

Collective Action, Service Provision and Urban Governance

A critical exploration of Community Based
Organisations (CBOs) in Dhaka's *bustee*
(slum) settlements, Bangladesh

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Abstract

Sally Cawood, 2017, a thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities
“Collective Action, Service Provision and Urban Governance: A critical exploration of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in Dhaka’s *bustee* (slum) settlements, Bangladesh”

In Dhaka, Bangladesh over five million people live in low-income, informal settlements (*bustees*) with limited access to basic services, secure land tenure and political voice. Whilst collective action among the urban poor is central to accessing affordable services and – when taken to scale – a broader politics of ‘redistribution, recognition and representation’ (Fraser 1997; 2005), little is known about how Dhaka’s slum dwellers organise, and the extent to which this is (or can be) transformative. To deepen our understanding, this thesis utilises collective action theory to examine intra-group dynamics, the instrumental value of groups and broader context of urban governance that enables and/or constrains certain forms of collective action in Dhaka’s *bustees*. Case studies of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in three *bustees* are used as a lens to explore how slum dwellers organise to obtain basic services, such as water and sanitation. CBOs are disaggregated into two main types (externally or NGO-initiated and internally or leader-initiated) and sub-types (formal and informal), with three sub-themes; participation (leadership and membership), function (activities and responsibilities) and outcomes (equity and sustainability). A mixed qualitative toolkit, including in-depth observations of CBOs, interviews with CBO leaders, members, non-members and key-informant interviews with NGO, government officials and citywide urban poor groups, reveals the complex relationship between collective action, service provision and urban governance in Dhaka.

Two key findings emerge. Firstly, similar patterns in participation and outcomes are observed regardless of CBO type, whereby politically-affiliated local leaders and house owners create, enter and/or use CBOs to address their strategic agendas, and reinforce their authority. This demonstrates that, as opposed to bounded groups, CBOs are in fact nodes of interconnected individuals, some of whom are better able to participate in (and benefit from) collective action, than others. Secondly, although collective action plays an increasingly important role in service provision in Dhaka (especially legal water supply), it is largely practical in nature (i.e. addressing immediate needs). In cases where it is more strategic (i.e. to access land and housing), or both practical and strategic (i.e. obtaining legal water supply to secure land), certain male local leaders seek to benefit over others. In all cases, ‘transformative’ collective action is constrained. This, it is argued, relates to the broader context of urban governance that enables certain forms of collective action, while constraining others, in Dhaka’s *bustees*. Three (interrelated) spheres of urban governance are identified as particularly important: 1) patron-centric state; 2) risk-averse and market-oriented development sector; and 3) clientelistic society. Whilst existing collective action theory has value for understanding intra-group dynamics, fieldwork suggests that the urban governance context is the overarching factor affecting collective action in Dhaka’s *bustees*. The thesis concludes with potential ways forward.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning

Sally Cawood

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List of Abbreviations

ACHR	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AL	Awami League
ARBAN	Association for Realisation of Basic Needs [NGO]
ASD	Association of Slum Dwellers [NGO]
ASEH	Advancing Sustainable Environmental Health
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BBOSC	<i>Bangladesh Bosti Basheer Odhikar Surakha Committee</i> [Bangladesh Slum Dwellers Rights Protection Committee]
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust [NGO]
BNP	Bangladesh National Party
BUF	Bangladesh Urban Forum
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDC	Community Development Committee
CO	Community Organiser
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CUP	Coalition of Urban Poor [NGO]
CUS	Centre for Urban Studies
CWC	Community WASH Committee (World Vision)
DESCO	Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd.
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DNCC	Dhaka North City Corporation
DoC	Department of Cooperatives
DSCC	Dhaka South City Corporation
DSK	<i>Dushtha Shathya Kendra</i> [NGO – Health Centre for the Distressed]
DWASA	Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority

ED	Executive Director
EECHO	Enhancing Environmental Health by Community Organisations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HFHB	Habitat for Humanity Bangladesh [NGO]
IDI	In-Depth Interview
KII	Key Informant Interview
LIC	Low-Income Community
MBOP	Membership Based Organisation of the Poor
MCR	Microcredit
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MODS	Maintenance Operations Development Services [Zonal Offices of DWASA]
NBUS	<i>Nagar Bostibashi Unnayan Sangstha</i> [Urban Slum Development Agency]
NDBUS	<i>Nagar Daridra Bostibashir Unnayan Sangstha</i> [Urban Slum Dweller Rights Development Agency]
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OPP	Orangi Pilot Project
PDAP	Participatory Development Action Program [NGO]
PEHUP	Promoting Environmental Health for the Urban Poor
PM	Project Manager
PO	Project Officer
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PPRC	Power and Participation Research Centre
RAN	Relational Actors and Networks
RAT	Rational Actor Theory
SCO	Senior Community Officer [within DWASA]
SDD	Slum Development Department
SDI	Slum/Shack Dwellers International

SDO	Slum Development Officer [within SDD]
SSQ	Semi-Structured Questionnaire
SVR	Structural Variables and Relationships
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UPDP	Urban Poor Development Program
UPPRP	Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Program
WAB	WaterAid Bangladesh [NGO]
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WSUP	Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor [NGO]

Glossary of Terms

<i>Adarsha Nagar</i>	Model/exemplary town/urban area
<i>Ansar Force</i>	Lowest tier of Bangladesh's security forces, responsible for maintaining law and order in their locality (e.g. preventing illegal land encroachment)
<i>Apa</i>	Sister
<i>Bahumukhi</i>	Multipurpose (cooperative society)
<i>Baksheesh</i>	Bribes or 'tips'
<i>Bash</i>	Bamboo
<i>Bastu Hara</i>	Landless people
<i>Bideshi</i>	Foreigner
<i>Bosti</i>	Settlement
<i>Bustee</i>	Slum
<i>Busteebashee</i>	Slum dweller
<i>Basha mālika</i>	House owner
<i>Crore</i>	1 crore = Tk. 10,000,000
<i>Hartal</i>	General enforced strikes
<i>Jamider</i>	Landowner
<i>Jhupri</i>	Temporary structures made of plastic, polythene, board, scraps
<i>Jheel</i>	Pond/waterbody
<i>Kasto</i>	Pain/trouble
<i>Katha</i>	Land measurement (usually six feet)
<i>Kallyan</i>	Welfare
<i>Kutcha</i>	Semi-durable structures with wall and roof made of bamboo, wood, leaves etc that require annual upgrading
<i>Lakh</i>	1 lakh = Tk. 100,000

<i>Mastaan</i>	Literal translation is “muscle-man” – men (or women) who exert their authority and power over others, often through violence
<i>Pagala</i>	Mentally ill (derogatory term)
<i>Pōrā</i>	Burnt
<i>Pucca</i>	Permanent structures with brick wall and concrete roof
<i>Samoboy Samity</i>	Cooperative Society
<i>Semi-pucca</i>	Semi-permanent structures with brick walls and sheet roof
<i>Shalish</i>	Informal community court that carries out social arbitration
<i>Shakti/Shakti nei</i>	Power/no power
<i>Shonchoy O’ Wreen</i>	
<i>Dan</i>	Savings and loan distribution (cooperative society)
<i>Taka (Tk.)</i>	Currency of Bangladesh
<i>Tong</i>	Hanging over waterbody (e.g. house or toilet)

EXCHANGE RATE

In April 2015 (at time of fieldwork) approx. 1 USD = Tk. 77 and 1 GBP = Tk. 115

1. Introduction

‘If we tie a bundle of sticks, and on the other side we keep a single stick, you will notice that breaking the single stick is very easy, but breaking the bundle of sticks is very hard...’

(Facilitator, PDAP Grassroots Women Leaders Workshop 2015)

Collective action among the urban poor is understood to be central to accessing affordable services and, when taken to scale, a broader politics of ‘redistribution, recognition and representation’ (Fraser 1997; 2005). This assumption is based upon a body of literature that documents the struggles of Grassroots Organisations (GROs), Membership Based Organisations of the Poor (MBOPs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and urban social movements within and across Africa, Asia and Latin America. In particular, examples of urban poor federations within Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) demonstrate how collective mobilisation among the urban poor can fundamentally (re)shape local governance ‘from below’, and challenge eurocentric particularism ‘from above’ (Appadurai 2001; Mitlin 2003; McFarlane 2004; 2008; 2010; Roy 2005; Chen et al 2007; Miraftab 2009; Robinson 2011; Tawa Lama-Rewal and Zérah 2011; Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014).

Despite a growing evidence-base, concepts such as ‘the collective’ and ‘collective action’ are often taken as given, and not rigorously analysed in the urban context. A review of the literature reveals that the majority of theoretical contributions are dominated by economics and political science, centring on rural poverty and property rights, often in the Global North (e.g. Olson 1965; 1971; Uphoff 1986; Ostrom et al 1994; Poteete and Ostrom 2004; Meinzen-Dick et al 2004; Ratner et al 2013). With some notable exceptions (outlined in chapter two), and without disregarding urban social movement theory¹, the extent to which these approaches can be used to understand collective action and service provision in low-income settlements of the Global South, remains underexplored. To deepen our understanding, this thesis uses, and nuances, existing collective action theory, to examine intra-group dynamics, the instrumental value of collective action (via groups) in low-income settlements, and broader context of urban governance in which collective action is enabled and/or

¹ Whilst I do not wish to downplay the vast array of literature on urban social movements (e.g. Lefebvre 1974; Castells 1983; Foweraker 1995; Borja and Castells 1997; Crossley 2002; Pickvance 2003; Mitlin 2006; McFarlane 2009; Bebbington et al 2010; Diani 2011; Tarrow 2011), the focus here is not on ‘movements’ *per se*, but the application of collective action theory to understanding group action (via CBOs) in low-income settlements.

constrained. Focusing on these three interconnected aspects of collective action enables us to see why certain individuals are more likely to participate in (and benefit from) collective activities, what role collective action plays in service provision, and why certain forms of collective action dominate, in certain contexts.

Empirical work on collective action is also spatially uneven, with ‘successful’ cases drawn from a selective range of cities and settlements², leaving others understudied (Baud 2000). Little is known, for example, about how slum dwellers (*busteebashees*) organise around services in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and the extent to which this is (or can be) ‘transformative’. This is problematic, given that over five million people live in low-income, informal settlements (*bustees*), with limited access to basic services, secure land tenure and political voice. To deepen our understanding, this thesis uses the lens of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to explore collective action in Dhaka’s *bustees*. Whilst a range of CBOs exist in these settlements, there are few rigorous empirical studies on the role of urban CBOs in service provision and mediation. Beyond services, there is also little evidence of CBOs up-scaling to the citywide or national level to demand rights to shelter, land and political recognition, as exemplified with SDI in South Africa, India, Kenya, Uganda, the Philippines and beyond.

Before introducing the research in greater detail, section 1.1 contextualises collective action within two interrelated global trends that are particularly prevalent in Bangladesh – the rise of urban poverty and associated service deprivation, and rapid urbanisation with the proliferation of urban slums. Two key points are highlighted. Firstly, whilst urban poverty underpins many collective initiatives, it is acknowledged that the urban poor do not act collectively around poverty *per se* (Bebbington et al 2010). As one of the key drivers of collective action in low-income settlements, inadequate service provision offers a more appropriate lens through which to examine collective initiatives. Secondly, low-income settlements are regarded not as ‘poverty pockets’, as Marx et al (2013) argue, but as diverse terrains of habitation, livelihoods, self-organisation and politics (Roy 2011), where the urban poor deploy a range of strategies – including collective action – to address their needs and priorities. Section 1.2 then elaborates on the research project, outlining key concepts, aims, objectives and questions. This is followed by a chapter overview.

² Frequently cited examples include; SDI, the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) in Karachi, Pakistan (outlined in chapter two), Baan Mankong in Bangkok, Thailand and Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) (Hasan 2006; Archer 2012; Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014; Das 2015).

1.1. Collective Action in Context

1.1.1. Urban Poverty and Service Deprivation

Urban poverty in low and middle-income countries has in recent years received greater scrutiny from academics, practitioners and government agencies. This follows recognition that urban poverty is (and will be) a significant global challenge in the 21st century³, linked to rapid unplanned urbanisation, ‘inadequate’ governance and rising inequality (Satterthwaite 1997; Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2004; 2013). Despite this, ‘inaccurate poverty lines based on wholly inappropriate criteria are being used to greatly overstate success in urban poverty reduction’ (Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014: 3). In Bangladesh, for example, the study of urban poverty has been patchy, based on non-representative surveys (Islam et al 1997; UPPR 2010), focused on municipal governance (Murtaza 2002), or concerned primarily with Dhaka (Begum 1999; Afsar 2000; Ahmed et al 2000 cited in Roy 2014: 453). In turn, the dominance of econometric measures, failure to acknowledge adverse living conditions, disaggregate urban populations and recognise higher consumption costs (e.g. rent and bills), results in the continued underestimation of the number of people living in [urban] poverty (Satterthwaite 1997; Mitlin 2003; Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2004; 2013).

There is also a failure to address the structural and relational factors that give rise to urban poverty, such as exploitative patron-client relations and local power struggles (Harriss 2007; Mosse 2010), and a failure to acknowledge the political power of low-income groups (Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014). Where ‘success’ has been documented, this appears to be largely dependent on the extent to which the urban poor⁴ could organise, and the nature of their relationship with a functioning local government (McCarney and Stren 2003). For Satterthwaite and Mitlin (2014), collective action among the urban poor is a critical component of pro-poor political change for multiple reasons, including; strategic knowledge, capability to engage with urban development and negotiate with the state, challenge prejudice and discrimination among better off citizens, and secure universal rights and needs. They argue that interaction between an unreliable state, overconfidence in the capacity of low-income groups to participate in

³ Baker (2008) suggests that one-third of all urban residents are ‘poor’, representing one quarter of the world’s total poor. Statistics from 2002 based on \$1.08/day for low-income countries and \$2.15/day for middle-income countries using the 1993 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) (*ibid*).

⁴ The term ‘urban poor’ is homogenising and de-humanising, neglecting the diversity within this category (Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014). Alternative classifications (e.g. *bustee* resident) are used where possible.

market relations, vertical authorities, unaccountable and unrepresentative local organisations, accounts for the failure of many urban poverty reduction programmes to date (*ibid*).

Even though ‘initiatives for urban poverty reduction are held to critically depend on the collective agency of slum dwellers’ (De Wit and Berner 2009: 927), and ‘getting organised’ is fundamental to development (Hamdi 2004), the relationship between collective action and urban poverty is insufficiently substantiated and conflicted (Bebbington et al 2010). Whilst there is evidence that the ‘new politics’ or ‘third generation’ of collective mobilisation around housing and services (outlined in chapter two) can empower and provide stability for those living in chronic and transient poverty, collective action in low-income settlements is not necessarily about poverty *per se* (*ibid*). Rather, it can actually exclude the most vulnerable, and address the symptoms, as opposed to causes of poverty (Appadurai 2001; Thorpe et al 2005; Mitlin 2006; Mitlin and Bebbington 2006; Harriss 2007; Mwangi and Markelova 2009; Bebbington et al 2010; Hulme 2010; Ahmed et al 2012; Hooper and Ortolano 2012). Arguably, we must look beyond an urban poverty lens to understand why people act collectively in low-income settlements. This thesis acknowledges that inadequate service provision is one, among an array of ‘drivers’ of collective action in this context (Walton 1998).

Worldwide, over 600 million people live without access to improved water, 1.6 billion use drinking water contaminated with faecal matter and 2.4 billion live without access to basic sanitation, with significant implications for health (WASH Watch 2015; WHO/UNICEF JMP 2015; UN 2016a). Whilst access appears to have improved, quality, affordability and sustainability of water and sanitation is a major concern, especially in low-income settlements. Referring to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Satterthwaite (2016: 99) argues that there has been a ‘disastrous performance among many low and middle-income nations in...halving the [urban] proportion without drinking water piped on the premises and improved sanitation between 1990-2015’. This is due, in part, to insufficient data and inadequate criteria that is unsuited to complex urban realities (*ibid*).

In Dhaka’s *bustees*, for example, water and sanitation deprivations are compounded by cramped living conditions, inadequate infrastructure (e.g. damaged/broken pipes, overflowing and leaking septic tanks), infrequent/intermittent supply, high user costs and tenure insecurity (Mahmud and Mbuya 2015; GoB 2016; EcoPoor 2016). Existing

facilities also rarely meet the demands and needs of different user groups – especially young children, adolescent girls, women, disabled and elderly residents – exacerbating unhygienic practices (e.g. open defecation), overcrowding, conflict and sexual harassment (Sommer et al 2015; McGranahan et al 2016; O'Reilly 2016). As the main water collectors, women and girls unequally bear the burden of inadequate services and infrastructure (e.g. long queues, dilapidated facilities and long distances to collection points) (Sultana et al 2013). They are also expected to adhere to strict hygiene practices (i.e. regular bathing), difficult in settlements with limited access to water, washrooms and sanitation facilities (Joshi et al 2012). However – as we explore in chapters six and seven – women also play a central role in negotiating for improved services collectively at the settlement and citywide level.

1.1.2. Rapid Urbanisation and Proliferation of Urban Slums

By 2030, it is predicted that 60% of the world's population (one in every three people) will live in cities (UN 2016b). Whilst these spatial shifts are occurring globally, the pace and complexity of unplanned urbanisation in the Global South (Africa, Asia and Latin America) is fundamentally (re)shaping the urban landscape. In particular, 'southern towns and cities are dealing with crises which are compounded by rapid population growth...lack of access to shelter, infrastructure and services, by predominantly poor populations' (Watson 2009: 151).

With a growth rate of 2.7% per annum, it is predicted that 63% of the world's urban population (3.3 billion) will be living in South Asia's towns and cities by 2050 (Tawa Lama-Rewal and Zérah 2011). In Bangladesh alone, the urban population rose from 2.64 million in 1971 to 50 million in 2011 (Rahman 2011), demonstrating the uneven spatial and temporal nature of urbanisation. Driven by economic necessity, climate-related hazards and diverse aspirations, millions of rural migrants are moving into unplanned, informal settlements in towns and cities, where they live as 'partial' or 'invisible' citizens (Desai and Potter 2008; Banks et al 2011; Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2013; Thieme and Kovacs 2015; Roy et al 2016). Over one billion people now live in slums worldwide, with numbers set to rise significantly (UN-HABITAT 2014).

The term 'slum' has a stronghold in global discourses of urbanisation and urban poverty, utilised by agencies across the world (Amis 2001; Patel et al 2001; Gilbert 2007; Fox 2014). UN-HABITAT (2010; 2011) defines slums as human settlements consisting of one, or a group of individuals living under the same roof in an urban area, with one or

more of the following ‘shelter deprivations’. Points three, four and five are particularly relevant for this thesis:

1. Durable housing (permanent structure providing protection from extreme climatic conditions)
2. Sufficient living area (no more than 3 sharing a room)
3. Access to improved water (sufficient, affordable and accessible)
4. Access to improved sanitation facilities (private or reasonable public toilet)
5. Secure tenure (*de facto* or *de jure* status, protection against forced eviction).

According to this definition, the highest incidence of slums is in Sub-Saharan Africa, and largest number of slum dwellers (in absolute terms), is in Asia (*ibid*). An estimated 42.9% of the urban population in the South Asian region lives in slums, with proportions as high as 69% in Nepal and Bangladesh, and 47% in Pakistan (Mathur 2010 cited in Tawa Lama-Rewal and Zérah 2011). By 2030, UN-HABITAT (2014) predicts that around three billion people (40% of the world’s population), will require access to adequate housing and basic infrastructure. Beyond these statistics, it is important to recognise that the categorisations of ‘slum’ and ‘slum dweller’ are highly contested⁵. The association between slums and urban poverty is particularly problematic, as settlements may be relocated and demolished in the name of ‘poverty reduction’ (Patel et al 2001; Gilbert 2007; 2009; Arabindoo 2011).

As opposed to homogeneous ‘poverty pockets’ (Marx et al 2013), this thesis recognises that low-income settlements vary significantly in terms of history, size, service availability, housing and land tenure type, household number, demography, occupancy type, geographical location, topography, political affiliation and level of collective organisation. It is acknowledged that residents mobilise and create social networks that transcend rural/urban, formal/informal, public/private boundaries (Begum and Sen 2005; Kabeer and Kabir 2009; McFarlane 2008; Roy 2011), and that there is significant variation in income and assets between individuals, challenging the assumption that all slum dwellers are ‘poor’ (Burra 2005; Milbert 2006; Moser 2009). Rather than ‘impotent, passive and guideless...spectators observing physical and spatial [as well as social and political] changes they neither control nor understand’ (Nasr and Volait 2003 cited in Shatkin 2007: 6), residents deploy a range of strategies to address their needs

⁵ Where possible, I use the Bangladesh term (*bustee*) or low-income settlement.

and priorities (McCarney and Stren 2003; Mitlin 2006; Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014). This thesis recognises that one such strategy – collective action – is central to accessing affordable services, and when taken to scale, a broader politics of ‘redistribution, recognition and representation’ (Fraser 1997; 2005).

1.2. Research Outline

The following section elaborates on the key concepts – collective action, CBOs and urban governance – used throughout this thesis. This is important because each has multiple (contested) meanings that require clarification.

1.2.1. Key Concepts

Collective Action

Collective action is highly context-dependent and dynamic, generating three central challenges for researchers; how to conceptualise, measure and operationalise it (Meinzen-Dick et al 2004). Broadly defined, collective action is voluntary action taken by a group to achieve common interests (Marshall 1998). The type and nature of collective action ultimately varies according to the specific politico-legal, social, economic and environmental context, and is shaped by changing dynamics at the individual, household, settlement, citywide, national and global scale (Shatkin 2007).

As indicated above, this thesis conceptualises collective action in terms of intra-group dynamics, the instrumental value (of groups) and broader context in which certain forms of collective action are enabled and/or constrained – key themes identified in the literature. Chapter two outlines three particular approaches to collective action that can potentially be used to understand intra-group dynamics; Rational Actor Theory (RAT), Structural Variables and Relationships (SVR) and Relational Actors and Networks (RAN). Whilst not all aspects of existing collective action theory are appropriate for application to an urban context, Ostrom’s work (2005; 2009; 2010) on SVR offers a rigorous theoretical base from which to understand why certain individuals engage in collective action over time. This is complemented by an understanding of networks (type, direction and strength), which enables us to observe how certain individuals are connected both within and outside collective groups, and why certain people participate in, and benefit from, collective activity (Nicholls 2008; 2009; Hossain 2013).

Drawing on debates over whether collective action is a force for challenging, rather than reinforcing existing power inequalities (Evans 2002; Mitlin 2001; 2004; Hickey and Mohan 2004; Chen et al 2007; Moser 2016ab), the instrumental value of collective action (via CBOs) in Dhaka's *bustees* is conceptualised in two ways; practical⁶ (i.e. meeting the immediate needs of CBO leaders, members and wider community) and strategic (i.e. meeting and protecting the interests and priorities of CBO leaders, members and wider community). Rather than opposite ends of a spectrum, it is acknowledged that CBOs can be practical and/or strategic at different times, and within different contexts. However, the extent to which practical and/or strategic collective action can bring about transformative change – defined here as challenging power inequalities to achieve 'redistribution, recognition and representation' (Fraser 1997; 2005) – is contested.

Community Based Organisations (CBOs)

Notwithstanding the complexity and diversity of collective action, this thesis focuses on one specific type – group action via CBOs. Whilst acknowledging different conceptualisations, from 'local institutions' (Uphoff 1986; 1990) to MBOPs (Chen et al 2007), CBOs are used for three reasons. Firstly, CBOs are one of the most dominant forms of collective action around services in Dhaka's *bustees*. Secondly, as collective action is difficult to measure, CBOs offer a useful way in which to study collective action in a specific context. Thirdly, unlike MBOPs, the researcher refrains from associating CBOs with 'urban poverty', as these organisations involve poor and non-poor leaders, members and agendas. In line with the above, an important yet related distinction is made between collective action dilemmas and norms within CBOs and the instrumental value of collective action via CBOs. Both are relevant for this research, and captured by the analysis of intra-group and broader governance dynamics.

Broadly defined, CBOs are 'arrangements and associations formed and located within the local space, or immediate residential surroundings of the actors [or residents]' (Akin 1990 cited in Shatkin 2007: 4). This thesis places particular emphasis on CBOs that are involved in service provision and mediation in Dhaka's *bustees*. Within this context, CBOs are disaggregated into two main types⁷ (externally or NGO-initiated and internally or leader-initiated) and sub-types (formal and informal), with three sub-

⁶ This practical/strategic distinction emerges from Molyneux (1985) and Moser's (1989) work on practical and strategic gender needs and, more recently, gender transformation (2016ab).

⁷ Based on initial scoping visits and existing literature (outlined in chapter three).

themes; participation (leadership and membership), function (activities and responsibilities) and outcomes (equity and sustainability).

Whilst there is significant overlap between (and within) these categories, these distinctions allow for deeper analysis of intra-group dynamics, instrumental value and the broader context in which groups are shaped. For example, externally-initiated water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) CBOs may expose challenges associated with foreign-aid agendas, whilst internally-initiated CBOs may provide insight into the strategic interests of politically-affiliated leaders. This being said, such a selective approach does have limitations as – rather than bounded entities – CBOs are ultimately nodes of interconnected individuals, some of whom are better able (than others) to mediate the flow of resources, and exert their authority. Chapter three elaborates on these limitations in greater depth.

Urban Governance

Urban governance is regarded here as the broader context within which practical and/or strategic forms of collective action (via CBOs) are enabled and/or constrained. Governance is conceptualised in three key ways; normatively, descriptively and analytically – the latter two being of particular significance for this thesis. Firstly, in the normative sense, it is increasingly recognised that ‘good’ or ‘good enough’ governance (Grindle 2004; 2007) is central to affordable, inclusive and effective service provision in urban areas (Harpham and Boateng 1997; Devas 1999; Bakker 2008; Hardoy et al 2005; Boex et al 2014 cited in Jones et al 2014: 5 and 11). As we explore in chapter two, community participation (via CBOs) is key to enhancing ‘good urban governance’ in low-income settlements (*ibid*).

The second (descriptive) conceptualisation emphasises the interactions between multiple actors⁸, at multiple scales. This enables us to look beyond monolithic conceptualisations of ‘the state’, ‘market’ or ‘civil society’ to the fragmented governance context that characterises many rapidly urbanising towns and cities, like Dhaka, in the Global South. CBOs are just one, among an array of actors in this context. Far from neutral, these interactions are deeply political, contested and imbued with unequal power relations. The final (analytical) conceptualisation therefore draws on

⁸ The term ‘actor’ is used throughout this thesis to refer to individuals (e.g. local leaders and political patrons) and organisations (e.g. NGOs, donors and government departments/authorities). The specific use of the term is clarified throughout the text.

Bourdieu's (1986; 1998) notion of 'fields' to re-introduce power into the governance debate (Zimmer and Sakdapolrak 2012). Within Dhaka, it is argued that unequal interactions between actors in three spheres of urban governance (i.e. patron-centric state, risk-averse and market-oriented development sector and clientelistic society) constrain transformative forms of collective action at the settlement and citywide level.

1.2.2. Aims and Objectives

Drawing on these debates, the overall aim of this thesis is to deepen our understanding of collective action, service provision and urban governance in urban low-income settlements, by conducting an in-depth study of CBOs in Dhaka's *bustees*. The following four objectives are identified:

- Critically explore the literature to provide a rigorous theoretical analysis of collective action (via CBOs), service provision and urban governance in low-income settlements of the Global South and in particular, Dhaka, Bangladesh,
- Develop an integrated analytical framework for collective action, to understand CBO type, participation, function and outcomes in relation to potable water and sanitation in Dhaka's *bustees*,
- Conduct in-depth analysis of (externally and internally-initiated) CBOs in three *bustees*, disaggregated according to land type (i.e. public, private, disputed), level of NGO/CBO activity and occupancy type (i.e. owner-occupier, tenant),
- Evaluate the role of collective action around service provision in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and highlight lessons for collective action theory in low-income settlements of the Global South.

1.2.3. Research Questions

The overarching research question asks:

How is collective action understood in relation to service provision in low-income settlements of the Global South, and what does in-depth analysis of CBOs in Dhaka's *bustees* tell us about the relationship between collective action, service provision and urban governance?

This main question is supported by three secondary questions:

- I. To what extent has the form and nature of urban governance influenced service provision in Dhaka's *bustees*, and – subsequently – the type and intensity of CBO activity in the sector?
- II. How do (externally and internally-initiated) CBOs form, who participates and why, what are their main functions and outcomes for leaders, members and the wider community in relation to potable water and sanitation?
- III. Does in-depth analysis of CBOs reinforce and/or challenge existing collective action theory?

The findings of this thesis are expected to contribute to theoretical, methodological and empirical debates on collective action, service provision and urban governance. Firstly, by focusing on intra-group dynamics, the instrumental value of collective groups and broader context in which groups are shaped, this thesis expects to generate nuanced understandings of collective action in low-income settlements. Secondly, it is argued that the integrated analytical framework for collective action (introduced in chapter three) can be used to build a robust picture of collective action in other rapidly urbanising towns and cities within Bangladesh, and across the Global South. This thesis also demonstrates the value of in-depth, qualitative research in understanding collective action (via CBOs) at the settlement and citywide scale. Finally, it is argued that empirical findings have potential relevance for policy making and programme design in Dhaka and other similar governance contexts.

1.2.4. Chapter Outline

Following this introduction, the literature review in chapter two explores the relationship between collective action, service provision and urban governance in low-income settlements. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 2.1 focuses on collective action theory (RAT, SVR and RAN). It is argued that, whilst RAT and SVR have value for understanding intra-group norms, focusing on the 'rational' actions and decisions of individuals alone, is inadequate for understanding collective action in low-income settlements. Within this context, individuals are connected via intricate kinship,

political, social and economic networks, with implications for participation within, and benefits of, collective action. Following this, section 2.2 focuses on the instrumental value of collective action as regards service provision. Collective action (via CBOs) is contextualised within three key urban development shifts; state-led, market-led and citizen-led. Whilst each phase has different implications for collective action, there is a great deal of overlap. For example, the extent to which citizen-led approaches are ‘alternatives’ to state and market-led interventions, challenge and/or reinforce existing power inequalities, remains unclear. The section concludes with critical reflection of the limits to collective action, and recognition that collective action takes different forms (i.e. practical and/or strategic). Section 2.3 focuses on the broader context of urban governance that enables and/or constrains certain forms of collective action, in certain contexts. It is argued that a combination of the descriptive and analytical conceptualisation of ‘governance’ helps us identify dominant actors within different governance spheres that affect the forms of collective action emerging. The chapter concludes by suggesting that focusing on intra-group dynamics, the instrumental value of collective action, and broader urban governance context, adds theoretical rigour to understanding collective action in low-income settlements. As there are no singular existing frameworks that encompass such an approach, an ‘integrated framework for collective action’ is proposed.

Chapter three outlines the research approach and methodology used in this thesis. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 3.1 outlines the philosophical underpinnings of the research, analytical framework (used as a heuristic tool), and qualitative methodology, deemed most appropriate for answering the research questions. Section 3.2 focuses on the research process in greater depth, split into four phases (I to IV). Particular emphasis is placed on scoping trips, field site selection and the specific methods deployed in each site, including; notes and observations, transect walks and community profiling, Semi-Structured Questionnaires (SSQs), In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and mini census. This section also elaborates on citywide Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), data verification and analysis. Section 3.3 reflects on the ethical, logistical and methodological limitations of the research, including; managing expectations, sensitive research topics and the vulnerability of research participants, language barriers, mobility and timing, as well as representative sampling, using CBOs as a lens, and CBO typology.

Chapter four situates the research within the broader urban governance context in Bangladesh, which is understood to affect the type of collective action observed in Dhaka's *bustees*. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 4.1 outlines the changing political setting in Bangladesh, the 'development surprise' (i.e. successful rural poverty reduction in a context of 'weak' governance) and shifting state-civil society relations from the 1970s to today. An overarching trend is identified whereby civil society is increasingly de-radicalised and de-politicised, with a shift from mobilisation to service delivery. However, the implications of this for urban NGOs and CBOs remain underexplored. Section 4.2 acknowledges that, whilst progress has been made in rural poverty reduction, urban poverty is rising, and rapid urbanisation is leading to the proliferation of *bustees* across Bangladesh. Inadequate access to basic services, such as water and sanitation, are major challenges for *bustee* residents. Despite inclusion in Government of Bangladesh (GoB) water and sanitation policies and strategies, the urban poor remain neglected in policy and practice (Banks et al 2011). Section 4.3 reflects on how this neglect has resulted in 'informal' governance and service delivery configurations in Dhaka's *bustees*.

Chapter five grounds these observations within the three case study field sites in Mirpur, Dhaka. The chapter is divided into two sections. Section 5.1 outlines history and population, housing and land tenure type, eviction threat, water and sanitation provision and political context in each site. Even though the settlements were selected according to specific criteria (outlined in chapter three), an overarching trend emerges whereby local political leaders and house owners control and mediate services, land and housing. Section 5.2 outlines the key problems, solutions and responsible actors identified in each site. It is acknowledged that residents are more likely to mobilise around their needs and priorities, which may differ to those promoted by NGOs and donors.

In the second empirical chapter (six), the focus returns to the citywide scale to understand how the form and nature of urban governance has affected service provision and collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*. This is important, because the relationship between urban governance and collective action remains underexplored in this context, and fieldwork suggests that urban governance has major implications for the type of CBOs emerging at the settlement level. The chapter is divided into three sections. Drawing on KIIs with NGO staff, section 6.1 outlines how a combination of donor preferences and 'hostile' political environment have contributed to an apparent shift

from mobilisation to service delivery in Dhaka's NGO sector. Sections 6.2 and 6.3 then focus on the rise and role of NGO-initiated CBOs in this context, drawing on the case of one leading urban NGO (DSK) and examples of CBO formation from Sites 1 and 2. In accordance with observations in chapter four, it is argued that existing and historical governance configurations have led to the de-radicalisation and de-politicisation of civil society in Dhaka. Within this context, CBOs play an important role in service provision and mediation, yet do not necessarily address the strategic priorities of *bustee* residents.

Using multiple CBO case studies from Sites 1 and 2, chapter seven focuses on the intra-group dynamics of externally or NGO-initiated CBOs. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 7.1 focuses on CBO participation, and the election or selection of leaders and members. An apparent mismatch is highlighted between the principles of gender equity and inclusivity promoted by NGO staff, and the reality of CBO participation at the settlement level. As expected, certain individuals (e.g. local leaders and house owners) are more likely to participate than others (i.e. short-term tenants), with implications for function and outcomes. Section 7.2 focuses on CBO function, with particular emphasis on the activities of user and central CBOs. A number of overlapping trends are identified, for example; the unequal distribution of responsibilities between leaders and members, the irregularity of CBO meetings, variation in NGO regulation procedures and CBO overlap. Section 7.3 focuses on CBO outcomes, including equity (i.e. the spread of benefits) and sustainability. Three key points are highlighted. Firstly, whilst WASH projects bring numerous benefits for leaders, members and the wider community, many non-members believe CBO leaders benefit unfairly from their participation, fuelling mistrust. Secondly, in a context of financial, social and tenure insecurity, there are few incentives (and opportunities) for residents to maintain infrastructure post-project, resulting in the dilapidation and/or misappropriation of services. Thirdly, though some user CBOs sustain post-project, central CBOs appear to dissolve rapidly. This lack of sustainability, though nothing new, relates to the urban governance context in Dhaka, and inherent design of NGO-initiated CBOs.

Using multiple CBO case studies from Sites 2 and 3, the final empirical chapter (eight) focuses on the intra-group dynamics of internally or leader-initiated CBOs (e.g. *bustee* committees and cooperative societies or *samity*s). The chapter is again divided into three sections, but takes on a slightly different format. Section 8.1 focuses on participation, function and outcomes of informal *bustee* committees. These CBOs are

found to be largely male-led, with leaders and members (mostly house owners) involved directly and/or indirectly in service provision and mediation. The primary focus of these groups is to conduct social arbitration, protect and govern the settlement. Section 8.2 focuses on participation, function and outcomes of *samitys*. Many *bustee* committee leaders and members are also involved in (and lead) these *samitys*. However, as formal (registered) entities, the multipurpose *samitys* in Sites 2 and 3 play a different role in service provision and mediation. In particular, these CBOs are used by some leaders to apply for legal water, electricity or gas connections, without NGO support. Section 8.3 elaborates on what happens when both NGO and leader-initiated CBOs exist within a settlement – as in Site 2. Within this context, a trend emerges whereby the same individuals are involved in all CBOs, though there are notable divisions between men and women, old and new settlers, and political party supporters. The chapter concludes with the recognition that leader-initiated CBOs play an important yet neglected role in service provision and mediation, but their actions largely benefit male, politically-affiliated leaders and house owners, reinforcing existing hierarchies.

Chapter nine draws on the empirical evidence to critically re-engage with the literature, and nuance our understanding of collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*. The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 9.1 begins by revisiting collective action theory (RAT, SVR and RAN). Whilst RAT and SVR have value, a range of additional individual, household and settlement level factors are found to affect CBO type, participation, function and outcomes in Dhaka's *bustees*. One overarching finding emerges whereby CBO participation and outcomes are similar regardless of CBO type (i.e. externally/internally-initiated, formal/informal). Whilst CBOs offer a useful lens through which to examine intra-group dynamics, it is argued that identifying networks between local leaders and political patrons, is of greater value to understand collective action in low-income settlements. In this sense, RAN is the most relevant theoretical approach. However, RAN may not readily explain why certain leaders dominate, why certain forms of collective action emerge, and whether collective action challenges and/or reinforces existing power inequalities. To answer these questions, section 9.2 returns to the practical and/or strategic distinction outlined in chapter two.

Fieldwork reveals that, while collective action plays an important role in service provision, it is largely practical (i.e. addressing immediate needs). In cases where it is more strategic (i.e. to address priorities), or both practical and strategic, the benefits are

not widely shared. In both cases, transformative collective action (and associated outcomes) is restricted. This, it is argued, relates to the broader urban governance context that enables and/or constrains certain forms of collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*. Three interrelated spheres of urban governance (outlined in section 1.2.1) are identified as particularly important. Far from neutral, the interactions between actors within (and across) these spheres are inherently political and unequal. Re-engaging with Bourdieu's (1986; 1998) notion of 'fields' (section 9.3) helps us explore these unequal power dynamics in greater depth. The chapter concludes with the recognition that urban governance is highly dynamic, with shifts in one or more spheres offering the potential for more (or indeed less) transformative collective action.

Chapter ten focuses on how we can move forward in this context. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 10.1 answers the research questions, drawing on empirical evidence. Section 10.2 outlines potential actions that certain actors within the three spheres of urban governance (i.e. the state, development sector and society) can take, to move towards more transformative collective action in Dhaka. Section 10.3 reflects on the extent to which findings from Dhaka have relevance for other rapidly urbanising contexts, and outlines future areas of research. Though complex, a rigorous analysis of intra-group dynamics, the instrumental value of groups, and broader urban governance context is argued to deepen our understanding of collective action in low-income settlements of the Global South.

2. Collective Action, Service Provision and Urban Governance

The following literature review explores the complex relationship between collective action, service provision and urban governance in low-income settlements of the Global South. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 2.1 provides a rigorous analysis of collective action theory, focusing on three main approaches identified in the literature; Rational Actor Theory (RAT), Structural Variables and Relationships (SVR) and Relational Actors and Networks (RAN). Whilst RAT and SVR have value for understanding intra-group norms, and RAN is useful to analyse actors and networks across geographical space, this is not necessarily sufficient to understand what drives people to act collectively, and the potential outcomes of such action.

Section 2.2 therefore focuses on the instrumental value of collective action (via CBOs) as a means to access basic services – one of the key ‘drivers’ of collective action identified in the literature. Collective action is situated within three generational shifts in urban development; state-led, market-led and citizen-led. It is argued that each phase has particular implications for collective action and service provision in low-income settlements. However, there is also a great deal of overlap, raising questions over the extent to which collective action is a force to challenge, rather than reinforce, existing inequalities. The section concludes with the recognition that collective action is not inherently progressive, inclusive or possible in all governance contexts.

Section 2.3 interrogates the notion of ‘urban governance’ in greater depth, focusing on three conceptualisations; normative, descriptive and analytical. A combination of the latter two enables us to see how the unequal interaction between actors enables and/or constrains certain forms of collective action, in certain contexts. The chapter concludes by suggesting that focusing on intra-group dynamics, instrumental value and the broader urban governance context adds theoretical rigour to understanding collective action in low-income urban settlements.

2.1. Theorising Collective Action

Broadly defined, collective action is voluntary action taken by a group to achieve common interests (Marshall 1998). The ‘collective’ refers to activities that require the coordination of efforts by two or more individuals to accomplish an outcome (Sandler 1992: 3), whilst ‘actions’ refer to multiple, interlocking processes with an array of strategies deployed (i.e. from sporadic or reactive events, to incremental, proactive or longer term social movements). Collective action can be place-based, but also transcend spatial boundaries by involving multiple actors at different scales. Examples include; neighbourhood associations and anti-eviction protests, savings and credit groups, community-based adaptation to climate change, social movements and unions of the working poor (Appadurai 2001; Chen et al 2007; Kabeer and Kabir 2009; Miraftab 2009; Jabeen et al 2010; Roy et al 2012; Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014).

Since the 1960s, understandings of collective action have shifted from economic, to more institutional and relational interpretations underpinned by calls for socio-spatial justice (Mahmud 2002; Diani and McAdam 2003; Roy 2005; Tawa Lama-Rewal and Zérah 2011). The following outlines three broad approaches to understanding collective action identified from existing literature; Rational Actor Theory (RAT), Structural Variables and Relationships (SVR) and Relational Actors and Networks (RAN), summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Summary of Collective Action Theory

Approach	Description	Key Authors
Rational Actor Theory (RAT)	Only in rare circumstances, would groups of rational individuals act in a coordinated and cooperative manner, giving rise to certain ‘collective action dilemmas’ (e.g. free riding, elite capture and oligarchy).	E.g. Olson (1965; 1971); Hardin (1968)
Structural Variables and Relationships (SVR)	Multiple factors in addition to group size and heterogeneity affect the likelihood of initial and continued action. Emphasis placed on structural variables (e.g. history of collective action) and core relationships (e.g. trust and reciprocity).	E.g. Ostrom (1990; 2005; 2009; 2010); Poteete and Ostrom (2004)
Relational Actors and Networks (RAN)	Social networks and kinship ties central to ‘successful’ collective action. Strength (i.e. strong/weak) and direction (i.e. vertical/horizontal) of networks important. Collectives as fluid, multi-scalar and multi-actor networks or ‘assemblages’ that transcend geographical space.	E.g. Granovetter (1973; 1983); Nicholls (2008; 2009); Hossain (2013) E.g. Routledge (2003); Routledge et al (2007; 2008); Diani (2011); Diani and McAdam (2003)

(Author’s Own 2017)

Whilst RAT, SVR and RAN overlap, they offer different ways to understand why people act collectively in certain contexts, and under certain conditions. This relates, in part, to the philosophical and disciplinary underpinnings of each approach. For example, RAT (and to an extent SVR) emerge from rational choice theory, commonly associated with political science. RAN, on the other hand, emerges from post-structuralism, widely used in sociology and geography. The implications of each approach for understanding ‘intra-group’ dynamics are elaborated below.

Whilst earlier interpretations emphasised the ‘logic’ of group formation to achieve shared goals, a number of scholars argued that only in rare circumstances, would groups of rational individuals act in a coordinated and cooperative manner, giving rise to certain ‘collective action dilemmas’ (Olson 1965; Hardin 1968). Particular emphasis was placed on the challenges of ‘elite capture’ and ‘oligarchy’, the idea that groups are co-opted by the agendas of powerful individuals, which would deter or break-down collective endeavours (Michels 1915 [1966]). Even when collective groups do form, Olson (1965: 2) argued that there is a ‘free rider’ problem, as ‘members of a large group rationally seek to maximise their personal welfare, they will not act to advance their common group objectives unless there is coercion to force them to do so’. A free rider is ‘anyone who contributes less than his/her true marginal value derived from non-excludable public goods⁹’ (Sandler 1992: 17). According to Uphoff (1986), the more free-riders an organisation has, the less likely it is to survive. He argues that ‘excluding non-contributors from getting benefits is a particular problem for local membership organisations and cooperatives’ (*ibid*: 14-15). Rational actors are thus believed to act only ‘when the opportunities for doing so effectively are greatest’ (Crossley 2002: 12), particularly if benefits will be received immediately and/or in the short term (Kyessi 2011). Olson (1965) also argued that people have little incentive to contribute time and resources to collective goals when they have to share the rewards with others, including non-participants. He did, however, acknowledge the importance of group size and heterogeneity in affecting outcomes (i.e. smaller homogeneous groups reduce the free rider problem).

⁹ Public goods and services (e.g. basic infrastructure, water and sanitation) are those that can be collectively consumed, without reducing the amount available to others (Booth 2012). They are distinguished from Common Pool Resources (CPRs), which are systems that generate finite quantities of resource units (e.g. fish stocks, timber, coal) so that one person’s use depletes the units available to others (Ostrom et al 1994).

These collective action dilemmas have relevance (in theory) to contemporary studies of urban service provision. For example, in his study on urban CBOs in Metro Manila, Philippines, Shatkin (2007: 3) argued that, for community improvement and political transformation, CBOs must first overcome Olson's (1971) logic of collective action 'by persuading or coercing residents to commit time and energy to participation when it appears against their interests to do so'. Similarly, referring to CBOs in Dar es Salaam's informal settlements, Tanzania, Kyessi (2011: 67-68) notes how 'all efforts to organise collective action, whether by an external agent (e.g. NGO, entrepreneur or government), who wish to gain collective benefits, must address [this] common set of problems'. Individual constraints to participation in collective activities (i.e. due to lack of time and resources), as well as the barriers to sustained action (i.e. due to elite capture) are also well documented (Shatkin 2007; Cleaver 2007; De Wit and Berner 2009, see also section 2.2.3). Whilst relevant, a substantial body of literature and empirical evidence has amounted to challenge RAT in recent years (Chamberlin 1974; Ostrom 1990; Bromley and Feeny 1992; Gibson et al 2000; Crossley 2002; Dasgupta and Beard 2007). Four primary criticisms were levelled:

- Ethnocentrism: RAT largely derives from American and European scholars trying to understand collective behaviour and political process in western societies,
- Reductionism: the minimalism of RAT precludes the origin and distribution of preferences, identity, culture and emotionally driven 'irrationalities' from analysis,
- Intrinsic plausibility: RAT is based upon numerous economic assumptions about human behaviour, i.e. that people will only act when it is beneficial to them. This ignores less tangible elements, such as social networks, reciprocity and kinship ties,
- Narrow definitions: social structure is narrowly defined as (formal) political structure.

(Adapted from Crossley 2002)

In addition to the above, RAT did not necessarily translate well into practice. For example, reflecting upon collective action in Indonesia, Dasgupta and Beard (2007)

argued for a distinction between elite capture and elite control, as not all who had power were corrupt. Rather, elites within the community provided political and economic leverage for groups and were ‘willing and able to contribute time and know-how needed to facilitate community-level projects’ (*ibid*: 244). Furthermore, Shatkin (2007) found that collective action problems (in CBOs) were largely overcome by strong social ties and social sanctions against free riders. Uphoff (1986: 15) also argued that the process of ‘institutionalisation’ (i.e. persistence of norms and behaviours that satisfy needs and expectations) constrains free riding. Whilst RAT provides some useful insights into the internal coordination problems of groups, a broader understanding of collective action, is required. Elinor Ostrom’s work on structural variables and core relationships (SVR) is useful in this regard. Ostrom (1990; 2005; 2009; 2010) argued that multiple factors, in addition to group size and heterogeneity, affect the likelihood of initial and continued action (Box 2.1).

Box 2.1: Structural Variables Affecting Likelihood of Collective Action

Initial Mobilisation

- The number of participants/group size,
- Whether benefits are subtractive or fully shared (i.e. public goods vs CPRs),
- Participant heterogeneity (i.e. class, age, gender, ethnicity, religion),
- Face to face communication (i.e. as opposed to phoning over distance),
- Group purpose and shape of the production function.

Continued Action

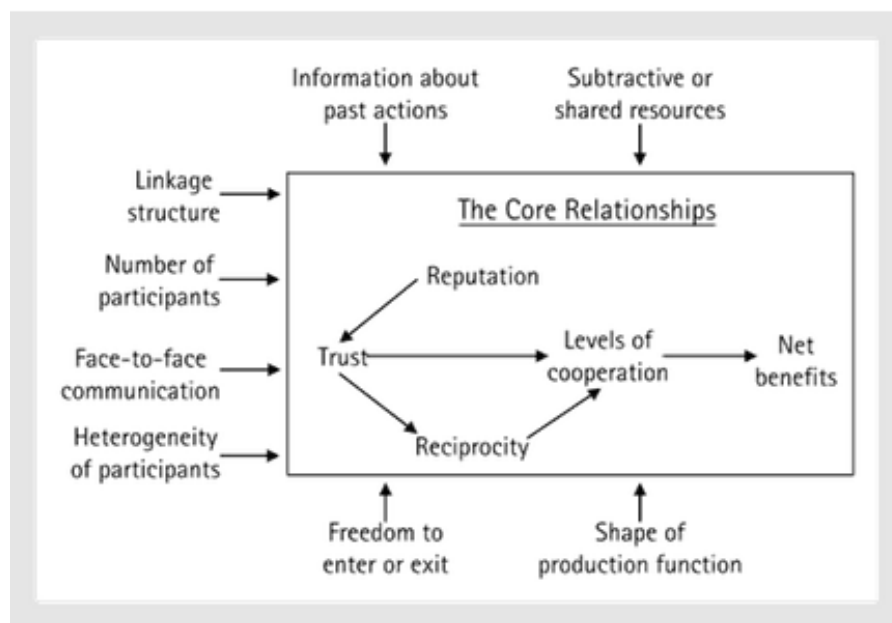
- History of collective action (i.e. information about past actions and level of success),
- Mediating role played by institutions (i.e. external actors and organisations),
- How participants perceive the political environment (and how they are perceived),
- Whether individuals can enter or exit voluntarily,
- How individuals are linked (i.e. social networks of reciprocity and trust).

(Adapted from Poteete and Ostrom 2004; Ostrom 2005; 2009; 2010)

In addition to structural variables, Ostrom (2005; 2009; 2010) recognised the importance of ‘core relationships’ – less tangible social norms and behaviours (e.g. trust, reciprocity, reputation) – in shaping individual propensity to engage in collective action (Figure 2.1). Drawing on the work of sociologists and social psychologists, she noted how ‘individuals may (or may not) be linked in a network when confronting various social dilemmas’ (Granovetter 1973; Cook and Hardin 2001 cited in Ostrom 2005: 18). This relates to Putnam’s (1994; 2000) earlier work that posited social capital as central to overcoming Olson’s collective action dilemmas. Like Ostrom, Putnam argued that when people have a history of engagement in civic and political activities, they develop

certain norms of reciprocity and networks of social relations that instil in them a sense of shared purpose and confidence in potential success of collective action (*ibid*). Putnam was critiqued, however, for his assumption that civil society is inherently benevolent, that social relations are progressive or inclusionary, and that social capital can only emerge from a deep history of associationalism (Portes and Landolt 1996; Abu-Lughod 1998; Storper 1998 cited in Shatkin 2007: 7-8). Social capital has also been shown to be a collective asset that can benefit groups as a whole, but often at the cost of others (Cleaver 2005; Harriss and de Renzio 1997; Putzel 1997 cited in Banks 2015: 22).

Figure 2.1: Core Relationships



(Ostrom 2009: 8)

Ostrom also recognised that individuals within collective groups are knowing and capable agents and, as such, can create their own agreements, institutions and systems of management, which shift over time (*ibid*). Indeed, individual agency in terms of human needs, wants, aspirations, expectations, subjective wellbeing and value formation is known to influence participation within ‘the collective’ (Clark 2011). In turn, ‘choice’ and the enabling of agency relates to complex individual identities, unequal interdependence of livelihoods, structure, voice, embodiment and emotionality (Cleaver 2007). One must therefore ask – why are some individuals better placed to shape public decision making than others? What are the costs and benefits of participation? Is non-participation also an active expression of agency, or symptom of structural constraint? By what authority is collective action legitimised, claims to

resources asserted and understood?’ (*ibid*: 225). These questions (and some potential answers) are elaborated in section 2.2.3.

Whilst recognising the theoretical value of SVR, two concerns are worthy of note. Firstly, Ostrom’s empirical work, though broad in scope, has largely focused on, and been adopted for, studies of American political systems, CPRs, property rights and rural poverty reduction¹⁰, with little focus on collective action around public goods in rapidly urbanising towns and cities in the Global South¹¹. This is problematic, as collective action is particularly challenging in complex socio-political systems due to the involvement of (and intricate relationships between) numerous actors and institutions (elaborated in section 2.3). This thesis provides some potential insights into the translation of SVR into the urban context, and additional factors that may affect participation (elaborated in chapter nine).

Secondly, although Ostrom acknowledges the importance of core relationships and individual agency, much of her work (especially on CPRs) remains grounded in rational choice theory, with the implicit assumption that actors in collective action processes are rational beings who make cost-benefit calculations (Morçöl 2014). Whilst Ostrom (2005; 2009) differs from conventional rational choice theorists in recognising ‘bounded rationality’ (i.e. that individuals try to find satisfactory solutions according to specific context, resources and objectives), her work remains constrained by methodological individualism, which places the preferences, interests and actions of individuals at the centre of analysis (*ibid*). This potentially neglects personal histories, identity and cultural affiliations that affect decision-making, and renders the interests, values and preferences of actors as ‘fixed’, rather than dynamic (Cleaver 2007; Morçöl 2014). Challenging these assumptions, other conceptualisations of collective action place greater emphasis on the social, political and economic networks between actors that affect not only the likelihood, but also the success or outcomes of collective action.

Broadly defined, networks are horizontal, informal organisations based on connections between actors with similar interests (Arias 2004). Social networks and kinship ties are recognised as central to ‘successful’ (and ‘unsuccessful’) collective action, with the importance of relational qualities (e.g. trust, norms, symbols, identities and emotions)

¹⁰ A global research project (est. 1996) entitled ‘Collective Action and Property Rights’ (CAPRi) drew extensively on Ostrom’s work on collective action and Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD). For example; Meinzen-Dick et al (2004); DiGregorio et al (2008); Davis (2009); Ratner et al (2013).

¹¹ Exceptions include; Tendler (1995); Ostrom (1996); Dasgupta and Beard (2007); Shatkin (2007); Kyessi (2011); Booth (2012); McGranahan (2013) and Scott (2015).

emphasised in the maintenance of networks and coordination of activities (Melcucci 1996; Della Porta and Diani 1999 cited in Nicholls 2008). Strength (i.e. strong/weak) and direction (i.e. vertical/horizontal) of social, economic and/or political networks can greatly influence the propensity for, and outcomes of, collective action. For Granovetter (1973: 1361), strong ties result from the 'combination of the amount of time, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocal services which characterise the tie'. As a result of strong ties and a sense of shared identity, people would be motivated to participate in high-stake collective action and contribute their valued goods (Shatkin 2007).

Whilst strong ties enhance collective capacities, weak ties increase uncertainty between networked actors and decrease willingness to contribute resources to collective enterprise. However, there can also be drawbacks to strong ties, such as closing off connections to other groups, restriction of individual freedoms and lower collective standards (Granovetter 1973; 1983; Portes 1998 cited in Nicholls 2008). For Hossain (2013), such relationships can form dense networks within a 'closed regulatory system', which can be difficult to enter, or exit. Whilst 'weak' ties can result in lower levels of emotional intensity and commitment to collective causes, extensive weak ties across the social system can also generate opportunities to access new resources and information (Nicholls 2008; 2009). Ultimately, optimal network structures combine both types of ties, with each contributing complementary sets of resources for collective action (*ibid*). Referring to Dhaka, Hossain (2013) argues that it is not only a case of 'strong' or 'weak' but rather, mobilising and maintaining the right kind of relationships that is central to security and wellbeing among the urban poor.

Based on this understanding, normative definitions of collective action can be broken down and re-interpreted from locally meaningful experiences. For example, in Davis's (2009: 1-2) study of collective action in rural Bangladesh, the researchers rejected rigid definitions 'in order to gain a realistic picture of the context and types of collective action that were most significant in affecting people's wellbeing'. Using life histories, Davis (2009) found that collective action was not restricted to actions rationally aimed at achieving group interests; rather, the motivation was often complex and messy, with instrumental, value-oriented, affective or traditional underpinnings (*ibid*). Collective action was also deeply ingrained in local power struggles, which were highly uneven depending on one's status, ethnicity, gender, age and so on, within a particular 'social context' (Devine 2007; Davis 2009). This supports Devine's (1999 cited in 2006: 91) observation that poverty in Bangladesh is not only about material resources and assets,

but much more about the type, quality and experience of relationships. He argues that people ‘make an important distinction between *amar kichu ney* (I have nothing) and *amar keu ney* (I have no-one)’ (*ibid*). As we explore in chapters four and five, these underlying networks and relationships have significant implications for collective action (via CBOs) among Dhaka’s *bustee* dwellers.

Like Ostrom (2005), Davis (2009) found that certain social norms, centred on reciprocity, were significant for collective mobilisation. However, these networks were not necessarily progressive. Indeed, in societies where patron-client relations dominate daily life, trust and reciprocity between non-state elites and elites has been shown to contribute to elite capture and corruption (Matin and Hulme 2003 cited in Kothari and Hulme 2004), though this is by no means clear-cut (Khan 2010). In this sense, ‘strong’ and ‘non-linear’ networks alone are not sufficient to overturn deeply embedded structural barriers, especially if there is risk of violent retribution. Ostrom (2005: 2), too, acknowledges this complexity:

We must be able to explain success as well as failure of efforts to achieve collective action. Further, we need to recognise that forms of collective action differ in regard to the distribution of benefits and harms to those in a group and those who are external to it.

Whilst RAT and SVR largely focus on the propensity of individuals to engage in collective activity (for personal gain), and sociological approaches have tended to focus on the behaviour of groups, and how motivation for action can be shaped at the group level (Menzein-Dick et al 2004), geographers in particular, have promoted more relational approaches to collective action, centred on fluid, multi-scalar and multi-actor networks or ‘assemblages’ that transcend geographical space (Routledge 2003; Routledge et al 2007; 2008; McFarlane 2011; 2012; Anderson et al 2012). This responds to calls for re-conceptualisation of agency and empowerment ‘beyond atomised individuals (as in structural-functionalist theories), and rather as more fluid, networked, and embedded in cultural practices and epistemic communities that fuse action, knowing and being through everyday realities’ (Ernstson 2013: 25). In this sense, complex networks of individuals, organisations, collectives and events are posited as central to sustained collective action, particularly in the form of social movements (Diani and McAdam 2003; Routledge et al 2007; Nicholls 2009; Diani 2011). For example, the symbolic practice of ‘exchanges’ across the Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) network demonstrates the strategic importance of face to face learning (McFarlane 2009). Similarly, in their study of ‘People’s Global Action Asia’, Routledge et al (2007), note how international conferences act as a strategic tool to

reinforce and reproduce transnational solidarities. Far from being predictable or determined, collective action is understood as a process, involving an array of ‘triggers’, actors and organisations in the multi-layered ‘messy realities’ of everyday life (*ibid*).

Whilst useful, these conceptualisations have greater relevance for understanding social movements, as opposed to group action (via CBOs). Indeed, if we assume that by their very nature CBOs are place-based, defined within a certain locality (Akin 1990 cited in Shatkin 2007), then relational approaches that reject territorial claims may not readily explain what actually exists ‘on the ground’. On the other hand, if CBOs and their leaders or members have extra-local networks, we must acknowledge that the reality ‘on the ground’ is often one constrained by dense social structures and ‘closed regulatory systems’, where the ‘destructive uncertainty’ of daily life exacerbates reliance on short-term, exploitative networks (Appadurai 2001; Wood 2003; Banks 2012; Hossain 2013). It is important to return to these debates in chapter nine, as empirical evidence from Dhaka reinforces, nuances and challenges existing collective action theory.

In summary, Ostrom’s work (2005; 2009; 2010) on SVR offers a rigorous theoretical base from which to understand why certain individuals engage in collective action. This is complemented by an understanding of networks (type, direction and strength), which enables us to observe how certain individuals are connected both within and outside collective groups, and why certain people benefit from collective action, over others (Nicholls 2008; Hossain 2013). Though useful, these insights do not necessarily help us understand why certain forms of collective action emerge in low-income urban settlements. As indicated in chapter one, inadequate service provision is one among an array of ‘drivers’ of collective action in this context. Collective action, in turn, is regarded as central to accessing affordable services and, when taken to scale, a broader politics of ‘redistribution, recognition and representation’ (Fraser 1997; 2005). Section 2.2 focuses on the instrumental value of collective action in greater depth.

2.2. Collective Action and Service Provision in Low-Income Settlements

Although collective action is by no means inherently ‘urban’, towns and cities are understood to be central arenas of collective struggle (Lefebvre 1974; Castells 1983; Harvey 1985). The contradictions between rapid urbanisation, the political economy of land dispossession, real estate, ‘slum speculation’ and rising private ownership have particular implications for access to basic services, housing and tenure security among the urban poor in the 21st century (Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2013). Within this context,

the general absence of ‘formal’ state provision in many low-income settlements has led to an array of alternative ‘service delivery configurations’, including; self-help, project-based (i.e. NGO/CBO-led), private vendors, local leaders, landlords, kinship and/or patron-client networks (Gough 2004; Olivier de Sardan 2011; Jaglin 2014; 2016; Thieme and Kovacs 2015). For Jaglin (2014: 434), focusing on the ‘failure’ of formal delivery systems alone neglects the diversity of service provision in towns and cities of the Global South, where ‘services are not delivered within the framework of a uniform and integrated system, but in different ways through a range of provisions’ (*ibid*). We must focus, therefore, on the ‘vitality and multiplicity of actual delivery systems which contribute to the functioning of cities – informal, formal, self-help, legal, illegal’ (*ibid*).

Collective action among the urban poor is just one, among an array of strategies to obtain legal services (and protect assets) in this context (McCarney and Stren 2003; Gough 2004; Mitlin 2006; Chen et al 2007; Jaglin 2014; Thieme and Kovacs 2015). According to Walton (1998), inadequate provision of public goods (like water and sanitation) is the main driver of collective action¹² in rapidly urbanising towns and cities, where neighbourhoods and communities are the common locus of mobilised action, and urban services are the currency of political exchange. Collective action is also regarded as the most effective means to improve public goods provision in low-income settlements (Botes and Van Resburg 2000; Carpenter et al 2004 cited in Scott 2015: 37).

Collective action is important for two reasons: 1) basic infrastructure improvements are subject to economies of scale, whereby demand among a critical mass of residents could justify large-scale infrastructure investment; and 2) once the public sector has provided infrastructure, access functions as close to a ‘pure’ public good at the neighbourhood scale (i.e. usage is non-excludable and non-rivalrous) (*ibid*). However, not all basic services have public good characteristics, at all scales. According to Scott (2015), water has the fewest public good characteristics (rendering it more vulnerable to collective action problems e.g. free riding and elite capture), whilst sanitation is closer to a ‘pure’ public good (*ibid*). Such differences have implications for the project-based mode of service delivery (noted above), whereby water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is often addressed collectively, even though each service has different politico-legal, institutional, financial and physical requirements. For example, construction of a

¹² Whilst ‘collective consumption’ constitutes the very core of urban politics, it is important to acknowledge overlap with other key drivers, such as capital accumulation (i.e. land dispossession) and identity-based politics (Walton 1998; Webster and Engberg-Pedersen 2002; Bebbington et al 2010).

sanitation chamber may require building permission and negotiation with the landowner for space, whilst legal water and sewage connections may be networked into the central pump operating system, requiring investment from municipal authorities. This also increases the ‘free rider’ risk (Harris et al 2012).

Whilst water and sanitation are identified as ‘non-excludable’ and ‘non-rivalrous’ public goods, this is not necessarily the case in many low-income settlements, where provision involves an array of actors and institutions (Jaglin 2014), entails unequal ‘webs of access’ (Cornea et al 2016), and is increasingly determined by one’s capacity to pay for it (Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014; McFarlane and Silver 2016; Mitlin 2016). Collective action around services can also take multiple forms, from episodic, community-led, NGO-led, claims-led, patron-led and/or constituency-based (Roy et al 2012). Notwithstanding this complexity, this thesis focuses on group action via CBOs, to allow for more in-depth, focused fieldwork.

2.2.1. CBOs and Service Provision

Whilst acknowledging different conceptualisations, from ‘local institutions’ (Uphoff 1986; 1990) to MBOPs (Chen et al 2007), CBOs are used in this thesis for three reasons. Firstly, CBOs are one of the most dominant forms of collective action around services in Dhaka’s *bustees*. The reasons for this are elaborated in chapters five and six. Secondly, as collective action is difficult to measure, CBOs offer a useful lens through which to study collective action in a specific context. Thirdly, unlike MBOPs, CBOs are not necessarily associated with ‘urban poverty’, as these organisations involve poor and non-poor leaders, members and agendas. This being said, existing literature on local institutions and MBOPs does have value for understanding CBOs (outlined below).

Broadly defined, CBOs are ‘arrangements and associations formed and located within the local space, or immediate residential surroundings of the actors [or residents]’ (Akin 1990 cited in Shatkin 2007: 4). These organisations rely upon voluntary collective action among leaders, members and the wider community to access goods and services that neither the market nor state can provide (e.g. water lines, electricity, security, savings) (Mitlin 2006). Whilst CBOs are important in tackling problems at the neighbourhood level, their resources and local base usually does not allow them to do more, so they often enter into partnerships with external actors and organisations to leverage funds, implement services and infrastructure (Lee 2000 cited in Baud 2000: 7).

CBOs are often posited as ‘natural’ partners to NGOs and as representatives of ‘the poor’ (Mitlin 2006; Chen et al 2007), yet take multiple forms. Drawing upon a range of examples from low-income settlements in Africa, Asia and Latin America¹³, Mitlin (2001) argues that the presence of CBOs is the norm, rather than the exception. In turn, ‘while such organisational efforts of slum dwellers, resident associations, women’s savings groups, urban development cooperatives, and mass-based rights organisations are important, their absence does not necessarily mean the lack of local organisation’ (Simone 2013: 16). Indeed, we cannot ignore more informal or ‘invisible’ collectives, such as mother’s groups, social control committees or the ‘rough collectivism’¹⁴ of everyday life (Alexander 2006; Rooy 2008; Boonyabancha et al 2012).

According to Shatkin (2007: 4), any study of CBOs should acknowledge their ‘instability, adaptability and vulnerability as a first step to abandoning unfounded assumptions and understanding them as they exist on the ground’. This is based on the recognition that CBOs vary significantly in size, degree and level of formality, leadership and membership composition, mandate and level of activity (*ibid*). They range from highly informal networks of friends and neighbours to highly organised, formal organisations with elected leaders (Chen et al 2007). Referring to MBOPs, Crowley et al (2007: 25) make a useful distinction between organisations that are internally or externally supported (or funded) and organised. At one end of the spectrum are self-started organisations that rely on internal support. On the other, are organisations formed and supported by external actors (e.g. NGOs, donors, patrons and philanthropists). Rather than static, Crowley et al (2007) recognise that MBOPs often fall somewhere in-between these categories, and shift along a continuum over time, often in response to historic opportunities. They also acknowledge that while some organisations sustain, others are co-opted and/or disappear (*ibid*).

Organisational type (i.e. internal/external) may also affect leadership and membership composition, CBO function, size and sustainability. For example, many NGO-led CBOs promote female leadership and participation¹⁵, yet CBOs formed by residents – such as

¹³ For example; Pornchokchai (1992); Desai (1995); Moser and McIlwaine (1997) cited in Mitlin (2001).

¹⁴ Support networks between the urban poor, their families and communities that operate on the principle of mutual self-help (Boonyabancha et al 2012: 444).

¹⁵ Since the 1980s, women have been increasingly incorporated into participatory WASH, income-generating, healthcare and education projects. In many cases, women were the principal target group, with success equated with their full and equal participation (Mayoux 1995). It became increasingly clear, however, that ‘many attempts at increasing women’s participation fail[ed] to live up to the expectations of both the implementing agencies, and the women involved’ (*ibid*: 235). See also section 2.2.3.

cooperatives and social control committees – are often male-led (Shatkin 2007; Banks 2012; Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014). It is also widely acknowledged that CBOs created by NGOs or donors often dissolve post-project due to lack of internal capacity, financial autonomy and incentives for continued participation (Uphoff 1986; Hulme and Turner 1990; Chen et al 2007; Kyessi 2011). However, CBOs formed by residents themselves may be at greater risk of elite capture, free-riding and corruption, resulting in their rapid demise and/or reformation, though this is by no means clear-cut (Olson 1965; Uphoff 1986; 1990; Hulme and Turner 1990; Ostrom et al 1994, Hossain 2013; Banks 2015). Numerous researchers have outlined criteria for ‘successful’ CBOs, ranging from strong leadership and effective resource mobilisation (Uphoff 1986; Crowley et al 2007; Kyessi 2011), to expanding the membership base (Chen et al 2007) and institutional growth (Uphoff 1990). The latter is regarded as particularly important for achieving sustainability and pro-poor outcomes (Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014). Sustainability or ‘survival’, in turn, is regarded as a key determinant of success (Crowley et al 2007). The value of these observations for understanding CBOs in Dhaka’s *bustees* is elaborated in chapter three.

CBOs have come under increasing scrutiny from academics and practitioners in recent years, posited as either inherently benevolent (e.g. Patel et al 2001; Chen et al 2007) or malignant (e.g. Desai 2008; De Wit and Berner 2009). In particular, romantic (mis)conceptions of CBOs as ‘inherently progressive’ or internally cohesive, simplifies the complex interactions, hierarchies and heterogeneity within communities¹⁶ and within the organisations themselves (Hulme and Turner 1990; Bebbington et al 2008; De Wit and Berner 2009; Hickey 2009; Roy et al 2012, elaborated in section 2.2.3). The instrumental value of CBOs is also disputed. Whilst for some, CBOs act as key ‘change-agents’ within a vibrant civil society; others regard them as ‘service delivery mechanisms’ within a donor-dominated neoliberal order (Hulme and Turner 1990; Das 2015). In order to understand these complexities, we must contextualise collective action (via CBOs) and service provision within broader shifts in urban development discourse, policy and practice in recent decades (Patel et al 2001; Mukhija 2003; Shatkin 2007).

¹⁶ ‘Community’ has different meanings (i.e. spatial/geographical, identity, labour etc), according to who defines, and for what purpose. The meaning deployed here is that of a ‘relatively self-contained socio-economic residential unit’ (Uphoff 1990), within which individuals and groups interact on a daily basis.

2.2.2. Generational Shifts: From State-Led to Citizen-Led

Table 2.2 outlines three generational shifts that have had particular implications for collective action (via CBOs) and service provision in low-income settlements of the Global South. These shifts are ultimately non-linear and compounded in reality, with contemporary approaches fluctuating between the ‘second’ and ‘third’ generations. In some contexts like Bangladesh, the ‘first’ and ‘second’ generations still dominate, with limited scope for (and evidence of), a more progressive ‘third’ generation. It also becomes clear that understandings and perceptions of ‘slums’ and ‘slum dwellers’ have changed, from ‘marginal masses’ (1950s-60s), ‘active participants’ (1960s-1980s) to ‘active agents’ (1990s-2000s) and most recently, ‘entrepreneurial and networked actors’ (2000s-present). The following outlines each generation, and the implications for collective action, in greater depth.

Table 2.2: Generational Shifts influencing Collective Action and Service Provision

STATE-LED ‘First Generation’ [1960s-1980s]	MARKET-LED ‘Second Generation’ [1980s-today]	CITIZEN-LED ‘Third Generation’ [1990s-today]
Sponsored by global institutions and donors e.g. WB and UN	Shift from government as provider to ‘enabler’ of private sector	Designed, managed and implemented by slum dwellers themselves and/or in co-production with partners
Challenges: expensive and ambitious; long delays; technical solutions neglect livelihoods and attachment to place	Challenges: Conflicting interests; exclusion of poorest; increased consumption costs; competition for housing, land and services	Challenges: scaling-up activities; co-option into neoliberal agendas and land conflict
E.g. Senegal Sites and Services Project; Zambia’s First Urban Project; Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, India	E.g. Dharavi Redevelopment Plan in Mumbai, India and 1998 Bhashantek Rehabilitation Project in Dhaka, Bangladesh	E.g. Toilet and housing upgrading in Pune, India; amendments to plans in Dharavi, Mumbai and Orangi Pilot Project in Karachi, Pakistan

(Adapted from Gaventa 2002; Gulyani and Bassett 2007; Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014)

State-Led

‘First-generation’ state-led¹⁷ approaches to slum upgrading and service provision have varied significantly over time, from benign neglect, forced eviction and demolition, resettlement or relocation, upgrading and the adoption of enabling strategies (Milbert 2006; Gulyani and Bassett 2007; UN-HABITAT 2008; D’Cruz et al 2009). Throughout

¹⁷ This thesis recognises that the state is not homogeneous, but varies according to ‘regime type’ (e.g. participatory democracy, co-production, bureaucratic and/or authoritarian) and entails significant internal heterogeneity and conflict (Benjamin and Raman 2001, 2006; Corbridge et al 2005; Mitlin 2006; Fuller and Harriss 2000 cited in Bawa 2011; Zimmer 2011, see also chapter four).

the 1950s and 1960s, slums were perceived as an inconvenience by urban planners and state agencies (Milbert 2006), and the contributions of the urban poor to the city's economy went unrecognised (Gulyani and Bassett 2007), with slums regarded as areas of 'dead capital' (D'Cruz et al 2009). The 'solution' was simply to clear them and relocate residents outside of the city boundaries, as seen in Karachi in 1958, when scores of refugees were 'dumped' into two satellite towns (Hasan et al 2013).

At this time, the assumption was that rapid urbanisation, due to large-scale migration of the rural poor, would result in mass mobilisation and unionisation of migrant workers, linking to 'old' accumulation by exploitation (Walton 1998). However, in the 1960s and 70s, urban scholars began to challenge notions of 'marginal masses' and emphasise the capacity of the poor to participate in community organisations and social movements, relating to labour and collective consumption (Ross 1975; Perlman 1976; 2010; Castells 1983; Walton 1998). The idea of 'self-help' and 'community-based solutions' to housing and services coincided with the realisation that the state could not (or would not) provide for rising urban populations (Turner and Fichter 1972; Shatkin 2007).

Throughout the 1970s and 80s, activists and donors, especially the World Bank (WB) and United Nations (UN), promoted 'sites and services' programmes in low-income settlements (Mayo and Gross 1987; Scott 2015). Although the urban poor were increasingly posited as 'active participants', the state was still the main agent of social and economic transformation (Castells 1983). Whilst in principle the state was (and is) responsible for setting the legal framework, defining policy goals, planning and implementing systems of service delivery (Batley and McLoughlin 2010; Avis 2016), in reality, there were (and are) numerous constraints to, and inadequacies of, state-led service provision. In particular, technical solutions often neglected attachment to place, social networks and livelihoods (Turner and Fincher 1972; Begum and Sen 2005; Graham and McFarlane 2015), and few government initiatives focused on land tenure, with a fundamental access/affordability/provision mismatch (Devereux and Cook 2000; Gough 2004). The urban government structure was also usually unable (financially), or unwilling (normatively) to address issues in poor urban communities, let alone develop in step with processes of urban change (Panday and Panday 2008; Satterthwaite 2009). This relates, in part, to anti-urbanisation discourse stimulated by Lipton's (1977) influential book, 'Why poor people stay poor: A study of urban bias in world development'. Arguably, such bias still prevails in Bangladesh, where national policies

and plans centre on preventing rural to urban migration, rather than improving the lives of the urban poor (Banks et al 2011, see also chapter four).

In the late 1970s, as ‘debt crisis engulfed many countries [and] globalisation took hold’, the WB and UN ‘sought new models to welfare delivery that fitted the agenda of fiscal austerity. This new orthodoxy argued for reduced government expenditure and the creation of partnerships with the private sector and civil society to maximise cost recovery’ (Shatkin 2007: 5-6). Increased attention was placed on community participation in social provisioning as a way of making government initiatives more effective (Stoker 2000; Putnam 1994 cited in Baud 2000; Cornwall and Gaventa 2000). The ‘enabling framework’ (as it became known) was based on the premise that a decentralised, democratic, and market-oriented state could provide economic efficiency, global competitiveness and promote avenues for popular influence on the state via NGOs and CBOs (World Bank 2000 cited in Shatkin 2007:9), representing a shift from the ‘first’ to ‘second’ generation in Table 2.2.

Market-Led

The 1980s heralded the so-called era of neoliberalism, characterised by ‘decentralisation fever’ (Tendler 1997), structural adjustment, democratisation of political processes, economic deregulation, trade liberalisation and privatisation of basic services. Based on the proposition that the role of the state was increasingly to ‘steer not row’ (Osborne and Gaebler 1992), alternative models to service provision emerged, including; Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), private entrepreneurs and ‘contracting out’ to CBOs (Devas 1999; 2004; McFarlane 2012; Hossain and Ahmed 2014). The latter was particularly important in fostering participation and mobilising community resources to offset costs (Gilbert 2003: 795). These shifts were again influenced by international donors, whose emphasis on privatisation and market-oriented growth centred on ‘prosperity for all’ (UN-HABITAT 2012; World Bank 2013a).

Decentralisation of state authority from central to local government throughout the 1990s sought greater inclusion of municipalities and informal community groups in city planning, signifying for some a ‘downward shift’ (Ward et al 2011). Whilst central government agencies provided legislative and policy guidance, responsibility for actual service delivery was (and is) increasingly placed on local government agencies and their (private, NGO or CBO) partners, through this varied according to context (McCarney

and Stren 2003). Direct involvement of communities in construction was also expected to increase a sense of ownership and responsibility for operation, maintenance and management of infrastructure (UNCHS 1994; Choguill 1999 cited in Kyessi 2011). As we explore in chapter six, this ‘second generation’ approach underpins current initiatives to deliver legal water supply to Dhaka’s *bustees*.

At this time, civil society emerged as a ‘catch all’ term for collective citizen action in which individuals and groups sought to claim their rights to land, resources and services from an ‘unresponsive’ or ‘absentee’ state (White 1999; Gaventa 2002; McCarney and Stren 2003; Miraftab 2009; De Wit and Berner 2009; Thieme and Kovacs 2015). Broadly defined, civil society or the ‘third sector’ refers to the sphere of ‘non-state’ and ‘non-market’ actors. It represents the space in which Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), like NGOs and CBOs, enhance ‘organic’ participatory development, facilitate access to locally available resources, challenge the ‘one-size-fits all’ development approach, link local development initiatives to global context, create a platform for local voices to be heard and facilitate acceptance of difference and respect for local knowledge (Gaventa 2003; Burkett and Bedi 2007 cited in Makuwira 2014: 7-8).

The notion of ‘governance’ also entered mainstream donor parlance in the 1990s, encompassing the study and practice of development, or the ‘prevailing patterns by which public power is exercised in a given social context’ (Jenkins 2008: 516). It was a normative tool in relation to the ‘good governance’ agenda promoted by the UN and WB, involving the ‘exercise of authority, control, management and power of government’ (World Bank 1992: 3). In practice, this was associated with the restructuring of state bureaucracies and priorities, reformation of legal systems, democratic decentralisation and creation of accountability enhancing civil societies (Shatkin 2007; Jenkins 2008). Thanks to Putnam (1994; 2000), grassroots civic participation in state and market-led service provision was posited as central to ‘good urban governance’, as it enhanced political accountability, equity, legitimacy, effectiveness and development outcomes (UNDP 1997; Harpham and Boateng 1997; Slack 2007 cited in Jones et al 2014: 6). This association had both positive and negative implications, with greater responsibility placed on CBOs to deliver and manage services (Mohan and Stokke 2000; Das 2015).

Community participation in service provision has been at the heart of intense debate over the last 40 years (Hulme and Turner 1990; Chambers 1997; Bevan 2000; Jaglin 2002; Lemanski 2008). It is widely acknowledged that participation as a radical ‘alternative’ to mainstream donor, state and NGO-led service provision has had mixed results (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Parfitt 2004). For many, the ‘co-optation’ of the participatory approach into neoliberal development institutions, such as the UN and WB, resulted in its de-politicisation, with the reshaping of participation around strict time frames, results-based evaluation and a donor-centric ownership of knowledge and resources (Edwards 1989; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Mohan 2008; Raman et al 2016). There is also ongoing confusion over the means/ends of participation, and concerns over the terms of participation (White 1996; Duraiappah et al 2005). For some, community participation is simply a cost-saving initiative for the state and private sector (Davis 2006), ‘a compromise between an ambition to provide universal access...and the principal of cost-recovery’ (Jaglin 2002: 231). For others however, participation has instrumental value for citizens, who can directly influence local governance ‘from below’ (Hickey and Mohan 2004; Mitlin 2004; Baiocchi et al 2011).

Citizen-Led

Whilst state-led conceptions (<1980s) largely viewed citizens as recipients or ‘users’ of services and market-led models (>1980s) viewed citizens as consumers or ‘choosers’ (Gaventa 2002), greater attention in the late 1990s and 2000s was placed on the role of collective groups in ‘making’ and ‘shaping’ their own understandings of urban social citizenship (*ibid*). This relates to shifting interpretations of citizenship from that of a ‘national identity’, to new forms emphasising the exercise of agency and re-casting of rights by citizens themselves (Gaventa and Barrett 2010; Cornwall et al 2011). During this time, ‘the collective’ became increasingly synonymous with political rights and democratisation, with literature focusing on struggles for/over ‘newly articulated rights’. Referring to Bangladesh, Mahmud (2002: 1) notes how:

Collective action is the process of conscious and purposeful mobilisation of people around a common or shared concern [over] the failure of provision and protection of existing rights...Collective action can also mobilise people around newly articulated rights, such as the right to land. Collective action is also the process of acquiring social and political space and the operational mechanism for making voices heard in influencing the action of others.

In particular, literature documenting grassroots urban social movements and federations in Africa, Asia and Latin America sought to promote demand-driven development, and challenge North to South knowledge creation and dissemination (Appadurai 2001; Roy 2005; McFarlane 2009; Robinson 2011; Tawa Lama-Rewal and Zérah 2011; Parnell and Robinson 2012; Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2004; 2013; 2014). These literatures recognise that slum dwellers have always been active agents in their own development; it has just taken researchers, practitioners and policy makers too long to take note (McGee 2002). Within these debates, ‘social agency is conceived in terms of a skilled, capable entrepreneurial poor whose knowledge and abilities have long been ignored by states and international donor agencies’ (McFarlane 2008: 346). In this sense, it is no longer an issue of people needing to participate in government programmes, rather, government learning to participate and support people’s programmes (Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014: 260). Citizen-led initiatives that refocus on local organisations are increasingly posited as innovative and successful ‘alternatives’ to state and market-led technical-fixes (*ibid*), heralding a ‘third generation’ led by (and for) the urban poor. Box 2.2 outlines the case of SDI, one example of citizen-led collective action at scale.

Box 2.2: Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI)

SDI is a transnational network of grassroots slum dweller organisations, that have joined together to form urban poor federations. SDI affiliates operate all over the world but extensively in India and South Africa, mobilising slum dwellers and providing technical, legal and financial support. In 1996, there were federations in 14 countries. In 2017, SDI had affiliates in 33 countries across the world. SDI affiliates deploy a range of ‘rituals’, including; savings, exchanges, profiling, mapping and enumerations, housing and sanitation exhibitions, precedent-setting, pilot projects and community-led upgrading. These strategies are based upon shared ideologies of risk, trust and a broader philosophy placing knowledge and capacity of the urban poor at the core of all work, with NGOs in a supporting role. Women play a leading role in SDI. In all federations, ‘there is a deliberate attempt to build a culture that, in terms of gender relations, favours women through dialogue, action, documentation, leadership interventions and ongoing practice’ (Patel and Mitlin 2011: 5). SDI also attempts to remain politically neutral, negotiating with whoever is in power.

(Adapted from Patel et al 2001; Mitlin 2006; Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014; SDI 2017)

The basic idea is unchanged: low-income communities can improve their living environment through collective action (Baud 2000). The urban poor are seen as able and willing to solve local problems through ‘community governance’ or governance ‘from below’ (Mitlin 2001; Bowles and Gintis 2002; Booth 2012). Referring to SDI, Appadurai (2001: 23) notes how:

Individually and collectively, they seek to demonstrate to governments (local, regional, national) and international agencies that urban poor groups are more capable than they in poverty reduction, and also provide these agencies with strong community-based partners through which to do so. They are, or can be, instruments of deep democracy, rooted in local context and able to mediate globalising forces in ways that benefit the poor.

Citizen-led initiatives are regarded as central to equitable, affordable and sustainable service provision, and a broader ‘politics of visibility’ (Appadurai 2001; Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014). However, these initiatives also face numerous constraints. Referring to sanitation, McGranahan and Mitlin (2016) argue that service improvement lies in meeting four key institutional challenges; collective action, co-production, affordability and tenure. Whilst collective action is required among the wider community to construct sanitation at scale, orchestrating said action is difficult, especially when residents have individual pit latrines. In turn, tenure insecurity and eviction undermines efforts, and de-incentivises local residents to improve sanitation facilities (*ibid*: 307-8). This is particularly the case for tenants in Dhaka’s *bustees* (elaborated in chapters five, six and seven). In fact, lack of secure land tenure is deemed the most influential barrier to sustainability of water and sanitation infrastructure in Dhaka (Rahman et al 2014).

McGranahan and Mitlin (2016) provide examples of citizen-led initiatives in India and Pakistan that have (to a large extent) overcome these institutional barriers. They argue that the SDI Alliance in India makes a clear distinction between ‘public’ and ‘community’ toilets. The former ‘built by anyone and owned by no-one’, with the latter ‘held in common by a well-defined group of people; a high-quality community toilet reflects a high-quality community’ (*ibid*: 312). In Pakistan, the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) (Box 2.3) used a model of ‘component sharing’ to provide low-cost sanitation in *katchi abadis* (informal settlements). Sanitation provision not only improved health outcomes, but was strategic in fostering long-term, constructive partnerships between local residents and government authorities, with the latter contributing time, staff and resources (*ibid*).

Box 2.3: Orangi Pilot Project (OPP)

OPP began in 1980 as action research in Orangi, then Karachi's largest *katchi abadi*. After sanitation was identified as a key issue among residents, a low-cost sanitation programme was initiated to enable residents to build a sanitary latrine in each house, an underground sewer in each lane and a collector sewer in each neighbourhood (internal development), the last feeding into a trunk sewer (later) provided by the state (external development). Lane organisations (with an appointed manager) oversaw infrastructure and service installation in each lane, with technical support from OPP staff (e.g. surveying, mapping, costing, positioning of drain, tools etc). Neighbourhood and citywide organisations also formed. By 2012, OPP's sanitation approach had been adopted by over 90% of Orangi's informal housing, approximately 107,000 households. The approach has received widespread policy uptake, and spread to other informal settlements in Karachi, across Pakistan, and globally.

(Adapted from Hasan 2008; McGranahan 2013; McGranahan and Mitlin 2016)

It is increasingly acknowledged that community groups cannot work alone. Indeed, whilst 'provision' implies a one-off event, such as building a house or toilet block, services and infrastructure require ongoing maintenance, processes of negotiation and security of tenure (Hossain 2013). Low-income residents cannot be expected to dispose of faecal sludge or manage large-scale, costly repairs (Kyessi 2011; McGranahan and Mitlin 2016). As demonstrated by OPP, co-production is a means to address practical challenges at scale, but also (strategically) create new spaces of engagement, change the terms of recognition and realisation of material goals for low-income residents (Mitlin 2006; Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014). Co-production re-emerged¹⁸ as a 'buzzword' (Pestoff et al 2012) in the 2000s, referring to the joint and direct involvement of public agents and private actors in planning, financing and implementing state services. It challenges state and society-centric interpretations of production from 'regular' providers of public goods and services, and emphasises the active role of citizens in dynamic collaborations (Ostrom 1990; Tandler 1995; Joshi and Moore 2004).

Co-production is also a key strategy within SDI, where members engage in negotiations and dialogue with private land owners, government officials, NGOs and technical experts. For some, this presents the danger of projects being 'co-opted' by government actors and neoliberal donor agencies, which can act to 'de-radicalise' and 'de-politicise' activities (McFarlane 2012). Co-production can also fundamentally mask the causes of urban poverty and support the assumption that these initiatives operate within existing political structures to affect change, as opposed to 'transform' power relations (Mukhija 2001; McFarlane 2004; Benjamin 2008; Pieterse 2008; Roy 2009; Raman et al 2016). In

¹⁸ Coined by Ostrom in the 1970s to explain crime rates in Chicago, US and later used by Ostrom (1990) and Tandler (1995) to describe partnerships between the urban poor and municipality in Brazil.

this sense, ‘alternative’ is a complex, value-laden term, as these groups and their partners often work within political space constructed by (and for) the state.

Whilst experience varies according to context¹⁹, it is important to acknowledge the influence of the state, private actors and international donors within ‘citizen’ or ‘community-led’ initiatives. The extent to which these responses are inclusive of the extreme poor, can be up-scaled, resolve land conflicts and have transformative potential is also disputed (Mukhija 2001; McFarlane 2004; Pieterse 2008; Benjamin 2008; Tawa Lama-Rewal and Zerah 2011). This relates to the community participation debate (noted above), and to a central question within civil society discourse: are grassroots organisations functional and/or transformatory? (Chen et al 2007). One could also ask, what (and who) enables and/or constrains certain forms of organisation, over others? These critical questions are elaborated below, and in section 2.3.

The three generational shifts outlined above demonstrate that the shifting role of collective action (via CBOs) within service provision closely relates to the development of neoliberal capitalism and the liberal democratic state (Hyden 1998 cited in Mitlin 2001: 152). Although civil society is considered the institutional and ideological ‘home’ of collective action among marginal groups (Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014), formal practices of civil society are deeply intertwined with ‘the political’ and increasingly, ‘the informal’ and ‘the illegal’ (Corbridge et al 2005; Hasan et al 2013). Civil society and collective action cannot, therefore, be viewed in isolation from the state and private sector, or from politics itself (Somers 1995; White 1999; Pacione 2005; Bebbington et al 2008; Eyben et al 2008; Rooy 2008; Hickey 2009; Makuwira 2014). As we explore in chapter four, narrow interpretations of civil society are particularly unhelpful in Dhaka, where services, land and housing is deeply politicised. Lewis's (2011) discussion of ‘uncivil’ society – the historical formation and maintenance of (sometimes violent) patronage, brokerage and clientelist networks – is of greater relevance. Section 2.2.3 focuses on the limits to collective action in greater depth. This is based on the recognition that, whilst collective action is ‘instrumental’ to obtaining services, it is by no means inherently progressive, inclusive or possible in all contexts.

¹⁹ Some proponents of OPP actively discourage large donor funds, arguing it can: a) undermine local (NGO and CBO) capacity and enhance dependency; b) that donors have their own agenda and use foreign consultants to monitor (who do not know the context) and; c) that local partners and communities can design cheaper, more responsive and higher quality sanitation systems (Hasan 2008).

2.2.3. Limits to Collective Action

According to Cleaver (1999: 604), many researchers and practitioners ‘excel in perpetuating the myth that communities are capable of anything, that all is required is sufficient mobilisation and the latent and unlimited capacities of the community will be unleashed’. Similarly, Pande (2005:8) argues that we must recognise ‘people living in urban slums do not organise because an “outsider” wants them to, or thinks they are able to play a positive role in their own development through collective action’. Ultimately, one must appreciate that people do not simply ‘act collectively’ and – although collective struggle implies a sense of community – ‘community’ itself involves internal processes of inclusion and exclusion (Uphoff 1986; Hulme and Turner 1990; Foweraker 1995; Thorpe et al 2005; Mitlin 2006; Hickey 2006; Cleaver 2007; De Wit and Berner 2009; Rahman et al 2014).

In particular, there is a potential reverse causation between income and collective action, with better-off households more likely to act collectively, having more time and resources to contribute (Rahman 2001; Ghertner 2008; Mwangi and Markelova 2009). Mobilisation amongst the poorest, on the other hand, is often constrained by competition for work, limited resources, daily insecurity and the individualisation of needs (Rashid 2000; Ahmed et al 2012). This relates to Wood’s (2003: 455) notion of a ‘Faustian Bargain’, whereby ‘strategic preparation for the future...is continuously postponed for survival and security in the present’, and to Appadurai’s (2004) argument that the daily prejudice the urban poor face limits their capacity to challenge political structures. Unlike Wood (2003), however, Appadurai (2004) believes that the urban poor can challenge these structures via collective action at scale.

The relationship between gender²⁰ and collective action is also contested. For example, the gendered division of labour may mean that men are more likely to participate in formal public organisations (e.g. cooperatives) and political groups (Moser 1993; Kabeer 1994; Pandolfelli et al 2007). Women, on the other hand, carry a ‘triple burden’ of responsibility for reproductive (i.e. childbearing and rearing), productive (i.e. livelihoods) and community-managing activities (i.e. investing time and energy in

²⁰ ‘Gender’ is understood to be a socially constructed (rather than biologically determined) category (Moser 1993; Mayoux 1995). ‘Gender relations’ can be defined as unequal ‘relations of power between women and men which are revealed in a wide range of practices, ideas and representations, including the division of labour, roles and resources between women and men and the ascribing to them of different abilities, attitudes, desires, personality traits, behavioural patterns’ (Agarwal 1994: 51).

CBOs, water collection etc) (Moser 1993). For this reason, there may be higher opportunity costs for women, who have less time and resources to participate (*ibid*). These observations are supported by contemporary studies of collective action. For example, in her study of neighbourhood associations in Bengaluru, India, Haritas (2013) found that young working women were less likely to participate due to time constraints brought about by reproductive and productive responsibilities (*ibid*). In Shatkin's (2007) study of CBOs in Metro Manila, Philippines, he found that many women did participate, but that they were often relegated to the position of secretary, treasurer or general member, with men taking up the role of president, as they were perceived to be more 'politically astute' by residents (*ibid*). However, CBOs that received leadership and skill training from NGOs were more likely to have female presidents, compared to CBOs that received no training, or were formed by residents themselves. Shatkin (2007) notes how many NGO workers perceived women to be more interested in community affairs due to their presence within the immediate area, and less inclined to seek financial or political gain from their leadership position (unlike local male leaders) (*ibid*).

These are highly relevant observations for this thesis, yet require critical reflection. For example, it is important to acknowledge that strict hierarchies exist between women, based on class, caste, ethnicity, occupancy type (e.g. tenant or owner) and political affiliation (Cleaver 2007; Shatkin 2007; Haritas 2013). The assumption that women are somehow 'inherently benevolent' or have 'natural' solidarity is also problematic. In Dhaka, for example, women can also act as powerful *mastaans* ('musclewomen'), controlling housing, businesses and services in the settlement. The unequal gender relations between men and women in Bangladesh are also more complex than implied above. These complexities are further elaborated in chapters seven, eight and nine.

The reality for many residents of low-income settlements is that they do not have the time, interest or resources to act collectively to address their needs, and/or are blocked from doing so by powerful elites within existing and newly formed institutions (Rigon 2014). Referring to the Bangalore Urban Poverty Alleviation Program (BUPP), India, De Wit and Berner (2009) reveal how power inequalities within the community resulted in the uneven distribution of resources, with powerful moneylenders obstructing the formation of CBO savings groups. They note how male leaders 'blocked progress, controlled or captured benefits aimed at the poor, and misused them for private (political) interests' (*ibid*: 927). Similarly, the formation of Community Development Committees (CDCs) during the Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Program

(UPPRP) in Bangladesh presented opportunities for dialogue and participation at the municipal level, but also promoted and maintained exploitative power structures within the slum (Banks 2012). These observations justify the need for greater scrutiny over the role of CBOs or rather, ‘leader-centred networks’ that may in fact represent the interests of an elite few (De Wit and Berner 2009). As noted by Banks (2012: 60-61):

While there have been important steps forward in Bangladesh in community mobilisation and community-led service provision, attention must be paid to community-based organisations to ensure that grassroots mobilisation becomes a vehicle for breaking, rather than reinforcing, existing social order and inequalities.

The extent to which collective action (via CBOs) can ‘break’ or undermine existing power inequalities is disputed. As collective action is difficult to coordinate, sustain and is very time-consuming, patronage, brokerage and clientelism often ‘offers a less costly alternative to redress grievances that suits the purpose of the state and urban poor’ (Walton 1998). Broadly defined, a patron-client relation is an uneven reciprocity of exchange based on ‘economic structures of exploitation, political structures of domination and ideological structures of consensus and control’ (Lewis 2011: 22). For Hilgers (2011: 568 cited in Mitlin 2014: 6), clientelism ‘involves longevity, diffuseness, face to face contact, and inequality. That is, it is a lasting personal relationship between individuals of unequal socio-political status’. In some cases, there may be multiple patrons and brokers (i.e. middlemen/women), with the distribution of power, resources and opportunities confined to a relatively small elite circle (Banks 2012; Hossain 2013).

According to Devine (2006: 94), ‘clientelism works against collective enterprise because it reproduces vertical solidarities, which are internally organised along hierarchical lines’. Horizontal networks among slum dwellers (central to collective action), are thus constrained by vertical patron-client relations (Mahmud 2002; De Wit and Berner 2009; Mitlin 2014). This has particular salience in Dhaka’s *bustees*, where patronage and clientelism intersect across all forms of society (Mahmud 2002; Wood 2003; Devine 2006; Lewis 2011; Banks 2012). Such hierarchies are particularly well documented in relation to the role of *mastaans* in what some term ‘mastaanocracy’ (Hulme and Sen 2004; Devine 2006; Hossain 2012, see also chapter four).

Although not necessarily ‘progressive’, such relationships form part of the daily reality and only source of financial and/or material support for many low-income residents (Auyero 1999; Devine 2006; Khan 2010; Mosse 2010; Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2014; Mitlin 2014). Though often exploitative, this is not always the case, as patronage can

enhance individual autonomy via access to livelihoods, resources and so on (Devine 2006). Rather than opposite and conflicting political phenomena, patronage politics and collective action can also establish recursive relationships (Auyero et al 2009), as demonstrated by patron-led collective action (i.e. political rallies, voting) (Roy et al 2012), and ‘collective clientelism’ (i.e. negotiation, bargaining and alignment between a group and politician/s) (Bénit-Gbaffou 2011). This highlights some of the ‘complex ways in which the politics of clientelism and citizenship are intertwined’ (Hickey and Du Toit 2007: 14 cited in Mosse 2010: 1167).

Rather than static, these networks are also ‘subject to constant processes of challenge and re-negotiation, particularly by civil society actors’ (Gay 1998 cited in Lewis 2017: 3). As noted by Mosse (2010: 1164), patron-client politics is often ‘the space into which social movements or NGOs move trying to reconnect people to formal systems by mobilising popular demand for services, accountability or justice’. Some grassroots organisations and federations (like SDI) also seek to work within these relations to avoid conflict, generate consensus and legitimacy (Mitlin 2014). Indeed, ‘if you live in the river, it is best to stay friends with the crocodile’ (Van der Linden 1997: 81 cited in Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014: 62). A ‘politics of patience’ is of critical importance in this context, as it takes years to build positive relations with powerful patrons and brokers within and beyond the settlement (Appadurai 2001). Given this complexity, one must again ask: ‘do GROs and NGOs reduce poverty, or is their role to reinforce dependency, powerlessness and exclusion?’ (Mitlin 2001: 151).

This distinction is critically important, especially as ‘the issue of how local and community organisations relate to broader power structures has remained neglected. It is unclear whether proponents’...see such organisations as an efficient service delivery mechanism, or as a step on the road to redistributing power at local and national levels’ (Hulme and Turner 1990: 197). In this sense, collective action (via CBOs) can be regarded in two ways: practical (i.e. meeting the immediate needs of CBO leaders, members and wider community) and strategic (i.e. meeting and protecting the interests/prioritised concerns of CBO leaders, members and wider community). Rather than opposite ends of a spectrum, CBOs could be practical and/or strategic at different times, and within different contexts. For example, meeting immediate needs (e.g. water and sanitation) may not initially address the strategic interests of residents, but could lead – over time – to enhanced tenure security, linkage with government agencies and solidarity to address and protect interests (as seen with OPP, Box 2.3). The distinction,

interconnections and tensions between intra-group dynamics and the instrumental value of groups is central to understanding the limits to practical and strategic action. For example, CBO leaders could use organisations for their own strategic agenda (i.e. to acquire land and housing). These strategic agendas may, in turn, be fundamentally shaped (and constrained) by external political patrons. The extent to which practical and/or strategic collective action (via CBOs) can bring about broader transformative change therefore requires deeper investigation.

Transformation is a highly contested concept with multiple interpretations (i.e. as process/ends, incremental/rapid, working within/challenging hierarchies) (Hickey and Mohan 2004; Moser 2016ab). The definition deployed here is that of an inherently political process that alters underlying power dynamics and relationships that perpetuate inequality (Evans 2002; Mitlin 2004; Hickey and Mohan 2004; Moser 2016ab). Collective action at scale is regarded as central to this process (*ibid*). While there are different pathways to ‘transformation’, examples could include; up-scaling CBOs from the settlement into citywide and national federations (with louder political voice and bargaining power), implementation of pro-urban poor policies and programmes, and/or the formation of sustained urban social movements (to put pressure on politicians and government agencies). In this sense, collective action forms part of a broader politics of ‘redistribution, recognition and representation’ (Fraser 1997; 2005), whereby the urban poor demand (and gain) political voice, access to land, housing and services, and are recognised as entitled urban citizens in discourse, policy and practice. Whilst important, transformative collective action may be constrained within certain governance contexts. Section 2.3 focuses on the relationship between collective action and urban governance in greater depth. It is suggested that the broader urban governance context greatly affects the type of collective action emerging in low-income urban settlements.

2.3. Urban Governance and Collective Action

Whilst ‘government’ is more narrowly defined as ‘the formal and institutional processes which operate at the level of the nation state to maintain public order’ (Stoker 1998: 17), ‘governance’ encompasses the whole range of relationships between civil society and the state, rulers and ruled, government and the governed (Mabogunje 1990; McCarney et al 1995; McCarney and Stren 2003). Governance takes multiple forms (i.e. community, every day, participatory, NGO, formal and/or informal), and operates at

different scales (i.e. from individual to global) (Devas 1999; 2004; Shatkin 2007; Blundo and Le Meur 2008; Zimmer 2011; Lemanski 2017).

Whilst for some, governance ‘has too many meanings to be useful’ (Rhodes 1997: 52-3) and carries a heavy ‘ideological load’²¹ (Blundo and Le Meur 2008), urban governance is important for collective action and service provision both in a normative and descriptive sense. Firstly, in the normative sense, it is increasingly recognised that ‘good’ or ‘good enough’ governance (Grindle 2004; 2007) is central to affordable, inclusive and effective service provision in urban areas (Harpham and Boateng 1997; Devas 1999; Bakker 2008; Hardoy et al 2005; Boex et al 2014 cited in Jones et al 2014: 5 and 11). In turn, ‘weak’ urban governance and policy incoherence leads to uncoordinated and ‘messy’ provision, which fails to meet local needs and global goals, such as the MDGs (Bawa 2011; Wild et al 2012; Jones et al 2014; Avis 2016; Satterthwaite 2016). As noted in section 2.2.2, community participation (via CBOs) is regarded as central to enhancing ‘good urban governance’ in this context.

Whilst this conceptualisation of governance helps us contextualise collective action (via CBOs) within shifting state, market and civil society relations, this understanding is inadequate, for two key reasons. Firstly, as indicated in section 2.2, a state-centric, managerial lens that regards inadequate service provision as government ‘failure’ does not necessarily reflect the reality in many low-income settlements (Zimmer 2011; Jaglin 2014). As noted by Zimmer and Sakdapolrak (2012: 334), ‘in the context of governance debates, struggles of citizens to obtain better public services have been integrated into a discourse on “good governance”, an indicator of the attempt – mostly by international donors – to influence states to rethink their understanding of how to govern, and subsequently, their practices of governing’. They also argue that, whilst good governance has the potential for citizens to hold government agencies to account, there is limited evidence of this in practice (*ibid*).

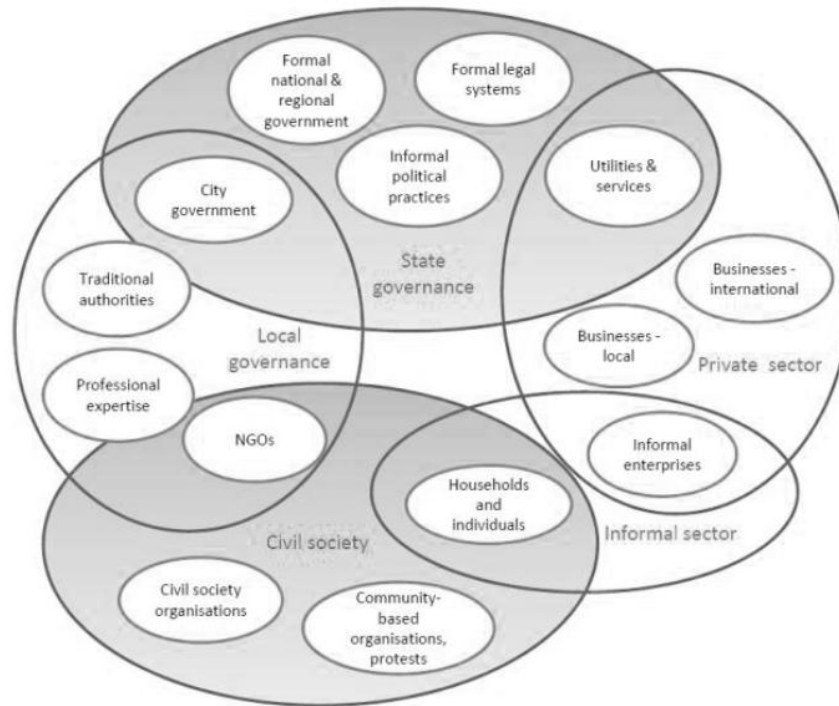
Secondly, the ‘good governance’ debate is ahistorical and apolitical (Grindle 2017). In other words, its proponents promote a universalising discourse that neglects specific country contexts (*ibid*). This relates to Blundo and Le Meur’s (2008: 24) observation

²¹ Blundo and Le Meur (2008) argue that the concept of governance is nothing new in development practice (normatively) or the social sciences (descriptively or analytically). They identify four shifting uses of the term since the 1920s, including; corporate governance, urban governance, good governance and global governance.

that ‘donor-oriented good governance policies attempt to impose an institutional toolbox (decentralisation, participation and administrative efficiency), which is supposed to be merely technical and politically neutral’, resulting in its de-politicisation. This is problematic, given that collective action and service provision are inherently political and contested processes (*ibid*).

Arguably, it is of greater value to focus on the second (descriptive) conceptualisation of urban governance – the repeated interaction (e.g. conflict, negotiation, alliance, compromise, avoidance) between different actors, at multiple scales (Blundo and Le Meur 2008). In this sense, urban governance can be understood as self-organising, inter-organising networks of diverse state and non-state, formal and informal actors (e.g. civic associations, illegal operators, community groups and social movements) (Mabogunje 1990; Rhodes 1997; Devas 2004; Lindell 2008). This conceptualisation allows for deeper investigation of the opportunities for, and constraints to, collective action in an increasingly diverse and fragmented governance context. This is crucial, given that CBOs are just one, among an array of actors and institutions within urban governance, including; traditional authorities, utility companies, NGOs, central and municipal government (Figure 2.2). Hyden et al (2004) argue that interactions do not happen between all actors, at all scales. In reality, separate spheres of governance exist in which different groups interact, including; civil society, local and state governance, the private and informal sector (Brown 2015).

Figure 2.2: Actors and Institutions of Urban Governance



(Brown 2015: 5)

Whilst useful, the descriptive conceptualisation also requires critical re-working, for two key reasons. Firstly, as indicated in section 2.2, civil society and collective action cannot be viewed in isolation from the state and private sector. Rather than separate or clearly defined spheres (as indicated above), multiple actors interact directly and/or indirectly across geographical space, with implications for collective action. For example, ‘informal political practices’ (i.e. patronage) may affect the type of CBOs or protests emerging at the settlement level. In turn, national government (discourse and policy) may legitimate the practices of certain actors, over others (e.g. NGOs and donors or formal CSOs over traditional authorities and informal CBOs). The above conceptualisation also neglects other major players in urban governance, such as international donors and real estate companies (Banks and Hulme 2014). This is problematic as these actors may also affect the types of collective action emerging in cities of the Global South, and Dhaka in particular (elaborated in chapters four and six).

Secondly, this conceptualisation of urban governance fails to take into account unequal power relations between actors (Zimmer 2011). In view of this, Zimmer and Sakdapolrak (2012) propose that Bourdieu’s (1986; 1998) notion of ‘fields’ can be used to re-introduce power into the governance debate. This analytical conceptualisation

places greater emphasis on the unequal circulation of power, and relationships between governance actors, to understand service provision in low-income settlements. It is important to note, however, that Bourdieu did not directly engage with the notion of ‘governance’ in his work, though he indirectly rejected the neoliberal ‘good governance’ agenda (i.e. rolling back of state) (Swartz 2003).

Whilst acknowledging this, Bourdieu’s (1986; 1998) notion of ‘fields’ is useful to understand how power consolidates within patterns of vertical authority (i.e. patron-clientelism) in fragmented governance contexts. According to Zimmer and Sakdapolrak (2012: 328), governance can be conceived as a field, whereby ‘processes and interactions represent an arena of struggle and competition for control over resources [that are] valued by actors in the field’. In this sense, ‘the field of governance is a structured system of actors occupying differing positions of power (e.g. bureaucracy, citizens), which are formed by various species of capital (e.g. law, rights, money, networks)’ (*ibid*). Bourdieu (1986; 1998) argues that power is a capital that certain actors are endowed with, enabling them to dominate others within a field – the more resources or ‘capitals’ actors have, the more powerful they are (*ibid*). As power is unevenly distributed, one characteristic of the field of governance is its asymmetric power relations (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2006: 127 cited in Zimmer and Sakdapolrak 2012: 328).

Powerful actors (like state representatives) who are endowed with the largest volume of capital are thus in the position to set the rules that determine the functioning of the field (*ibid*), and best able to pursue their interests (Blundo and Le Meur 2008: 24). Because of this, ‘various forms of brokerage and mediation contribute to the shaping of everyday governance, by bridging (and controlling) normative and social gaps between actors’ (*ibid*: 29). This, in turn, varies according to the particular political-economic context (Cornea et al 2016). Using the notion of field therefore allows for analysis of power relations, logics and interests of various actors involved in governance (Swartz 2003: 103). It is also acknowledged that the power certain actors (e.g. patrons and policy makers) have over others may actively organise the strategic interests of low-income residents out of politics and policy discourse (Bourdieu 1991; Mosse 2010).

In summary, a combination of the descriptive and analytical conceptualisation of urban governance enables us to see how the unequal interaction between actors enables and/or

constrains certain forms of collective action in low-income settlements. Chapters four and six outline the urban governance context in Dhaka in greater depth, and chapter nine elaborates on the implications of these governance configurations for transformative collective action.

2.4. Concluding Remarks

This literature review was divided into three sections. Section 2.1 outlined the potential value and limitations of three theoretical approaches to collective action identified in existing literature (RAT, SVR and RAN). Whilst RAT offers a useful starting point to understand internal coordination problems or collective action dilemmas (such as elite capture and free riding), focusing on the rational actions of individuals alone neglects an array of other variables and relationships that mediate collective action. Ostrom's work (2005; 2009; 2010) on SVRs, which acknowledges 'core relationships' (e.g. trust and reciprocity) and individual agency was argued to be of greater value to understand why certain individuals engage in collective action over time. However, as with RAT, SVR remains grounded in rational choice theory, with empirical application largely confined to rural contexts, often in the Global North. SVR was therefore complemented by an understanding of networks (type, direction and strength), which enables us to observe how individuals are connected both within and outside collective groups, and why certain people benefit from collective action, over others (Nicholls 2008; Hossain 2013). This thesis also seeks to nuance RAT, SVR and RAN, by applying them to the urban context.

Though useful, focusing on intra-group dynamics alone is insufficient to understand why people act collectively in low-income urban settlements. Inadequate service provision was identified as a key driver of collective action in this context. Section 2.2 therefore focused on the instrumental value of collective action, via CBOs, in greater depth. After a brief introduction to CBOs, collective action was contextualised in three key generational shifts in urban development in the Global South; state-led, market-led and citizen-led. Two key points emerged: 1) that collective action cannot be regarded in separation from broader political and economic processes within 'the state' or 'market'; and 2) collective action is by no means inherently progressive, inclusive or possible in all contexts. Particular emphasis was placed on the limits to collective action in low-income settlements (i.e. patron-clientelism), with a distinction drawn between practical and/or strategic forms. The extent to which these forms may (or may not) lead to

transformative outcomes is a source of ongoing debate in the literature, that requires a more rigorous understanding of collective action in specific governance contexts.

Section 2.3 unpacked the ambiguous notion of ‘urban governance’ in greater depth. Three conceptualisations were discussed – normative, descriptive and analytical. Whilst the first had value for understanding collective action and service provision in relation to broader shifts in the state, market and civil society, this neglected the fragmented nature of governance and provision in many towns and cities of the Global South. The descriptive and analytical conceptualisations were therefore deemed of greater value to understand how the unequal interactions between actors within different spheres of governance enable and/or constrain certain forms of collective action.

In conclusion, a combination of existing literature on intra-group dynamics, the instrumental value of collective action and broader urban governance context potentially adds theoretical rigour to understanding collective action in low-income settlements of the Global South. As there are no singular existing frameworks that encompass all three elements, an integrated analytical framework is proposed to use as a heuristic tool for data collection and analysis. Chapter three elaborates on the framework and its various components in greater depth, and the qualitative methodology applied in the field.

3. Methodology

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section 3.1 outlines the research approach: the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research; integrated analytical framework for collective action; and qualitative methodology applied in the field. Section 3.2 focuses on the research process, from fieldwork to data analysis, split into four phases (I to IV). Section 3.3 then elaborates on the ethical, logistical and methodological limitations of the research. Whilst CBOs offer a useful ‘lens’ through which to examine the relationship between collective action, service provision and urban governance, such a selective approach requires critical reflection.

3.1. Research Approach

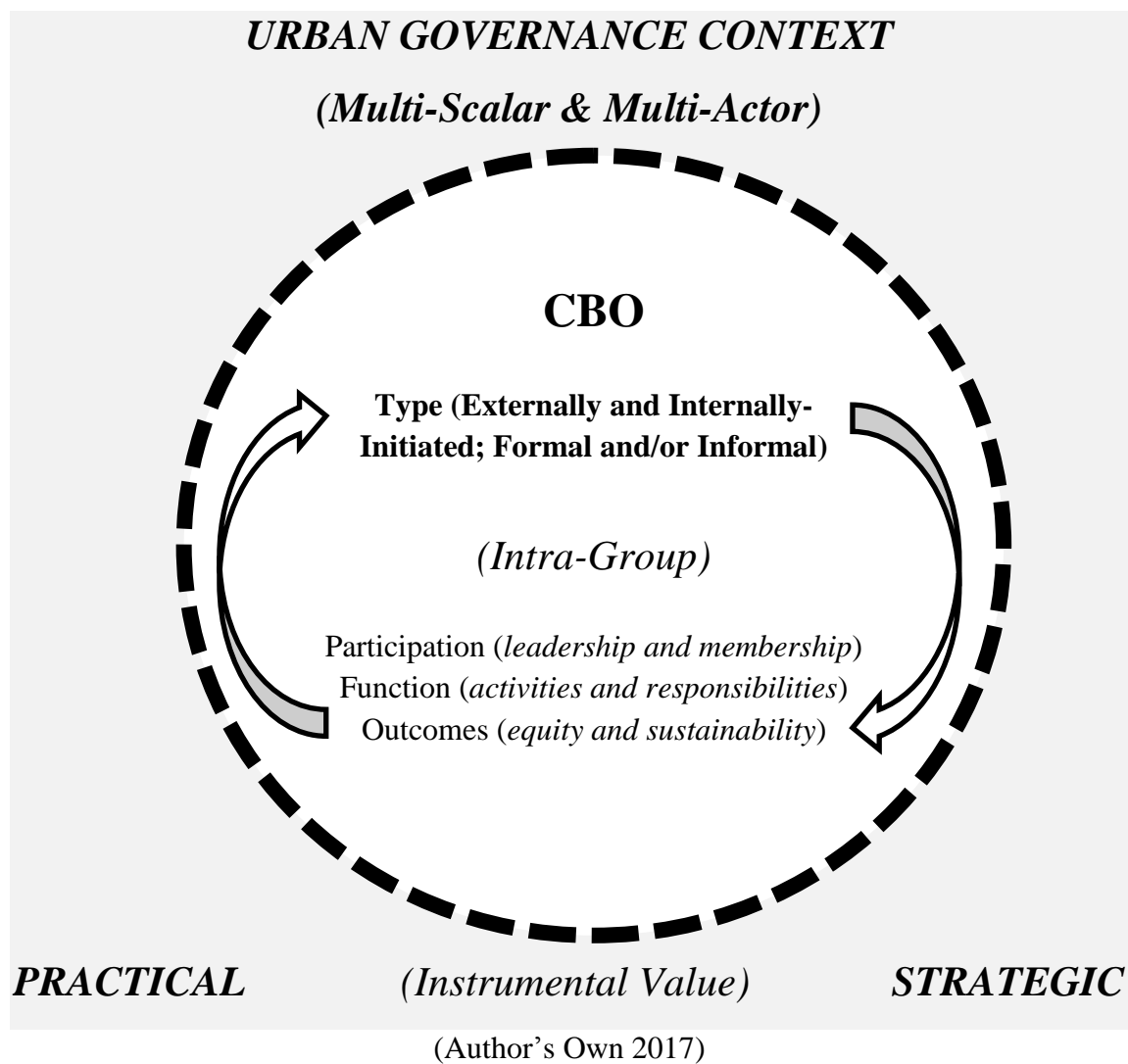
According to Tuli (2010: 99), ‘the selection of research methodology depends on the paradigm that guides the research activity, more specifically, beliefs about that nature of reality and humanity (ontology), the theory of knowledge that informs the research (epistemology), and how that knowledge may be gained (methodology)’. Methodology thus reflects deeper paradigm shifts and philosophical underpinnings of the research process, as well as tangible research guidelines, procedures and practices (*ibid*: 102).

This thesis recognises the agency of individuals and groups (within and via collective action), but also the context within which these groups shape (and are shaped by) broader structural processes i.e. identity, urban governance and political economy. In other words, individual choices are enabled or constrained by characteristics of the context in which the individual (or group) is located. This approach, underpinned by critical realism (retroduction), recognises the world as an external ‘reality’, through which broader structures mediate knowledge and experience, allowing for greater theoretical and pragmatic flexibility (Denzin and Lincoln 2000 cited in Blaikie 2000; Perlesz and Lindsay 2003: 29; Bhaskar 2008). As noted by Crossley (2002: 175), ‘agents act, think, reflect, desire, perceive and make sense...but they always do so by way of habits inherited from the social locations in which they have socialised, which are in turn shaped by wider dynamics of the social world’. Emphasis is placed on the importance of ‘associational life’, allowing for analysis of structure and agency in overcoming problems of collective consumption (Blaikie 2000: 113).

3.1.1. Integrated Analytical Framework for Collective Action

Underpinned by critical realism, the researcher developed an ‘integrated analytical framework for collective action’ (Figure 3.1) to use as a heuristic tool for data collection and analysis. Though a simplification of a complex reality, the framework allows for a rigorous understanding of intra-group dynamics, the instrumental value of collective action, and broader context of urban governance that enables and/or constrains certain forms of collective action. The framework combines existing literature on collective action and CBOs (outlined in chapter two) with preliminary field observations (elaborated in section 3.2), within an iterative research process. The following outlines the internal components in greater depth.

Figure 3.1: Integrated Analytical Framework for Collective Action



Drawing upon Crowley et al (2007) (section 2.2.1) and field observations, CBOs are disaggregated into two main types; externally or NGO-initiated and internally or leader-initiated and sub-types; formal and/or informal (Box 3.1). This broad conceptualisation captures the diversity of organisations involved in service provision and mediation in Dhaka's *bustees* – from WASH CBOs and cooperatives, to *bustee* committees²².

Box 3.1: CBO Typology (Definitions)

- **Externally or NGO-initiated:** formed by development agencies (e.g. NGOs and donors) outside the settlement for project/programme purposes. Participation among the wider community (especially women and extreme poor) is encouraged. Examples include; user and central WASH CBOs²³.
- **Internally or leader-initiated:** formed by residents (usually leaders) within the settlement. 'Leader' preferred over 'community' as these CBOs are heavily influenced by local leaders who do not necessarily encourage wider participation. Examples include; cooperative societies and *bustee* committees.
- **Formal:** 'officially' registered with, and regulated by, government agencies (e.g. Department of Social Works or Cooperatives). Fill certain leadership, membership, administrative and financial criteria (e.g. audits, fees, elections). Examples include; cooperative societies and (some) central WASH CBOs.
- **Informal:** operating without 'official' registration as a collective of neighbours, leaders and/or house owners. No 'formal' regulation from government agencies. Loosely defined structure, leadership and membership. Examples include; *bustee* committees and user WASH CBOs.

(Author's Own 2017)

Whilst this typology offers a useful frame through which to unpack participation, function and outcomes, these categories are highly dynamic, interconnected and difficult to disaggregate in practice. For example, some CBOs may be formally registered as cooperatives or central CBOs, but not regarded as legitimate actors by government agencies (such as Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority – DWASA). External political patrons may, in turn, legitimate the actions of informal CBOs under their protection (i.e. *bustee* committees). Externally and internally-initiated CBOs can also be formal and/or informal, and levels of in/formality can fluctuate throughout a

²² Whilst cooperatives and *bustee* committees are not perceived as CBOs in the conventional (i.e. NGO and donor) sense, they are classed here as CBOs because they have a local membership base (based on voluntarism), operate within the settlement and play an understudied role in service provision and mediation. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that cooperatives, as formal membership-based organisations, have a distinct history, function and structure. Unlike in the Global North, cooperatives are also directly accountable to government departments in many developing countries, as with the Department of Cooperatives in Bangladesh (Hulme and Turner 1990, see also chapter eight).

²³ See section on CBO Function for definition of user and central.

CBOs lifespan (Shatkin 2007). CBO type and sub-type is best expressed, therefore, along a dynamic continuum, rather than via rigid typologies. These overlaps are elaborated in section 3.3.3.

CBO Participation

Existing literature (e.g. Shatkin 2007; Chen et al 2007) and preliminary field observations suggests that leadership and membership are two important components of CBO participation. Analysing these components helps us understand who participates and why/why not. As noted in chapter two, individual incentives for initial and ongoing collective action are mediated by structural variables and ‘core relationships’ (e.g. norms of trust and reciprocity) (Ostrom 2005; 2009; 2010). Individual and household characteristics, such as age, gender, class, ethnicity, income level and social networks are known to mediate the type and terms of participation. As indicated in section 2.2.3, poorer households and women are perceived as less likely to participate in collective groups, though this may vary according to CBO type. For example, female leadership and membership is often promoted by NGOs, whilst CBOs formed by local leaders are more likely to be male-led (Shatkin 2007; Banks 2012; Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014).

As we explore in chapters seven and eight, CBOs in Dhaka’s *bustees* (including highly informal groups) often have an executive committee of four or five leaders, consisting of a president, vice president, cashier, secretary and joint secretary. Membership then varies according to the specific CBO (size and function) in question. Perceptions of membership and attendance may also vary. For example, an individual may regard themselves as a CBO ‘member’ even if they do not attend regular meetings, or after the NGO project has ‘phased out’. Whilst not clear-cut, tracking the election (or selection) of certain leaders and members could reveal uneven relationships and/or established social orders in a given context. In turn, understanding how leaders and members are connected (via networks) with others (Nicholls 2008; Hossain 2013) is central to understanding CBO function and outcomes.

CBO Function

As indicated in chapter two, function may vary according to specific CBO type (i.e. external/internal) (Crowley et al 2007; Shatkin 2007). Preliminary field observations indicate that activities and responsibilities are two important components of CBO function in Dhaka’s *bustees*. Activities can be understood as the specific tasks that

leaders and members fulfil (e.g. collecting water bills, procuring materials, constructing sanitation facilities or negotiating with utility providers). The roles and responsibilities of certain leaders and members may then vary in frequency according to level and type of participation (i.e. as president, vice president or general member etc) and CBO type. For example, in NGO WASH projects ‘user’ CBOs are usually responsible for cleaning, maintenance and repair of specific water points and sanitation chambers, while ‘central’ CBOs usually oversee user groups and activities across the settlement, or multiple settlements. It is also acknowledged that certain CBO leaders may be more strategic in their actions and division of roles, than others. This is particularly the case in internally-initiated CBOs, as we explore in chapter eight.

CBO Outcomes

Researchers and practitioners have identified numerous measures for ‘successful’ CBOs, from effective resource mobilisation (Uphoff 1986; Crowley et al 2007; Kyessi 2011) to institutional growth (Uphoff 1990). These observations have relevance to the Dhaka context, yet require re-working. Two key components of CBO outcomes emerge from initial scoping trips – levels of equity and sustainability. Equity, in terms of the spread and type (i.e. monetary/non-monetary) of benefits²⁴ from CBO participation and function, was deemed particularly important by NGO practitioners, CBO leaders, members and non-members. On the contrary, the unequal spread of benefits, due to misuse of funds and privatisation of infrastructure, was deemed inequitable.

Two key elements of sustainability emerged: a) longevity of water and sanitation infrastructure (‘hardware’); and b) longevity of the CBO itself (‘software’). Hardware sustainability can be understood as the functionality of water and sanitation facilities over time. As we examine in chapter seven, hardware sustainability greatly depends on the level of NGO and donor interaction post-project, and capacity of CBO leaders, members and general users to pay for repairs. This, in turn, relates to ‘software’ sustainability. As indicated in chapter two, it is widely acknowledged that externally-initiated CBOs often dissolve post-project (Uphoff 1986; Hulme and Turner 1990; Chen et al 2007; Kyessi 2011), whilst internally-initiated CBOs may be at greater risk of elite capture, free-riding and corruption (Olson 1965; Uphoff 1990; Ostrom et al 1994). In

²⁴ As this thesis focuses on service provision, ‘benefits’ largely refer to access to, and use of public goods (i.e. water and sanitation), affordability and perceived improvements for CBO leaders, members and the wider community.

both cases, history of collective action (i.e. information about past actions and level of success), mediating institutions perceptions of the political environment voluntary/involuntary entry or exit, core relationships and the strength/direction of networks may affect the propensity of leaders and members to continue participation, and/or engage in future actions (Ostrom 1990; 2005; 2009; Nicholls 2008). In turn, ‘failed’ actions and/or the mismatch of individual priorities and collective outcomes may influence future participation (Ostrom 2005; 2009).

Though a useful tool for data collection and analysis, it is important to highlight that the proposed framework is not prescriptive or ‘fixed’. Rather, CBO type, participation, function and outcomes are deeply interconnected, contested and dynamic. Chapters nine and ten reflect on the application of the framework in Dhaka, and its potential value for other contexts.

3.1.2. Qualitative Methodology

Methods deemed most appropriate to answer the research questions within given time and resource constraints were prioritised for this thesis (Brady et al 2004; Gerring 2007). The overarching research question asks:

How is collective action understood in relation to service provision in low-income settlements of the Global South, and what does in-depth analysis of CBOs in Dhaka’s bustees tell us about the relationship between collective action, service provision and urban governance?

This main question is supported by three secondary questions:

- I. To what extent has the form and nature of urban governance influenced service provision in Dhaka’s *bustees*, and – subsequently – the type and intensity of CBO activity in the sector?
- II. How do (externally and internally-initiated) CBOs form, who participates and why, what are their main functions and what are the outcomes for leaders, members and the wider community?

III. Does in-depth analysis of CBOs reinforce and/or challenge existing collective action theory?

Whilst quantitative analysis is central to understanding the scale of service deprivation in low-income settlements, or total number of CBOs, for example, this research seeks to understand why *bustee* residents act collectively, how and to what end. This requires in-depth field level research. At the same time, it seeks to understand how collective action is constrained and/or enabled by broader processes (of urban governance), requiring multi-stakeholder and multi-scalar engagement. Qualitative methodology was therefore preferred for data collection and analysis.

Broadly speaking, qualitative methodology is based on flexible and sensitive methods of data generation, which involves understandings of complexity, detail and context (Mason 2002: 3). Qualitative research normally requires the researcher's long-term immersion in the field, engaging in a reflective process of data collection and analysis (Mayoux 2006). Qualitative research methods also have a comparative advantage in identifying multiple processes or events that have influenced an outcome, rather than quantitative methods which tend to subscribe events as outcomes of a single process or event (Tarrow 1995). Case studies and ethnographic enquiry were integral components of the qualitative methodology applied in this research project. The following elaborates on each approach in greater depth.

Case Studies

Case studies can be used to 'retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as small group behaviour' (Yin 2009: 4), and position the practices of these groups within the wider historical, institutional and political context in which they take place (Flyvbjerg 2006). According to Yin (1994: 1), 'case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are posed', as with the main research question and sub-question II. Single or multiple-case studies can be adopted (depending on the nature of study), and a range of data collection techniques, from primary and secondary sources, can be used (Yin 2009). The combination of two or more methods (i.e. triangulation) within this approach ultimately strengthens research rigour (Denzin 1978 cited in Perlesz and Lindsay 2003: 27).

In this thesis, Dhaka, Bangladesh is used as an overarching ‘illustrative case’ (Flyvbjerg 2006), as little is known about how Dhaka’s *busteebashees* organise collectively around services, and the extent to which this is (or can be) transformative. Within Dhaka, three case study field sites were selected according to specific criteria (outlined in section 3.2.1), and within each site, CBO case studies were identified. Comparison of settlement characteristics and CBOs across (and within) the field sites then enabled the researcher to identify overlapping and distinct patterns around collective action, service provision and urban governance. This was complemented by citywide scoping visits (section 3.2.1) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) (section 3.2.3).

Ethnographic Enquiry

‘WASH is artificial: it is a donor-centric construct. You must think about the motivations of CBO members. Is it to improve services for all, or have a project? Try to understand group dynamics first and ask: why do people help each other?’

(KII NGO Practitioner 2014)

Taking note of existing literature and advice from practitioners (above), fieldwork began on the premise that to understand collective action (specifically CBOs), I needed to first and foremost learn about the dense kinship ties and relationships between men and women, friends and family, tenants, managers and house owners, local leaders and political patrons within Dhaka’s *bustees*. Whilst the complexity of such networks would take more than nine months of fieldwork to unpack, ethnographic enquiry helped to expose the deeper norms and behaviours associated with collective struggle, including less well documented elements, such as (mis)trust, frustration, anger and humour.

Ethnography can be defined as relying on participant observation, ‘a methodology whereby the researcher spends considerable time observing and interacting with a social group’ (Herbert 2000: 551). The researcher can undertake multiple roles, ranging from ‘complete participant’ to ‘complete observer’ (Gold 1958 and Junkers 1960, cited in Hammersley and Atkinson 2010). Ethnography is different from interviews ‘because it examines what people *do* as well as what they *say*’ (*ibid*: 552), and helps to ‘uncover how structures are made real in the contexts and commotions of daily life’ (*ibid*: 553). Using ‘thick description²⁵’ (Geertz 1973), I was able to explore the daily lives of participants via multiple visits to each field site, in-depth discussions with local residents, detailed field notes and a daily diary containing rich information about

²⁵ A method of descriptive ethnography that observes and explains behaviour, and the context in which the behaviour becomes meaningful (Geertz 1973).

conversations and experiences. Throughout fieldwork, I applied the philosophy that researchers ‘do not dominate [but] sit down, listen and learn’ (Chambers 1997: 103), often spending hours sitting at tea stalls, talking about an array of topics from politics to cricket! This ‘tea stall strategy’ also had three key benefits, it: 1) enhanced my visibility in the area; 2) allowed participants to approach me when they wished; and 3) gave me access to male participants who would spend time in public spaces, as opposed to in or near the home (like their wives, mothers and daughters).

Despite the value-added by such an approach, there are concerns over the ‘trustworthiness’ of this type of research. The role of the ‘the moral self’ (Young 2013) in participant observation has come under particular scrutiny. Following the emergence of constructivism throughout the ‘cultural turn’ of the 1980s and 90s, it was increasingly recognised that the researcher is not, and cannot be, a static observer. Rather, ‘we are inevitably part of the social world we wish to study’ and must reflect upon our ‘personal politics’ (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Blaikie 2000; Holden 2004; Kalir 2006; Engelke 2008; Dale and Mason 2011). As a middle class, white, young woman from the UK, my identity and personal politics ultimately shaped people’s perceptions of me. For example, as many foreign visitors to *bustees* in Dhaka are NGO or donor staff, I was instantly associated with assistance (see also section 3.3.1). Whilst this was problematic at first, my long-term presence in each site meant that residents came to know me and understand the research objectives. On numerous occasions they would tell others ‘*she is just here to learn about us*’.

Over time, I was seen less as a *bideshi* (foreigner) and more as an ‘interested observer’. This was particularly evident when I was invited to attend NGO meetings by community members. For example, in Site 1, I attended a ‘community mobilisation’ meeting facilitated by NGO Forum/WSUP. In my field diary I wrote, ‘*after the meeting we²⁶ joined P5 discussing CBO formation. It felt like we were on the side of the community in community-NGO relations, a breakthrough!*’ (Field extract 18.02.15). Similarly, in Site 2, I attended a dialogue between NGO and CBO leaders. I later wrote ‘*as we walked past the club house we saw it was full of many familiar faces...they called us inside and we sat and observed a fascinating FGD between a lady from Mohila Housing Trust, India, her translator and the male and female committee members. As they knew us, we could sit quietly and observe the discussions*’ (Field extract 25.06.15).

²⁶ ‘We’ refers to my Research Assistant (Fazle Rabby) and I (introduced in section 3.2).

Whilst I was always considered ‘an outsider’, these encounters revealed valuable insight into interactions between community leaders and NGOs.

3.2. Research Process: Phases I to IV

This section focuses on the research process, broadly divided into four phases (I to IV). Phase I (November to December 2014) included scoping visits and field site selection. Phase II (January to June 2015) included in-depth primary data collection in three *bustee* settlements. Phase III (March to August 2015) included KIIs, data verification and feedback and Phase IV (September 2015 to July 2017) included data analysis and writing-up. Whilst presented here in a linear fashion, these phases ultimately overlapped within an iterative and flexible research process.

3.2.1. Phase I: Secondary Data, Scoping Trips and Field Site Selection

Secondary Data Collection and Stakeholder Mapping

Before fieldwork, existing literature, policies, maps and reports on Dhaka and Bangladesh were collected and analysed. I focused in particular on GoB policy documents (e.g. GoB Five-Year Plans, National Sustainable Development Strategies and WatSan policies, outlined in chapter four), country-specific NGO and donor reports (e.g. World Bank; World Vision and Water Aid) and newspaper articles (e.g. The Daily Star, Dhaka Tribune and Financial Express). In addition to secondary data collection, stakeholder mapping allowed me to identify certain organisations to target upon arrival in Dhaka. This included NGOs (e.g. Water Aid and DSK), donors (e.g. UNDP and World Bank) and research institutes (e.g. PPRC and CUS). Participants were preliminarily disaggregated into ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ stakeholders, with *bustee* residents, CBOs, NGOs and citywide urban poor groups (e.g. BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS) identified as primary participants.

Scoping Trips

Prior to my arrival for fieldwork in November 2015, I visited Dhaka for two weeks in March 2014. This initial scoping trip provided an opportunity to gather secondary data, visit (11) *bustee* settlements of different types (e.g. public, private, large, small, owners-occupiers, tenants, old and new) and conduct preliminary interviews with NGOs, donors and researchers. I also established connections with the BRAC Institute of Governance

and Development (BIGD), who would become my research host, providing me a desk space in Dhaka.

Upon arrival for the nine month fieldwork period, I contacted key stakeholders (e.g. NGOs and donors) previously identified (above) via email and telephone to learn about and observe WASH CBO activities. At this time, I also hired a full-time Research Assistant (RA) Fazle Rabby, whom I trained in research ethics, objectives and methodology. The selection of a male RA was strategic, and on reflection highly beneficial, as he provided access to male participants, who could be more reserved with female RAs. However, as a young man, he had greater difficulty accessing the elders in the settlements, who largely responded to men of their age. This being said, prolonged presence in each settlement meant elders came to know and talk with us. Being very friendly, approachable and unthreatening, Rabby built rapport with research participants, men and women of all ages, very quickly.

During this initial phase I attended seven FGDs (x4 organised by PDAP, x2 organised by DSK-Shiree and x1 organised by UPPR). This allowed me to gather information about how NGOs and donors mobilise communities, and how they run and sustain these organisations. I built a particularly good relationship with PDAP, a small NGO located in Mirpur²⁷. The Executive Director (ED) was interested in my research, and invited me to events and meetings throughout the research period. In return, I assisted with funding proposals and report writing. Two settlements initially visited with PDAP (Sites 1 and 2) later became research sites. Whilst I was careful to avoid association with an NGO (for reasons mentioned), the connection with PDAP proved to be beneficial, rather than problematic. As PDAP no longer had activities in these settlements, risk of association was minimal, and many residents had not heard of the NGO. The relationship I established with PDAP's staff also helped to reveal the financial and logistical challenges facing smaller NGOs in Dhaka. I was aware, however, that PDAP only shared their part of the story, and so made sure to gather a range of perspectives from NGO professionals (elaborated in section 3.2.3).

²⁷ See Appendix 5 for an outline of PDAP's activities.

Field Site Selection

Two primary criteria²⁸ underpinned initial site selection – land tenure type (public and private) and level of ‘known’ WASH NGO and CBO activity. Land tenure type was regarded as a key differential characteristic, as existing evidence (e.g. Roy et al 2012; Roy and Hulme 2013) suggests land type and associated tenure in/security affects the propensity for residents to engage in certain forms of collective action and invest in infrastructure. In particular, collective action is deemed less likely in *bustees* on private land, as landlords block CBO and NGO activity (*ibid*). The second key criterion was level of ‘known’²⁹ WASH NGO and CBO activity in the settlement. It was deemed important to study a site with externally-initiated CBOs (only), internally-initiated CBOs (only) and both. This, I believed, would expose different dynamics around collective action, service provision and urban governance (i.e. when NGOs are not present, or when NGOs interact with leader-initiated groups).

Using this criteria, existing literature and maps, I short-listed over 25 settlements in Dhaka to visit³⁰. Through these scoping trips, I was able to understand different settlement dynamics around service provision and collective action, and talk to residents about their most pressing concerns. This also led – provisionally – to the analytical framework outlined in section 3.1, and to an amendment in final selection criteria. Whilst public and private land was a useful categorisation, I found that this was significantly blurred in reality, with multiple claimants, perceptions of tenure and/or different land owners for one settlement. Rather than disaggregate according to public/private, many sites were on ‘disputed’ land. In addition, many NGOs did not differentiate between public and private, though this did affect project delivery and service costs (elaborated in chapter six).

An alternative yet related category was therefore added for final site selection: occupancy type (i.e. majority owner-occupiers or tenants). This was based on the observation that tenants were less likely to participate in CBOs or invest in WASH

²⁸ Secondary criteria included; demography (e.g. population size and ethnicity), age of settlement, housing and service type, location (i.e. core/periphery) and topography. Whilst taken into account, these secondary characteristics did not determine final selection.

²⁹ ‘Known’ refers to field sites where WASH NGO and CBO activity is documented in government, NGO/donor reports or through discussions with key informants and residents. ‘Unknown’ refers to sites where there are no documented WASH NGOs or CBOs, but other less tangible collective groups may exist (e.g. informal committees, social control groups and sporadic protest).

³⁰ In addition to Dhaka, I visited two settlements in Narayanganj and five settlements in Khulna. This experience revealed differences between settlement types, local governance and topography, with greater availability of public land in Khulna for example, compared to Dhaka (see also section 10.3).

infrastructure, as this was deemed the responsibility of the *basha mālika* (house owner) (outlined in chapter five). These categories were still associated with certain tenure arrangements, for example, owner-occupiers with public land and tenants with private, though (as noted), legal land status remained unclear³¹, and tenants could be found on both land types. Using this renewed criteria, three field sites were selected for in-depth fieldwork (Table 3.1). As indicated in Figure 3.2, all three sites were located in Mirpur, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC).

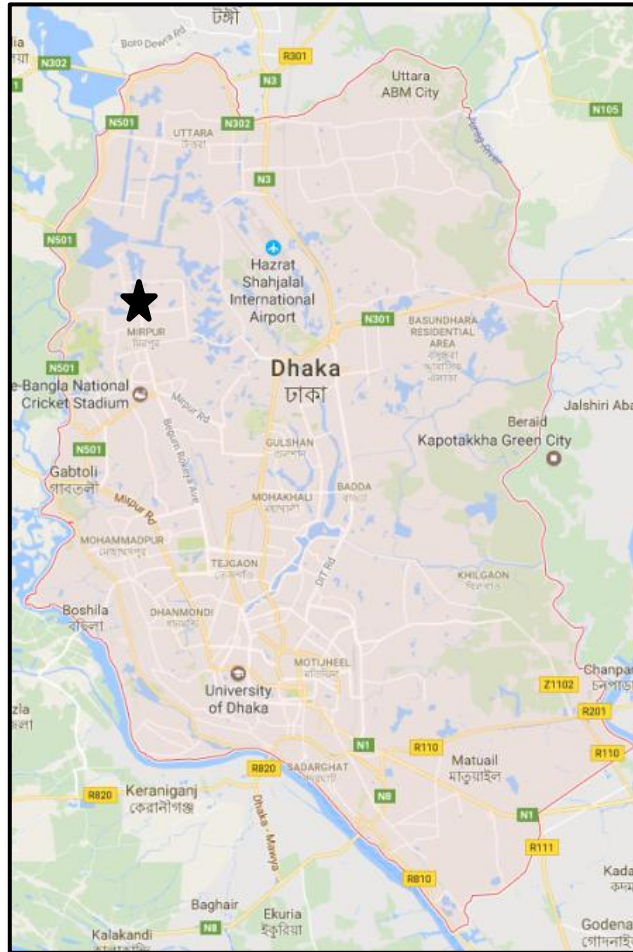
Table 3.1: Summary of Field Site Characteristics

KEY CHARACTERISTICS	SITE 1	SITE 2	SITE 3
*Land Type	Mixed/Disputed	Public/Disputed	Disputed
*Occupancy Type	Owners, Managers and Majority Tenants	Majority Owner-Occupiers	Owners and Majority Tenants
*Active/Level of WASH NGO and CBO Activity	Yes/Medium	Yes/High	None/Low
Size	802 households, 3200-4000 people, 2-3 acres	660 households, 3000-3500 people, 4 acres	650 households, 2600-3200 people, 2 acres
Age	25-30 years	17 years	35 years
Location	Periphery	Periphery	Periphery
Topography	Mixed elevation with areas of low-lying land by <i>jheel</i>	Mixed elevation with areas of low-lying land by <i>jheel</i>	Low-lying land. Hanging households over <i>jheel</i>
Average Income (Tk. per household, per month)	12000	9000	9000
DNCC Services	Roads, telecoms, drainage, DWASA supply	DWASA and DESCO supply	None (DWASA connections pending)
WASH NGOs and Donors	DSK, ARBAN, NDBUS-UPPR, NGO Forum and WSUP	DSK, NDBUS-UPPR, World Vision, Habitat for Humanity, NGO Forum	None
Eviction Threat	High	Medium	Medium
Critical Incidents	2008 eviction, 2015 college expansion and eviction	2015 MP declaration about housing scheme (Tk. 250 per day)	2008 eviction, fire in 1998-2002 and 2011, shop evictions by police in 2015

(Based on SSQs, IDIs, KIIs and mini census 2015 *primary selection criteria)

³¹ Whilst numerous attempts were made throughout fieldwork to access official land maps from the Land Records Office, this proved impossible without paying a bribe (which I refused to do) or engaging with lengthy and complicated bureaucratic procedures.

Figure 3.2: Field Site Locations, Dhaka



(Adapted from Google Maps 2017; star indicates site locations)

Whilst I intended to include sites in other parts of Dhaka, political crisis and recurrent *hartals* (general enforced strikes and total shutdowns) severely limited travel. However, with all three sites in Mirpur, I was able to gather a more in-depth understanding of local political context. Whilst I cannot make claims about other settlements in (or beyond) Dhaka, earlier scoping visits to 25 settlements across the city, from the Southern boundary in Kamrangirchar to Northern tip in Uttara, meant I had a good idea of different settlement dynamics. Section 3.2.2 outlines in-depth fieldwork in the three case study field sites. Due to the sensitive nature of information shared in each site (elaborated in section 3.3.1), settlement names and locations are anonymised.

3.2.2. Phase II: In-Depth Research in Three *Bustees*

I began work in Site 1 in January 2015, Site 2 in March 2015 and Site 3 in May 2015. Staggering the fieldwork enabled me to spend two months in each site, before re-

visiting all at different intervals to capture seasonal variation and key events (e.g. mayoral elections and NGO meetings). Unlike Sites 1 and 2, I entered Site 3 independently, by sitting with my RA at a tea stall at the entrance, and speaking with local residents. Despite an array of logistical challenges (outlined in section 3.3.2), my RA and I followed the same method sequence in each site, to ensure comparability and consistency. Table 3.2 summarises the data collected in each field site.

Table 3.2: Data Collected (December 2014 to June 2015)

Field Site	Community Profiling	SSQs	IDIs	FGD	Mini Census
SITE 1	1	70	6	2	1
SITE 2	1	73	10	3	1
SITE 3	1	70	5	1	1
TOTAL	3	213	21	6	3

(Author's Own 2017)

Community Profiling, Transect Walks and Mini Census

Community profiling was conducted in the first few days of fieldwork in each site to understand settlement boundaries, water and sanitation infrastructure, housing type and household number. This provided an opportunity to introduce myself and the research as we passed tea stalls, shops and houses. After initial introductions, my RA and I would walk through all the lanes of the settlements on transect walks, noting down what we saw, and to whom we spoke. These exercises were critically important as access to services, housing quality and levels of CBO and NGO activity varied within each settlement. On numerous occasions, local residents (and excited children!) showed us around, taking us down previously hidden or unseen lanes. Being led around by local residents was central to understanding the social, political and economic boundaries (beyond the spatial) in each field site. For example, between middle and low-income households, and areas governed by different political groups.

Whilst I initially intended to ask CBO leaders and members to draw community maps, I realised, after speaking to residents, that this would be of no benefit to them, as they already had numerous maps they had completed for NGOs, donors and researchers. To spare participants unnecessary time and effort, I used existing maps and FGDs to verify settlement information. To complement the community profiling and transect walks, a rapid mini census was conducted at the end of fieldwork in each site to verify settlement

information. As the third site had no prior reports or maps, a more thorough house to house validation was required.

*Semi-Structured Questionnaires (SSQs) and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)*³²

In addition to community profiling, SSQs were a central tool to gather initial information about households and the community from individuals, including; age, gender, income band, place of birth, migratory status (reason for moving and length of stay), labour (type, hours and working conditions), consumption and expenditure, health and healthcare, housing and tenure type, access to services and – most importantly – level of WASH NGO and CBO participation (Appendix 1). A questionnaire is conventionally defined as a data-collection device that elicits from respondents answers or reactions to pre-arranged questions, presented in a specific order (Zikmund 2003). However, rather than rigid, questionnaires are flexible and adaptable to a variety of research designs, contexts and purposes (Brace 2008). The questionnaires used in this research had both closed and open-ended questions, which allowed me to collect core household data and conduct open discussions about NGO and CBO participation, when residents revealed they were a current or past leader or member. In turn, if participants had left a CBO, it was important to explore why. As the academic language used to label group organisation (i.e. collective action) is not necessarily used nor recognised by *bustee* residents and practitioners, it was essential to use locally relevant terms (such as CBOs and *samity*s), or simply ask how/whether residents help each other and organise as a group to solve problems.

The SSQ discussions varied between 20 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes and, following consent³³, the majority were recorded via Dictaphone. My RA would ask the questions, and I would write the response on the questionnaire. Whilst audio recording allowed me to transcribe SSQs, IDIs and KIIs at a later time, bringing out the Dictaphone could shift the interview dynamic and put respondents on edge, meaning they would be more formal or selective with their answers. Often, the conversation before and after the recorder was turned on was more insightful. Upon realising this, I took extensive notes, rather than use the Dictaphone, to avoid disrupting the flow of conversation or causing unnecessary concern. Participants were purposively selected to

³² SSQs and IDIs are presented in the empirical data with participant number, field site number and year. For example; (SSQ P5 Site 1 2015) or (IDI 'Mr M' Site 2 2015). Issues or themes mentioned by numerous SSQ or IDI respondents are presented as; (SSQs 2015) or (IDIs 2015).

³³ Many residents were uncomfortable (or unable) to sign an informed consent form, so verbal consent was obtained and signed off by myself and my RA.

included diverse groups, including; single mothers, tenants, owners, managers, and a mix of ages and genders living in different parts of the settlement. The earlier community profiles and transect walks helped to ensure relatively equal coverage. Whilst attempts were made to engage both men and women, the majority of respondents were women, who were often found in or around the home. This gender imbalance was noted early, however, and attempts were made to engage male participants using the ‘tea stall strategy’ noted above (see also section 3.3.3).

In total, 70 SSQs were conducted in Sites 1 and 3, and 73 in Site 2. Whilst the SSQs were not random, we succeeded in engaging a range of different participants (e.g. CBO leaders, members and non-members), which revealed some crucial differences in why certain people engaged in collective activity, and others did not (or simply could not). The SSQs also deepened insight into the ‘community’ power structure, very quickly revealing influential leaders in each settlement. As CBO leaders were also often local political leaders, it was critically important to engage non-members in discussion. Sitting on the floor or bed in a room (the bed often being the only furniture), many respondents would share their frustration about the role of certain leaders involved in NGO programmes and service delivery. Similar comments made by different people across the settlement, and KIIs with NGO staff, verified initial findings. At the same time, SSQs helped me to identify CBO leaders and members, whom to return to for In-Depth Interviews (IDIs).

21 open-ended, semi-structured IDIs were conducted to gather more in-depth information about CBOs and service provision in each site³⁴. Whilst only a small number, some of the SSQs were themselves so in-depth that it was not fair to ask further time of the participant. Details were also supplemented during repeat visits, informal discussions and observations. Towards the end of fieldwork, IDI informants in all field sites beckoned us into their homes for general conversation and to impart new information. As one participant shared, *‘I am pleased that you come to my house. I am very happy to say many things about my community. I am very delighted because someone is asking about our situation. Someone is hearing our history and story’* (IDI P70 Site 1 2015).

³⁴ IDIs were also conducted with a handful of individuals who did not complete a SSQ, but wanted to share their knowledge and experience at length. These individuals are referred to throughout this thesis with pseudonyms (e.g. ‘Mr K’, ‘Mr M’, ‘Ms H’), rather than participant numbers (e.g. P5, P70 etc).

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Broadly defined, a FGD is a group interview or discussion consisting of a small number of individuals (i.e. six to ten), which enables the researcher to explore participants' attitudes and experiences on a specific subject (Asbury 1995; Morgan 1996; Wilkinson 1999; Cronin 2008). The group is 'focused' in that it involves a collective activity, such as exploring questions (Kitzinger 1994: 103). For Morgan (1996), there are three project level design issues (standardisation, sampling and number of groups) and two group level design issues (level of moderation and group size) to consider when planning FGDs. Whilst standardisation of questions could allow for greater comparability (e.g. between non-group and group members), this could also deter spontaneity. The use of established groups also raises a sampling issue, as group dynamics between friends will ultimately differ from those between strangers, which may affect data quality (Cronin 2008). As with interviews, there are multiple formats and levels of moderation (i.e. high, medium, low) (*ibid*).

For this research, FGDs were used with existing groups of 10-15 *bustee* residents. I invited those identified during SSQs and IDIs as being actively involved in CBOs in the past and present (see also section 3.3.3). Medium level moderation was adopted, to allow for a balance between structured interaction, intervention when one or a small group of individuals dominated and conversational flow. In total, six FGDs were conducted: two in Site 1 (one at the beginning facilitated by PDAP, and one at the end); three in Site 2 (one at the beginning facilitated by PDAP, and two – one male and female – at the end); and one in Site 3 (at the end). Whilst the earlier FGDs were used to gather background information on the settlements, rank problems, solutions and identify responsible actors, the later FGDs were used to verify and feedback findings. Due to lack of space, police and water crises in the third site, only one FGD was conducted with a group of male leaders. Each FGD lasted approximately two hours. Whilst language barriers presented a logistical challenge, my trusted RA was a vital support to run the sessions. Following consent from all participants, the FGDs were documented via Dictaphone and photographs (Photo 3.1).

Photo 3.1: FGDs in Field Sites



(Author's Own 2015)

3.2.3 Phase III: KIIs, Data Verification and Feedback

*Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)*³⁵

Qualitative interviews take multiple forms, dependent on the research question and approach. As opposed to ‘extracting’ knowledge from a participant, interviews are increasingly recognised as longer-term processes of exchange (Mason 2002: 62). A face to face (or on a few occasions Skype), semi-structured approach was prioritised for multi-stakeholder KIIs. This allowed for identification of key questions, but also flexibility to omit or add questions, according to conversational flow. In total, 59 KIIs were conducted in Dhaka (and a few cases beyond), to understand the citywide context in which CBOs operate. A full list of KII respondents can be found in Appendix 2a.

³⁵ KIIs are presented in the empirical data using organisation name, role of interviewee and date. For example, a KII with the Executive Director (ED) of DSK would be (KII DSK ED 2015). Likewise, the Project Officer (PO) of World Vision would be (KII World Vision PO 2015). Issues or themes mentioned by numerous KII respondents are presented as (KIIs 2015).

NGOs working in the field sites and Mirpur area were prioritised, as well as urban poor group leaders from BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS (Box 4.2). Earlier stakeholder mapping and identification aided this process. To gather a range of opinions and experiences, I interviewed different tiers of NGO staff, from Executive Directors (EDs), Project Managers (PMs), Project Officers (POs) to Community Organisers (COs). This was important, as field staff relayed their first-hand experiences of challenges at the settlement level, and office-based staff discussed the broader narratives and project objectives. Coupled with detailed field-level data, the KIIs provided me with a well-rounded analysis of the perceived role and function of CBOs in Dhaka's *bustees*.

Whilst I interviewed English-speaking participants independently, my RA conducted interviews with non-English speakers (with me present). Informed consent was obtained in written form and the interviews were recorded using a Dictaphone. An example Participant Information Sheet (PIS) can be found in Appendix 2b. Whilst it proved surprisingly easy to schedule interviews, it became clear that during interviews (especially with older men), my age, gender and identity as a 'foreign' researcher affected the responses. For example, as opposed to answering a specific question about water provision, I was asked why a young woman was entering slums alone. Whilst I could navigate these off-topic questions, it could influence the depth of answers provided. On the other hand, these encounters were highly insightful and revealing, as the following quote from one NGO practitioner shows:

'I admire you actually, that you dare to come to Bangladesh and stay here! When you know about the environment...If you go outside, oh my god! Water quality is not even suitable for begging, the water quality of DWASA...I am scared of DWASA water! There is sound pollution, noise pollution, air pollution. So I wonder actually how you dare to come here!'

(KII 2015)

Key Events and Meetings

Throughout fieldwork, I attended various events organised by PDAP (e.g. Birth Registration, Child Marriage Dialogue, Community Resilience and Grassroots Women's Leadership Training), other NGOs and donors. Two particular events are noteworthy:

- UNDP GoB Urban Forum Policy Dialogue on 7th Five-Year Plan (16.05.15): The UNDP high-level policy dialogue focused on urbanisation, and the extent to which urban poverty had been taken into account in the next GoB Five-Year Plan. During the event, I observed how NDBUS vocalised their demands. CSO

representatives also shared their concern that, although urban poverty is acknowledged within the plan, rural poverty models are still being applied to the urban context, and practical implementation of rights to housing and services is lacking (field observations 2015).

- WASH Fair (15.06.15): DSK, NGO Forum, Habitat for Humanity and NDBUS were present at this event in Mirpur, as well as participants from Sites 1 and 2. There were speeches from local ward councillors and NGO staff about WASH. The local MP was due to be the keynote speaker, but did not attend due to 'ill health'. It later emerged he attended a different political programme, much to the dismay of *bustee* residents who wanted to raise concerns over housing and land tenure security. The WASH Fair provided an opportunity to observe research participants, especially CBO members from Site 2, who were actively involved in the event organisation (field observations 2015).

I also attended numerous meetings (upon invitation) organised by BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS, including; BBOSC and Proshika dialogue, BBOSC central committee meeting, NBUS executive board and Annual General Meeting (AGM), and DSK, BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS dialogue. These encounters provided insight into the role of, divisions within and between, these organisations. Whilst there is little scope to elaborate on the internal dynamics of these citywide groups in this thesis, their stories are central to understanding the barriers to collective action at scale (elaborated in chapters six and nine).

Verification and Feedback

As fieldwork drew to a close, I re-visited all field sites to conduct FGDs and mini censuses to verify, feedback key information (on CBOs and settlement characteristics), and say thank you and farewell to research participants. Outside of the field sites, I presented preliminary findings at my host university (BIGD) and returned to UNDP to present to the UPPR team.

3.2.4. Phase IV: Data Analysis

According to Yin (2009), data analysis must be accompanied with rigorous empirical thinking, sufficient presentation of evidence, and careful consideration of alternative interpretations. Taking note, every effort was made throughout fieldwork to organise

raw data in a timely, secure and efficient manner. SSQ responses were inputted into excel (and paper copies destroyed), interview notes and field observations were written up in Word and photographs were grouped according to specific event and/or field site on the date of collection. Upon my return to Manchester, I re-organised the data into files according to: 1) data type (e.g. community profiling and mini census, SSQs, IDIs, FGDs, KIIs and observations); 2) location (i.e. Site 1-3); and 3) KII stakeholder group (i.e. NGO, donor or government).

After organising the settlement data, I compiled a report for each field site, summarising information from the community profiling, SSQs, IDIs, KIIs, mini census and FGDs. This provided me with a detailed picture of political context, service delivery, CBO type, and enabled me to (inductively) map out the connections between CBOs and key actors within and outside each settlement. I began to draw out key comparisons between the sites, and identify overarching variables affecting collective action. Whilst analysis largely took place upon return from Bangladesh, the act of inputting and typing up raw data was an analytical process in itself, allowing me to target certain individuals, narrow my focus and questioning. This supports the argument that there is no separation of data collection and analysis in qualitative research (Gibbs 2007).

Semi-Structured Questionnaires (SSQs)

During fieldwork, I highlighted particularly insightful SSQs (via colour coding) for my RAs to transcribe³⁶ and to return to for IDIs and data analysis. In total, 69 out of 213 SSQs were transcribed (the remainder analysed in excel), with a relatively equal balance across all field sites. These SSQs were a cross-section of participants (i.e. CBO leaders, members, non-members, political leaders and informal service providers). In cases where SSQs were not recorded, I relied on the data and notes inputted into excel. Manual analysis of the excel data³⁷ enabled me to identify key patterns relating to CBO type, participation, function and outcomes. Problems and solutions were also coded and ranked according to the number of times a respondent mentioned a descriptor (within a theme). These insights were important to understand (limits to) participation, and compare FGD and SSQ data (see chapter five).

³⁶ I hired a further four RAs in the final three months of fieldwork to assist with transcription.

³⁷ Whilst statistical analysis (via SPSS) would be useful to analyse some of the background data, this was not deemed necessary for answering the research questions, or representative, considering the purposive sampling and relatively small sample size.

Interview Coding

According to Jackson (2001), analysis of qualitative interviews is an iterative and considered process whereby the researcher should closely read transcripts, picking out ‘codes’ from particular words and phrases which can be further analysed for relations to each other. Coding can be broken down into two broad phases: ‘open’ and ‘axial’ (Blaikie 2009). Open coding involves the breaking down of data into categories, and axial coding is used to find relationships between these categories (*ibid*). Analysis of IDIs and KIIs (as well as the open-ended section of SSQs) was undertaken in this multi-stage way. Firstly, interviews were transcribed. Whilst I transcribed the interviews conducted in English, my team of RAs worked on the Bengali interviews (as well as photo and FGD translations). Due to the volume of data collected over a nine month period, and to ensure quality and accuracy, this took two to three months. Secondly, once all transcripts were collected (and quality checked), I read all in detail and highlighted particularly insightful phrases, sentences and paragraphs. Thirdly, I created a list of key words (e.g. leader, political, corruption, water, sanitation, co-sharing), themes (e.g. participation, function and outcomes) and headings (e.g. NGO or leader-initiated CBOs), and re-read the transcripts to code key phrases and direct quotations into specific categories. I then compared data from the field sites with NGO, donor and government KIIs. This, combined with secondary data analysis, helped me identify patterns and trends at the settlement, citywide, national and even global scale.

Textual and Content Analysis

As text is ‘culturally produced’ (Rose 2001; Johnson et al 2004), textual and content analysis of the interview and secondary data collected before, during and after fieldwork was used to expose underlying biases and assumptions. For example, in newspapers and some policy documents, *bustees* were often referred to as ‘illegal structures’ and ‘breeding grounds of crime and filth’, de-humanising and criminalising residents and legitimating evictions (e.g. Vidal 2002; Dhaka Tribune 2013; The Daily Star 2013; Khan 2014). These biases were reiterated during various KIIs. As one World Bank official stated, ‘*the slum itself is a very big political power. It is also an area of mugging, looting and thieves...human trafficking, brokers and organ selling is also an issue in the slums*’ (KII 2015). Despite many negative depictions, discourse and policy analysis also revealed shifting perceptions towards *bustees* in Bangladesh (elaborated in chapter four).

Triangulation of secondary data with field level observations and KIIs also helped to expose a mismatch between what is said, and what is done.

3.3. Ethical, Logistical and Methodological Reflections

3.3.1. Ethical Reflections

Managing Expectations

Even though PDAP was no longer active in Sites 1 and 2, the sheer number of NGOs in these settlements (especially Site 2), meant that it took two weeks of repeat visits to demonstrate to residents that I was an independent researcher, and not an NGO or donor official. As NGOs often use FGDs during project identification, I was also careful to clearly state the purpose, aims, objectives and conditions of voluntary participation, to avoid disappointment. Over time, I came to understand how NGOs, donors and researchers leave a legacy. For example, in Site 2, residents repeatedly mentioned a previous researcher (ten years ago) whom they believed ‘brought NGOs to the area’. I later discovered this was an MA student at Dhaka University. Despite the NGOs stating that she did not ‘bring them in’, this powerful legacy meant there was an element of expectation of my role. Many expressed their hope that I could assist them in the future when I was a ‘big person’ (i.e. professor or NGO practitioner). I was always clear to state that I was a neutral, independent researcher and that my research brought no direct benefit, but that I would raise their issues of concern in various forums. One diary extract from Site 1 read, ‘P42 said she was happy that we were honest at the beginning about our work, and did not make false promises like others have. She said “it is the heart and kind conversation that matters”’ (field extract 15.04.15).

Although residents in Site 3 had less exposure to NGOs, I was initially received with suspicion, as some believed I was a Christian NGO worker or journalist. Upon entering the settlement, we encountered some aggressive male leaders who demanded to know what we were doing. However, after explaining the research, they were eager to share their opinion, with interesting results (elaborated in chapter five).

Sensitive Research Topics

In all sites, residents revealed sensitive information about land, housing, services and politics. Whilst the influence of political patrons (such as MPs and ward councillors) is widely known, many feared retribution from local political leaders or their associates if

they were overheard discussing corruption and political control. This was particularly the case for opposition party (BNP) supporters, who were frequently harassed by ruling party leaders within and outside the settlement. In Site 1, the influence of the MP and political elite in the area meant that some were afraid to speak out. During one visit, one lady whispered *'we're being watched so I am not able to comment on the new [house] builds'* (field observation 2015). However, our prolonged presence in each site meant people began to trust us, and were increasingly willing to talk, often ushering us into their homes or to tea stalls for lengthy discussions. As a young woman with a clear research mandate, I believe local leaders felt unthreatened, increasing their willingness to talk openly. We did, of course, take every measure to ensure confidentiality (e.g. seeking private spaces for interviews, safely storing data in locked cabinets and encrypted files).

Vulnerability of Research Participants

Dhaka's *bustee* dwellers, especially widows, single mothers, the elderly, disabled and extreme poor, faced daily insecurity. Many residents stated *'onek kasto apa'* (many troubles sister) and shared concerns about housing, land tenure, food, jobs, domestic abuse and ill health. These insecurities were, of course, highly gendered and unequal. A diary extract from Site 1 read, *'one lady showed us where she was staying. Her elderly mother was lying on the floor in a little makeshift shack. She said she was abandoned by her only son and had to beg for money to pay for rent and food. She was living in a temporary area of new builds. Once built, she would be evicted'* (field extract 19.01.15). Another extract from Site 2 read *'one lady said she was tortured by her husband a few days ago. If he works one day a week, he doesn't work the other six days and is angry with her if she does not work, or if she does! She said NGOs don't provide services to tenants. What could I say to her? How could I comfort her?'* (Field extract 12.06.15). These are just two of many stories of struggle encountered daily during fieldwork.

Levels of insecurity also varied between settlements. As indicated in Table 3.1, residents in Site 3 faced a number of critical incidents, including; the demolition of shops by police following an altercation, multiple water crises and police raids. I noted these incidents in my field diary. For example, on 28.07.15 *'could not conduct FGD today due to police presence'* and on the following day, *'could not conduct FGD today due to water crisis, water lines were cut by DWASA'* (field extract 29.07.15). There was also a higher degree of fatalism in Site 3, with many residents stating *'it is Allah's*

[God's] will'; 'no one will help us, we must do it ourselves' or 'there is nothing we can do' (SSQs 2015). The daily insecurity faced by residents meant I took utmost care to clearly state my purpose and work around the schedules of participants.

3.3.2. Logistical Reflections

Language Barriers

As a non-native speaker, I worked via a translator for the majority of fieldwork. This meant that I often missed subtle remarks and opportunities for follow up questions. Interviewing via another person could also shift the power dynamic and influence content. For example, some residents were suspicious of interpreters (based on past experience), stating that they do not feedback correct information or twist their words. However, taking two months of Bengali classes and learning in the field meant that I could converse to a basic level, build trust and rapport with participants relatively quickly. The extensive training, briefing/de-briefing and excellent working relationship built between myself and my RA also meant that conversation flowed well and questioning was consistent, accurate and reflexive.

Mobility

Complex land tenure arrangements, blurred settlement boundaries and narrow or hidden lanes rendered accurate data collection difficult. For example, in Site 1, as East and West were not officially demarcated, some information related to the entire surrounding area, including highly diverse and large parts I had not visited (see chapter five). To overcome this ambiguity, findings were verified by KIIs, IDIs and FGDs. Site 3 was particularly difficult to navigate, with a labyrinth of lanes leading to houses or dead-ends. It was also located on low-lying land below the road level, meaning that many of the lanes were submerged during heavy rain. Unlike Sites 1 and 3, there were open spaces to sit at tea stalls or outside shops in Site 2, meaning I would often sit and talk for hours with residents. During fieldwork, there were also multiple *hartals*, when it was not recommended to venture out. Heavy traffic and monsoon rains (from May to August) also meant that it could take three hours to travel a 20 minute distance, and we would have to wade through knee-high water to reach our destination. Whilst these challenges resulted in numerous delays, my RA and I would try to honour arrangements and, if deemed safe, visit field sites to see how residents were affected by, and responded to, critical events.

Timings

Flexibility was ensured for every participant, to avoid disruption to their daily lives. My RA and I approached residents in the field sites at pre-arranged or convenient times of day, for example, after meals, cooking, prayer, nap and wash times. We were also careful to respect religious festivals (such as Eid). As many respondents worked all day, visiting on weekends was important, especially to talk with garment workers. As urban dwellers are less likely to have time to partake in FGDs during the long working day (Mitlin and Thompson 1994), a flexible FGD timetable was also essential.

3.3.3. Methodological Reflections

Representative Sampling

As many CBO leaders were also local political leaders and house owners, their responses were not necessarily representative of ‘the community’. SSQs and ethnographic enquiry was therefore essential to talk with non-members, many of whom shared their suspicion that leaders were ‘reaping the benefits’ from NGOs (see chapters seven and eight). This meant I had to plan FGDs with active CBO leaders carefully, to avoid conflict and misunderstanding (i.e. that I was providing them ‘gifts’ or prioritising them, at the expense of others). A second issue relates to gender balance. Whilst the majority of respondents in Sites 1 and 2 were female, the dominance of male leaders and physical layout in Site 3 meant that engaging female participants was more challenging. Whilst I conducted an array of SSQs with women, they were less likely to be involved in the leader-initiated CBOs, or willing to speak out. To redress the balance, I engaged women in conversation about the DSK-Shiree programme (that has over 90% female participation). In Site 2, there was a strong male/female division, evident in NGO and CBO activities, prompting two separate FGDs (at the request of CBO leaders) to understand gender dynamics and encourage open discussion. Flexibility and adaptability was central to the research process.

CBOs as Lens

Using CBOs as a lens to understand collective action, and focusing on water and sanitation (an NGO and donor-driven agenda), potentially neglects other forms of collective action (e.g. sporadic anti-eviction protests, savings and loans groups or

political rallies) in Dhaka's *bustees*. Indeed, the vast majority of data collected on CBOs relates to NGO and donor programmes. Rather than a limitation, this reflects the dominance of these actors (and their proponents) in the service sector³⁸ (elaborated in chapters four and six). As the majority of CBO meetings were irregular and often took place after dark when residents returned from work but when I had left the field, it was also difficult to monitor group dynamics directly. This means that the majority of data on CBOs is from SSQs, IDIs, FGDs and field observations. Despite this, the triangulation of data from the field and KIIs meant I could build a robust picture of CBO type, participation, function and outcomes. Ethnographic enquiry, including discussion of settlement history with long-term residents, also revealed different types of collective action, and helped to ground CBOs within changing politico-legal, social, economic and environmental contexts.

CBO Typology

As indicated in Figure 3.1, CBOs are disaggregated into 'externally' and 'internally-initiated', 'formal' and 'informal' categories. Whilst useful, fieldwork reveals that leaders and members of different CBOs were often the same interconnected individuals, with multiple (social, economic, political, kinship) networks within and beyond the settlement. These complexities have been described in various ways, from multiple identities and intersectionalities of leaders (Bénit-Gbaffou and Katsaura 2014), to local power structures and relational milieu's (Khan 2007; Devine 2007) and hybrid organisations (Chen et al 2007). Arguably, the most relevant conceptualisation for this thesis is 'leader-centred networks' (De Wit and Berner 2009). The implications (and significance) of this are elaborated in chapters eight, nine and ten.

3.4. Concluding Remarks

Section 3.1 discussed the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research. A critical realist approach that acknowledges individual and group agency, but also the broader (structural) context within which such agency is enabled and/or constrained, was adopted. The integrated analytical framework for collective action was then introduced as a useful heuristic tool for data collection and analysis. Section 3.1.2 focused on the adoption of qualitative methodology, including case studies and

³⁸ Chapter seven on NGO-initiated CBOs is larger than the other empirical chapters as a result.

ethnographic enquiry, which enabled both depth and breadth of analysis. Section 3.2 outlined the research process, from initial scoping visits and field site selection, to in-depth field research, KIIs, data verification/feedback and data analysis. Section 3.3 elaborated on the ethical, practical and methodological limitations of the research. Chapter four now focuses on the urban governance context in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This is critically important, as urban governance is understood to affect service provision and the forms of collective action emerging at the settlement level.

4. Politics, Urban Governance and Service Provision in Dhaka, Bangladesh

This chapter situates the research within the broader urban governance context in Dhaka, Bangladesh. As indicated in chapter two, ‘governance’ can be understood as the (unequal) interaction between multiple actors, at multiple scales. These interactions affect service provision and the forms of collective action that emerge in low-income settlements. This chapter places particular emphasis on the role of, and interactions between, the Bangladeshi state, political patrons, civil society organisations (i.e. NGOs) and *bustee* residents in providing and mediating services in Dhaka.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 4.1 outlines the historical and contemporary political context in Bangladesh. This is important because shifting national party politics are understood to greatly affect state-civil society relations, and the type of collective action observed at the settlement level. Section 4.2 acknowledges that, whilst progress has been made in rural poverty reduction, urban poverty is rising, and rapid urbanisation is leading to the proliferation of *bustees* across Bangladesh. Inadequate access to basic services, such as water and sanitation, are major challenges for *bustee* residents. Despite inclusion in GoB water and sanitation (WatSan) policies and strategies (briefly outlined), the urban poor remain neglected in discourse, policy and practice in Bangladesh (Banks et al 2011). Section 4.3 reflects on how this neglect has led to ‘informal’ governance and service delivery configurations in Dhaka’s *bustees*. The section briefly outlines the rise of *bustees* in Dhaka, before elaborating on the actors involved in service provision and mediation at the settlement level. The chapter concludes with some reflections on the relationship between urban governance, service provision and collective action in Dhaka.

4.1. Political Context

Since independence in 1971, Bangladesh has undergone significant political change, experiencing authoritarian military and democratic rule (Jahan 2000; Devine 2006; Van Schendel 2009; Lewis 2011). After the assassination of the ‘Father of the Nation’

Sheikh Majibur Rahman during a military coup in 1975, the country experienced two long periods of authoritarian rule (White 1999: 311). The eventual overthrow of General H.M. Ershad in 1990 led to a fragile yet functioning system of parliamentary democracy in 1991 (Van Schendel 2009). In 2007, an unelected military-backed caretaker government ran the country for two years, eventually followed by democratic elections, won by the Awami League in 2009 (Lewis 2011).

Contemporary Bangladesh is a democratic republic with two spheres of government (national and local), divided into rural and urban administrative zones. There are 11 City Corporations and 324 *pourashavas* (smaller towns with over 15,000 people). The political landscape is dominated by Head of State, President Zillur Rahman and two main parties; the Awami League (AL) (current in power), led by Sheikh Majibur Rahman's daughter, Sheikh Hasina and the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) led by Khaleda Zia, widow of murdered military leader Ziaur Rahman. Since the 'democratic transition' in 1991, election results (up to 2013) indicated that politics in Bangladesh had evolved towards a *de facto* two-party political system (Hassan 2013). During this time, the two political parties cultivated a pyramidal system of pervasive patron-client relations across the country to enlist and reward party supporters, leading to a patronage-based electoral politics in a post-military setting (Lewis 2011; 2017). Such 'patronage politics' (Mahmud et al 2008) has potentially significant implications for collective action (at scale) in Dhaka (elaborated in chapters eight and nine).

Whilst the two main parties continue to dominate contemporary politics (and media), the 2013 elections pointed 'towards the evolution of a coalitional form of electoral politics' against AL (Hassan 2013: 9). During the elections, BNP led an 18 party opposition, consisting of key opposition groups, including fundamental Islamist group *Jamaat-i-Islam*. The coalition called for a nationwide boycott, with violent outcomes. For example, during the 2014 general election (5.01.14), there were arson attacks on hundreds of polling stations (The Daily Star 2014). A 'politics of fear' (Furedi 2007; 2008) increasingly dominates in Bangladesh, with political processes fraught with conflict and confrontation, resulting in frequent *hartals*. Whilst the proliferation of *hartals* may represent the physical manifestation of right to protest, these events are characterised by violence, often with powerful 'backstage actors', such as *mastaans* coercing and/or forcing thousands of impoverished slum dwellers to take to the streets (Banks 2008; Banks et al 2011; Keck 2012; Suykens and Islam 2013).

Since 2013, the trend has shifted towards a dominant one-party state, with AL quashing political opposition (ESID 2017). Rather than a parliamentary democracy, many commentators now argue that what we are seeing in Bangladesh is ‘democratic mimicry’ (Sen 2014) or ‘illiberal democracy’ (Lewis 2017). As we explore in chapters five, six and seven, these shifts have significant implications for collective action among Dhaka’s *bustee* dwellers, and for the NGOs that support them.

Despite ‘weak’, ‘poor’, ‘bad’ or ‘failed’ governance (World Bank 2012; Islam 2013; Hassan 2013; Basu et al 2017; ESID 2017), Bangladesh has achieved consistent economic growth and success in rural poverty reduction in recent decades. Since 2000, the country has experienced sustained economic growth of around 6% – higher than the South Asia regional average (World Bank 2014). This growth has been supported by social investments in human development, such as healthcare and education, especially for girls (Sen 2014). Whilst there is significant spatial variation, absolute poverty declined from 58.8% in 1991-92 to 31.5% in 2010, while extreme poverty declined from 41% to 17.6% over the same period (GoB 2013a:143). This ‘success’ reflects what some term the ‘Bangladesh paradox’ or ‘development surprise’ (Mahmud 2008; Mahmud et al 2008; Asadullah et al 2013; Hassan 2013; ESID 2017; Hossain 2017). As noted by Hassan (2013: 4):

It is a paradox to the extent that growth and social development took place in the context of ‘bad’ governance, characterised by systemic political (patron-clientalism) and bureaucratic corruption, an inefficient state, weak regulatory capacity, confrontational politics, political instability, politicised and corrupt judicial institutions.

Whilst this paradox argument assumes that democratic transition and ‘good governance’ is a pre-condition for high and sustained growth (Khan 2008 cited in Hassan 2013), it attempts to explain the apparent mismatch between economic and political moments noted above. According to Asadulla et al (2013), the ‘development surprise’ also relates to the rise of low-cost NGO solutions, social awareness campaigns and programmes in partnership with the government. NGOs within a so-called ‘vibrant’ civil society are seen as particularly integral to promoting ‘good governance’ in Bangladesh (Rahman 2006). In 2006, an estimated 27-35% of the country’s population received services (e.g. credit, health or education) from an NGO, more than twice the South Asian average (World Bank 2006 cited in Lewis 2011). In 2017, there were 2554 registered NGOs in Bangladesh, with over 300 operating in Dhaka (GoB NGOAB 2017).

According to Lewis (2017: 6), there are two main NGO types in Bangladesh: 1) humanitarian and 2) development; with a radical sub-set. The rise, role and fall of these NGOs (and other CSOs)³⁹ relates to four overlapping shifts in state-civil society relations in Bangladesh identified in the literature: post-independence humanitarianism (1970s-1980s); era of neoliberalism (1980s-1990s); demise of the radical sub-sector (1990s-2000s); and contemporary era (2000s-2017). Whilst the majority of literature focuses on NGOs in the rural context, these broader trends also have implications for NGOs and CBOs operating in urban low-income settlements. The reasons for this are elaborated below, and in chapter six.

4.1.1. Shifting State-Civil Society Relations

Post-Independence Humanitarianism (1970s-1980s)

The majority of humanitarian and development NGOs emerged in the 1970s and 80s in response to the post-conflict political crisis, 1970 cyclone disaster, 1974 famine and 1988 floods. NGOs were at the forefront of relief and rehabilitation, providing a range of services to stricken families (e.g. healthcare, emergency response, education, basic infrastructure and family planning, savings and loans) (Feldman 2003; Rahman 2006; Lewis 2017). Over time, however, ‘each organisation creatively and rapidly shifted from immediate relief and reconstruction to a strategy of community and economic development’ (Feldman 2003: 6). NGOs began to roll out rural credit programmes (e.g. Grameen and ASA), mobilise water-user associations (e.g. Proshika) and provide training and income-generating opportunities to women (e.g. BRAC). The profile and size of these NGOs began to increase both nationally and internationally, attracting donor interest and funding (White 1999; Haque 2002; Devine 2003; Rahman 2006; Lewis 2017).

Within the development NGOs was a radical sub-set that focused on grassroots mobilisation around political rights and advocacy to challenge the perceived structural causes of (rural) poverty and injustice (Lewis 2017). As noted by Devine (2003: 235), ‘to combat the politics of class domination embedded in the patron-client linkage, many of the first NGOs began with radical agendas of pursuing a more open politics of class

³⁹ Whilst acknowledging the diversity of CSOs and collective action in Bangladesh – from residents associations, informal committees, small radical campaigning NGOs, informal trade unions, “unruly” forms of resistance to sporadic protest (Mahmud 2002; 2008; Banks et al 2011; Roy et al 2012; Hossain 2017) – I focus here on NGOs and CBOs, as they are most relevant for this thesis.

struggle. Conscientization, solidarity and mobilisation were the principles chosen to drive this agenda'. Many of these more 'radical' NGOs (such as Nijera Kori) rejected donor funds to avoid dependency, and directly challenged what they regarded as inadequate government programmes and increased privatisation, associated with neoliberalism (Feldman 2003).

Era of Neoliberalism (1980s-1990s)

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, donors had shifted their focus to credit, micro-enterprise and entrepreneurship, and the private sector was increasingly incorporated into development planning (Feldman 2003, see also 'market-led' second generation in chapter two). NGOs played an increasingly prominent role in service provision in Bangladesh, and were often posited (by donors) as better able than the government to distribute resources and organise rural dwellers (*ibid*). The proliferation of NGOs at this time was attributed to their ongoing success, growing pressure of aid agencies on the government to use them for development activities, and increased funding sources from government and foreign donors (Planning Commission 1998; Rahman 2000 cited in Haque 2002: 414). Certain donors (e.g. WB, SIDA and NORAD⁴⁰) were particularly influential in pushing for greater collaboration and partnership between the government and NGO sector. For example, a 1990 World Bank report entitled 'Poverty and Public Expenditure' recommended the expansion of NGOs to supplement government efforts, whilst the 1996 report 'Pursuing Common Goals: Strengthening Relations between Government and Development NGOs' focused on building collaborative partnerships to enhance 'good governance' (White 1999). NGOs were increasingly seen as partners to the state in a mutually advantageous and collaborative project (*ibid*). As noted by White (1999: 309):

For the NGOs, working with the state offers an opportunity to expand the scope of their operations, broaden their influence and participate in the formulation of the national development agenda. The state, on the other hand, may see collaborating with NGOs as a chance to gain some reflected moral glory, retrieve a hold on donor funds, neutralise potential opposition and achieve more efficient and cost effective implementation of policy. What is open to question, however, is whether these mutual interests necessarily coincide with the interests of those whose name they all invoke: the poor.

For Lewis (2017: 16), government and donor 'vogue for NGO "partnership"' mainly took the form of sub-contracting relationships in service delivery in keeping with the

⁴⁰ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)

neoliberal vision of functional division of labour between government and NGOs'. Whilst bringing about improvements in the lives of the (predominantly rural) poor, these processes resulted in the bureaucratisation and professionalisation of the NGO sector, and a growing tendency to 'mobilise money over people' (Eade 2000: 12 cited in Feldman 2003: 22). This was based on the donor-driven 'need for sustainable funding, long-term employment for staff and activities that ensure measurable results' (*ibid*). According to Devine (2003: 231), 'NGOs in Bangladesh [largely] responded to donor demand for sustainability by introducing strict microcredit programmes'. From 1989 to 1999, donor funds for NGOs fell from 94% to 35% of the total, with NGOs increasingly supported by capital funds from loans, member savings and service charges (relating to microcredit) (*ibid*). Whilst the 'revenue from microcredit...allowed some of the big NGOs to reduce their level of dependence on donor funds...NGOs have had to depend more on contributions from their members', raising questions over equity (*ibid*: 223). There was also a gradual realisation that, as opposed to being challenged, patron-client relations prevailed in Bangladesh, and were 'more likely to accommodate and adjust to the arrival of new organisations, such as development NGOs' (Devine 1999 cited in Devine 2003: 235). These relations also existed within NGOs, leading some to argue that NGOs had become 'new patrons' in Bangladesh, replacing dependency on more traditional forms of authority (i.e. moneylenders) (Feldman 2003).

Demise of the Radical NGO Sub-Sector (1990s-2000s)

Despite the positive attention NGOs received after independence, the role of (especially large⁴¹ and radical) NGOs and their leaders came under increasing scrutiny and suspicion, especially during the political upheavals of the 1990s (White 1999; Devine 2003; 2006; Lewis 2011; Lewis 2017). According to White (1999: 312), 'donor advocacy [and funding] of NGOs challenged state monopoly as development actor, with implications for its funding base, sovereignty and internal legitimacy'. This exacerbated growing tensions between NGOs and government officials, NGOs and bilateral agencies, and within the NGO community, as not all (especially the radical sub-set) agreed with this approach (Feldman 2003). In turn, the intensification of political

⁴¹ Devine (2003: 230) notes how, 'with the introduction of large-scale donor support at the start of the 1990s, an elite group of NGOs have moved into a league of their own in terms of size, budgets and staffing'. Examples include; BRAC, Proshika and ASA. At this time, these three NGOs controlled more than 72% of the total funds available to NGOs in Bangladesh (*ibid*).

patronage under electoral democracy made NGOs more vulnerable to allegations of co-option and malpractice (Lewis 2017).

Throughout the 1990s, the GoB reassessed NGO relations, guided by the new mainstream policy discourse that involved government-NGO ‘complementarity’ and ‘collaboration’ (noted above), but motivated primarily by the need to exert political control over NGO activities and funding (via the NGO Affairs Bureau)⁴², and deter opposition movements (*ibid*). The activities and subsequent demise of one large NGO (Proshika) became iconic of fraught state-civil society relations at this time. Whilst I will not go into great detail here, as the story has been told many times⁴³, the experience of Proshika is central to understanding the contemporary role of NGOs, CBOs and urban poor groups in Dhaka’s *bustees*. The reasons for this are elaborated below, and in chapter six.

Before the 1996 parliamentary elections, Proshika – led by the Founder and Chairman – mobilised thousands of rural and urban poor residents, and ran a ‘voter-education programme’, to challenge the then ruling BNP-led government, in support of the Awami League. BNP and *Jamaat-i-Islam* were regarded as a threat to secularism, women’s rights and to the ‘*very survival of NGOs in Bangladesh*’⁴⁴, so ‘*something had to be done*’ (KII Proshika Chairman 2015). Proshika and other NGOs organised a large rally in Dhaka with over 100,000 people to demand open, democratic elections. AL narrowly won the election and, when they came to power, ‘*NGOs gave a huge sigh of relief*’ (*ibid*).

Such overt political alignment had significant implications for Proshika, and the credibility of the NGO sector overall. When BNP was re-elected in 2001, there was a backlash against the NGO, with accusations of fund mismanagement and partisan politics, leading to the suspension of donor-committed and agreed funds, loss of staff and dramatic reduction of programmes (Devine 2006). One Proshika Project Manager

⁴² The NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) was set up in 1990 to regulate foreign-aid flows to NGOs (Haque 2002). Prior to this, the 1978 and 1982 military governments also passed laws to deter ‘radical’ mobilisation in the NGO sector by requiring NGOs to seek approval from certain ministries to access donor funds (Rahman 2006).

⁴³ See for example Devine (2003; 2006); Feldman (2003); Rahman (2006); Wood (2014).

⁴⁴ According to the Chairman, after the 1991 election, NGO schools, health centres and staff were targeted by (ruling) BNP and *Jamaat* followers who regarded them a threat to the religious and cultural sentiments of Islam (i.e. fearing NGOs were ‘converting’ people to Christianity and challenging women’s role in society) (KII 2015).

(PM) recalled how, 'in 2001, when BNP came to power, our entire fund was shut down. 31 projects had to suffer' (KII 2015). According to Rahman (2006: 461), 'any political action is conflated with partisan support for opposition parties, and ultimately reduces the legitimacy and efficacy of NGOs to serve as the voice for the poor'. Following the Proshika crisis, many NGOs shifted their focus from mobilisation to service delivery and microcredit⁴⁵, to avoid direct confrontation with the state (*ibid*). Even when AL returned to power in 2009, government officials remained suspicious of NGOs who had the ability to mobilise large numbers of people (Lewis 2017).

Contemporary Era (2000s-2017)

Contemporary trends indicate increased control and regulation of NGOs by the state, the ongoing dominance of Microfinance Institutions (MFIs), Microcredit (MCR) and service delivery, and the almost total disappearance of the 'radical' sub-sector (Lewis 2017). According to Lewis (2017: 19), the Awami League government has consolidated its power [and] become less tolerant of a diverse development NGO community. Recent years have seen a narrowing of civil society space in the mainstream, as well as the radical sub-sector'. In line with the arguments outlined above, Lewis (2017: 1-2) notes that the disappearance of this sub-sector is due to: 1) the institutional setting dominated by clientelistic structures that undermine efforts to build horizontal alliances in civil society, or links between NGOs and political parties; 2) a shift in donor support from mobilisation to market-based service delivery; and 3) internal structures that have generated legitimacy and accountability problems by encouraging elite capture, co-optation and personalised leadership. As a result, an apolitical service delivery NGO model increasingly dominates, with a shift from contestation to collaboration (*ibid*). Indeed, whilst many studies of NGOs 'are correct to stress the influence of western donors in driving this de-politicisation, the process in Bangladesh results from the combination of international donor pressure with a domestic environment inimical to political activism' (Rahman 2006: 451). This shift is not necessarily an intrinsic weakness of NGOs themselves, therefore, but a reaction to the political climate (*ibid*).

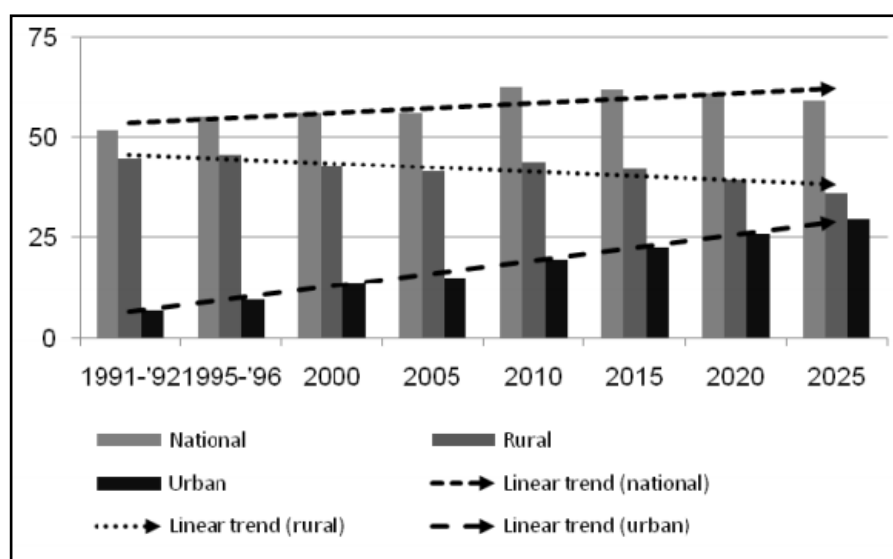
⁴⁵ Banks et al (2015: 712) note how 'more recently, accusations of corruption and the forced resignation of Mohammed Yunus from the Grameen Bank...are widely recognised as a government response to his post-Nobel prize attempts to create a 'people's' political party to foster change in the country's political culture'. This indicates that even large and powerful MCR organisations are not immune from government influence.

Though presented as separate entities, CSOs (including NGOs and CBOs) and the Bangladeshi state are internally fragmented, and deeply interconnected. Whilst in the past there were strong arguments for seeing the GoB as a ‘weak state’ in a ‘strong society’ (Migdal 1988 cited in White 1999), such distinctions are unhelpful in a contemporary context where political elites have ‘successfully politicised state institutions and organisations along party lines, and have established clientelistic control over civil society organisations’ (Hassan 2013: 10). This relates to Lewis’s (2011) discussion of ‘un-civil society’ in chapter two, and to the argument among some scholars that there is a gradual erosion of democratic norms and institutions in Bangladesh (Stiles 2002; Lewis 2004; Rahman 2006). What we see, instead, is a ‘limited-access order’ political system whereby CSOs are ‘unable to exist and function independently of the state’ (Wood 2014: 1). The irony, therefore, is that while NGOs cannot be seen to mobilise against the state (as in the Proshika case) they are ‘deeply enmeshed in political machines’ (Stiles 2002: 140). As we explore in chapter nine, these processes have potentially significant implications for transformative collective action among Dhaka’s *bustee* dwellers. Section 4.2 shifts our focus to the urban context. Particular emphasis is placed on the rise of urban poverty, rapid urbanisation, the proliferation of *bustee* settlements and associated service deprivation.

4.2. Urban Poverty and Rapid Urbanisation in Bangladesh

According to Banks et al (2011), Bangladesh is still perceived as a predominantly agrarian country, with poverty constructed as a rural phenomenon, and poverty estimates and measures centred on rural indicators. As indicated in chapter one, this neglects vital differences in urban areas, for example, greater reliance on the cash and informal economy, rising rent and bills, overcrowded living conditions, frequent evictions, environment hazards, social fragmentation, exposure to crime and violence (Rahman 2011). Whilst progress has been made in rural poverty reduction, urban poverty in Bangladesh is rising – as demonstrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Population below the poverty line 1991-2025 (DCI method, absolute number in millions)



(Eusuf 2010 cited in Banks et al 2011: 488)

Rural to urban migration due to economic necessity and climate-related hazards (e.g. cyclones and river erosion), and natural growth in urban areas is contributing to rapid urbanisation in Bangladesh (Rahman 2011). The urban population has grown (and continues to grow) at around 3% per annum (UN 2014), and the four major cities (Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi) contain over 56% of the total urban population (UNDP 2010; BBS 2012). As Bangladesh's urban agglomerations expand rapidly, so do the number of low-income settlements, known as *bustees* (Rashid 2000; 2009; Rahman 2001; Kazi 2010; Rahman 2011; Shikdar 2012; Ahmad 2014).

4.2.1. *Bustee* Settlements

Whilst *bustees* share characteristics outlined in the UN-HABITAT definition (chapter one), they vary significantly in age, size, land and housing tenure, occupancy type, service availability, level of collective organisation and NGO activity. Box 4.1 outlines the definition used in the 2014 Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) survey. Additional characteristics include; shared kitchen, bathroom facilities, water sources and household income below the poverty level (i.e. Tk. 5000 per month) (CUS 2006). Bihari Camps⁴⁶ also fall under this categorisation.

⁴⁶ Bihari Camps are settlements under the protection of the Red Cross that house refugees of Pakistani origin who were stranded in Bangladesh after 1971. Bihari's were granted citizenship by the GoB in 2008 but remain socially, economically, politically and spatially excluded, and suffer from violence and discrimination. Over 90% of Bihari's are illiterate and live in extreme poverty (Aljazeera 2014).

Box 4.1: Bustee definition

A slum (*bustee*) is a cluster of compact settlements of five or more households which grow very unsystematically and haphazardly in an unhealthy condition on government and private vacant land. Slums also exist on owner based premises. A slum has the following six characteristics:

- i. **Structures:** small *jhupri*, *tong*, *chai*, tin-shed, semi-pucca structures and dilapidated buildings built with very cheap materials,
- ii. **Density:** very high (approx. 300 persons per acre) – relates to a) crowded rooms (usually with all members of the household in one room) and b) structure density (three or more structures situated on one decimal of land),
- iii. **Ownership of land:** slums generally grow on government, semi-government, private vacant land, abandoned buildings/houses, hill slopes or rail-line and road sides,
- iv. **Water supply and sanitation:** water is insufficient and unsafe. Sanitation systems are inadequate (15 or more people use one toilet). Overall, a very unhygienic environment,
- v. **Lighting and road facilities:** very inadequate,
- vi. **Socio-economic condition:** socio-economic status of slum dwellers very low. Dwellers are usually engaged in informal non-agricultural jobs.

(BBS 2015: 5-6)

In GoB policy discourse, *bustees* are ‘negative aspects of urbanisation’ that must be managed, either through eviction, redevelopment or neglect. As noted in the GoB 6th Five-Year Plan (FY2011-2015):

Chaotic urban development and the accompanying unemployment, environmental degradation, lack of basic services, crime and the proliferation of slums are obviously major obstacles to creating better cities and better urban living conditions...The government needs to manage urbanisation in such a way that beneficial aspects of urbanisation are strengthened and negative aspects of urbanisation are minimised.

(GoB 2013a: 70)

Similarly, the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) notes that ‘the proliferation of slums needs to be discouraged’ (GoB 2013b: 91). For Banks et al (2011), the perception of Bangladesh as predominantly ‘rural’, plays an important role in maintaining rural bias in poverty reduction and explains, in part, the chronic neglect of the urban poor. According to Habib (2009: 263), ‘the majority of NGOs are [also] more concerned with rural development, although some do work in urban slums’. Of these NGOs, many are reluctant to work on housing for slum dwellers due to government eviction, tight regulation and control of land distribution systems. Many also ‘choose their field of intervention according to donor guidelines, which are unlikely to reflect the actual slum needs’ (*ibid*). Despite this, the number of NGOs working in urban areas – especially Dhaka – has risen in recent decades. As we explore in chapter six, NGOs provide various services, including; water and sanitation, healthcare, education,

MFI/MCR and legal-aid⁴⁷. Some have also formed citywide urban poor groups, three of which were active at the time of fieldwork (Box 4.2).

Box 4.2: Urban Poor Groups in Dhaka – BBOSC, NDBUS, NBUS

BBOSC (the ‘informal collective’): *Bangladesh Bostibashir Odhikar Shuroka Committee* (BBOSC) or ‘Slum Dwellers Rights Protection Committee’ is an informal collective of CBOs, established by the Coalition for Urban Poor (CUP) in 1996. CUP acts as an ‘umbrella’ organisation for BBOSC, providing financial, logistical support and training. Slum residents and low-income people can be members of BBOSC. BBOSC consists of 750 Primary Groups (CBOs), 65 Ward and 39 Thana Level Committees and a Central Committee (21 members). Achievements include; advocacy for voting, national I.D. cards and birth certificates, securing legal water and electricity connections.

NDBUS (the ‘sleeping giant’): *Nagar Daridra Bostibashir Unnayan Sangstha* (NDBUS) or ‘Urban Slum Dwellers Rights Development Agency’ emerged when some leaders split from BBOSC in 2003, and registered with the GoB NGOAB in 2008. Slum residents and low-income people can be members of NDBUS. NDBUS has 1800 primary, 78 ward, 24 thana, 10 zonal level committees and 1 central committee (with 15 members). They also have a general council with 45 members, and advisory committee. They have an election every 2 years. NDBUS focus on social mobilisation, anti-eviction, savings, land and housing. NDBUS worked with UPPRP, when they were given funds for mobilisation of savings groups. One major achievement of NDBUS was obtaining legal water supply in Korail *bustee* (the largest in Dhaka) via an MoU with DWASA in 2013.

NBUS (the ‘service provider’): ‘*Nogor Bostibashi Unnayan Sangstha*’ (NBUS) or ‘Urban Slum Development Agency’ formed through the initiative of DSK and WaterAid Bangladesh in 2008, and registered with the GoB Ministry of Social Welfare in 2010. NBUS evolved from a number of CBOs or ‘primary groups’ initiated in different slums to deliver water and sanitation projects. These 370 CBOs form the base of the organisation. The executive committee has 15 members (10 men and 5 women), who meet monthly, and 30 general members who attend the AGM. Membership is voluntary and elections are every two years. The main focus of NBUS is on securing land tenure, housing and basic services. Unlike BBOSC and NDBUS, only slum residents can be members of NBUS, proven on production of a national I.D card. Achievements include; anti-eviction campaigns in Korail and Bagan Bari and legal water provision to over 42 slums in Dhaka.

Collectively, BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS have members in over 80% of slums in Dhaka. The three groups also have representatives in the National Federation, an initiative of DSK and other NGOs in Dhaka to bring together NGOs and CBOs working for the urban poor across Bangladesh.

(Based on KIIs with BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS 2015)

Thanks, in part, to the role of NGOs, BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS, gradual shifts in discourse are occurring. For example, there is now greater emphasis on *in-situ* upgrading (GoB 2013b: 92-93; 99) and improving living conditions for slum dwellers. As noted in the GoB 7th Five-Year Plan (FY 2016-2020):

There is a need to change attitudes towards slum settlements. It should be recognised that slums/squatters are an integral part of urban areas and contribute significantly to the economy both through their labour market contributions and informal production activities...Even where slum clearance is considered essential in public interest, the slum dwellers are entitled to receive basic minimum services until proper relocation and resettlement provisions have been made.

(GoB 2015: 539)

⁴⁷ The NGO Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) has played a prominent role in providing legal-aid to Dhaka’s *bustee* residents.

The incorporation of *bustees* into national Water and Sanitation (WatSan) policies and strategies, is also particularly notable, and relevant for this thesis. Section 4.2.2 outlines WatSan trends in Bangladesh, GoB roles and responsibilities, policies, plans and strategies in greater depth. Unpacking the broader policy context is important to understand why certain forms of collective action (i.e. NGO-initiated CBOs) dominate at the settlement level.

4.2.2. Urban Service Provision

Contemporary WatSan Trends

A large proportion of the population in Bangladesh, especially those living in ‘hard to reach’ areas (such as *bustees*) do not have access to safe drinking water (GoB 2011; 2016). In 2010, water supply coverage was around 94.96% – 35.57% of which was supplied via pipes and 59.18% by hand pump tube wells (BBS 2010). Whilst progress has been made in transitioning from traditional drinking sources (e.g. ponds/canals) to improved sources, coverage of piped supply is just 32% in urban areas (Table 4.1). This is problematic given that future urban water supply must rely on the piped system, as tube wells are contaminated with arsenic and faecal coliforms from leaching pit latrines and septic tanks (GoB 2013b: 92). Water supply is also unreliable and intermittent in urban areas (Mahmud and Mbuya 2015). In 2013, Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (DWASA) supplied 2110 million litres of water per day to around 12.5 million people, against a demand of 2250 million litres per day (GoB 2013b; GoB 2015). Whilst coverage in Dhaka has improved from 65% in 1998 (GoB 1998), increasing water stress through contamination and aquifer depletion has major implications for water quality and quantity. Table 4.1 provides an overview of drinking water coverage in Bangladesh, based on the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Project (JMP) standard.

Table 4.1: Drinking Water Coverage in Bangladesh (1990-2015)

Bangladesh	Drinking water coverage estimates					
	Urban (%)		Rural (%)		Total (%)	
	1990	2015	1990	2015	1990	2015
Piped onto premises	23	32	0	1	5	12
Other improved source ⁴⁸	58	55	65	86	63	75
Other unimproved	17	13	28	13	26	13
Surface water	2	0	7	0	6	0

(WHO/UNICEF JMP Dataset 2015)

Improved access to water was mostly found among more solvent households in urban areas (*ibid*). Slum dwellers are particularly vulnerable, as they are ‘unaware of the ill effects of unsafe water, unhygienic latrines, and improper disposal of solid wastes and consequently suffer from diseases and burdens of healthcare costs’ (GoB 2011: 18). As most *bustees* are located on lowlands or wetlands, they also face problems with low water pressure and inadequate drainage, particularly during monsoon (*ibid*). This can exacerbate contamination of drinking water via mixing of wastewater and faecal sludge with leaking pipes. As noted in chapter one, women and young girls (the primary water collectors) unequally bear the burden of inadequate water supply in *bustees*, often suffering from chronic back and neck pain from using rusted, old or dilapidated tube wells, and spending hours queueing or searching for water (Sultana et al 2013; EcoPoor 2016). Many also face sexual harassment and ill-health due to overcrowded shared latrines, lack of washrooms and menstrual health facilities (Joshi et al 2012).

A nationwide baseline survey on sanitation coverage in 2003 revealed that only 33% of households had hygienic latrines. Around 55 million people (42% households) did not use any form of latrine, and defecated in the open (GoB 2005). Repeat surveys in 2015 revealed that open defecation reduced to less than 1%, and improved sanitation coverage increased by 28% to 61% (GoB 2016). However, the quality of sanitation is a concern, with just over half of the population in urban areas having access to improved facilities, and around one third sharing facilities. Shared latrines connect to a water trap that breaks off soon after it is installed, exposing the content of the pit and making the latrine unhygienic (World Bank 2013b). Again, improved facilities in urban areas were mostly found among more solvent households (WHO/UNICEF 2015). Table 4.2 provides an overview of estimated sanitation coverage.

⁴⁸ JMP defines an improved water source as one that, by nature of its construction or through active intervention, is protected from outside contamination with faecal matter.

Table 4.2: Sanitation Coverage in Bangladesh (1990-2015)

Bangladesh	Sanitation coverage estimates					
	Urban (%)		Rural (%)		Total (%)	
	1990	2015	1990	2015	1990	2015
Improved facilities ⁴⁹	47	58	31	62	34	61
Shared facilities	24	30	14	28	16	28
Other unimproved	19	12	15	8	16	10
Open defecation	10	0	40	2	34	1

(WHO/UNICEF JMP Dataset 2015)

Conventional sewer systems are absent in all urban areas except Dhaka. Within Dhaka, only 20-25% of the population are served by a sewer network (GoB 2013b: 92-93). In *bustees*, limited access to hygienic latrines, hand washing facilities and adequate Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) has major implications for health. Many residents use simple pit latrines with/without water seals, septic tanks, cluster latrines, communal latrines or *tong* (hanging) sanitation suspended over water bodies. Only 8% of households in *bustees* have improved access to sanitation facilities, compared with an urban average of 76%, and the use of hanging latrines is twice as high in *bustees* compared to the national average (GoB 2016). In urban areas like Dhaka, the long-term aim is to extend the public sewer system to new areas, including existing slums, and improve FSM (GoB 2013b: 93). The latter is a major challenge as de-sludging is unaffordable for many residents, and de-sludging vehicles cannot pass through narrow lanes and alleyways. As a result, sludge is often emptied into nearby water bodies or open fields, exacerbating localised contamination (EcoPoor 2016). Though sanitation is also DWASA's responsibility, it lags behind significantly (GoB 2016).

GoB WatSan Roles and Responsibilities

The Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives is responsible for monitoring and governing water, sanitation, storm water drainage and solid waste management, as well as formulating policies through the Local Government Division (LGD). The LGD includes the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Water and Sewerage Authorities (WASAs) and National Institute of Local Government. WASAs are responsible for WatSan coverage in Dhaka and Chittagong, whilst DPHE and City Corporations are responsible for smaller cities, towns and rural areas. The LGD also oversees activities

⁴⁹ JMP defines an improved facility as one that hygienically separates human excreta from human contact.

within the City Corporations. Table 4.3 summarises LGD departments involved in WatSan provision in Dhaka. The role of DWASA, DNCC and SDD is particularly relevant for this thesis, as these institutions mediate and monitor NGO activities and service provision in *bustees*.

Table 4.3: Key WatSan Institutions in Dhaka

Department/ Institution	Roles and Responsibilities
Local Government Engineering Department (LGED)	LGED provides technical and management support to Urban Local Institutions (e.g. City Corporations, City Councils) to implement urban infrastructure development programmes. Activities include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and maintenance of water supply and sanitation, solid waste management and drainage projects, • Maintenance of water and sanitation infrastructure, • Planning and implementation of slum upgrading projects, • Development of Land use plan, survey & digital mapping.
Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (DWASA)	DWASA was established in 1963 to provide water and sanitation to Dhaka and Narayanganj. DWASA is divided into 11 operational zones. Activities include construction, improvement, operation and maintenance of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure to store, treat and supply potable water to residential, commercial and industrial consumers, • Infrastructure to collect, treat and dispose of residential sewage, and commercial and industrial wastes, • Infrastructure for adequate drainage, and • Provision of water and sewerage connections to new customers (including Low Income Communities – LICs).
Dhaka North and South City Corporations (DNCC and DSCC)	Dhaka was given the status of City Corporation in 1983. Dhaka City Corporation was divided into DNCC and DSCC in 2012. Mandatory functions of the City Corporations include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection and disposal of waste, • Provision and regulation of water supply, • Provision of water connections to new customers, • Approval of construction works, • Provision and maintenance of drainage, • Establishment and maintenance of public markets, Optional functions include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision and maintenance of parks and gardens, • Provision of public urinals and latrines, • Slum improvement.
Slum Development Department (SDD)	Established in 2012, SDD is one of 14 departments in DNCC ⁵⁰ . Activities include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and construction of roads/footpaths, drainage and waste management via NGOs, • Monitoring, regulation and coordination of NGO activities, • Research/data collection.

(Adapted from World Vision 2014; DWASA 2017; LGED 2017)

GoB WatSan Policies, Strategies and Programmes

There are five national strategies for water and sanitation in Bangladesh: the National Sanitation Strategy (2005); Pro-Poor Strategy for Water and Sanitation Sector (2005);

⁵⁰ In DSCC this is known as the ‘Slum Improvement Development Department’.

National Cost-Sharing Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation (2011); National Strategy for Water and Sanitation in Hard to Reach Areas (2011); and National Hygiene Promotion Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation Sector (2012). These five strategies, as well as Citizen Charters, Five-Year Plans and Sector Development Plans, build upon the 1998 National Policy for Safe Water Supply and Sanitation that aims to ‘supply safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation to all’ (GoB 1998). Appendix 3 highlights key agreements (in chronological order) relating to *bustees*. Despite changing rhetoric, there are still no water and sanitation policies specifically for urban slums.

Whilst the GoB is primarily responsible for providing safe water and hygienic sanitation to all citizens (regardless of age, gender, ethnicity and class), responsibility is largely shared with the private sector and CSOs. Community participation (via CBOs) is deemed particularly central to water and sanitation provision in *bustees*, with NGOs and CBOs posited as key partners for cost-sharing and implementation. For example, the 1998 policy refers to ‘development of [the] water supply and sanitation sector through local bodies, public-private sector, NGOs, CBOs and women’s groups’ (p5) and that a ‘congenial atmosphere will be created and necessary support provided to facilitate increased participation of the private sector, NGOs and CBOs in sector activities’ (p14). Similarly, the 2011 Hard to Reach strategy states that ‘community water point connections from DWASA supply network and community sanitation blocks managed by CBOs have successfully demonstrated improved slum conditions and such approaches should be mainstreamed in the development plans of urban authorities’ (GoB 2011: 19). It also states that ‘community water points and sanitation blocks [are] to be built and maintained by CBOs with assistance from NGOs and collaboration with urban utilities’ (*ibid*).

As legitimate development partners, NGO-initiated CBOs are ‘increasingly taking over responsibility of operating and maintaining water points and community latrines in urban slums’ (*ibid*: 6). CBOs are also increasingly used to deliver hygiene training, motivational activities and capacity building, reflecting the discursive shift at the national (and indeed international level) from WatSan to WASH – Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. One of the most significant policy shifts to date was the change in DWASA’s Citizen Charter in 2007, outlined in chapter six.

Despite progress, these policies, strategies and agreements are not legally binding, and there are various logistical, political and financial barriers to implementation. Ambitious

targets are set, but not met, such as the WatSan Sector Plan (FY 2011-25) which pledged to ‘supply pure drinking water to the entire population by 2011, and bring each house under hygienic sanitation by 2013’ (GoB 2011: 3), or DWASA announcement in 2013 that it would ‘provide water to all slums in Dhaka by 2015’ (The Financial Express 2013). Lack of coordination is one major barrier to achieving sector goals. As noted in the GoB 7th Five-Year Plan (2015: 513), ‘the involvement of multiple organisations in the urban development process results in uncoordinated and overlapping activities. Major urban functions are divided among various ministries but their activities are not effectively coordinated at the local level’. For example, an estimated 42 institutions are involved in urban development in Dhaka’s Metropolitan Area⁵¹ alone. Lack of communication and funds, internal fragmentation, crises of legitimacy, accountability and autonomy between and within these institutions has particular implications for service provision in low-income areas (Panday and Panday 2008; Panday and Jamil 2011; IGS 2012; Islam 2013, see also section 4.3).

Lack of funding, low City Corporation and DWASA capacity are further challenges. Of the funds available for water and sanitation, 35% are from GoB sources, with the majority (65%) from development partners (e.g. donors and NGOs) or private actors. Urban local governments also remain heavily dependent on central funds and personnel (Islam 2013). According to Banks (2010: 28), DNCC and DSCC ‘remain administratively, managerially and financially weak...with central government retaining significant powers’. Furthermore, centrally-allocated funds ‘do not prioritise poverty reduction’ (*ibid*). To sustain the progress achieved so far, a greater contribution and commitment from the GoB is required to fund and install public goods (Mahmud and Mbuya 2016: 27-39). ‘Good governance’ is posited as central to improving water and sanitation outcomes in Dhaka’s *bustees* by researchers (e.g. Roy et al 2012; Rahman et al 2014) and donors (e.g. World Bank 2016; ADB 2017) alike.

In summary, there appears to be an increasing gap between political commitment to poverty reduction, service provision and lived reality (Mahmud 2002; Banks et al 2011). This is particularly evident in Dhaka, where over 35% of the population live in *bustees*, on just 5.1% of the land (CUS 2006; Angeles et al 2009). Section 4.3 focuses on the Dhaka context in greater depth. It is argued that the mismatch between GoB discourse, policy and practice (noted above), has resulted in informal governance and service

⁵¹ Including; Dhaka, Narayanganj, Savar and Narsingdi Districts.

delivery configurations at the settlement level, with implications for the forms of collective action emerging.

4.3. (Informal) Governance and Service Provision in Dhaka's *bustees*

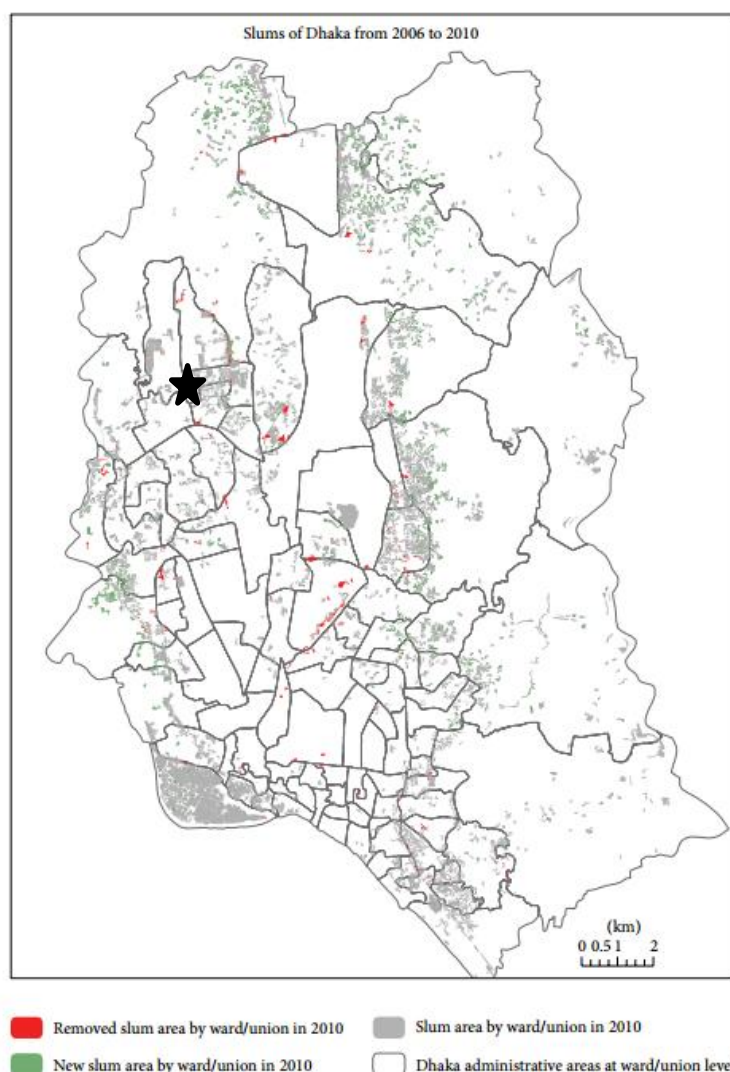
4.3.1. Dhaka's *Bustees*

Once known as a town of '52 markets and 53 lanes', Dhaka has undergone rapid change in the past 400 years to become a modern 'megacity', with a population of over 16 million, predicted to reach 20 million by 2020 (Ahmed et al 2012). As a primary city, Dhaka has a larger population than Chittagong, Khulna and Barisal combined, and an average growth rate of 4.4% per annum (UN-HABITAT 2008). The city is also one of the most densely populated in the world, with an average 44,000 inhabitants per square kilometre, compared to 17,325 in Karachi, Pakistan, 12,700 in Lagos, Nigeria and 9,500 in Mexico City (Cox 2012).

The rapid growth of Dhaka is clearly not commensurate with its overall development, with a significant increase in the number of *bustees* in recent decades (Ahmed 2012). 4966 settlements were recorded in 2005 (CUS 2006), rising to 6489 in 2014 (BBS 2015)⁵². Within Dhaka, Mirpur has the highest concentration (in absolute terms) of slum dwellers (377, 608), followed by Mohammadpur (299, 376), Lalbagh (151, 844), and Demra (141,834) (CUS 2006). Between 1975 and 2003, and during the caretaker government in 2008, large-scale evictions took place to reclaim public land, with smaller evictions common around key political events (Mohit 2012). Spatial mapping in 2010 by Gruebner et al (2014) reveals how evictions, rising land values and competition for land has pushed slums from core to peripheral areas, indicated by the grey clusters in Figure 4.2. 70-80% of *bustees* in Dhaka are now thought to be located in DNCC, though exact numbers remain unclear (KII SDO 2015).

⁵² The BBS figures have been criticised by CSOs for grossly underestimating the number of slum and floating people through methodological bias and inaccuracy (KIIs 2015).

Figure 4.2: Mapping Dhaka's *bustees* (2006 to 2010)



(Gruebner et al 2014: 4. Star indicates Mirpur and location of field sites)

Access to (and control over) land, housing and services in Dhaka is highly politicised, especially as land values continue to rise (Nahiduzzaman 2012). For example, in the wealthy area of Gulshan, the cost of land rose from Tk. 2398 in 1975 (per sq mtr) to Tk. 106891 in 2005 (Kamruzzaman and Ogura 2008 cited in Rahman 2011: 46). The cost of *bustee* housing is also much higher in Gulshan (e.g. Korail *bustee*) compared to other settlements in the city (e.g. Tk. 5000 per month, rather than Tk. 2-3000) (SSQs 2015). Over 77% of the 4966 slums surveyed in 2005 were located on privately owned land i.e. single owners (42.4%), or multiple owners (34.8%). Conversely, only 21% of slums were located on publicly owned land⁵³, with 2% on land owned by NGOs (Angeles et al

⁵³ Settlements on 'public' land can be disaggregated into those with partial recognition (e.g. resettlement sites), 'illegal' (i.e. along railway tracks and ponds) or under Government protection. The latter refers to

2009). According to Banks et al (2011) virtually all new low-income settlements will be built on private land. This has implications for access to affordable housing and services, as poor households cannot afford rising rent and bills (Rahman 2011; Islam 2013). As indicated in chapter three, rising private ownership also has potential implications for collective action, as landlords may block NGO and CBO activity (Roy et al 2012; Roy and Hulme 2013).

Whilst the urban poor have a much greater need for government support, state ‘neglect’, unwillingness or inability to deliver services in Dhaka’s *bustees* has resulted in ‘highly formalised informal’ systems of governance that mediate access to housing and services (Islam et al 2003; Banks 2008; 2012; 2015; Panday and Panday 2008; Hossain 2012; 2013). An array of actors provide and mediate services in this context, including; private landlords, house owners, local leaders, political patrons, *mastaans*, illegal vendors, NGOs and CBOs. Section 4.3.2 outlines these dynamics in greater depth.

4.3.2. (Informal) Governance and Service Provision

Within Dhaka, DNCC and DSCC are each headed by a democratically elected Mayor, and 90 wards (in 10 zones) are each headed by a democratically elected Ward Councillor. The wards constitute the most localised level of municipal governance. As the closest representatives to residents, ward councillors and MPs (of which there are eight in DNCC) play a central role in city governance. However, ‘lacking a fully defined framework of duties and responsibilities, [they] are left to perform their responsibilities according to their individual initiative and commitment’ (Banks 2008: 362). This is problematic as ‘many lack empathy for the poor and fail to prioritise their needs’ (*ibid*). Large ward-sizes⁵⁴ also mean that ward councillors and other officials rarely engage directly with *bustee* residents, but use politically-affiliated local leaders⁵⁵ to manage these relationships (Banks 2015).

According to Hossain (2013), the government fears that large urban areas controlled by opposition parties will damage their chances of re-election, so operating through these

sweeper colonies. As fourth-class government employees, sweepers have relative tenure security and can access ‘free’ or heavily subsidised water, electricity and sanitation services (EcoPoor 2016).

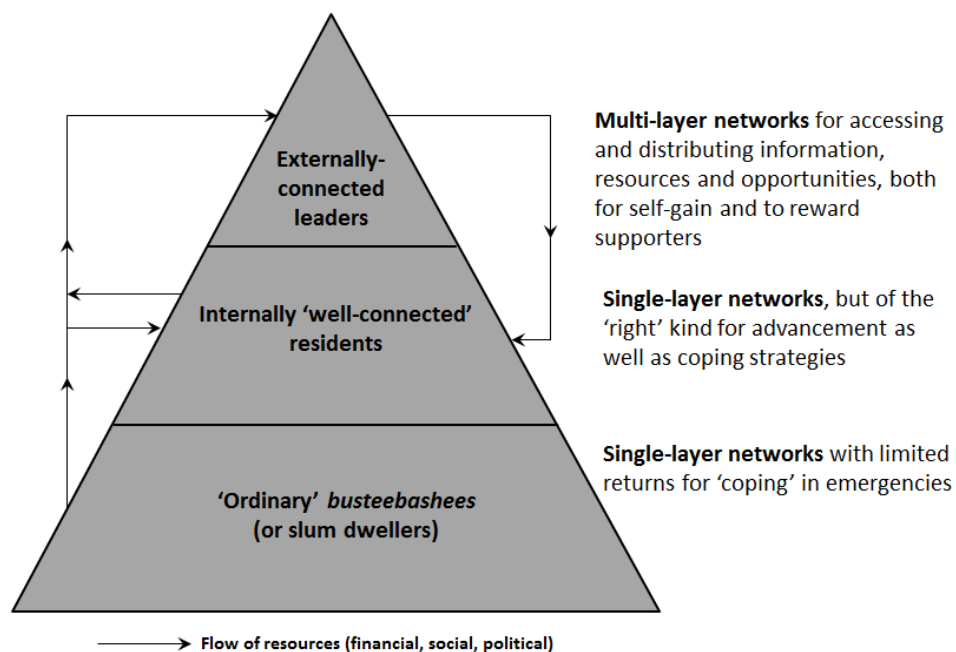
⁵⁴ Whilst village-level tiers of local government serve around 27,000 people (CGS/BRACRED 2006), ward councillors head constituencies of up to 100,000 (Rahman 1998; Siddiqui et al 2000; Siddiqui 2004 cited in Banks 2010: 28).

⁵⁵ Throughout this thesis, reference to ‘local leader’ refers to politically-affiliated individuals that live within, and oversee governance of, the settlement.

leaders minimises the risk of anti-government movements emerging. This also means that ward councillors, MPs and other officials have little incentive to be directly responsive towards, accountable to, or inclusive of, *bustee* residents (Banks 2008). Whilst formal voting rights given to the urban poor in 1994 acted to strengthen political participation, accountability and create spaces for mobilisation, the quality and depth of participation is also questionable (Khan 1997 cited in Banks 2008). For many, political participation among the urban poor is characterised by political patronage and ‘vote buying’ (*ibid*). This administrative and political ‘gap’ is linked to the emergence of *mastaans*, and prevalence of patron-client relations in Dhaka’s *bustees* (Wood 2003; Sen and Hulme 2006; Banks 2008; 2010; 2012; 2015; Hackenbroch and Hossain 2012; Hossain 2013). These ‘deep structures’ can ‘imprison’ residents within relationships of dependence (Wood 2000) and – as indicated in chapter two – restrict the formation of strong, horizontal networks required for collective action (Devine 2006).

Whilst not necessarily ‘progressive’, these relationships are part of the daily reality and only source of support for the urban poor in Dhaka’s *bustees*. Figure 4.3 demonstrates how this dependency plays out in different ‘tiers’ at the settlement level. As indicated in chapter two, the type, strength and direction of these networks varies according to the individuals and groups in question, and are mediated by gender, age, ethnicity, kinship, income level and political affiliation (Nicholls 2009; Hossain 2013).

Figure 4.3: Social hierarchies and patron-client relationships in a *bustee* setting



(Banks 2012: 49)

Within this context, *mastaans*, landlords, house owners and local leaders (often the same person/people) use their political connections to control housing and services (Banks 2015). Only those with the ‘right connections’ (i.e. to government officials, politicians and local businessmen) can become an informal service provider (*ibid*). Local leaders largely exert their power over residents via local committees (usually representing the two main parties – AL and BNP), and informal courts, based on the traditional *shalish* system⁵⁶ (Ahmed and Johnson 2014; Banks 2010; 2015). As noted by Banks (2015: 13), ‘at any one time, one political committee is in control, drawing its power from the government in office at the national level. Power dynamics therefore shift within the settlement in line with changes to the ruling party’. As we explore in chapters seven and eight, the fact that the ruling party (AL) has not changed since 2009 has significant implications for opposition party supporters at the settlement level.

4.4. Concluding Remarks

This chapter situated the research within the broader urban governance context in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This was important, because urban governance is understood to affect service provision, and the type of collective action emerging at the settlement level. Section 4.1 outlined historical and contemporary political trends, with particular emphasis on shifting state-civil society relations. Existing literature suggests a reduction of ‘democratic’ space, and move away from social and political mobilisation, to MFI/MCR and service delivery among NGOs. Whilst useful, the implications for the urban context remain underexplored. Chapter six therefore nuances this debate, by focusing on the changing role of urban NGOs and CBOs in Dhaka. Section 4.2 focused on the rise of urban poverty and urbanisation, with the proliferation of *bustee* settlements. Key shifts within GoB WatSan policy were highlighted, whereby NGOs and CBOs are posited as key partners for service provision in *bustees*. Despite progress, there is an apparent mismatch between GoB discourse, policy and practice. Section 4.3 outlined the gap between ‘formal’ governance structures and the lived reality in many *bustees*, characterised by patron-client relations and the dominance of politically-affiliated leaders in housing and service provision. Chapter five outlines the implications of these governance configurations for service provision and collective action in the three case study field sites.

⁵⁶ The *shalish* is an informal community court that carries out social arbitration in an open, public setting. Mediation is carried out with the help of family, friends or neighbours. If that fails, a formalised process is adopted, with help from respected persons (e.g. elders) or those in positions of authority (e.g. leaders, religious clerics, teachers and ward councillors) (Jahan 2009 cited in Ahmed and Johnson 2014: 278).

5. The Case Studies: Three *Bustees* in Mirpur, Dhaka

This first empirical chapter provides an overview of the three case study field sites in Mirpur, Dhaka, drawing on community profiling, participant observation, Semi-Structured Questionnaires (SSQs), In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), mini census and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). This overview is important, because it situates observations at the settlement level within the citywide and national urban governance context (outlined in chapter four), and provides the backdrop for chapters six to eight. The chapter is divided into two sections. Section 5.1 outlines settlement characteristics that are understood to affect CBO type, participation, function and outcomes, including; history and population, housing and land tenure type, eviction threat, water and sanitation provision and political context. Section 5.2 examines the key problems, solutions and responsible actors identified in each site. This reveals the complex processes behind access to (and mediation of) services, and a potential mismatch between the WASH agenda promoted by NGOs and donors, and priorities of residents themselves.

5.1. Settlement Characteristics

5.1.1. Site 1

History and Population

Site 1 is located in a large area of middle and low-income housing, with *bustee* housing in the Western and Eastern part. For logistical reasons (i.e. existing contacts, size of area, timing), data collection focused primarily on the Eastern part, though crossover was inevitable (see section 3.3.2). Whilst located on public land, numerous private owners laid claim to different plots, constructing tin-shed or concrete houses to rent out and run businesses. To date, it remains unclear which parts are publicly or privately owned. DWASA and some NGOs (e.g. World Vision) classified the area as ‘private’, adding to this confusion (KIIs 2015).

Whilst rental housing has expanded rapidly alongside the *jheel* (pond) in recent years, the overall number of households in the area has declined. For example, a 2005 community map indicated there were 1500 households (approximately 5000-6000

people), whilst the 2015 mini census revealed 802 households (approximately 3200-4000 people), with an average of 4-5 people per household. Eviction and relocation of households by one *jamider* (landowner), land grabbing, the expansion of a college, new apartments and construction of roads and drainage by DNCC are all linked to *bustee* housing decline.

Housing and Land Tenure Type

In Site 1 there are approximately 40 private (gated) plots with walkways and rows of (10-20) rooms on each side, as well as multiple hanging bamboo constructions along the *jheel* and dispersed pockets of housing within the centre known as 'P41's *bustee*'. Housing type and quality ranged significantly, from *jhupri* (temporary structures made of plastic, polythene, board, scraps etc), *kutchha* (semi-durable structures with wall and roof of bamboo, wood, leaves etc), *semi-pucca/tin-shed* (concrete wall, tin roof), *pucca* (concrete) to two-storey. By the *jheel*, tin-shed rooms were constructed on bamboo stilts above the water. The variation in living condition reflects the inequality in the area.

Community profiling revealed that the vast majority of gated plots had Holding Numbers (HNs)⁵⁷, displayed on a blue plaque above the entrance. Although this provides partial tenure security and access to services, the majority of owners did not have legal documentation for the land, meaning they could be evicted at any time (SSQs, IDIs and KIIs 2015). According to one resident, some 'illegal' position holders obtained fake documents by bribing staff at the land records office (IDI P5 2015). The blurring of public/private ownership had implications for service provision, costs and CBO formation in Site 1 (elaborated in chapter six).

Many residents in Site 1 were tenants. Out of a snapshot of 70 SSQ respondents, 52 were tenants, 11 were owners (of multiple rooms), 6 were managers and 1 was a 'landowner' (SSQs 2015). The landowner (P41) claimed his family had lived in the area for generations, and the land was in his father's name. P41's family rented out over 100 rooms to tenants paying either monthly land rent of approximately Tk. 600-1000 (who constructed their own dwellings and 'owned' the house) or monthly room rent of approximately Tk. 2500-3000 (living in households constructed by the owner). Other room owners stated they bought land or paid for a plot informally via local influential

⁵⁷ Only those with holding numbers can obtain legal services (e.g. electricity, gas and water) from City Corporation. Holding numbers are obtained (for a fee of Tk. 300-500) from DNCC. Proof of legal home and land ownership is required.

people, and constructed housing to rent out. In one case, 10 families pooled resources to construct housing along the *jheel*, paying a one-off ‘fee’ of Tk. 10,000 per family to local influential people for the position (field observations 2015).

Rent in other parts of Site 1 varied according to the agreement with the owner, tenant status/role (i.e. as manager), location, housing type, service availability and quality (e.g. private or communal kitchen, bathroom, latrine, gas and so on). In some lanes and plots the rent was Tk. 1500 or 2000 per month for tin-shed households, rising to Tk. 2500-3000 for *pucca* and Tk. 3500 for two-story housing. Some rent included bills (e.g. electricity, water, waste collection, gas) whilst others did not, with extra required. Many rooms were also empty with ‘to let’ signs, awaiting new tenants or redevelopment. Rent and bill increase was identified as a major concern for poorer tenants. As one tenant remarked, ‘*some families are earning more than 1 lakh [Tk. 100,000], 2 lakhs [Tk. 200,000] taka as rent per month. I know, I know*’ (SSQ P25 2015). Site 1 was the most expensive location to rent a room out of the three field sites.

Eviction Threat

The majority of tenants and house owners face ongoing fear of eviction. Large-scale evictions in 2008 by the (then) caretaker government removed multiple dwellings, both here and in Site 3. During fieldwork in 2015, over 40 households in P41s *bustee* were demolished by hired *mastaans*, with little warning. According to displaced residents, this followed a dispute between the local ward councillor and P41. The former claimed that P41 had appropriated the land illegally, and reclaimed it to expand the public college (SSQs 2015). The tenants, all from Bhola District, were forced to relocate to nearby rental accommodation, or scattered further afield. Photo 5.1 depicts the aftermath of the displacement, with four NGO sanitation chambers, one water point and school reduced to rubble. A wall was rapidly built around the vacant land by the college authorities to prevent re-building.

Photo 5.1: Demolished Houses, NGO Water Points and Sanitation Chambers



Water point and NGO chamber

Boundary wall

(Author's own 2015)

During fieldwork I observed the destruction of another NGO sanitation chamber and shops in the Eastern boundary by P41s family (Photo 5.2), so they could build brick shops, and charge a higher rate to shop owners i.e. Tk. 2500 per month, compared to Tk. 500 per month previously (field observations 2015). According to local residents, the destruction of sanitation chambers was a common occurrence, though at times they were re-built elsewhere (SSQs 2015). Houses near the *jheel* on the North-Western side were also demolished by DNCC for construction of a road to the Army cantonment.

Photo 5.2: Demolition of NGO Sanitation Chamber



(Author's own 2015)

WatSan Provision and Key Issues

Service availability and quality varied between the different plots and households in Site 1 according to the initiative of (and relationship between) the tenants, managers, house owners, and level of NGO or CBO engagement. Managers and owners acted as intermediaries for tenants, negotiating directly or indirectly with service providers and lower-level government staff, often using their political and economic leverage to do so (SSQs 2015). Whilst some plots and households had legal DWASA connections, other residents bought water from a vendor or used illegal lines. Some complained that they paid a fee (e.g. Tk. 500) to NGOs for a legal connection, had their illegal line cut, but had still not been connected to the DWASA line months later (SSQs 2015). Table 5.1 provides a summary of service provision, approximate costs and problems identified by participants. Photo 5.3 depicts the range of WatSan facilities in Site 1.

Table 5.1: Summary of WatSan Provision in Site 1

Service	Cost (Tk. per month, per household)	Type and Status	Provision & Maintenance	Problems Identified
Water	<i>Tenants:</i> 100-200 or included in rent. <i>Owners:</i> 600-1500 according to meter & number of rooms	Some legal DWASA connections obtained via landowner or NGOs (e.g. ARBAN, NGO Forum & WSUP) with tube wells and reserve tanks. 15-20 ARBAN points. Some illegal lines and water vendors	Managers and owners, residents or ‘middlemen’ & women. Some user CBOs and new NGOs repair/install taps. Illegal water vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Illegal lines (pressure from NGOs and DWASA) - Limited supply and low pressure in line - Dirty water - Unpaid DWASA bills, lines cut - Accidental break in line (e.g. construction work)
Sanitation	No regular bill but 5-10% co-sharing fee if NGO chamber + maintenance costs (e.g. 100 for cleaning materials) DSK or DNCC Vacutag truck (Tk. 1500-2000 per call out)	20 ARBAN blocks (2-4 chambers/block with septic tanks). 3 WSUP and NGO Forum flush systems. Some hanging sanitation by <i>jheel</i> and private pit latrines and chambers built by managers or owners, connected haphazardly to sewage channels	User CBOs but managers and owners control access. DSK Vacutag truck empties tanks on demand. Residents, managers or owners responsible for private latrines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overcrowding, long queues - Many damaged and costly to repair - Leaking and overflowing septic tanks, expensive to empty/clean - Unequal access (e.g. some locked) - Some NGO blocks damaged/removed - Unhygienic

(Based on 70 SSQs, IDIs, FGDs and mini census 2015)

Multiple WASH NGOs, such as DSK, ARBAN and NGO Forum/WSUP have worked in Site 1 over the past 10-15 years. During one FGD, participants shared how NGOs were not initially welcomed to the area by older settlers and house owners, as they felt that external agencies would grab the land and evict them (FGD 2015). One FGD participant remarked, ‘*the DSK lady fieldworkers came secretly to the area to take a community survey and interviews due to the local control over the area*’ (ibid). Over time however, NGOs entered Site 1 with the support of local political leaders and owners, some of whom became ‘WASH champions’, bringing in other organisations (elaborated in chapter seven).

Photo 5.3: WatSan Facilities in Site 1

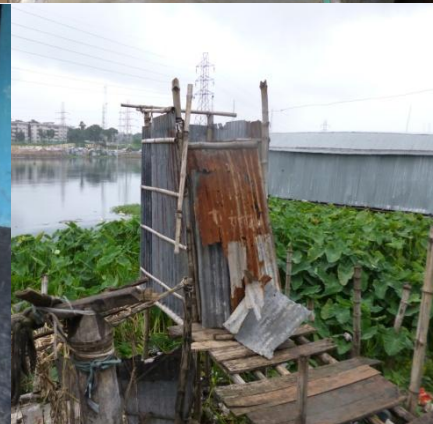
DWASA pipes



ARBAN well



ARBAN sanitation chamber



Tong (hanging) sanitation

(Author's own 2015)

Political Context

Site 1 is under the jurisdiction of a very powerful MP and his family. The housing and land market in the area reflects this political dynamic, with members of the family accused of 'grabbing land' to construct and rent out *bustee* dwellings (SSQs, IDIs and FGD 2015). During fieldwork, over 30 new houses were built along the *jheel* by local influential people affiliated with the MP. They filled the *jheel* with sand and rubbish to create land, and then constructed tin-shed houses on bamboo stilts. Tea stall owners in these areas acted as 'brokers' for the new rooms, arranging 1-2 year leases for the position (SSQs 2015). Some residents were reluctant to discuss housing development in the area for fear of retribution from local political leaders. However, the issue frequently emerged in SSQs, IDIs and the FGDs. One FGD participant remarked, '*local political leaders do not bother about our problems. There is a lot of vacant land, they are grabbing this and renting it at a high price to us!*' (FGD 2015).

Site 1 is understood to be a ruling party (Awami League) stronghold. At the time of fieldwork, two Zonal AL Sub-Wing offices and one AL Youth Wing (Jubo League)⁵⁸ office were located in the settlement. There was also a ‘club house’ (located nearby) which – according to residents – was run by the MPs brothers and cousins, who deliver ‘justice’ to those seeking arbitration (SSQs 2015). Whilst there were no internally, leader-initiated CBOs involved in service provision in Site 1, local political leaders (often house owners) directly and/or indirectly controlled and mediated services, and were actively involved in NGO-initiated CBOs. As one CBO leader remarked, ‘*if you want to bring gas, electricity or water connections, you have to pay something to these local political leaders*’ (IDI P5 2015).

5.1.2. Site 2

History and Population

Site 2 was established in 1999 on public land allocated for the resettlement of evicted families from 12 *bustees* across Dhaka. Residents were temporarily rehabilitated here as per a High Court Stay Order by the (then) AL government for three months. However, the settlement still exists 17-18 years later, and has expanded in size over time due to natural growth, the influx of extended family members and newcomers. While estimates vary⁵⁹, existing community maps (verified by mini census) revealed 660 households (approximately 2600-3300 people), with an average of 4-5 people per household. Contrary to the declaration that 5454 families could relocate, less than 900 families initially chose to resettle in Site 2 due to the lack of services, isolated location (then a peri-urban area) and environmental hazards (in 1999 the area was a wasteland/dump site covered partially by a *jheel*) (SSQs and IDIs 2015). As one older settler recalled:

‘Initially when we came, we used to sleep under polythene bags. Then I sold my only earring and bought tin to build our house. Previously there were no roads, no water. We had to go so far to bring water. We took water from houses, which was not proper. We went to Mosques to get water, and they shut the door on us. All day we used to go from house to house, looking for a jug of water. Then a well was made nearby, which only allowed you to take water if you chanted a particular Islamic religious prayer. We did all that and got water. We used to put medicine in that water to purify it and used it for drinking. We then used the pond water to shower, wash clothes and vegetables’.

(IDI P68 2015)

⁵⁸ Sub-wings are political groups affiliated with the ruling party. Many have offices in low-income settlements, where leaders can meet to plan political campaigns, rallies and conduct arbitrations.

⁵⁹ The 2012 UPPR community map indicated 5,000 households (20,000 people). However, mapping conducted by NGO Habitat for Humanity revealed 450 households.

As indicated in the above quote, residents faced particular problems finding safe water, with many resorting to buying pots for Tk. 5 from water vendors in the ‘upper side’ (middle-class households across the main road), or using polluted water from the *jheel* – *‘I got some water from the pond and cooked rice, I couldn’t even eat it...it was so blue’* (IDI P63 2015). Early arrivals also faced violent resistance from a family of original settlers, and had to be given police protection (IDI P4 2015). Despite this, settlers gradually upgraded their dwellings from polythene to tin-shed, and accessed basic services through self-help, political patrons (e.g. MP and ward councillors), land brokers and more recently, NGOs.

Housing and Land Tenure Type

Site 2 is a recognised settlement on public (government) land. In 1999, the original settlers were allocated a resettlement card for a fee of Tk. 160 by a *Bastu Hara Samity* (landless persons cooperative), which gave temporary tenure security to the holder, but was not legally binding. Over time, many original settlers left, selling their plot or renting it out to newcomers and, in some cases, passing on their plot cards along with the house. Many later arrivals obtained a plot and built housing through family contacts, land brokers, political patrons or by paying a fee to the Ansar Force, a low-level security force who patrol the area to stop encroachment (SSQs 2015).

Despite the in and out-migration, the majority of respondents in Site 2 were owner-occupiers, with fewer tenants, an estimated 10% of the overall population (FGD 2015). Out of a snapshot of 73 SSQ respondents, 63 were owners and 10 were tenants (SSQs 2015). One FGD participant explained that *‘there are hardly any outsiders living here as tenants. Our own family members are living in rent’* (FGD 2015). Rent varied between Tk. 800-1500 per month, per household depending on relation with the owner, and whether bills were included or additional. Some tenants reported higher rates of Tk. 2000-2500 depending on number of rooms and household size.

The housing and settlement infrastructure has improved significantly from temporary polythene shelters, to tin-shed, *semi-pucca*, *pucca* and (five to six) two-storey dwellings with concrete floors and stone or red brick walls, with access to water points, sanitation chambers, electricity and telecommunications. Initially, the households were scattered, with no particular layout. However, a few (BNP) political leaders, with support from the ward councillor and community elders decided to serial the households into lanes in 2005 to prevent fire and improve road/transport links, allocating plots dependent upon

family size (IDIs and FGDs 2015). At the time of fieldwork, there were three rows of 10 lanes (30 in total) connecting households throughout the settlement. The majority were paved (a result of NGO, donor and community initiatives in 2012) yet a few (by the *jheel*) remained unpaved, much to the frustration of residents there (SSQs 2015).

Eviction Threat

Site 2 is surrounded by private plots and fishing ponds, real estate housing developments, a military DOHS zone, private army compound and Bihari Camp. The area has urbanised rapidly since 1999, and the improvement of infrastructure and telecommunications has enhanced the settlements connectivity with other parts of Dhaka. Whilst this has brought economic opportunity, some residents fear that they will be displaced if the increasingly valuable land is grabbed by political elites, the army or private real estate companies. One resident stated that *'the army have their eye on this land...they are very powerful'* (SSQ P49 2015). Although residents have relative tenure security – protected by the Stay Order and ongoing High Court case – many expressed their fear, anger and uncertainty over rehabilitation. The housing and land dynamics in Site 2 had significant implications for the types of CBOs (particularly *samity*s) that emerged, and frustration among residents over lack of NGO and donor interest in housing and land tenure (elaborated in section 5.2).

WatSan Provision and Key Issues

As with Site 1, service availability and quality varied between households and lanes in Site 2. Unlike Site 1, the level of NGO and CBO engagement in service provision was much higher, and the role of managers or owners of lesser importance. Table 5.2 provides a summary of service provision, approximate costs and associated problems, and Photo 5.4 provides an overview of WatSan facilities.

Table 5.2: Summary of WatSan Provision in Site 2

Service	Cost (Tk. per month, per household)	Type and Status	Provision & Maintenance	Problems Identified
Water	30-60 for DSK tube wells and reserves with meter. Some residents paying 100-200 due to re-selling of water by local leaders, type of access and relation to caretaker/owner of water points	Majority legal DWASA connections via DSK. Tube wells and reserve tanks. Also individual wells (20,000 to build). Some collect water from nearby Bihari Camp (100/month) during supply crisis	DWASA, NGOs (e.g. DSK, World Vision, HFHB, NGO Forum), residents themselves (e.g. 'users' and managers of water points), CBOs and local leaders collect, pay bills and maintain connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO water points grabbed by local leaders - Some illegal lines (cut) - Limited/no supply to NGO sanitation blocks (not turned on by DWASA due to low pressure in line) - Unpaid DWASA bills (lines cut) - Accidental break in line (e.g. construction work)
Sanitation	No regular bill but 5-10% co-sharing fee if NGO chamber (e.g. 300-500 one-off payment). Maintenance costs (e.g. 30-100 for cleaner/materials) DSK or CC Vacutag truck (Tk. 1500-2000 per call out or 200-300 per user)	Majority use shared NGO, donor (e.g. UPPR, World Vision) or City Corporation cluster chambers and pit latrines (with septic tank). Some individual chambers (NGO Forum), ring slabs (DSK) or self-built latrines	User CBOs, NGOs and local leaders control access. DSK or DCC Vacutag truck empties tanks on demand. Residents with private ring slab or chamber responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overcrowding, queues (e.g. 10 families/chamber) - Many damaged and costly to repair, smelly - Leaking and overflowing septic tanks, expensive to empty/clean - Unequal access (locks) - Unhygienic - Lack of NGO coordination

(Based on 73 SSQs, IDIs, FGDs and mini census 2015)

In 1999, Dhaka City Corporation (now DNCC) provided three tube wells and six sanitation chambers for the 900 resettled residents. Over time, these facilities became unusable, and could not meet the demand of the growing population. Many resorted to open defecation or hanging latrines over the *jheel*, and to buying water. In 2005, the first NGO (DSK) entered the settlement, followed by NDBUS-UPPR, World Vision, HFHB and NGO Forum (amongst others) to install sanitation chambers, water connections, repair drains, walkways and establish a waste collection system. Despite the influx of NGO support, various issues emerged during fieldwork over the quality, quantity, affordability and type of support provided by NGOs in the context of tenure insecurity (elaborated in chapter seven).

Photo 5.4: WatSan Facilities in Site 2

NDBUS-UPPR sanitation chamber

World Vision sanitation chamber



DSK tube well

DSK wells

(Author's own 2015)

Political Context

The political leadership of Site 2 exerted its power over residents through an informal *bustee* committee, two formal *samity*s, NGO and AL sub-wing committees. Beyond the leadership, many ‘general’ residents were involved in politics as campaigners for local councillors, and/or beneficiaries of patronage from the local MP (the same MP as Site 1). This was particularly the case for a handful of older women in the settlement who built up a network of political patrons – ‘*the MP is good to me*’ explained one elderly resident (SSQ P65 2015). Another shared how she earns *baksheesh* (tips) for volunteering with the Ansar Force at polling stations during elections. She earned Tk. 4000 from her participation in the 2015 DNCC Mayoral election⁶⁰ (SSQ P29 2015).

⁶⁰ The DNCC Mayoral election took place on 28.04.15. The elected Mayor (Annisul Huq) and his wife visited numerous *bustees* (including Site 2) and pledged to work closely with urban poor groups like NDBUS. Whether this has any positive outcome for *bustee* dwellers is yet to be seen.

5.1.3. Site 3

History and Population

25-30 years ago, Site 3 was a paddy field with only 10-15 houses. Over time, the house number increased, with infrastructure (e.g. road) improvement and construction of high rise apartments in the last 5-8 years, which now surround the settlement. As indicated in Table 3.1, the residents faced numerous crises, including eviction (2007-8) and multiple outbreaks of fire (thrice in 1998-2007 and once in 2011), giving the settlement its nickname – '*pōrā*' (burnt) *bustee*. Little was known about Site 3 prior to entering, but detailed mini census revealed approximately 650 households (2600-3200 people)⁶¹, an average of 4-5 people per household, living in very cramped conditions.

Housing and Land Tenure Type

Site 3 is an unauthorised settlement on disputed land. It is disputed because land ownership is sought by the residents (some of whom claim to have lived there for over 30 years), three private Housing Societies, and a government bank, who allegedly bought the land from the Department of Housing (FGD 2015). The settlement is a labyrinth of houses, connected by bamboo, sandbag or brick walkways that often (with the exception of a few connecting paths) lead to a dead-end. The majority of houses are hanging on *bash* (bamboo) platforms above the *jheel* and made of tin-shed and polythene/plastic with mud or bamboo floors. There are a handful of two or three story tin houses, often housing one owner and multiple tenants, or an NGO school. Due to low-elevation, flooding and water logging are major problems during monsoon, and the bamboo platforms become rotten, slippery and hazardous when wet. Intense heat from the tin and lack of ventilation due to the narrow lanes also makes staying inside unbearable during hot weather.

Whilst the majority of residents are tenants, SSQs with a snapshot of 70 respondents revealed 31 owners and 39 tenants respectively, a larger number of owners than in Site 1. Local leaders conducted their own census which revealed 200 owners (with multiple rooms) and 4-500 tenant households (FGD 2015). Whilst many owners lived within the area, others (owning 25-30 rooms) allegedly lived in the surrounding high-rise buildings or even abroad (SSQs 2015). Tenants paid between Tk. 1500-3000 per month (including bills) depending on the room size and relation with owner.

⁶¹ A DSK-Shiree survey identified 650 households (approx. 2600 people), yet *bustee* leaders estimated 750 households (3500 residents). No official census has been taken, so exact numbers remain unclear.

Eviction Threat

‘We resisted when they came to fill this land. We were organised. They came with a big police convoy. We women of the slum stood in a front line as a human shield. The police agenda was to arrest the men. Police charged and struck us, many women were beaten. I fell down after getting struck twice by the police. We did not allow those trucks of sand to come forward. Our agenda was if the trucks have to come, they must come over us. We resisted from dawn to dusk and did not allow them to dump sand on our wasteland’.

(IDI P12 2015)

As the above quote implies, the residents are willing to fight to hold onto their position. After the 2008 eviction, 10-15 *bustee* leaders (all owners) filed a case with the support of Dr Kamal Hossain of NGO BLAST in the High Court against the government bank, based on the 1993 National Housing Policy clause (5.7.1. and 5.7.2.) ‘no eviction without rehabilitation’ (cited in Nawaz 2004: 7). More recently, the leaders have shifted their demand to *in-situ* upgrading, as per the 2013 NSDS (highlighted in chapter four). The case is ongoing, but *bustee* residents have a High Court Stay Order (similar to Site 2), until it is resolved. The local leaders repeatedly stated ‘*our only demand is land*’ (FGD 2015). They argued that the current value of the land under Site 3 is Tk. 30 *crore* [Tk. 30,000,000], and that they are willing to pay in instalments – a common trend across all field sites.

WatSan Provision and Key Issues

Site 3 is different to Sites 1 and 2 in that there are no NGO WASH facilities or activities in the settlement, nor are there any services from DNCC. NGOs were unable to enter the settlement due to a land dispute and ‘anti-NGO’ stance of the local committee and *samity* leaders (elaborated below). The service delivery landscape was thus one controlled by owners, local leaders and ‘middlemen’, who obtained illegal water connections by tapping into WASA lines, and constructed their own hanging or *pucca* sanitation facilities for tenants (Photo 5.5). In some cases, residents would pay ‘tips’ to low-level DWASA staff to access services and avoid being cut off. As one respondent remarked, ‘*when WASA put a line in the upper side 10-12 years ago, people of the area tapped the line at midnight to bring connections to the settlement. Someone watched out for police to ensure they weren’t caught!*’ (SSQ P17 2015). Another stated, ‘*I don’t pay water bills. We received a water connection after requesting to the MP who said “give them one line”. They provided WASA supply to one person but we now have a relay system whereby the pipe has been tapped with many other pipes, which supply numerous lanes*’ (SSQ P5 2015). Others paid a lump sum to obtain a connection – ‘35

landowners brought the water connections to the area. We paid a one off amount of Tk. 1500 to the president of the slum committee' (SSQ P9 2015).

Whilst illegal lines were frequently cut by DWASA, one leader remarked how '*it takes one minute to cut, but one second to re-install*' (SSQ P52 2015). Crucially, at the time of fieldwork, a core group of 7-10 house owners had applied for 25 legal DWASA connections via their *samity* (elaborated in chapter eight). Table 5.3 provides a summary of service provision, approximate costs and associated problems, and Photo 5.5 provides an overview of WatSan facilities. Site 3 had particular problems with water contamination, as pipes criss-crossed through the *jheel* in a 'spaghetti' network.

Table 5.3: Summary of WatSan Provision in Site 3

Service	Cost (Tk. per month, per household)	Type and Status	Provision & Maintenance	Problems Identified
Water	<i>Tenants:</i> included in rent or 150-300. <i>Owners:</i> one-off payments of 1000-3000 for connection, or 400-800 (according to room number). 'Free' of cost if good relation with provider	Illegal lines connected to DWASA pipes. Alternative sources include; employer's residence, local high-rise (sometimes free water in drums) and tube wells. 25 legal lines applied for (25,000-30,000 connection fee/line)	Owners arrange connections via local leaders and intermediaries. Some owners trying to obtain legal water lines via <i>samity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Illegal lines (cut by DWASA), re-connection costly - Low pressure in line and irregular supply (10-30 minutes per day) - Dirty water (pipe under rubbish) - Rising costs - Conflict over supply (e.g. long wait, queue jumping)
Sanitation	No regular bill but construction and maintenance costs (e.g. 2000-4000 to build hanging sanitation and 5000 for ring slabs)	Self-built hanging sanitation or ring slab pit latrines. In few cases connected manually to local sewage network via pipes	Owners responsible for construction and maintenance of sanitation facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overcrowding, queues - Unhygienic and contamination of local environment, ill-health - Rotting bamboo (repairs needed every 1-2 years) - Accidents common (slippery or rotten bamboo), hazardous for children

(Based on 70 SSQs, IDIs, FGDs and mini census 2015)

Photo 5.5: WatSan Facilities in Site 3



(Author's Own 2015)

'We Chase Them Out'

With the exception of DSK-Shiree⁶², BRAC savings and UNICEF's Shuruvi Schools, Site 3 had little NGO or donor engagement, and no NGO-initiated WASH CBOs. The majority of leaders in Site 3 had negative perceptions towards NGOs entering the area. The reasons for this emerged during the FGD. One participant remarked how the house owners *'strongly believed that NGOs disclosed information about the weaker points of the slum to external parties [government agencies and companies] who want to acquire the land'* (FGD 2015). This relates to a failed NGO WASH project in 2007⁶³, whereby *'an [unnamed] NGO installed 2-4 sanitation blocks and a water house in the Northern*

⁶² An outline of DSK-Shiree activities can be found in Appendix 5.

⁶³ Despite asking longer-term residents and NGO staff, no one could recall the name of the NGO.

part, [but] within a few months of establishing the structures, the slum was evicted' (FGD 2015).

The negative association between the NGOs arrival, infrastructure development and eviction remained in the collective memory of many residents, and *'since 2008, house owners of the slum do not allow NGOs to work in the area. We hate NGOs!'* (IDI P69 2015). Another leader remarked, *'we have refused many NGOs, we chase them out!'* (IDI P45 2015). This is verified by the World Vision Project Manager (PM), who shared how they recently tried (and failed) to enter the settlement: *'the slum has a CBO that formed to resist eviction. They don't want NGOs to enter for fear that the government will evict them [but] we are determined to run a project there'* (KII 2015). One resident also claimed that they reject NGO WASH proposals because *'we can't afford cost-sharing, and lack of tenure security means we live every moment in fear of eviction'* (IDI P14 2015). Some tenants also feared rent increase as a result of WASH improvement – a concern across all field sites (SSQs 2015).

During a KII with the DSK PM, another issue emerged – *'15 years back we wanted to work in that area and we needed permission from DCC, but DCC didn't allow us, because it was the land of [a company]'* (KII 2015). Many residents also mentioned their disillusionment with NGOs and donors, as many 'foreigners' or staff enter the settlement and take their names, but nothing ever improves – another common story across all field sites (SSQs 2015). DSK-Shiree also faced opposition. As one local leader remarked, *'the training in DSK-Shiree to make women challenge men or argue with their husband goes against the social structure in Bangladesh'* (IDI P70 2015). The DSK-Shiree CO shared his experience entering Site 3 for the first time:

'When we first got here to work, political leaders of the area did not allow me to enter. I had to return [to the office] after the first visit. They said that many times, many organisations take their names but there is no outcome. Another strong suspicion is fraud. They also think our agenda is converting their religion [from Islam to Christianity]. Sometimes they are furious! Later a few leaders from the labour cooperative called me and said "people of the settlement are poor, they need some support. You are wanted to work for the poor people, you can proceed with your work and no one will disturb you".'

(KII 2015)

Whilst local leaders initially resisted the female-targeted DSK-Shiree project, they relented when they realised they could receive a Tk. 14,000 grant through their wife's participation (SSQs and KII 2015). In addition to financial grants and savings, DSK-Shiree fieldworkers tried to install hygienic sanitation and legal water lines, but these attempts were blocked:

‘They have only a few ring slab sanitary latrines but most are bamboo made hanging ones. I wanted to give them permanent brick sanitation chambers. They have fear of eviction related with any infrastructural development. They are opposing to take this service from us.

...I tried to [introduce legal connections] but there are some fixed local rules, so I could not do much. They have water from illegal DWASA supply lines. If I try to install a legal connection, they have to pay bills regularly. They denied having legal water supply connections’.

(*ibid*)

Evidently, there are multiple reasons for the lack of WASH NGO engagement in Site 3, including; mistrust, fear of eviction and legacy of past NGOs, the agenda of local leaders, affordability and politico-legal barriers. However, SSQs revealed that some residents (both owners and tenants) did want NGOs to provide water and sanitation facilities, which were perceived as cheaper and of higher quality (elaborated in section 5.2).

Political Context

A core group of leaders (all house owners) with links to the local MP and ward councillor (different individuals to Sites 1 and 2) govern Site 3 via an informal *bustee* committee and two formal *samitys*. The committee conducts social arbitration, distributes religious and political donations, and protects the area from eviction (FGD 2015). On numerous occasions, residents in different parts of the settlement mentioned the political factions in Site 3 between AL, BNP and (a few) Socialist Party supporters. In some cases, residents excluded from the DSK-Shiree programme believed that they were purposefully deprived as they supported the opposition party – ‘*some people of our area influenced the selection process. You know Bengali people are notorious!*’ (SSQ P43 2015). As we explore in chapter eight, these political dynamics had particular implications for CBO type, participation, function and outcomes.

5.2. Problems, Solutions and Responsible Actors

Upon entering each site⁶⁴, a FGD was conducted to determine overall problems, identify potential solutions and responsible actors. These FGDs provided useful insights into settlement history, and how (or why) residents organise around certain issues. As indicated in Table 5.4, participants in Site 1 prioritised poor drainage, gas and electricity, which could be resolved via partnership between government authorities (e.g. City Corporation, DESCO and TITAS), NGOs and residents. In Site 2, housing tenure was identified as the main priority, followed by legal gas and electricity supply. FGD

⁶⁴ With the exception of Site 3, where the FGD was conducted at the end (see chapter three).

participants stated they needed NGOs and donors to assist the community with education, healthcare, WASH and housing, followed by City Corporation, to resolve issues over gas, street lighting and electricity. In Site 3, participants were primarily concerned with housing and land tenure, potable water crises and lack of jobs. The government was identified as the primary problem solver for land, housing and water, compared to NGOs or NGO-government partnerships in Sites 1 and 2. This reflects the lack of NGO engagement in the settlement.

Table 5.4: Problem and Responsible Actors Ranking

SITE 1 – Problems	Responsible Actors
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poor drainage system – water logging and floods 2. No gas connection – want legal supply 3. Illegal electricity connection – want legal supply 4. Poor road and walkway condition – hazardous, especially for children 5. Unavailability of health care facilities – costly and far away 6. High density settlement – fire risk and intense heat 7. Rubbish management problems – open dumping, bad smell, rats and flies 8. No (secure) housing and no fund for rehabilitation – fear eviction (like 2008) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. City Corporation, NGOs and residents 2. City Corporation and TITAS 3. DESCO and Residents 4. City Corporation, NGOs and Residents 5. Government and NGOs 6. House/land owners, NGOs and residents 7. NGOs and residents 8. NGOs and residents
SITE 2 – Problems	Responsible Actors
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing tenure – temporary housing, no security. 2. No gas connection – residents must buy expensive firewood. Gas safer than firewood. 3. Electricity – high (rising) cost, monopoly of provision and bill collection. Want cheaper government supply. 4. Health – few health centres in the area, expensive 5. Adult literacy – few schools over Standard 5, low quality teaching, expensive 6. Dark road (no lights) – security problems, especially for young girls returning from garments work at dusk/night 7. Fire – use of firewood increases fire risk 8. Water logging – lower areas by the <i>jheel</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NGOs, <i>Samity</i>s and Central Government 2. City Corporation, NGOs and TITAS 3. DESCO and NGOs 4. NGOs 5. NGOs 6. City Corporation and NGOs 7. NGOs 8. NGOs, residents and City Corporation
SITE 3 – Problems	Responsible Actors
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permanent housing – fear of eviction and fire 2. Water crises – inadequate supply, dirty water, low pressure, queues 3. Lack of jobs and harassment in the workplace 4. Flooding and water logging – unbearable during monsoon 5. Rising costs of living (e.g. rent, bills, food) and financial insecurity 6. Police harassment – young men falsely arrested, bribes 7. Inadequate sanitation – slippery bamboo, accidents, queues 8. No street lighting – hazardous for women especially 9. Narrow, slippery walkways – accidents common. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Central Government 2. DWASA and City Corporation 3. Employers 4. City Corporation 5. House owners 6. Local leaders, <i>bustee</i> committee and politicians (e.g. MP, Ward Councillor) 7. House owners or managers 8. City Corporation 9. House owners and neighbours

(Based on FGDs 2015)

Unlike Site 3, potable water and sanitation was not necessarily a priority for FGD participants in Sites 1 or 2. While this could be explained by the fact NGOs were

working/had worked on water and sanitation in these settlements, a more complex story emerged. Many respondents shared their frustration that NGOs were entering with new WASH projects, when they wanted assistance with housing and land tenure. Two long-term residents in Site 2 shared their concerns:

‘NGOs are spending *crores* of taka on us; 7-8 *lakhs* [Tk. 7-800,000] on toilets, a lot of money for paths. All that is good, but if the government were to destroy the slum tomorrow, then the *crores* spent will be of no use. No value. That’s why we have told them, if there is any way for the NGOs to consult with the government, it may be possible to make some sort of arrangement, like long-term instalments to transfer land ownership in our names. That is our request to them’.

(IDI P25 2015)

‘Slum dwellers are the puppets of NGOs and headaches of the government. NGOs are collecting money from communities for sanitation. They are like seasonal birds, all trying to enter the same settlement and competitively make sanitation chambers and water points. When NGO infrastructure is complete, [the] bureaucrats evil eye zooms [in] and they propose government to construct a college, industry, hospital...Evict the slum people and give [them] the land’.

(IDI ‘Mr K’ 2015)

The FGD responses imply an apparent mismatch between the WASH agenda promoted by NGOs and donors, and priorities of participants. However, as noted in section 3.3.3, the FGDs largely involved active CBO leaders, meaning the priorities identified were not necessarily representative of diverse interests within the settlement. Whilst the SSQs also offer just a snapshot of individual priorities, comparison of the FGD and SSQ data revealed some important differences.

Contrary to the FGDs, SSQs in Site 1 revealed that the major concern among many respondents was financial insecurity, followed by potable water crisis and poor social security. Financial insecurity was also the primary concern in Site 2, followed by housing, land tenure and social insecurity. Despite the strong WASH NGO presence, potable water crisis was the fourth biggest problem. In Site 3, potable water crisis was the number one issue, followed by flooding/water logging, financial insecurity, poor living environment and inadequate sanitation. The combined total of SSQs (213), verified by observations and IDIs, revealed the top 10 problems for participants in all three field sites (from most to least/lesser importance) as:

1. Financial insecurity
2. Potable water crisis
3. Flooding and water logging
4. Social insecurity
5. Land tenure and housing insecurity
6. Electricity problems
7. Poor living environment
8. Sanitation problems
9. Gas problems
10. Illness

(See Appendix 4 for full list of descriptions)

These problems are intricately linked and unevenly experienced according to age, gender, income level, ethnicity, social, economic and political networks. For example, many residents noted how financial insecurity underpinned all other problems, and fluctuated according to health, number of earners in the household and season (i.e. monsoon/winter). One participant in Site 1 remarked, *‘NGOs need to address poverty before worrying about healthcare and hygiene’* (SSQ P49 2015). An alarming number of respondents also reported being trapped in loan-debt cycles with multiple MFIs, including; ASA, BRAC, Grameen and Shakti Foundation (SSQs 2015). The implications of this for individual autonomy and group savings is elaborated in chapters seven and nine.

Unlike the earlier FGDs, potable water did emerge as a concern in Sites 1 and 2. While provision and access had improved, water quality, quantity and cost were significant issues. One respondent in Site 1 noted, *‘we have a water supply problem, we got a WASA connection three months ago but the quality is not good. 20 people were admitted to ICDDR’B [cholera hospital] due to poor water quality last year’* (SSQ P28 2015). Sanitation was not an overall priority in Sites 1 and 2, though numerous issues were reported, including; overcrowding, lack of privacy, unhygienic/unsafe latrines and leaking septic tanks. In Site 3, inadequate sanitation, especially hazardous hanging latrines and open sewage, was a major concern. One resident remarked on the irony of eating food with human waste flowing past your door (SSQ P40 2015).

Further nuances emerged after analysing the data on solutions and responsible actors. For example, the majority of respondents in each field site stated that they largely

solved problems ‘on their own’ due to lack of choice, finances, time and access to decision makers. One respondent in Site 3 remarked, ‘*we don’t approach neighbours as there is power in the area. Those who have money have power. They do not help the poor*’ (SSQ P11 2015). Another stated, ‘*everyone is busy working. There is not enough time to visit NGOs, donors or government. We also don’t know who to approach*’ (SSQ P29 2015). In Site 2, one respondent shared how ‘*there are people from 12 districts living here, it makes for awkward bonding*’ (SSQ P28 2015). Other than solving problems ‘on their own’, residents in Site 1 called upon family, neighbours, landlords, house owners, managers and NGOs. In Site 2, residents relied upon NGOs, local leaders and political patrons and in Site 3 residents looked to central government, political patrons, landowners, house owners and local leaders (within the *bustee* committee and *samity*s). The combined total of SSQs, verified by observations and IDIs, revealed the top 10 responsible actors (from most to least/lesser importance) as:

1. On their own/solve themselves
2. Family
3. NGOs
4. Neighbours
5. Local leaders/influential people/long-term settlers or elders
6. Landlords and house owners
7. Central government
8. (House) managers
9. Political patrons (e.g. MP, Ward Councillor)
10. Savings and loan *samity*s

Whilst the actors varied according to the specific problem, or cluster of problems identified, certain patterns emerged. For example, in all field sites, landlords, house owners and managers were deemed responsible (by tenants) for problems relating to the household, services and bills (e.g. repair and water, sanitation, electricity and gas connections). Social security was the primary responsibility of local leaders, the *bustee* committee and political patrons, whilst personal and financial matters were largely resolved by family, friends, neighbours or savings and loan *samity*s. It also became clear that service provision and other ‘problems’ were not addressed by (or the sole responsibility of) any one individual, but a web of actors and institutions within and outside the settlement. These networks ultimately had implications for service accessibility, provision and management (elaborated in chapters seven and eight).

5.3. Concluding Remarks

This chapter provided an overview of the three case study field sites in Dhaka. Section 5.1 outlined history and population, housing and land tenure type, eviction threat, water and sanitation provision and political context. Overlapping patterns can be identified across the settlements. For example, the ‘disputed’ status of land tenure, dominance of local political leaders, landlords and house owners in service provision and mediation, and internal political fragmentation. These observations support existing literature on ‘informal’ governance, outlined in chapter four (e.g. Banks 2008; 2012; 2015; Hossain 2013). The implications for CBO type, participation, function and outcomes are elaborated in chapters seven and eight.

Section 5.2 focused on problems, solutions and responsible actors identified during FGDs and SSQs. Whilst the views gathered were not representative of ‘the community’, they highlighted different priorities, for different residents – from house owners to tenants, NGO and CBO members to non-members. They also revealed trends in how (and why) certain individuals organise collectively around certain issues, or seek particular opportunities. For example, financial insecurity meant more people were inclined to join MFIs, NGO or donor programmes that provided grants, savings or loans, over WASH CBOs. Whilst potable water was a concern across all sites, sanitation was less so – raising questions over the extent to which WASH projects address the priorities of *bustee* residents. In Site 3, sanitation did emerge as a concern, but local leaders and house owners involved in the *bustee* committee and *samity*s blocked WASH NGOs from entering, and constructed their own facilities. They were, however, applying for legal services themselves to stake claim on the land – their main priority (outlined in chapter eight).

Chapter six now returns to the citywide scale to deepen our understanding of how the form and nature of urban governance has affected service provision and collective action in Dhaka’s *bustees*. This is important, because the relationship between urban governance and collective action remains underexplored in this context. The chapter also provides essential backdrop to the role and rise of NGO-initiated CBOs in Sites 1 and 2, elaborated in chapter seven.

6. Urban NGOs, CBOs and Service Provision in Dhaka's *bustees*

This second empirical chapter focuses on how the form and nature of urban governance in Dhaka affects the type and intensity of CBO activity in the service sector. The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 6.1 draws on Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with NGO staff to understand: 1) when, why and how NGOs first started working in Dhaka's *bustees*; and 2) what triggered an apparent shift from mobilisation to service delivery. In accordance with Rahman (2006, chapter four), fieldwork suggests that the combination of a hostile political environment and shifting donor preferences have deterred NGOs from mobilising Dhaka's urban poor around 'contentious' issues such as land and housing. In addition, divisions within (and between) NGOs and their associated urban poor groups (e.g. BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS) present barriers to collective action at scale. What we see, instead, is a proliferation of NGO-initiated CBOs in service delivery at the settlement level.

Focusing on one leading urban NGO *Dushtha Shasthya Kendra* (DSK) or 'Health Centre for the Distressed', section 6.2 highlights the rise and role of NGO-initiated CBOs in WASH provision and management. Particular emphasis is placed on the 'DSK Model' and shift in DWASA's Citizen Charter to supply legal water via CBOs. Section 6.3 then outlines how NGO-initiated CBOs form in practice, using examples from Sites 1 and 2. A trend is identified whereby NGO-initiated CBOs are becoming 'new intermediaries' between *bustee* residents and DWASA, replacing dependence on illegal vendors. Whilst this varies according to specific context (i.e. sites where NGOs are present), and has positive outcomes (such as improved access to legal water and hygienic sanitation), a mismatch remains between the WASH agenda promoted by NGOs and donors, and priorities of *bustee* residents (especially leaders). The chapter concludes with some broader reflections on how the urban governance context affects collective action (via CBOs) in Dhaka's *bustees*.

6.1. Urban NGOs in Dhaka: From Mobilisation to Service Delivery

In the early to mid-1980s, few NGOs and donors worked with the urban poor in Dhaka, and (as noted in chapter four) government neglect, inability and/or unwillingness to deliver services to 'illegal' settlements meant that *bustee* dwellers relied upon *mastaans*,

private entrepreneurs, illegal vendors and political patrons to access water, sanitation, electricity, gas and housing. The Proshika Chairman explained why NGOs were initially hesitant to work in *bustees*:

‘At that time NGOs were reluctant to work in urban areas [due to] some misconceptions. Like, “the urban poor are highly mobile and won’t stay in one place for long”; “they are immoral and criminal”; “they cannot be trusted”. Whether these were misconceptions or right conceptions, we needed to find out. So we started the Urban Poor Development Program [UPDP] with action research. We found that the urban poor have a network that comes through their original village. When they are evicted, they don’t go to another location, but live nearby. In terms of their moral character, we found they are good people, but there are *mastaans* who oppress them and force them to pay levies. If they were taking electricity or water, they had to bribe these *mastaans*...if they were squatters [on government land] the *mastaans* would take a levy for that. So these people were not the perpetrators, but the victims. They were oppressed by *mastaans*, police [and] different government departments’.

(KII 2015)

The UPDP was one of the first initiatives to assist Dhaka’s urban poor, covering over 2000 slums and providing healthcare, education, sanitation and ‘*hundreds of tube wells*’ (KII Proshika PM 2015). The Chairman also shared how, at this time, Proshika ‘*faced challenges conceptually from Grameen and others who said “for poverty alleviation you need to focus on rural areas, not urban”*’ (KII 2015). Many donors were also hesitant to work in urban areas, as they perceived poverty to be a rural phenomenon (*ibid*). Despite this, Proshika obtained funds from the Ford Foundation, and began to form committees (BBOSCs), with the intention of building an urban poor network – ‘*we spent countless nights with the slum dwellers...We told them that if they unite, they will be very strong*’ (KII Proshika PM 2015).

Throughout the mid-to-late 1980s, a small group of NGOs, with support from human rights activists and researchers⁶⁵, began mobilising *bustee* residents to resist eviction and promote their rights to land, services and shelter. In 1989, staff from Proshika and other NGOs formed the Coalition for Urban Poor (CUP), an umbrella organisation for NGOs working in Dhaka. The Executive Director (ED) explained why CUP emerged: ‘*in 1985 to 1989 government started to evict the bustees inhumanely and randomly. We wanted to advocate in favour of the urban poor, and resist the harsh policies of the government...CUP formed to give a united platform to CBOs and NGOs*’ (KII CUP ED 2015). Throughout the 1990s, the number of NGOs working in Dhaka increased⁶⁶, based

⁶⁵ For example; Proshika, DSK, ARBAN, ASD, Fulki and PSTC (amongst others); Prof Nazrul Islam (Centre for Urban Studies) and lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain (of NGO BLAST).

⁶⁶ At the time of fieldwork, CUP had 64 members in DNCC and DSCC; though not all attended regular meetings (see Appendix 5).

on the realisation that *bustee* dwellers were in dire need of healthcare, credit and basic services (*ibid*).

In 1992, CUP registered with the GoB NGOAB to access foreign donations. Whilst registration provided opportunities for project implementation and organisational sustainability (i.e. staff salaries and expenses), some CUP members believed it triggered a shift in the organisation. The ED of NGO Shelter for the Poor noted how *'we wanted to keep fighting on the streets to establish the rights of the urban poor, but CUP registered with [the] government, and the government could stop their funding any time'* (KII 2015). The Proshika Chairman shared similar concerns:

'Somehow CUP has lost its way. They are either afraid or don't want to take the challenge. Because they feel what happened to Proshika, in facing the state power, so they want to be [a] little bit safe...They would have seminars, conferences, study visits, but not the real work. So in a way CUP is only a shadow of its former self...*They [the leaders] are turning CUP into a service delivery organisation.* This is of course needed...but basic problems of the urban poor cannot be addressed without large-scale social mobilisation'.

(KII 2015, *emphasis added*)

As noted in chapter four, the re-election of BNP in 2001 and subsequent Proshika crisis had major implications for the NGO sector in Dhaka. As the ED of Shelter for the Poor remarked, *'the new [BNP] government put pressure on NGOs, and CUP shifted its strategy to avoid confrontation...we [also] strategically shifted our focus from street fighting to negotiation. We now fight on the table with government officials and policy makers'* (KII 2015). The apparent shift from contestation to collaboration was openly acknowledged by the CUP ED:

'Earlier we did movements on the street but presently government invited us in participatory meetings and gave the opportunity to share views...at first the government attitude was anti-NGO. At present, CUP has a very strong connection with the government. CUP is now a member of all the policy forums. Now government does not approach NGOs negatively'.

(KII 2015)

The ED also shared that *'from 1989, the strategy changed. In the past, NGOs did the movement for rights of the urban poor. Now CBOs [BBOSC, NDBUS] do the movement and NGOs give them logistical support'* (*ibid*). Contrary to this, BBOSC leaders argued repeatedly during fieldwork that CUP no longer provides any financial or logistical support. The following extract from a meeting between the Proshika Chairman and PM, BBOSC Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary (overseen by the researcher), highlights these tensions:

BBOSC Chairperson: ‘BBOSC is not in a good condition at the moment...we need support. Even yesterday, [the CUP ED] told us to leave CUP and take registration ourselves.

BBOSC Secretary: [The ED] told us to become an NGO and CUP does not need us//

Proshika Chairman: Now NGOs are not working with BBOSC?

BBOSC Chairperson: They are now forming their own CBOs and working with them. We are running our organisation through our own pocket money. We have been with Proshika since 1996. Our present committee that formed 3-4 years ago has not had a single penny from CUP.

Proshika PM: Now some evil force has entered CUP; that is the problem.

BBOSC Vice Chairperson: Now some pro-BNP members are in the committee.

Proshika PM: It became a safe-house of *Jamaat*-BNP.

Proshika Chairman: BBOSC will not survive if it has no activities. What kind of activities could make BBOSC alive?

BBOSC Vice Chairperson: We are involved in different kinds of projects like WASH. That is our opportunity to keep our presence alive and keep contacts in the slum. NGOs are now directly implementing projects. They no longer involve us as community facilitators...’.

(Meeting Extract 2015)

Two key points emerge. Firstly, that BBOSC were eager to air their grievances over CUP with (and seek advice from) the Proshika Chairman, whom they greatly respect (KIIs and field observations 2015). During the meeting and subsequent discussions, it emerged that BBOSC leaders played a key role in mobilising the urban poor for the pro-AL rally in 1996 (outlined in chapter four). The strong association between BBOSC, Proshika and the AL is further demonstrated by the argument of BBOSC leaders and the Proshika PM that CUP is no longer supportive due to ‘unwanted elements’ (from *Jamaat*-BNP) in the organisation. During fieldwork, however, the Proshika Chairman was also criticised by some NGO staff and researchers who believed he used the BBOSC committees to ‘*get into politics*’, rather than for any agenda-setting purpose (i.e. housing and land rights) (KII PPRC and BUF 2015). Referring to BBOSC, the ED of PPRC remarked: ‘*CBOs are constantly under pressure either to become supplementary delivery mechanisms, aids, co-opted into becoming political foot soldiers or vehicles for local power figures*’ (KII 2015). Whilst this argument neglects the personal aspirations, sacrifices and motivations of leaders, it resonates with broader observations in Dhaka (elaborated in chapters seven and nine).

Secondly, BBOSC leaders noted that NGOs and donors are increasingly ‘forming their own CBOs’, rather than working through existing organisations (an issue also raised by NBUS in section 6.3.2). According to the CUP ED, this relates to a broader trend

whereby *'donors are facilitating registration of CBOs and making them into NGOs. Instead of working with NGOs, they are more interested to work with [their own] CBOs'* (KII 2015). This was the case with UNDP's UPPRP, which had a mandate to create and implement via their CDCs. According to one UPPRP official, bypassing NGOs had three benefits, it: 1) reduced dependency and brought the community closer to local government (and UPPRP staff); 2) enhanced cost efficiency; and 3) encouraged sustainability (KII 2015). This approach created tensions with some NGOs in Dhaka who regarded themselves as central to CBO formation and management – *'all CBOs are organised by NGOs. So now if they give emphasis to the CBO it is not fair. NGOs are suffering. In the last 3-5 years it is very difficult to get funds'* (KII NGO ED 2015)⁶⁷. This also resonates with the DSK ED's comment that *'some CSOs perceive CBOs as competitors'* (KII 2015).

According to the CUP ED, registration of CBOs as NGOs also means they *'cannot do any movement because of having financial assistance from the government'* (KII 2015). Somewhat contradicting earlier statements about CUP's positive relation with government, the ED argued that *'NGOs have a lot of barriers. NGOs cannot speak against the government decision. NGOs cannot do movements with freedom and raise their voice'*, and *'donors do not accept if an NGO speaks about different issues from its course of work'* (ibid). The ED ultimately believed that: *'donors and government are planning to reduce the power force of CBOs. They are promising that if CBOs register they will be aided with funds...now WASH CBOs [like NDBUS] have a huge fund and account'* (ibid). Similarly, the ED of PDAP stated that *'the government strategy is divide and rule...government knows that if all three groups [BBOSC, NDBUS and NDBUS] raise their voice then it will be big trouble...If they are separated, political parties will use them'* (KII 2015).

Although all three groups are part of the 'National Federation' (Box 4.2), there were clear divisions within and between BBOSC, NDBUS and NDBUS during fieldwork. These tensions relate to the broader shifts noted above. For example, whilst BBOSC remains unregistered (and reliant on CUP and Proshika), NDBUS and NDBUS are registered as formal organisations, and can obtain donor funds. According to the BBOSC Chairperson, *'NDBUS has become an NGO now, and NGOs and CBOs can't work together'* (KII 2015). Contrary to this, during a speech at the WASH Fair, the

⁶⁷ Anonymised upon request

NDBUS cashier stated *'we are not an NGO. We are an autonomous organisation...many CBOs work under the patronisation of other NGOs. We used to work with the assistance of others [i.e. CUP] but now we are working independently'* (field observations 2015). Though active, all groups (especially BBOSC) operate at low/limited capacity. Some government officials also regard them as *'pocket organisations'* of the NGOs, rather than autonomous organisations (KII SDO and UPPR TM 2015). Box 6.1 summarises challenges identified by the leaders themselves.

Box 6.1: Challenges Facing Urban Poor Groups in Dhaka

- **Leadership:** female representation and voice within the groups (especially NBUS) is low. As one female NBUS member stated, *'we want our women members [to be] more active. We have to be more advanced'*. There are also concerns over the re-selection of leaders, as opposed to democratic election required by the Ministry of Social Welfare and NGOs.
- **Funding and capacity:** leaders and members are volunteers, using their own time and resources to attend meetings and visit settlements across Dhaka. Unlike NDBUS – NBUS and BBOSC have no office space, a further constraint to organisational capacity. *'We could not establish our own office room because of financial crisis'* explains one NBUS leader. As BBOSC is not registered, it struggles to attract donor or NGO funding, whereas NDBUS and NBUS have received work from UPPR and ACHR, amongst others.
- **Local legitimacy and accountability:** many slum residents had not heard of these groups and/or confused them with other organisations. One NBUS member stated, *'even our committee members could not say the name of the organisation properly. Some called it NDBUS. I heartily request that we clearly pronounce our organisation so people will recognise [us] independently'*.
- **Coordination:** whilst all three groups have leaders in the National Federation, and attend different forums and events, the organisations rarely meet of their own accord, and each seeks funding for their own projects. Their members are also spatially fragmented. Whilst BBOSC primarily operates in DSCC, NDBUS and NBUS operate primarily in Mirpur, DNCC.

(Based on KIIs and Meetings 2015)

In accordance with Rahman (2006, chapter four), we see that a combination of shifting political context and donor preferences has influenced NGO activities. Whilst the number of NGOs working with the urban poor has risen since the 1980s, fieldwork suggests that the vast majority provide services and MFI, with few fighting for land and housing for (and with) the urban poor. Whilst this brings about positive change (via improved access to services and credit), NGOs and CBOs operate in a highly politicised environment, with limited scope for contestation. In particular, there has been a growing tendency for government authorities to exert control over NGOs working in Dhaka's *bustees*. This was evident via increasing monitoring and regulation of NGO activities during fieldwork. For example, the Slum Development Officer (SDO) remarked that the 52 NGOs working in DNCCs *bustees* have to submit monthly progress reports to the

District Commissioners Office, and new NGOs are required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DNCC to prevent project duplication (KII 2015). The SDO argued that *'the decision to organise and coordinate the NGOs came from the higher authority'* (*ibid*). It is within this changing context that WASH NGOs (and their associated CBOs) have come to prominence in Dhaka. Section 6.2 focuses on the story of one leading urban NGO – DSK.

6.2. The 'DSK Model'

In the early 1990s, DSK, the 'pioneer' of CBO WASH provision, began to provide water and sanitation to the urban poor in Dhaka. The DSK ED explained that, whilst the initial focus was on healthcare, slum residents argued that their problem was *'more acute with access to water supply'*, triggering a shift in approach (KII 2015). DSK utilised a community managed WASH model based on negotiation with utility agencies, cost recovery and participation (i.e. time, labour, co-sharing), to enhance ownership and sustainability. They were one of the first NGOs to install legal water connections on illegally occupied land (*ibid*). As noted in the 1996 Activity Report – 'experience is encouraging. Community managed public utilities are functioning well. Payments of water bills are regular...the UNDP/World Bank Regional Water and Sanitation Group proposed to replicate this innovative water supply delivery model' (DSK 1996: 11). DSK did just that – replicate. By 2001, DSK had constructed 75 water points, 112 hand pumps, 286 slab latrines and six community latrines in Dhaka, with permission from DWASA and DCC (DSK 2000; 2009). By 2015⁶⁸, this had risen to over 1,200 water points, 850 latrines, and DSK had two Vacutug trucks to empty septic tanks, servicing over 40% of Dhaka's *bustees* (KII DSK ED 2015).

The 'DSK model' as it became known (Akbar et al 2007) received continued support from donors, most notably WaterAid Bangladesh (WAB), SIDA, DFID and UNICEF⁶⁹, with the recognition that *'we need CBOs, NGOs can't work alone'* (KII UNICEF PM 2015). Similarly, the WAB PM stated, *'DSK are the champions...and [DSK's PM] is the father of CBOs!'* (KII 2015). Because of notable success, DSK staff faced regular opposition from *mastaans*, illegal vendors and DWASA officials with vested interests in service provision (KIIs DSK ED and PM 2015). The DSK PM recounted his

⁶⁸ DSK had nine active WASH projects in 2015 (KII DSK PM 2015).

⁶⁹ UNICEF-funded projects included; Dhamalkote Integrated Project (2000-2004), Advancing Sustainable Environmental Health (ASEH) (2003-2009), Enhancing Environmental Health by Community Organisations (EECHO) (2009-2011) and Promoting Environmental Health for the Urban Poor (PEHUP) (2011-2016).

experience installing a water point in one *bustee*. At this time (in 1996), water was controlled by an illegal vendor (charging Tk. 5 per pot) and *mastaans* hired to prevent outside intervention:

‘When I started to install the water point some *mastaans* threatened me...“you can’t do it, why you are doing it, there is water over there!” It took nearly 6-7 months to solve this problem...I negotiated with the councillor and some political persons to minimise this problem...We finally found out, one guy from that community [was] doing this. He told me, “why are you disturbing me? I will lose my business!” I told him, “you are doing illegal business, it will not sustain”. When I mentioned he is doing it illegally he told me, “no, you will install a water point, you will pay the bill only to WASA, but I pay the bill to WASA, police, journalists, local politicians, *mastaans*...seven categories of people are collecting money from me, so *who is legal, you or me?*”

(KII 2015, *emphasis added*)

As indicated above, DSK staff had to negotiate with both ‘illegal’ and ‘legal’ providers, an incredibly difficult and complex process, as DWASA supplied water (only) to households with holding numbers, or would supply to slums for a minimum time (i.e. once per day for 10-30 minutes). As one WSUP (NGO) engineer remarked, ‘*DWASA’s argument [was] that “these people are getting our water illegally, so we are not interested to provide them services”*’ (KII 2015). DWASA’s lengthy, bureaucratic and costly procedure to acquire water connections also meant that applications (compiled by the NGO) could take many months (KII DSK PM 2015).

A major breakthrough came in 2007 when, after prolonged advocacy from NGOs (such as DSK, ARBAN, Fulki and World Vision), DWASA amended its Citizen Charter to allow legal water supply to slums via CBOs, with no holding number required (Box 6.2). The relationship with slum dwellers was further institutionalised in 2010 when a Low-Income Community (LIC) department was set up in DWASA with support from UNICEF and WSUP, to improve customer service, capacity and ‘*provide safe drinking water to all of Dhaka’s LICs*’ (KII WSUP 2015). WSUP seconded four of their staff, produced a customer relations manual and trained DWASA and MODs Zone officials (in charge of pumps) to be more receptive to the needs of LIC consumers (*ibid*). According to the DSK PM, ‘*DWASA is now very much responsive*’, and can approve a new connection in a matter of days (KII 2015).

Box 6.2: DWASA Water Supply Connections in Slums

- CBOs (local organisations) of slums on the Government/Semi-government/autonomous bodies/corporations land will apply directly to the Authority and the Authority shall provide the connection to CBOs according to the rules. CBO will pay the water bill to the authority,
- In case of slums on privately owned land, if the owner applies directly to the authority for a connection according to the rules the authority will provide connection and the owner will pay the water bill to the authority as per the schedule,
- If the owner of the private land based slum is unable to apply for the connection, the CBO of the slum could apply to the authority with a permission letter from the owner. The authority will formally provide a connection to the CBO. CBOs will pay water bills as per the schedule,
- If a slum is on disputed land or ownership is still not fixed, the CBO of the slum could apply for a water supply connection and the CBO will pay water bills formally to the authority,
- CBO water distribution systems shall be maintained inside the slum. A WSTF (Ward Sanitation Task Force) CBO will monitor these activities,
- Any person or organisation of any slum with land ownership certificates (documents) that display the name of a single individual or organisation can take the water connection.

MODS (Maintenance Operations Development Services) Zonal Office will issue demand notes within one business day after submission of the Field investigation report. Within two business days of receiving copy of the paid demand note, the zonal office will permit the connection.

(Translated from Section 3C of DWASA Citizen Charter 2007)

Whilst NGOs and donors finance major investments (e.g. construction materials) and pay the demand note (Tk. 5000), CBOs contribute a small co-sharing fee for connection; monitor, maintain ‘hardware’ (e.g. standpoints, tube wells, tanks) and pay the DWASA bills⁷⁰ (KIIs WSUP and DWASA 2015). According to the DWASA Senior Community Officer (SCO), NGOs (especially DSK⁷¹) are central to this process as *‘they create the CBOs. If NGOs work there, we benefit because it’s very easy to bring revenue’* (KII 2015). He explained that *‘this CBO model occurs because we don’t have enough manpower. We need CBOs. One place where we can put everything – our bill, or any problem, they will solve it’* (*ibid*). At the time of fieldwork, DWASA had just four permanent staff in their LIC department, and relied heavily on donors (e.g. UNICEF⁷²) and NGOs for financial and human resources, as they receive very limited central funds (*ibid*, see also section 4.2.2).

Within this context, there were clear monetary incentives to supply LICs, as the new water connections brought previously lost revenue for DWASA. As the SCO explained, *‘DSK tried to motivate our management that LIC people are taking water and they are*

⁷⁰ One or two designated persons in the user group/CBO collect and pay bills to DWASA monthly either directly at the office or via the bank (e.g. Trust, Eastern or Sonali Bank).

⁷¹ Most connections are given via DSK (KII DWASA 2015).

⁷² In addition to UNICEF, the World Bank provided 10 million USD to DWASA, of which 300,000 was used for the LIC Improvement Plan (KII World Bank WatSan Official 2015).

paying [illegal vendors] but DWASA is not getting the money. They are losing revenue. That's the main reason for the change [in legislation] ...DWASA now collects 100% of bills' (KII 2015). Legal connections also reduced bills for *bustee* residents. The bills, produced according to a meter, vary according to the number of users, but average between Tk. 100-200 per month, per family (approximately Tk. 7.75 per 1000 litres). On the other hand, illegal connections taken via *mastaans*, local leaders or lower-level DWASA staff, often incurred much higher charges, reaching Tk. 300-400 per month, per family (approximately Tk. 50 per 1000 litres) (SSQs and KIIs 2015).

Recognised LICs also receive subsidised connection fees of Tk. 5000 compared to Tk. 25-30,000 paid by 'regular' customers. During fieldwork however, CBOs in *bustees* on 'private' land (e.g. Site 1), and *samity*s (cooperative societies) applying for legal water connections (e.g. Site 3) complained they were charged the full price, even though they were technically LICs (see chapters seven and eight). This reflects DWASA's strategy to prioritise settlements on public land, as '*private land slums stay for two years, maximum. After that they just move the slums and build a huge apartment*' (KII DWASA SCO 2015), resulting in bill arrears. The SCO also shared how DWASA prefers to work in '*easy slums*', with '*easy entrance*' first, before tackling harder settlements with strong vested interests, such as Site 3 (*ibid*).

Since the early 2000s, many other NGOs, such as ARBAN, World Vision, HFHB, NGO Forum and WSUP have replicated the 'DSK model' across Dhaka, albeit under different names. Appendix 5 provides an overview of 13 NGOs and 2 donors involved in WASH provision in Dhaka's *bustees* at the time of fieldwork. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, and NGOs are listed individually, they are intricately connected by advocacy, funding and coordination networks. In some cases, NGO partners divide labour according to specialities. For example, NGO Forum provides 'software' (e.g. community mobilisation, CBO formation and hygiene awareness/training), WSUP provides 'hardware' (e.g. engineers, resources and technical assistance), and both advocate for improved services from DWASA (KIIs 2015).

Over the past 15 years, NGO-initiated CBOs have become 'new intermediaries' between *bustee* residents and DWASA, breaking dependency on illegal vendors. As noted by the World Vision Project Officer (PO), '*earlier, the NGOs were middlemen, now the committee [CBO] members collect from each household*' (KII 2015). These changes also demonstrate a broader shift in GoB approach from one of 'benign neglect'

to the ‘enabling’ strategy outlined in chapter two. This is supported by the following statement from the World Vision PO – ‘*at first, the approach was “no slums in Dhaka” and therefore no City Corporation activities to improve the wellbeing of slum dwellers. However, there is now a shift in approach with NGOs whereby the government says “you mobilise the community then we can provide assistance”*’ (ibid). Whilst notable progress has been made with legal water supply⁷³, DWASA’s capacity – especially regards sanitation – remains low. As key partners, NGO-initiated CBOs therefore play a central role in ‘filling the gaps’. Section 6.3 uses examples from Sites 1 and 2, to demonstrate how NGO-initiated CBOs form in practice.

6.3. NGO-Initiated CBOs in Practice: New Names, Same Models?

KIIs were conducted with 27 NGO and 6 donor staff working in the WASH sector in Dhaka (listed in Appendix 2a). Whilst many claimed a ‘unique’ organisational approach to CBO formation, similar patterns emerged in the methods used to mobilise communities around water and sanitation, based on the core principles of ‘ownership’, ‘participatory’ and ‘inclusive’ provision, to enhance efficiency and sustainability. As one World Bank WatSan official remarked:

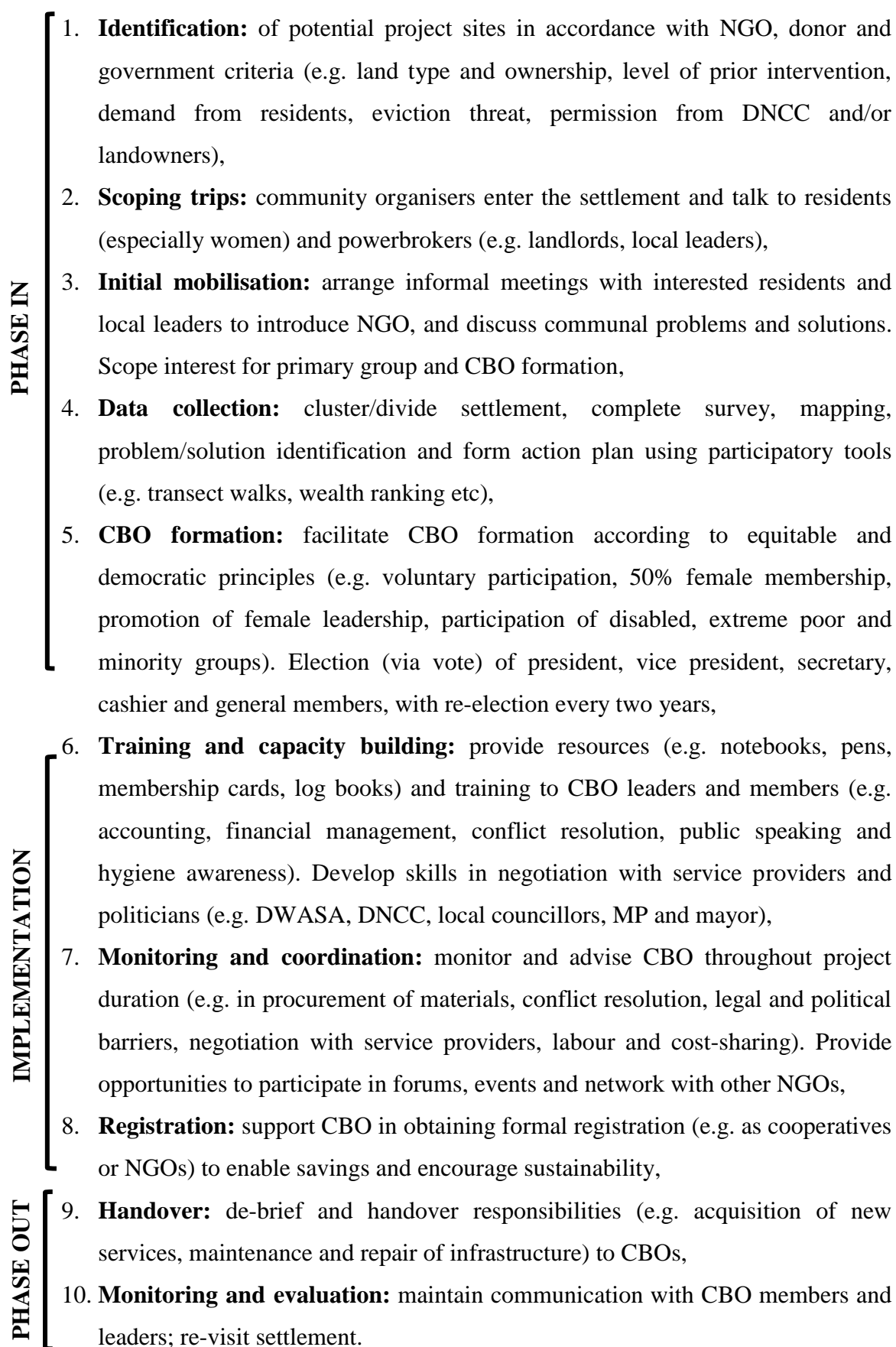
‘Community mobilisation is demand driven. 20 years ago there was greater focus on infrastructure provision but there has been a shift to demand-driven service provision. Community mobilisation is a tool to create robust institutions. Mobilisation is regarded as time consuming – especially by the government who regard it as “wasted money” – but it makes infrastructure more sustainable. NGOs get direct funding from donors and have a large overhead so they can do this mobilisation work...It is a donor interest to ensure sustainability and follow a *participatory, democratised and demand-driven approach*. Fixing institutions and fixing pipes are both important for sustainability’.

(KII 2015, *emphasis added*)

KIIs with NGO and donor staff, verified by field observations, secondary materials, SSQs and IDIs with CBO leaders and members revealed a common ‘10-step’ WASH project model (Figure 6.1).

⁷³ The DWASA SCO estimated the number of connections to be 2174 in approximately 400 *bustees*. There can be multiple connections in one settlement, hence the higher number (KII 2015).

Figure 6.1: ‘10-Step’ WASH Project Model



(Author's Own 2017)

Though this model is presented in a linear fashion, the process ultimately varies according to project time-frame, NGO and donor approach, funding, DNCC⁷⁴ and DWASA criteria. As noted in chapter five, WASH CBOs operate in highly dynamic, and often conflicting social, political and economic contexts, with implications for all project phases. The following uses examples from Sites 1 and 2 to highlight the complexities of initial mobilisation and CBO formation (points 3 and 5 in Figure 6.1).

6.3.1. Initial Mobilisation and CBO Formation

In Sites 1 and 2, NGOs have provided water and sanitation via CBOs for over a decade, largely replacing dependence on illegal vendors, ‘middlemen’ and self-help (e.g. collecting from wells, ponds and rivers) (SSQs, IDIs and FGDs 2015). As indicated in Figure 6.2, the first WASH NGO in Site 1 was DSK in 2001, followed by PDAP, ARBAN, WSUP and NGO Forum. DSK entered Site 2 in 2005, followed by; iWASH, PSTC, NDBUS-UPPR, World Vision, HFHB and NGO Forum. Whilst the majority of NGOs interviewed during fieldwork created new CBOs, a large number used existing CBOs left ‘dormant’ by previous projects, or formed by their NGO partners. This section focuses specifically on ARBAN and NGO Forum/WSUP in Site 1, and DSK, World Vision/HFHB and NGO Forum in Site 2 – active or phasing out at the time of fieldwork⁷⁵. A full list of NGO-initiated CBOs and WASH infrastructure installed in Sites 1 and 2 can be found in Appendices 6 and 7, respectively.

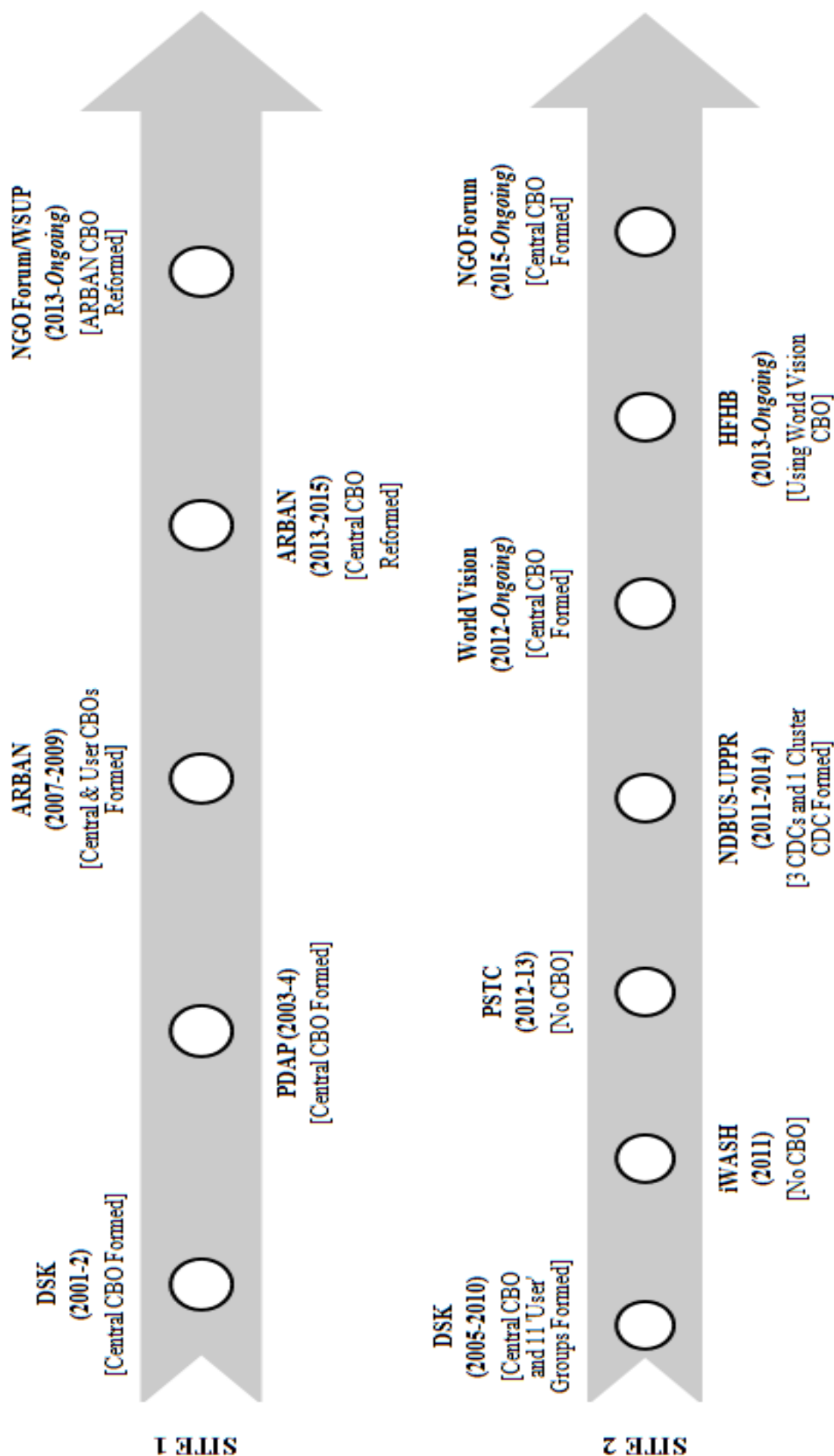
Site 1: Creating and Reforming CBOs

As noted in chapter five, DSK fieldworkers initially faced opposition when they entered Site 1 in 2001 due to fear of eviction amongst house owners. Over time however, other WASH NGOs entered the area, including ARBAN (under the ASEH Project) in 2007. By then, DSK and PDAP had phased out, and house owners were keen to obtain legal water connections and improve sanitation for their tenants (IDIs 2015).

⁷⁴ NGOs must get approval from DNCC or DSCC (and other relevant authorities e.g. railway authority) to work in specific slum settlements.

⁷⁵ Whilst DSK and ARBAN had ‘phased out’ some user CBOs remained active and these initial interventions left a legacy for future WASH NGOs (elaborated in chapter seven).

Figure 6.2: WASH NGO and CBO Timelines in Sites 1 and 2



(Based on FGDs and KIIs 2015)

In 2007, ARBAN signed a MoU with DWASA for legal connections to be given in the name of ARBAN and their user CBOs (KII ARBAN PO 2015). From 2007-2009 ARBAN constructed 20 water points and 20 cluster sanitation chambers, each with a user CBO (with 10-15 members), overseen by a central CBO (with 15 executive members). As the ARBAN PO explained:

‘ARBAN’s CBO formation system is programme based. Our staff members discussed the project objective with the community leaders, those who control the slum. We divided the slum into clusters and then created CBOs through discussion or election. 50 households make 1 CBO, so there may be 4-5 CBOs in one slum. A cluster of CBOs form a central CBO. We conducted social mapping, problem identification (e.g. how many water points and sanitation chambers are needed) and created a plan via a participatory process. We also trained the CBOs for capacity building’.

(KII 2015)

After the ASEH project closed in 2010, the central ARBAN CBO became inactive. However, when ARBAN re-entered Site 1 in 2013 (under the PEHUP Project), they reformed the central CBO (with 13 members) to oversee repairs and new construction (IDIs 2015). In 2014, NGO Forum/WSUP entered Site 1 with a new WASH project encouraging residents to apply for ‘*cheaper and better quality*’ legal DWASA connections (KII WSUP PM 2015). During the project, NGO Forum created user groups and Infrastructure Implementation Committees (IICs) to oversee water points and sanitation chambers. 20 families formed one user group, and 10-15 user groups formed one 15 member IIC. Within each IIC there was a purchase committee and latrine management committee. Each IIC also had a bank account with co-sharing⁷⁶ and NGO funds, whereby project beneficiaries were required to contribute three or five percent for construction (KII NGO Forum CO 2015). A central committee was then formed to oversee the project across Site 1 and the surrounding area (KII WSUP PM 2015). Rather than form a new CBO, NGO Forum reformed the central ARBAN CBO that had again become inactive, into a 25 member committee. The NGO Forum PM and Community Organiser (CO) explained why reforming the central CBO was important:

‘Why are we reforming the CBO? We will work there until 31st December [2015]. After that, we will phase out. So the CBO will be the final owner who will take over responsibility to carry out the work. We found that they have a CBO [ARBAN], but they are not functional, so very recently we asked the people to come forward and form a strong functional CBO’.

(KII PM 2015)

⁷⁶ Co-sharing was used as a method to reclaim costs and enhance ownership by DSK, ARBAN, NGO Forum/WSUP and World Vision. Conventionally, NGOs would divide households into clusters (i.e. extreme poor, poor, non-poor) and charge rates accordingly. Residents could repay in ‘one-off’ payments (e.g. Tk. 5000 for a sanitation chamber) or – more commonly – via monthly instalments (e.g. Tk. 30 per household for a water point) (KIIs and IDIs 2015).

‘A CBO existed in another NGO format here but it was not active [ARBAN]. WASA wanted a CBO that would address all the [water] problems. The existing CBO lacked the ability to perform this task, so we thought of reforming the CBO and changing the structure as many people left the area. The idea was to form a CBO with people who are living here for a long time, who have worked with several NGOs or are involved in mosques and organisations for the area’s development’.

(KII CO 2015)

The ARBAN PM also remarked ‘*NGO Forum is working with the same CBO. It’s not bad actually, but they need to reform the CBO. If you question the relationship or objective in the small CBO, then you have to reform it*’ (KII 2015). NGO Forum reformed the ARBAN CBO during a community meeting in February 2015⁷⁷. Whilst it was in the interest of NGO Forum, WSUP and DWASA to have a ‘functional’ CBO, rapid CBO reformation had implications for participation, function and outcomes (elaborated in chapter seven).

Site 2: Creating, Reforming and Using Existing CBOs

Similar to Site 1, initial mobilisation in Site 2 was difficult, as the DSK CO explained:

‘Working in [Site 2] was very tough when we first started...They didn’t believe in NGOs. People of the area opposed us, saying “many NGOs come here and leave with our money”. We talked and learned about their sorrows from one or two women. After sitting with them, we took our team there. We told them that “we haven’t come here to take money. We just want to improve the situation in which you are living”. The female ward councillor helped us. As a woman, she used to help us’.

(KII 2015)

Between 2005 and 2010 (under the ASEH Project), DSK constructed 11 water points, 110 individual ring slab latrines, 20-25 cluster latrines and repaired the DCC chambers. For each water point and sanitation chamber, a user CBO was created with 9 members, representing 20-30 households, and one nominated manager to oversee bill collection, maintenance and payment. These were usually all-female groups because ‘*water is actually for the women*’ (*ibid*). As women are responsible for collecting, carrying, storing and distributing water in the household, they are often targeted by NGOs to participate in WASH CBOs (KIIs 2015).

According to the DSK CO, 11 user groups are still active in Site 2, though only six were found during fieldwork (field observations 2015). DSK also formed a central ‘WatSan committee’ with 15 members to oversee the user groups and negotiate for further

⁷⁷ The meeting took place on 18.02.15 and was attended by the researcher, 2013 ARBAN president (P70), 2007 ARBAN president (P5), NGO Forum, WSUP, DWASA staff and 50 residents, including local political and religious leaders.

services. The committee reformed twice over a 10 year period, once in 2008-9 and again in 2011, but was dormant at the time of fieldwork (elaborated in chapter seven).

In 2012, World Vision reformed the dormant DSK committee into an ‘Integrated Slum Development Committee’ with 35 members, to oversee four elements of programme delivery; WASH, waste collection, child sponsorship and hygiene awareness (KII 2015). As noted by the World Vision PO, *‘upon entering a settlement, we first assess existing committees to see if they are active or inactive. Our CBOs form from these existing CBOs, often DSK or the UPPR CDCs. World Vision uses these existing networks and does not create new CBOs’* (KII 2015). In 2013, HFHB entered Site 2 and used the existing World Vision CBO, specifically the WASH wing or ‘Community WASH Committee’ (CWC) with 8-10 members, to deliver housing materials, construct washrooms and sanitation chambers. In this case, World Vision and HFHB entered into a partnership via their mutual donor AusAid to *‘enhance coordination and avoid duplication of the same project’* (ibid). As the HFHB PO explained:

‘We collected the list of CWCs from World Vision, [then] World Vision called the people; we sat together and introduced ourselves, “we are trying to work with you”. Through this process, we recognised them as our committee members. We do not form any committee. World Vision form and we work with the existing committee. We just recognise them’.

(KII 2015)

Following HFHB, in 2015, NGO Forum created an 11 member central CBO to oversee delivery of individual sanitation chambers and water reserves. Unlike in Site 1, NGO Forum created a new CBO in Site 2, though – as we explore in chapters seven and eight – the leaders and members were involved directly and/or indirectly with DSK, World Vision and HFHB.

6.3.2. Patterns and Trends

Key patterns emerged from initial mobilisation and CBO formation in Sites 1 and 2. For example, DSK was the first NGO to provide WASH services in both settlements, reflecting their ‘pioneer’ status. Referring to Site 2, the DSK CO remarked how *‘after DSK many NGOs went there; World Vision, Habitat and NGO Forum. When they contacted us we told them “work with the committee that is present, and work with the same bank account. You will notice they are strong. They are all our people”* (KII 2015). On the contrary, in Site 1, residents noted a preference for ARBAN and NGO Forum, as they had lower co-sharing fees – *‘The DSK programmes focused more on co-sharing for WASH. DSK took 10% interest. When ARBAN came, they didn’t take 10%*

and we got good toilet chambers and water points. ARBAN did have co-sharing but that went into the communal savings account. We continued with ARBAN, and no longer joined DSK (IDI P5 2015). The opposite was the case in Site 2 – *'I have to pay over Tk. 6000 for a water house to NGO Forum, and Tk. 7000 for a water supply connection. I had to take loans to pay. However, DSK did not take money for the water supply or house. They only took Tk. 30-40 per user in instalments. NGO Forum has higher co-sharing costs'* (IDI P6 2015). Far from passive recipients, residents in both settlements assess and decide which NGO programmes to engage with, according to their preferences, needs and resources. As one resident in Site 2 remarked, *'we are now selective about NGOs and only work with renowned NGOs. DSK first worked in our area then other NGOs came. We found World Vision to be the largest, so ignored other average NGOs'* (Male FGD 2015). This resonates with the argument of one NGO practitioner that *bustee* dwellers have become 'habituated' to NGOs in Dhaka (KII Practical Action PM 2015).

Whilst the use of existing CBOs could reduce costs, time spent on community mobilisation and NGO-CBO overlap, the creation of 'new' CBOs could (in theory) include individuals previously unable to participate and/or actively excluded, due to specific leadership and membership criteria (elaborated in chapter seven). The creation of new, or reformation of existing CBOs also had the potential to break dependency on dominant power figures (e.g. local political leaders, house owners and NGO 'brokers'⁷⁸) who could use CBOs to capitalise on the flow of resources and information. At the time of fieldwork, the creation of new CBOs was a source of ongoing debate amongst NGOs and urban poor groups in Dhaka. The NBUS president stated:

'We have a message to all NGOs. Whoever is working in any settlement needs to work with the existing CBOs, and not create new CBOs, because a large quantity of different CBOs creates rifts among the dwellers. If NGOs work through the same CBOs, our unity will sustain. This rift is created by NGOs. We are not creating a rift. We want to be united'.

(DSK, BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS Dialogue 2015)

Similarly, the DSK PM noted that *'NGOs are sometimes the barrier of development. One NGO comes and forms a CBO, then another, so five CBOs are implementing, creating a very conflicting situation'* (KII 2015). CBO overlap and lack of coordination was a particular issue in Site 2, where (at the time of fieldwork) five NGOs and three

⁷⁸ Local residents selected to work for NGOs voluntarily or in paid positions (i.e. as community facilitators), who use their position to manipulate selection criteria and charge fees to residents for grants, WASH facilities and information.

CBOs were involved in water and sanitation provision, fuelling frustration among some residents. One respondent remarked, *‘NGOs help us to organise and work in collaboration, but collaboration among the NGOs is probably the missing link’* (SSQ P15 2015). Whilst DSK claims to target ‘un-served’ settlements that are ‘harder to reach’ (e.g. along railway lines, higher risk of eviction or political influence), other NGOs (such as NGO Forum and WSUP) prioritised ‘safe’ settlements on public land (like Site 2), due to donor preferences and rigidity (KII DSK, WAB and WSUP PMs 2015). Ultimately, not all NGOs share the same approach or ‘stream of thought’. As the DSK ED explained:

‘One stream believes that “we are their NGO, we will organise different services for the poor, and we want to do it as efficiently as possible”, linking with the donors or government. This is a *service delivery model*. Now there is another stream of thinking which says “OK, we may organise some services, but we will focus strongly on the empowerment angle of this process. Whatever we do, it catalyses, influences, strengthens their understanding, views and roles within this entire social paradigm. They are exploited and deprived in an unjust social structure. That injustice needs to be removed”. This is the *empowerment model*’.

(KII 2015, *emphasis added*)

Whilst many NGOs use a ‘service delivery’ model, the DSK ED claimed an ‘empowerment model’ whereby CBOs are less delivery mechanisms and more *‘new institutions’* that are strategically important in negotiating with City Corporation for other services. This reflects the socialist ideology of the ED – a doctor trained in Russia, whose father was leader of the Socialist Party in Bangladesh (*ibid*). Whilst acknowledging this difference, fieldwork suggests that different CBO names are used for very similar project models. The ‘DSK model’ has improved the lives of thousands of *bustee* dwellers, but is not immune to critique. As one World Bank WatSan official remarked, *‘DSK have been using the same system of CBOs for 25-30 years. They are telling the story in the same way, with the same methods. Where is the innovation?’* (KII 2015). Contrary to the ‘empowerment’ approach espoused by the ED, one urban planner also argued that *‘DSK just wants to get the job done, they are a contractor’* (KII CUS 2015). Even more ‘progressive’ NGOs like DSK are constrained by the broader context of urban governance in which they operate.

6.4. Concluding Remarks

This second empirical chapter sought to deepen our understanding of how the form and nature of urban governance in Dhaka affects the type and intensity of CBO activity in the service sector. Section 6.1 demonstrated that a combination of a ‘hostile’ political

environment and donor preferences (towards participation, sustainability and efficiency), has contributed to an apparent shift from mobilisation to service delivery amongst urban NGOs and the citywide urban poor groups (BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS). This supports existing arguments that CSOs are increasingly de-radicalised and de-politicised in Bangladesh (e.g. Devine 2003; Rahman 2006; Lewis 2017, chapter four). This chapter nuances these arguments, however, by demonstrating the implications of this for collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*, with the proliferation of NGO-initiated CBOs.

Focusing on one leading urban NGO (DSK), section 6.2 highlighted the rise and role of NGO-initiated CBOs in service delivery. Particular emphasis was placed on DSK's WASH model, and the change in DWASA legislation to allow CBOs to apply for legal water connections – a move triggered by NGO advocacy, low DWASA capacity and incentives for cost-recovery. A trend emerges whereby NGO-initiated CBOs have become 'new intermediaries' in Dhaka, replacing dependency on illegal vendors. Section 6.3 outlined how NGO-initiated CBOs form in practice via a common '10-step' project model. Examples of initial mobilisation and CBO formation/reformation were drawn from Sites 1 and 2, where WASH NGOs had operated for over 10 years. It was argued that: 1) *bustee* residents actively select which NGO to engage with (often based on cost-sharing); and 2) lack of coordination between NGOs and CBOs (especially in Site 2) can fuel frustration among some residents, for whom WASH is not necessarily a priority.

An overarching trend emerges whereby the urban governance context (noted above and in chapter four) enables practical forms of collective action (i.e. WASH CBOs), over other, more strategic forms (i.e. to address land, housing tenure, financial and social insecurity – the priorities in all field sites). Chapter seven strengthens and nuances these observations, by focusing on participation, function and outcomes of NGO-initiated CBOs in Sites 1 and 2.

7. NGO-Initiated CBOs in Sites 1 and 2

Drawing primarily on the voices of CBO leaders, members and non-members, this third empirical chapter focuses on the intra-group dynamics of externally, NGO-initiated CBOs. Examples are drawn from Sites 1 (e.g. ARBAN and NGO Forum/WSUP) and 2 (e.g. DSK, World Vision/HFHB and NGO Forum), where WASH NGOs were active or phasing out at the time of fieldwork. The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 7.1 focuses on CBO participation, with particular emphasis on election or selection of leaders and members. Section 7.2 outlines CBO function, including; activities during the project cycle and the responsibilities of leaders and members in accessing services, monitoring and maintaining ‘hardware’ (e.g. sanitation chambers, tube wells). Section 7.3 then focuses on CBO outcomes, exploring in particular ‘who benefits, and why’, and what happens after NGOs ‘phase out’.

It is argued that, whilst NGO-initiated CBOs bring numerous benefits for (some) leaders, members and the wider community, sustainability post-project is a major challenge due to eviction threat, lack of incentives and resources, limited capacity, elite capture, NGO and donor dependency. Existing power dynamics within and outside the ‘community’ also have implications for CBO participation, and access, control over and maintenance of services in the long-term.

7.1. CBO Participation

As indicated in chapter three, an important component of CBO participation is election and/or selection of leaders and members. Whilst the meaning of ‘leader’ and ‘member’ is contested, and selection varies according to CBO size and function (i.e. user or central), certain patterns emerged during fieldwork with similar criteria promoted by NGO staff. For example; gender balance and female leadership, inclusion of extreme poor and disabled, targeting local powerbrokers (e.g. local political leaders and elders), long-term residents (e.g. house owners, managers) and those with previous NGO experience. Box 7.1 outlines the election/selection preferences of NGO staff working in Sites 1 and 2.

Box 7.1: NGO Election/Selection Criteria

DSK PM: ‘We call a general meeting, before the meeting someone serves the notice to the community through microphone or door-to-door visits. In the meeting they finalise the CBO leaders and members. If there is any competition then they vote. We always give priority to women’s leadership. We try to select women in the big positions like president, treasurer or secretary. And also the disabled persons or hard-core poor’.

ARBAN PO: ‘One person per 100-200 families is nominated to represent their area in the central CBO. Members are then selected by residents in a voting system’.

NGO Forum CO: ‘NGO Forum asks for 50/50 gender equity in the CBO, and encourages diverse representation from permanent settlers like owners, long-term tenants and managers. NGO Forum also asks for genuine community representation. For example, we convinced the local religious leaders about women’s participation in the CBO. We made them understand that community development is a collective effort that requires inclusive participation. They are now convinced about the programme’.

WSUP PM: ‘Our fieldworkers call a meeting to discuss the purpose of the committee, “you have to serve voluntarily and take responsibility, if you are willing and can spare time, then you can be a member”. So they say “OK you can be a member, he can be cashier”. The committee forms in a consultative way’.

World Vision PO: ‘World Vision promotes women’s leadership and empowerment. More than 50% of CBO members are women. We purposefully put them in leadership positions, and select those who are more established and likely to stay, as mobility of residents makes it difficult’.

HFHB PO: ‘The community nominates members of the committee and selects someone to be chairman, secretary, treasurer and vice chairman. There is a core team of 4 or 5 that lead and communicate with the government and other NGOs. When they are elected, we recognise and formally communicate with them. They must be a member of this community, and live in the area’.

(Based on KIIs 2015)

During fieldwork, CBO leaders and members were asked why they were nominated, elected or selected for CBO positions. For many, it was because they had previous NGO and CBO experience, got on well with the fieldworkers, were long-term residents, perceived as trustworthy and reliable (SSQs and IDIs 2015). Whilst some leaders were elected by vote during a community meeting, many were selected by the CBO president or NGO staff directly. The cashier in ARBAN’s central CBO in Site 1, also a manager of 20 households, explained why she was selected:

‘The NGO workers came to the area. At first they didn’t know anyone, so they enquired about the owners, managers or caretakers. They found us and introduced themselves. They proposed that they want to do something here, and gather people for an orientation meeting. They asked us to call those who are sensible and interested. I invited my neighbours. At the beginning, I was the only member but then it became ten. Those ten people then circulated the message to another ten of their contacts. Randomly it became mass participation. After spreading the objectives and tag line of the project, they registered members. They know me very well. *I am trustworthy and one of the old tenants. They always come to me with all the problems*’.

(IDI P6 2015, *emphasis added*)

Another ARBAN CBO leader in Site 1 remarked, *‘there is no voting or election; NGO authorities selectively assigned the responsibilities to active members. They selected me because I am working with different NGOs for many years’* (IDI P33 2015). In Site 2, one member of the World Vision Community WASH Committee (CWC) shared why she was chosen:

‘Those who wish to do and are available for voluntarily work are selected, those who are committed. *It is obvious. You take me in the committee because you like me.* You [would] take my name in the committee even if I wasn’t present in that particular meeting. That is because you trust me. I am not joining the committee for my own interest’.

(IDI P9 2015, *emphasis added*)

P9 went on to state how she replaced someone in the reformed committee:

‘At first they selected another woman named ‘Ms J’. We were not home at that time. The fieldworker knows that I always volunteer in community activities and due to this fact, Ms J’s name was dropped, and I was selected. She is complaining that her name was dropped but we argued “you are not available for the committee’s community activities. If I could not give time would you take me in your team?” Many people say “you people are taking members of your liking in the committee”. The fact is many are not available in the time of need’.

(*ibid*)

Whilst relationship and trust-building between NGO fieldworkers and residents, (especially those actively involved with NGOs for many years), was important for project implementation, and friendships developed organically, allegations of nepotism and favouritism fuelled mistrust between CBO leaders, members and non-members. This was exacerbated by the provision of food, drinks or ‘tips’ by NGOs to boost attendance at CBO meetings and training programmes. One non-member in Site 1 remarked, *‘people do not take the initiative themselves. They are running after the NGOs!’* (IDI P45 2015). Similarly, one non-member in Site 2 stated *‘people are only available to enjoy a free lunch!’* (IDI P19 2015). Even the World Vision PO argued that *‘people have a relief-oriented attitude. The CBO members ask for cash, but World Vision only provides in-kind and infrastructure improvement’* (KII 2015).

Throughout fieldwork, numerous reasons were given for why people participated in NGO-initiated WASH CBOs, ranging from; to improve the living environment and help others, access cheaper water and sanitation facilities, cleaning materials and hygiene training, gain skills and leadership qualities, resist eviction, access decision makers (e.g. MP, mayor, politicians, service providers), or simply because they were targeted by the NGOs or donors (e.g. as extreme poor households) (SSQs and FGDs 2015). Some residents also noted that they joined to obtain individual sanitation facilities (as with NGO Forum in Site 2), or shared facilities for their tenants (e.g. cluster latrines and

water points) (SSQs and IDIs 2015). In Site 2, women were particularly interested to participate because they found leadership training useful. They shared that people were initially hesitant to join because of the unwillingness of elders and family members. However, this changed once they started to see how CBOs could bring benefits personally, and for the whole community (Female FGD 2015). Ultimately, certain people were more likely to participate in NGO-initiated CBOs than others. Field observations, SSQs and IDIs with CBO leaders, members and non-members in Sites 1 and 2 revealed that those more likely to participate were:

- More solvent households (i.e. multiple earners, stable income),
- House owners and managers or longer-term tenants,
- Those with emotional, financial, logistical support from family,
- Those with political backing (i.e. ruling party supporters),
- Whose household was located close to access points and lanes/meeting hubs,
- Those with prior NGO and CBO experience/known to NGO staff,
- Those with time to participate,
- Those educated to Standard 5 or above (often elected as cashiers),
- Able bodied, physically and mentally well persons,
- Local powerbrokers (e.g. landlords, house owners, political leaders and elders).

Within this spectrum, CBO leaders were more likely to be local political leaders, multiple house owners, educated above Standard 5 and/or involved with NGOs for a long time. Box 7.2 highlights some examples from Sites 1 and 2.

Box 7.2: Field Extracts: Active CBO Leaders

P5 (Site 1): P5 is 45 years old and has lived in Site 1 for 29 years. She bought the plot of land informally, and owns her *pucca* house and 7 other rooms, which she rents out at Tk. 1500 per month. P5 lives with her husband (a businessman) and three children. P5 is educated to Standard 9 and earns approximately Tk. 15-20,000 per month from rent and NGO work. P5 has been actively involved with NGOs since 1992. Her house has been used as a DSK savings hub⁷⁹ for over 10 years. DSK give her Tk. 300 per month as an honorarium to use the space. P5 was the former ARBAN central CBO president (2007-9), and has an ARBAN sanitation chamber and water point in her compound. P5 is also an active member of NBUS, where she is cashier in the Executive Committee. Although it is time consuming, P5 enjoys participating in CBOs, as she likes to learn and help others. Her daughter and son have also benefited from her NGO contacts (she recently arranged a job for her daughter working with DSK). She has become very confident through working with the NGOs. She tries to involve her tenants in NGO projects, as they are in a more vulnerable condition. P5 has a good relation with the local landowner (P41), who rents out 200 houses nearby.

P63 (Site 2): P63 is 35 years old and has lived in Site 2 for 16 years in her own house. She lives alone with her two children. Her husband is currently in jail, which is very distressing but she has many friends, male guardians and political contacts in the area who look after her. She is very confident and not afraid to speak her mind. She is actively involved in various NGO and donor projects relating to WASH, savings and education. P63 is the leader of the hygiene cluster in the World Vision CBO. She worked as a community facilitator, and has become familiar with the World Vision staff – this is why she was selected in the committee. Her husband was also a good friend of a previous World Vision engineer – that’s why they got some household materials/repairs. P63’s husband was the leader of a *samity* in Site 2. After he was jailed, she took over this role. She also takes part in political campaigning for the Awami League.

(Based on SSQs and IDIs 2015)

Throughout fieldwork, it became clear that certain people were leaders (or members) of multiple NGO-initiated CBOs at one time, relating to WASH, savings, healthcare and/or education. During the female FGD in Site 2, one active CBO member stated:

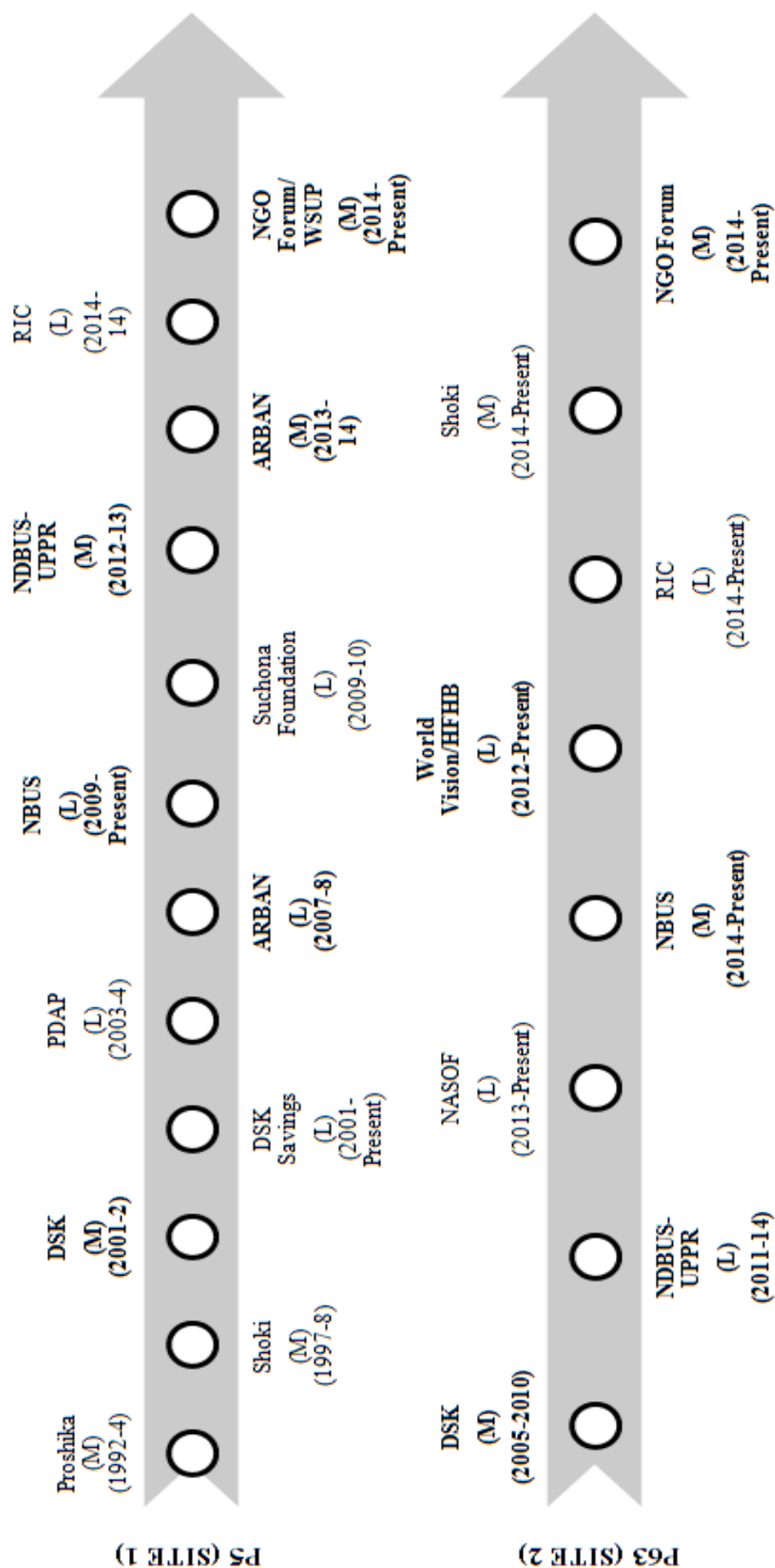
‘We have multiple membership and diverse positions in different CBOs. There are a number of cases where someone is secretary of one CBO but vice president of another. We have a WASH committee, NGO Forum committee...We all help and support each other. For example, if someone is absent, we take his or her responsibilities and do our duty’.

(FGD 2015)

This multiplicity is best demonstrated by individual timelines. Figure 7.1 depicts the NGO timelines of P5 (Site 1) and P63 (Site 2) – just two among many similar stories.

⁷⁹ The houses of CBO leaders were often used as savings ‘hubs’ where 10-20 members would store their savings books and deposit money. The MFI worker would then collect in bulk (field observations 2015).

Figure 7.1: Leadership and Membership of CBOs*: Individual Timelines



*WASH CBOs highlighted in bold. (L) = Leader and (M) = Member

(Based on SSQs and IDIs 2015)

In both field sites, informal women's groups emerged from previous NGO and donor projects. For example, in Site 1, a collective of five house owners initially involved with PDAP sat together fortnightly to discuss NGO projects and problems in the area (SSQs and IDIs 2015). In Site 2, a 15 member group of UPPR leaders and political campaigners met monthly (or as required) to inform each other about NGO programmes and run social arbitration for women in the area. Members of this informal network were involved with all the NGO and donor-initiated CBOs in the settlement. One of the leaders remarked, *'without us, it is not possible for them to work here. We know people and the settlement. People of our area respect us and listen to us'* (IDI P49 2015). The husbands of these women were also some of the political leaders in the area, involved in the committee, *samity*s and same or parallel WASH CBOs. The significance of this overlap for CBO participation and outcomes is elaborated in chapter eight.

Whilst there were numerous incentives for participation in WASH CBOs, there were also numerous barriers. Multiple reasons were given for why people did not participate, including; no perceived benefit, mistrust of NGOs and fellow residents, lack of family support (especially from husband), limited time and finances/debt, lack of confidence, lack of information or invitation and ideological differences (SSQs 2015). Field observations, SSQs and IDIs with WASH CBO leaders, members and non-members in Sites 1 and 2 revealed that those least likely to participate were:

- Short term tenants/highly mobile/evicted multiple times,
- Those living in daily financial insecurity ('hand to mouth') with debt,
- Single mothers with multiple dependents,
- Mentally ill (*'pagala'*), physically ill or disabled,
- Elderly and living alone (often widowers),
- Those with limited time to participate in meetings/activities as working away or in intensive jobs (e.g. garments),
- Those living in 'hidden' or inaccessible parts of the settlement (e.g. by *jheel*, away from main roads, paths and meeting hubs),
- Those who have a dispute/conflict with local leaders and/or are perceived as supporting the opposition party (BNP).

Box 7.3 highlights some examples from Sites 1 and 2.

Box 7.3: Field Extracts: Non-Members

P54 (Site 1): P54 is 40 years old and has lived in Site 1 for 15 years. She lives with her elderly mother, two sons and disabled daughter in two small rooms, which she rents from P41 for Tk. 1500 per month. The house is in very poor condition, dark and narrow with a leaking roof. P54 suffers from chronic ill-health. She cannot afford her medicine, or that of her mothers. P54 works as a domestic helper in two houses, one of which is P41s. She only earns Tk. 2000 per month as P41 is withholding pay because she owes three months' rent. P54's husband abandoned her but comes to the house randomly to demand money. He often beats her during these visits as he dislikes her involvement with any NGOs or *samity*s. P54 was involved in an ARBAN user group but is no longer invited to join meetings. She was also a member of the World Vision sponsored child programme, which was beneficial for her daughter, but was dropped by the community facilitator because she did not attend political rallies. She also participated in the NDBUS savings programmes, but her money has gone missing – she suspects the fieldworker has taken it. She has lost interest to participate in NGO activities, as there is no benefit and certain people are making money from the NGOs.

P28 (Site 2): P28 is 27 years old. She moved to Site 2 four months ago and lives in a small rented room, paying Tk. 1000 per month plus bills. Her husband passed away one year ago leaving her with four young children. She is living in a very vulnerable condition and begs in Mirpur for money and food. A few days ago, the house owner scolded her for failing to pay rent. If she does not pay, she will be kicked out. She has no family and receives no help from her neighbours. P28 doesn't participate in NGO activities because she has no time and is not invited. She believes '*local people don't like the ultra-poor like her*'.

(Based on SSQs and IDIs 2015)

Evidently, financial, social and political barriers overlap to prevent certain people from joining, or continuing participation within CBOs. Short-term tenants and those living in severe financial insecurity were particularly unlikely to participate – '*poor people living in rent have no peace in life as they have to maintain rent*' (SSQ P47 Site 1 2015). Short-term tenants were also deemed unviable for CBO participation (especially as leaders) by NGO staff, due to their perceived mobility. As the DSK PM remarked, '*you can't just directly mobilise the tenants, you need to mobilise the owner, otherwise you will not be able to work in the community, because after some time, they [the tenants] will change houses*' (KII 2015). When tenants were included, this was often as general members in user CBOs, rather than in leadership or decision-making roles in central CBOs (SSQs 2015). Intra-household support was also central to participation, but could change over time. For example, one lady in Site 1 noted how her husband and sons were initially supportive of her participation in ARBAN, but then persuaded her to leave after a short-time, so she could manage household chores (IDI P33 2015). Another lady in Site 2 shared how she was being physically abused by her husband, as he did not like her involvement with World Vision or NGO Forum (IDI P54 2015). Some female CBO leaders and members also mentioned that they felt stressed juggling CBO and domestic (e.g. cooking, cleaning, working, water collection) duties (SSQs 2015).

In some cases, participants actively avoided CBO engagement, due to prior bad experience or disillusionment. As one resident in Site 2 remarked, *'I have no interest to join NGO groups now due to complex social conflict. Favouritism and nepotism among local leaders causes conflict and affects the culture of the NGO groups'* (SSQ P41 2015). The influence of local powerbrokers on CBO participation was a topic of intense discussion in both field sites. The perception of many non-members interviewed was that local leaders did not let others join CBOs, to monopolise on perceived (or actual) benefits (SSQs and IDIs 2015). Many respondents also reported being 'dropped' by local leaders after election or selection. This was the case in NGO Forum/WSUP in Site 1, and DSK, World Vision/HFHB and NGO Forum in Site 2. The following provides examples from NGO Forum in Sites 1 and 2 – two particularly illustrative cases.

NGO Forum/WSUP in Site 1

At the ARBAN CBO reformation meeting (outlined in chapter six), it became apparent that the rapidly reformed committee would consist mostly of male political leaders from the area. Research participants pointed out numerous political leaders in the meeting, and on the committee panel. The only woman present on the panel was the former (2012-2013) ARBAN CBO president (P70), who said little. Towards the end of the meeting, the committee members stated to the NGO Forum, WSUP and DWASA representatives that *'they will reform the CBO in 10-15 days'* (field observations 2015). Whilst local leaders took control of this process, the NGO Forum PM later stated *'on that day they said they were ready to form the committee but I said "no, you are not ready". They said "we are doing well" but people said "no you are not doing well"'* (KII 2015). A few weeks after the meeting, P70 shared what she knew about the reformed CBO:

'I am the vice-president of that CBO. They [NGO Forum] tried to finalise the selection of CBO members but were not able to because the water connections were in a mess. There was an urgency to quickly sort out the water supply due to scarcity of water and WASA was going to cut the illegal lines. NGO Forum formed the CBO with the opinion of key community stakeholders very quickly to sort out the water problems...We are yet to have a meeting, so I am not sure about the final number of members. I heard there would be 25'.

(IDI P70 2015)

The former (2007-9) ARBAN CBO president (P5) shared her concerns:

'When the CBO reforms it will be very political...We don't want any CBO with a politician involved. They are too corrupt! When they started planning to make the committee strong, some leaders also said they wouldn't participate under the banner of slum dwellers. However, they also have temporary housing and no legal documentation. WASA still

identifies that area as a slum. According to the NGOs, slums are places that are densely populated, with 10-12 people sharing one latrine, so it is obviously a slum’.

She continued:

‘P70 does not have much experience, and cannot raise her voice. Since P70 wasn’t able to provide good leadership, no work was done in this area. Now more men are participating even though women were involved in WASH CBOs as community mobilisers. Now men are getting involved as donor funds and infrastructure is coming. *Women are being sidelined, gender relations are shifting and women’s voices are quiet*’.

(IDI P5 2015, *emphasis added*)

Whilst the central CBO is for ‘*overall management of the whole slum*’ (KII WSUP PM 2015), the CBO represents the interests of lower-middle class male leaders and house owners in nearby areas, who do not wish to be associated with ‘slums’. When asked, P5 said she self-identifies as a ‘slum dweller’ (even though she lives in a stable financial condition and *pucca* house) to obtain services, improve living conditions and because she enjoys participating in NGO programmes (SSQs and IDIs 2015). Ultimately, a central CBO covering over 15,000 households of various types in a highly politicised area must address such conflicting interests.

NGO Forum in Site 2

Similar issues were reported with NGO Forum in Site 2. As the cashier (P52) explains:

‘I, P68, P64 and P49 were in the committee but were dropped after less than a week. The whole committee dissolved and then reformed. We found that those leaders were present, and pretended they don’t know us! P25 was the secretary, ‘Mr R’ was the vice president and P26 was the president. They undermine everyone and ignore whatever people say about them. They maintain their syndicate and do not let other people know what they’re actually doing. I said to the NGO Forum workers, “since the beginning we’ve struggled for you, my husband scolded me but I ignored it and you’ve not even invited me to join the committee”. The NGO workers then intervened to make me cashier. This created a lot of problems. Many of the committee were not happy with me joining. They even went to the NGO office to complain’.

(IDI P52 2015)

When asked about current NGO Forum activities as cashier, P52 replied, ‘*I am just symbolically in the committee; I am cashier without any power. The leaders control everything. They withdraw money from the bank copying my signature*’ (*ibid*). P52s experience reflects a broader trend in Sites 1 and 2, whereby local male leaders enter and then drop female members from CBOs. Male leaders also repeatedly tried to interfere with the UPPR CDCs, even though this was a female-only donor project (SSQs and IDIs 2015). Female leaders in Site 2 perceived the male-led groups (e.g. DSK, World Vision/HFHB and NGO Forum) as less functional and sustainable, compared to the female-led CDCs – ‘*the men are lazy, female leadership is better*’

(SSQ P49 2015). In both sites, residents (both CBO members and non-members) shared an overall sense of powerlessness in holding local leaders to account. As one resident in Site 2 remarked:

‘Some powerful leaders and guardians are responsible for addressing these issues. What could we do if they do not respond to the problems? They are involved with all NGOs that come to our settlement. They are invited to all NGO meetings. We were members of DSK, World Vision, Habitat and NGO Forum but were dropped from all the groups. We are no longer updated about what the committees and NGOs are doing...They have the opportunity to tell NGOs our main demands but they don’t. They are busy with their selfish interests. They will abuse us if we raise our voice in front of the NGOs’.

(IDI P6 2015)

NGO staff in Sites 1 and 2 were aware of these challenges. Referring to Site 1, the WSUP PM remarked, *‘in the existing CBO men are there, but we encourage women in our CBOs. If someone has capacity, she can talk, make decisions independently or spare time then she is most welcome’* (KII 2015). One can see how easily someone ‘without capacity’ can be side-lined. Throughout fieldwork, it became apparent that NGOs used similar strategies to deal with local powerbrokers within and outside project sites. Rather than avoid or actively exclude potentially ‘problematic’ individuals, many NGOs tried to include them, albeit in advisory roles. As the DSK PM remarked, *‘when influential people try to enter the committee, we just facilitate “OK brother, you are very powerful, you are contributing to the community for a long time but I think it’s a small business for the poor people, you might be the advisor”* (KII 2015).

In some cases, without permission from certain individuals, NGOs could not implement the project. As noted by the WSUP PM, *‘there is a power structure there, you cannot avoid or bypass them to do something in the slum. We have a budget provision for a meeting with the so-called landowner, political leaders and even the MP. We meet with them and state that “we need your cooperation and support”. Sometimes we get a positive response, sometimes we are told that to run the project, we must hire contractors affiliated with the local MP’* (KII 2015). Similarly, the World Vision PO remarked, *‘we are aware of the political influence on groups in slums. We face some challenges, but our strategy is to build good relationships with landowners and political leaders’*. Despite this, many NGO fieldworkers, CBO leaders and members mentioned that they face regular opposition from local political leaders and young men who want to capitalise on the flow of resources and information. For example, during fieldwork in Site 2, the World Vision CBO grew from 35 to 42 members, as a group of young men from the area demanded to join (field observations 2015).

CBO participation is evidently highly dynamic and contested. Leaders and members can be dropped, forced out or hold positions over many years. Someone can be nominated or elected, but decline the position due to lack of time, changing preferences or personal circumstances. CBO participation can also be a heavy burden that only those willing and able to commit time and resources can take on. Women in particular, are expected to manage community and family duties, which can be stressful.

As expected, financially, socially, politically and physically able persons were more likely to participate, and hold leadership positions. It became clear that certain individuals know exactly how to engage with NGOs, due to prior experience. Those who've '*learnt the language of NGOs*' (IDI P60 Site 2 2015) were more likely to lead CBOs. Relationships between residents and NGO staff, established over time and negotiated through kinship, political and gender identities also meant certain people were informed about, and included in WASH CBOs, before others. Short-term tenants/highly mobile households were less likely to benefit from such connections, and were often left in the dark about NGO projects in the area – '*we don't get to hear what goes on, we aren't given much value are we?*' (SSQ P20 2015). However, just because an individual wasn't included in a WASH CBO, did not mean they weren't involved in other collective groups. In fact, many non-CBO members were involved in formal and informal *samity*s, especially in relation to savings and land (SSQs 2015). This relates to the discussion about priorities (i.e. financial and tenure security) in chapter five.

Whilst male political leaders and house owners were the 'usual suspects' for CBO leadership, there were notable exceptions. For example, two elderly blind men were actively involved in the DSK WatSan committees in Site 2, where they received training and encouragement from DSK fieldworkers and competed with each other for leadership positions. Likewise, whilst some women were prevented from participating by their husbands or children, others would defy these barriers and participate anyway, drawing on their networks of friends and neighbours for support. In turn, many women reported participating with encouragement from their husbands, or because their husband was already a member (SSQs and IDIs 2015). CBO participation ultimately involves a complex politics of inclusion and exclusion, with many spoken and unspoken rules and norms. There is also an apparent mismatch between the devolution of election powers to 'the community', and NGO principles of inclusion and gender equity. Section 7.2 now focuses on CBO function, with particular emphasis on activities and responsibilities of certain leaders and members.

7.2. CBO Function

Whilst each WASH NGO in Sites 1 and 2 had their own project objectives (in line with priorities identified and donor mandate) common CBO activities could be identified. As indicated in Table 7.1, user CBOs were largely responsible for monitoring and maintaining specific water points and sanitation chambers, while central CBOs were often engaged with selection of beneficiaries, billing and negotiation with government agencies and other NGOs. Meeting frequency and structure also varied according to CBO size, with user CBOs meeting according to need (i.e. to address repairs or collect fees), and central CBOs meeting approximately once per month during project implementation. The following provides examples of CBO function from Sites 1 and 2.

ARBAN and NGO Forum/WSUP in Site 1

As indicated in chapter six, each ARBAN facility has a user CBO, whose members are responsible for cleaning. In most cases, a voluntary caretaker (often a house owner or manager) was nominated to oversee activities (SSQs 2015). ARBAN also trained user CBO members in maintenance and repair, to enhance sustainability post-project:

‘ARBAN transfer all the responsibility to the CBOs to look after the water points, bathing places or toilets. They have a fund, communicate with DWASA for water supply, collect bills from the community and pay WASA. We found that CBOs pay the WASA bills regularly, it is the rich families in the multi-story apartments that do not pay the bills!’

(KII ARBAN PM 2015)

The 2007-9 central CBO oversaw the user CBOs, managed the joint bank account, identified beneficiaries and supported applications for legal DWASA connections. Co-sharing money from user CBO members was stored in the joint account, to be used for future repairs and maintenance (SSQs 2015). As the ARBAN cashier explained:

‘They gave us this sanitation chamber in 2007. After opening the account in 2009, we and all the other members contributed. We opened a joint account to prevent fraud. We have Tk. 75,000 in our co-sharing account at Rupali Bank. The account is open in the name of three CBO leaders. We can use the fund to repair sanitation chambers if we have a problem. If two of the leaders sign, we can withdraw money’.

(IDI P6 2015)

Table 7.1: WASH CBO Activities in Sites 1 and 2

ACTIVITY	WASH CBOs (SITE 1)				WASH CBOs (SITE 2)			
	ARBAN (User CBOs)	ARBAN (Central CBOs)	NGO Forum/WSUP (IIC)	NGO Forum/WSUP (Central CBO)	DSK (User CBO)	DSK (Central CBO)	World Vision/HFHB (CWC)	NGO Forum (Central CBO)
Identify problems and form community action plan	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Organise meetings (frequency)	When required	Monthly	When required	4-6 weeks	When required	Monthly	Monthly	When required
House to house visits and mobilisation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Select project beneficiaries	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Training and awareness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Manage bank account	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓
Record keeping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hire local contractors	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X
Procure materials	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X
Arrange cost-sharing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oversee construction of infrastructure	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Monitor facilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clean facilities	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X
Collect and pay bills to WASA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Maintain and repair facilities	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	X
Communicate and negotiate with government agencies (e.g. DWASA, DESCO, DNCC) for other services	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Communicate and negotiate with NGOs for other services	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓

(Based on KIIs; SSQs; IDIs; FGDs and field observations 2015)

Although CBO leaders technically required a signature from an ARBAN staff member to withdraw money from the joint account (KII ARBAN 2015), P6 shared how the fund could be accessed for other purposes, at the leaders discretion – *‘We can use the money for community development, but we have to return it later. For example, if an ultra-poor girl is eligible for marriage, we give a maximum Tk. 5000 grant to her family. Or if a person dies, we give maximum Tk. 3000 for funeral costs’* (ibid). This reflects the strong social bonds between kin, family and neighbours in Dhaka’s *bustees* that underpin (and override) prescribed CBO ‘function’.

The 2013-14 ARBAN project placed greater emphasis on repair, drainage and supporting applications for legal water connections amongst house owners (IDI P70 2015). After ARBAN, NGO Forum/WSUP prioritised removal of illegal, and installation of legal water lines (in accordance with DWASA), repaired dilapidated ARBAN sanitation chambers, and promoted hygiene awareness, particularly menstrual hygiene – a neglected component of the ARBAN projects (KII WSUP PM 2015). As the NGO Forum CO explained, *‘our objective is to ensure that people are aware of WASH and that they have a link with WASA. Through this link we firstly want to increase Government revenue. Secondly we want people to use hygienic washrooms’* (KII 2015). The WSUP PM shared why repairing facilities was important, *‘we found that a number of community latrines are not functional. Most of the septic tanks were full and overflowing. In other toilets we saw that the door or roof is broken...so we cleaned the sludge, plastered it, fixed the door and made provisions for lighting and water. Without running water it’s very difficult to maintain the toilet, so where possible we get a legal connection from DWASA, and provide a tank on top of the toilet’* (KII 2015). The Infrastructure Implementation Committees (IICs) were largely responsible for procuring materials, overseeing construction and major repair. They also had joint co-sharing accounts. As the WSUP PM explained:

‘We open an account in the name of the IIC and mobilise the fund to that account. In order to have some control over the budget, our field engineer is one of the co-signatories. Without his signature, they cannot withdraw money. The community buy the material, they engage the local plumber and mason and get the work done. Our field engineer checks the quality and workmanship, and whether this is done as per our design. So this is one way of empowering the community, by involving the people and transferring the money to them’.

(ibid)

Similar to the ARBAN user CBOs, the IICs were responsible for cleaning, maintenance and communication with DWASA post-project (KII NGO Forum PM 2015). Unlike ARBAN, NGO Forum/WSUP hired paid community workers (individuals selected by

user families) to collect bills and maintain the sanitation blocks (*ibid*). The central NGO Forum/WSUP CBO then oversaw the IICs, identified project beneficiaries, negotiated with local house owners and DWASA to legalise water connections. As the vice president explained, *'we voluntarily identify the households which still do not have hygienic sanitation facilities and water supply points. For holistic environmental development, we need sanitation and water for all. NGOs inserted this idea in our brains'* (IDI P70 2015).

DSK, World Vision/HFHB and NGO Forum in Site 2

Whilst the DSK ring slab latrines were managed by individual user families, each tube well and sanitation block had a user CBO, whose members were responsible for cleaning, monitoring and maintenance. Similar to ARBAN, a voluntary manager or caretaker (usually a long-term resident and house owner) collected and paid bills to WASA. The DSK CO remarked, *'suppose a water point is given for 20 families, among those 20 families, whoever has time, can talk and people listen to them, can be selected for this role. They collect the water bill, make repairs if it's broken, call mechanics, call meetings and solve problems if people argue'* (KII 2015). The central WatSan committee played a broader role in selecting beneficiaries, overseeing construction, maintenance, repair, co-sharing and negotiating with service providers (e.g. DNCC and DWASA). The committee also managed the joint co-sharing bank account, using funds to construct a DSK resource centre and renovate eight DCC latrines (SSQs 2015).

Unlike other NGOs, World Vision/HFHB did not have smaller user CBOs, but operated via the CWC cluster of the central CBO. The CWC would submit an application to World Vision, prioritising what they wanted (e.g. latrine, water reserve) and implement this with local contractors. As the CBO president explained:

'World Vision sends materials through a contractor. After sending the materials they inform me the steel rods, bricks and cement must be of the highest quality. By listening to their advice we buy accordingly and the work is done very nicely. Once the materials are sent, I have to watch them; otherwise thieves might take them. Sometimes I have to stay up all night. We have to work very hard'.

(IDI P26 2015)

CWC leaders were also responsible for selecting beneficiaries, monitoring infrastructure, collecting co-sharing fees, distributing sanitation chamber locks and keys to user families and obtaining (land and connection) approval from the relevant authorities (SSQs and IDIs 2015). Each CWC member was then responsible for households in their

lane/plot, and encouraged to gather neighbours to attend hygiene awareness training. Although user families were responsible for daily cleaning, committee members were required to clean facilities and provide ‘cleaning demonstrations’ for NGO officials (SSQs 2015). During one field visit, CWC members were frantically cleaning the newly constructed sanitation blocks prior to a foreign delegate’s arrival. One member joked – ‘Does it look like I am benefiting from the NGOs?’ (Field observations 2015).

The World Vision PO remarked that, ‘the CBOs do everything, and World Vision staff just facilitate. We assist with application forms and provide contact information...this [process] increases confidence of community members’ (KII 2015). Similarly, the HFHB PO stated that ‘they as a committee decide how to maintain and collect money every month if they face any problem. We will not provide any money for maintenance. It is their ownership’ (KII 2015). A poster at the WASH Fair (brought out to display by World Vision staff) summarised the CWC activities, expanding beyond WASH to child development, skills and education (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2: CWC Activities

1. Encourage the community to use safe drinking water, hygienic toilets and dump waste in the right place
2. Regular communication with City Corporation to ensure City Corporation routinely collects community garbage
3. Regular participation in the Mirpur Urban Development Initiative Program
4. Ensure intellectual development and security of the children
5. Committee members work voluntarily in the community, meaning we never claim anything in return of our time, space, merit, skills etc.
6. Organise regular meetings in the area and keep meeting minutes of every meeting
7. Regular cleaning of waste, garbage and drainage of the area
8. Select positions to make community toilets, community dustbins, water reservoirs; seek permission from local government office and City Corporation; and seek permission from WASA for legal water supply connection
9. Contribute 5 to 10% taka to total development work cost
10. Actively work to prevent children of age 0-5 years dying due to Malnutrition and Dianthoea.



(Author’s own 2015)

Similar to Site 1, NGO Forum prioritised legal water connections and repaired dilapidated sanitation chambers in Site 2. As noted by the CBO vice president, ‘NGO Forum has been working here for the past year. There are some dirty, filthy bathrooms with broken doors – they have repaired those. They provided waste baskets, detergent

powder and soap in all the bathrooms and have given brooms to clean it' (IDI P26 2015). They also constructed individual (as opposed to shared) sanitation chambers according to household need and capacity to co-share. CBO leaders were responsible for overseeing construction, co-sharing and negotiating with DWASA. However, unlike the central CBO in Site 1, the NGO Forum CBO in Site 2 did not meet regularly – *'just now and then to talk about the issues'* (ibid). In some cases, residents bypassed the CBO and paid their co-sharing fees to DWASA directly. One applicant explained why – *'NGO Forum formed a CBO. The leaders encouraged residents to pay DWASA Tk. 8000 for a legal connection. However, I'm aware it costs only Tk. 7500 so the other 500 was for their own pocket, so people actually went to DWASA directly'* (IDI P2 2015).

Analysis of CBO function revealed four important trends. Firstly, that the activities and responsibilities were unevenly shared between (and among) CBO leaders and members. For example, cashiers and secretaries in World Vision/HFHB and NGO Forum complained that they had more work (e.g. calling people to meetings, record keeping, monitoring and maintaining the bank account) than the president or vice president (SSQs 2015). Many female members of World Vision in Site 2 also argued that they always had to clean whenever foreign delegates visited, not the male leaders (SSQs 2015). In other cases, CBO leaders (both male and female) worked exceptionally hard to ensure timely project implementation. These individuals – named here as 'WASH champions' – actively sought to improve WASH their area, attend local and citywide forums and gave up extensive time and resources for CBO activities. The former ARBAN president (P5) in Site 1, and former DSK president ('Mr K') in Site 2, were two such people. In the words of P5, *'WASH is required until your death!'* (SSQ 2015).

Secondly, whilst some CBOs (like World Vision/HFHB) met regularly, most met irregularly, when NGO officials were visiting, or if there was a problem (e.g. logistical, repair, conflict) to address. This, and the fact that many CBO meetings took place in the evenings after working hours, made CBO activities difficult to track (see section 3.3.3). Meeting structure also varied along a spectrum from highly informal (e.g. sitting in someone's house) to formal (in the DWASA, DNCC or NGO office). Those in attendance would also vary according to meeting type and location. For example, CBO leaders (presidents, vice presidents and secretaries) were more likely to attend higher level meetings outside the settlement, compared to cashiers and general members. In turn, only those with larger rooms/houses could host meetings inside the settlement.

Thirdly, NGOs have different regulation and monitoring procedures for control over the joint/co-sharing bank accounts. Whilst some CBOs required the signature of project staff to withdraw money, others had no such requirement, or could not enforce this after the NGO phased out (e.g. ARBAN). In the latter case, project staff no longer worked for ARBAN, so could not sign, even though their name was listed on the account. This created obstacles for CBO members, and was a problem reported in other NGO and donor projects (FGDs 2015). This also meant that co-sharing funds were mismanaged and/or used for other purposes (e.g. child marriage and dowry) that were sometimes contradictory to the ethical principles promoted by NGOs, but represented priorities of, and social, political, economic or kinship bonds between, *bustee* residents.

Finally, despite distinct project mandates, overlap was common. As indicated in Appendix 7, not all NGO ‘hardware’ was functional at the time of fieldwork. In Site 1, NGO Forum/WSUP repaired dilapidated ARBAN chambers whilst in Site 2, DSK, PSTC, World Vision and NGO Forum repaired dilapidated DCC and NGO facilities. A cycle emerged whereby NGOs (or DCC) constructed facilities, and other NGOs repaired them at a later stage. As outlined in chapter six, this overlap could lead to NGO fatigue and frustration among residents who believe their main priorities are not being addressed. Section 7.3 elaborates on equity and sustainability post-project, in greater detail.

7.3. CBO Outcomes

The benefits from NGO WASH projects reported by non-members included; improved access to cheaper services (located nearby), a more hygienic, safe and enjoyable living environment, cleaning materials and greater awareness of hygienic practices (e.g. going to toilet with sandals, hand washing before and after defecation and preparing/eating food) (SSQs 2015). In addition to this, benefits noted by CBO leaders and members included; increased confidence and respect in the community, unity through organising collectively, leadership and skill development, opportunities to travel across Dhaka, Bangladesh and in a few cases overseas⁸⁰, access to and negotiation with service providers and politicians, and ability to address other issues (beyond water and sanitation) in the locality. For example, during the female FGD in Site 2, participants stated that *‘we have become united, more vocal and have courage. We no longer fear the law force [police] and could defend the settlement from eviction’* (FGD 2015).

⁸⁰ One participant travelled to Nepal with PDAP. Two others travelled to Thailand with DSK-NBUS.

Whilst CBO leaders and members in both sites denied any financial gain from their participation – often upset that they received little/no compensation for their hard work – others stated that they did benefit personally, in monetary and non-monetary terms. As one World Vision/HFHB leader in Site 2 remarked, *‘sometimes we are lucky and benefit financially but not always. I work without any agenda. We help NGOs organise programmes and mobilise people. We also organise people for political meetings with local or national leaders, MP, Ministers. People obey us and trust our invitation’* (IDI P9 2015). In Site 1, the former (2007-9) ARBAN president stated, *‘I do it because I enjoy it. I and my family benefit through new social connections, and financially’* (IDI P5 2015). Many CBO leaders mentioned that they enjoy participation, challenging the negative associations of ‘community participation’ outlined in chapter two, though this varied according to individual preference and experience. Benefits were also highly gendered, with women reporting higher mobility as a result of participation, as they became more vocal, confident, and able to make demands within the household and community (SSQs 2015). Box 7.4 outlines the perceived benefits of CBO participation noted by leaders in Sites 1 and 2. All, with the exception of ‘Mr K’ are female.

Box 7.4: Benefits of CBO Participation: Voices of Leaders

2007-9 ARBAN president (P5): ‘At one time we didn’t even know how to drink water at the roadside. Now I know a lot of things. Sitting at home would I have trusted anyone? I am hopeful that people think of me positively because I have never looked after my interests...the only benefit is that people of my area complement me for my public dedication’.

2013-14 ARBAN president (P70): ‘ARBAN made me courageous. ARBAN trained me up. ARBAN made me. I was an introverted character living at home. I couldn’t talk much. I didn’t realise I was intelligent enough for community leadership. I was very shy to talk in any kind of public forum. They nurtured my inherent qualities and made me a leader. ARBAN helped me to participate in different NGOs. If I wasn’t promoted by ARBAN, I may have ended up as a garments worker. ARBAN give me a platform to prove myself and have a respected position in the community and society. I can now contribute to my family and community at the same time. I respect ARBAN sincerely’.

2006-9 DSK president (‘Mr K’): ‘If it wasn’t for NGOs, poor people would never have acquired the knowledge. NGOs gave water and bathrooms on humanitarian grounds, but the biggest work they have done is provide knowledge...As a disabled person, I had no experience regarding the world, but through discussions with NGOs, I can say I am human, and I have the right to life’.

Head of World Vision/HFHB hygiene cluster (P63): ‘Since my childhood, I like people and help people. The people in the area also like me very much. Elders listen and respect my opinion...I’ve enjoyed working with the NGOs, especially World Vision. No one in the committee makes issues when I give orders. They understand me even though I am a young person. I like it’.

(Based on IDIs 2015)

Whilst many CBO leaders and members were respected and praised by non-members, fieldwork revealed mistrust and anger at the actions of certain individuals and groups involved in WASH CBOs. The perception of many residents was that CBO leaders

predominantly benefited from WASH projects (and other NGO or donor programmes), as they had the knowledge, resources, social and political connections to do so (SSQs 2015). While NGOs promoted linkage between CBOs and government agencies, many CBO members and non-members also feared that leaders – especially presidents, vice presidents and secretaries – did not necessarily have the interests of ‘the community’ at heart when attending meetings with the local MP or officials from DWASA and DNCC. Many were anxious about eviction, and feared CBO leaders were using their position to access political decision makers and negotiate for plots of land, a particular concern in Site 2 (elaborated in chapter eight).

Many tenants also argued that WASH projects primarily benefited house owners (many of whom were CBO leaders), as they were first approached by NGOs, and more able to pay for legal water connections or sanitation facilities. One tenant in Site 1 remarked, *‘the main purpose [of this] is serving the owner, as he does not have to create a sanitation block’* (SSQ P34 2015). Another stated, *‘sanitation chambers are given by ARBAN in the land of the owner who can evict us at any time. How could that benefit us?’* (SSQ P6 2015). Whilst some tenants reported altruistic relations with house owners, many stated that owners were physically and verbally abusive, and even used their name to access NGO benefits, such as cleaning materials (SSQs 2015). Box 7.5 outlines the perceptions of non-members about WASH project benefits.

Box 7.5: Benefits of CBO Participation: Voices of Non-Members

P67 (Site 1): ‘I’ve not even received a cup of tea from the NGOs, but I’ve seen NGOs giving gifts (e.g. bins, buckets, brushes) through committee members who have sanitation blocks. Those with bathrooms have close relations to the NGOs, so get more benefits’.

P54 (Site 1): ‘I’ve not benefited as it all depends on your social connections. Those who participate in politics benefit more’.

P19 (Site 2): ‘Local leaders are in the WASH committee. A family’s multiple members are even in the committee – both husband and wife. If something (a grant, gift or aid) comes for the people, multiple members of a family benefit, but other families are deprived’.

P20 (Site 2): ‘8-10 people are involved in all NGO activity. They take the money and tell NGOs to go through them directly. These people sit in the club house and engage in political programmes. They absorb this money for politics’.

P43 (Site 2): ‘Listen, what they want is money. The leaders want money. I joined the NGOs thinking that everyone in the slum is poor, but not everyone is able to do honest work’.

(Based on SSQs and IDIs 2015)

Though experiences varied according to the NGO, CBO and individuals in question, many residents were convinced that CBO leaders committed fraud with communal

funds and materials (SSQs 2015). One common complaint was that CBO leaders manipulated who would get a facility, and where it would be placed. Referring to NGO Forum in Site 2, one resident remarked, *'we demanded a toilet but local leaders opposed it. They claimed it is unnecessary, but it is necessary for us. There is a sanitation block nearby but the owner always keeps it locked'* (IDI P6 2015). In both sites, family, friends or political allies of CBO leaders were found to have bill waivers or 'free' access to facilities, or had keys cut for locked sanitation chambers, even if they were not an allocated user (SSQs; IDIs and field observations 2015). Tensions over the terms of access, and distribution of WASH benefits resulted in frequent arguments in Site 2. During one field visit, a debate erupted at a tea stall between the World Vision/HFHB president (P26) and local residents:

Resident 1: 'To use a latrine Tk. 100 has to be paid otherwise they won't give access. They are using some NGO latrines as though it was their own! To bring a water supply connection to the area through an NGO, a committee has to form. After forming the committee a water connection is brought from WASA. By bringing the water from WASA, it turns out the bill is Tk. 700-800, but those 11 people are taking Tk. 100 each from 50 people for supply water, as though it were their personal thing...They are using water supply lines through NGOs to earn money. Poor people's money//

P26: Some bathrooms were built here under Habitat and World Vision; but none of them belong to anyone in particular. Six bathrooms were made and a Tk. 20,000 deposit paid. The people didn't give it. He [P25] and I gave the money. Even then we don't use the World Vision bathroom as though it were our own. Do you get it? It's not my concern if someone else does it...No money has ever been forcefully taken from anyone. Some others like P73 and 'Mr B' are saying "if you don't give Tk. 6,200 cost-sharing money then you cannot use the bathroom". I support Awami League, 'Mr B' supports BNP//

Resident 1: Awami League and BNP is not the matter; rather how the slum is running. Those who have power are running it the way they want!

Resident 2: Whoever brings a water line here and worked to bring it, the line becomes his//

P26: Then say it! Say who has done it!

Resident 1: You are who I said you are! That's why I don't acknowledge you. Those who do wrong, a hundred times shall they answer for it! Come with me and I will show you how people are looting and plundering from the NGOs. Not doing what needs to be done but making more of what is already there lie idle, why? Because they have the power to do so!

P26: If I have done anything wrong, I will wear a garland of shoes around my neck'.

(Field observations 2015)

When talking to us in private, P26 explained that *'while ruling there are some deviations that have to be made, even the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has to do that'* (IDI 2015). Despite attempts to dispel rumours, negative perceptions of CBO leaders and members as 'benefiting' from NGOs (at the expense of others) was a deterrent to continue participation, or join CBOs. As the former DSK cashier in Site 2 shared; *'sometimes I want to leave everything. I become angry and annoyed that there are no*

financial benefits for me, and I have to face bad behaviour and hear dirty talk from people who think I'm benefiting' (IDI P68 2015). On numerous occasions, CBO leaders (and members) mentioned they were upset, stressed and frustrated by the lack of trust and harassment from non-members. The distress caused is often not taken into account by NGOs, who do not observe daily interactions. These accusations could also exacerbate existing tensions between so-called 'old' and 'new' settlers, and other 'outsider' groups (i.e. those from ethnic minorities, or opposition party supporters). As the former ARBAN president in Site 1 remarked, *'I have lived here since 1986, but if I speak out at local forums, I am called a foreigner!'* (SSQ P5 2015) Likewise, in the female FGD in Site 2, a debate broke out between the 'original settlers' and those considered to be 'recent migrants', and less knowledgeable about the area (FGD 2015).

The question of equity is clearly highly contentious, gendered and political. Whilst provision of public goods should mean (in theory) that benefits are equally and widely shared, the reality is more complex. Arguably, the mistrust of many non-members towards CBOs relates to the multiple roles of CBO leaders as service providers, political campaigners and house owners (with multiple tenants), who are more able to participate in, and benefit from, NGO WASH projects. The implications of this for sustainability are elaborated below, and in chapter eight.

'Hardware' Sustainability

As indicated in section 7.2, NGOs place great emphasis on training and capacity building to enhance sustainability of, and responsibility for, repair, maintenance and billing of WASH services and infrastructure post-project. Fieldwork revealed that some user CBOs, managers and community volunteers did continue to collect bills, resolve minor repairs and disputes over facility use (SSQs 2015). As one DSK water point manager in Site 2 remarked, *'we still use the water points and provide bills. Each point has 30 consumers. We collect bills from the consumers at a group meeting, and deposit it into the WASA account. We distribute the bill per head. The committee sustains because we are consuming, and will continue to consume water in future'* (IDI P2 2015).

If the supply was adequate, and facilities were working, then users were more likely to contribute regularly, and clean via a rota or by hiring a *bua* (maid). As one World Vision CWC member remarked – *'whenever we need to clean septic tanks, we request those in a better financial situation to contribute. Suppose I give Tk. 50, another person may pay Tk. 100. Many people of this area do not have the capacity to contribute'* (IDI

P63 2015). If the facility did not function efficiently, or required major repair, then problems emerged. Major repair was often deemed unfeasible by user and central CBOs due to financial, resource and labour constraints. One ARBAN CBO member in Site 1 remarked, *'we do not have the financial capacity to repair our WASH facilities'* (SSQ P33 2015). This was particularly the case with management of overflowing or dilapidated septic tanks. Whilst some CBO members pooled resources and hired local sweepers (cleaners), or rented the DSK Vacutag trucks to de-sludge the tanks (every 6-12 months at a cost of Tk. 1000-1500 per call out), this was not a regular practice, and unaffordable for many.

Similar maintenance and management problems were reported with NGO water points. For example, when ARBAN first phased out of Site 1, WASA bills continued to go to the ARBAN office (not to user CBOs), resulting in payment arrears. CBO members argued that they were not informed what to do by ARBAN staff, which resulted in DWASA cutting some water lines. CBO leaders later transferred registration to their name and paid the due bills (SSQs 2015). Whilst NGO staff regarded legalisation of water lines as a key achievement (KIIs 2015), CBO members and general residents also complained of irregular supply and poor quality DWASA water. Residents were often told just to purify or boil water before use, a practice that requires expensive tablets, firewood or gas – not available to all (SSQs 2015). In Site 2, some residents dug shallow or deep wells, as the water was perceived to be of higher quality than the DSK tube wells (SSQs 2015).

In Site 2, P73 and 'Mr B' were accused of re-selling water from three DSK water points to over 100 households, a claim verified by their tenants and other house owners – *'NGOs take co-sharing money but water points become individualised. When the WASA bill comes, the owner or manager only pays Tk. 600-700 when they are using much more, and getting Tk. 100 per month from other users. This is happening at most of the NGO water points'* (IDI 'Mr A' 2015). On a few occasions, managers (initially appointed), were pushed out of their positions by other house owners on the premise that bills were too high, so they could re-sell water to tenants (SSQs 2015). In other cases, neighbours tapped into legal water lines or sanitation outlets, with or without the consent of users. This resulted in higher bills, water shortages and blockages, as facilities were used beyond their capacity. CBO members and non-members argued that leaders took no action to resolve or regulate these issues because they feared repercussions, or because they were involved in these practices themselves (SSQs 2015).

Some NGO staff blamed user and central CBOs for failing to maintain facilities properly. As the ARBAN PM remarked, *‘when we repair, it is due to lack of proper operation and maintenance, the CBO has not taken it seriously’* (KII 2015). Contrary to this, the Water Aid PM remarked that *‘the lifecycle of WASH infrastructure is five years. After this, it is not fair to ask slum dwellers to maintain. We don’t expect the middle-classes to clean their toilets! There should be an agreement with City Corporation, DWASA or other NGOs [but] there is not enough pressure on these institutions to be pro-poor’* (KII 2015).

In a context of tenure insecurity, there are also few incentives for residents to invest time, resources and money in infrastructure that could be demolished (SSQs 2015). In Site 2, residents repeatedly mentioned this to NGOs, but they stated that they do not work on housing and land as it is ‘not in their mandate’, ‘too political’ or ‘too risky’ (SSQ and KIIs 2015). In Site 1, complex land politics, and the high number of house owners, managers and tenants also had implications for hardware. For example, whilst ARBAN provided 25 sanitation chambers, residents stated *‘you will not find 25 now’* (FGD 2015). Indeed, our mini survey found only 16, with the remainder demolished in evictions, privatised or relocated by the landowner for housing and shop development (see chapter five). The extent to which water points and sanitation chambers are moved, tapped, extended, knocked down and/or appropriated by certain individuals (most often landowners and house owners) was largely underexplored post-project by NGOs, for reasons given below.

‘Software’ Sustainability

A trend emerged during fieldwork whereby user CBOs continued activities (albeit to a limited extent), but central CBOs dissolved within a few months of the NGO phasing out. Numerous reasons were given by CBO leaders and members as to why central CBOs did not sustain, including; high rates of migration, lack of incentives, limited financial capacity, autonomy and/or manipulation by local leaders. As the 2013-14 ARBAN president remarked, *‘when the NGO project is running, NGOs monitor and follow-up with CBOs, but when NGOs phase out, the CBO has irregular meetings, as people are not interested to continue in the committee’* (IDI P70 2015). Similarly, the cashier remarked, *‘when ARBAN workers stop visiting and the project closes, the members stop contributing to the fund’* (IDI P6 2015).

Whilst some NGOs maintained contact with CBOs and monitored post-project, others did not, often due to financial and human resource constraints. As the ARBAN PM shared, *‘ARBAN could not keep the staff due to fund shortages. The fund supplied by donors, government, international NGOs or the UN was for a fixed period’* (KII 2015). Unlike ARBAN, DSK had a low-rate of staff turnover/high retention, which provided continuity to project beneficiaries. For example, the DSK PM and CO had both worked with DSK for over 20 years⁸¹. Referring to Site 2, the CO remarked, *‘they sometimes phone me. “Sister, what do we do? We are suffering from this problem” We have a warm relation’* (KII 2015). Although NGO contact varied post-project, many NGOs left a legacy, whereby CBO leaders and members actively sought opportunities to participate in other WASH programmes. This was the case for ARBAN in Site 1, whose leaders and members joined NGO Forum; and DSK in Site 2, whose leaders and members joined UPPR and World Vision/HFHB. Even after activities had stopped, CBO leaders also continued to refer to their position (i.e. as president, cashier, secretary) or state they were a ‘member’ of the CBO, implying a sense of pride in their role (SSQs 2015).

Although ‘software’ sustainability varied according to CBO size, leadership and resources, another major challenge was the limited scope for up-scaling the membership base and activities. One of the biggest constraints to up-scaling was a weak financial base. Self-organised savings groups based on reciprocity, unity and trust (as seen in SDI) were largely non-existent in a context where house-to-house MFI and loans dominate. NGOs that tried to start savings groups also reported facing resistance from MFI fieldworkers who believed they were *‘taking their beneficiaries’* (KII Tarango 2015). Even NGOs committed to water, sanitation and housing advocacy were expanding their MFI and MCR programmes. For example, DSK has seen a huge increase in its MCR budget in recent years, from Tk. 4,794,562,351 in (FY) 2013-14, to Tk. 9,164,944,674 in (FY) 2016-17. Over the same period, the grant-based WASH budget fell from Tk. 152,615,814 to Tk. 146,324,487 (DSK 2013; 2017).

A further challenge to CBO up-scaling is the short WASH project time-frame, ranging from one (e.g. HFHB), two (e.g. ARBAN) to five (e.g. DSK) years. World Vision was an exception, with a 15 year project cycle. As the DSK PM remarked; *‘NGOs always depend on project-based activity. If they had commitment and the same vision to*

⁸¹ This relates, in part, to long-term donor support from WAB and UNICEF, as project staff could switch between old and new projects (KIIs DSK PM and CO 2015).

mobilise the community, empower the leaders, develop leadership quality and involve women and collectively raise their voice towards the government, we could achieve a lot' (KII 2015). Despite this, some NGOs and donors tried to encourage sustainability (via savings, credit and loans, access to foreign funds etc) through 'built in' up-scaling models, registration⁸² or linkage to citywide networks. For example, UPPR used a model whereby 100 households form a primary group, 2-3 primary groups' form a CDC and 8-10 CDCs form a cluster CDC. The cluster CDC would then seek registration at the Ministry of Social Welfare, and feed into town, city and national-level federations (KIIs 2015). Likewise, World Vision facilitated CBO registration at the Department of Cooperatives (DoC). During fieldwork, I visited Hazaribagh Women's Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd, a collective of former World Vision CBOs, managed by a former World Vision PO. The cooperative maintained close ties with World Vision, winning numerous grants and awards. The manager joked that *'people still refer to this as the World Vision office, not the cooperative office'* (KII 2015). Finally, ARBAN and DSK linked its central CBOs to the citywide urban poor network NBUS. The 'WASH champions' (P5 in Site 1 and 'Mr K' in Site 2) were both active NBUS leaders whom I came to know well. P5 was particularly proud to be part of the organisation, showing me photos of different events, field visits and meetings. She argued that NBUS is important because it provides 'linkage':

'What I experienced with ARBAN in 2007 is that we had some demands to NGOs, like "NGOs provide water and sanitation, which is fine, but we don't have secure shelter for living". Another one was that "when your project finishes, you leave the committee in our hands but the committee has no function as there is no project". I believe that linkage is a very important factor. If someone doesn't hold it together, people will lose attachment to these kinds of CBOs...My NBUS is like an umbrella. All CBOs operate under this umbrella. Almost all slums are connected with us'.

(IDI P5 2015)

Whilst not wishing to undermine the importance of these organisations, or the enjoyment that leaders and members have in participating, the extent to which they can bring about transformative change for Dhaka's *bustee* dwellers (especially tenants and the extreme poor) remains to be seen. As noted in chapter six, BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS face numerous challenges, and UPPR's plan to form a National Federation of its own⁸³ will – according to one DFID official – fall on '*closed ears*'. He remarked, *'who*

⁸² Non-profitable and non-political voluntary organisations can register at the Department of Cooperatives; Ministry of Social Welfare and Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, in accordance with the Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance 1961.

⁸³ This is distinct from the DSK-initiated National Federation with BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS (outlined in Box 4.2). The UNDP-UPPRP National Federation would unite all Town Federations across Bangladesh, to encourage greater linkage between the urban poor and government (KII UPPR 2015).

would they talk to, the same people in urban policy we already talk to, and don't listen?' (KII 2015).

One could ask, what enhances equity and sustainability in this context? Whilst the answer is not clear, fieldwork highlights a range of potentially important factors. For hardware; low-cost community-led solutions, cleaning rotas or paying cleaners/managers, needs-based assessments, greater emphasis on privacy (especially for women), adapting to changing preferences (e.g. from shared to individual sanitation chambers, or tube wells to in-house taps), linking to central sanitation and water systems and most importantly, addressing tenure, social and financial insecurity. For software; financial autonomy (e.g. group savings), incentives for continued participation (e.g. livelihood opportunities) and personal development, inspiring WASH champions (in community, CSOs and government), peer learning and exchanges, self-management and leadership training, continuity and flexibility from NGOs and donors (to meet community demands, retain staff), longer-term projects and registration (as cooperatives). These potential ways forward are elaborated in chapter ten.

7.4. Concluding Remarks

Whilst it is unwise to generalise, the rich empirical cases of NGO-initiated CBOs in Sites 1 and 2 provide important insights into CBO participation, function and outcomes. Three points are worthy of note. Firstly, WASH CBOs have brought significant improvements to health, wellbeing and living conditions for residents. However, externally-initiated CBOs with an ascribed WASH identity face numerous challenges, including; sustainability of hardware and software, lack of coordination, elite capture and control, neglect of tenants, eviction threat and limits to up-scaling. As noted in chapter six, these constraints relate to the urban governance context, whereby NGO-initiated CBOs are designed as practical enablers, not strategic change makers.

Secondly, it becomes increasingly clear that an array of individual, household and settlement-level factors affect CBO participation, function and outcomes. While it comes as no surprise that certain people are more likely to participate in, or benefit from CBOs than others, certain trends can be identified. For example, (male) politically-affiliated local leaders and house owners often lead CBOs, sometimes 'dropping' female CBO leaders. The perceived political influence on CBOs also fuels mistrust and frustration among non-members. These dynamics demonstrate that WASH CBOs are

not immune from broader political processes (such as patronage and party politics) at the citywide or national scale.

Thirdly, though dominant in the sector, NGO-initiated CBOs are still just one, among an array of groups that provide and mediate services at the settlement level, including; leader-initiated CBOs (*bustee* committees and *samity*s), political patrons, landlords and house owners. Though residents rely less and less on illegal vendors and *mastaans*, these actors still play a part in mediating services, and can be active WASH CBO leaders themselves. One must therefore ask: who are the leaders; what do they want; and how do they get what they want? Chapter eight seeks answers, by focusing on leader-initiated CBOs in Sites 2 and 3.

8. Leader-Initiated CBOs in Sites 2 and 3

This final empirical chapter examines the intra-group dynamics of internally, leader-initiated CBOs (*bustee* committees and cooperative societies or *samitys*) involved in service provision in Sites 2 and 3 (see Appendix 8 for full list). As indicated in chapters three and five, both of these settlements have informal *bustee* committees and (two) formal *samitys*, however, Site 3 has no NGO-initiated CBOs, and Site 2 has both NGO and leader-initiated CBOs. To unpack these different dynamics, the chapter is divided into three sections. Section 8.1 focuses on participation, function and outcomes of *bustee* committees, with particular emphasis on the role of leaders and members in accessing and mediating services. Section 8.2 focuses on participation, function and outcomes of the *samitys*, especially multipurpose *samity* No. 4 in Site 3, which had (at the time of fieldwork) applied for 25 legal DWASA connections without NGO support. Section 8.3 then explores the relationship between internally and externally-initiated CBOs in Site 2.

It is argued that the main priority of leader-initiated CBOs is control over the *bustee*, including land, services and housing. Water connections and infrastructural development (on their terms) are used as a tool to stake claim on the land. Whilst these CBOs are more strategic than NGO-initiated CBOs, their activities predominantly benefit only a small group of (male) politically-affiliated leaders and house owners. In Site 2, where both CBO types are present, a trend emerges whereby the same individuals are involved in all CBOs, and take on different roles.

8.1. Bustee Committees

8.1.1. CBO Participation

The informal *bustee* committee in Site 2, known as the '*Bustee Parichalona [Slum Management] Committee*', consists of around 10-15 male, politically-affiliated (AL) leaders and 21 general members. Whilst the committee is a loosely defined group, there is a senior president, vice president, secretary, cashier and general members. These positions did not appear to have specific roles or responsibilities attached, but were largely tokenistic. Those with political backing, and those who own small businesses and multiple houses, negotiate for a position in the committee (IDIs and FGDs 2015).

At the time of fieldwork, the president ('Mr R') was a respected elder and retired government employee, whilst the vice president and secretary (P26 and P60) were local businessmen. The secretary remarked, *'I am an honest person, I have gained a lot of respect from people here. That's why I am the secretary of the area committee'* (IDI P60 2015). Although female participation was low, 7-10 women, the wives of past and present committee leaders, attended meetings and ran their own social arbitrations – *'senior male leaders call me or other female leaders to consult on different issues. We are involved in solving problems with a mandate from male leaders'* (IDI P63 2015). Compared to Sites 1 and 3, there were many vocal female leaders in Site 2 who were not afraid to argue with seniors in the area – *'I don't belittle myself in front of any men in the slum'* (IDI P43 2015). These were the same leaders involved in the NGO and donor projects outlined in chapter seven.

A core group of political leaders (all house owners) with links to the MP and ward councillors also governed Site 3 via the *bustee* committee. At the time of fieldwork, the committee had 41 members (10 female and 31 male). Though informal and largely reactive in nature (meeting when an arbitration was required, or a crisis emerged), the committee also had a president, vice president, secretary, cashier and general members, again largely tokenistic roles that changed frequently. Seven male leaders acted as the key decision makers (IDIs and FGD 2015). As in Site 2, those in leadership positions were commonly house owners with political backing: *'all committee members are permanent residents and owners'* (IDI P70 2015); *'I am involved in politics. You have to be involved in politics to survive in the slum. Without politics we are worthless'* (IDI P69 2015); and *'all leaders are involved in politics for the ruling party...the committee cannot run without political backing'* (IDI P23 2015). One member noted their concern over this political affiliation, stating that *'AL people dominate the committee and for this reason [they] can access government agencies like DWASA. But if BNP enters power, we will be evicted!'* (SSQ P9 2015).

Contrary to the promotion of female leadership and participation in NGO-initiated CBOs, and vocal leaders in Site 2, female participation in the committee in Site 3 was very low. Whilst 10 women were mentioned, SSQs and field observations revealed only two or three active female members – all house and small business owners. One member had lived in the settlement for 25 years, and was involved in the committee to resist eviction, fight for permanent housing and tenure security. She was also a DSK-Shiree CBO leader (SSQ P18 2015). Another was a notorious house owner, known for

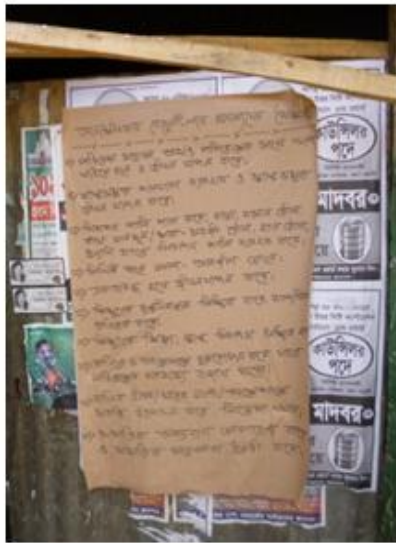
being physically and verbally abusive to tenants, who ran a tea stall. She was the wife of the vice-president (field observations 2015).

Similar to NGO-initiated CBOs, short-term tenants or those supporting the opposition party (BNP) were largely excluded. This was the case in both Sites 2 and 3. As one leader in Site 3 remarked, *'only owners can be members, tenants are not invited'* (SSQ P7 2015). Some house owners who had lived in the settlement for 30 years were also ousted from leadership positions by 'newer' settlers – *'as a young man, my friends and I had control over this area. We allowed new settlers to build houses here. Over time, my friends left the area and these new settlers became more powerful. They now control the area and are more vocal'* (IDI P31 2015). The division between 'old' and 'new' settlers was prevalent in all field sites, and related to shifting national politics (i.e. from BNP to AL). For example, when BNP was in power, their supporters led the committee. A change of power (to AL) resulted in a change in committee leadership (SSQs 2015). However, in both settlements, multiple political factions were also observed within these groups, and leaders were found to switch political affiliations (elaborated in section 8.2.3).

8.1.2. CBO Function

The *bustee* committee in Site 2 formed in 1999 to oversee the welfare and maintenance of the settlement, mobilise residents for political meetings, anti-eviction protests and to conduct social arbitrations (SSQs; IDIs and FGD 2015). Arbitrations commonly take place in the 'club house' which displays a list of rules for an *Adarsha Nagar* (model or exemplary town) on its front door (Figure 8.1). Although the committee did not play a direct role in service provision – as water and sanitation was arranged legally via NGOs, DNCC and DWASA – leaders would oversee all NGO projects and many were in leadership or 'advisory' positions in the NGO-initiated WASH CBOs. This overlap had particular implications for CBO participation and outcomes (elaborated in section 8.3).

Figure 8.1: Adarsha Nagar Characteristics



Translation

Characteristics of Model Town Members:

- Environment conscious - living adapting with environment
- Use hygienic toilets for healthy living
- Drink safe drinking water, use pure water in cooking, dish wash, fruits and vegetable wash, hand wash
- Dump waste in specific place
- Be united
- Ensure birth registration of children. Prevent child marriage
- Ensure education, healthcare and security of children
- Plant trees in house and yards to keep environmental balance
- Cultivate vegetables in backyards of house/rooftop/and in open space for own feeding
- Resist against social injustice and build social awareness.

(Author's own 2015)

The *bustee* committee in Site 3 formed after the 2008 eviction to resettle evicted residents and file a case in the High Court to claim land ownership and *in-situ* rehabilitation (IDIs and FGD 2015). Committee leaders conduct social arbitration, distribute religious and political donations, and protect residents from police violence, drugs, crime and eviction (FGD 2015). In other words, '*the committee looks after the area*' (IDI P69 2015). Whilst the committee itself was not identified as a 'service provider', leaders and members were involved directly or indirectly in constructing, negotiating, obtaining and distributing water, sanitation, electricity and cable TV to tenants and other house owners (SSQs 2015). This came at a cost, as one house owner explained:

'The committee members told us they are bringing five [water] lines to the area and if we wanted a line, we would need to pay Tk. 10,000. I took a loan from my sister to get the line. However, they are now saying "give another Tk. 14,000 and buy a pipe". They said "if you don't like it, go to WASA yourself". However, they know that normal residents can't approach WASA without the leaders, as they have connections with WASA staff. They also said if I don't want the pipe, I will get 50% of the money back, but the rest will be kept by the committee'.

(SSQ P11 2015)

It is important to note that, as the committee leaders and members acted as service 'brokers', they often had to pay large bribes to middlemen, low-level government staff (from DESCO, DNCC or DWASA) and police to secure connections. Whilst the majority of connections were illegal, committee leaders were also trying to bring legal DWASA and DESCO lines, using their political connections to the MP and ward

councillor (SSQ P45 2015). However, as an informal entity, the committee could not obtain legal connections. For this, they required a legal organisation, such as a registered multipurpose *samity* (outlined in section 8.2.2.).

8.1.3. CBO Outcomes

Many residents had negative perceptions of the committee in Site 2, stating that they only deliver justice with bribes (e.g. Tk. 10,000 or more per arbitration) and that leaders were not accountable to the general population (SSQs 2015). Local shopkeepers also claimed they have to pay *baksheesh* to leaders – *‘when they come to the shop you have to leave your seat’* [metaphorically] (SSQ P47 2015). Some residents remarked how, in the past, a strong leader ‘Mr A’ had the ability to unite people, but the current leaders do not: *‘at that time, he [Mr A] was the only one in the area with a mobile phone, he could help us in any situation’* (SSQ P43 2015); and *‘there are no people like [Mr A] in this era. He was a wonderful person. He taught us to express our demands’* (IDI P9 2015).

After ‘Mr A’ died, numerous leaders – young (aspiring) and old (respected) – negotiated for power in the committee (SSQs 2015). One influential leader ‘Mr K.M.’ (also a *samity* president) took over the leadership position, but was later jailed. Following this, many long-term settlers argued that the committee reformed with ‘newcomers’ who *‘don’t know the history of the area but exercise their power’* (IDI ‘Ms H’ 2015). Throughout fieldwork, it became clear that there were also factions within the committee, reflecting the political fragmentation within Site 2. One long-term resident remarked how *‘members of the same party [AL] are grouping and rival each other’* (SSQ P31 2015). Another claimed that there are historical factions between the AL *Bastu Hara* sub-wing, youth-wing and AL central committee, as well as BNP leaders (IDI P43 2015). Many residents feared these factions would worsen following the recent election of a BNP ward councillor, despite the AL candidate allegedly providing money to committee leaders to buy votes from residents, money that went awry (field observations 2015).

Whilst ‘general’ residents had access to political patrons (e.g. councillors and MP) living on the ‘upper side’ (see chapter five) – and would often bypass local leaders to make their demands – committee leaders had the most direct contact. This was especially the case for the president, vice president and secretary, who met the MP 2-5 times per month (IDIs and FGD 2015). Many residents believed that the leaders used

their positions to access (and manipulate) any aid, grant, incentives or opportunities that came to the area from local politicians or NGOs: *'our leaders are going to this meeting or that meeting, going to the MP or minister. They are looking after their own interests...they also control utility services in the area'* (SSQ P67 2015) and *'these "golden boys" are Hitler types. They are very cunning. They use the knowledge of the old settlers then kick us out of the [NGO] groups'* (IDI P57 2015).

A number of residents also shared their fear of speaking out against those in power, as many had court cases filed against them by local political leaders, resulting in costly legal fees, debt or even prison sentences (SSQs 2015). One resident remarked, *'there is a group here who support Awami League. Suppose I don't, the slightest misunderstanding with them leads to a complaint. They sued my husband and son. We were punished for six months'* (SSQ P52 2015). Others feared that the leaders were conspiring to buy and sell plots of land, a valid fear (elaborated in 8.2.3). Despite this, the committee president remarked that:

'We are struggling to keep peace, security and stability in the area. The local honourable MP is the guardian of the whole area, but he is a single person. We do not have regular access to his office. In case of major problems, we go to the MP's office. We have to solve other problems ourselves. We could not access the judicial service because of financial constraints. We solve those problems via social arbitration, with consent from the MP'.

(IDI 'Mr R' 2015)

Similarly, SSQs with tenants and owners in Site 3 revealed mixed opinions about the role of the committee – some good, but mostly bad. Whilst leaders and members said they conduct arbitrations voluntarily, many residents argued that they demand bribes to deliver justice – *'Dite parle Bhala, na dite parle hala'* (Bengali Proverb: if you give tips you get justice, if not then get out of my sight). There were also claims of favouritism and nepotism within the committee (SSQ P31 2015). Others remarked that the committee was largely inactive, and did little to improve the settlement: *'local political leaders are not helping the slum dwellers...a syndicate of 10-15 leaders control all resources'* (SSQ P49 2015); *'the local leaders are musclemen!'* (SSQ P50 2015) and *'the slum committee is not accountable'* (SSQ P55 2015). Tenants in particular shared how they felt powerless as *'those with more power are taking benefits'* (SSQ P35 2015) and *'forcefully make us participate in political meetings'* (SSQ P11 2015).

Whilst *bustee* committee leaders and members stated that they want to bring legal services to the settlement and protect their tenants, their motivations – in both Sites 2 and 3 – primarily related to obtaining permanent land and housing, resisting evictions

and maintaining strong links with political patrons, whom they relied upon for protection, ‘tips’ and access to government agencies (like DWASA). Many *bustee* committee leaders and members were also involved in the cooperative societies (*samitys*), with further implications for participation, function and outcomes.

8.2. Cooperative Societies (*Samitys*)

8.2.1. CBO Participation

Two *samitys* operated in Site 2 at the time of fieldwork: *Bastu Hara Ekota Bahumukhi Samoboy Samity Ltd* (Homeless People’s Unity Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd) established in 2003 [No.1]⁸⁴; and *Bastu Hara Shonchoy O’ Wreen Dan Samoboy Samity* (Homeless People’s Savings and Loan Distribution Cooperative Society), established in 2013 [No.2]. Both *samitys* are formally registered with the Department of Cooperatives (DoC) (see Appendix 9 for 21-step registration criteria) and have a president, vice president, secretary, cashier and general members. As formal entities, they must adhere to annual audits, whereby they submit a financial statement and managing committee statement, AGMs and re-election of leaders every two years (KII DoC 2015). During interview, staff members at the DoC shared their suspicion of urban cooperatives in *bustees*, stating they primarily form to ‘*grab the land*’. However, they also acknowledged that they do not have the human or financial resources to monitor their activities (*ibid*). This resulted in an apparent mismatch between the regulations noted above, and reality observed during fieldwork.

Whilst *samitys* must (in theory) adhere to regular audits and bi-annual elections; some residents in Site 2 argued that ‘*30 senior people in the area run the samitys [and] don’t recruit anyone*’ (SSQ P32 2015). These ‘senior people’ were mostly male, politically-affiliated house owners. One exception was the ‘proxy’ president in *samity* No. 2 (P63) – a vocal female leader also involved in the informal women’s group and NGOs (see Box 7.2) – standing in as president for her husband (‘Mr K.M.’), who was in jail. Whilst P63 is respected in the area and has good connections with the male leaders, she ‘*generally does not sit in the club house because it is odd to sit with random male persons*’ (IDI P63 2015). She also stated that ‘*the president doesn’t have much to do*’ (*ibid*). When asked, the male leaders declared that the vice president of the *bustee* committee (P26) was in fact the ‘acting’ president of No. 2, contradicting P63. They ran activities, with P63 in a more tokenistic role (field observations 2015).

⁸⁴ The full *samity* names and numbers are anonymised.

In 2015, *samity* No.1 had 12 leaders in its managing committee and 61 general members, whilst *samity* No.2 had 12 leaders and just 22 general members (KII DoC 2015). In contrast to these ‘official’ figures, *samity* leaders, members and non-members argued that ‘most people’ in the *bustee* are members of one or both *samitys*, sometimes through force (SSQs 2015). Leaders argued that there were 150-200 fee paying members in *samity* No. 1 and 400 in *samity* No. 2. Whilst members from *samity* No. 2 were from the settlement only, *samity* No.1 had members both inside and outside the area (SSQs and IDIs 2015).

There were also two formal *samitys* in Site 3: ‘*Bastu Hara Sromojibi Samoboy Samity* (Homeless People’s Labour Savings and Loan Cooperative Society) [No. 3] and ‘*Bustee Kallyan Bahumukhi Samoboy Samity*’ (Slum Welfare Multipurpose Cooperative Society) [No. 4]. Both registered with the DoC in 2010. At the time of fieldwork, *samity* No. 3 was largely inactive, with 30-35 members, whilst *samity* No. 4 had reformed with a 12 member management committee, including a president, vice president, secretary, cashier and 84 general members (SSQs and IDIs 2015). Leaders were elected by *samity* members, as per DoC guidelines (FGD 2015). Although women could join directly, or via their husbands, female participation was very low, and the leaders were all male, politically-affiliated house owners. The majority of tenants interviewed had not heard of, or been informed about the *samity* activities (SSQs 2015).

During fieldwork, it became apparent that the *samitys* in Sites 2 and 3 had different political affiliations. For example, in Site 2, leaders of *samity* No. 1 were affiliated with BNP and No. 2 with AL; whilst in Site 3 *samity* No. 3 was associated with BNP and *samity* No. 4 with AL. *Samity* leaders and members in both settlements, were also involved in the *bustee* committees. In Site 2, the president of the *bustee* committee (‘Mr R’) was a member of *samity* No. 1 and 2, and vice president (P26) was the acting president of No. 2. In Site 3, the president of *samity* No. 4 (P45) was the vice-president of the committee, and president of the committee (P69) was vice-president of *samity* No. 4. Despite political differences, the president of *samity* No. 3 (P70) was general secretary in the *bustee* committee (SSQs and IDIs 2015). These dynamics had important implications for CBO function.

8.2.2. CBO Function

Both *samitys* in Site 2 have savings schemes whereby members pay a joining fee of Tk. 100 and Tk. 100-200 savings per month in the hope of obtaining a house and/or plot of

land (via instalments) in future. In Site 3, the *samitys* also had savings schemes of Tk. 300 per month (or daily Tk. 10/20) to secure plots of land, and offered loans (a maximum of five per month). According to leaders, *samity* No. 1 was '*genuinely the first*' in Site 2, and played an important role in service provision in the early years of the settlements establishment (SSQs and IDIs 2015). At this time, *samity* leaders were advised to apply for legal connections via the multipurpose cooperative⁸⁵: '*political leaders and government officials suggested that we approach government via an organisation. That is why we applied through the cooperative*' (IDI P1 2015); '*neither NGOs nor government provide facilities to an individual. They provide to a group of people. It is obvious that trustable facilitators are required to provide services*' (SSQ P72 2015); and '*government doesn't give anything so you have to do it yourselves*' (IDI P25 2015).

In 2004-5, when BNP was in power, leaders used the legal entity of *samity* No. 1 (and their political contacts) to bring a water connection, water house and commercial electricity line to the settlement – '*we successfully negotiated with the concerned government agencies, and people of [Site 2] are still having the benefits*' (SSQ P30 2015). According to one long-term member, the main purpose of *samity* No.1 was to obtain legal services:

'The multipurpose cooperative was the first in [Site 2]. It was informally set up in 1999-2000 to bring a water line. In order to get a legal WASA connection we needed Tk. 2 *lakh* [200,000] so started saving. We initially got fake registration from the government office staff to obtain the line, but later applied for and received official registration in 2003'.

(IDI 'Mr K' 2015)

The *samity* president shared how '*we had to submit a demand note to DWASA worth Tk. 6000 and bear the cost of pipes to draw water supply connections*' (IDI 'Mr M' 2015).

The secretary at the time (P25) played a key role in this process:

'There was no water supply in the slum. To get water I went to many places including the MP. Then it was a BNP-led government. I went to the councillor, but after a lot of hassle I couldn't get them to supply water...Later on, the current president ['Mr M'] told me to manage the pipes. I brought the water supply line through the cooperative. I have the legal documents for everything'.

(IDI P25 2015)

The multipurpose *samity* [No. 4] in Site 3 also played a key role in service provision. At the time of fieldwork, the *samity* had applied to DWASA and Navana⁸⁶ for 25 legal

⁸⁵ According to DoC staff, only multipurpose cooperatives can apply for legal services (KIIs 2015).

⁸⁶ DWASA's technical contractor, hired to replace old DWASA pipelines across the city.

connections. As one *samity* leader remarked, *‘we don’t want NGOs to provide sanitation or water facilities, it’s better to go through the slum committee or multipurpose cooperative society to obtain legal connections. Government is obliged to provide services’* (IDI P45 2015). Political backing was essential to this process. As the president remarked, *‘we have good political contacts and are permanent voters. We have supported different individuals [like the ward councillor] in campaigns, so can call on them if needed’* (IDI P45 2015). Similarly, the vice president stated, *‘at first WASA refused our application, arguing that we are not permanent owners, but the local MP recommended us as it is a public concern, then WASA accepted’* (IDI P69 2015). The secretary explained the application process:

‘We protested for two lines and have those two water lines. We did it without any NGO support. We are making demands for water connections using our own capacity. Four or five of us took the initiative. Navana advised us to bring a recommendation from the local MP. When we brought the recommendation, DWASA said there should be a legitimate body which will be liable for the payment of bills and dues, so we applied through our registered cooperative society’.

(IDI P68 2015)

Samity leaders applied for 25 DWASA connections in 2013, at a cost of Tk. 25-30,000 and deposit of Tk. 10,000 per line (FGD 2015). At the time of fieldwork, only four were approved, and the leaders were facing numerous financial and institutional barriers – *‘It was not approved by government because they [the disputed land owner] opposed it. The MP recommended our application, but our application is not moving forward. We already deposited the required fees for four lines which were approved. We believe those lines will be arranged’* (ibid). As Site 3 was not recognised as a Low-Income Community (LIC) by DWASA, residents had to pay the full non-subsidised cost (outlined in chapter six). The *samity* leaders believed that DWASA was not being transparent in their dealings with them, charging high rates that should be subsidised by donors. As one leader remarked, *‘LICs should enjoy 55 per cent waivers in billing and fees. DWASA and Navana [are] unwilling to give legal water supply connections to the slum because they are charging us regular fees and bills. If they provide legal connections, ADB or UNDP⁸⁷ will know there are transparency problems in DWASA’* (FGD 2015). On the contrary, when asked about the role of *samitys*, the DWASA Senior Community Officer (SCO) stated that *‘yes, they do apply for connections and they are treated as general customers. But in the bustee it’s different; the samity is*

⁸⁷ Asian Development Bank (ADB) and United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

different. If from a bustee then it's definitely treated as an LIC. Samity and CBO is the same' (KII 2015).

There were also disagreements within the *samity* about who was responsible, and how they should move forward. One leader remarked, '*NGOs have the mandate to provide water supply connections in slums. DWASA and Navana don't have the mandate*' (IDI P69 2015). Another stated, '*DWASA are saying that responsibility of the new water supply connection has been handed over to Navana. On the other hand, Navana is claiming that DWASA is the ultimate decision maker*' (FGD 2015). The distinction between NGOs and donors is notable. Many leaders maintained their 'anti-NGO' stance (outlined in chapter five), yet welcomed financial and technical support from donors, such as ADB and UNDP.

Beyond improved access and lower costs, legal connections were deemed strategically important by committee and *samity* leaders to staking a claim on the land – their main priority (FGD 2015). The president of *samity* No. 4 remarked that '*the main issue is land, not water and sanitation*' (IDI P45 2015). In addition to water, leaders used the legal entity of the multipurpose *samity* to apply for holding numbers, electricity and gas connections, and planned to file a new case over land ownership in the High Court. As the secretary explained:

'We thought if we get WASA, electricity or gas connections, [and] if we have government approve legal papers of these connections, then we could use this to prove our legitimate claim over the land. We are now working with that agenda in mind. We are cow [beef] eating Bengalis [*Garu Khawa Bangali*], we know too many tricks! We are illiterate devil geniuses [*Murkho Saitan*]. We will be successful! The present Mayor and Councillor [are] in our favour. We also believe our newly elected Commissioner will consider our issue on political grounds because we are supporters and workers of his party'.

(IDI P68 2015)

At the time of fieldwork, *samity* leaders had already obtained holding numbers⁸⁸:

'We [*samity*] members and house owners now have holding numbers and will pay tax every year. 150 people got holding numbers from the DNCC zonal office. The government charge is Tk. 370 but we paid Tk. 500. This is proof we are original owners of this land. We are planning to file a case from the cooperative society. We will apply to acquire ownership of the land. We would pay the land price in instalments to government. [P68 showing holding number sign to researcher]...Look, it says "settlement" [*bosti*], not "slum" [*bustee*]. This is our official address. We are calling it "settlement" because we are going to be the owners of this land'.

(*ibid*)

⁸⁸ Many of the leaders kept their holding numbers hidden under beds or in cupboards, as they feared they would be stolen (field observations 2015).

The distinction between *bosti* and *bustee* is highly symbolic. Similar to NGO Forum/WSUP CBO leaders in Site 1 who rejected the label of ‘*busteebashee*’ (chapter seven), it reflects the desire of (some) leaders to disassociate themselves from the ‘illegal’ status of the *bustee*, and claim legal ownership. Despite the optimism of the secretary, however, the process to obtain legal connections was both time consuming and costly. By obtaining holding numbers, *samity* leaders may also have had to pay the full, non-subsidised DWASA rate, as ‘*anyone with holding numbers will be treated as a normal customer. You cannot treat them as low-income people...They want to be LIC customers because the deposit money and demand note is less than the general cost*’ (KII DWASA SCO 2015). This may explain the confusion over the connection costs, noted above. Whilst the process to obtain legal water, electricity and gas lines is highly complex, other examples demonstrate that this is possible. Box 8.1 outlines the case of a successful women’s multipurpose cooperative in Bhola *bustee*.

Box 8.1: Bhola Bustee Cooperative Society

The *Bhola Kaluan Bahumkhi Somobay Samity* (Bhola Welfare Multipurpose Cooperative Society) registered in 1997. At the time of fieldwork, it had 200-300 members. ‘Ms A’ (an active NGO leader in Bhola *bustee* and across Mirpur) and her husband (leader of the *bustee* committee) run the *samity*. The majority of members are female. ‘Ms A’ mobilised existing women’s groups (initially formed by PDAP) to create the cooperative. Since 1997, leaders have applied for and successfully obtained legal gas connections for 20 stoves, eight water lines and an electricity connection via the *samity*. The *samity* also mobilised residents to resist five eviction attempts. As ‘Ms A’ remarked: ‘*we made an application and went to the MP to get permission for a gas line. Then we went to the TITAS gas office, and they gave us a line. Now we cook food using gas, and drink boiled water. We no longer suffer from water-related diseases. Then we brought water legally via different organisations...WASA and Navana gave us permission for five water lines. They told us to use them and then pay the water bills according to a meter*’ (PDAP Workshop 2015).

‘Ms A’ believes the cooperative has been successful because of the strong shared identity of residents in the settlement – the majority of whom are from Bhola district. They also have good links with NGOs (e.g. PDAP, World Vision and DSK), the local MP, male and female ward councillors and DNCC officials – ‘*we approached the MP during the election, asking that he solve our problems if we cast our vote for him. He replied “the door of my mind is open for you” [tomander jonno amar moner dorja khola]*’ (ibid). The ED of PDAP also shared how they prefer to work in Bhola *bustee* as it is ‘*so well-established and unified*’, unlike Sites 1 and 2, which are ‘*fragmented and divided*’ (KII 2015). Similarly, ‘Ms A’s’ long-term friend, an active CBO leader in Site 1 remarked that, ‘*compared to Site 1, Bhola is a very organised community. Even the MP can’t evict them. They have organised themselves to obtain services. Site 1 on the other hand has no shared identity and is highly politicised...I also want to form a women’s cooperative to start savings and loans, and perhaps use it to obtain land and gas connections*’ (IDI P5 2015).

(Based on IDIs, KIIs and PDAP Workshop 2015)

8.2.3. CBO Outcomes

Though the process to obtain legal connections was far from simple, No.1 *samity* leaders in Site 2 used their political connections to bring water and electricity during the

tenure of BNP. However, with the change in national government (to AL), *samity* No. 1 lost their control over the area – *‘in 2008, after the present government came to power, the ruling party influence is everywhere’* (IDI ‘Mr K’ 2015). Crucially, some of the leaders from *samity* No. 1 had to flee Site 2 for a number of years after the change in government, due to fear of violence from AL supporters and other *samitys* in the settlement (IDIs and FGD 2015). The president of *samity* No. 1 still lives outside Site 2, and former secretary only recently returned:

‘I formed the cooperative using my money. I brought the water supply and electricity. I did all of that. After doing this I faced some false lawsuits about land and women’s repression, filed against me for enmity. I went away from this place in 2007 and came back in 2011...There have been a lot of wrongs against me’.

(IDI P25 2015)

Whilst the electricity connection was under the control of P25 during fieldwork, the water line was no longer active. The reasons for this were unclear, but *samity* leaders indicated that the line was cut when they fled the area, and due bills were not paid. They also mentioned that NGOs had *‘taken over responsibility’* for water provision in Site 2 (SSQs 2015). The club house, initially used by *samity* No. 1, was also *‘taken over’* during their absence – *‘a few former members of our cooperative society tried to grab the club house. Cooperative [No. 2], formed by politically-backed people, started to use the club house as their own office space. They’ve already put their signboard in there, though it is still under our authority’* (IDI P30 2015).

These political factions were clearly visible throughout fieldwork, with leaders and members of *samity* No. 1 sitting at one tea stall, and *samity* No. 2 at another. Tensions also emerged following the male FGD. During the FGD, I noticed that a handful of local leaders who had expressed interest, did not attend. I had my suspicions that this was because of tensions between the two *samitys* and political groupings within the settlement. After the FGD I sat with the absent leaders at a local tea stall. They told me that they did not participate because *‘those people’* (in *samity* No. 2) do not invite them to meetings and cause problems for them, confirming my suspicions. They argued that leaders of *samity* No. 2 try to exert power, but are newer settlers of the area (field observations 2015).

Despite these differences, leaders from both *samitys* – especially the former secretary of *samity* No. 1 (P25) and (acting) president of *samity* No. 2 (P26) – were in leadership positions in the *bustee* committee and NGO-initiated CBOs. In addition, within *samity* No. 2, the secretary was linked to BNP, and joint secretary was the former secretary of

samity No. 1. Some leaders also changed their political and organisational allegiance, challenging the notion that the *samitys* had clear-cut political affiliations, or that political identity alone determines participation. As the ‘acting’ president of *samity* No. 2 explained:

‘Meetings used to be held every month. We’ve had a problem for 3-4 months. The present secretary supports BNP. Do you get it? We work together. Out of fear the secretary is unable to give time. But we have given him the courage that nothing will happen to him while we’re here. When BNP was in power, we weren’t able to sleep properly in our homes; the police would come and bother us. After AL came to power, it is *lakhs* and *crores* times better! There are many BNP supporters in our area; none of them have to sleep outside’.

(IDI P26 2015)

During fieldwork, *samity* No. 1 was running at very low capacity, with a core group of 4-5 leaders meeting secretly in the settlement to discuss savings and housing plots (field observations 2015). Many original members had lost interest in participating. As one former member remarked, *‘I along with many of this area were members of the cooperative. The president ‘Mr M’ is a totalitarian. He didn’t know how to delegate work and people of this area didn’t like it. So he left the area and the cooperative broke down’* (IDI P58 2015). Others remarked that the *samity* leaders ‘flew away’ with their savings (SSQs 2015), an allegation also made by the ‘acting’ president of *samity* No. 2 – *‘they stole money. There are many cooperatives like this...They have exploited and harassed us on the grounds they will give us land. That is why this cooperative [No. 2] is us alone, no members from outside’* (IDI P26 2015).

Similar to Site 3, the ultimate priority for leaders (and members) – in both *samitys* – was to obtain plots of land. During fieldwork, I was invited to a meeting where leaders from *samity* No. 1 showed me sensitive documentation that indicated the land under Site 2 had already been sold to a housing company, and that *samity* leaders and active members (who contributed regularly to savings) would obtain small plots (1.5 *katha* of land) via instalments of Tk. 1000 per month over a 90 year period (field observations 2015). When asked about the fate of non-members, one leader remarked:

‘Not all people will have a stake in this success. There are 600 families in the slum, but less than 100 are members of the cooperative society. No one is supposed to be excluded, but for various reasons, many left the cooperative. I could not personally contribute due to financial constraints, but he [‘Mr M’] favours me and includes me in the project on humanitarian grounds because I am a blind person’.

(IDI ‘Mr K’ 2015)

Another leader used an anecdote about a dinner party to refer to those who would miss out – *‘invited guests join the feast, while uninvited people wait until the last group of*

guests have finished their meal. At the end, there is hardly any food left' (IDI P5 2015). The first wife of the president of *samity* No. 1 also shared how she has been socially outcast because of her husband's association with the housing company – *'I feel alone in the settlement. No one approaches me because of my husband. When he left the area, he also remarried'* (SSQ P44 2015). If legitimate, this claim has significant implications for land tenure security for residents in Site 2. Leaders of *samity* No. 2 seemed aware of this plan, however, and quickly dismissed the 'false' documentation. They too were saving to buy plots of land – *'through the cooperative society we have given some money and documents to the government, via the MP. So if the government is able to manage land for us, we can pay in instalments – small amounts, per year or per month'* (IDI P26 2015).

There were also clear factions within the *samitys* according to gender, age, length of stay (i.e. new/old settler) and personal aspirations. The former secretary of *samity* No. 1 – who had played an active (though contested) role in water and electricity provision – was excluded and disregarded. He was not, for example, included in meetings regarding the housing plots. *Samity* leaders argued that this was due to his 'manipulative behaviour' (field observations 2015). The former secretary was clearly frustrated by this, stating *'I lost my business and money because of this cooperative society. I made a lot of sacrifices!'* (field observation 2015). There were also clear divisions between men and women, with the latter taking a more proactive role in negotiating for land, using their NGO and political contacts. At the time of fieldwork, a group of women – including the 'proxy' president (P63), leader of UPPR CDCs (P49) and others in the informal women's committee – approached the local MP and mayor numerous times to request support for rehabilitation via *samity* No. 2. They were also aware (through their NGO contacts) of Bhola *bustee* obtaining gas connections via their *samity*, and wanted to replicate this in Site 2 (Female FGD 2015). One resident remarked, *'in my honest opinion women leaders in our area are more committed than male leaders. Male leaders are deceptive and selfish. They do not organise and mobilise people for their rights'* (IDI P19 2015). There were also notable differences between young and older settlers, with younger male leaders (involved in the AL youth-league) frustrated with being side-lined from discussions over the land (field observations 2015).

Similar to Site 2, many residents in Site 3 suspected the *samitys* of fraud, and argued that the multipurpose *samity* [No. 4] had to reform because it became *'the pocket organisation'* of one local leader (SSQ 2015). Throughout fieldwork, it became clear

that whilst the majority of *samity* (and committee) leaders in Site 3 wanted to claim land ownership, a handful of (3-5) leaders from *samity* No. 4 championed the idea to use holding numbers and legal connections as a way to obtain land (field observations; IDIs and FGD 2015). This had implications for equity and, specifically, ‘who benefits and why’. In particular, the strategic agenda of *samity* leaders fuelled mistrust among residents (both tenants and owners) about the intentions of certain leaders – some of whom were accused of seeking pay-offs from the (disputed) landowner (SSQs 2015). For example, *samity* leaders stated that tenants and ‘the unmarried’ did not obtain holding numbers, as they were ‘*not aware of the situation*’ (FGD 2015). The vice president also stated that not all owners (only 69 out of 160) could afford holding numbers (including the extra bribes) (IDI P69 2015). The high DWASA application fees also meant that the new lines were only accessible to those who could pay (i.e. house owners and local businessmen). As one resident remarked, ‘*we cannot afford the connection fees. Many people have already applied for the line, costing Tk. 25,000. They will have a monopoly on the connections and sell to others for a higher price*’ (SSQ P34 2015). Another stated, ‘*25 people are taking the legal connections and will sell water, charging Tk. 500-600 per month. That’s why I would prefer an NGO connection*’ (SSQ P29 2015). Similar to Site 2, it became clear that *samity* leaders in Site 3 had multiple (conflicting) interests and agendas according to age, gender and political affiliation. For example, the secretary of *samity* No. 4 later revealed that he was a supporter of BNP. He said that, despite being proactive in seeking legal services, he is increasingly excluded by some (AL) leaders because of this (SSQ and IDI 2015). This is a very similar story to the *samity* secretaries in Site 2.

The informal *bustee* committee and formal multipurpose *samity* clearly play important, yet distinct, roles in service provision and mediation in Site 3. Whilst committee leaders are indirectly involved in provision (obtaining illegal connections via middlemen, local patrons or low-level government staff), *samity* leaders strategically use the registered organisation to obtain holding numbers and legal connections, as part of a broader strategy to acquire land. There is also a great deal of overlap, with many committee leaders in the *samity* and *vice versa*. Compared to Site 3, the informal *bustee* committee and formal *samitys* in Site 2 also play important, yet less direct, roles in service provision. This is due to the dominant role of WASH NGOs and characteristics of the settlement (i.e. majority owner-occupier on public land). Similar to Site 3, land and housing is the priority of *samity* and committee leaders. However, these leaders mediate

NGO services and infrastructure, with implications for equity and sustainability. Section 8.3 elaborates on these overlaps in greater detail.

8.3. Leader and NGO-Initiated CBOs in Site 2

Site 2 is distinct from the other two field sites in that it has both leader and NGO-initiated CBOs. Leaders, members and activities of both CBO types were found to overlap in multiple ways, with implications for outcomes. Most notably, leaders of the *bustee* committee, AL *Bastu Hara* sub-wing, central committee and *samitys* were in leadership positions, members or ‘advisors’ of the NGO-initiated CBOs. For example, the vice president of the *bustee* committee and ‘acting’ president of *samity* No. 2 (P26) was the president of the World Vision WASH committee; and president of the *bustee* committee (‘Mr R’) was an ‘advisor’ to all NGO projects, and member of both *samitys*. In turn, the DSK WatSan committee was led by an AL sub-wing leader (P73), and the wives of committee leaders were involved in the UPPR CDCs (SSQs; IDIs and field observations 2015). According to the president (‘Mr R’), the *bustee* committee presides over all other CBOs in the settlement:

‘The slum directorate committee is above all the committees formed in our area. There is a DSK, World Vision, NDBUS/UPPR and NGO Forum committee. Basically, the members of the central committee are members of all other NGO and non-NGO committees. There is no social obstacle for us, meaning we can seek connections and infrastructure development. There are no outsiders in our committees. We are the same people who established the cooperative societies’.

(Male FGD 2015)

Contrary to this, other CBO leaders argued that: ‘*we all look after the area now, some people from DSK and a few from the cooperatives. We listen to ‘Mr R’ because he is an elderly person, but he is not a good leader*’ (IDI P58 2015); and ‘*there was a corrupt committee in the past, but now 35 members of the WASH committee govern [Site 2]*’ (IDI P72 2015). Leaders in *samity* No. 1 also noted how, in the beginning, they welcomed NGOs (like DSK) as long as they worked via them:

‘The NGOs don’t work through cooperative societies; it’s not in their mandate. However, my demand or order was that, if any NGO wanted to work in our area, they should work along with our cooperative...DSK had a relation with our cooperative. DSK fieldworkers agreed [to work with us], but other NGOs did not want this’.

(IDI ‘Mr K’ 2015)

‘Mr K’ later became president of the (first) DSK WatSan committee, and was actively involved in the citywide urban poor group NBUS. Similarly, the secretary of *samity* No.2 remarked how, ‘*before working in the area, NGOs meet with us for verbal or no*

objection support in their programmes. This cooperative is the guardian of [Site 2's] rehabilitation and residents...we coordinate NGO activities' (Male FGD 2015)⁸⁹. As indicated in chapter seven, this cross-over of leaders, members, activities and spaces, coupled with the factions between (and within) groups, had implications for CBO outcomes in Site 2. For example, the secretary of *samity* No.2 was also the person ('Mr B') who had allegedly appropriated DSK water points to re-sell water to tenants.

8.4. Concluding Remarks

Evidently, leader-initiated CBOs play an important, yet understated role in service provision and mediation in Dhaka's *bustees*, especially where NGOs do not operate (i.e. Site 3). Whilst committees and *samitys* are not directly comparable, due to their different function, structure and level of in/formality, the overlap of leaders and members has clear implications for participation, function and outcomes. Four key points are highlighted. Firstly, unlike NGO-initiated CBOs, leader-initiated CBOs (especially committees) pay little attention to 'inclusive', 'participatory' or 'equitable' principles. The majority of leaders and members are male, politically-affiliated house owners. Short-term tenants are largely excluded, and female participation is low.

Secondly, leader-initiated CBOs (especially the multipurpose *samitys*) are more 'strategic' than the NGO-initiated CBOs outlined in chapter seven. This reflects the difference between externally and internally-initiated CBOs – the former addressing a 'practical' NGO or donor WASH agenda, and the latter addressing the priorities of local leaders (i.e. land and housing tenure security). Whilst services are not necessarily 'top' priority, they are still critically important, and can be used strategically to advance the interests of certain leaders. This was the case with water and electricity in Site 2, and water, electricity, gas and holding numbers in Site 3. However, as these leader-initiated CBOs operate outside of the dominant NGO framework (outlined in chapter six), they also face numerous logistical, technical and financial barriers to obtaining legal services. In this sense, NGOs like DSK, World Vision or NGO Forum still play an important role in mediating between *bustee* residents and DWASA.

Thirdly, fieldwork suggests that some committee and *samity* leaders are strategic, but not all. In both settlements, a core group of 7-10 leaders appeared to set the agenda and mediate the flow of resources, information and services. In this sense, these groups are

⁸⁹ NGOs also commonly used the *samity* and committee club house to conduct meetings, training workshops and distribute 'gifts' (field observations 2015).

less ‘community based organisations’ and more ‘leader-centred networks’ (De Wit and Berner 2009). Even though the leaders act collectively to resolve certain issues, they operate in a relatively ‘closed regulatory space’ (Hossain 2013) that few can enter or exit. This was particularly the case in Site 3, where committee and *samity* leaders acted as key ‘gatekeepers’, using their contacts with political patrons and government officials to obtain connections and resolve service disruptions, but were not necessarily accountable to the wider settlement population, and blocked WASH NGO engagement. The multipurpose *samity* secretaries in both sites played a prominent role in negotiating for services, but were ostracised due to their (shifting) political affiliations.

Finally, the role of politics – in terms of political parties and patronage – cannot be understated. This ultimately lies at the core of committee and *samity* activities. As seen in Sites 2 and 3, a change in national government (e.g. BNP to AL) greatly affects the function and outcomes of leader-initiated CBOs at the settlement level, often resulting in a change/reformation of structure, leadership and activities. This supports Banks’ (2015) observations outlined in chapter four. Rather than completely dissolve (like the central WASH CBOs in Sites 1 and 2), however, the leader-initiated CBOs in Sites 2 and 3 sustained over time (albeit in a loose organisational form), but the leadership and membership changed frequently. New CBOs were also formed by leaders or members of old ‘inactive’ CBOs, as with the *samitys* in Site 2. Again, this often reflected changing political dynamics at the citywide and national scale.

Whilst certain leaders use these CBOs to their advantage, or strategically shift their political allegiances, they are trapped in entrenched, and highly structured, clientelistic relationships with political patrons. In this sense, the category of ‘internally-initiated’ is problematic, as many leaders are dependent upon, and respond to, external patrons (e.g. MPs and ward councillors). As indicated in chapter four, contemporary shifts from a ‘two-party’ to ‘one-party’ state (dominated by AL) have also meant that BNP is now a much weaker oppositional force. However, tensions between BNP and AL were still visible within the field sites, with the former retaining support among many residents – who suffered from harassment as a result. There were also multiple factions within AL-affiliated groups, demonstrating that political-affiliation alone does not determine CBO participation, function or outcomes. Chapter nine elaborates on these emerging patterns and trends, and their implications for collective action at scale.

9. Urban Governance and Collective Action in Dhaka's *bustees*

This analysis chapter draws on the empirical evidence to critically re-engage with the literature, and nuance our understanding of collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*. The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 9.1 begins by revisiting collective action theory; Rational Actor Theory (RAT), Structural Variables and Relationships (SVR) and Relational Actors and Networks (RAN). Whilst RAT and SVR have value, a range of additional individual, household and settlement level factors are found to affect CBO type, participation, function and outcomes in Dhaka's *bustees*. One overarching finding emerges whereby CBO participation and outcomes are similar regardless of CBO type (i.e. externally/internally-initiated, formal/informal). In all three field sites, male politically-affiliated leaders and house owners led CBOs, with implications for equity and sustainability. Whilst CBOs offer a useful lens through which to examine intra-group dynamics, and the heuristic framework (chapter three) was a valuable analytical tool to reach this conclusion, it is argued that identifying more broadly-based networks between local leaders and political patrons, is of greater value to understand collective action. In this sense, RAN is the most relevant theoretical approach. However, RAN may not readily explain why certain leaders dominate, why certain forms of collective action emerge and sustain (while others disappear), and whether collective action challenges and/or reinforces existing power inequalities.

To answer these questions, section 9.2 returns to the practical and strategic distinction outlined in chapter two. Fieldwork reveals that, while collective action plays an important role in service provision, it is largely practical (i.e. addressing immediate needs). In cases where it takes a more strategic direction (i.e. to address priorities), the benefits are not widely shared. In both cases, more transformative collective action is restricted. This, it is argued, relates to the broader urban governance context that enables and/or constrains certain forms of collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*. Three (interrelated) spheres of urban governance are identified as particularly important: 1) patron-centric state; 2) risk-averse and market-oriented development sector; and 3) clientelistic society. The interaction between different actors within these spheres constrains transformative collective action. These interactions are deeply political, and highly unequal. Section 9.3 re-engages with Bourdieu's (1986; 1998) notion of 'fields'

to highlight the way in which networks of local leaders and political patrons manage collective action at the *bustee* level, and how these networks relate to governance configurations at the citywide, national and global scale. The chapter concludes with the recognition that urban governance is dynamic, with shifts in one or more spheres offering the potential for more (or less) transformative collective action.

9.1. Collective Action Theory: Revisiting RAT, SVR and RAN

Whilst different theoretical approaches to collective action (e.g. RAT, SVR and RAN) help us to understand why certain people act collectively, when, how and to what end, few contributions explore these questions through detailed empirical case studies from low-income urban settlements in the Global South. In particular, there are few rigorous empirical studies of collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*. To address these gaps, this thesis used group action (via CBOs) as a lens to explore collective action and service provision among Dhaka's *bustee* dwellers. This section discusses the implications of the empirical findings for existing literature and the heuristic framework, outlined in chapters two and three.

Collective action dilemmas (e.g. elite capture, free riding) (Olson 1965; Hardin 1968) were observed during fieldwork. Elite capture was a particular issue in NGO-initiated CBOs, where local (male) leaders would enter and often 'drop' female leaders (as with NGO Forum in Sites 1 and 2). Some CBO leaders and house owners also appropriated NGO water points to re-sell water to their tenants (as with 'Mr B' and P72 in Site 2). Free riding (i.e. non-contribution) was also evident in NGO and leader-initiated CBOs. For example, in Sites 1 and 2, not all leaders and members would co-share or contribute their labour for the construction and maintenance of NGO facilities. Some also had 'free' or subsidised access due to their relation with CBO leaders, while others would tap into/use facilities with or without permission. On some occasions, CBO leaders complained that they had to pay lump sums from their own pocket to bring services to the settlement (as with the World Vision/HFHB president in Site 2, chapter seven). Similar issues were reported in the *samitys*, where resource mobilisation was confined to a small group of leaders, who then applied for legal services. This was the case with the former secretary of *samity* No. 1 in Site 2, who 'brought in' water and electricity. Leaders and members of externally and internally-initiated CBOs were also accused of misusing funds and resources in all field sites. This was particularly the case for *bustee* committees, where leaders would require 'tips' for arbitration and service connections,

and *samity*s, where – despite strict Department of Cooperative (DoC) guidelines – some leaders allegedly ‘flew away’ with member contributions (chapter eight).

Though insightful, focusing on collective action dilemmas alone is not sufficient to explain the processes observed in the three settlements. As per the critique of RAT (outlined in chapter two), participation was not solely determined by rational self-interest, but underpinned by relationships bound by need, trust, fear and reciprocity (elaborated below). Similar to Dasgupta and Beard (2007), I also found a distinction between elite capture and elite control, as not all CBO leaders were corrupt. In fact, many spent considerable time and resources bringing services to the settlement, often using their political contacts to do so. This was particularly the case with the *samity*s in Sites 2 and 3 (chapter eight). Unlike Dasgupta and Beard (2007), however, the motivations for, and intended benefits of such control was confined to a small group of male leaders. In turn, the strategic attempts of some CBO leaders (especially secretaries) to obtain services, as part of a broader strategy to secure land (e.g. Site 3), supports the notion that certain individuals are knowing and capable agents (Ostrom 1990; 2005; 2009). However, a range of other structural and relational factors were also found to constrain the actions of these individuals at the settlement and citywide scale (elaborated below, and in section 9.2).

Ostrom’s (2005; 2009) work on SVR (outlined in chapter two) fits more closely with the empirical findings. Certain structural variables were found to influence initial mobilisation and continued action. Similar to Ostrom, I found that group type and function, perception of benefits and participant heterogeneity (especially gender and ethnicity) were particularly important for initial mobilisation, whilst history and legacy of collective action (i.e. information about past actions and level of success), the mediating role of institutions (especially committees, political party sub-wings and NGOs) and strength and direction of core relations was central to continued action (elaborated below). Unlike Ostrom, however, I found that voluntary entry/exit and communication type was of less importance, though there were cases of involuntary entry or exit through coercion, being dropped or due to project closure, as with the central WASH CBOs in Sites 1 and 2 (chapter seven).

Whilst ‘core relationships’ (e.g. trust, reciprocity and reputation) were found to affect and underpin initial and ongoing collective action (Ostrom 2009), fieldwork suggests

that mistrust and damage to one's reputation is just as, if not more important. Negative perceptions of CBO leaders and members as benefiting at the expense of others emerged as a particularly important barrier to continued participation in NGO-initiated CBOs. This was especially the case in Site 2, where CBO leaders faced regular harassment and 'dirty talk' from non-members (chapter seven). Though work elsewhere has emphasised the importance of less tangible aspects of collective action in rural contexts (e.g. Cleaver 2007; Davis 2009; Ostrom 2009; Clarke 2011, chapter two), these relations are understudied in low-income urban settlements. This is problematic, given that they were central to the everyday experiences of, and interactions between, CBO leaders, members and non-members in the three field sites.

Fieldwork also highlights a range of factors – supporting and additional to Ostrom's SVR – that affect collective action. The implications of (and interactions between), these individual, household and settlement level factors for CBO type, participation, function and outcomes are elaborated below.

9.1.1. Factors Affecting Collective Action in Dhaka's *Bustees*

Individual and Household Level

- Social, Economic and Political Networks
- Household Status (e.g. tenant, manager, owner)
- Income and Employment
- Gender
- Self-motivation and Perceived Gains
- Intra-Household Support
- (Ill)Health and Disability

Settlement Level

- Land Tenure Type (i.e. public, private, disputed)
- Support and/or Opposition from Political Patrons
- History of NGO and Donor Engagement
- History of Government Engagement
- (Demographic) Homogeneity/Heterogeneity
- Leadership Type
- Physical Layout

Individual and Household Level

Social, Economic and Political Networks

Fieldwork reveals that social, economic and political networks linking individuals and households with relatives, house owners, landowners, NGO workers and political patrons within and outside the settlement, greatly affect participation in collective action. This supports existing observations that the strength (i.e. strong/weak), direction (i.e. vertical/horizontal) and type (i.e. bound by fear, reciprocity, trust, need or kinship) of network influences propensity for, and outcomes of, collective action (Granovetter 1973; Melcucci 1996; Della Porta and Diani 1999 cited in Nicholls 2008; Arias 2004, chapter two). For example, whilst strong horizontal networks bound by kinship, as seen in Bhola *bustee* cooperative society, had positive outcomes, strong vertical networks (between tenants, managers and house owners, local leaders and political patrons) had potentially negative consequences for participation and outcomes (elaborated below, and in section 9.2.3).

Household Status (e.g. tenant, manager, owner)

Fieldwork reveals that household status plays an important role in mediating collective action. In particular, short-term tenants (i.e. those living in one place for less than one year) were found to be less likely to engage in collective action due to resource and time constraints, high levels of mobility, lack of incentives, opportunity and dominance of house owners. Whilst this varied according to the relationship tenants had with owners, local political leaders and length of tenancy, house owners were found to be more likely to participate in (and lead) externally and internally-initiated CBOs. For example, in NGO WASH projects, tenants were often included in user groups (as with ARBAN), but were rarely in leadership positions in the central CBOs. In Site 1, managers of multiple households (often tenants themselves), played an important role as mediators between owners and tenants. In Site 2, where the majority of residents were owner-occupiers, many tenants were not included in, or invited to CBO meetings. In Site 3, committee and *samity* leaders were all house owners. Tenants were not invited to meetings and/or were not aware of the CBOs. In all sites, longer-term residents (owners and tenants) were also more likely to build established networks in the area, and capitalise on NGO activity. Fieldwork suggests that greater emphasis should be placed on the limits to participation among tenants – a neglected area of research and practice.

Income and Employment

More solvent households with relatively stable and diverse incomes (e.g. room and small business owners) were found to be more likely to engage time and resources in collective action. Many extreme-poor households living ‘hand to mouth’ (especially widows, single mothers and short-term tenants) simply did not have the time, finances or interest to participate due to daily insecurity (elaborated in section 9.2.3). This supports existing literature that suggests a potential reverse causation between income and collective action (e.g. Rashid 2000; Rahman 2001; Wood 2003; Appadurai 2004; Ghertner 2008; Mwangi and Markelova 2009; Ahmed et al 2012, chapter two). Fieldwork also reveals that, whilst NGOs often actively target ‘the poorest’ to participate, extreme poor households are rarely invited to CBO meetings by leaders. This demonstrates an apparent mismatch between the equitable principles promoted by NGOs, and the devolution of powers to CBO leaders. Leader-initiated CBOs had no requirement to be inclusive, and were formed and run by house owners with small businesses. Employment type, location and hours also affected participation, with garment workers and others working outside of the settlement less able to attend meetings and give time due to long working days.

Gender

Fieldwork support’s Shatkin’s (2007) observation that female participants are often relegated to lower-level CBO positions. Whilst the ARBAN user and central CBOs in Site 1, World Vision CWC and DSK user CBOs in Site 2 had a majority female membership base, few NGO-initiated CBOs had active female leaders in president, vice president, secretary or cashier positions. In Site 1, ARBAN had phased out, and the vice president of the NGO Forum/WSUP CBO (P70) was side-lined by local male leaders. In Site 2, all female leaders in NGO Forum had been ‘dropped’. Unlike Shatkin (2007), however, fieldwork reveals that NGO training does not necessarily undermine or deter male leaders from entering and dropping female leaders, especially after the NGOs ‘phase out’. Female CBO leaders and members also faced numerous time constraints to participation due to the gendered division of labour in the household and settlement. For example, women in Sites 1 and 2 mentioned juggling family, domestic chores and community activities – supporting Moser’s (1993) ‘triple burden’ (chapter two). Gendered division of labour was also found within WASH CBOs. For example, female leaders and members often cleaned water points and sanitation chambers, even though it

was the responsibility of all. Furthermore, as women and young girls were encouraged to stay in or around the home, negotiations outside of the settlement with politicians and service providers were usually handled by male CBO leaders, though this was not always the case (especially with the female-led UPPR CDCs in Site 2). As expected, the internally-initiated CBOs in Sites 2 and 3 were male-led, and had a majority male membership base, consisting of local leaders and elders. This supports Banks' (2012) observation about the composition of leader-initiated groups at the settlement level. One exception to dominant male leadership was in Site 2, where an informal women's group met to arbitrate domestic violence and share information about NGO projects (chapter seven). In all field sites, there were also highly vocal and powerful women (often the wives of local leaders) who were involved in numerous CBOs and owned multiple businesses and houses. This challenges the notion that women are somehow inherently benevolent, subordinate or have shared solidarity (chapter two).

Self-Motivation and Perceived Gains

Self-motivation receives limited attention in collective action theory, but fieldwork suggests it is an important driver for participation. The reasons for participation among CBO leaders and members included a desire to 'help people', seek financial gain, improve living conditions and/or access secure housing in future. These motivations differed according to CBO type. For example, many externally-initiated CBO leaders and members said they 'felt good' knowing they had helped others, and thoroughly enjoyed participating. Some also acted as 'WASH champions', working extremely hard to improve their areas (as with P5 in Site 1 and 'Mr K' in Site 2, chapter seven). These observations challenge some of the negative perceptions towards 'community participation' outlined in chapter two (i.e. that it is simply a cost-saving initiative). However, as indicated above, many CBO leaders also felt disheartened when they were accused of benefiting from NGOs at the expense of others. Whilst internally-initiated CBO leaders and members also shared that they wanted to bring legal services to the settlement, their motivations largely related to obtaining permanent land and housing, and maintaining strong links with political patrons. With political backing, local leaders could capitalise on the flow of resources into and out of the settlement, and consolidate their authority. This was especially the case in Site 3 (chapter eight).

Intra-Household Support

Fieldwork reveals that family support (from the spouse and children) was essential to initial and ongoing participation, especially for female CBO leaders and members. As outlined in chapter seven, many women in the three field sites reported that their husbands did not allow them to join groups, and some reported domestic abuse linked to their participation. However, others shared how, without their husband's encouragement, they would never have joined. Support could also change over time, from initial encouragement to disillusionment. While male participants also sought support, encouragement and counsel from their wives, this was less openly discussed. It did, however, emerge during informal tea stall discussions. Single mothers and widowers had little or no intra-household support at all.

(III) Health & Disability

Ill-health and disability were further barriers to CBO participation. In all field sites, physically (especially chronically) unwell and disabled residents complained they received little benefit from CBOs, and could not attend, or were not invited to meetings. As a result, water and sanitation facilities were rarely responsive to their needs. Those suffering from poor mental health, often referred derogatively to as *pagala* ('crazy') were often social outcasts within the settlement. There were some notable exceptions as regards disability however. For example, in Site 2, two elderly blind men were actively involved in the DSK WatSan committees, where they competed with each other for leadership positions. Whilst externally-initiated CBOs were encouraged to be inclusive, no such requirement existed in the internally-initiated CBOs.

Settlement Level

Land Tenure Type (e.g. public, private, disputed)

Whilst all field sites were on disputed land (with unclear tenure arrangements), public/private distinctions still had important implications for collective action. For example, in Site 3, WASH NGOs were prevented from entering the settlement by local leaders, but also did not have permission from Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) to work there, due to the disputed status of the land (chapter five). In their place, house owners involved in the leader-initiated CBOs provided and mediated services. On public land, such as Site 2, NGOs were in abundance, and residents were actively engaged in CBO activity of various types. Leader-initiated CBOs were, however, still

present, and often mediated access to services (chapter eight). In Site 1, ‘private’ landowners and house owners encouraged NGOs to enter, as they provided essential infrastructure and services at no cost to them, as tenants co-shared for facilities. This challenges the notion that private landowners actively block NGO or CBO engagement (e.g. Roy et al 2012; Roy and Hulme 2013, chapter three) – though this varies according to context and perceived gains. Land tenure status also affected the frequency (and type) of critical events (e.g. evictions, fires, police raids etc), and led to the emergence of diverse forms of collective action in the field sites, from sporadic anti-eviction protests, to the formation of formal *samitys* (as in Sites 2 and 3). However, fear of eviction could also deter participation in NGO-initiated CBOs, as residents were afraid of losing assets, time and money invested in CBO activity and WASH infrastructure. This supports existing observations that suggest land tenure insecurity is a major barrier to service improvement in low-income urban settlements (e.g. Rahman et al 2014; McGranahan and Mitlin 2016, chapter two).

Support and/or Opposition from Political Patrons

In each field site, CBO leaders were affiliated with (ruling) Awami League politicians (e.g. MPs and ward councillors), requesting their support in times of crisis and in longer-term negotiations for legal services (as with the *bustee* committee and *samity* No. 4 in Site 3, chapter eight). In turn, without support from these individuals, NGOs (and CBOs) could not operate or install infrastructure. Some NGOs (like WSUP) had a budget for negotiations with ‘powerbrokers’ (chapter seven). Whilst political patronage was particularly evident in, and important for, the *bustee* committees (whose leaders had direct links to the MP), leaders and members of all collective groups, from WASH CBOs to *samitys*, had political affiliations, with implications for participation, function and outcomes. For example, CBOs could function at low capacity with irregular meetings due to internal political divisions (as with *samity* No. 2 in Site 2), and politically-affiliated leaders were often accused of using collective groups to access financial aid, building materials and information (as with World Vision/HFHB in Site 2). Rather than separate processes, fieldwork supports the notion that patronage and collective action are deeply interconnected, and can establish recursive relationships (e.g. Auyero et al 2009; Bénit-Gbaffou 2011, chapter two). This was especially evident with the formation and function of leader-initiated CBOs in Sites 2 and 3. However, fieldwork also nuances existing observations by focusing on: 1) community-led collective action in respect of water and sanitation services (rather than large-scale mass

mobilisations and protest); and 2) arguing that patron-client networks can actually undermine or block more transformative collective action in certain contexts. In other words, collective action that may lead to improved wellbeing among the urban poor, and which does not only benefit political patrons and politically-affiliated local leaders. These complexities are further elaborated in section 9.2.

History of NGO and Donor Engagement

Fieldwork suggests that the history and legacy of NGO and donor engagement within a settlement clearly affects the propensity of residents to engage in collective action. On the one hand, collective and individual memory or first-hand experience of beneficial NGO activity (e.g. legal water connections, new sanitation chambers) may encourage residents to re-engage in new projects. For example, even though many projects had phased out and their CBOs were inactive, many residents in Sites 1 and 2 still perceived themselves as active members with specific roles (e.g. cashier, president, secretary or general member), or joined new WASH projects (as with ARBAN and NGO Forum in Site 1). On the other hand, many residents were frustrated that NGOs had not addressed their more pressing concerns (i.e. rehabilitation), and became tired attending meetings, with little perceived gain (as in Site 2). In Site 3, lack of historical NGO engagement affected residents' perceptions towards those responsible for basic services and housing (i.e. central government over NGOs).

History of Government Engagement

Government engagement (or lack of) is understood here as government departments (e.g. DWASA and DNCC) providing services to *bustees*. Fieldwork suggests that the type and quality of engagement relates to land tenure status, legal/policy frameworks, level of (existing) collective action and, realistically speaking, the political identity of *bustee* residents (elaborated above and in section 9.2). Whilst DNCC is responsible for providing basic services in Site 2 – a government recognised resettlement area – residents received only three tube wells and six sanitation chambers in 1999 for 900 families. Since 1999, residents have relied heavily on NGOs (rather than DNCC) to address their needs. In Site 1, DNCC provided roads, drainage and water connections. However, many residents believed that these facilities were actually for wealthier families with *pucca* houses, and that the *bustee* housing will be evicted. As noted in chapter five, evictions or 'relocations' of tenants had already begun – resulting in the destruction of homes and existing WASH facilities. In Sites 1 and 2, DWASA now

supplies piped water, yet limited DWASA capacity means that responsibility for provision, bill collection and maintenance is largely contracted out to NGOs and their associated CBOs. Chapter seven outlined how CBO leaders, members and users cannot always afford large-scale repairs, resulting in the rapid dilapidation of facilities. In Site 3, obtaining approval for DWASA lines (without NGO assistance) was regarded as a key achievement among *samity* leaders yet – as outlined in chapter eight – was also a lengthy and complex process that incurred various costs.

(Demographic) Homogeneity/Heterogeneity

It is widely acknowledged that low-income settlements are not homogeneous, but involve internal processes of inclusion and exclusion (e.g. Uphoff 1986; Hulme and Turner 1990; Foweraker 1995; Thorpe et al 2005; Mitlin 2006; Hickey 2006; Cleaver 2007; De Wit and Berner 2009; Rahman et al 2014, chapter two). This was certainly the case in Dhaka, where *bustees* were highly diverse, especially in terms of ethnicity and kinship, length of residence (i.e. old/new settlers), political affiliation and income levels among residents. Such heterogeneity exacerbated a lack of unity and mistrust, with negative implications for initial and continued collective action. For example, residents in all field sites noted how they had close-knit networks with kin from their home districts, but found it hard to mix with people from other parts of Bangladesh within the settlement. On the contrary, the success of the cooperative society in Bhola *bustee* was due, in part, to the strong sense of shared identity among residents, many of whom were from Bhola District. As noted in chapters seven and eight, divisions between middle and lower-class households, as well as ‘old’ and ‘new’ settlers, often created rifts within CBOs. In Site 1, for example, CBO leaders in NGO Forum/WSUP did not want to be associated with ‘slums’, even though many other residents needed service improvements. In Site 2, tensions emerged between ‘original’ settlers and ‘newcomers’ in the NGO and leader-initiated CBOs (e.g. World Vision, *bustee* committee and *samitys*), with negative implications for function and outcomes.

Leadership Type

While each field site had local ‘leaders’, none were formally elected, and in all cases their positions were contested. In Site 1, the fragmented nature of the settlement meant that house owners and landowners acted as ‘leaders’ of their different plots. Many house owners were relatives of and/or affiliated with the local MP, who exerted control over land and housing in the area. In Site 2, the original and well-respected leader ‘Mr A’

died a few years before, leaving a power vacuum filled by two to three men vying for control over the area. Subsequent leaders were perceived as unresponsive and corrupt; especially regarding NGO projects (chapters seven and eight). In Site 3, leaders and elders were called upon for social arbitration, but this came at a cost. In all sites, local ‘leaders’ were involved directly and/or indirectly (i.e. as ‘advisors’) in all collective groups, with implications for participation, function and outcomes (elaborated below, and in section 9.2.3).

Physical Layout

Whilst the amount of communal space within a settlement (for meetings and events) might not deter collective action, it could influence the quality of engagement, and participation of different residents. For example, in Site 1 there were multiple plots, some of which were difficult to access/hidden. Whilst some plots had NGO-initiated CBOs to manage sanitation chambers, others did not. They were either intentionally left out (due to opposition/arrangements with the owners), or unintentionally missed. Those living in houses located near entrances, exits and main roads inside settlements were able to approach NGO, donor and government staff entering, and engage them in conversation. In Site 3, movement within the settlement was restricted by unsafe, narrow walkways and lanes that led to dead-ends. Residents from one side of the settlement did not mix with those from the other; exacerbating fragmentation. By contrast, Site 2 had communal areas, including a ‘club house’ and open field (often used by NGOs), where residents could gather.

9.1.2. Patterns and Trends

Whilst Ostrom’s SVR offers a useful starting point to understand initial mobilisation and continued action, the section above demonstrates how an array of other factors at the individual, household and settlement level affect collective action in Dhaka’s *bustees*. The scale of influence (i.e. from most to least influential) ultimately varies according to specific context, rendering hierarchical categorisation difficult. However, certain patterns and trends can be identified. For example, at the individual and household level – social, economic and political networks, household status, income and gender were found to be particularly important for CBO participation, whilst at the settlement level – land tenure type and support (or opposition) from political patrons greatly influenced CBO type, function and outcomes. As opposed to static or ‘fixed’, these factors are interconnected and dynamic. For example, those with strong networks

to kin and patrons, financial stability (i.e. multiple house or business owners) and intra-household support were more likely to participate in CBOs. Furthermore, household status was greatly affected by land tenure type, which, in turn, affected history of NGO, donor, government engagement and CBO formation.

Comparative analysis of the factors affecting CBO type, participation, function and outcomes across (and within) the field sites, reveals an overarching finding – that participation and outcomes are similar regardless of CBO type (i.e. externally/internally-initiated, formal/informal). In other words, CBO leaders in all field sites were often the same interconnected individuals (i.e. male politically-affiliated local leaders and house owners), with implications for equity. This is demonstrated by the fact that short-term tenants, poorer households and female leaders were excluded from, and/or pushed out of positions in both CBO types, despite ‘inclusive’ NGO criteria.

Whilst CBOs offer a useful lens through which to explore intra-group dynamics, and the heuristic framework (chapter three) was a valuable tool to reach this conclusion (i.e. by comparing type, participation, function and outcomes), identifying networks between individuals (i.e. local leaders and political patrons) – rather than focusing on bounded groups (i.e. CBOs) – is of greater value to understand collective action in Dhaka’s *bustees*. These observations align with the sociological RAN approach outlined in chapter two. In particular, RAN helps us to understand who is more likely to act collectively, how these individuals are connected (i.e. via strong/weak, vertical/horizontal networks) within and outside the settlement, and how this affects the ‘success’ or outcomes of collective action (e.g. Nicholls 2008; Hossain 2013). The value of this approach is further elaborated in the discussion of ‘leader-centred networks’ (De Wit and Berner 2009) in section 9.2.3.

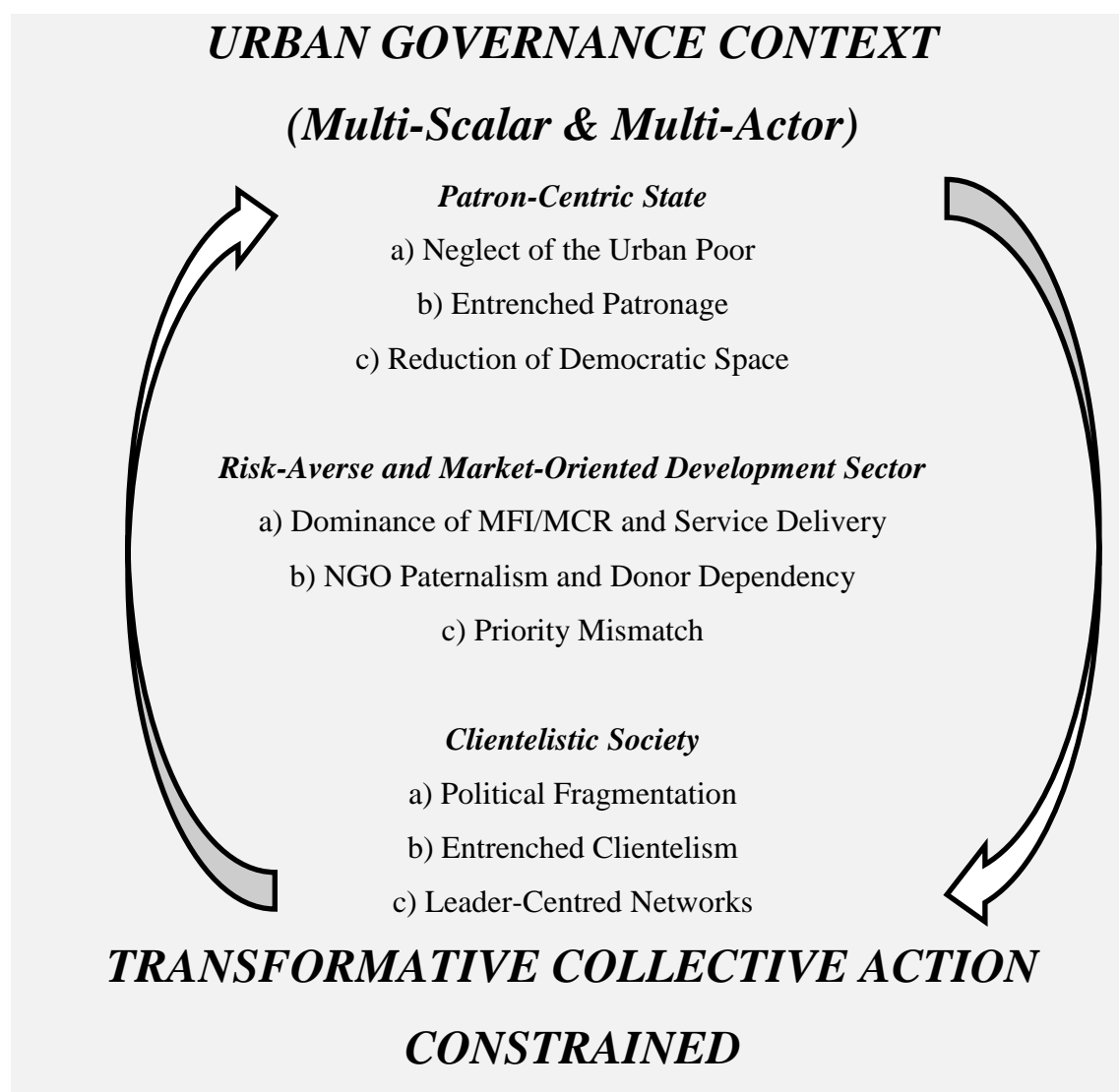
Whilst useful, RAN still leaves certain questions only partially answered. For example, why do certain leaders dominate? Why do certain forms of collective action emerge and sustain, while others disappear? And, does collective action challenge and/or reinforce existing power inequalities? The answers require critical re-engagement with the instrumental value of collective action, and broader context of urban governance in which collective action is enabled and/or constrained. This requires shifting the analysis beyond the settlement level, to the citywide, national and global scale.

9.2. Constraints to Transformative Collective Action in Dhaka

As noted in chapter two, collective action is just one among an array of strategies the urban poor use to address their needs and priorities in low-income settlements of the Global South. When taken to scale, collective action also has emancipatory potential, as part of a broader politics of ‘redistribution, recognition and representation’ (Fraser 1997; 2005). Whilst there is a rich array of evidence to support this claim – as with Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) and the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) (chapter two) – fieldwork suggests that collective action among Dhaka’s *bustee* dwellers is largely practical in nature (i.e. addressing immediate needs). In cases where it is more strategic (i.e. to protect assets and address longer-term priorities, such as land and housing), or both practical and strategic (i.e. addressing needs and priorities, for example, obtaining water connections to stake claim on land), the benefits (if any) are not widely shared. In all cases, transformative collective action is restricted. This, it is argued, relates to the broader context of urban governance that enables and/or constrains certain forms of collective action. Three spheres of urban governance are identified as particularly important: 1) patron-centric state; 2) risk-averse and market-oriented development sector; and 3) clientelistic society (Figure 9.1).

The following section outlines how this governance context constrains transformative collective action by: a) enabling more practical forms of collective action with limited strategic potential; and b) enabling strategic forms (or the combination of both practical and strategic), that may reinforce, rather than challenge existing inequalities. These observations emerge primarily from fieldwork, but also support, challenge and nuance existing literature on Dhaka, Bangladesh (chapter four), and other rapidly urbanising towns and cities across the Global South (chapter two).

Figure 9.1: Constraints to Transformative Collective Action



(Author's Own 2017)

9.2.1. Patron-Centric State

Whilst acknowledging that 'the state' is highly diverse and internally fragmented (Mitlin 2006; Bawa 2011; Zimmer 2011, chapter two), fieldwork and existing literature suggests that the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) is largely patron-centric. In other words, existing governance configurations prioritise the interests of political patrons, and promote exploitative political relationships, over the wellbeing of *bustee* residents. Three processes, highlighted below, were found to have particular implications for transformative collective action.

a) *Neglect of the Urban Poor*

Whilst there are positive shifts in discourse, especially as regards service provision (outlined in chapter four), fieldwork supports the notion that the urban poor in Dhaka

continue to be neglected and misrepresented in government policy and practice (Banks et al 2011). Broadly speaking, this relates to: embedded and pervasive rural bias (leading to lack of investment in utility agencies, limited funds for ward councillors, inadequate urbanisation and urban poverty policy and planning); lack of incentives to respond to urban electorate (especially among councillors, MPs and lower-level government staff with vested interests e.g. house ownership, land speculation and vote bank); negative views about the urban poor (misconceived as criminals, temporary migrants or ‘unclean’); and an expectation that the best way to address urban poverty is to reduce rural poverty and deter migration. This neglect has three important implications for collective action.

Firstly, fieldwork demonstrates that the absence of ‘formal’ service providers (with the exception of DWASA) has led to a ‘messy’ multiplicity of service providers (i.e. formal/informal, legal/illegal, public/private) at the settlement level, supporting Jaglin’s (2014) conceptualisation of ‘service delivery configurations’ (chapter two). Government agencies do not have the human and financial resources (or incentives) to provide adequate services to Dhaka’s *bustee* dwellers. As key partners, NGO-initiated CBOs play an important role in this context, yet remain largely practical and short-term in nature, with limited opportunity to up-scale and/or address more pressing concerns, such as land tenure, housing, financial or social security (outlined in chapter five). The ‘proliferation’ of WASH NGOs and their associated CBOs has also led to increased competition and lack of coordination at the settlement and citywide level (chapters six and seven). This relates to the reduction of democratic space, NGO paternalism and donor dependency noted below.

Secondly, evictions of *bustees* on public land, and absence of state regulation and rehabilitation has led to a rise of settlements on private or disputed land (chapter four). Most residents in these areas are tenants. Fieldwork suggests that tenants are less likely to act collectively, as they are often living in more precarious conditions (having to pay monthly rent and bills), are not approached by NGOs, and landlords, house owners and managers largely mediate outside intervention and services. This was the case in all field sites (chapters seven and eight). Access to land and services is also highly politicised in Dhaka, meaning that collective action (at scale) to demand land and housing, may face resistance from powerful (and wealthy) real estate actors and politicians, who want to appropriate valuable land. As indicated in section 9.1, fear of eviction among residents could also undermine participation in NGO WASH projects.

Thirdly, fieldwork supports existing literature that suggests the absence of formal governance mechanisms in Dhaka's *bustees* has led to 'informal' governance configurations (e.g. Banks 2008; 2012; 2015, Hossain 2013, chapter four). In this context, local political leaders and elders control the settlement via *bustee* committees, *samity*s and ruling party sub-wings (chapters five and eight). However, fieldwork also nuances our understanding, by documenting (in detail) how the leaders provide and mediate services. The role of the multipurpose *samity*s is particularly noteworthy, as the leaders of these organisations use the formal entity to apply for legal water, gas, electricity connections and holding numbers – a relatively undocumented process. Although leaders often spend considerable time and resources to obtain services, the costs are high (that few can bear), and the intended benefits are not widely shared. The reasons for this are elaborated below, and in section 9.2.3.

b) Entrenched Patronage

Fieldwork suggests that certain political figures (especially MPs and ward councillors) are directly or indirectly involved in governance in Dhaka's *bustees*, often benefiting from votes and rent from low-income housing (see chapters five and eight). For example, in Site 1, the political setting appeared to be one of fear and intimidation, where the local MP exerted control over the area (especially housing and land development) via various middlemen and relatives. CBOs operating in the settlement quickly became politicised, as with the NGO Forum/WSUP CBO (chapter seven). In Sites 2 and 3, residents were frequently mobilised by local political leaders to attend Awami League (AL) rallies in other parts of the city. Whilst some actively (and willingly) participated, others were forced or coerced against their will. These same leaders were involved in all CBOs, and had direct links with the MP and ward councillors, who provided protection and leverage for services.

Whilst these relations are not always exploitative, such 'patronage politics' (Mahmud et al 2008, chapter four) has potentially negative consequences for transformative collective action. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, many residents (especially tenants) rely upon local political leaders or 'brokers' affiliated with patrons, for services, protection and 'gifts'. They are less likely or able, therefore, to challenge these relations via collective action (see also section 9.2.3. on 'entrenched clientelism'). Secondly, local political leaders are often in a better financial condition, and have higher social

status as a result of their connections to patrons, so are also less likely to challenge these relationships (chapter eight).

c) Reduction of Democratic Space

Fieldwork supports the claim in chapter four that Bangladesh is becoming a one-party state (dominated by AL), resulting in the loss of democratic space, de-politicisation and de-radicalisation of civil society (Hassan 2013; Lewis 2017; ESID 2017). This has two important implications for transformative collective action. Firstly, many NGOs fear that if they are seen to act ‘against’ state interests, they are at risk of losing their NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) registration and associated donor funding. After the Proshika crisis, many NGOs shifted away from ‘street fighting’ to closed-door ‘table negotiations’ with bureaucrats and officials, as with Shelter for the Poor and the Coalition for Urban Poor (CUP) (chapter six). Whilst this strategy could, in theory, open spaces of engagement (as with SDI and OPP), there is little evidence that this results in any tangible change for Dhaka’s *bustee* residents. Secondly, collective action to demand rights to services, shelter, land and recognition at scale is actively blocked and/or faces numerous barriers. For example, attempts to up-scale CBOs and form national slum dwellers federations by UPPRP and DSK have largely stalled. In turn, the three citywide urban poor groups – BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS – face numerous logistical, political and financial constraints (elaborated in Box 6.1). These complexities are further elaborated below.

9.2.2 Risk-Averse and Market-Oriented Development Sector

The ‘development sector’ refers here to NGOs and donors working (via CBOs) in Dhaka’s *bustees*. I refer to sector to emphasise how practices in Dhaka reflect broader development discourse, policy and practice, outlined in chapter two. Three interrelated processes are found to constrain transformative collective action.

a) Dominance of MCR, MFI and Service Delivery

Fieldwork supports existing evidence (e.g. Devine 2006; Rahman 2006, chapter four) that a combination of donor preferences (for cost-recovery, sustainability etc) and hostile political environment (noted above), have resulted in a shift from mobilisation to MFI and service delivery in Bangladesh. However, fieldwork also nuances this argument, by focusing on the implications of these broader trends for urban NGOs and CBOs operating in Dhaka (chapter six). Whilst enabling the urban poor to improve their

lives, it is argued that the dominance of MCR, MFIs and service delivery in Dhaka's *bustees* constrains alternative forms of organisation (around livelihoods, land and housing etc). For example, the success of SDI rests in its savings groups, bound by trust and solidarity. The regular act of group saving, and interaction with other savers empowers women (and men) to address priorities in their communities (via profiling, enumeration and pilot projects – see Box 2.2). On the contrary, MCR and MFI is largely transactional and individualistic, involving MFI fieldworkers collecting money house to house, via 'hubs' or the savers depositing money at the office. Respondents in all field sites reported high levels of dependence on MFIs, and that they had accumulated considerable debt. In Site 1, one NGO (Tarango) set up a women's savings group, but faced ongoing resistance and hostility from MFI fieldworkers (chapter seven). Even NGOs committed to water, sanitation provision and housing advocacy (like DSK) are increasingly expanding their MFI/MCR programmes. Whilst this may provide NGOs with sustainability, it does not necessarily challenge underlying inequalities, and can exacerbate insecurity for some *bustee* residents (elaborated in section 9.2.3).

b) NGO Paternalism and Donor Dependency

Fieldwork indicates that NGOs play a critically important role in water and sanitation provision in Dhaka's *bustees* (chapter six). However, they operate in a sector based on cost-recovery and tokenistic participation. WASH, as an externally-driven agenda, results in practical, short-term forms of collective action, whereby CBOs are designed to monitor, repair, deliver and pay for services. They are not designed to be critical change makers. Whilst there are some exceptions, and NGOs (like DSK) vary in their approach, these CBOs face numerous constraints to up-scaling and sustainability (chapter seven) as a result of their inherent structure. This was particularly evident in Sites 1 and 2, where user CBOs would sustain (albeit to a limited extent) but central CBOs would dissolve rapidly post-project. Paternalism towards CBOs was also noted among some smaller NGOs, who regarded themselves as central to CBO formation (chapter six). Whilst earlier observations highlight how some NGOs act as 'patrons' towards their beneficiaries in rural MFI projects (e.g. Devine 2003; Feldman 2003, chapter four), fieldwork suggests that this is also the case with NGOs involved in water and sanitation provision in Dhaka's *bustees*. This could lead to dependency and rapid demise of CBOs once NGO support is withdrawn (as seen in Sites 1 and 2).

A second related point emerging from fieldwork is that NGOs – as well as government agencies (like DWASA) – rely heavily on donor funds to run their activities. This means they must often adhere to strict donor criteria that favours cost-recovery, lacks flexibility, pursues rapid ‘results’ and does not necessarily address the priorities of *bustee* residents. This supports Habib’s (2009) observation in chapter four that NGOs and donors rarely meet the needs of the urban poor in Dhaka. However, fieldwork also reveals some exceptions to this trend. For example, the long-term partnership between DSK, WaterAid Bangladesh (WAB) and UNICEF led to greater flexibility, donor commitment and retention of staff, with numerous benefits. This demonstrates that NGOs (and donors) differ in their approach, and cannot be regarded as a homogeneous group. However, DSK and WAB staff also noted numerous challenges associated with short-term project funding, and barriers to building citywide urban poor coalitions (chapter seven). Fieldwork indicates that even more ‘progressive’ NGOs like DSK or WAB are constrained by the broader processes of urban governance noted above (chapter six).

c) Priority Mismatch

Fieldwork suggests that the means/ends of collective action is particularly unclear regarding water and sanitation, highlighting the mismatch between NGO and donor WASH agendas, based on discourses around ‘ownership, ‘participation’, sustainability’, and the priorities of *bustee* residents. Whilst water was a priority in all field sites, permanent housing, land tenure, social and financial insecurity were the most pressing concerns (chapter five). This was the case for ‘general’ residents and local leaders, though the latter were more strategic in their fight to obtain land and housing rights (chapter eight). Identification of these priorities was central to understanding why certain people act collectively, around certain issues (and not necessarily others).

Whilst collective action around water and sanitation has been found to have transformative potential elsewhere (as with OPP, Box 2.3), no such evidence was found during fieldwork. In this context, WASH CBOs played a largely practical role (as in Sites 1 and 2) and/or local leaders used water to address their own priorities (as in Site 3). Tenure insecurity also undermined efforts to improve services and living conditions at the settlement level. Despite repeated pleas from residents in Sites 1 and 2, NGOs and donors stated that they do not work on housing and land as it is ‘not in their mandate’, ‘too political’ or ‘too risky’ (chapters six and seven). NGOs and donors are unlikely,

therefore, to partake in policy campaigns or mobilise the urban poor around such contentious issues. This relates to the lack of democratic space, de-politicisation and de-radicalisation of civil society, as well as broader donor agendas outlined above.

9.2.3. Clientelistic Society

The constraints to transformative collective action associated with the state and development sector reflect broader shifts at the global, national and citywide level. This section focuses on how these processes are interpreted (and re-worked) at the settlement level. This is important, because – as indicated in section 9.1 – an array of interconnected factors (and actors) mediate collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*.

a) Political Fragmentation

Existing literature (e.g. Banks 2015, chapter four) notes how a shift in national government (from BNP to AL, or AL to BNP) greatly affects the composition of politically-aligned committees at the settlement level. Whilst *bustee* committees, *samity*s and NGO groups were indeed found to have political affiliations in the three field sites, nuanced interpretation is required in a context where AL has been in power since 2009, and largely quashed political opposition.

Whilst BNP's power is dwindling at the national level, fieldwork suggests that many *bustee* residents remain loyal. This came at a cost, however, as anyone associated with the opposition party (or parties), was regularly harassed by ruling party supporters who had consolidated their power within (and beyond) the settlement. For example, in Site 2, those perceived to support BNP were often accused in false court cases, sidelined or 'dropped' from CBOs (see chapters six and seven). Many BNP supporters did not talk openly about their political preferences, for fear of repercussions. Divisive two-party politics remained, therefore, very much alive at the settlement level. Beyond this, fragmentation within political groups (as with the AL *Bastu Hara* sub-wing, youth-wing and central committee in Site 2) fuelled mistrust, conflict and resulted in the frequent break-down and/or reorganisation of collective groups. This also related to divisions between 'old' and 'new' settlers, and 'old and young' leaders. There were also cases where supporters of different political parties were involved in the same collective groups, challenging the notion that political affiliation alone determines participation (chapter eight, see also section 9.1.1).

b) Entrenched Clientelism

Patron-clientelism has been widely documented in Dhaka's *bustees* (e.g. Wood 2000; 2003; Banks 2008; 2012; 2015; Hackenbroch and Hossain 2012; Hossain 2013, chapters two and four). Fieldwork supports and nuances these observations, by suggesting that clientelism is perpetuated at the household and settlement level by the daily land tenure, housing, financial, health and social insecurity that *bustee* residents (especially tenants) face. This insecurity was evident in all field sites, but especially Site 3, where residents faced regular illness due to the poor living environment, water shortages, electricity cuts, financial crises, eviction and police harassment. This insecurity resulted in a sense of powerlessness (*'shakti nei'*) and fatalism among residents, supporting Wood's (2003) notion of a 'Faustian bargain' (chapter two). In this context, many relied upon political patrons on the 'upper side' (i.e. middle-class housing), who would provide advice, protection and 'tips'. Local leaders and house owners – often with the most direct contact to patrons – would act as 'brokers', resolving household-related problems, providing and mediating services.

Clientelism and daily insecurity was also found to undermine collective solidarity amongst residents in all field sites, especially the poorest, who simply did not have the time, resources, networks or interest to challenge exploitative relations. The risk of losing this support often far outweighed potential benefits. This supports existing literature that suggests clientelism works against collective action (e.g. Mahmud 2002; Devine 2006; De Wit and Berner 2009; Mitlin 2014, chapter two). However – as noted in section 9.1 – fieldwork also suggests that certain individuals can and do act collectively, indicating that patron-client relations and collective action can, in fact, form recursive relationships (Auyero et al 2009; Bénit-Gbaffou 2011). This is demonstrated by the *bustee* committees and *samity*s in Sites 2 and 3.

c) Leader-Centred Networks

Finally, fieldwork suggests that there are some individuals in Dhaka's *bustees* who actively use and/or manipulate patron-client relations, to their own benefit. Those most able to do this are male, politically-affiliated leaders and those with relative financial stability (e.g. house and business owners). While local leaders play an important role in security, arbitration, housing and service provision, certain individuals form and use collective groups, to access resources and consolidate their power in the settlement. In Sites 2 and 3, for example, a core group of 7-10 leaders set the agenda and mediated the

flow of resources, information and services. As indicated in section 9.1, and in chapter eight, these ‘leader-centred networks’ (De Wit and Berner 2009) underpinned all collective activity. Even though the leaders acted collectively to resolve certain issues, they operated via a strong vertical hierarchy and relatively ‘closed regulatory space’ (Hossain 2013) that few could enter or exit. However, as indicated in section 9.2.1, local leaders were also ‘trapped’ in exploitative relations with patrons, who used them to maintain political control over *bustee* residents (e.g. vote bank, mobilisation for political rallies etc). These dynamics are further elaborated in section 9.3.

9.3. Power and Urban Governance

The three spheres and associated processes noted above are deeply interconnected, and involve an array of actors, operating at multiple scales. Neglect of the urban poor among politicians, policy makers and bureaucrats at the national scale, for example, may explain (in part) the entrenched patronage and clientelism observed between political patrons, local leaders and ‘general’ residents at the citywide and settlement level. In turn, donor incentives for sustainability and cost-recovery at the global scale, and reduction of democratic space at the national, may explain the rise in MFI/MCR, service delivery NGOs and apparent mismatch between the WASH agenda and priorities of residents at the settlement level. It becomes increasingly clear that the interactions between different actors within and across these spheres are highly unequal. Certain actors are more powerful, and thus able to assert their agendas, than others. The section below re-engages with Bourdieu’s (1986; 1998) ‘fields’ to understand these unequal power dynamics, and the implications for transformative collective action, in greater depth.

As indicated in chapter two, one existing critique of (normative and descriptive) governance literature is that it fails to give sufficient weight to unequal power relations (Zimmer 2011). To address this gap, Zimmer and Sakdapolrak (2012) use Bourdieu’s notion of ‘fields’ to re-introduce power into the debate. To recap, Bourdieu (1986; 1998), argues that power is a capital that certain actors are endowed with, enabling them to dominate others within a ‘field’ (i.e. structured arena of relations). The more capitals actors have, the more powerful they are (*ibid*). Powerful actors, endowed with the largest volume of capital are thus more able to set the rules that determine the functioning of the field (in this case governance), and pursue their interests (Blundo and Le Meur 2008; Zimmer and Sakdapolrak 2012). In line with these debates, I also argue that ‘field’ is a useful analytical tool to understand the constraints to transformative

collective action observed in Dhaka. The focus on ‘powerful actors’ also enables us to look beyond rigid categorisations of ‘the state’, ‘development sector’ or ‘society’, to the relationships between multiple actors, at multiple scales. Two key points are highlighted.

Firstly, as indicated in section 9.1.2, certain interconnected individuals (i.e. male, politically-affiliated leaders and house owners), are more able to act collectively at the settlement level. Applying Bourdieu’s notion of field’s, one could argue that these actors are more able to act, because they are endowed with higher levels of capitals (or power), than ‘general’ residents. For example, political capital from their closer relation to MPs and ward councillors; social capital from relationships with relatively powerful kin, friends and family, and economic capital from business, home ownership (i.e. rent), other assets and ‘tips’. However, fieldwork also suggests that these actors are constrained within structured relationships or vertical patterns of authority with external political patrons, who are themselves endowed with higher levels of capital. Within this context, collective action can (and does) occur, but does not necessarily challenge exploitative relationships (for reasons given in sections 9.2.1 and 9.2.3).

Secondly, whilst political patrons play a key role in mediating collective action, section 9.2 demonstrates that they are just one, among an array of ‘powerful’ actors within urban governance. One can therefore ask – who else holds power in this context? Fieldwork and existing literature (noted above) indicates that other ‘powerful’ actors in urban governance include; policy makers, lower-level government officials (e.g. DWASA), donors, private landlords and MFIs. The actions (or inactions) of these different actors constrains transformative collective action, for example, via the legitimisation of certain forms of collective action over others, and/or restriction of alternative forms. The power that some actors (e.g. patrons and policy makers) have may also actively organise the strategic interests of *bustee* residents out of formal politics and policy discourse (Bourdieu 1991; Mosse 2010).

In summary, fieldwork suggests these urban governance configurations are the most influential factor affecting collective action in Dhaka’s *bustees*. The relatively long time-scale of exploitative patron-client relations over *bustee* dwellers, and the lack of collective efforts to challenge such structures, also reveals how deeply (and historically) entrenched these power relations are. However, it is also acknowledged that power is constantly contested and negotiated within the relational ‘field’ of governance

(Bourdieu 1986; 1998). Shifts in one or more spheres of governance may therefore result in more (or indeed less) opportunity for transformative collective action.

9.4. Concluding Remarks

This analysis chapter used the empirical findings to nuance existing understandings of collective action and urban governance in Dhaka's *bustees*. Section 9.1 revisited and re-worked collective action theory (RAT, SVR and RAN) that has, to date, primarily focused on rural contexts. Whilst certain collective action 'dilemmas' associated with RAT (i.e. elite capture and free riding) were evident in the field sites, RAT could not adequately explain the complexities observed. For example, participation was not solely determined by rational self-interest, but mediated by an array of relationships. Ostrom's SVR was therefore deemed of greater value to explain field observations, due to its focus on structural variables and core relations (e.g. trust, reciprocity, reputation). In particular, SVR helps us understand why certain individuals are more likely to act collectively over time. Fieldwork also revealed a range of factors – additional to SVR – at the individual, household and settlement level, that affected collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*. This demonstrates that a rigorous analysis of intra-group dynamics adds value to understanding collective action (and the constraints to collective action), in urban low-income settlements.

Comparison of the factors affecting CBO type, participation, function and outcomes also revealed an overarching finding – that participation and outcomes are similar regardless of CBO type. This led to the acknowledgement that, rather than bounded groups of 'rational' actors, CBOs are actually nodes of interconnected individuals (i.e. male, politically-affiliated local leaders and house owners), who are more able to act collectively and access (perceived or actual) benefits. Focusing on the relationships and networks between these actors (and their patrons) was therefore deemed of greater value, to understand not only why certain people are more likely to act, but how they are connected, and what the implications are for equity and sustainability. RAN was thus deemed a more appropriate theoretical approach.

Section 9.2 argued that, though useful, RAN does not readily explain why certain leaders dominate, why certain forms of collective action emerge, and whether collective action challenges and/or reinforces existing power inequalities. To answer these questions, the focus returned to the instrumental value of collective action, and practical and/or strategic distinction identified in chapter two. Fieldwork suggests that practical

forms of collective action dominate in Dhaka, and where strategic (or a combination of both) forms exist, the benefits are not widely shared. In all cases, transformative collective action is thus restricted. It was argued that this is due to the unequal interaction of actors between (and within) three spheres of urban governance. Section 9.3 re-introduced Bourdieu's (1986; 1998) notion of 'fields' to understand these unequal power dynamics in greater depth. Fieldwork suggests that male, politically-affiliated leaders and house owners are endowed with more capitals (and thus more power), than others, explaining their dominant role in collective action at the settlement level. However, these actors are also constrained within structured relationships with political patrons outside of the settlement. Finally, a number of 'powerful' actors were identified within urban governance, whose actions (or inactions) constrain transformative collective action. The section concluded with the recognition that urban governance is the most influential factor affecting collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*. However, it is also understood to be dynamic, and open to contestation. Chapter ten elaborates on potential ways forward, and concludes the thesis with reflections on the theoretical, methodological and empirical implications of the research.

10. Conclusion

This thesis presented a critical examination of collective action, service provision and urban governance in Dhaka, Bangladesh, where over five million people live in low-income, informal settlements (*bustees*) with limited access to basic services, secure land tenure and political voice. The thesis began with a critical overview of existing collective action theory, the instrumental value of collective action in relation to service provision, and broader context in which collective action is enabled and/or constrained. In doing so, the thesis moved beyond existing theory that has so far focused primarily on rural contexts, and deepened our understanding of collective action in urban low-income settlements. Combining insights from existing literature and scoping trips, an analytical framework for collective action was proposed in chapter three to use as a heuristic tool for data collection and analysis. Chapter three also outlined the qualitative methodology – including case studies and ethnographic enquiry – applied in the field. Chapter four provided essential context on politics, urban governance and service provision in Bangladesh, and specifically Dhaka's *bustees*. This was followed by four empirical chapters (five to eight) outlining the rise and role of NGO and leader-initiated CBOs in the three field sites. Chapter nine then drew comparatively upon the empirical evidence to critically re-engage with the literature, and nuance our understanding of collective action.

This chapter summarises the theoretical, methodological and empirical implications of the research. The chapter is divided into three main sections. Section 10.1 answers the research questions identified from the literature. Section 10.2 focuses on potential actions that actors within the three spheres of urban governance (i.e. 'state', 'development sector' and 'society') could take, to re-work urban governance for more transformative change. Section 10.3 then elaborates on the extent to which observations in Dhaka have relevance for other rapidly urbanising contexts, and identifies avenues for future research.

10.1. Answering the Research Questions

This section answers the research questions by drawing upon the literature and empirical evidence. The overarching research question asked:

How is collective action understood in relation to service provision in low-income settlements of the Global South, and what does in-depth analysis of CBOs in Dhaka's *bustees* tell us about the relationship between collective action, service provision and urban governance?

In answering this question, the following provides a brief summary of key debates identified in the literature, before focusing on how findings from Dhaka nuance our understanding. As indicated in chapter two, collective action is one, among an array of strategies, deployed by the urban poor to address their needs and priorities. Collective action can take multiple forms, from sporadic protest to group action and sustained social movements. A review of the literature revealed that collective action is an effective way in which to address service deprivation (Walton 1998; Scott 2015). When taken to scale, collective action also has emancipatory potential, as part of a broader politics of 'redistribution, recognition and representation' (Fraser 1997; 2005). These observations are based upon a body of literature that documents the struggles of Grassroots Organisations (GROs), Membership Based Organisations of the Poor (MBOPs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and urban social movements within and across Africa, Asia and Latin America – especially with the SDI network.

Whilst important, it is also acknowledged that the urban poor do not (and sometimes cannot) simply 'act collectively' (Thorpe et al 2005; Mitlin 2006; Hickey 2006; De Wit and Berner 2009; Rahman et al 2014). Rather, there are an array of interlocking economic, social, cultural, political and environmental factors, disaggregated (unequally) according to age, gender, ethnicity, disability, income level and political affiliation that can deter and/or block participation within, and effectiveness of, collective action. In particular, extensive literature on patron-clientelism demonstrates how many living in low-income settlements often rely on strong, vertical relationships with patrons and brokers to meet their daily needs. Patron-client networks are understood to undermine collective endeavours (Devine 2006). However, there is also evidence that patronage and collective action can establish recursive relationships (Auyero et al 2009; Bénit-Gbaffou 2011). The latter conceptualisation was the most relevant for this thesis, demonstrated in particular, by the formation of *bustee* committees and *samitys*.

A further debate identified within the literature is the extent to which collective action is functional and/or transformatory. In other words, does collective action among the

urban poor reinforce and/or challenge exploitative power relations? This is a particularly important question in relation to the so-called ‘co-option’ of participatory and ‘citizen-led’ approaches to urban development in recent decades (chapter two). For some, collective action among the urban poor, especially that which is instigated by external actors (e.g. NGOs and donors) is simply a cost-saving initiative, whereby government responsibility for service provision and maintenance is ‘contracted out’ to collective groups (i.e. CBOs), restricting transformative potential (Mohan and Stokke 2000; Davis 2006; Kyessi 2011; Das 2015). For others, the urban poor can actively use and/or create opportunities to re-work governance ‘from below’ (as with SDI and OPP), by co-producing services and entering into negotiations with diverse state and non-state actors (Hickey and Mohan 2004; Mitlin 2004; Baiocchi et al 2011). As noted in chapter two, however, citizen-led collective action cannot be regarded in isolation from ‘the state’, ‘market’ or ‘politics itself’ (Somers 1995; White 1999; Pacione 2005; Bebbington et al 2008; Eyben et al 2008; Rooy 2008; Roy 2009; Hickey 2009; Makuwira 2014; Raman et al 2016). Taking note of these debates, collective action was divided into two main forms, drawing on Molyneux (1985) and Moser’s (1989) distinction; practical (i.e. addressing immediate needs) and strategic (i.e. addressing interests and priorities). Collective action was also understood to be both practical and strategic (as demonstrated by OPP). The extent to which practical and/or strategic forms can lead to transformative outcomes required further elaboration in the Dhaka context.

In order to deepen our understanding of collective action, service provision and urban governance in urban low-income settlements, this thesis used CBOs as a lens to explore collective action in Dhaka’s *bustees*. Whilst this had limitations (elaborated in chapter three), it allowed for identification and analysis of intra-group dynamics, the instrumental value of collective action, and broader urban governance context that enables and/or constrains certain forms of collective action – key themes identified in the literature. Drawing upon existing literature (e.g. Crowley et al 2007) and preliminary field observations, CBOs were disaggregated into two main types (externally or NGO-initiated and internally or leader-initiated) and sub-types (formal and/or informal), with three sub-themes; participation (leadership and membership), function (activities and responsibilities) and outcomes (equity and sustainability). Comparison of CBOs across (and within) three field sites in Dhaka – selected according to land tenure, occupancy type and level of WASH NGO/CBO activity – led to the

identification of key overlapping patterns and trends. The following three sub-questions elaborate on these patterns in greater depth.

- I. To what extent has the form and nature of urban governance influenced service provision in Dhaka's *bustees*, and – subsequently – the type and intensity of CBO activity in the sector?

A key finding of this thesis was that the type and intensity of CBO activity in the service sector in Dhaka cannot be regarded in isolation from broader shifts in urban governance – specifically Government of Bangladesh (GoB), NGO and donor relations. In chapter six, the story of Proshika, CUP and the three citywide urban poor groups (BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS) – told by the leaders themselves – was used to demonstrate how the shifting form and nature of urban governance affected CBO activity at the settlement and citywide level. Fieldwork revealed that some NGOs shifted their activities from mobilisation to service delivery, to avoid contestation with the state. This explained, in part, the rise of NGOs and their associated CBOs in service delivery. Chapter six used the case of one leading urban NGO (DSK) to explore the role of NGO-initiated CBOs in obtaining, maintaining and managing water and sanitation at the settlement level. Particular emphasis was placed on the legislative change in Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority's (DWASA's) Citizen Charter in 2007, which enabled CBOs to apply for legal water connections. It was argued that since 2007, numerous NGOs have adopted the 'DSK model' to supply water and sanitation to *bustees*, including Sites 1 and 2 (chapters six and seven). This was important in explaining the proliferation of NGO-initiated CBOs at the settlement level.

Whilst NGO-initiated CBOs have largely replaced dependence on 'illegal' vendors, other actors were still found to mediate services at the settlement level, especially where NGOs did not operate (e.g. Site 3). In the latter context, local leaders in the *bustee* committee provided services 'illegally' but also (at the time of fieldwork) used the formal entity of the *samity* to apply for legal services – a relatively undocumented process. Despite their efforts, fieldwork suggested that *samity* leaders face numerous barriers to obtaining legal services, as they operate outside of the dominant NGO and donor framework. NGOs and their associated CBOs are regarded as 'legitimate' partners, central to meeting GoB sector goals (chapter four). *Samity*s, on the other hand,

mainly consisted of local political leaders, seeking legal connections to stake claim on the land – their main priority.

- II. How do (externally and internally-initiated) CBOs form, who participates and why, what are their main functions and outcomes for leaders, members and the wider community in relation to potable water and sanitation?

Comparison of CBO type, participation, function and outcomes revealed important overlapping patterns and trends within and between the field sites. For example, fieldwork in Sites 1 and 2, supported by Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and observations across Dhaka, suggested that NGO-initiated CBOs form in very similar ways, via a common ‘10-step’ WASH project model (chapter six). This model did vary slightly, however, according to specific context, project time-frame, NGO and donor approach, funding and human resource capacity, DNCC and DWASA criteria. For example, DSK placed great emphasis on capacity building, whilst World Vision ran their projects over 15 years and encouraged CBO registration (chapter seven). Leader-initiated CBOs differed greatly in their formation. For example, whilst informal *bustee* committees emerged after a key event (e.g. eviction or election) and persisted in a loose form, formal *samitys* had to (in theory) abide by strict criteria from the Department of Cooperatives (DoC). The reality observed was somewhat different, however, with the *samitys* in Sites 2 and 3 holding irregular meetings, functioning at low capacity and having ongoing leadership conflicts. DoC staff also had minimal financial and human resource capacity to monitor and regulate activities, even though they were suspicious that these *samitys* formed to ‘grab the land’ (chapter eight).

Whilst NGO staff emphasised ‘inclusive’ participation via elections (targeting women, elderly, disabled and extreme poor residents), no such requirements existed for leader-initiated CBOs, especially informal *bustee* committees. These groups were often male-led and male-dominated, with only a few female members (often the wives of leaders). There was also an apparent mismatch between NGO requirements, and the reality observed. For example, many women participated in NGO-initiated CBOs, but few were in core leadership positions (i.e. as president, vice-president, secretary). Fieldwork suggested that this relates to the unequal division of labour (within the household, settlement and CBOs), but also the dominance of male leaders, who often ‘dropped’ or pushed out female CBO leaders (chapter seven). There were also cases where NGOs

(such as WSUP in Site 1) prioritised rapid CBO formation over inclusivity. Whilst this would lead to the creation of a ‘functional’ CBO (to pay DWASA bills etc), this had negative implications for women’s empowerment and participation, as demonstrated by P70 being side-lined in the central WASH CBO (chapter seven). There were notable exceptions however, with vocal female leaders emerging from, and involved in, NGO, donor projects (e.g. ARBAN in Site 1 and UPPR in Site 2) and *samity*s (e.g. *samity* No. 4 in Site 2). This demonstrated the positive impact of leadership training and capacity building in NGO projects, but also reflected existing hierarchies within the settlement, with some women (i.e. house, business owners and political campaigners) more able to participate than others (i.e. widows, single mothers and extreme poor). Overall, gender emerges as an important theme, especially in relation to CBO participation.

CBO function varied greatly between (and within) the different types. Fieldwork revealed that NGO-initiated CBOs are often divided into user and central groups. Whilst the former played a key role in managing, maintaining and collecting bills for specific water points and sanitation chambers, the latter oversaw activities across the settlement, and negotiated with government agencies (e.g. DWASA) for services. Central CBO leaders were also responsible for procuring materials and collecting co-sharing fees. Leader-initiated CBOs also provided and mediated services, but often at a higher cost and lower quality. For example, *bustee* committee leaders provided ‘illegal’ water connections to other house owners for a one-off payment or monthly fee. *Samity*s applied for ‘legal’ services, but this was only available to those who could pay. Many committee and *samity* leaders acted as ‘brokers’, mediating between lower-level government officials and *bustee* residents (chapters five and eight). In all CBO types, responsibilities were unevenly shared between leaders and members, according to gender and position (i.e. as president, vice president, secretary). For example, secretaries were found to play a particularly prominent role in negotiating for services. The reasons for this were unclear, but related to; personal motivation, financial investments and existing contacts (i.e. to MP, ward councillors). The secretaries were often regarded with suspicion by other leaders, members and non-members because of their active role and shifting political affiliations (chapter eight).

In terms of outcomes, NGO-initiated CBOs brought numerous benefits for leaders, members and the wider community (e.g. improved access to water, sanitation facilities, and hygienic living environment). However, leaders were often accused of misusing

funds and infrastructure. This was especially the case with the World Vision/HFHB CBO in Site 2, but was mentioned in relation to all WASH CBOs in Sites 1 and 2 (chapter seven). Central CBOs were found to dissolve soon after project completion, whilst (some) user CBOs sustained. This greatly depended on the capacity of CBO members to pay for repairs (chapter seven). Leader-initiated CBOs also played a key role in obtaining water connections, and constructing sanitation facilities, but – as indicated above – the benefits were largely confined to a small group of leaders and house owners. These CBOs appeared to sustain over time, but underwent frequent leadership contests, re-organisation and periods of inactivity. The level of mistrust and suspicion of CBO leaders by local residents across all field sites was notable, and undermined collective solidarity. Overarching patterns and trends identified between and within the CBO types, and implications for collective action, are elaborated below.

III. Does in-depth analysis of CBOs reinforce and/or challenge existing collective action theory?

In-depth analysis of CBOs in Dhaka reinforces, challenges and nuances existing collective action theory that has (with some notable exceptions), largely centred on rural contexts. Fieldwork also addressed a clear empirical gap, providing detailed accounts of how CBOs operate in low-income settlements in Dhaka. As indicated in chapter nine, Rational Actor Theory (RAT) (e.g. Olson 1965; 1971) and Structural Variables and Relationships (SVR) (e.g. Ostrom 2005; 2009; 2010) provided useful insights for understanding intra-group dynamics, especially CBO participation. However, focusing on the actions and decisions of ‘rational’ individuals alone was inadequate, especially in a context where a range of individual, household and settlement level factors affect collective action (chapter nine).

One key finding emerged from comparative analysis of these factors with CBO typology – that participation and outcomes were similar, regardless of CBO type. This was based on the observation that male, politically-affiliated leaders and house owners participated in (and often led) all CBO types across the field sites, with implications for equity and sustainability. This demonstrated that, rather than bounded groups, CBOs are better understood as nodes of interconnected individuals who take on different roles, and have connections both within and outside the settlement. This challenges static conceptualisations of ‘externally’ or ‘internally-initiated’; ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ CBOs

(chapter three), as the actions of these leaders relate to multiple actors, across multiple scales. Based on this finding, Relational Actors and Networks (RAN) (e.g. Nicholls 2008; Hossain 2013) was identified as a more appropriate theoretical approach to understand who participates, how these individuals are connected, and the wider implications for collective action and service provision (chapter nine).

Though useful, RAN was also not sufficient to explain why certain leaders dominate, why certain forms of collective action emerge and sustain (and others do not), and whether collective action challenges and/or reinforces existing power inequalities – key debates in the literature. The answers required critical re-engagement with the instrumental value of collective action, and practical and/or strategic distinction introduced in chapter two. Analysis suggested that collective action in Dhaka's *bustees* is largely practical in nature, due to the dominance of the NGO WASH model in service delivery. When it was more strategic (or both practical and strategic), the benefits (if any) were not widely shared. In all cases, transformative collective action was thus restricted. The reasons for this were complex, but related to the unequal interaction between actors in three spheres of urban governance: 1) patron-centric state; 2) risk-averse and market-oriented development sector; and 3) clientelistic society.

These existing governance configurations were found to constrain transformative collective action by enabling practical forms with limited strategic potential, and/or enabling strategic (or both) forms that reinforce, rather than challenge power inequalities. The final part of chapter nine used Bourdieu's (1986; 1998) notion of 'fields' to better understand the unequal power relations between different actors of urban governance. It was argued that certain actors are endowed with higher levels of capital or power than others, and as such, can shape the functioning of the field (i.e. governance). Particularly 'powerful' actors identified within urban governance included: political patrons (e.g. MPs, ward councillors), policy makers, lower-level government officials (e.g. DWASA), donors, private landlords and MFIs. Section 10.2 outlines some potential ways forward in this context.

10.2. Towards Transformative Collective Action

Dhaka (and Bangladesh) is undergoing rapid social, spatial, economic and political change. On the one hand, the urban poor are increasingly recognised in national discourse on water and sanitation, and government agencies (especially DWASA) are increasingly involved in service delivery. CBOs have partially replaced illegal vendors

as the ‘new intermediaries’ between *bustee* residents and service providers, and efforts are being made – in DWASA and among NGOs – to coordinate activities, and mainstream their programmes into DNCC. On the other hand, there is evidence that, in this ‘one-party’ context (dominated by the Awami League), avenues for popular participation, leadership competition, mobilisation and contestation are increasingly undermined. *Bustee* settlements also remain largely under the control of political patrons and politically-affiliated leaders, who have consolidated their power since 2009 (when AL was elected). In this context, the urban poor face an upward battle to demand ‘redistribution, recognition and representation’ (Fraser 1997; 2005).

Though a somewhat pessimistic analysis, collective action and urban governance are understood to be dynamic processes, in which power is under constant negotiation and contestation. In this sense, there is the potential for urban governance to be re-worked by actors within the different spheres (i.e. ‘state’, ‘development sector’ and ‘society’) outlined in chapter nine. Moving towards more transformative collective action could, therefore, involve shifting from the present context to a more responsive and accountable ‘pro-poor’ state, ‘risk-taking’ and ‘priority-oriented’ development sector and ‘equitable’ society. Appendix 10 outlines some potential actions that actors within these three spheres of urban governance (e.g. politicians, lawyers, bureaucrats, NGOs, donors, activists, urban poor groups, local leaders and other *bustee* residents) could take, to move forward in this context. These actions are based on interviews and discussions with NGO and donor staff, citywide urban poor groups, government officials and *bustee* residents themselves, all of whom were asked how the various challenges identified (during interview), could be overcome. For example, NGO staff and urban poor group leaders argued for enhanced capacity of, and coordination between BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS via funding joint projects, promoting group savings and learning exchanges across Asia (e.g. inviting policy makers from other countries). Likewise, NGOs and DWASA staff called for greater funding from central government to expand legal water coverage and build human resource capacity.

Two critical reflections are worthy of note. Firstly, these actions are, for the most part, ideal-type scenarios that do not offer quick-fix solutions, and could involve complex trade-offs, for example, between increased services at a lower cost and less participation of *bustee* residents, settlement relocation and/or loss of patrons. This is based on the understanding that policy makers and government authorities will not act without

incentives, ranging from cost-recovery, public health to donor funding conditions (as indicated with DWASA, chapter six). This is also the case for urban NGOs – many of whom rely upon donor grants and/or increasingly focus on MFI/MCR to sustain their activities (chapter seven). As noted in chapter two, one cannot also assume that *bustee* residents have the interest, time or capacity to act at scale in these changing circumstances (Cleaver 1999; Pande 2005).

Secondly, though collective action at scale (as seen with SDI and OPP) is constrained in Bangladesh, this does not mean that collective action with transformative potential is not possible. One can ask – are other types of collective action more effective in this context? For example, multipurpose *samity*s, though not necessarily equitable or inclusive, play an important role in service provision and resource mobilisation (as seen with Bhola cooperative, chapter eight). In addition, with the support of lawyers, such as Dr Kamal Hossain of NGO BLAST, claims-led groups have been relatively successful in lobbying for (temporary) tenure security and preventing unlawful evictions, whilst episodic political rallies and anti-eviction campaigns show that thousands of people can mobilise in a very short time-frame. The ‘transformative’ agenda clearly requires critical reflection. Collective action at scale is ultimately just one, among an array of potential pathways towards transformation. The extent to which this actually leads to ‘redistribution, recognition and representation’ (Fraser 1997; 2005) is also contested. The actions outlined above are thus not meant in a prescriptive sense, but to offer some potential starting points for debate in academia, policy and practice. Section 10.3 now focuses on whether observations in Dhaka have relevance for other rapidly urbanising towns and cities across the Global South, and outlines future avenues of research.

10.3. Learning from Dhaka and Directions for Future Research

Dhaka, Bangladesh was used as an ‘illustrative’ case (Flyvbjerg 2006) to deepen our understanding of collective action, service provision and urban governance in low-income settlements of the Global South. Dhaka was selected, as little was known about how Dhaka’s *busteebashees* organise collectively around services, and the extent to which this is (or could be) ‘transformative’. CBOs were used as a lens through which to explore collective action in three *bustee* settlements. Before elaborating on the relevance for, and implications of findings for other contexts, it is important to reflect on the potential limitations of generalising from the Dhaka case.

Dhaka is a highly dense city with high and rapidly rising land values (and associated conflicts), and a large proportion of privately-owned and disputed land. Whilst this is a common trend in many capital cities across Asia, Africa and Latin America, these dynamics were shown to have significant implications for collective action and service provision in Dhaka, where an array of powerful actors mediate access to land, housing and services. This differed to other parts of Bangladesh. For example, KIIs with NGO and donor staff (verified by field visits to Khulna and Narayanganj) revealed that secondary cities and smaller towns had a larger amount of public land, and that local government authorities could be more responsive to the needs of the urban poor (i.e. willing to provide legal services and allocate land) (KIIs World Bank; UPPR; Practical Action; DSK and CUP 2015). In addition, whilst fieldwork suggested up-scaling CBOs into citywide federations in Dhaka faced numerous barriers (and explains in part why international federations, such as SDI and ACHR have not engaged in Dhaka), interviews with NGO, donor staff and urban poor group leaders suggested that community mobilisation and up-scaling was ‘easier’ in secondary cities, smaller towns and rural areas. Multiple reasons were given for this, including; fewer actors involved in local governance (and thus greater levels of coordination and ability to create sustained partnerships), fewer MFIs, NGOs and ‘middlemen’ (KIIs UPPR; ACHR 2015).

Whilst findings from Dhaka (as a capital city) and Bangladesh (as a country with a unique history and political economy) are not directly comparable to other contexts, this thesis offers a theoretical, methodological and empirical contribution to understanding collective action, service provision and urban governance in other rapidly urbanising towns and cities across the Global South. Theoretically, it was argued that analysis of intra-group dynamics, the instrumental value of collective action, and broader context of urban governance, adds rigour and depth to existing collective action theory. Whilst not all existing theories are useful and/or can be applied in the urban context, a combination of collective action (i.e. RAN) and urban governance theory (i.e. descriptive and analytical) was found to be particularly useful to better understand collective action in low-income settlements.

Methodologically, though the heuristic framework (outlined in chapter three) was a simplification of a complex reality, it was central to reaching the overarching conclusions, by identifying overlapping patterns and trends. For example, the pattern that emerged when comparing CBO type, participation, function and outcomes, was that

the same individuals participate, with implications for outcomes. This led to the conclusion that CBOs are nodes of individuals, as opposed to bounded entities. Similarly, identifying patterns relating to the instrumental value of collective action (i.e. as practical and/or strategic), led to the conclusion that certain forms of collective action are enabled in Dhaka, whilst others are constrained. The final component of the framework focused on why this might be the case, identifying urban governance as the overarching influential factor affecting collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*. Based on these observations, it is argued that future studies could apply the heuristic framework to understand the interactions between intra-group dynamics, instrumental value of collective action and urban governance. It is important to stress, however, that the framework should be used as a guiding, rather than prescriptive tool, especially when studying collective action in highly dynamic contexts. This thesis also demonstrated the value of in-depth qualitative research, including case studies and ethnographic enquiry, to understand collective action at the settlement and citywide scale.

Empirically, this thesis deepens our understanding of collective action around services in Dhaka's *bustees*. However, more than this, the identification of similar governance configurations in other rapidly urbanising towns and cities, could help explain the types of, and limits to, transformative collective action elsewhere. For example; the neglect of the urban poor in urban policy and planning, entrenched patronage and clientelism, the dominant role of NGOs and CBOs in service provision and mediation, donor dependency or the rise of private slum housing. In turn, these patterns relate to the generational shifts outlined in chapter two, from 'state-led', 'market-led' to 'citizen-led' urban development. One can see how certain approaches dominate, in certain contexts. In Bangladesh for example, there is limited evidence of citizen-led approaches, compared to other countries, such as India or Thailand.

Based on these observations, and the analysis in chapter nine, three priorities for future research are identified: 1) elaborating on relationships between powerful actors in urban governance in Dhaka, and the implications for collective action at the citywide and national scale; 2) studying collective action in other towns and cities in Bangladesh and; 3) applying the heuristic framework in other contexts. Firstly, chapter nine concluded with the recognition that powerful actors within three spheres of urban governance constrain transformative collective action in Dhaka's *bustees*. This raises a further question – whose interests are promoted (in urban governance), and why? The answers

require a deeper understanding of: a) the relationships between political patrons, real estate actors, private landlords and MFIs; b) the ‘deep structures’ (Wood 2000) that underpin Bangladeshi society; and c) a historically and globally informed analysis of social, economic and political processes affecting opportunities for collective action at the citywide and national scale (Shatkin 2007). Further research is also required to understand how the ‘actions’ and reforms outlined in Appendix 10 could be achieved. This would involve deeper engagement with political elites, beyond the scope of this research.

Secondly, as indicated above, further research is required on collective action in other towns and cities across Bangladesh (e.g. Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet and Rajshahi) to understand different settlement dynamics and governance configurations. In particular, future research could elaborate on the opportunities for, and limits to up-scaling CBOs and building federations. Whilst a vast array of data was collected on BBOSC, NDBUS and NBUS, there was limited scope to expand on their activities in this thesis. Further research could build upon this, using insights from other urban centres across the country. Finally, the heuristic framework could be used to understand the potential of, and limits to, collective action in other low-income settlements across the Global South. Future research could also focus on alternative forms of collective action (such as cooperatives) and the enabling factors within urban governance where ‘successful’ cases are documented. I hope, via this thesis, I have provided some valuable insights. I would like to end here by completing the quote that opened the introductory chapter:

‘If we tie a bundle of sticks, and on the other side we keep a single stick, you will notice that breaking the single stick is very easy, but breaking the bundle of sticks is very hard...

...If we move together, we will be successful’.

(Facilitator, PDAP Grassroots Women Leaders Workshop 2015)

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Questionnaire (SSQ)

Section 1: Background Information	
Gender: Male/Female (CIRCLE)	Date: Location: Time:
Age: (CIRCLE) 16-20 years 20-30 years 30-40 years 40-50 years 50-60 years	
Household Number/Composition: (Adults, Children, Disabled, Elderly)	
Religion:	
Place of birth: Birth Registration? National I.D? Voting Card?	
Level of Education:	
Length of stay in Dhaka:	
Length of stay in this settlement:	
Housing materials:	
Do you own your house? If not, do you rent?	
How much do you pay per week/month for rent? Who do you pay rent to?	
How much are household bills? Water: Electricity/Gas: Other services (SPECIFY)	
Do you own any land? If yes, where? If not, do you rent land?	
Who owns this land?	
How do you earn money (TICK)	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily Labour e.g. construction, domestic help, market selling <input type="checkbox"/> Garment Industry <input type="checkbox"/> Rickshaw Puller <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Waste Collection, Sorting and Recycling <input type="checkbox"/> Work for Government <input type="checkbox"/> Work for Private Organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Work for NGO <input type="checkbox"/> Other...(please give examples) <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know

What other things do you do to earn money?	
How many taka do you earn on average per day? (TICK)	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 100 <input type="checkbox"/> 100-200 <input type="checkbox"/> 200-300 <input type="checkbox"/> 300-400 <input type="checkbox"/> 400-500 <input type="checkbox"/> 500-600 <input type="checkbox"/> 700-800 <input type="checkbox"/> 800-1000 <input type="checkbox"/> 1000+ <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give an estimate) <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
How many taka on average do you earn per month?	
Other than rent and bills, what are your main costs?	
Section 2: Problem Identification	
What are the biggest problems that you face living in this <i>bustee</i> (CIRCLE)	
Crime Police Eviction (Threat) Lack of job opportunity Fire Water logging	Social Unrest Politicians Water Access Lack of taka Flooding Bad health Women's Social Status
	Corruption High (increasing) rent Sanitation Access Tenure security Earthquake Vermin
Other...(Please give examples)	
Section 3: Solution Identification	
How do you try and address these problems in your community? (CIRCLE)	
On Your Own With Neighbours Landlord Local Politicians	With Friends Community Groups Police Local Strongmen CBOs
	With Family NGOs
Other...(Please give examples)	
Section 4: CBOs	
Who helps you when you face difficulty?	
Are you a member of a CBO? If yes... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which one(s)? When did you join? 	
If not... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were you a member in the past? If so, why did you leave? Would you like to join one? How can you join? 	
Finally... Have you benefited from CBO activities? How? If not, why?	
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME <i>Any Questions, Comments or Suggestions for us?</i>	

(Author's Own 2015)

Appendix 2a: List of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

KII Organisation (& No. of KIIs)	KII Role	KII Date*
NGOs		
Association for Realisation of Basic Needs (ARBAN) (x2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Manager Project Officer 	11.07.15 (R**)
Association for Slum Dwellers (ASD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director 	13.07.15 (R)
Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and Document Coordinator 	2.05.15
Coalition for Urban Poor (CUP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director 	20.01.15 (R)
Dushtha Shathya Kendra (DSK) (x3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founder and Executive Director Project Manager Community Organiser 	28.05.15 (R) 22.06.15 (R) 7.07.15 (R)
DSK-Shiree (x2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Manager Community Organiser 	28.05.15 4.08.15 (R)
Habitat for Humanity (HFHB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Officer 	27.4.15 (R)
NGO Forum (x2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Manager Community Organiser 	25.02.15 (R)
Participatory Development and Action Program (PDAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founder and Executive Director 	4.02.15 (R)
Practical Action (x2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Manager Former Programme Manager 	24.12.14 (R) 23.11.14 (R)
Proshika (x2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founder and Executive Director Urban Project Manager 	8.06.15 (R)
Shelter for the Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founder and Executive Director 	29.06.15
Tarango	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO 	4.03.15 (R)
WaterAid Bangladesh (WAB) (x3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Project Manager Social Development Officer Engineer 	15.01.15 (R)
World Vision (x3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Urban Programmes Urban WASH Project Officer Project Manager (Mirpur) 	13.01.15 12.03.15
Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineer 	24.02.15 (R)
Total: 27		
DONORS		
UK Department for International Development (DFID)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Leader for Extreme Poverty 	26.07.15
UNDP Urban Partnerships for Poverty Reduction Program (UPPRP) (x3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP Deputy Country Director International Project Manager, UPPR Former UPPR Project Manager 	17.12.14 (R) 23.02.16
UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Programmes Specialist 	5.08.15
World Bank (WB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Water and Sanitation Specialist 	13.07.15
Total: 6		
GOVERNMENT		
DNCC Slum Development Department (SDD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slum Development Officer 	21.06.15 (R)
DNCC-UPPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UPPR Town Manager 	21.06.15 (R)
Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (DWASA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior Community Officer 	7.7.15 (R)
Urban Development Directorate (UDD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Planner 	14.07.15
Department of Cooperatives (DoC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registrar 	9.08.15
Total: 5		

URBAN POOR GROUPS		
BBOSC (x5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairperson • Vice Chairperson • Thana Committee Member • Ward Committee Member • Local Committee Member 	4.06.15 (R)
NBUS (x3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President • Secretary • Cashier 	26.05.15 (R) 26.04.15 (R)
NDBUS (x4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President • Secretary • Treasurer • Assistant Secretary 	19.05.15 (R)
Total: 12		
RESEARCHERS		
Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) (x3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor of Urban Studies • Architect and Urban Planner • Office Secretary 	12.07.15
Poverty and Participation Research Centre (PPRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder and Executive Director 	2.08.15 (R)
Total: 4		
OTHER		
Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), Bangkok, Thailand (x2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACHR Board Member • Community Architect 	1.07.15 (R)
Community Architects Network (CAN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Architect 	28.06.15
Hazaribagh Women's Multipurpose Cooperative Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager 	9.06.15
Bangladesh Urban Forum (BUF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adviser 	3.08.15
Total: 5		
OVERALL TOTAL: 59		

(Author's Own 2017)

*This date is when the initial KII took place. However, I met with some KII participants on numerous occasions throughout fieldwork for informal discussions, repeat interviews and at events. This was especially the case for PDAP, DSK, BBOSC, NBUS and NDBUS leaders.

**R = Recorded (via Dictaphone)

As semi-structured interview questions were prepared and adjusted for each KII, it is not possible to provide a representative question guide. However, the following Participant Information Sheet (PIS) provides some insight into the topics covered. This document (and the associated informed consent forms), were also translated into Bangla.

Appendix 2b: Sample Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Collective Action, Service Provision and Urban Governance: A critical exploration of Community Based Organisations in Dhaka's bustee (slum) settlements, Bangladesh

You are being invited to take part in a study as part of a three-year student project for a PhD in Development Policy and Management. This study is about Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in *bustee* settlements in Dhaka.

Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

- **Who will conduct the study?**

This research is carried out by PhD student Sally Cawood and her research assistant Fazle Rabby. Sally is an independent researcher from the Global Development Institute (GDI), based at the University of Manchester, UK.

- **Why am I researching this topic?**

I have been interested in Bangladeshi society and politics for many years. Bangladesh is a beautiful and vibrant country, but its poorest residents face many challenges. Millions of people are living without access to water, sanitation, adequate housing and livelihood opportunities in urban slums. By undertaking this research, I hope to show how people living in slum settlements help themselves (and each other) in difficult circumstances. I am particularly interested in how Community Based Organisations (CBOs) access basic services in Dhaka's *bustees*.

- **What is the aim of the study?**

By talking to you and your colleagues about your experiences working with slum residents, and visiting *bustees*, the researcher hopes to understand what role CBOs play in service provision, as well as who participates in these groups, and what the outcomes are for members and the wider community.

- **Why have I been asked to take part?**

You have been asked to take part in the research because the researcher values your opinion, and would like to learn about your experiences (personal and professional). By taking part, you will help the researcher understand the challenges and solutions to service provision in Dhaka's *bustees*.

- **What will I be asked to do and when?**

Participation in this investigation will involve **one or more** of the following;

1. Attending field visits
2. Being interviewed
3. Participating in workshops

The researcher would like to learn from you. This learning might take place in a one to one interview where you are asked specific questions, in a group discussion or workshop. **The research activity will be clearly stated to you when you are approached by the researcher.**

- **Will I be paid?**

Participation in this research will not be paid. Research is based on voluntary participation, where you have the right to leave at any time, or not take part if you wish. Refreshments will be made available at workshop sessions. Your participation is greatly valued by the researcher, especially as you may be very busy. Out-of-pocket expenses for participants up to a value of Tk. 300 may be met for any travel (via rickshaw and/or CNG taxi) to interview or workshop locations.

- **What happens to the information I provide?**

The information you provide will be kept securely. Electronic documents will be kept on the researcher's computer (encrypted and password protected) and paper documents will be kept in a locked cabinet. The information will be used to answer the main research questions, and will contribute to knowledge on this topic. Your privacy is taken very seriously and you have the right to confidentiality.

- **Is this information shared?**

With your approval, the information may be shared as part of research papers, reports and presentations on this topic, both in Dhaka and overseas. All names will be anonymised.

- **What will the outcomes of the research be?**

By exploring the different CBO groups and their functions in Dhaka's *bustees*, the researcher hopes to contribute to knowledge of how the government, NGOs and donor organisations can work with *bustee* communities to work towards inclusive and sustainable development in Dhaka, and Bangladesh.

Contact Details

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If you change your mind about participating after interview, please contact me before [August 2017] so that I can withdraw your information before submission

If you have any questions about the research that you do not wish to discuss with myself or my research assistants, please contact the Research Governance Office at the University of Manchester;

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Appendix 3: GoB Water and Sanitation Policies and Strategies*

Policy Name & Date	Key Agreements
<i>National Policy for Safe Water Supply & Sanitation 1998</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe water and sanitation essential for the development of public health, Ensure affordable and sustainable access to safe water and sanitation services for all, Behavioural change central to improving hygiene practice and public health outcomes, Make safe drinking water available to each household in urban areas and ensure sanitary latrines within easy access of every urban household through technology options, ranging from pit latrines to water borne sewerage, WASAs and relevant agencies shall support and promote any collective initiative in slums in accessing water supply services on payment, Development of water supply and sanitation sector through local bodies, public-private sector, NGOs, CBOs and women groups, Congenial atmosphere will be created and necessary support provided to facilitate increased participation of the private sector, NGOs and CBOs in the activities of the sector both in urban areas.
<i>National Sanitation Strategy 2005</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service provision should be delinked from land tenure-ship. This will allow the utilities to extend their services to slums, Public-private community partnership is to be promoted for effective sanitation delivery to the slums. It is proposed that partnership be forged between public utilities, NGOs/private sector and slum dwellers to set up and manage community sanitation solutions in all slums.
<i>Pro Poor Strategy for Water and Sanitation Sector in Bangladesh 2005</i>	<p>Priority to households whose basic minimum need for drinking water and sanitation is not met. If they meet the eligibility criteria, they are provided with the 'Basic Minimum Service Level' for water and sanitation. The eligibility criteria includes;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Landless households Pavement dwellers/ homeless Main earning person or the head of family is a day labourer, owning less than 50 decimal of agriculture land or residing in a rented premise lesser than 200 square feet, and having no fixed source of income. Households headed by disabled or females or old aged (65+ years) persons. <p>The 'Basic Minimum Service Level' for drinking water is as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the purpose of drinking, cooking and personal hygiene, the basic minimum level of service is defined as 20 litres per capita per day, The safe drinking water source should be within 50 metres of household premise, The drinking water must meet the national water quality standards. <p>The 'Basic Minimum Service Level' for Sanitation is defined as one 'hygienic latrine' for each household.</p>
<i>DWASA Citizen Charter 2007</i>	<p>WASA can supply water to LICs via a CBO. DWASA is committed to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting the needs of safe and clean drinking water and development of infrastructure for that purpose (specifically targeting slum areas), Ensuring the sewage system, sewer service infrastructure, Developing infrastructure for rapid extraction of logged water (due to rain), Developing accurate and realistic plans for the long-term water supply, sewerage drainage and rain water drainage system, A reasonable level of system loss reduction and revenue growth in the development of the revenue, Increased institutional capacity to ensure quality customer service.
<i>National Cost Sharing Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation in Bangladesh 2011</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service providers shall ensure 'Basic Minimum Service Level' of water and sanitation to the poor necessary to meet their basic needs at an affordable price. This includes urban slum communities and floating populations,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs and small private operators who buy and resell to poor consumers shall be eligible to buy water from the service providers at subsidised rates (50% cost) and restricted to resell it only to poor consumers without profit.
<i>Sector Development Plan (FY 2011-25) Water Supply and Sanitation Sector in Bangladesh 2011</i>	<p>WASAs have agreed with the LGD to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure access to safe water supply and sanitation services, including drainage facilities, to improve health, enhance convenience and upgrade living standards of all sections of city dwellers, Provide a safety net for the poor in accordance with the pro-poor strategy (2005) and cost sharing strategy (2011), and address the needs of women, children and people with disability, Promote private sector, NGOs, communities and others to effectively meet the policy objectives related to safe water supply and sanitation, Extend piped water supply to all areas under the jurisdiction of WASAs, Improve urban sanitation including installation of appropriate sanitation technologies for households, public places and safe disposal of sludge, Involve customers more in planning, implementing, operating and maintenance of water supply and sanitation programmes and facilities.
<i>National Strategy for Water and Sanitation Hard to Reach Areas of Bangladesh 2011</i>	<p>Urban slums one of six designated Hard to Reach (HtR) areas in Bangladesh; coastal, char, Wetlands (<i>Haors and Jheels</i>), <i>Barind</i> and Hill. Extreme poverty in these areas exacerbates the water and sanitation crisis. Solutions for urban slums include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulation and implementation of appropriate policy and strategies for slum water supply and sanitation development, All basic services including water and sanitation must be made accessible to slum dwellers irrespective of legal status of land and until they are rehabilitated at suitable locations considering their livelihood opportunities, Community water point connections from DWASA supply network and community sanitation blocks managed by CBOs have successfully demonstrated improved slum conditions and such approaches should be mainstreamed in the development plans of urban authorities, A nationwide awareness campaign in all slum settlements of the country focusing on the economic gains of having clean, hygienic environmental conditions through access to safe water, sanitation, solid waste management and other basic services, would be an important step forward, Community water points and sanitation blocks to be built and maintained by CBOs with assistance from NGOs and collaboration with urban utilities.
<i>National Hygiene Promotion Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation Sector in Bangladesh 2012</i>	<p>Promote sustainable use of improved water supply and sanitation infrastructures and create an enabling environment ensuring comprehensive hygiene promotion and practices to reduce water and sanitation related diseases. In growing urban areas, adopt/promote the following strategies;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe piped water supply to urban slums to be ensured by WASAs, Campaigns undertaken by the City Corporations to promote and make available sanitary latrine facilities; carry out the campaigns in a participatory manner to instil a sense of ownership in the local communities, Awareness campaign by Ward WATSAN committees on practicing proper hygiene behaviour among slum dwellers, WASAs should ensure adequate wastewater and drainage facilities, which are to be implemented in a participatory approach with slum-dwellers, Introduce Cluster/Community latrine with waste disposal facilities.
	<p>Streamline the five National Strategies into one (five year) single strategy to incorporate all outstanding and emerging sector issues. Key guiding principles;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regard water supply and sanitation as human rights,

<p><i>National Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation (FINAL DRAFT 2014)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Consider water as a public good that has economic and social value, c) Ensure drinking water security through integrated water resource management, d) Promote water supply, sanitation and hygiene components in all WASH development programmes in an integrated manner, e) Adopt a participatory, demand driven and inclusive approach in all stages of WASH service delivery programmes, f) Recognize importance of gender in all WASH activities, g) Ensure equity in services by giving priority to arsenic affected areas, hard-to-reach areas, water-stressed areas and vulnerable people, h) Protect human health and water supply and sanitation facilities from the adverse impact of natural and manmade disasters and climate change, i) Harness the potential resources from solid and liquid wastes, j) Promote innovations to address technical and social needs, k) Promote transparency and accountability at all stages of service delivery, l) Undertake a gradual approach to improve the quality and service levels, m) Promote enhanced private sector participation.
<p><i>The Sixth Five Year Plan (FY 2011-FY2015)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install community latrines in densely populated poor communities, • Remove arsenic from drinking water and supply of arsenic free water from alternate sources in arsenic affected areas, • Take measures in urban areas for removal of solid and liquid waste.
<p><i>The Seventh Five Year Plan (FY 2016-FY2020)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe drinking water for all, • Proportion of urban population with access to water and sanitary latrines to be increased to 100 percent. 50% with access to piped water, and 50% with access to water points.

(Author's Own 2017. *Reference to CBOs highlighted in **bold**)

Appendix 4: Problem Identification

The problems identified during SSQs were coded into 19 thematic groups, as follows;

THEME	Descriptor
Potable Water Crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irregular supply/shortage - Contaminated water - Low-pressure - High cost - Overcrowded water points - Water source far away - Illegal supply
Sanitation Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unsafe/poor condition - Unhygienic/poor drainage/overflow/broken or exposed sewage pipe - Overcrowding and lack of privacy - Bad smell (from gas, human faeces)
Financial Insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of money (income less than expenditure) - Debt - Rising living costs (e.g. rent and bills) - Lack of job opportunities/poor working conditions/low-pay - Concern over cost of dowry - Cannot afford household items and/or food
Gas Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No or irregular supply - Low-pressure - Illegal supply
Electricity Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular load shedding - High cost - Illegal supply
Tenure and Housing Insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High eviction threat/fear of eviction - Lack of permanent housing - Don't want to invest in house or area due to uncertainty - Fire risk
Illness (of self and/or family members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor mental health - Chronic sickness - Acute sickness - Injury
Poor Social Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sexual harassment - Domestic violence and abandonment - Police harassment - Anti-social behaviour (e.g. drugs, crime/theft) - Extortion, corruption and fraud - Mistrust and gossiping - Local leaders have monopoly of power
Poor Living Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No rubbish disposal/open dustbin - Bad smell (from rubbish, waterbodies) - Cramped/small living space and intense heat (from tin) - Lack of privacy - Poor housing quality - Smoke inhalation/air pollution - Shared kitchen and bathrooms
Social Exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harassment and discrimination based on age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, caste - Loneliness and abandonment/no support network
Political Exclusion/Unrest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cannot access decision makers - Exploitative vote politics - Regular <i>hartals</i> - Leaders mismanage funds/use for politics

Vectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mosquitoes - Snakes - Rats
Flooding and Water logging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dirty water (enters home, in walkways etc) - Poor drainage - Leaking rooftops - Destruction of household items - Risk to health and hazard for children
Poor Transport/Road Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unstable walkways/paths - Muddy roads - No street lighting
Poor Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unaffordable (e.g. fees, clothes, equipment) - Poor quality teaching/absenteeism - Abuse in classroom - Located far away
Poor Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unaffordable - Low quality - Located far away
No Childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No childcare facilities in locality - Unaffordable
NONE IDENTIFIED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No problems identified by respondent
CANNOT SAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respondent does not wish to share

(Based on 213 SSQs 2015)

Appendix 5: NGO and Donor Table*

Name & Date Registered	WASH Projects & Funding Partners	Operating Area (in Dhaka)	WASH Activities	CBOs created (Yes/No) & Name	Beneficiaries & Key Achievements	Status/Update (at time of fieldwork)
NGOs						
*ARBAN (1989)	2007 ASEH and 2013 PEHUP (WAB, UNICEF and ARBAN UK)	Mirpur (e.g. Site 1, Jheelpar Ta Block)	WatSan provision (e.g. legal water connections and sanitation chambers), training on hygiene and maintenance	Yes – 'WatSan Committees'	Mobile toilets for floating populations, legal water connections, ARBAN flats for slum dwellers	ARBAN not currently active in project sites due to fund shortage. CBOs largely inactive.
ASD (1988)	2003-2009 (WAB, DFID)	Mohammadpur, Beribadh, Mirpur	Installation of tube wells and sanitation chambers	Yes – 'Maintenance Committees'	Legal water supply and sanitation facilities	Private slums evicted, WASH infrastructure destroyed. ASD no longer providing WASH.
CUP (1992)	Pavement Dwellers Project, WASH (Concern Worldwide and UNICEF)	DNCC and DSCC	Membership platform of 64 NGOs working in Dhaka. Advocacy on right to shelter and basic services for urban poor and homeless	Yes - Citywide network (BBOSC)	NGO coordination and policy advocacy for voting rights of slum dwellers anti-eviction campaigns	52 active members and of this group only 10-15 regularly attend monthly meetings. Declining leadership, financial and coordination capacity. Tension with grassroots CBO network BBOSC.
*DSK (1989)	1996-Present. 8 WASH Projects and multiple funders (e.g. WAB, UNICEF, Warar.org, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Oxfam)	DNCC and DSCC	CBO mobilisation and installation of water points (e.g. tube wells) and sanitation chambers (e.g. pit latrines). Wealth ranking and co-sharing model. Vacutug Truck to empty septic tanks	Yes – 'CBOs', 'WatSan Committees', 'WASH Committees' and citywide group NEUS	200 LICs. 2613 hardware units (e.g. water points, sanitation chambers)	Ongoing WASH projects and capacity building of citywide urban poor group NEUS.
*HFHB (1999)	2012/13-2015 Urban Pilot Project (World Vision Partnership, AusAid)	Mirpur – Same sites as World Vision	Latrines, washrooms, water reserves and household repair (e.g. pillars, tin)	No new CBOs. Use existing World Vision CBOs	1 LIC (out of 9 potential World Vision sites)	Now working in third site – Teherbari. Projects completed in Talab Camp and Site 2.

*PDAP (1997)	1998-Onwards	Mirpur	Water and sanitation provision, women's leadership training and group formation, advocacy	Yes – 'primary groups' (often named after flowers)	2 Bihari Camps and 4 LICs	Limited activities at present due to low funds.
Practical Action Bangladesh (1990)	2012-2017 'Integrated Slum Improvement Model'. Multiple funders (e.g. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, UNICEF, EU Commission)	Operate primarily outside of Dhaka in smaller cities/towns e.g. Faridpur and Jessore	Waste management services (e.g. FSM), hygiene, total sanitation, water provision, slum upgrading, local government advocacy and integrated action planning	Yes – 'Slum Improvement Committees', 'Ward and Town Level Coordination Committees' (WLCC and TLCC), and Apex CBO	Reached 45,343 people with WASH; 284 organisations (16,332 members); 107 women's organisations (across Bangladesh)	Limited work in Dhaka due to space, political constraints.
Proshika (1976)	Urban Poor Development Program (1990s)	Dhaka	One of the first NGOs to work in urban LICs. Tube wells, electricity provision, group mobilisation, federation building, anti-eviction advocacy and data collection on slum conditions	Yes – BBOSC (network of citywide CBOs)	2000 LICs	Running at low/weak capacity due to funding and political crisis. Few activities.
Shelter for the Poor (2003)	2009-2015 (ACHR-ACCA)	Old Dhaka (DSCC)	Water and sanitation facilities (e.g. community latrine and drainage), walkways and housing credit programmes. Housing and land rights advocacy	No (but work with BBOSC and ACHR)	Ethnic minorities (e.g. Dalit and Cobblers) in 3-4 LICs	Problem with ACCA Funds and Housing Credit Programmes implementation. Limited activities.
*NGO Forum For Public Health (1982)	2013-2015 WSUP Project (WSUP, DFID, EU, DANIDA, WAB)	DNCC and DSCC, especially Mirpur (e.g. Kallyanpur, Site 2, Rupnagar)	Community identification, mobilisation, training and awareness, CBO formation and distribute cleaning materials to IIC members (e.g. gumboot, bucket, brush, bleach, glycerine)	Yes – User Groups, 'Infrastructure Implementation Committees' (IICs) and 'Central CBOs'	15 LICs, 200,000 (100,000 direct and 100,000 improvement of service). 80% new construction; 20% repair	Phased out in December 2015. Hand over to CBOs (IICs).
*Water Aid Bangladesh (1996)	Multiple WASH projects (e.g. ASEH, PEHUP) and donors (e.g. UNICEF, DFID, SIDA)	DNCC and DSCC	No direct implementation - fund and coordinate WASH projects via partners (e.g. DSK) and provide financial and technical support	Yes - via DSK	62 LICs across Dhaka	Still operating WASH projects in Dhaka.

*World Vision Bangladesh (1973)	8-15 year projects and multiple donors (e.g. PLAN, Breaking the Silence, Good Neighbours)	Mirpur (pilot area since 2012) e.g. Takerbari, Site 2, Talab Camp and Old Dhaka	WASH and waste management one of three project themes. Others include: child rights/protection/sponsorship and health/nutrition	Yes - 'Integrated Slum Development Committee' and 'Community WASH Committee' (CWC)	9 LICs slums in Mirpur	Ongoing projects and partnership with HFHB in Mirpur. Projects in DSCC phased out.
*WSUP (2005)	2013-2015 WSUP Project (DFID, EU, DANIDA, WAB, WHO)	DNCC and DSCC, especially Mirpur (e.g. Kallyanpur, Site 2, Rupnagar)	'Install latrines, (legal) water connections and repair existing facilities, Faecal Sludge Management (FSM), advocacy and capacity building with DWASA, hygiene promotion (posters)	Yes (via NGO Forum)	15 LICs, 200,000 (100,000 direct and 100,000 improved service), DWASA capacity building (LIC), repaired 400 community latrines	Phased out in December 2015. Hand over to CBOs (LICs).
DONOR PROJECTS						
*DSK-Shiree	2009-2015 (UK DFID funded)	DNCC and DSCC e.g. Karail, Sattala, Kamrangirchar, Hazanibagh, Mohammodpur, Kallyanpur & Site 3	Livelihoods programmes targeting extreme poor households (especially women), including: Tk. 14,000 small business grant and/or asset transfer, training, healthcare, collective savings and loan schemes and WASH	Yes - 'Primary Group', 'CBO' and 'Central Apex CBO'	25,000-30,000 extreme poor households in 9 LIC areas	Project complete. CBOs now independent and/or being registered as cooperative societies. Concerns over CBO infrastructure and business sustainability.
*UPPR	2011-2015	300+ sites in Dhaka, and 23 towns and cities across Bangladesh. Incl. Sites 1 and 2	Infrastructure improvement/installation (e.g. tube wells, sanitation chambers) and drainage	Yes - 'Primary Groups', 'CDCs' and 'Cluster CDCs'	400,000 in DNCC	No current activities. Next phase starting in 2016 - Up-scaling to National Level.

(Based on KIIs and secondary data 2016) *Present in one or more field sites.

Appendix 6: NGO-Initiated CBOs in Sites 1 and 2

CBO Name	Degree of Formality/ Informality	CBO Participation	CBO Function	CBO Outcomes
SITE 1				
ARBAN <i>User Committees & Central CBO</i>	Informal (but recognised by NGO)	15 members in central and user CBOs. P, VP, S, C & GMs* elected by vote (or by fieldworkers). Mixed male/female membership. Female-led (in past). Mostly owners.	Management of sanitation chambers and water points. Co-sharing and maintenance fund.	+ive: inclusive, legal water and sanitation, budget management and installation, user groups active. -ive: not sustainable, co-opted, short-term needs, lack financial capacity. Central CBO inactive. No meetings.
NGO Forum/WSUP <i>IICs & Central CBO</i>	Informal (but recognised by NGO and DWASA)	25 members in central CBO, 10-15 in IICs. P, VP, S, C & GMs selected (via consultation). Mixed male/female members. Male-led. Mostly owners.	Management of sanitation chambers and water points. Negotiation with DWASA. Co-sharing and maintenance fund.	+ive: legal water and sanitation, budget management and installation, hygiene awareness, improve living area. -ive: not sustainable, co-opted and politicised, dominance of owners, short-term needs/few incentives. Project phased out. Central CBO inactive. Some IICs active. No meetings.
SITE 2				
DSK <i>User groups & Central CBO</i>	Informal (but recognised by NGO and DWASA)	10-15 members in central CBO, 20-30 in user groups. P, VP, S, C & GMs elected by vote. Managers selected by users. Mixed male/female members. Male-led.	Management of sanitation chambers and water points. Co-sharing and maintenance funds. Negotiation with service providers.	+ive: inclusive, legal water and sanitation, awareness and make demands, budget management, user groups active. -ive: not sustainable, politicised, co-opted. Project phased out. Central CBO inactive. No meetings.
World Vision/ HFHB <i>WASH Committee</i>	Informal (but recognised by NGO)	42 members. P, VP, S, C & GMs elected by vote (or by fieldworkers). Mixed male/female members. Male-led.	Hygiene awareness, management of sanitation chambers, bathrooms and waste disposal. Negotiation with service providers. Distribution of housing materials. Co-sharing funds.	+ive: inclusive, legal water and sanitation, awareness and make demands, budget management, improve living area. Active, running activities. -ive: politicised, co-opted, limited capacity, mistrust, influence of young men.
NGO Forum <i>Central CBO</i>	Informal (but recognised by NGO)	11 members. P, VP, S, C & GMs selected by fieldworkers (but 'dropped' and replaced). Mixed male/female members. Male-led.	Management of individual sanitation chambers and water reserves. Co-sharing funds.	+ive: legal water and sanitation, budget management and installation, hygiene awareness. -ive: not sustainable, co-opted and politicised, male leaders dominate. Few activities.

(Based on KIIs, SSQs, FGDs and field observations 2015. *P = President, VP = Vice President, S = Secretary, C = Cashier and GM = General Member)

Appendix 7: Summary of WASH Infrastructure in Sites 1 and 2

SITE 1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSK and WAB FAST Project (2001-2): 15 ring slab sanitation blocks (one toilet/10-15 families) and 3 legal water supply connections. Co-sharing with beneficiaries (e.g. Tk. 5000 required for one sanitation chamber, DSK-WAB take Tk. 10 per Tk. 1000 as interest). • PDAP (2003-4): 5 ring slab latrines. • ARBAN (2007-2009 and 2013-2014): 20 legal water points and 25 sanitation chambers (water points and tanks outside, no roof). In 2013, ARBAN repaired the sanitation chambers, constructed rooftops, developed 2-3 drains, pathways and provided filter water and sanitation facilities to BRAC School. • NGO Forum/WSUP (2013-15): 3 sanitation chambers (with water points inside) and repairs to 5-10 existing chambers, hygiene programmes with informative cartoons on communal sanitation chambers and water points. NGO Forum formed the CBO and distributed WASH kits (e.g. gloves, brush, bleach and gumboots) to user groups. Advocacy for legal water connections. 6 community workers (selected by fieldworkers and paid honorarium of Tk. 3000 per month). 	
TOTAL No. of Sanitation Blocks Constructed	48
TOTAL No. of Water Connections Provided	23
TOTAL No. of 'out of order' or demolished chambers and water points at time of fieldwork	9 ARBAN blocks and 1 DSK water point
SITE 2	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCC (1999-2004): 6 sanitation chambers (2 latrines in each), 3 tube wells. • DSK (2004-2010): 110 individual ring slab toilets (inside households), 11 water connections (paved floor, tube-well and underground water storage tank connected to DWASA supply) and 20-25 cluster latrines. Tk. 150 per month co-sharing over 2 years. Renovated 8 DCC latrines. • iWASH (2011): 1 five chamber and 1 four chamber sanitation facility, 1 water reserve and repairs. • PSTC (2012-13): Repaired remaining DCC latrines. • NDBUS-UPPR (2011-2014): road development, drainage, 5 sanitation chambers constructed. • World Vision (2012-2020): 8 chambers, 7 water reserves (under construction at time of fieldwork), 1 waste dumping site with x2 carts (not in use). • HFHB (2013-2015): 3 sanitation chambers and 3 washrooms, 2 communal toilets repaired, 5 water reserves, 1,100 ft pipe repair, 350 household filters, 36 household improvements (e.g. concrete pillar, tin), 1000-1075 ft footpath, 900 ft drainage/slab covers and waste management • NGO Forum/WSUP (2015): 4 individual sanitation chambers, 5 water reservoirs and repaired 2 bathrooms. 19 applications submitted for water connections. 	
TOTAL No. of Sanitation Blocks Constructed	80
TOTAL No. of Water Connections Provided	31 (+ 19 further applications in process)
TOTAL No. of 'out of order' chambers and water points at time of fieldwork	DCC tube wells and 1 DSK chamber + water point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Majority of individual DSK ring slab toilets no longer in use due to damage and difficulty of waste removal. - HFHB washrooms and World Vision sanitation chambers not in use as no water supply for cleaning. Awaiting water supply.

(Based on SSQs, IDIs, FGDs and KIIs 2015)

Appendix 8: Leader-Initiated CBOs in Sites 2 and 3

CBO Name	<i>Degrees of Formality/ Informality</i>	CBO Participation	CBO Function	CBO Outcomes
SITE 2				
<i>Bustees Committee</i>	Informal	21 members. P, VP, S & GMs, self-selected local leaders & elders with political backing. Male-led.	Oversee security of settlement, social arbitration, service provision and anti-eviction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +ive: local knowledge and availability, protection during crisis, service and housing provided. Active, meet when required. -ive: exclusionary, politicised, reinforce power, fuel mistrust, require 'tips'.
Multipurpose Cooperative [No. 1]	Formal (registered with DoC)	12 member executive committee, 61 'official' members and 160-200 paying members (within and outside settlement). P, VP, S, C & GMs. Voting but self-selected leaders. Male-led.	Multipurpose cooperative society. Application & management of legal water and electricity supply. Joining fee and monthly savings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +ive: legal services, save for land via formal entity. -ive: exclusionary, politicised, corruption, lack of accountability. Limited activities, low capacity.
Savings and Loans Cooperative [No. 2]	Formal (registered with DoC)	12 member executive committee, 22 'official' members and 400 paying members (within settlement). P, VP, S, C & GMs. Voting but self-selected local leaders with political backing. Male-led.	Homeless People's Savings and Loans Cooperative. Joining fee and monthly savings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +ive: legal services, save for land via formal entity. Active, meet regularly in 'club house' -ive: exclusionary, politicised, corruption, lack of accountability.
SITE 3				
<i>Bustees Committee</i>	Informal	10-15 members. House owners, no tenants. P, VP, S, GM self-selected by local leaders & elders with political backing. Male-led.	Oversee security of settlement, social arbitration, service provision (in times of crisis) and anti-eviction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +ive: local knowledge and availability, protection during crisis, service and housing provided. Active. -ive: exclusionary, politicised, reinforce power, fuel mistrust, 'tips' required, tenants excluded.
Savings and Loans Cooperative [No. 3]	Formal (registered with DoC)	12 leaders, 30-35 members. P, VP, S, C & GMs. Voting but self-selected local leaders, political backing. Male-led.	Homeless People's Savings and Loans Cooperative. Joining fee and monthly savings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +ive: legal services, save for land via formal entity. -ive: allegations of fraud and mismanagement, political influence, tenants excluded. Inactive.
Multipurpose Cooperative [No. 4]	Formal (registered with DoC)	12 member management committee, 84 members. House owners, no tenants. P, VP, S, C & GMs. Voting but self-selected local leaders with political backing. Male-led.	Multipurpose cooperative society. Applied for legal water, electricity, holding numbers. Joining fee and monthly savings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +ive: legal services, save for land via formal entity. Active, meet monthly. -ive: exclusionary, politicised, corruption, lack of accountability, tenants excluded.

(Based on SSQs, IDIs, FGDs and field observations 2015)

Appendix 9: Required Documents for the Registration of Primary Cooperative Society*

1. Application Form
2. Main Copy of Official Treasury Receipt/Document - Deposit Registration fee to Treasury (Registration fee is Tk. 300 +15 % VAT)
3. Types of the *samity* need to be mentioned specifically
4. All the documents have to be approved by the concerned authorities
5. Name and Address of the Committee
6. Attach photocopy of National ID Card or Citizenship Certificates from Union Parishad Chairman/Ward Councillor,
7. Original or attached copy of the *samity* office rent's contract papers,
8. Observation notes of the inspectors who verified the information,
9. Name of the applicant, name of his/her father and mother, address must match with other supportive documents,
10. In case of the business *samity*, a copy of the Trade License needs to be submitted,
11. In case of the fishermen *samity*, Upa-zila Fishery Officer will verify and certify members as fishermen and issue a certification of profession
12. All the members need to submit one copy of passport size photograph and mobile phone number,
13. Declaration of all the members,
14. Financial statements (fund and expenditures) details from the starting date to the date of submitting application,
15. Budget of upcoming two years,
16. Cooperative Society Registration Regulation/08, clearance letter or certification that there are no other *samitys* in the same name in the same area, and there is no contradiction with any other *samity*,
17. According to the class or type of *samity*, three copies of supplementary or complementary laws,
18. Meeting minutes of two meetings with the resolution of organising committee meetings,
19. Photocopy of the elite members,
20. List of share and savings along with deposit and expenses. And certification for mandate of keeping hard /hand cash. Statement on the source of share and savings,
21. In case of professional cooperative societies, there should be certification from the concerned authorities to verify the professionals.

(Translated from Department of Cooperatives Application Form 2015)

*There are 29 types of cooperative society in Bangladesh. Cooperatives can form at the primary, central or national level. 20 people are required to form a primary group, 10 for a central society and 10 for a national society. In 2017, there were 22 national cooperatives, 1160 central and 189,181 primary in Bangladesh, with a total number of 10,333,310 members (DoC 2017).

Appendix 10: Towards Transformative Collective Action in Dhaka

1) PATRON-CENTRIC > PRO-POOR STATE	
a) <i>Neglect of the Urban Poor > Recognition and Safeguarding of the Urban Poor</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise and implement urbanisation, urban poverty and housing policies for the urban poor (non-existent/in draft), Stop <i>bustee</i> evictions and implement affordable rehabilitation programmes and slum upgrading for urban poor, Regulate private settlements and slum speculation – ensure basic housing standards, service provision and tenant protection, Do not apply rural indicators to urban poverty reduction – stronger datasets and measuring criteria, Invest central funds and human resources in key (local) government agencies (e.g. DWASA, SDD, DESCO, DNCC, DSCC and TITAS). Mainstream urban poor into customer services and train staff accordingly, Improve and safeguard health, social security (e.g. policing and justice system) and financial security (e.g. labour laws, wage protection, pensions, disability and welfare support) for urban poor, especially for women and girls, Improve access to quality and affordable legal services (e.g. electricity and gas) for urban poor, Expand coordination with NGO, donors and cooperative societies operating in low-income settlements, Run training programmes for politicians, bureaucrats and officials (led by urban poor representatives) to sensitise them to challenges facing urban poor, and tackle rural-bias and misconceptions.
b) <i>Entrenched Patronage > Accountable Politicians, Bureaucrats and Officials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop upwards and downwards accountability mechanisms (e.g. regular audits, trainings, monitoring), Hold accountable politicians, government officials (e.g. MPs, DWASA, DESCO staff) found to abuse power, Involve the urban poor in policy formation and urban planning – ensure needs are addressed.
c) <i>Reduction of > More Democratic Space</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessen control over NGOs and external funding via NGO Affairs Bureau to allow project flexibility, NGOs and donors to be more 'radical' in their approach, especially as regards land, housing and basic rights, Build capacity of national slum dwellers federation to claim space for negotiation, Open door to slum dweller organisations for negotiation and dialogue, Tackle corruption and political influence within state and non-state institutions.
2) RISK-AVERSE and MARKET-ORIENTED > RISK-TAKING and PRIORITY-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT SECTOR	
a) <i>Dominance of MCR, MFIs and Service Delivery > Group Savings and Agenda-Setting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulate MCR and MF sector – challenge aggressive MFIs and interest rates, MFIs to encourage group savings and community improvement, as opposed to house to house collections, Greater leniency and support with loan repayment and lower/0% interest rates.
b) <i>NGO Paternalism and Donor Dependency > CBO Autonomy and Sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase financial autonomy (e.g. group savings), accountability and internal democracy mechanisms of CBOs, Provide incentives for continued participation e.g. personal development, peer learning/exchanges and leadership training, Ensure continuity and flexibility to meet community demands via longer, as opposed to short-term projects, Educate residents on broader citizenship rights. Use laws and policies to demand rights, Encourage CBOs to register as cooperatives (rather than NGOs), to reduce NGO overlap and competition.

<i>c) Priority Mismatch > Priority Alignment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Background research in each project site to emphasise understanding of demands and power structure, ▪ Utilise government plans and policies on urbanisation, urban poverty, housing and service provision, as well as international goals and commitments, to pressurise state agencies into action, ▪ Take greater 'risks' in tackling housing and land tenure security – work with existing rights-based legal organisations e.g. BLAST and ASK, and international partners to share 'best practice' cases with government officials (e.g. CODI, Thailand), ▪ Run training programmes on urban poverty reduction for NGO workers (led by urban poor representatives and communities) to sensitise them to challenges facing urban poor, and tackle rural-bias and misconceptions.
3) CLIENTELISTIC > EQUITABLE SOCIETY	
<i>a) Political Fragmentation and Mistrust > Unity and Trust</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exchanges to learn about successful initiatives and dispel myths/suspicion about CBO leaders and members, ▪ Safeguard freedom of speech and protect opposition supporters via justice system, ▪ Encourage unity and conflict resolution, utilise positive networks between friends, family, kin and neighbours.
<i>b) Entrenched Clientelism > Accountable Politicians, Bureaucrats and Officials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demand upward and downward accountability. Hold political leaders to account within and outside settlement. Utilise 'vote politics' to obtain benefits for settlement, ▪ Address overlapping insecurities to improve time, resource availability and reduce reliance on patrons, ▪ Greater accountability in NGO projects, ensure paid staff and volunteers are not abusing position.
<i>c) Leader-Centred > Inclusive Networks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change cooperative law to encourage female participation and leadership, ▪ Hold local leaders, house owners and political patrons to account and ensure services benefit entire community, ▪ Capacity building and leadership training (for women) to challenge authority and prevent elite capture, ▪ Local, citywide and national campaigns to promote women's rights and gender equality.

(Based on SSQs, IDIs, FGDs and KIIs 2015)