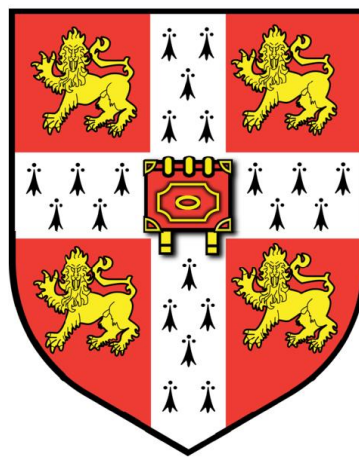


Belonging in the Segregated City:

Gender, community and urban citizenship in Mumbai, India



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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing that is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution, except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit of 80,000 words of the Degree Committee for the Faculty of Earth Sciences & Geography.

Abstract

The rights of Muslim women have received increasing attention in recent years from a diverse range of political groups. The resurgence of Hindu majoritarian politics in contemporary India has been accompanied by a growing acceptability of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim rhetoric, and increasing Muslim segregation; simultaneously, new forms of mobilisation by Muslim women's movements in the past two decades have challenged dominant constructions of the compliant 'Muslim woman', while highlighting the forms of exclusion they face. However, the everyday experiences and contestations of Muslim women in the social and political spaces of the city remain underexplored.

The thesis examines evolving notions of urban belonging in the context of ethno-religious segregation at the intersection of gendered and minority rights in India. It explores everyday gendered negotiations of belonging to urban space in and from segregated neighbourhoods in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. Here, the analysis of belonging extends to critically examine the situated understandings and negotiations of closely related concepts of community and citizenship over a period of socio-spatial-political change.

In exploring how gender mediates everyday socio-spatial-political claims to the segregated city, the thesis explores two interrelated areas: First, it examines the everyday gendered contestations of urban space to understand evolving social relations and constructions of identity and community, taking a socio-spatial approach. Second, it investigates intersectional contestations of citizenship through a socio-political analysis of the situated experiences, practices, and strategies of residents in segregated neighbourhoods to claim urban belonging through a socio-political approach. The research adopts a multi-scalar approach, grounded in intra-urban comparison of two segregated neighbourhoods. Analysis draws on qualitative data including interviews, participant observation and oral histories conducted over nine months of fieldwork to examine how multiple power structures and the politics of urban space and infrastructure relate to socio-political relations and everyday negotiations of socio-spatial belonging.

The thesis unpacks the narratives and modes that construct socio-political subjectivities and socio-spatial belonging at different scales, and reveals how urban complexity complicates understandings of belonging, community and citizenship. In doing so, the thesis contributes to scholarship across urban studies, political geography and postcolonial feminist geography, providing an intersectional investigation of emerging gendered social relations in the context of urban segregation.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The rights of Muslim women have received increasing attention in recent years from the media, politicians and a diverse range of political groups and actors, both in India and internationally. The socially constructed figure of the 'Muslim woman' has been symbolically deployed in political disputes not only in the global 'war on terror' (Hirchkind and Mahmood, 2002; Abu-Lughod, 2002) but also in India by political groups vying for power ever since the colonial period (Kirmani, 2009). The resurgence of Hindu nationalist politics in India since the 1980s has been accompanied by a growing purchase and acceptability of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim political rhetoric, against a backdrop of a longstanding difficult relationship between India and its Muslim population, constructing Indian Muslims as a single threatened community (Robinson, 2010). The social and political alienation of Muslims has been accompanied by increasing socio-spatial segregation along religious lines through the emergence and expansion of Muslim-dominated neighbourhoods in most Indian cities (Gayer and Jaffrelot, 2012). Patterns of displacement that increasingly confined Muslims to certain areas have entrenched separation and 'otherness'.

Within this context, a notable development has been the rise of Muslim women's movements in India in the last two decades. New forms of organising by Muslim women across the country have exposed complex systems of power based on religion, class, and gender. These groups have challenged dominant constructions of the 'Muslim woman' as oppressed victims, while continuing to highlight the multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion that Muslim women face (Kirmani, 2009). The emergence and growing momentum of Muslim women's movements has raised important questions about the social and political space for and position of Muslim women, as Muslim women are increasingly raising their voices, individually and collectively, often alongside Muslim men and non-Muslim women, in response to diverse global and local challenges.

Yet, their experiences are far from uniform. Despite the symbolic importance that 'Muslim women' have come to hold, and the increasing prominence of debates surrounding the rights of Muslim women vis-à-vis both their religious communities and the state, the voices and experiences of 'ordinary' women, and their experiences and everyday contestations to belong in the social and political spaces of the city, remain underrepresented.

The original motivation for this research was a desire to understand the gendered contestations of urban space in material and imagined terms, over a period marked by decisive social, political and spatial shifts. In the context of the emergence of Muslim women's mobilisations and rising Hindu majoritarian politics and ethno-religious segregation, this research focuses on understanding the everyday lived experiences of women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods. In doing so, it critically

explores the gendered negotiations of belonging and citizenship through the perspective of women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods in Mumbai.

This chapter introduces the background and motivations that frame this research and outlines the structure of this thesis. Section 1.1 sets out the main research question explored in this thesis and elaborates on the primary aims of the research. Subsequently, Section 1.2 outlines the economic, political and socio-spatial changes in Mumbai to provide a brief background of the empirical context in which the research has been undertaken. Section 1.3 then discusses the contributions of the research to existing scholarship. Finally, Section 1.4 describes the structure of this thesis and introduces the main topics, themes and questions addressed across subsequent chapters.

1.1 Research aims

This thesis examines gendered perceptions and negotiations of belonging in and from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods in Mumbai. It explores the everyday lived experience and contestations of women's belonging in and from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods through the lens of urban space.

The main intellectual problem that the thesis tackles is understanding the multi-level politics and experiences of urban belonging in the context of ethno-religious segregation by bringing together a multi-pronged analysis that examines the social, spatial and political dynamics of gendered urban space. The thesis is therefore guided by one main research question: **In what ways does gender mediate women's everyday socio-spatial-political claims to the segregated city?**

The thesis examines how women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods make sense of and negotiate urban space and their own agency through a period of urban change. The motivation that instigated the research was to understand the gendered production of space in the context of ethno-religious segregation. A second – and eventually more central – question that emerged during fieldwork was the everyday lived experience of citizenship in terms of rights, belonging and exclusion from both society and the state. As notions of belonging are closely related to imaginations of community and citizenship, the research takes a gender lens to investigate the situated experiences, practices, and imaginaries of urban belonging, as well as community and citizenship, over a period of complex socio-spatial-political change. Thus, the thesis provides an analytical framework to examine the formation and construction of belonging through two lenses and through the exploration of two inter-related areas:

1. It explores gendered negotiations and contestations of urban space in and from segregated neighbourhoods (taking a socio-spatial approach)
2. It links urban belonging to citizenship and related 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983) in relation to both society and the state (taking a socio-political approach)

The investigation of these two inter-related (and co-constitutive) areas of inquiry is grounded in the gendered politics of segregation in Mumbai and India, and aims to examine the everyday experiences of women in segregated neighbourhoods. The research recognizes that notions of identity and community intersect with other social structures and are negotiated as much in the mundane spaces of everyday life as through political mobilisation. Equally, notions of community are not fixed but rather always constructed or imagined within specific discursive moments and are thus contextual, contingent and political (Anderson, 1983; Bran, 1992; Baumann, 1996; Dwyer, 1999). In this context, the research contributes to understanding the constructions of community, belonging and citizenship in the context of urban segregation in India.

The thesis also makes conceptual contributions to critical urban studies through a multi-scalar analysis of gendered space and urban segregation. The city of Mumbai has experienced significant shifts in social geography and increasing segregation along economic, social and religious lines (discussed in Section 1.2), providing a good context to study evolving political dynamics of urban belonging. Yet, as Roy (2011) observes, although cities like Mumbai have become metonymic of cities in the global South, they remain the ‘constitutive outside’ of urban studies. This research therefore uses the case of Mumbai to contribute to urban theorization from the global South. At the same time, having called Bombay and Mumbai home for most of my life, I have a personal commitment to the city and the Indian context, which have shaped my ideas, and a wider intellectual aim has been to see from Mumbai and contribute to urban theorisation on gender and the segregated city more broadly.

From a socio-spatial perspective, increasing discussion and research on gender relations and women in Indian cities has often focused on women’s safety. A key underpinning of this research project has been to move beyond narratives of safety and risk and conceptualize women’s claims to urban space through the lens of belonging. Although literature exists on women and urban space in India, this rarely situates the politics of their claims within larger social, economic and political shifts. The thesis thus explores gendered urban segregation not as a static phenomenon but as a relationship that is constantly negotiated. When foregrounding women’s agency, the past decade has recorded increasing mobilization around women’s right to the city, but the ways in which women negotiate urban space and social relations through everyday life rather than political mobilization or contestation remain relatively underexplored. Jamil (2017) comments that Indian Muslims are often framed as a backward community, emphasising the lack of agency of Muslim women and argues for scholars to avoid simplistic binaries that essentialise identity when studying urban Muslims. The research responds to this challenge but is not restricted only to structural exclusions and emphasizes the situated experiences, contestations and agencies of women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods in exploring the gendered construction of urban belonging.

In sum, through a multi-scalar social-spatial-political analysis, the thesis examines the gendered constructions of these three core concepts – belonging, community and citizenship – in and from segregated neighbourhoods in Mumbai through the prism of everyday life, imaginaries, and narratives. These concepts do not frame individual empirical chapters, but rather are recurring themes across all chapters. In doing so, however, the research aims to produce a rich picture of the multiple constructions of these concepts within the empirical context of segregation in Mumbai but also to contribute to underexplored theorization at the intersection of political, feminist and postcolonial geography (elaborated further in Section 1.3) to make critical interventions into understanding the multi-layered negotiations around gendered urban belonging.

1.2 Situating the research: Describing the empirical context

The city of Bombay¹, now officially Mumbai,² first rose to prominence as a colonial port town in the 19th century and later grew as an industrial city (Kosambi, 1995). Over time, the city's social and economic landscape has recorded significant changes, altering the everyday lives of residents and urban spaces. Here I trace some of the shifts in postcolonial Bombay/Mumbai to situate the empirical context of this research project.

The growth of Bombay during the colonial period as an industrial centre was dominated by the cotton textile industry, with cotton mills established by both English and indigenous entrepreneurs (Kosambi, 1995). Workers lived near the mills, where they established a thriving milieu of tenements and markets that continued into the postcolonial period (Chandavarkar, 1994). By the 1970s, the labour-intensive mills recorded declining productivity as government policies incentivised power-looms (Ghadge, 2016). In January 1982, mill workers called a strike due to a dispute around wages: lasting over 18 months, this was the longest strike in modern Indian history. Mill owners refused to cooperate and given their declining profits, 58 mills were closed, leading to large-scale retrenchment (Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana, 1996 cited in Ghadge, 2016). This contributed to the weakening of working-class politics in the city, as most workers resorted to informal or self-employment (Gandy, 2008).

The closure of the mills had marked social implications: it reduced institutionalized secular social space and interaction, which has been linked to the growth of ethno-religious politics (Hansen, 2001a). It also disrupted Muslim communities as large numbers of Muslim weavers either shifted to

¹ There are three conceptions of Bombay: The first draws from colonial history when Bombay coincided with the island city; Greater Mumbai is coterminous with the municipal corporation that serves Mumbai and suburban Mumbai; and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, which consists of several cities, towns and villages of the agglomeration, is the unit of analysis of this research.

² Bombay was officially renamed Mumbai in 1995. This thesis uses both names interchangeably, although it broadly uses Bombay for the period before 1995 and Mumbai thereafter.

self-employment (occupying the grey areas between the legal and illegal, and contributing to public imaginations that criminalised Muslim communities and areas) or migrated to the Gulf countries as labourers (ibid.). Further, in 1991, the World Bank and IMF introduced structural adjustment policies in India, after which urban planning discourse envisioned Bombay's transformation into a '*World Class City*' (McKinsey, 2003). However, this vision of the city was to the detriment of peripheries, which served to absorb undesired people and activities (Low and Banerjee-Guha, 2001), and the city's 'world-class' aspirations were accompanied by increasing inequality (Banerjee-Guha, 2002; Ghertner, 2011).

The city also recorded significant political changes in the postcolonial period, many mirroring national trends. While Bombay was traditionally associated with cosmopolitanism, intensifying communal politics challenged this perception (McFarlane, 2008). After independence, Indian states were reorganised principally based on language to improve administrative efficiency and maintain national cohesion (Mawdsley, 2002). While the State Reorganisation Commission initially opposed the division of Bombay state due to its composite character, escalating protests demanding a Marathi-speaking state resulted in Bombay state being divided into Gujarat and Maharashtra in 1960, with Bombay joining Maharashtra. Soon after, the political party *Shiv Sena* ("Sena") rapidly gained prominence through its near-violent espousal of nativism and extensive network of patronage-based social service (Palshikar, 2004). The Sena mobilised in the name of the "sons of the soil", the interpretation of which has varied based on its political expediency (Hansen, 2001a). It was initially nurtured by industrialists to intimidate trade unions (Katzenstein, 1978; Gupta, 1982). It also mobilised against South Indian migrants that they claimed monopolised government jobs, demanding quotas for Maharashtrians, in its initial years. Over time, it shifted its target to Dalits, north Indians and, subsequently, Muslims through a wider programme of Hindu consciousness (Shaban, 2012). After the Babri Masjid demolition³ in December 1992, Muslim protestors nationwide took to the streets and were attacked by Hindu groups, leading to 'communal riots' across India. In Bombay, the Sena mobilized forces against Muslim communities and neighbourhoods (Lele, 1995; Hansen, 2001a). While the city had previously witnessed communal conflict, here violence consumed the entire city across class lines (Khan, 2007). The state government took no action fearing Hindu backlash, while the police often participated in violence alongside Shiv Sainiks (Contractor, 2017). The Sena's actions were an extension of their politico-cultural strategy that attempted to violently reshape the city as a sacred

³ The Babri Masjid was a 16th century mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, claimed to be the birthplace of the Hindu God Ram. After a long political movement demanding the construction of a temple at the site of the Masjid, the Babri Masjid was destroyed in a rally of Hindu-nationalist organisations on 6 December 1992.

and Hindu space (Appadurai, 2000). Officially, over 900 people, mostly Muslim, died in the violence and many more were injured, and lost family or property.

The riots radically changed the city's socio-spatial geography and created a sense of separateness, communalising Bombay's metaphorical and material spaces (Masselos, 1994; Shahban, 2012).

Thousands of Muslim migrants left the city, and many others that lived in mixed areas moved to Muslim-majority neighbourhoods. Setalvad (2006) argues that Muslims became further alienated from public spaces, except in their *ghettos*, and boundaries between Muslim and Hindu neighbourhoods became pronounced. Several commentators have identified this as a watershed point: Arjun Appadurai (2000) describes the ensuing period as the 'decosmopolitanisation' of Bombay.

The research is situated within this empirical context, and speaks to theoretical constructions of belonging, community and citizenship through an analysis of the lived experience and practices of women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods in Mumbai. The research does this through detailed case study work and intra-urban comparison of two segregated neighbourhood within the Metropolitan Region of Mumbai, which were both significantly impacted by the socio-spatial-political changes discussed above. The research does not examine the immediate aftermath of shocks, but rather studies the long-term processes of change and consolidation in segregated neighbourhoods constituted by structural violence through the everyday experiences of women.

Here, a note of caution regarding the timing of the research is important. The fieldwork for the research was undertaken between October 2017 and June 2018. While I sought updates from participants and friends in the two neighbourhoods after fieldwork ended, and some of these are discussed in the thesis, the analysis and discussions do not substantively consider more recent events. Specifically, whereas the research is focused on women's engagements in urban spaces and the city, the fieldwork was conducted before the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent lockdown. As such, socio-spatial dynamics in these neighbourhoods and the city have changed significantly since the fieldwork and, although lockdown has been eased since June 2020, it may take time for a return to the same public sociability discussed in this thesis. I reflect explicitly on the developments owing to the Covid-19 pandemic in Chapter 8, but the empirical chapters of this thesis are limited to the period during which the research was conducted owing to practical limitations of time.

1.3 Contributions of the thesis

The research conceptualises urban belonging and related constructions of community and citizenship through an examination of everyday urban cultural politics and gendered social relations in and from segregated neighbourhoods. Two key lenses frame the examination of belonging: an analysis of

gender (from a socio-political perspective) and an examination of urban segregation (taking a socio-spatial approach). Through this, the thesis seeks to make contributions at three levels.

First, the research is located across and makes conceptual and theoretical contributions to three scholarly spheres: political geography, feminist geography, and urban studies. While Chapter 2 situates the research at the intersection of these bodies of literature, here I briefly outline the main contributions of this thesis. Existing scholarship explores ethno-religious identity and belonging from a socio-political perspective (e.g. Yuval-Davis, 2011), but a spatial perspective is often remarkably absent. At the same time, feminist literature on gender and space (e.g. McDowell, 1983; Peake and Rieker, 2013; Chant and McIlwaine, 2015) largely underexplores the processes by which identity and socio-political subjectivity are constructed. Yet, socio-political relations and power structures are imminent and constantly renegotiated spatially through everyday life (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]; Massey, 2005). By bringing together these academic strands in my examination of gendered belonging, I offer a critical understanding of the socio-spatial-political contestations of urban space, both material and metaphorical, from an intersectional perspective. The thesis examines structural exclusion as well as situated agency, and explores how women construct their socio-political subjectivities and demonstrate agency through both everyday mundane tactics and strategies. In doing so it undertakes a gendered reading of urban space at different levels and makes critical contributions to reframe understandings of gendered social relations as well as urban processes in the global South.

Second, the research examines everyday politics during a time of wider shifts in national politics in India. The period of my fieldwork was marked by intense political contestations around the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill (or Triple Talaq Bill) which criminalised the practice commonly called triple talaq.⁴ This Bill prompted debate in policy and domestic spheres alike, about the relationship between Muslim women, religious community, and the state, and was enacted into law in 2019. The fieldwork was also a precursor to subsequent political struggles for Muslim belonging and citizenship that have escalated during the writing up of this thesis. Notably, in December 2019, the Parliament passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 which, for the first time, explicitly linked religious identity to citizenship. While the research examines belonging and citizenship through the lens of everyday life in and from Muslim neighbourhoods, it is not removed from the political moment but provides insight into the lived experience of belonging and exclusion in the context of these macro-political shifts.

⁴ Triple talaq refers to unilateral instantaneous divorce wherein a man divorces his wife by stating the word 'talaq' three times in one sitting.

Finally, methodologically, the multi-scalar intra-urban comparison and multi-pronged social, spatial and political approach help unpack urban complexity and, in doing so, contribute to the larger project of comparative urbanism advocated within the post-colonial 'turn' in urban studies (Robinson, 2006) while also placing the city as the scale at which diversity in urban forms and processes may be studied (see McFarlane et al, 2016). The research contributes to urban theorisation and the project of postcolonial urban studies through the case of Mumbai. Within urban studies, Roy (2011) argues that although cities like Mumbai have become metonymic of cities in the global South, they remain the 'constitutive outside' of urban studies. The thesis thus makes critical interventions into theoretical debates around public space (see Chapter 4) as well as urban processes such as segregation and gentrification (see Chapter 6) through a gendered and postcolonial critique.

The research thus balances the specificity and situated insights of Mumbai with a theoretical contribution to urban studies by examining urban diversity through an theorisation that unpacks questions of community and citizenship at the margins foregrounding the agency and perspective of women from segregated neighbourhoods in Mumbai. Yet, the research is not only about Mumbai as a segregated city but also a study of how notions of belonging, community and citizenship are constructed in the context of urban segregation at the intersection of different socially constructed identities. Thus, taken together, the research produces both empirical and conceptual interventions on the gendered politics of urban belonging and ethno-religious segregation, and more generally contributes to scholarship on urban cultural politics, and feminist and post-colonial urban theory.

1.4 Structure of this thesis

This thesis is organized into eight chapters, including this introductory chapter. As already mentioned, the main aim of the thesis is to examine the social, spatial and political constructions of community, belonging and citizenship at different scales through a gender lens.

Chapter 2 sets up the empirical and theoretical context to situate and motivate the research. It outlines the relevant theories and academic literature that have informed the development and conceptualization of the research project. The chapter is structured around the three main areas at the intersection of which this research is located – citizenship, urban space, and gender. The chapter outlines existing debates across these concepts drawing on urban, social, and political geography as well as related disciplines including sociology and political science.

Subsequently, **Chapter 3** elaborates on the methodological approach of the research project. It connects the research aims to the methodology and methods used in the research. In terms of data collection, the research employed a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with residents from case study neighbourhoods, representatives from the government and non-

governmental organisations (NGOs), and supplemented by participant observation and selected oral histories. In total, 78 interviews with 88 participants were conducted over nine months of fieldwork. Chapter 3 also reflects on ethical and other considerations underlying the research process.

The following four chapters set out the main empirical contributions of the research. The first two empirical chapters are focused on the neighbourhood as the scale of analysis, while the remaining two chapters link the neighbourhood to the urban and the nation. The chapters examine conceptions of identity, community, belonging and citizenship alternately through a socio-spatial and socio-political lens (see Table 1).

Table 1: Exposition of empirical chapters

| <i>Scale</i> | Socio-spatial | Socio-political |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| <i>Micro/meso</i> | Ch 4: Gendered constructions of public space and community | Ch 5: Narratives: Negotiating agency and the gendered self |
| <i>Macro</i> | Ch 6: Negotiating belonging from the segregated neighbourhood | Ch 7: Seeing the state: Cultural constructions of state-society relations |

The empirical investigations of **Chapter 4** revolve around gendered negotiations of urban space through performative acts and everyday practices. Although there is growing literature on women's right to the city in South Asia, this rarely distinguishes between the localised socio-spatial contexts in which these rights are negotiated. The chapter examines the gendered meanings of, and practices in, urban space to complicate understandings of urban social space in segregated neighbourhoods. Specifically, it poses two questions: What is 'public' about urban space? And, what does a gendered reading of public space reveal about gender and community? The chapter advances existing scholarship that argues the importance of context in shaping gendered space, by exposing the significant variance in expectations around gendered performances and everyday socio-spatial politics even at the local level of the neighbourhood. By examining women's experience of urban space, and the multiple meanings different types of places hold, it complicates understandings of 'public' space. At the same time, through an elaboration of gendered performances and everyday socio-spatial politics of women's claims to urban space and citizenship, the chapter unpacks the diverse configurations of gendered public space and expounds on differing notions of community within the segregated neighbourhood.

Next, **Chapter 5** examines how girls and women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods negotiate their identity through an examination of the role of narratives. It asks how women in segregated neighbourhoods construct and negotiate their own identities. It also highlights the importance of narratives not only in understanding women's identity construction but also in terms of their value to

women in navigating, negotiating and reconciling competing priorities, identities and communities. As the diverse contexts of women's social locations influence their identity formation, I do not focus on essentialised identity groupings or culturalist questions of identity construction but rather examine how women negotiate their aspirations, socio-political subjectivities, and agency within their social worlds.

Chapter 6 reverts to a socio-spatial examination of belonging and does this through an examination of the relationship between the segregated Muslim locality and the city. It unpacks notions of belonging and inclusion/exclusion in the material and metaphorical spaces of the city through the everyday experiences of women to explore how marginalisation impacts subjectivities in spaces of relegation. Specifically, it asks: to what extent does the segregated Muslim neighbourhood belong in the city, and how do residents in segregated neighbourhoods perceive and negotiate exclusion from the city? In exploring these questions, the chapter connects the neighbourhood to the macro level of the urban and examines the politics of segregation through urban cultural politics. By examining socio-spatial segregation and the role of neighbourhood territoriality – which is often entwined with religious, class and other identities – in shaping perceptions of urban belonging, it emphasises the differential experiences of exclusion and the strategies employed to claim belonging in and from segregated neighbourhoods. Whereas both neighbourhoods under study are stigmatised as segregated Muslim areas, the experience of marginalisation in is distinct in several ways. This chapter therefore emphasises the importance of exploring the diversity of experience beyond homogenising narratives of exclusion and segregation.

Subsequently, **Chapter 7** explores the urban cultural politics that shape how residents of segregated neighbourhoods perceive and experience the state through a gendered lens. While Chapter 6 touches upon interactions with the state in examining how residents of segregated neighbourhoods negotiate urban belonging, this chapter focuses explicitly on state-society relations in the realm of political space. The chapter asks: through what socio-political imaginaries are the state and state-society relations framed by residents of segregated Muslim neighbourhoods? Following Akhil Gupta's (1995) exposition of the state as constituted through a complex set of intersecting representations and everyday practices, the chapter examines the construction of the state as an "imagined" and "everyday" conception from segregated neighbourhoods. In the context of the emergence of Hindu nationalism as a dominant political force, the chapter first traces the socio-political imaginaries of the state and related trends in cultural politics as experienced by Indian Muslims. Subsequently, it undertakes a gendered analysis of the practices and perceptions of localised state actors, where the state is most viscerally experienced. Thus, the chapter examines the ways in which the state and citizenship are constructed and experienced as relational concepts where varying power geometries

position the state and state actors differently in different contexts and arenas within a context of a fractured community constituted by unequal power relations.

Finally, in **Chapter 8**, I bring together the findings of the research, and highlight the main contributions of the research. The chapter also reflects on how notable events that have occurred since my fieldwork might speak to the findings of the research, and briefly outlines possible directions for future research.

Chapter 2. Theoretical explorations

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines concepts relevant to the empirical and theoretical foundations of this thesis, which frame the contributions of the research project. Exploring practices of urban belonging and citizenship in segregated neighbourhoods requires an examination of citizenship; socio-spatial relations and processes that (re)produce urban spaces and segregation, as well as the construction of gendered identity and relations. In this chapter, I critically unpack the evolution of debates on these practices and concepts through urban, political and social geography as well as related social sciences. Specifically, this chapter discusses the conceptual strands of literature that frame the research project: citizenship, urban space and gender.

2.2 Citizenship and belonging

This section engages with debates on the meanings and practices of belonging and citizenship. Citizenship's promise of equal political membership remains powerful, but elusive (Roy, 2014). Citizenship can represent both oppression and marginalisation as well as resistance and transformative change (Chatterjee, 2004; Holston, 2008; Mohanty, 2009). This section explores the evolution of citizenship concepts and practices, positioned within narratives of belonging, community and the state.

2.2.1 Conceptualising citizenship

Although citizenship is vital to understanding socio-political life, the concept still escapes easy definition (Miller, 2000). In Anglo-scholarship, Marshall's (1950) formulation of citizenship as membership in a political community remains popular, which outlines three categories of citizenship – civil, political and social – that emerged sequentially in Britain. However, subsequent debates question this narrow conceptualisation in terms of scale, content and scope.

Scale

Although historically citizenship derives from cities (from the Greek polis), the common assumed bond is between citizens and the nation-state (Mann, 1993; Urry, 2000; Sanyal, 2014). However, scholars increasingly argue that an exclusive focus on the nation-state is less relevant in the context of economic and cultural globalisation, the growth of sub-state nationalisms and growing socio-economic and political-financial dominance of other scales (e.g. urban, region), alongside new forms of identity politics (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]; Sassen, 1996; Jacobson, 1996; Habermas, 1998; Delanty, 2000).

The city has re-emerged as an important scale at which citizenship is perceived and practised, for both citizens and the state. Localities are the sites where a sense of commonality that motivates individuals to act as citizens is built (Etzioni, 1993; Sandel, 1996; Putnam, 2000), and the meaning of citizenship beyond legal standing is realised (Kemmis, 1990). Equally, in discussions on 'global cities' (Sassen, 1991), urban entrepreneurialism and urban inequality, urban citizenship serves as a useful lens to understand contemporary politics (Holston and Appadurai, 1999). A focus on the local and on grassroots movements is argued to hold the potential for the expansion of citizenship rights (Holston, 2008), although local citizenship need not be emancipatory and may reflect local elitist tendencies (Smart and Lin, 2007).

In addition to citizen-driven changes in perceptions of citizenship scale, state-led developments have increasingly focused on the urban as the scale of development, planning, politics and citizenship. Internationally, the urban has received attention through discussions for the 'New Urban Agenda' and the inclusion of an urban-focused goal (SDG-11) within the Sustainable Development Goals. These developments signal a departure from previous anti-urban discourses and policy neglect of urbanization in the global South (Parnell, 2016), and a recognition of the unintended detrimental impact of the Millennium Development Goals on slum-dwellers (Meth, 2013). Indeed, a key argument of the 'New Urban Agenda' has been that municipal leaders need greater decision-making powers, challenging traditional notions of national sovereignty. These developments have been the result of concerted efforts by cities, city networks, governments, policymakers, NGOs and other actors. This demonstrates the interlinkages between different actors in agenda-setting for the scale at which we understand planning.

Yet, the focus of discussions on urban agendas and policy often neglect the role of urban citizens. In India, the shift in policy towards cities since the early 2000s has been most significantly marked by the 'Smart Cities Mission', a state-run inter-urban competition that seeks to transform 100 existing cities into ICT-driven urban centres since 2015. It has been argued that "smart cities" driven by technocratic conceptions of citizenship may enumerate residents previously hidden from technologies of governance, but the experience of citizenship often reproduces historic inequalities and hinders just urban politics (Datta, 2018; Caprotti et al, 2017). Thus, whereas the shift in scale and attention given to cities represents an opportunity for greater urban autonomy, it does not necessarily imply empowering understandings of urban citizenship.

Concurrently, globalisation, migration and the development of human rights regimes have spurred new transnational, cosmopolitan (Ong, 1999) and post-national (Soysal, 1994) conceptions of citizenship. Although the nation-state's roles may have changed, it remains salient, particularly in the context of growing securitization of national borders and the capacity of the nation-state to withdraw

legal rights (Bigo, 2002; Yuval-Davis, 2007). Indeed, the nation-state remains important in public imagination and political discourse as well as legal frameworks. Thus, citizenship has been considered a multi-scalar concept shaped by processes, perceptions and institutions at the local, national and international scales (Staeheli, 2003).

Content

Another complication in defining citizenship relates to the conceptions of *de jure* citizenship, which considers formal and legal status; and *de facto* or substantive citizenship, which concerns the realisation of socio-political rights. In some cases, the practice and experience of citizenship for certain groups (e.g. women and racial or ethnic minorities) may contradict legal and normative ideals (Lister, 1997; Yuval-Davis, 1997). Here, an exclusive focus on *de jure* citizenship ignores the legal and social barriers that exclude certain groups of citizens, and is insufficient to guarantee citizens full participation in political life or equal treatment under the law (Turner, 2001; Ong, 2006). Conversely, Staeheli and Cope (1994) examine how citizenship can be used to produce social change and introduce the concept ‘empowering citizenship’ to demonstrate how women use their *de jure* status as citizens to challenge the *de facto* barriers they face to full social inclusion.

This duality highlights debates that question the universality of citizenship, drawing attention to issues of identity and participation (Delanty, 2000; Bloemraad, 2000). Liberal political theory, which forms the basis of citizenship rules in most countries, conceptualises a universal concept of citizenship with all members of the political community enjoying equal rights. However, communitarian or republican theorists argue that legal structures alone cannot ensure equality in terms of citizens being able to effectively exercise rights (Fraser, 1990; Young, 2000). Citizenship often remains elusive for the most marginalised as the substance of citizenship varies significantly across geographies. Holston and Caldeira (1999) argue that citizenship is not evenly distributed for all citizens, but “disjunctive”, where democratised political institutions continue to diminish civil liberties and may systematically violate citizens’ rights. They show how in Brazil political democracy can coexist with violence against citizens to exemplify a specific but common variant of democratic disjunction wherein the vast majority cannot rely on the state to respect or guarantee individual rights, justly arbitrate conflicts or stem violence.

Scope

The social construction of the citizen and spaces of inclusion and exclusion precede access to civic and political rights (Isin, 2008a). Critics outline that liberal notions of citizenship that consider difference to be irrelevant are themselves exclusionary and discriminatory, as people’s citizenship, rights and responsibilities are mediated by their membership in several collectivities (Young, 1989; Kymlicka,

1995; Roy, 2014). While the Marshallian welfare state considered some class differences, it largely ignored modes of differences such as gender and race, and neglected differences within groups even when these identities were considered (Fraser and Gordon, 1992; Yuval-Davis, 2007). Yet, race and ethnicity have long been mapped onto lived understandings of citizenship (Benhabib, 2004; FitzGerald, 2017; Collins, 2001; Harder, 2010; Barreto and Lozano, 2017; Jamal, 2007; Hosein, 2012; Kashiwazaki, 2013; Chee et al, 2014).

Moreover, Marshall's theory neglected the importance of the citizenship project in the Empire and the lasting impact it had in the colonies (Kabeer, 2006; Sadiq, 2017). Such influences have been crucial in the conceptualisation and experience of postcolonial citizenship. Forms of "direct" and "indirect" rule (Mamdani, 1996) impacted postcolonial states that emerged after independence struggles. The bifurcation of the colonial state into an urban "civilised" sphere and an unruly rural space (ibid.) has reproduced itself in practices of citizenship in postcolonial states exemplified, for instance, in Chatterjee's (2004) influential distinction between civil and political society (discussed in Section 2.2.2).

Equally, feminist challenges account for the exclusion of gender and the broader invisibilisation of marginalised groups within conceptions of citizenship (Lister, 1991; 1997). Thus, instead of citizenship as an abstract category (as in liberal theory), feminist and anti-racist scholars have emphasised the embodied nature of citizenship, with citizens differentially situated in terms of identity to de-homogenize notions of citizenship (Pateman, 1996; Lister, 1997). In this context, citizens' positioning in terms of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, caste, stage in the life cycle, ability, etc., must all be acknowledged in any citizenship project that aspires to be inclusionary and democratic.

Scholars have argued that the boundaries of citizenship are constructed according to various shifting criteria that construct citizenship in racialised, gendered forms (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). The conditions of reproduction and transformation of ethnic identity are argued to be critically linked to a range of interconnected social divisions and distinctions (Brah, 1996). People regard themselves as members of several communities simultaneously, "communities within communities" (Baumann, 1996: 10) and thus identities within identities. Here, identities are not discrete forms to be accepted or discarded at different times, but messy, multiple, overlapping and intersecting. This situates identity and emphasizes fluidity, process, and relationality (Alexander, 2010).

In relating belonging to identities and communities, Benedict Anderson (1983)'s book *Imagined Communities*, which identifies the nation as a socially constructed imagined political community, is noteworthy. Anderson (1983: 7) clarifies that the nation is imagined as a community because "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may occur in each, the nation is always

conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship”. Yet, Anderson stresses that being ‘imagined’ is not being false or fictionalised but rather an exercise of abstract thought.

As with the nation, ethno-religious collectivities constructed around boundaries that divide the world into ‘us’ and ‘them’ are also Andersonian imagined communities (Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler, 2002). In this context, Yuval-Davis (1999) conceptualises citizenship as a multi-layered construct functioning in collectivities at different layers – local, ethnic, national, state, trans-state and supra-state. Here, a person’s citizenships in different layers affects and is affected by their citizenship in other layers of state and non-state polities. Thus, she argues that people’s lives are simultaneously shaped by their rights and obligations in several political communities. Although this is true for all, she emphasises that migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities are particularly affected by these multiple layers compared to those belonging to hegemonic majorities (Yuval-Davis, 2007), and also women, whose bodies are the site of multi-layered rules and regulations (Yuval-Davis, 1999).

Finally, focussing on citizenship alone is inadequate, and it needs to be situated in the wider context of the contemporary politics of belonging. Crowley (1999: 30) defined the politics of belonging as “the dirty work of boundary maintenance”. Belonging is thus a thicker concept than citizenship, not merely concerned with membership, rights and duties, but the emotional investment such membership provokes, generated by processes of exclusion as inclusion (Yuval-Davis et al, 2005). While community is recognized as a site to cultivate the social capital believed to be essential for democracy and form political subjectivities, it is also a site of politics and contesting who “belongs” in a political community. Thus, Staeheli (2008) argues that while community is based on commonality, it does not necessarily imply unity or homogeneity, highlighting the need to recognize the possibility of internally differentiated communities.

Understanding how citizenship is constructed and experienced as a relational concept demands a focus on the “power geometries” (Massey, 1993) that position political subjects. A key distinction between citizenship and contemporary conceptions of belonging relates to identification of self and of ‘the other’: individuals constructed as members of other collectivities are not considered to ‘belong’ to the community even if formally entitled to it (Yuval-Davis, 2007). This is clearly illustrated in the case of postcolonial India in Section 2.2.3. More broadly, recent scholarship has recognised citizenship as an important lens to frame politics, focusing beyond citizenship as a legal right or status to examine the acts and practices that shape state-citizen relations.

2.2.2 Beyond status: Acts of citizenship

Citizenship is increasingly recognised as more than a status, with a growing focus on the actions of citizens demonstrating their citizenship through both radical, confrontational, and everyday acts and

practices. Thus, there has been a shift away from analysing citizens *per se*, to instead exploring the *actions* that demonstrate citizenship.

Recent literature has focussed on new claims to citizenship through “acts of citizenship” (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). This broadens citizenship from membership of an institution (e.g. nation-state), to one where sites, scales and citizenship emerge as fluid and dynamic entities constituted through struggle (Isin, 2009). Understanding acts of citizenship in a way that is irreducible to status, requires a focus on those moments when – regardless of status and substance – subjects constitute themselves as citizens or as those to whom rights are due (Isin, 2008).

Isin and Nielsen (2008: 10) describe ‘acts of citizenship’ as deeds that “disrupt habitus, create new possibilities, claim rights and impose obligations in emotionally charged tones; pose their claims in enduring and creative expressions; and, most of all, are the actual moments that shift established practices, status and order”. Here, acts of citizenship differ from citizenship practices, such as voting or paying taxes, which are institutionally accumulated processes. Isin (2009) further establishes three identifying key principles: first, they are interpreted in particular contexts that transform subjects into citizens; second, they create activist citizens; and third, they need not be founded in law or legally enacted.

Thus, rupture or disruption of the given order is key to acts of citizenship (Isin, 2008b), which are often realised in the form of protests. Hence, a focus on “acts of citizenship” foregrounds the agency and actions of citizens. In this sense, the idea of acts of citizenship echoes concepts such as “insurgent citizenship” (Holston, 2008) and “active citizenship” (Miraftab and Wills, 2005) which centre citizenship claims that disrupt habitus through confrontation by marginalised groups through the language of rights. Emerging from the paradox between “universal inclusion in the language of rights” and “inevitable exclusion in the language of community and particularity” (Isin and Nielsen, 2008: 11), acts of citizenship emphasize the fluid and slippery reality of access to citizenship in practice. In doing so, acts of citizenship can potentially expand the conception of citizenship itself, often through the struggles of those excluded (Barbero, 2012).

In postcolonial contexts, regulatory frameworks are often secondary to everyday political negotiations, and questions of activist citizenship are closely linked to political patronage. Chatterjee (2004) differentiates political society from the Western Enlightenment notion of civil society. He defines political society as the chaotic process of negotiations contesting existing rules, such that the ‘politics of the governed’ is a persistent negotiation between political society and the State. Chatterjee (2004) argues that marginalised citizens are often forced to mobilise politically as ‘populations’ and find creative ways to articulate demands as political society whereas only a small,

elite section of civil society can act as citizens to access the state through rules and laws. This highlights the extremely political nature of citizenship and the socio-political processes through which *de facto* citizenship can be realised by marginalised populations. However, others have stressed the need to move beyond this binary conception in examining the socio-political processes through which cities and citizens are produced.

The modes of claiming citizenship are varied across contexts and group circumstances. Holston (2008) reveals how marginalised populations take recourse to the law and demand its fair application through the language of rights in Brazil. Similarly, for citizens on India's socio-political margins, struggle and protest are the primary mode through which citizenship is claimed (Chopra et al, 2011). Anand (2017) finds that residents of informal settlements do not only mobilise as political society, but struggle to be recognised, measured, and mapped in government surveys as legitimate citizens to shift the terms of urban belonging through claiming citizenship rights. In using a language of rights, the lines between acts and practices are often blurred through the coexistence of a multitude of strategies. For instance, Das (2011) argues that poor people engage in politics and not only appeals to pity or patron-client relations that characterise political society. Arguing against Chatterjee's binary conception of civil and political society, of those that govern and the governed, Das (2011: 320) demonstrates how these concepts blend together as the urban poor employ diverse strategies to "produce the capacity to make claims on the State" as a way to claim citizenship.

Thus, disruptions to habitus are not always the result of confrontational protests but can also be more subtle and incremental. Several scholars have investigated the subversive character of everyday practices through which the urban poor occupy urban space (e.g. Holston, 2009; Miraftab, 2009). An influential contribution has been Bayat's (1997: 57) theorisation of squatting, street trading and the "illegal" tapping of utilities as "quiet encroachment" which he describes as "a silent, patient, protracted and pervasive advancement of ordinary people" to redistribute social goods and opportunities and gain autonomy from the state. Bayat (1997: 58) distinguishes this kind of direct action from organized urban social movements as they occur "quietly, individually and gradually" and are not intended as political, though they may result in collective action if their gains are threatened by authority.

These debates highlight the importance of contextualising the complex interactions of acts of citizenship with informality and political subjectivities. Staeheli (2011), articulating a discomfort with the neglect of the citizen-subject and experience in favour of acts of citizenship, argues that practices of citizenship are an essential part of the relationships that construct and disrupt citizenship and are important for the potential of citizens to act. In this context, Staeheli et al (2012) propose the conception of 'ordinary citizenship' which emphasises everyday practices. Feminist, anti-racist, queer,

postcolonial and other critical theorists have long argued that legal and institutional structures intersect with everyday life (Robinson, 2006; Simone, 2010). Through the framework of ordinary citizenship, Staeheli et al (2012) argue that the ordinary and everyday plays a powerful role in the way citizenship is structured, practiced, and enacted, and consequently seemingly mundane acts, which may not always be considered political, can lead to varied forms of engagement that have the potential to mobilise political change.

2.2.3 Postcolonial citizenship in India

Within the context of the debates around citizenship, this section focuses on the idea of citizenship in postcolonial India. The conception of the Indian citizen has been a defining aspiration of postcolonial India and simultaneously one of its most contested political ideas (Jaya, 2014). Citizenship in India has been imbricated in state-formative practices and cartographic anxieties linked to the delineation of national space amidst the assertion of specific ethno-spaces (Roy, 2014).

In colonial India, colonial powers strategically inflated differences and ethnic identities to prevent collective action by the colonised (Cohen, 1969; O'Brien, 1986; Kabeer, 2006). This involved hierarchical codification of society that enabled the British to reinforce economic, religious and caste categories which became the basis of distributing differential patronage. The enumeration of 'communities' enabled the state to fashion conceptual instruments of control which configured racialised power not only between the dominant and subordinate, but also among different groups of subaltern populations (Chatterjee, 1993; Brah, 1996). Consequently, citizenship was viewed to be mediated by constructed communities rather than between the individual and the State. These labels accorded to communities have lived on and become strengthened in postcolonial India. It is within debates on the challenges of balancing cultural communities with civic identity that the conception of citizenship in postcolonial India must be understood.

Indian nationalists during the anti-colonial struggle sought to identify an Indian modernity rather than emulate conceptions of modernity from the West. This involved the creation of a unified political identity embedded in ideas of the nation having a 'common past' and driven by the allegory of 'Mother India' with her sons fighting for her purity, dignity and freedom (Sanyal, 2014). The dependence of nationalism on an essentialized Hindu female implied an 'ethno-cultural' citizenship (Roy, 2014).

After independence, despite efforts of leaders to create a shared national identity, the notion of group-differentiated citizenship emerged (Young, 1989). The fundamental rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution articulated equal treatment of all citizens, but stipulated certain exemptions for affirmative action. Thus, while the principle of universal citizenship persisted, the 'community' was

included as a collective unit, leading to two vocabularies of citizenship relating to the individual and the community (Roy, 2014). The Constitution abolished separate electorates but provided reservations or quotas in legislatures, public employment and education for members of certain excluded groups: Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. These were originally proposed for ten years but have been regularly extended. While the Constitution projected group-differentiated citizenship as a temporary exception for social justice, this has become the dominant mode of citizenship (Jayal, 2014). The fulfilment of Muslim claims to differentiated citizenship were considered to have been met through the creation of Pakistan and thus the Indian Muslim minority were not provided any quotas but given rights of a cultural community (ibid.).

A second contention relates to the principles of *jus soli*, or citizenship by birth in a territory, and *jus sanguinis*, or citizenship by ancestry or blood. While leaders of the independence movement repeatedly emphasised that Indian citizenship would be based on the principle of *jus soli*, which was solidified in the Constitution in 1950, scholars have argued that the practice of citizenship in postcolonial India has moved towards a regime of *jus sanguinis* (Chatterji, 2012; Jayal, 2013).

Yet, Jayal (2013: 51) argues that the looming of the ‘long shadow of Partition’ over ideas of citizenship in India prefigures a shift towards a *jus sanguinis* regime. Independence and the creation of India (and Pakistan) was accompanied by a bloody partition, the violence of which, far from being an aberration, was central to the creation of nationhood (Pandey, 2001) and informed debates on citizenship in drafting the Indian Constitution (Jayal, 2014). The partition of the subcontinent was followed by over 14 million people migrating to the ‘right’ side of the newly constructed borders (Bharadwaj et al, 2008). Post-partition movements challenged the conception of equal citizenship for all, as Hindus migrating to India were considered “natural” citizens (van Schendel, 2002) while Muslims had to prove their status (Chatterji, 2012). Similarly, Hindu and Sikh women recovered from Pakistan were restored to their ‘homes’ in India, whereas Muslim women were ‘taken into custody’ until their own government, Pakistan, claimed them (Roy, 2014).

Partition made the Indian elite acutely aware of the dangers of religious bigotry, and secularism became an important guiding principle in postcolonial state-formation to limit the political expression of ethno-religious conflict. The Indian Constitution interpreted secularism as a principle where the state would honour all faiths without discrimination (Madan, 2010). Yet, in practice, the partition of the Indian subcontinent and creation of Pakistan proved a fertile ground to question Indian Muslims’ commitment to the nation, and the association of the popular imagination of the Muslim minority with communalism and a separatist position.

Hindu nationalist agendas and institutions have gradually penetrated everyday life in postcolonial India, but acquired political prominence in the 1980s. A shift towards a *jus sanguinis* regime was seen through legislative amendments to the Citizenship Act 1955 in the 1980s to stem the flow of migrants from Bangladesh,⁵ which covertly introduced religious difference into the law (Jayal, 2014). Increasing centralisation of the Indian state in the 1970s was accompanied by a feeling of powerlessness (Brass, 1991; Kohli, 1990) and as the state became more oppressive, identities that coalesced around religion, caste and region asserted themselves more strongly (Hasan, 2000). The decline of the Indian National Congress (INC) created an ideological space in which Hindu nationalist groups, collectively known as the Sangh Parivar⁶, politically headed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), could emerge (Kohli, 1990; Manor, 1997). Whereas the INC initially received strong electoral support from Muslims based on its promise to protect minorities, from the 1980s communal forces of the Sangh Parivar projected this relationship as minority appeasement, and characterised pluralist ideologies as ‘pseudo-secularism’, which they alleged conferred ‘privileges’ on minorities and denied Hindus the advantage an unqualified policy of equal treatment would produce (Kaviraj, 1997; Madan, 2010). The BJP gained prominence through the Ram Janmabhoomi [Ram’s birthplace] agitation which demanded the construction of a temple at the site of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, claimed to be the birthplace of the Hindu God Ram. After a long political movement, the Babri Masjid was destroyed in a rally of Hindu-nationalist organisations led by BJP *kar sevaks* on 6 December 1992.

The idea of a plural Indian nationalism was challenged by the resurgence of Hindu nationalism in the 1990s (Van der Veer, 1994; Nandy, 1998; Corbridge and Harriss, 2000; Jaffrelot, 2007), and particularly with the election of a Hindu nationalist government in 2014. In fact, Jaffrelot (2019) proposes the framework of ‘ethnic democracy’ outlined by Smootha (2002) to analyse contemporary citizenship in India. One of the conditions for the emergence and persistence of an ethnic democracy is ‘the existence of a threat (real or perceived) to the ethnic nation that requires mobilisation of the majority to preserve the ethnic nation’ (Smootha, 2002: 479). Ethnic democracy implies two-tiered citizenship, with the majority enjoying more rights than the minority. While many countries have had elements of ethnic democracy, Smootha identifies Israel as its archetype, combining an ethnic identity (as Jews have greater rights officially and *de facto* in contradiction with the law) and a parliamentary

⁵ The 1985 amendment, following the Assam Accord, included a section [Special Provisions as to Citizenship of Persons Covered by the Assam Accord] that determined eligibility for citizenship based on the year residents migrated to India to allay anxieties about migrants from Bangladesh after the 1971 War. A further amendment in 2004 provided that a person with even one parent who was an illegal migrant would not be eligible for citizenship by birth. These provisions were a response to the political situation in Assam, but are argued to contain the seeds of the politicisation and communalisation of Indian citizenship.

⁶ The Sangh Parivar refers, as an umbrella term, to the collection of Hindu nationalist organisations of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh dedicated to the cause of Hindutva or Hindu nationalism.

system. Jaffrelot (2019) argues that India has moved toward this model since 2014, exhibiting a specific variant characterised by the lack of major legal reform. Although the Constitution continues to embody ideals of secularism and equal citizenship, he argues that vanishing minority representation in elected assemblies, and vigilante Hindu nationalist cultural policing that conjures a constant threat from Muslims with the blessing of the police and government has created a *de facto* ethnic democracy. Chatterji et al (2019) argue that although India has long exhibited dominance of the Hindu majority (which found purchase even among INC leaders), the election of the BJP in 2014 brought an open articulation and acceptability of Hindu majoritarianism, even at the highest level of the state.

Ethno-religious politics and violence (Brass, 2003; Varshney, 2003; Wilkinson 2005) along with caste, class and region are reconfiguring and producing new spaces (Shaban, 2012) and have further undermined the idea of equal citizenship. While elements of religious difference were covertly introduced into the conception of citizenship earlier, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019⁷ (hereafter CAA) overtly displaced the principle of *jus soli*, thereby entrenching an exclusionary conception of citizenship. The CAA facilitates the naturalisation of migrants belonging to 'Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian' communities who migrated to India from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan on or before 31 December 2014. Non-Muslims from these countries deemed 'belonging to minority communities' are not considered illegal migrants under the Act and are eligible for Indian citizenship after six years of residence (compared to the previous requirement of 12 years). In contrast, Muslims from these countries remain ineligible for the same relaxation. This Act thus represents a continuity of the move towards a *jus sanguinis* regime of Indian citizenship, and highlights contentions around Muslim belonging and citizenship in India. Earlier in 2019 the Home Minister Amit Shah announced the government's intention to create a National Register of Citizens (NRC). An NRC had been completed in the north-eastern state of Assam, where those without adequate documentary evidence risked losing their citizenship. In combination, the CAA and NRC mean that Muslims without the required documentation would have no recourse to citizenship, unlike those of other faiths. It is against the backdrop of these wider political shifts that the research in this thesis was conducted.

2.2.4 Citizenship and the postcolonial state

The previous sections outlined different conceptions of citizenship; these debates centre around the interactions of citizens with the state, and as such the state remains an important actor within the

⁷ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=195783>

conception of citizenship. This section therefore foregrounds the state and elaborates on recent scholarship on understanding the state, particularly in postcolonial contexts.

Firstly, what do we mean by the state? Skopol (1979: 29) defines the state as “a set of administrative, policing, and military organisations headed, and more or less well coordinated by, an executive authority”. Scholars have examined the processes that produce the distinctions between the state and society and make them appear natural (Mitchell, 2006). For instance, Ferguson and Gupta (2002: 981-2) outline two modes by which the State spatializes its authority and power: *vertically* as above society, and simultaneously *encompassing* all localities of society, from the family to the nation-state. These metaphorical scales of the state can be understood as the “less dramatic, multiple, mundane domains of bureaucratic practice by which states reproduce spatial orders and scalar hierarchies” (ibid: 984). This produces a spatial and scalar image of the state that Ferguson and Gupta (2002) argue allows states and state actors to secure their legitimacy and authority.

Questioning the state also means questioning state power. For example, Scott’s (1998) seminal book *Seeing Like a State* contends that centrally-managed social plans that impose schematic visions without considering complex interdependencies often fail even when seemingly well-intended, and proposes that the success of plans depends on the recognition of local, practical knowledge. Where Scott looks at the modern state as an exercise in legibility, Mathur (2015) argues that in India state officials are themselves often befuddled by these boundaries, finding the state is often illegible to them. Thus, while the image that the state presents of itself may be one of coherence and dominance, in practice it has not only multiple (and sometimes conflicting) parts but also pressure (and sometimes support) from groups outside the state (Migdal, 2001). Thus, it has been found that the state is not really a discrete institution or set of institutions, as its power is inseparable from the political power of non-state actors. For example, Mitchell (1991:88) argues that “the edges of the state are uncertain; societal elements seem to penetrate on all sides, and the resulting boundary between the state and society is difficult to determine”. Recent scholarship theorising the state has questioned the notion of the state as a fixed, authoritative, well-defined entity. This literature views the state as constantly under construction, while emphasising the importance of studying how it is constructed (Mitchell, 1990; Sharma and Gupta, 2006).

Despite the blurred distinctions between the state and society, the state remains widely understood as a distinct entity. In understanding this conception, Abrams (1988) proposes understanding the state not as an institution but an ideological project. Thus, in addition to ‘a state-system’ he argues that there is also a “state-idea, projected, purveyed and variously believed in in different societies at different times” (Abrams, 1988: 82). Similarly, Hansen and Stepputat (2001) argue that the notion of the state remains a powerful lens through which society and the nation are imagined. Thus, the state

is not just a set of institutional forms but has vital mythological dimensions. Ferguson and Gupta (2002: 981) contend “states are not simply functional bureaucratic apparatuses, but powerful sites of symbolic and cultural production that are in themselves always culturally represented and understood in particular ways.” Mitchell (1991) argues that although there is no clear boundary separating the state from society, the modern nation-state produces an apparent boundary between them, which he identifies as a defining feature of the modern political order. For him, the state is not to be analysed as a structure but as a structural effect. Nevertheless, for Mitchell (1999), it is important not to separate the material form of the state from the ideological, as the state-idea and state-system are two facets of the same process creating the state as a structural effect.

In practice, therefore, there is growing recognition of the “paradoxical quality of the state” which requires acknowledging both the “powerful image of a clearly bounded, unified organization that can be spoken of in singular terms” and “the practices of a heap of loosely connected parts or fragments, frequently with ill-defined boundaries between them and other groupings...and often promoting conflicting sets of rules” (Migdal, 2001 in Williams et al, 2011). Nevertheless, modern states are in a continuous process of construction through processes that invoke a range of registers of governance and authority (Hansen and Stepputat, 2001).

A final consideration relates to the relationship between the postcolonial state and communities. In India, the emergence of the postcolonial state saw political authority shift from caste-based hierarchical communities to a sovereign central state (Khilnani, 2004), although the latter did not completely displace the former. Indian political identity was envisioned as being “layered” to accommodate this disjuncture: being Indian was mediated through social and regional identities that were reinforced by the state and the INC after Independence (ibid). The colonial logic of governing social and territorially defined groups aimed to prevent the collective action of shared identity (Kabeer, 2006) led to forms of “internal dual citizenship” (Sadiq, 2017: 8) where religious and ethnic groups are given claims to autonomy. Notwithstanding efforts of elite leaders of nationalist movements to create shared national identities cutting across these categories, the notion of group-differentiated citizenship (Young, 1989) emerged in postcolonial states. Thus, the Indian state is not experienced evenly by all; at the margins, the state is experienced “most frequently and intimately” and in often violent or oppressive ways (Williams et al, 2011: 15).

The research in this thesis explores the situated experiences of belonging and citizenship of women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods in the context of these academic debates on the nature of citizenship. In examining constructions of belonging, it traces how this idea is closely related to socially constructed and politically contested notions of identity, community and citizenship. While this section outlined recent scholarship on the main theoretical object of investigation of the

research, the empirical discussions in the chapters to follow engage with these concepts to further extend the connections between community, belonging and citizenship, and complicate how they come together at different scales and in varied contexts.

2.3 Conceptualising urban space

This section outlines recent debates on urban space and frames the socio-spatial approach taken in this thesis. It first discusses the conceptualisation of space and place as relational and social. Section 2.3.2 traces critical perspectives on the right to the city and everyday life, and links it with recent literature connecting urban space and infrastructure to citizenship. Subsequently, Section 2.3.3 outlines debates on women in urban spaces and gendered claims to the city, and the final section discusses scholarship on urban segregation, outlining its causes and typologies.

2.3.1 The production of urban space

‘Space’ and ‘place’ are two central concepts in human geography, although their theoretical specification has often been disputed and transformed as new ways of ‘thinking geographically’ have developed (Hubbard and Kitchin, 2011). Urban theory, starting from the Chicago School, borrowed from the natural sciences in trying to explain spatiality and social interactions within the city. For a long time, geographers connected space to conceptions within Euclidean geometry and broadly considered space as a neutral container which was then filled by human activity (Gleeson, 1996). For instance, de Certeau (1984) outlined space as what place is when the unique gathering of things, meanings and values are sucked out. Conversely, Gieryn (2000) observed that place is what space is when invested with people, practices, objects and representations. Thus, space was considered *presocial*, which then became a social space once people attached boundaries, meaning and value to it – making it *place* (Gans, 2002). Such positivist approaches to space were typically aimed to describe urban phenomena without questioning why they were so. As such, they failed to recognise that space was a product of power relations and ignored the importance of capitalism and the market in producing urban society and space.

Following anti-establishment movements across the Western world in the 1960s, there was a rise in radical approaches, such as critical urban theory, which was critical of not only past theories but also capitalism and injustice in cities. In the 1970s, a different interpretation of spatiality developed which considered space to be inherently tied to social relations.

A key contribution was Henri Lefebvre’s 1974 ‘The Production of Space’, which proposed a universal theory of (social) space. Lefebvre argued that absolute space cannot exist because the moment it is colonized through social activity, it becomes relativized and historicised space (Hubbard and Kitchin, 2011). Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) elaborated that spaces created through the existing scientific notions

of Cartesian logic were merely an abstraction, disassociated from the reality of lived experience. Instead, he sought to unite three realms—the mental, social, and physical—into a conceptualization of space. For Lefebvre, experiences and practices in space produce three dialectically co-constituting spheres or types of spaces:

- *Perceived space or spatial practice*: is the perceivable aspect of space that can be grasped by the senses, and is associated with images and symbols. Lefebvre equated it with spatial practice to demonstrate that perception relates to both the mind and concrete materiality (Schmid, 2008).
- *Conceived space or representations of space*: produced by authoritative, and typically regulatory- or planning-based, and is concerned with prescriptive conceptions of space; this is the dominant space in society and constructed from codification and abstract representation by planners, urbanists, technocrats and engineers.
- *Lived space or representational space (spaces of representation)*: represents the world as it is experienced by people in the practice of their everyday life and is created by their encounters with physical space. Lefebvre points out that practical experience cannot be exhausted by theoretical analysis – there will always be an ineffable but valuable residue (Schmid, 2008).

As this conceptualisation gained prominence, geographers critically unpacked the political, economic, cultural, classed, gendered, and racialized processes that shape socio-space. Soja (1996) relates Lefebvre's spatial triad to an aleph⁸. For him, *Firstspace* relates to *perceived space*, *Secondspace* is *conceived space*, whereas *Thirdspace* is where they all come together, like an aleph: "subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history" (Soja, 1996: 56). Thirdspace thus encompasses the perceived and conceived space.

For Lefebvre, the three spheres are not independent but dialectically interconnected to each other in the production of space (Schmidt, 2008). Lefebvre emphasised that the three spatial facets are not separate; each generates specific forms of knowledge that are distinguishable in their relationships with power, and together produce a single phenomenon of social space. Yet, empirical studies of the multifaceted nature of space inspired by the Lefebvrian triad have struggled to integrate the spheres into holistic analysis. In this context, Pierce and Martin (2015) propose that a relational place-based framework to conceptualise the interaction between humans and the environment may capture the

⁸ Based on Jorge Borges's story *The Aleph*, an aleph is an artefact that shows everything in the universe at once.

physical, political, economic and experiential, while simultaneously resisting the conceptual slippage involved in collapsing different facets of space into a unitary space.

While many theorisations explore relational place without linking it to Lefebvrian social space, Pierce and Martin (2015) see important but incomplete parallels between the two approaches. They argue that although both emphasize the multifaceted nature and significance of space/place, Lefebvre's social space differs from place-based approaches both ontologically and epistemologically. They assert that Lefebvrian space is an ontological intervention, with *The Production of Space* being hostile to 'epistemology' as a critical discipline. In contrast, theorizations of place involve understanding the intersections of diverse threads of place and unpacking their multiple epistemologies. In this sense, they argue that a relational notion of place offers to incorporate many aspects of the Lefebvrian triad while addressing issues of epistemic hybridity.

Place generally represents a bounded space defined by the lived experiences of people. It emerges through acts of naming and distinctive activities and imaginings associated with particular social spaces (Hubbard and Kitchin, 2011). While place has often been equated to the local (Harvey, 1990; Merrifield, 1993), some scholars have argued that it does not necessarily denote local scale. For instance, Tuan (1977) stresses that place is created and maintained through 'fields of care' resulting from people's emotional attachment. Similarly, Massey's (1991b) conception of a 'global sense of place' argues that place depends on participation, not localism. As such, there has broadly been agreement that place is involved with embodiment (Thrift, 2003). Here, a relational place-based approach does not view place as a coherent, unitary whole, but rather as a variety of roughly congruent bundles that come together (Amin, 2004; Massey, 2004; 2005; Jones, 2009; Pierce et al, 2011).

Place is considered fundamental to experiencing belonging and provides a locus of identity for those living in it. However, Hubbard and Kitchin (2011) caution that place should not be romanticised as a pre-political entity. In fact, the many simultaneous framings of place are often fraught as stakeholders compete to control development within places through political contestation (Massey, 1996; Amin, 2004). Thus, places and the social relations within and between them are the result of specific arrangements of power, including often oppressive institutional forces and socio-political relationships (Massey, 2012).

To conclude, while some scholars have proposed a relatively simple distinction between space and place, others have offered more complex theorisations of both space (e.g. Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]; Soja, 1996) and place (e.g. Escobar, 2001; Amin, 2004; Massey, 2005). Although the ways in which both space and place have been operationalised have differed over time, both being fairly amorphous

concepts, they remain fundamental to geographical imaginations. In this context, this thesis follows from critical scholarship that emphasises the role of social power relations in producing urban spaces and places and interrogates how these are configured across different scales and sites in and beyond segregated neighbourhoods. In doing so, it considers space and place as relational objects to develop a multidimensional understanding of urban social space that is produced through the interaction of state action, material infrastructure, and everyday experience and socio-political relations. The next section elaborates on debates on urban belonging and, relatedly, citizenship in order to outline the ways in which the research examines these conceptions and their relation to the production of urban space and place.

2.3.2 The right to the city and everyday life

A discussion on urban socio-spatial exclusion and access to urban public spaces cannot avoid mention of the 'right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1968). Although the notion lacks an exact definition, the Lefebvrian right to the city constituted a radical rethinking in the content of 'belonging', defining rights not in terms of formal citizenship (which is inherently exclusionary) but based on inhabitation: those who inhabit a city have a right to the city (Fenster, 2005). Further, the right to the city is not simply the right to access education or work or certain services but rather includes the right to belong everywhere, occupy cities, influence institutions and gain a livelihood (Whitzman, 2013), and for residents to shape the city in ways that fulfil their needs (Holston and Appadurai, 1996; 1999). It thus includes the right to appropriation (to full and complete use of urban space) as well as to participation (to influence decision-making about the production of urban space). Harvey (2008) further elaborates that the right to the city surpasses individual liberty to access urban resources and includes a right to change oneself by changing the city. In this sense, it is not a right to be distributed from above to individuals but instead a way of relating to the political life of the city and thus not merely a participatory right but an enabling right to be defined and refined through political struggle (Dikec, 2001).

Here, it is worth connecting arguments about the right to the city with understandings of citizenship. Whereas the right to the city framework is inherently about the right of citizens as the primary inhabitants of the city, the notion of citizenship (discussed in Section 2.1) recognises the rights and roles of both citizens and the state. Purcell (2002) highlights that Lefebvre's conception of the right to the city emphasises the need to restructure the power relations underlying the production of urban space, shifting control away from capital and the state and toward urban inhabitants. Thus, Lefebvre's socialism insisted on a "withering away of the state and the collective self-governing of society" (Purcell, 2014: 145). Nevertheless, movements based on the right to the city have inevitably engaged with the state. Thus, while lived practices and claims for the right to the city have engaged with the

state in different ways, the right to the city is also distinct from citizenship narratives in that it adds a “deeply spatial understanding of politics, and in particular an understanding of politics that places urban space at the very centre of its vision” (Purcell, 2014).

The right to the city approach has been criticised for not being appropriate for Indian cities as the notion of the ‘public’ has always been based on the exclusion of certain groups. Postcolonial scholars have argued that Western conceptions of a dichotomy between public and private spaces fail to consider the distinction between European public-ness and non-Western ideas of commonness (Chakrabarty, 1992; Arabindoo, 2011). For instance, Kaviraj (1997) argues that in India public spaces may lack proper authorisation and impersonality. Rather than being based on a notion of individual rights, small or large groups dominate and manage public spaces (Kaviraj, 1997). As such, the daily functioning of colonial Indian society distinguished between the inside and outside rather than public and private (Chakrabarty 1992; Kaviraj 1997). Activities in outside spaces relied on the participation of the crowd as nationalist leaders drew on the ‘common’ in the independence movement. Although they reinforced inherited colonial structures intended to discipline everyday conduct in the postcolonial period, this was met with limited success (Kaviraj, 1997). Yet, neoliberal policies introduced since the 1990s have redefined understandings of public space by invoking bourgeois imaginaries of public spaces based on aestheticized models of order and cleanliness (Arabindoo, 2011; 2012; Ghertner, 2011). Yet, some scholars argue against viewing such changes as simplistic transfers to the private domain, claiming public space has never been self-evident and instead is the result of complex socio-political processes (Mitchell, 2005; Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo, 2009). The examination of gendered contestations to urban space in this thesis is situated within these debates, as the research examines how urban belonging is constructed through diverse vocabularies of public space. Chapter 4 makes a critical intervention to this scholarship by asking what is ‘public’ about space through a gendered reading of urban space in segregated neighbourhoods.

In addition to challenges relating to conceptualising ‘public’ space, the Lefebvrian conception of the right to the city has been critiqued for neglecting patriarchal power relations which are not only gendered but also ethnic and cultural (Fenster, 2005; Beebejaun, 2017). Lefebvre included the right to the city to be complementary to the right to difference: “the right not to be classified forcibly into categories determined by the necessarily homogenizing powers’ (Lefebvre, 1976: 35). Here, the focus in understandings of difference has been on the right to ‘be’, thus narrowly focusing on particularity rather than addressing issues of power and patriarchal control related to identity (Dikec, 2001; Fenster, 2005). In this context, while the right to the city discourse offers a range of perspectives on reclaiming the city for urban dwellers, it has been proposed that an exploration of gender dynamics may be better served by a focus on everyday life. Lefebvre (1958 [1947]: 97) described everyday life

as 'in a sense residual, defined by what is left over after all distinct, superior, specialised, structured activities have been singled out for analysis'. It is thus routine and yet forms the basis of social interactions. An exploration of how everyday life is negotiated and constituted can provide productive insights into the multiplicity of spatial practices that illuminate gendered experiences (Eyles, 1989; Beebeejaun, 2017).

The comparison between the right to the city and everyday life also mirrors the distinction Lefebvre makes between 'habiting' and 'habitat': Lefebvre elucidates the analytical promise what he calls 'habiting', drawing attention to the ways that its everyday private practices conflict with technocratic approaches to producing space, or 'habitat'. These lived experiences provide the revolutionary potential in capitalist forms of urbanisation, as Lefebvre (2003 [1970]: 84-85) asserts, "habiting should no longer be approached as a residue, as a trace or a result of so-called superior levels. It should, it can already, be considered as a source or foundation". Thus, while the right to the city framework can be understood as struggles to contest 'habitat', the right to everyday life and space can be connected to Lefebvre's notion of 'habiting'. As such, while the everyday is considered a residual, it is of epistemological, theoretical and political importance: An elaboration of everyday life is not only descriptive but offers new insights and conceptualisations of urban politics (Goonewardena, 2012). This research, following from Buckley and Strauss (2016), focuses on the everyday and simultaneously does not privilege the everyday over the global, politically or analytically. As such, the subsequent chapters in this thesis bring together imaginations, acts and practices that populate both the global and everyday within claims to urban space.

A final component of the understanding spatial justice and claims to urban space and belonging as interpreted within this thesis brings together the socio-political (and related power relations and structures) and the socio-spatial (in terms of the materiality of space and infrastructure). In India, recent efforts to build and create global or 'world-class' cities (Roy and Ong, 2011), as elsewhere, have catered increasingly to middle- and upper-classes through prioritisation of certain types of infrastructure, the removal of slum and squatter settlements, and attempts to gentrify citizen participation (Baviskar, 2003; Fernandes, 2004; Ghertner, 2011) (see Section 2.2.4).

Recent scholarship has acknowledged the politicised nature of challenges in accessing everyday infrastructure, which is often explored through the language of rights. Despite its resurgence in literature on reclaiming urban spaces, the right to the city conceptualisation has generally been focused on cities in the global North, whereas development scholarship and practice in the global South has often employed 'rights-based' discourses. Yet, Lemanski (2019a) argues that although a vocabulary of rights may help achieve particular demands, a wider conceptualisation of 'citizenship' offers to encapsulate the long-term relationship between citizens and the state. In doing so, Lemanski

(2019a; 2019b) introduces a framework of 'infrastructural citizenship' to examine the relationship between infrastructure and citizenship in shaping urban life. Through an example of public housing in Cape Town, Lemanski (2019a) demonstrates how infrastructure serves as a medium for citizens and the state to engage with one another. Whereas post-apartheid governments in South Africa have attempted to redress past inequalities through infrastructure-based visions of citizenship (Graham and Marvin, 2001; Monstadt and Schramm, 2017), infrastructure development is often unable to cater to increasing demand in the context of rapid urbanisation. In this context, Lemanski (2019a) outlines how both citizens and the state criticise the infrastructure-based inactions of the other through discourses of citizenship and motivates the conception of 'infrastructural citizenship' through the interchangeability between the political identity of citizens and their material rights in terms of infrastructure in grassroots and policy discourse.

In sum, spatial justice understood as the right to the city and everyday life is intimately linked to the experience and conception of substantive citizenship. Several different approaches have conceptualised the socio-political relationship between citizens and the state, and the materiality of the city in terms of space and infrastructure (which are themselves dialectically linked): through the right to the city, rights-based discourses, citizenship framings such as infrastructural citizenship. While each is based on different assumptions, has a distinct focus, and implies a different configuration of the elements within the assemblage, they all identify that the experience of urban space and infrastructure, as with citizenship, is characterised by a differentiated and uneven, highly politicised terrain. Chapters 6 and 7 engage with these interventions and assess the various configurations within which urban belonging and citizenship are negotiated. In doing so, these chapters highlight the heterogeneous ways in which these urban residents/citizens perceive and engage with urban space and the state to counter exclusion and stake a claim to belonging and citizenship.

2.3.3 Women in urban spaces

The urban transition has been associated with opportunities to advance gender equality, providing greater access to education, employment, and independence for women (Tacoli, 2012). Young men in urban areas are also considered to be more socialised towards gender equality (Chant and McIlwaine, 2016) reflecting changing social norms at the individual and interactional levels. Of course, this is not always the case and urban women continue to experience a wide range of challenges.

The construction of everyday life based on the ritualised use of space has a distinct gendered dimension as patriarchal structures restrict women's access to public spaces (Fenster, 2005). This has been highlighted by Anglo-American feminist geographers since the 1960s. The second wave of

feminism brought the struggle for the 'public woman', claiming women's rights to work and participate in public life (Spain, 2002; Peake, 2016). Feminist geographers argued against the perpetuation of inaccurate assumptions about women's lives, critiquing the conventional urban structure that created gendered environments intended to meet the needs of men and heteronormative families based on dichotomous distinctions between public and private, work and home, and production and reproduction – with the latter terms assumed to relate to women (McDowell, 1983; Bondi and Rose, 2003). Until then, through the period of capitalist industrialisation, the division of urban space in many western countries was characterised by a physical separation of home from work (McDowell, 1983). In the *city of separate spheres*, a woman's rightful place was perceived to be domestic – either her own home or, for domestic workers, someone else's (Sandercock and Forsyth, 2005). Families moved from cities to suburbs envisioning a *bourgeois utopia* where women could care for the household and children (Fishman, 1987 cited in Fainstein, 2005).

However, gender relations, which are socially constructed and transformed, vary across time and place. This demands an analysis from the global South, and indeed comparison of different places within the heterogeneous 'South', to understand commonalities and differences across contexts. This research aims to contribute to these debates by explicitly examining the factors that shape women's experience and practices in different urban spaces in segregated neighbourhoods in Mumbai. Chapter 4 explicitly unpacks the heterogeneity of gendered urban space even at the localised scale of the neighbourhood, thereby complicating how gendered urban space and the public-private dichotomy may be understood.

In terms of accessing public spaces, despite the emergence of women's movements in the 1980s (see Section 4.4.2), women are routinely discriminated against at all scales in Indian cities. Patriarchal social structures play a key role in shaping public perceptions of women in urban areas as also their labour market participation, choice of work and mobility (Das and Desai, 2003; Klasen and Pieters, 2015). For instance, in a study across Mumbai – a city considered friendly for women within the Indian context – only 28% of 'people in the streets' were found to be female (Phadke, 2007: 1511).

More generally, urban planning is often gender-blind and routinely assumes men and women have the same needs and aspirations (Fainstein and Fainstien, 1996; Tawa Lama-Rewal, 2011). While gender features prominently in policies on social services, few urban or transport plans explicitly addressed gender (Peters, 2001). For instance, both Marxist and neoclassical economists have largely ignored women's domestic work (Markusan, 1980), meaning that much of their contribution and needs are invisible in planning (Moser, 1989). As productive and reproductive work are often separated in cities, when women are employed, they must reconcile paid work with reproductive responsibilities, gendering non-income dimensions of deprivation such as time poverty, which also

often pressure them to work in the informal sector (Fonchingong, 2005). In this context, a simplistic public-private dichotomy does not capture the gendered use of space in India, where considerable 'productive' work is done in the private sphere and some 'reproductive' work for personal or household needs is conducted in public (e.g. collecting water, accessing toilets). Feminist scholarship has elaborated on how social norms impact women's time use and labour force participation (Tacoli, 2012), but less attention has been paid to how this impacts their use of space.

It is argued that women are expected to demonstrate their respectability, through clothing and symbols of matrimony, to justify their presence in public (Phadke, 2007). In Indian cities, women are conditioned to always behave respectable as society can be watching. Thus, while urbanization has enabled women's education, wider social change has been slow and social attitudes continue to normatively dictate what women can and cannot do, what hours they can work, and so on (Ghosh and Roy, 1997). Insofar as women's access to public space is conditional it is not an acknowledgement of their right to the city (Butalia, 2014). These arguments are reminiscent of Wolff's (1985) critique that there could not be a female flaneur, only a prostitute, since the freedom to roam was decidedly male. Theorists across the western world distinguished 'good' women from 'bad' women based on norms of morality (Tonkiss, 2005). 'Respectable' women did not wander the streets and parks alone, and non-respectable women were perceived to be for male consumption, though they too faced the threat of violence (Massey, 1991a). These dichotomies have persisted as, Datta (2016a) outlines how police in Delhi's slums use subjective assessments of women's morality to refuse to register cases of rape or domestic violence for slum-dwellers.

Another important issue relates to women's safety in cities. Urban women are at risk of violence both inside and outside the home (Chant, 2011); while linked to broader unequal gender power structures, physical safety concerns are aggravated by inadequate infrastructure. For instance, lack of access to toilets in informal settlements impacts women as they need to urinate more frequently and require regular access during menstruation (Mueller et al, 2005). Women are also at significantly greater risk of being victims of violent and sexual crime while accessing public sanitation facilities (Kulkarni et al, 2017; Datta and Ahmed, 2020).

Yet, Datta (2016b) argues that materialist interpretations of 'toilets to prevent rape' not only distance violence from the middle classes but also suggest that rape is a product of stranger misogyny. This assumes that access to toilets will prevent contact with strangers in the public realm and reinforces restricting women's engagement in the public sphere. Datta (2016b) also outlines how reportage on violent sexual crime that increasingly describes slums as "breeding grounds for criminals" (Bagga, 2013) have widened divisions between slums and the city, thereby maligning these neighbourhoods, which may be associated with ideas of territorial stigmatisation and advanced marginality (Wacquant,

2008; see Chapter 6), and conflate the poor material conditions of certain places with the moral fibre of its residents (see Section 3.2.4).

As such, class has been a key determinant of access to space in India, and economic segmentation often shapes notions of gendered threat and risk. The rhetoric of safety often creates a specious opposition between the 'respectable' woman – middle-class, upper caste, heterosexual, married and Hindu – and the vagrant male, a lower class/caste, often unemployed, male cast as an outsider (Phadke, 2013). Planning responses often emphasise the separation of women from the public realm, often claiming that it is for their own good, and drawing from 19th century concerns of the promiscuity of the crowd. Here, social norms deny both the perceived perpetrator and victim access to public space (Phadke, 2007).

Thus, the built environment remains constituted by and constitutive of gender-discriminatory processes (Jarvis et al, 2009; Chant, 2013). With mounting urban inequalities, gender disparities do not just persist but are often even exacerbated (Chant and McIlwaine, 2016). Despite these challenges, gender and patriarchal power relations have not received much recognition in the 'right to the city' arguments (Fenster, 2005). In research on postcolonial India, literature on women's experience in and negotiations on urban space has often focused on middle-class Hindu women. Within this context, this thesis considers the construction of gendered urban space and women's right to the city and everyday life through the case of women that are often located outside this typology. By examining the gendered experiences of women at the margins of the city, the research provides an intervention complicating conceptions of community relevant to understanding gendered urban space and belonging.

2.3.4 Urban segregation

Questions about the segregation of minorities have occupied urban geographers and sociologists for a long time, although initially focussed on the western world. Scholars from the Chicago School of Urban Sociology were the first to systematically examine ethno-racial segregation (e.g. Wirth, 1928; Thomas and Znaniecki, 1958). Although different measures have quantified segregation based on various dimensions (e.g. Apparicio et al, 2014 outline of 43 indices), a slightly different question has occupied qualitative researchers: that of whether segregation is voluntary or forced.

Marcuse (1997) summarized a three-term typology of segregated neighbourhoods: the 'ghetto', the 'enclave' and the 'citadel'. To this, in the context of the global South, is often added the category of the 'slum'. There is broad consensus that these typologies of segregated spaces differ in terms of whether segregation originates from choice or not: the former suggests an 'enclave' or a 'citadel', and the latter a 'ghetto' or a 'slum'. Equally, the terms 'ghetto' and 'enclave' are used for segregation

based on ascribed identities of residents (e.g. ethnicity, race, religion or caste), while the 'slum' and the 'citadel' denote economic or class-based segregation (Marcuse, 1997; Galonnier, 2015).

In India, cities have become sites where deepening political and economic inequalities become plainly evident and are manifested through socio-spatial segregation (Desai and Sanyal, 2012). Although these spatial typologies derived from experiences in the global North may not directly relate to cities in the global South (Jamil, 2017), it has been argued that they could offer heuristic value (Jaffrelot and Gayer, 2012; Galonnier, 2015). Thus, while it is important to be cautious in employing these typologies, this section outlines their conceptualisation and differences.

The ghetto and the enclave

The ghetto lies at one end of forced segregation. Recorded references of ghettos date to 1084, where it described localities that segregated Jewish minorities in Christian societies (Wirth, 1928). Initially granted as a privilege to attract Jews to towns where they played key roles while protecting Christian residents from perceived contaminating contact, they gradually turned into spaces of compulsion (Stow, 1992; Sennett, 1994). In the late 19th century, the term travelled across the Atlantic, as European Jewish immigrants moved to the United States, and expanded to include districts housing lower-class immigrants and, later, African Americans (Glaeser, 1997; Wacquant, 2004). Wirth's (1928: 285) study of the Jewish ghettos in the US conceived described them as enclosed spaces of belonging, but his conceptualisation of ghettoization as "a manifestation of human nature" was severely criticised (Tonkiss, 2005). Wacquant (2004), for instance, argues that the ghetto is a specific form of urbanization structured by asymmetric power relations between ethno-racial groupings.

Despite an extensive scholarship on the ghetto, Wacquant (2012: 15) argues that the social sciences have failed to develop the term as an analytical concept: the term "variously denotes a bounded urban ward, a web of group-specific institutions, and a cultural and cognitive constellation entailing the socio-moral isolation of a stigmatized category as well as the systematic truncation of the life space and life chances of its members". He contends that scholarship to date has failed to specify what makes a ghetto and instead taken for granted and adopted the folk concept extant in society.

Yet, there have been some attempts to define the ghetto. Marcuse (1997: 231) defines a ghetto as a "spatially concentrated area used to separate or limit a particular involuntarily defined group held to be and treated as inferior by the dominant society". Similarly, Wacquant (2008: 49) defined it as "a bounded, ethnically uniform socio-spatial formation born of the forcible relegation of a negatively typed population." A key criterion is that the ghettoised minority has no control over its identity and cannot change its categorization, which is both involuntary and inferior (Galonnier, 2015). Although

the ghetto may be modulated by class, it is fundamentally an ethno-racial exclusion and not a class-based one (Wacquant, 1997; Pattillo, 2003).

Another key property of a ghetto is the development of institutions that duplicate the city from which it is excluded (Slater, 2017). These institutions simultaneously serve as a sword that ensures the closure of the minority group and a shield that offers protected space and leads to rich internal affinities and strong solidarity ties within the outcast group – leading to Wacquant's (2004: 3) depiction of the ghetto as "Janus-faced".

The enclave, often considered the other side of the same coin as the ghetto, embodies a different type of segregation. Marcuse (1997: 242) defined an enclave as "a spatially concentrated area in which members of a particular population group, self-defined by their ethnicity or religion or otherwise, congregate as a means of enhancing their economic, social, political and/or cultural development". Here, spatial segregation is believed to be voluntary and, importantly, beneficial to the minority as it allows them to maintain social cohesion and cultural values. For Peach (1996: 380), the enclave and the ghetto represent 'the good and the bad; the voluntary and the imposed'.

Yet, several challenges exist in differentiating a ghetto from an enclave. Most often the voluntary and forced dimensions of segregation are subtly intertwined and the two types of residential clustering may blend due to inevitable variety of individual motives (Galonier, 2015; Susewind, 2017). What begins as a ghetto may attract new residents who perceive it as an enclave, and vice versa. Indeed, different households may move to segregated neighbourhoods for different reasons.

In India, the urban constitutes a tense relationship between religious identities and has been the site of some of the worst forms of religious or communal violence, both overt and covert (Hasan and Menon, 2004; Jaffrelot and Gayer, 2012; Gupte, 2012). Discussions on struggles over urban space in India have been dominated by literature on religion (Blom Hansen, 2001a; Varshney, 2003; Brass, 2003). While much of this scholarship is framed around identity – undoubtedly a useful conceptual tool – Jamil (2017) argues that approaches to study the Muslim question framed purely through socio-political identity pose several limitations, and proposes a spatial approach to explore questions of exclusion confronting urban Muslims. Here, clustered living defined by community, occupation and endogeneity has a long history (Heitzman, 2008), but Muslim segregation is increasingly perceived to be problematic and attributed to the state's negligence, prolonged histories of religious violence and resulting prejudices (Jaffrelot and Gayer, 2012).

Yet, the use of the term 'ghetto' derived from specific historical and political contexts poses challenges as concepts may not travel seamlessly across geographies (Jamil, 2017). Wacquant (2008)

argues against conflating French *banlieues*⁹ and black ghettos in the US, as they are products of different historical processes and criteria of classification, arguing that to talk of a 'French ghetto' is a 'sociological absurdity' (Wacquant, 2008: 160-2). In India, the media, political classes and academics have often referred to the emerging and expanding Muslim-dominated neighbourhoods as Muslim "ghettos" (Jaffrelot and Gayer, 2012). Although the term lacks an equivalent in most Indian languages, this label is increasingly adopted by residents, who may lament their confinement to 'the ghetto'. Here, although Muslims have sometimes been perceived to practise self-imposed segregation (Jaffrelot and Gayer, 2012), the choice on this account is limited (Jamil, 2017). Thus, although the terms Muslim 'ghetto' and 'enclave' have often been employed in scholarship on urban India, the specific conditions that lead to segregation in different contexts, their evolution over time, and the lived experiences of segregation in the context of macro political shifts all warrant consideration.

The slum and the citadel

At one extreme of class-based segregation is the slum. Although the term 'slum' was regarded pejorative and imprecise by academics and practitioners, it returned to centre stage in international development discourse through the UN's Cities without Slums initiative in 1999, and subsequently the MDGs and SDGs, to draw attention to urban problems and attract funding for initiatives to tackle the issue (Gilbert, 2007). Simultaneously, the term has also been adopted through networks of slum dwellers, such as the Slum and Shack Dwellers International.

The term and its conceptualisation remain contested and problematic for several reasons. Gilbert (2011) argues that the term 'slum' often confuses the physical problem of poor-quality housing with the characteristics of the people living there. As such, the slum is often conflated with informality. Davis (2006) views the 'slum' as the global prototype of a warehousing of the poor, marginalized by structural adjustment and deindustrialization. De Soto (1989; 2000), on the other hand, sees informality as a revolution from below, the entrepreneurial strategy of the poor marginalized by bureaucracy and state capitalism. In South Asia, Rao (2006) asserts that the slum as a demographic and theoretical construct challenges imaginaries of the modern city and thus is not only a spatial form but also a metonym for the distortion of the urban into a dysfunctional stage for violence, conflict and inequality. More broadly, the slum has become a shorthand for portraying the problems of urban poverty (Roy, 2011) although this may not always represent their reality. For instance, Perlman (2010: 150) found that Brazilian favelas are no longer characterised by acute poverty, shanty squatter settlements or undesirable land, and argued that favela residents are victims of a 'myth of

⁹ In *banlieues*, it is primarily the class position 'modulated' by ethnicity, while in a ghetto it is ethno-racial identity irrespective of class

marginality' used to justify inequity: "although they are neither economically nor politically marginal, they are exploited, manipulated and repressed; although they are neither socially nor culturally marginal they are stigmatised and excluded from a closed class system".

Recent campaigns such as Cities without Slums incentivise governments to employ quick solutions through the demolition of slums, which have been found to be ineffective (Gilbert, 2007; Meth, 2013). In fact, efforts to reduce slums have often been understood as emblematic of elite projects, where slums are perceived as an aesthetic or moral affront to elite values and slum rehabilitation has enabled elite interests to acquire profitable land (Simon, 2011). While slum evictions are central to this strategy, they take different forms to those previously pursued as contemporary resettlement sites often epitomise spaces of advanced marginality at distant locations from the city, disconnecting residents from labour markets and intensifying socio-spatial isolation (Arabindoo, 2011).

While there has been a proliferation of scholarship on slum settlements, these studies often fail to consider the sentiments of residents of these neighbourhoods towards the term. Arabindoo (2011) outlines how residents of Dharavi – infamous as Asia's largest slum – often find the label derogatory. Yet, she describes how the politics of 'slums' in India has meant that official recognition lends certain benefits: in the Golibar slum in Mumbai that was scheduled for demolition, a residents demanded that the government declare their settlement a 'slum' as official identification would qualify them for redevelopment. Thus, here the adoption of the term rendered the settlement visible and prevented arbitrary demolition.

Additionally, it has been argued that the diversity of slum forms and situations defies meaningful definition (Simon, 2011). Statistical aggregations and policy conclusions based on them often reflect simplistic stereotypes of slums which rely on different definitions and contain several inaccuracies (Satterthwaite, 2003; Lucci et al, 2018). These also fail to consider the resilience, survival and success of long-term residents in developing community and self-providing amenities (Simon, 2011).

In the context of lack of inadequate infrastructure provision, recent scholarship has examined the role of assemblages of residents in making the neighbourhood and city through everyday life. Simone (2004a) conceptualises 'people as infrastructure', emphasizing economic collaborations among residents marginalized from urban life, highlighting the flexible and provisional intersections of residents which themselves serve as an infrastructure that provides for and reproduces life in the city. He thus extends the understanding of infrastructure beyond materiality by focusing on people's activities in the city. Similarly, Silver and McFarlane (2019) propose the concept of 'social infrastructure' which anchors life in informal settlements or "popular neighbourhoods". The use of "social" follows Simone's (2004a) argumentation as they look beyond narrow social interactions to

the ways in which people navigate the city on the margins of citizenship. Social infrastructure represents a survival strategy rather than empowerment process.

Similarly, Streule et al (2020) propose the concept of 'popular urbanization' to describe urbanization processes based on collective initiatives and self-organization of inhabitants. This conception does not idealize collective efforts, which are themselves shaped by power hierarchies (Simone, 2014), but suggest a shift in analytical perspective towards understanding the social production of urban space. Along similar lines, Caldeira (2017) proposes the concept of 'peripheral urbanisation' to refer to those cities that have been largely constructed by their residents. Peripheral urbanization does not imply a spatial location of urban growth (towards hinterlands) but refers to ways of producing space that are driven by residents, transversally in relation to the state amid political contestations. In defining it as such, Caldeira highlights the political nature of resident-driven development, and asserts that these processes of house/city building produce residents as citizens and rights-bearing political agents. This conception thus connects citizen-driven development and provisioning to politics that produce citizens, claims, and contestations (Caldeira, 2017). Chapter 6 engages with such theorisations and examines the linkages between people-centred infrastructures and their mobilisations to claim entitlements from the state.

Finally, the last concept in the typology of segregation is the citadel. Marcuse (1997: 247) defines the citadel as "a spatially concentrated area in which members of a particular population group, defined by its position of superiority, in power, wealth or status, in relation to its neighbours, congregate as a means of protecting and enhancing that position". Generally upper-class and dominant, the minority retreats into defensive spaces to protect its superior position. The citadel can be used to characterize recent gated communities that have flourished across cities globally. In India, the pursuit for 'world-class' cities has prioritised space for the new elite and middle classes through gated residential communities and economic zones to attract capital, and policymakers have increasingly struggled to address the conflicting objectives of meeting the needs of urban populations relating to basic services and the infrastructural needs of 'world-class' cities (Banerjee-Guha, 2009). Roy (2011) argues, however, that this is more than a case of 'splintering' urbanism (Graham and Marvin, 2001) and instead the Indian 'world-class' city is based on claims of public interest and democracy, with the elite and middle classes influencing spatial order through visions of the city that have no place for the poor. Moreover, the idea of the Indian world-class city has been argued to have broad subscription: Ghertner (2011) finds that slum dwellers in Delhi often located themselves as aspiring citizens in the imaginary of the world-class city, even when this vision did not have any space for slums and, consequently, them. Here, planning resorts to a politics that aims to control social, economic and spatial progress and 'morally improve' individuals to instil a culture of compliance (Winkler, 2012).

2.4 Gender and identity

This section first traces feminist conceptualisations of identity and gendered social relations¹⁰ as well as debates around intersectionality. Subsequently, Section 2.4.2 connects how these concepts have played out in women's movements in India to highlight the intersectional concerns within the Indian context. Finally, Section 2.4.3 relates intersectional gendered subjectivities to notions of agency and aspirations in postcolonial urban contexts, and in contemporary India in particular. This section frames the intersectional perspective taken in the research and situates it in existing academic debates.

2.4.1 Gender and intersectionality

French feminist Simone de Beauvoir, viewed as the initiator of gender analysis, argued that insofar as the norm of the 'human' remains male, those with female bodies will be perceived in certain ways, marking her as the 'other'. However, the answer to the question 'what is a woman?' remains elusive, and different branches of feminist theory¹¹ have somewhat different positions on this question. For example, cultural feminist theory defines a woman based on socially constructed but essentialised attributes; which has been critiqued to be "contaminated by misogyny and sexism" (Alcoff, 1988: 406). Postmodern and post-structural feminists, on the other hand, argue that the term 'woman' itself needs to be problematised. While the goal of feminism has been equality between genders, post-structural feminists identify *difference* as an instrument to combat patriarchal domination, arguing that equality is still defined from a patriarchal perspective (Johnson, 2002).

Despite ontological diversity, feminist theory broadly takes a social constructionist view of gender. When sociologists began to consider sex and gender, they focused on differences between men and women rooted in childhood sex role socialisation (Weitzman, 1979). Two distinct theoretical approaches developed: the first worked in an interactional tradition, known as 'doing gender'. West and Zimmerman (1987) argued that gender is a performance of difference, something one 'does' rather than 'is'. In comparison, the new structuralists argued that institutional structures like power and unequal opportunity drive gender inequality. These two arguments initially posed some

¹⁰ The research focuses on women while recognising the non-binary nature of gender (Butler, 1990). South Asia has a diverse non-heteronormative population including *hijras* and *kothis*, that have contravened dominant gender norms overtly or covertly for centuries (Vanita and Kidwai, 2000). It wasn't until the 1980s, with growing awareness about AIDS, that these identities received recognition (Menon, 2009). Legal progress has been slow: it was only in 2014 that the Supreme Court of India officially recognised a third gender for non-binary citizens; and in 2018 that same-sex sexual activity was decriminalised.

¹¹ It is beyond the scope of this review to discuss the different branches of feminism and feminist theory and their points of departure. For elaboration see Beasley (1999); Donovan (2012).

theoretical tension, but by the end of the 20th century consensus emerged that gender was both a personality trait and a social system (Lorber, 1994; Risman and Davis, 2013).

Barbara Risman (2004) proposed gender as a multi-level system composed of mutually reinforcing forces that impact social relations at the institutional, interactional and individual levels. First, men and women internalise norms when they opt to do gender-typical behaviour which is guided by their perceptions of social norms. They are motivated to understand norms to gain social acceptance (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004; Tankard and Paluck, 2016). Second, gender organises interactional expectations which people meet in their everyday lives. For instance, Ridgeway and Correll (2004) find that gendered expectations can bias people's judgements even in situations where male privilege should not emerge. However, these discussions are often restricted to division of labour, although arguably feminist geographers use a similar principle when criticising the public-private dichotomy. Finally, gender structures social institutions presume distinct gendered needs and responsibilities (Risman, 2004). Notably, these institutions both communicate social norms and are impacted by them (Tankard and Paluck, 2016). Therefore, even when formal regulations change, cultural practices may uphold patriarchal relations when everyday practices institutionalise hegemonic norms (Williams, 2001; Ridgeway, 2009).

The suggestion that gender is composed of mutually reinforcing structures suggests that they function in conjunction to amplify one another as "change is fluid and reverberates throughout the structure dynamically" (Risman, 2004: 435). However, this assumption warrants empirical testing in different contexts. In practice, the connections between levels may not be straightforward; changes at one level may not impact the others or could have varied impacts in different spheres. For instance, women with progressive individual values may challenge patriarchal norms at the interactional level in 'safe' spaces but reinforce them in other contexts. While Risman (2004) acknowledges that social interaction can preserve inequality even in contexts that lend themselves to change, this approach still views social change as a linear trend between levels. Thus, although it is instructive to understand gender as a multi-level structure, examining the complexities of each level when exploring how they interact with and co-constitute one another remains important.

A second issue is that if gender is socially constructed then it varies spatially and temporally, meaning gender power social structures may take different forms in different contexts. A longstanding critique of second-wave feminism was its assumption of a commonality of experience that united all women (Witt, 1995). In practice, race, class and other social identities are inextricably linked to women's experiences. For instance, bell hooks (1981) in *Ain't I a Woman* argued against the then-common analogy many feminists used between the situation of women and Blacks: this implies that all women are White and all Blacks are men. hook's statement marked an analytical and political turning point in

deconstructing the categories of 'women' and 'Blacks' and spurred a focus on the intersections of social divisions.

Subsequently, Crenshaw (1989) introduced the term 'intersectionality' in the context of black women's employment in the US. She observed that since women of colour stand at the intersection of categories, their experiences are not simply the sum of racial oppression and gender oppression but that the two axes of inequality work together through a multiplicative effect. Similarly, Yuval-Davis (2007) points out that although the common imagery of intersectionality as a crossroad is inclusive of multiple causes of discrimination, it is inherently additive. While each constituent vector has a separate ontological basis, the intersecting oppressions also mutually constitute each other (Anthias, 2002; Yuval-Davis, 2007).

Since the 1990s, intersectionality has become a central tenet of feminist thinking – and was one of the key inspirations of third wave feminism in the 1990s (Mann and Huffman, 2005). Despite this recognition, empirical application of intersectional approaches in academia has been limited in the absence of consensus on how it should be applied in feminist inquiry (Davis, 2008). For instance, in the context of citizenship and belonging, discussions have often homogenized the differential meanings of multiple identities, inspired by identity politics. In this context, Yuval-Davis (2007) emphasizes the importance of differentiating between the analytical levels of social locations, identities and political values (Yuval-Davis, 2007).

The empirical chapters of this thesis examine the ways in which urban belonging and citizenship are conceptualised and contested at different scales and sites, and the associated subjectivities and notions of community that emerge. Chapter 5 proposes the importance of women's narratives in producing and reshaping their identity and relates this to social locations and values. As such, a core analytical object within this research project has been to understand how women understand and shape their own intersectional identities in different contexts.

2.4.2 Feminist assertions and women's movements in India

In the context of the theoretical debates on gender discussed above, this section outlines the evolving understandings of gender within the public and political sphere in India, thereby situating these theoretical constructions within the context of the research project.

Women began to play an active role in public life in the early years of the independence struggle in India. However, they remained subject to patronising and hegemonic politics (Kumar, 1993; Kumar, 1997; Subramaniam, 2004). After independence, several women's political and voluntary associations were formed to provide a platform for women's involvement in the public sphere (Sen, 2004). However, these focused on women rather than gender relations, and their activities remained

restricted to middle- and upper-classes and castes. From the late 1960s, the Indian National Congress (INC) and the state faced a growing crisis of legitimacy (Kohli, 1990) and several radical social movements arose – ranging from trade unions to new identity-based movements of Dalits and tribal groups – although these did not explicitly confront women’s oppression (Raman, 2007). In 1975, the Indian government announced a state of Emergency for 21 months which forced many radical groups to disband or go underground, but also generated greater commitment among them to defend political and civil liberties (Kumar, 1989; 1993; Sen, 2004).

In terms of gender, a new form of mobilisation emerged post-Emergency called the autonomous women’s movement, as it was separate from political parties (Desai and Patel, 1985; Omvedt, 1993). It was spearheaded by urban, educated, middle-class women, who raised issues of women’s oppression and marginalisation (Raman, 2007). Their agitations emphasised the family as an important, sometimes primary, site of patriarchal oppression (Kumar, 1989). Unlike the broad remit of second wave feminism in the West, the autonomous women’s movement focused on violence against women. It initially mobilised around anti-rape and anti-dowry movements, and later extended to issues of domestic violence, sex-selective abortions and female infanticide. Although it drew inspiration from global subaltern movements, it had a conflicted relationship with feminism. For instance, as ‘feminism’ was associated with the West (John, 1998), several eminent women’s leaders did not identify as feminist; there was a “distinct ‘allergy’ attached to feminism” (Desai, 1995: 250). Efforts to offset such criticisms drew on notions of “Indian culture” through references to “Hindu iconography and Sanskrit idioms denoting woman power” which unintentionally strengthened communal ideologies that equated Indian and Hindu (Agnes, 1994: 1124).

By the 1990s the autonomous women’s movement began to decline as deepening economic, religious and caste-based cleavages irrevocably changed Indian politics (Ray and Katzenstein, 2005). The decision of the Indian government to take a World Bank-IMF loan in 1991 and subsequent economic restructuring was accompanied by increasing institutionalization of gender in policy, with activists lamenting the use of ‘gender’ by state institutions (Tharu and Niranjana, 1994). A growing focus on attracting grants paved the way for professionalisation and, as elsewhere, Indian feminism has been critiqued for becoming ‘bureaucratic, hierarchical and careerist’ (Wiegman, 2002: 19). While women’s groups in poor urban settlements have contributed to empowering communities (Datta, 2012), these strategies arguably retain women within their location in patriarchal society without challenging the sexual division of labour (Menon, 2009).

Moreover, treating women as a homogeneous group fails to provide a nuanced understanding of women’s diverse experiences, which gained particular importance in the context of rising identity politics since the 1980s. While third wave feminism in the West attempted to expand the notion of

feminism to include diverse groups of women, political trends in India heightened traditional socio-economic differences along both caste¹² and religious lines. The rise of the Hindu Right since the 1980s in India also fundamentally challenged the women's movement. The riots following the destruction of the Babri Masjid marked the first time women actively participated in political violence on the side of the hyper-masculine right wing (Sarkar and Butalia, 1995; Sen, 2007). Whereas the women's movement earlier stressed a commonality of women's experience, it was increasingly felt that a quest for unity was not only futile but also counterproductive if it ignored other axes of oppression (Kumar, 1989). The women's movement thus witnessed open displays of sectarianism, initially by party-political women's organizations, and eventually a widening divide between different groups.

Gender and religion have coalesced in India at numerous points as different political forces have appropriated the figure of the Muslim woman for their political ends. While this might be traced to the Shah Bano case in 1986,¹³ recent events further complicate these understandings by highlighting Muslim women's agency and the forces that constrict it. The emergence of Muslim women's organisations that represent women's multiple identities (including religious identities) is indicative of growing minority feminisms and the assertion of the agency of Muslim women (Kirmani, 2011). For example, the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA, Indian Muslim Women's Movement) has a long history of women's mobilisation against the practice of *talaq-e-biddat*, commonly called *triple talaq*, and opposing the patriarchal leadership of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), an NGO that functions as the self-appointed authority on Muslim Personal Laws. The legal invalidation of triple talaq was precipitated by a Supreme Court judgement on a petition by a woman, Shayra Banu, supported by the BMMA. The subsequent Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019, however, divided secular and Muslim women's organisations as it served to criminalise the practice. Many argued that the right-wing government exploited the issue to advance the Hindutva agenda of criminalising Muslim men while ostensibly demanding justice for Muslim women.

¹² In terms of caste politics, the decision to implement caste-based quotas in government jobs and universities in 1990 following recommendations of the Mandal Commission prompted widespread anti-reservation protests, and aggravated caste consciousness (Balagopal, 1990). In the women's movement, Dalit women had held a suspicion of mainstream feminism, which was dominated by upper-caste, middle-class feminists and their issues (Paik, 2009; Banerjee and Ghosh, 2018). The growing national visibility of caste politics forced recognition that 'woman' is not merely an existing subject which can be mobilised for politics.

¹³ Mohd. Ahmad Khan vs. Shah Bano Begum & Ors is considered a landmark for the rights of Muslim women, and clarified the extent to which the courts could interfere in Muslim personal law. In 1978, Shah Bano claimed maintenance from her ex-husband under the Criminal Procedure Code, which her husband disputed as Muslim personal law only required him to provide maintenance during the *iddat* period. Despite bodies like the AIMPLB protesting that courts cannot interfere in matters of personal law, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of Shah Bano, holding that the CrPC applied to all Indian citizens. Controversially, the INC-led government soon passed the Muslim Women (Protection on Divorce) Act, which effectively overturned the Shah Bano judgment - a move widely considered to be "minority appeasement" for votes.

Observing how the lynching of Muslims failed to arouse public conscience but the triple talaq issue generated unprecedented media publicity, Agnes (2019) contends that these occurrences are two sides of the same coin of treating Muslims as the 'other'. Within these discussions, Muslim women have occupied a precarious role (discussed in Chapter 4).

The evolution, fragmentation and ongoing challenges of women's movements demonstrate that identity remains salient. As Menon (2015) argues, an intersectional framework only labels pre-existing theoretical and political commitment in India. In this context, the research understands gender as a social structure that consists of and is constituted by multiple social positions and power relations, and unpacks how these are constructed and negotiated in producing urban belonging and citizenship.

2.4.3 Constructing identity and aspirations

The perception of respectable femininity in India can be traced to British colonial history, when an idealized white, middle-class domesticity was a key symbol of national culture (Radhakrishnan, 2009). In India, the bourgeois Indian woman similarly became the site of production of modern nationalist culture (Chatterjee, 1989; 1990). Yet these conceptions have undergone some change in recent times due to individual negotiations and globalisation.

Gendered notions of the family play a key role in producing class distinction through a "global Indian" respectable femininity that is simultaneously globally savvy and embedded in nationalist norms of the heterosexual, patriarchal family (Radhakrishnan, 2009; 2011). Globalization in India has enabled the emergence of "new" Indian middle classes, often characterized by conservative cultural or nationalist values, a hunger for global consumer goods, and a conscientious integration into the global political economy (Deshpande, 2003; Fernandes, 2000; Mazzarella, 2005; Rajagopal, 2001). Many argue that this middle class holds a special position in imagining the Indian nation (Chatterjee, 1990; Deshpande, 2003; Fernandes, 2000). This scholarship emphasizes aspiration as a force that connects the lower-middle classes to the elite, high-caste urban professionals that have disproportionately benefited from economic liberalization (Fernandes, 2006; Fernandes and Heller, 2006). Here, aspiration is a desire for not only social mobility, higher educational or occupational attainment, but also realising a "global Indian" class identity (Radhakrishnan, 2009; 2011). Young women's aspirations have taken on a particular symbolic significance in these debates.

These observations have often been related to Bourdieu's (1990) exposition of habitus and capital. Bourdieu (1990: 53) defines habitus as "a system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organised practices and representations". Habitus therefore represents a sense of one's place and role in the world of one's lived environment. As such, habitus is the product of history: it is "an open

system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:133). While it is durable, it is not immutable. Being a product of history, social experience and education, habitus may be changed by new experience, education or training (Bourdieu, 2005).

A related concept is that of capital, which Bourdieu (1987) interprets in a wide sense, and differentiates between three types: economic capital (material wealth and concomitant power), social capital (resources and power obtained through social networks and connections), and cultural capital (knowledge and skills acquired through formal or less formal means of education, including prestige, status, articulateness, aesthetic preferences and cultural awareness). Additionally, Bourdieu (1989:17) recognises the importance of symbolic dimensions of capital, which incorporates the other three forms of capital and represents “the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate”. Thus, Bourdieu (1987) regards symbolic power as ‘worldmaking’ power due to its capacity to impose a legitimised vision of the social world.

Bourdieuian feminists have outlined how middle-class femininity itself serves as a capital that women seek to embody to gain symbolic capital (Skeggs, 2005). Bourdieu’s emphasis on symbolic capital as cultural authorization enables an examination of the embeddedness of gender in these processes. Radhakrishnan (2009) argues that it is not only education or tastes that constitute symbolic capital; respectable femininity constitutes equally critical forms of symbolic capital.

In terms of aspirations, sociologists have long insisted that educational and occupational aspirations are shaped by social dynamics (MacLeod, 1987; Schneider, 1999), including gender (McRobbie, 2007; Ringrose, 2007; Pomerantz et al, 2013). When connecting symbolic capital with aspirations, Bourdieu (1984: 65) views aspiration as grounded in class habitus; it is a “realistic relation to what is possible, founded on and therefore limited by power.” Aspirations are thus never unconstrained, passive reflections of elite lifestyles and must be understood in specific social locations. Relatedly, McNay (2003: 145) theorizes agency as a constant anticipation of the tendencies of social structure as “power relations shape and deform the experience of hope”. According to McNay (2003: 146), “the most oppressed groups in society oscillate between fantasy and surrender.” In practice, feminist scholars have argued that while neoliberal ideologies of individualism and self-improvement celebrate upwardly mobile young women, they also entrench those women’s outsider status (McRobbie, 2007; Skeggs, 2004; Walkerdine, 2003).

In India, scholars have argued that aspiration mediates the disjuncture between the new middle classes and elite professional groups (Fernandes 2006; Ganguly-Scrase and Scrase 2009). Articulations of aspirations are not static as they often express conflicts and constraints (Frye, 2012; Shu and

Marini, 2008). For instance, Jeffrey (2010) finds that when faced with limited urban opportunities and an aversion to traditional agricultural work, young rural Jat men resort to “timepass” or “hanging out” as they await opportunities. The inaccessibility of “timepass” to young women because of its threat to feminine virtue highlights the classed and gendered social structures within which aspirations are articulated. Yet, Vijaykumar’s (2013) exploration of young small-town middle-class women demonstrates that even if aspirations do not guide future action, they still serve as a gendered symbolic resource. In the context of social change and neoliberal restructuring, aspiration can thus serve as a useful resource.

A final exploration relates to how emerging gendered and classed identities relate to religion and secularism. A growing scholarship on the Islamic Revival globally has overturned assumptions that equated modernity with secularism (Brenner, 1996; Berger, 1999; Mahmood, 2005). It has become increasingly clear that modernity is not singular, but multiple (Sachsenmaier et al, 2002). For instance, in her ethnography of women in an Islamist movement in Egypt in the 1990s, Mahmood (2005) develops a critique of liberal feminist conceptions of agency by delineating the agency of women who submit themselves to the authority of God through acts of piety without questioning some forms of gendered subordination. In doing so, Mahmood theorises forms of agency that do not map on to a binary logic of repression and resistance, and argues for delinking agency from the ‘goals of progressive politics’.

Mahmood (2005) also offers important criticisms of Bourdieu, and favours the framing of dispositions rather than habitus as a way of stressing the agency involved in cultivating a pious self. Bourdieu’s theory of habitus has also been criticised primarily for its reductionist and deterministic approach to capital and habitus. Critics argue that habitus ruled out any agency of an individual (Dyck, 2008; Turner, 2019; Mahmood, 2012). Such critiques explicitly relate notions of habitus (and symbolic capital) with agency.

Whereas feminist scholars engaging with Bourdieu elaborate on how gendered and classed identities relate to symbolic capital and power and can influence women’s aspirations and ability to aspire, critiques of habitus on grounds of its determinism serve to foreground the role of women’s own narratives and practices that demonstrate agency and the complex ways in which this plays out. While recent scholarship on aspirations in neoliberal India has focused on middle-class Hindu women, the object of study in this research is women in segregated neighbourhoods that are located outside this prominent discourse. Thus, the research aims to locate women from marginalised locations within ongoing debates on emerging identities and aspirations and conceptually extend understandings of agency and aspirations through this perspective.

2.5 Conceptual approach

This chapter has outlined the main streams of academic scholarship that this thesis is located within and contributes to. As outlined in Chapter 1, the thesis brings together a socio-political investigation of situated constructions of identity, community, belonging and citizenship with a socio-spatial exploration of how these concepts manifest themselves at different scales in and from segregated urban neighbourhoods. Specifically, it examines these conceptions from the perspective of women from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods.

In the context of majoritarian ethno-religious nationalism, changes in political citizenship have multiple impacts on the lived experience and politics of belonging for Indian Muslims. Ethno-religious politics and violence in India have been reconfiguring space and social relations, undermining the idea of equal citizenship. The main objective of research in this thesis is understanding the situated constructions and politics of urban belonging and related notions of imagined communities and citizenship (both as a relationship with the state and belonging to the political collectivity). Here, drawing from the discussion in Section 2.2, the thesis interprets both belonging and citizenship as sets of acts and practices rather than just a status in order to examine how they are constantly negotiated through everyday life and political mobilisation as well as the ways in which individuals construct themselves as agents and citizens in the face of structural exclusions. The research engages with literature on the diverse modes of claiming citizenship – through legal claims (e.g. Holston, 2008); protest (e.g. Chopra et al, 2011), and incremental strategies (e.g. Bayat, 1997; Staeheli et al, 2012) – and introduces a gendered and spatial analysis to deepen the understanding of belonging that examines political negotiations “within” communities through gendered social relations.

The thesis seeks to examine the ways in which segregation is experienced and contested through everyday life by employing two conceptual frames: a lens of urban socio-space, and a gendered socio-political lens.

In terms of urban space, the multi-scalar approach taken by the thesis means that it contributes interventions to theorisation around space at the level of the neighbourhood but also the wider politics shaping public space and urban segregation. The thesis views space as a relational object and examines how social power relations configure urban space across scales as well as the practices in and meanings attached to different sites and scales of urban space. The use of belonging as a conceptual device to examine the socio-spatial political negotiations of urban space helps encompass notions of the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968), the right to everyday life (Lefebvre, 1958 [1947]; Beebejaun, 2017) as well as infrastructural citizenship (Lemsaki, 2019a; 2019b) and examine spatial justice and substantive citizenship in a common frame.

When taking a socio-spatial approach, most existing conceptualisations draw on Anglo-American contexts, including on concepts of public space and urban segregation. While this chapter has outlined some of the debates around these topics, they are elaborated further in the empirical chapters. However, the conceptual approach taken has sought to examine the appropriateness of these concepts to the empirical context. For instance, the thesis builds on feminist and postcolonial critiques of the public-private dichotomy and examines the situated practices of women in segregated Mumbai to understand what is public about space.

Similarly, segregation is commonly examined as a phenomenon manifested through the ghetto, enclave and citadel as an entity, with these typologies drawing on experiences from the global North. While they contain heuristic value, this thesis examines the nature and characteristics of segregation in its own right, and analyses segregation as a process that is constantly negotiated. This is not to deny the existence of structural exclusions that ethno-religious and economic minorities face, but rather to ground the analysis of segregation in the lived experience of residents through an exploration of how they make sense of urban segregated space and related socio-political relations and power structures. In the context of the long history of clustered living defined by community in India, the thesis seeks to examine how Muslim socio-spatial segregation is perceived among more recent macro political shifts.

The second frame that shapes the analysis of the research is that of gendered social power relations. In spatial terms, although the built environment is constituted by and constitutive of gender discriminatory processes, this leaves open the question of how this is negotiated by women in different contexts and spaces. The research therefore seeks to examine women's situated lived experiences and agency across urban sites and scales, and its relationship to different notions of community and belonging.

Drawing from an understanding of gender as a social structure (Risman, 2004; Tankard and Paluck, 2016) which is inextricably linked to women's other social identities, the thesis is not narrowly restricted to gendered social relations but also examines those shaped by emerging class, religious and other subjectivities. Here, in the context of macro political shifts and Hindu majoritarianism, the research problematises constructions of identity and belonging beyond the frame of socio-political victimisation and othering to simultaneously examine emerging aspirations and their construction, negotiation and performance. Agency is therefore understood and explored through the ways in which women reconcile multiple, and sometimes competing, priorities and social structures through narratives, acts and practices in urban space.

In sum, the two frames of gender and urban space come together in analysing how macro and micro politics of belonging impact and mutually constitute each other. The empirical chapters each combine these analytical lenses but alternately foreground the socio-spatial (in Chapters 4 and 6) and the socio-political (in Chapters 5 and 7) when examining the lived experiences of women in segregated neighbourhoods. While this chapter has provided a broad overview of the academic concepts and theoretical debates that underpin the research contained in this thesis, the chapters that follow will elaborate further on how the findings of the research engage with the existing scholarship and frame the contributions of this research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

“We lived in Bombay and we lived in Mumbai and sometimes, we lived in both of them at the same time.”

– Suketu Mehta, *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found*

As captured by the quotation above, several different conceptions and imaginations of the city co-exist; often competing, sometimes complementary, these emerge not only as a binary opposition of Bombay/Mumbai but also different worlds within Bombay and Mumbai, constructed from varied situated positions. The city of Mumbai has experienced several wide-ranging socio-spatial and political changes in the postcolonial period, particularly since the 1980s (discussed in Chapter 1). These changes have impacted urban residents in different ways, based on their position in the various intersecting social, economic and political power structures that shape the city.

Having called Bombay and Mumbai home through the period of many of these changes, I have wrestled with questions of urban inclusion and exclusion for a long time. Yet, this research project is not just about better understanding my own city or discovering its different avatars. My professional choices have been motivated by a commitment to contribute to better understanding and ameliorating inequities in contemporary India. My initial motivation for the research project, coming from policy research, was to understand the experience of urban change from the margins – with a focus on gender and religion, two stark axes of marginalisation in India. Within the context of the rising tide of Hindu majoritarianism and violent Islamophobia as well as neoliberalism and rising inequality, the growing momentum of the Muslim women’s movement signified hope, demonstrating that perhaps the subaltern is beginning to speak. Yet, while there was ample discussion about the movement, it remained focused on the arena of personal laws which, while undoubtedly important, left the everyday, routinized experiences of women underexamined. Thus, I aimed to understand the evolving conceptualisations and political dynamics of urban belonging in everyday life over a period of complex socio-spatial-political change.

This chapter elaborates on how I examined gendered socio-spatial negotiations of space in and from segregated urban neighbourhoods in this research project. I justify the approach that produced the research and outline methodology at two levels: the rationale behind the methodological choices (from the research design, selection of case studies and methods to analysis and representation), and the practicalities and quotidian aspects of the methods employed in fieldwork and analysis.

The objectives of the research project are outlined in Section 3.1. This is followed by a discussion of the epistemological and methodological approach in Section 3.2, and the research design and methods employed in collecting data in Section 3.3. Finally, Section 3.4 reflects on elements of positionality and research ethics across the different stages of the project, and how they are related to the ways in which the data were analysed and represented.

3.2 Research objectives

Several related factors have motivated this research. First, the increasing discussion on gender relations and women in Indian cities: although much of this has focused on women's safety, this has wide-ranging connections with other aspects of everyday life. Second, the resurgence of Hindu nationalist politics has been accompanied by growing purchase and acceptability of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim political rhetoric. In this context, the Muslim women's movement in the 21st century has been a notable development. Although the ghettoization of Muslims in Indian cities is argued to aggravate restrictions on women's mobility (Khan, 2007), the growing momentum of the Muslim women's movement, while mainly focused on legal change, has implications for the everyday lives and agency of girls and women.

Thus, the motivation that instigated the research and with which I began fieldwork was to understand the gendered production of space over the period marked by decisive shifts in perceptions of the city, from cosmopolitan Bombay to post-secular Mumbai. This was initially focused on women's experience of urban space and the incorporation of gendered concerns in urban policy and political narratives. While much of popular discourse on gender has focused on safety, the research takes a wider approach to investigate belonging and the production of space from an intersectional perspective.

A second – and eventually more central – question that emerged during fieldwork was the everyday lived experience of citizenship in terms of rights, belonging and exclusion from both society and the state. Although the initial question has not been relegated, following fieldwork, the focus shifted from an equal emphasis on the actions of the state and residents to a greater emphasis on the situated experiences of and contestations by residents in case study neighbourhoods. This has equally prioritised socio-spatial and socio-political relations and imaginaries.

The main research question then problematises how gender mediates everyday socio-spatial-political struggles in the segregated city. I examine how women's identities intersects with the political dynamics of space at the micro, meso and macro levels, and how it is negotiated through everyday life in and from segregated neighbourhoods.

3.3 Methodology

The main aim of the research has been to examine the multilevel socio-spatial-political power structures and relations through women's conceptions of belonging in urban space in and from segregated neighbourhoods. This Chapter relates the existing scholarly debates discussed in Chapter 2 to the epistemological approach taken in the research and explains the methodological choices made in conducting the research.

When critically exploring the experiences of women in Muslim neighbourhoods, Jamil (2017) comments that Indian Muslims are often framed as a backward community, emphasising the lack of agency of Muslim women. She argues for scholars to avoid simplistic binaries that essentialise identity when studying urban Muslims. A pertinent question was thus how to approach the concepts of belonging and identity. In conceptualising identity, Menon (2012: viii) states that "to be a feminist is to recognise that apart from gender-based injustice, there are multiple structural inequalities that underlie the social order". Indeed, different elements of identity are deeply intertwined and difficult to separate (Cope, 2002). I explicitly unpack the meanings and construction of identity in Chapters 5 and 6 but here I reflect on their relevance for the research methodology.

As individuals belong in many ways and to different objects of attachments, Yuval-Davis (2006) proposes differentiating between three analytical levels on which belonging can be constructed: social locations; identifications and emotional attachments to collectivities; and ethical and political value systems. She argues that although the three are interrelated, they are not synonymous. Social locations are not constructed along a single axis of difference, although official statistics and identity politics often construct them as such. More generally, Yuval-Davis (2006) cautions against conflating social locations with identifications. Drawing on Crowley (1999), who defined the politics of belonging as the dirty work of boundary maintenance, Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that forcing specific identities on people can equate locations and identifications, but equally this can also be resisted. In this context, I am mindful to not impose identities on participants either individually or collectively since identifications may vary across participants.

Instead, I emphasise the narratives of women themselves in producing and representing the research, although this itself is inevitably partial and shaped by several factors and conditions of the research project. This relates to Haraway's (1988) challenge on claims to neutrality within research and draws on her concept of "situated knowledges" which proposes rejecting the notion of an all-encompassing "truth" in favour of context-specific situation-sensitive knowledges. Considering the complexities of research in the real world and the necessarily partial views researchers hold (Cope, 2002), the starting point for this research is an understanding of knowledge as situated, relational and complex.

A second lens through which the inquiry in this research is conducted is that of urban space. In understanding urban space, while Lefebvre's "Production of Space" has been a key analytic for geographers to think critically about the processes that shape socio-space, recent efforts have offered more complex theorizations of place that consider multiple ways of knowing and being in the world (e.g. Amin, 2004; Escobar, 2001; Hankins and Walter, 2012; Massey, 2005; Pierce et al, 2011). Pierce and Martin (2015) argue that while these approaches emphasize the multifaceted nature of space or place in human experience, they differ both ontologically and epistemologically. They argue that Lefebvre's intervention was primarily ontological, exploring the multifaceted materiality of space, but his spatial epistemology remained elusive. Conversely, contemporary hybrid theorizations of place argue that insights are generated through understanding the intersections of diverse threads of place and unpacking their multiple epistemologies. Pierce and Martin (2015) relate this to Haraway's (1985) argument to view the self as multiple: although the hybrid self is constantly subject to claims of coherence, Haraway asserts the 'self' as hybrid. Similarly, Pierce and Martin (2015) argue that places are subject to claims of coherence, but resistant to ontological collapse: they cannot be fully known through any one epistemological approach, and indeed cannot be known completely at all, but always partially. Such a relational approach permits an exploration of place through elements of its hybrid whole without requiring engagement with a unitary object of analysis, and thus provides a methodological framework that embraces multiplicity.

The methodological choices made across the research stemmed from such critical perspectives of knowledge as situated and socially constructed. The focus on women's own perceptions and articulations of their identity and everyday negotiations of space informed the selection of methods of data collection. The following sections outline the specific methodological choices and methods used in the research and relate them to this epistemological positioning.

3.4 Research design

The operationalisation of the research involved several methodological choices which were influenced by epistemological positioning, ethical considerations and practical (time, financial and social) constraints. The first step included grounding the research questions through the selection of case studies and the adoption (and iterative adaptation) of research methods.

The initial stages of the research included a 3-week pilot study in August 2017 during which I conducted semi-structured interviews with 8 key informants: cultural theorists, architects, urban planners, journalists, leaders of the women's movement, and NGO representatives. The pilot study was fruitful on two fronts. First, it strengthened the motivations for the research, validating the

salience of the socio-political shifts that frame the research. Second, it helped narrow the research scope and identify case study neighbourhoods.

I subsequently undertook extended fieldwork between October 2017 and June 2018 during which I collected primary data which informed the research. Midway during fieldwork, I took a four-week break and returned to Cambridge to reflect on existing data, revisit the focus based on emerging themes and plan the fieldwork for the second case study.

Table 2: Timeline of fieldwork

| Aug 2017 | Oct 2017 | Nov 2017- Mar 2018 | Apr 2018 – Jun 2018 | Jul 2018 onward |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Pilot study | Extended fieldwork mainly in: | | | Analysis + writing up |
| | Mumbai | Mumbra | Shivajinagar | |

The research design purposively selected two case study neighbourhoods that have been impacted by socio-spatial segregation to examine gendered negotiations of urban space and place-making over time. The sections that follow outline the rationale for the methodological choices as well as the practical ‘nuts and bolts’ of how fieldwork was undertaken.

3.4.1 Case studies and intra-urban comparison

Linda McDowell (1996: 22) commented on western theorists’ proposition that their theories can be universally applied, saying: “On the margins exist the voices of those multiple others, subjugated peoples of the Third World, women, people of colour...[who] reveal the particularity of the universal claims of Western theorists”. The field of urban studies too has witnessed extensive debates and calls to generate new concepts to understand cities in a more plural manner in recent years, with growing interest in moving toward more global urban studies (Robinson, 2006; Parnell et al, 2009; Roy, 2009). Various approaches have been proposed, including ethnography-based theory (Simone, 2011), regionally-inspired theory (Watson, 2009; Roy and Ong, 2011; Parnell and Oldfield, 2014), and methodological approaches like comparative urbanism (Robinson, 2011; 2016) and conceptualising the urban at a planetary scale (Lefebvre, 2003 [1974]; Brenner and Schmid, 2014). Comparative urbanism has become more than just a method, and is understood as a strategy to de-centre urban knowledge. Although an active debate about its potential and limits remains ongoing, advocates contend that building theory from multiple cities may help better understand the diverse urban world (McFarlane and Robinson, 2012; Robinson, 2006, 2011).

Yet, as McFarlane et al (2016) point out, claims that studying more cities will produce a fuller understanding of urbanism leave assumptions about the scale at which urban complexity is located unexamined. They propose that intra-urban comparison too can contribute to comparative urbanism

as a city is not a unitary construction but itself contains multiple urban worlds. While an abundant scholarship employs intra-urban comparison, it has not been championed in debates on comparative urbanism. McFarlane et al (2016) argue that comparisons within cities can help pluralise how we understand the urban by problematising the politics existing in different spaces of the city. This research contributes to this project: in examining the complexity and diversity within the city, I balance the specificity and situated insights of Mumbai with a theoretical contribution to urban studies through an intersectional theorisation of segregation.

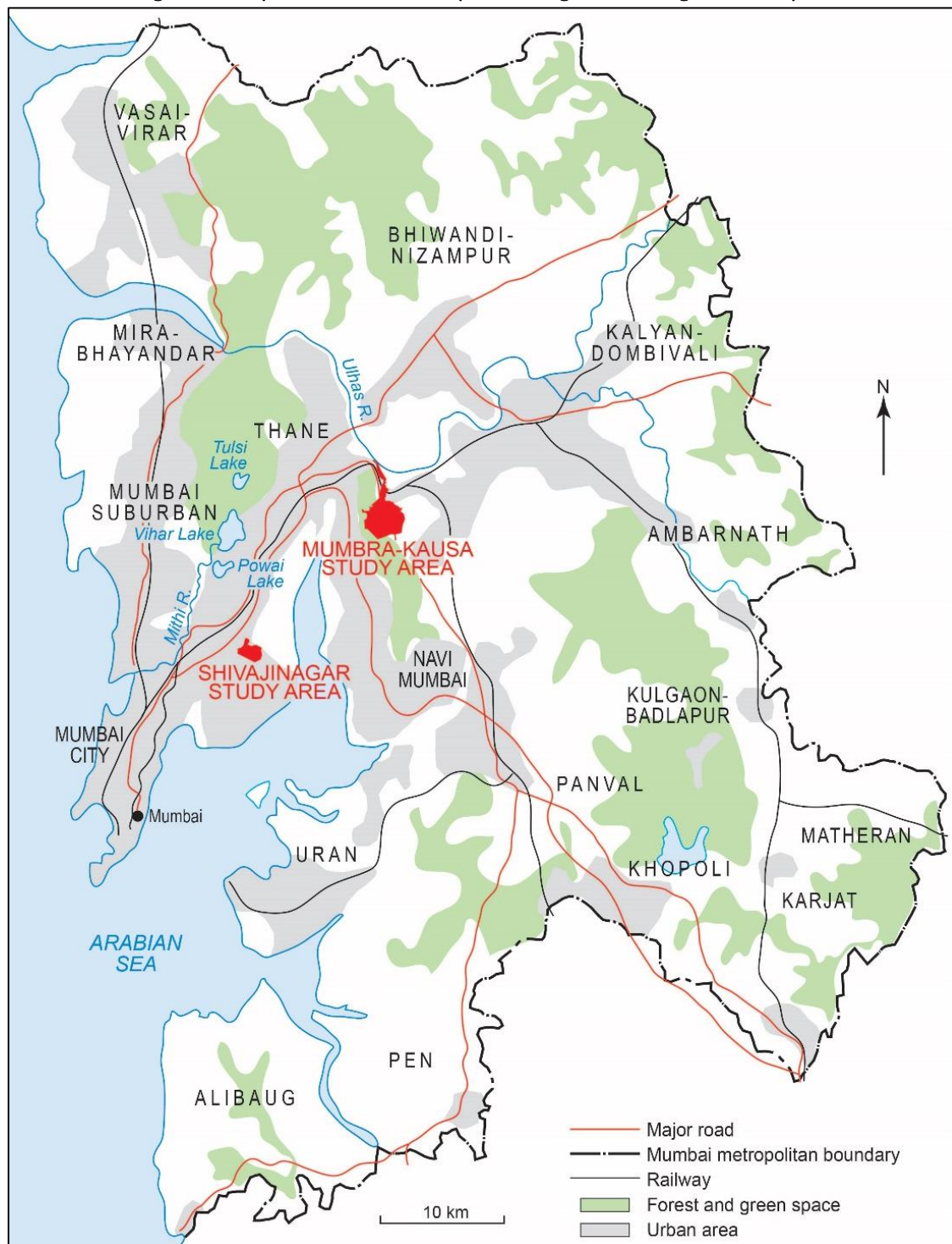
The research questions are explored through two segregated Muslim-majority neighbourhoods in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. As discussed in Chapter 2, attaching neighbourhoods with the label of 'slum', 'ghetto' or 'enclave' poses several challenges. Yet, these are conceptually useful terms and so I do not eschew them completely but use them with caution. In terms of measuring urban segregation, although anecdotal evidence exists of neighbourhoods dominated by certain social groups, disaggregated data on religious demography often remain classified in India. The Census only publishes Muslim population share at the city level, precluding estimation of religious segregation. Susewind (2017), using voter lists from the 2014 general elections, finds that Mumbai contains considerable Muslim ghettoization – often linked with economic deprivation (Contractor, 2012a) – but fares in the middle of the ranking of segregation of 11 Indian cities, and argues that it takes more than just segregation to form a ghetto. In this context, the selection of case studies is not based on quantitative measures of segregation but instead on the processes that have led to the formation and growth as of neighbourhoods as segregated spaces.

The neighbourhood can be variously understood as a spatial territory, a place of intimate encounter, and a field of expression of social power negotiated through everyday life. Many aspects of urban experience are shaped and sustained at the neighbourhood level. In implementing the research, one challenge related to identifying the scale of the 'neighbourhood'. Friedmann (2010) defines neighbourhoods as the area that neighbours acknowledge as their home or the primary space of social reproduction. Admittedly, people relate to several different territorial scales – from the very intimate of their building or lane to the city (and nation).

In this research, following initial conversations with representatives from NGOs (and in part shaped by their scale of engagement), I selected the scale and boundaries of the two case study neighbourhoods: Mumbra-Kausa and Shivajinagar (see Figure 1). While both sites house a significant population (estimated at over 700,000 each) and contain many smaller neighbourhoods, due to the processes that have led to their formation and growth, they are identified as localities with a distinct and common history that is separate from surrounding areas in the city. Both neighbourhoods have been crucially shaped by violent and structurally invasive shocks that impacted Mumbai's socio-

political geography: the 1992-93 so-called communal riots (and subsequent religious polarisation), and the adoption of neoliberal urban policies (and associated displacement of marginalised populations). This lends the two neighbourhoods to comparison in terms of their everyday politics of belonging/exclusion as segregated neighbourhoods and the research examines the differential impacts of these socio-spatial-political changes in the two neighbourhoods.

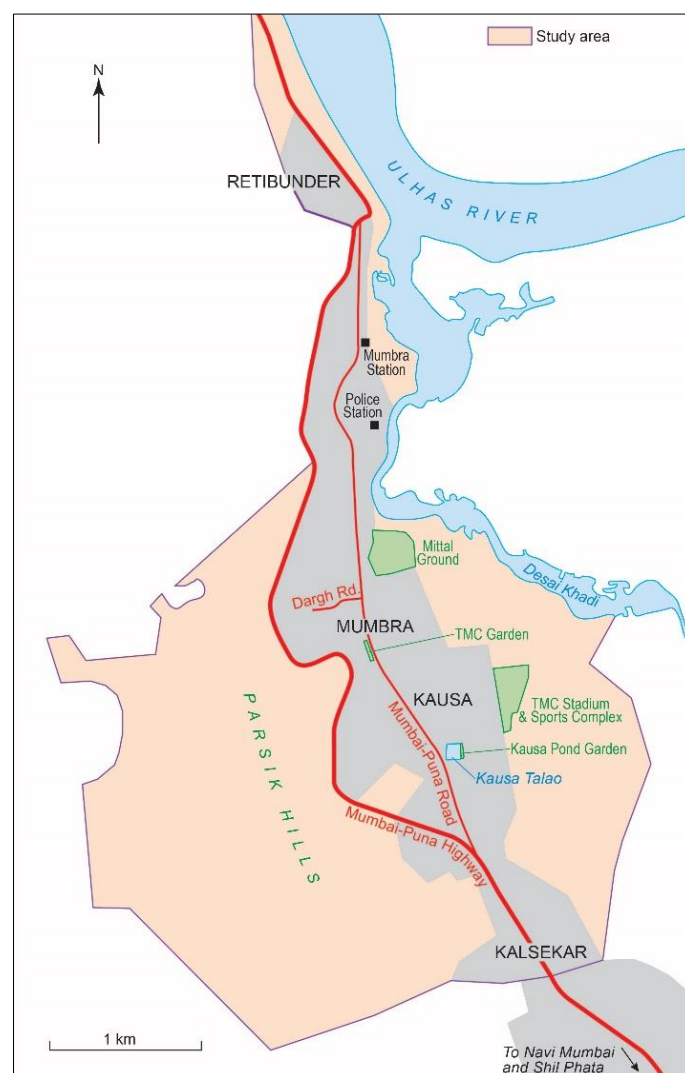
Figure 1: Map of Mumbai Metropolitan Region showing case study locations



Courtesy: Philip Stickler, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge

The first case study site, Mumbra, or Mumbra-Kausa, is commonly referred to as the largest Muslim ghetto formed in the aftermath of the communal violence in 1992-93. It is located north of Mumbai and is a suburb of the city of Thane. It first began to urbanize in the 1970s, but it was in the early 1990s after the communal riots that it witnessed significant population growth as Muslim families sought refuge from Mumbai, and the Maharashtra State Islamic Waqf Board was given land for the rehabilitation of Muslims displaced after 1992-93. Consequently, Mumbra experienced a wave of predominantly Muslim-centric population growth. In the 2000s, a second phase of migrants moved to Mumbra from the city due to affordable rents, and Mumbra also experienced growth with the inflow of Muslim migrants from the northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Figure 2: Map of Mumbra



Courtesy: Philip Stickler, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge

The second research site, Shivajinagar, is situated along the eastern periphery of the island city of Mumbai, adjacent to one of Asia's largest and oldest open landfills. It is commonly identified as one of the largest slums in Mumbai. In 2009, the Mumbai Human Development Report revealed that the M-

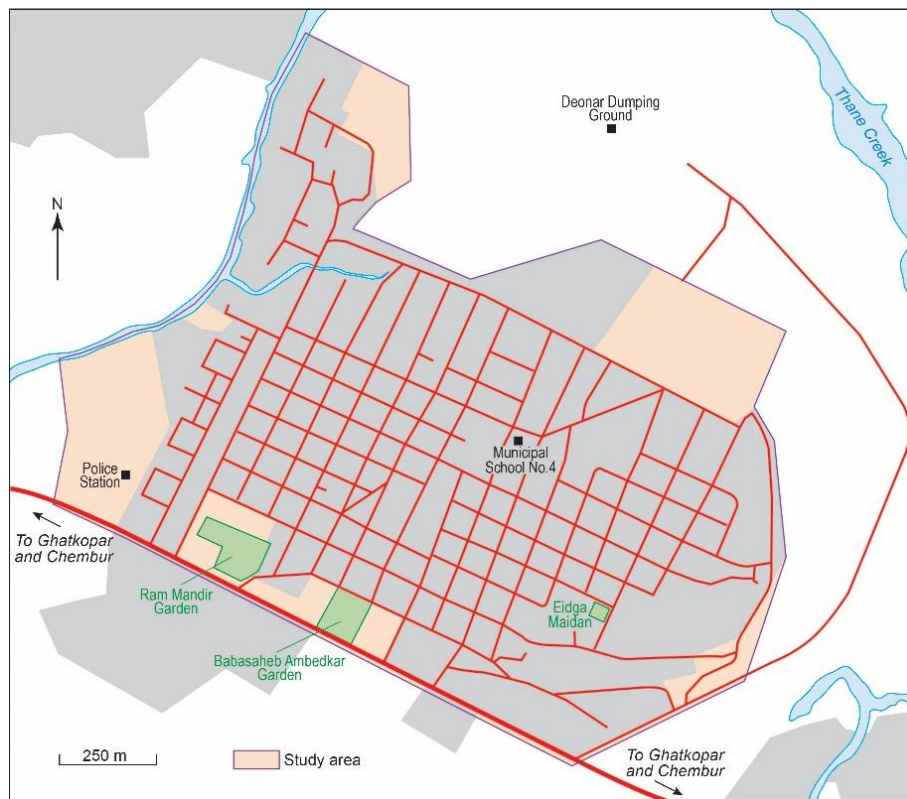
East Ward, within which Shivajinagar lies, housed 78% of its population in 'slum' housing and fared the worst in the city in terms of human development – with an HDI of 0.05 compared to 0.56 for the city (MCGM, 2010).

Despite Shivajinagar's marginalisation as a slum settlement, Björkman (2014) finds that the neighbourhood was planned. During a series of demolitions for infrastructure and urban upgrading projects in the 1970s, municipal authorities promised to relocate families to avoid creating new slums and created the plots of Shivajinagar (GOM, 1976 cited in Björkman, 2014). Due to its poor infrastructure and proximity to the landfill, several families assigned plots did not move there (Björkman, 2014). Sometimes coercive methods were used, including burning slum areas, to get residents to move to Shivajinagar (Contractor, 2012a). The neighbourhood gradually grew in population density and area, extending closer to the dumping ground. Notwithstanding its planned origins, the entire neighbourhood has been associated with informality by the government.

In the 1990s, Shivajinagar was considered "communally most sensitive in view of the large population of Muslims living cheek by jowl with Hindus" (Srikrishna, 1998: 9.1), and the neighbourhood was deeply affected by communal violence in 1992-93. Subsequently, large numbers of Hindu families left the neighbourhood. Today, although it contains a considerable non-Muslim population, it is often referred to as a 'Muslim area'.

It is important to note, however, that Shivajinagar is divided into different areas which experience differing levels of amenities and socio-material conditions (Figure 3). In municipal records, Shivajinagar is divided into two areas: Shivajinagar-I contains the organised plots connected by a network of 14 parallel roads; and Shivajinagar-II contains narrow roads and lanes and is located near the dumping ground (the edges of the neighbourhood along the north and east in grey without roads). Most facilities such as the market, banks, public schools, healthcare centre, and political party offices are in Shivajinagar-I (Contractor, 2012a). Residents of Shivajinagar-I are generally economically more secure, with larger and better maintained houses, many with raised granite entrances to protect houses from flooding, tiled walls, and equipment such as fans and sometimes air-conditioners. Additionally, these houses offer greater privacy to residents (Contractor, 2012a). In contrast, living conditions in Shivajinagar-II are much poorer owing to the proximity to the dumping ground and poor provision of basic infrastructure. The houses are much smaller, often not of permanent construction, and separated by narrow and congested ill-lit lanes. Households in the clusters of Shivajinagar-II also have less tenure security and many areas have been under threat of demolition at different points in the past.

Figure 3: Map of Shivajinagar



Courtesy: Philip Stickler, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge

Both Mumbra and Shivajinagar have grown both physically and demographically as distinctly Muslim-dominated areas – especially since the mid-2000s as the adoption of neoliberal policies and communal polarisation have accentuated socio-spatial segregation. Although they have been shaped by some similar drivers, they are distinct in terms of their local politics and socio-spatial relations to the city.

Across subsequent chapters, the two case studies are presented separately and compared together at different times. Due to personal circumstances during the phase in Shivajinagar, I had to cut fieldwork short and was unable to return. While I was able to meet a diverse range of people in Shivajinagar and the interviews conducted generated rich discussions that lent themselves to produce interesting points of comparison between the two neighbourhoods, the longer time for observations and greater number of interviews in Mumbra contributed to generating greater insights from this case study. Moreover, the two neighbourhoods lend themselves to discussion to different degrees across the topics discussed in the thesis and, as such, it is not always a perfect like-for-like comparison. Yet, perfect comparison was never the goal of this research, the imposition of which might have artificially forced certain frames on the research. Instead, I conducted similar investigations in two segregated

neighbourhoods and located the nature of this segregation as an object of research across the empirical chapters.

3.4.2 Data collection methods

Following from feminist and postcolonial critiques which argue that all knowledge is produced in specific circumstances and is situated (Rose, 1997), I employed qualitative research methods to generate in-depth understanding of the workings of social relations (Mullings, 1999; Winchester, 2000). Crang (2003: 494) argues that qualitative methods are not “touchy-feely” or soft but are best suited to exploring social phenomena such as power and dominance.

I chose in-depth interviews as the main method of data collection. This was primarily because I was interested in the situated knowledges of the girls and women I interviewed and wished to prioritise their own articulations and narratives of their lived experience. Interviews do not necessarily tell us facts or directly reveal people’s experiences but offer representations of their experiences that privilege their agency within the research (Silverman, 2006). Simultaneously, participant observation provides further insights on their lived experiences and socio-spatial practices to help situate their narratives within their social worlds. Thus, a combination of interviews and participant observation helped explore the linkages between women’s narrative and their social worlds. I also conducted a small number of oral histories and key informant interviews.

I initially aimed to employ additional methods to understand everyday negotiations, including mapping methods such as transect walks and shadow interviews. However, this did not prove practical in the field, in part due to most women’s limited movements outside the home, and so I mainly relied on interviews. While I did not conduct transect walks, I did go along with participants when the opportunity presented itself and engaged in mobile forms of participant observation during fieldwork.

Even with ample preparation and planning, unanticipated contingencies in the field are inevitable. In this context, while I prepared as much as I could for fieldwork, I also took an open and, to the extent feasible, grounded approach to allow key themes to emerge. In each neighbourhood, I spent initial weeks building a network and gaining insights into local contextual concerns that then framed the focus of the case study. I spent the initial weeks mainly in the centres of the NGOs, informally speaking with their members and volunteers. During the initial days, I sometimes felt like mine was an uncomfortable presence as I was conscious of my imposition and tried not to demand of others’ time but spoke to people that were free. As I was new, some members noticed my presence and included me in conversations and banter, told me about themselves, asked me questions, and offered to show me around. I also took walks around the neighbourhood to familiarise myself with the area. While I

did not conduct formal interviews during this time, I learned a lot about the neighbourhood and these informal interactions were some of the most interesting parts of the fieldwork. Nevertheless, here I outline the methods of formal data collection I undertook:

Semi-structured interviews:

Semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions help understand people's behaviours, motivations and diverse subjective experiences (Dunn, 2016). They shed light on how people construct context-specific narratives of their social worlds and attribute meanings to their experiences (Miller and Glassner, 2011). Semi-structured interviews thus respect participants' views of the world and attempt to empower participants within the data by encouraging them to phrase their perceptions in their own words. Following Rose's (1997) position that in-depth interviews are the best source of data collection for those wanting to study situated knowledge, interviews emerged as the main type of primary data.

My entry point into both neighbourhoods was local NGOs. Most interviews were conducted in either the NGO centres or participants' homes. I attempted to conduct all interviews in private¹⁴, but this was not always feasible. In the absence of a separate room, I attempted to ensure interviews occurred where participants were assured no one could overhear them. Although these were spaces of shared solidarity, this was important from an ethical standpoint of ensuring confidentiality and to ensure participants felt free to share personal stories. While absolute privacy was rarely possible, I prioritised ensuring that participants felt comfortable to share.

Most interviews were organised either through the institutional networks of the NGOs or personal contacts of their employees and volunteers, and subsequent snowball sampling. In total, I conducted 78 interviews with 88 participants - 55 residents from Mumbra and 33 residents from Shivajinagar (see Appendix 1 for demographic details of interview participants). In Mumbra, all resident interviews were with girls and women, whereas in Shivajinagar 30 were female and 3 were male. While most participants were interviewed only once, a small number in each neighbourhood were interviewed more than once (including through group interviews). In addition, I interviewed multiple members of the same household in some instances, and these multi-generational interviewing emerged as a powerful way of understanding generational differences in experiences, perceptions, and opinions. I undertook three sets of multi-generational interviews in each case study site (four individual interviews, and two as group interviews with mothers and daughters).

¹⁴ I worked with a research assistant in Mumbra, who was present at some of the interviews (discussed further in Section 3.4.1).

My aim was not to identify a representative sample but an illustrative group of participants. Snowballing helped overcome challenges in recruiting participants and reduced the warming-up process of establishing rapport. I wanted to ensure that participants represented an adequate diversity of positions and thus used multiple contact points to avoid recruiting participants from a narrow circle. I was mindful to include residents from different parts of the neighbourhoods (due to a diversity of socio-economic positions and access to infrastructure in different areas). I aimed to include respondents from different age groups to ensure adequate diversity (see Table 3). Despite this, the age profile of participants in both neighbourhoods is skewed towards younger people, in part reflecting the networks of the NGOs I worked with, but also the demographic profile of the neighbourhoods.

Table 3: Participant distribution by age group

| Age group | 16-30 | 31-45 | 46-60 | 61+ | Total |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| Mumbra | 32 | 14 | 8 | 2 | 56 |
| Shivajinagar | 12 | 12 | 7 | 2 | 33 |

It is worth mentioning the difference in interviews between younger and older participants, impacted partly by the fact that younger women may be more exposed to the public sphere. Interviews with middle-aged and older women often began with them claiming to not have much to say as they didn't go out much or know about current events or politics. I spent time putting them at ease, and these interviews often generated very useful insights even if they rarely led to further interviews.

Conversely, younger participants often enjoyed voicing their opinions and sharing stories. Miller and Glassner (2011) comment that interviews may serve as a reflective exercise for young people to work out and construct who they want to be. I often found this, although this also affected the 'accuracy' of the data: for instance, as discussed in Chapter 5, some younger respondents narratively constructed their lives to reflect their aspirations rather than grounded realities. While contradictions in interviews could be discounted as inaccuracies in the data, making sense of them provided theoretical insights in a context where the politics of aspiration has gained significant prominence. For instance, Elspeth (1996) and Fortier (2000) construct identity as always producing itself through processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong. Consequently, I specifically made room for women to relate to different identities in discussing different issues during interviews.

The interview topic guides (see Appendix 2) were prepared by disaggregating the research questions in simple language and based on inputs from key informants during the pilot study. They were intentionally broad to allow participants to steer the conversation towards concerns important to them. Yet, without any structure there was a danger of the discussion meandering through incohesive

narratives. Thus, it was important to strike a balance between ensuring the data collected would lend itself to examining the research questions while remaining open to prioritise participants' priorities. This was achieved by staying more open during initial meetings and interviews, and more focused as the fieldwork proceeded. Thus, the topic guides constantly evolved as interviews revealed new facets of inquiry, which were fairly different in the two neighbourhoods.

Finally, the use of interviews to examine temporal changes must be considered as time impacts memory. I attempted to include older participants to better understand these changes, and also conducted a limited number of oral histories – two per neighbourhood – of older women who had lived in the neighbourhood for over 15 years to understand socio-spatial changes over a longer period. But recruiting older women was more difficult and, among those interviewed, the receding quality of memory meant that discussions often focused as much (if not more) on the more recent past when reflecting on everyday life and politics. Therefore, the research is characterised by a chronology which is strongest in the present and fades as it extends towards the past.

Participant observation:

Participant observation has its roots in social anthropology but has been widely adopted by geographers to study place in the context of everyday life (Kearns, 2016). Evans (1988) remarks that irrespective of how much a researcher puts respondents at ease before and during an interview, its structured format removes them from the flow of everyday life. Thus, participant observation complemented interviews to provide contextual understanding of people's engagement with urban space and the socio-political relations that shape everyday life.

I spent extended periods of time informally interacting with participants within NGO spaces or "hanging out" in certain public spaces that they frequented as well as accompanying them in running errands. This allowed for longer periods of interaction, and a fuller understanding of their social worlds. I also participated in planned activities such as events organised by the NGOs, or picnics organised by groups within the NGO. Admittedly, this has certain limitations as this "hanging out" was only possible with a particular section of participants (younger women) and was limited to engagement in certain activities (leisure and everyday errands). While I undertook participant observation to a limited extent, I do not claim to have undertaken ethnographic fieldwork. As such, participant observation was not a primary method of the research but accompanied interviews as a consequence of spending time in the neighbourhoods. The use of participant observation as a supplementary method is in large part due to the lower presence of girls and women in the public sphere, as well as my own positionality which prevented me from spending long periods "hanging

out” in the streets. Nevertheless, participant observation still contributed to better understanding women’s everyday socio-spatial negotiations.

Key informant interviews:

Finally, I also conducted interviews with two groups of key informants (see Table 2 in Appendix 1). The first group include representatives from NGOs (including the ones I was working with) and community groups in the neighbourhoods, and officials and commentators relevant to the themes under study. The second group included former and current government officials and elected representatives from the municipal corporations, and state legislative assembly.

3.5 Understanding the data

This section outlines and reflects on my position as a researcher and how it may have impacted the research, how I dealt with ethical dilemmas in data collection, and the process of data analysis that led to the arguments in the empirical chapters.

3.5.1 Positionality

The identity of the researcher always impacts the research, posing both advantages and disadvantages. As qualitative research is inherently interwoven with power relations which cannot be eliminated from the research process (Dowling, 2016), I attempted to reflect on issues of positionality throughout the research process. The fieldwork presented concerns related to two factors: the role of the NGOs that served as my entry point into the neighbourhoods, and my own positionality as an insider-outsider.

Working with local organisations:

Once I identified the two case study neighbourhoods, the next step involved gaining access to residents in these areas. As I did not have any pre-existing contacts in these neighbourhoods, a pragmatic choice was to work with organisations that could connect me with participants. While the NGOs helped me recruit participants and I tried to reciprocate by volunteering with small tasks, I attempted to stay independent in terms of my day-to-day activities and employed snowball sampling from the original participants associated with the NGOs, although this played out differently in the two contexts.

I am very grateful for the support of the two NGOs: Apnalaya in Shivajinagar, and the Rehnuma Centre of Aawaz-e-Niswaan in Mumbra. I was introduced to a considerable share of participants through the institutional networks of the NGOs and personal connections of their staff and volunteers. The two organisations I worked with have different aims and methods of operating. In Shivajinagar, Apnalaya have been working since the late 1970s to “work with the urban poor -

enabling access to basic services, healthcare, education and livelihoods; empowering them to help themselves; and ensuring provision of civic entitlements through advocacy with the government” (Apnalaya, n.d.). Apnalaya staff include several outsiders to Shivajinagar and the organisation has regularly engaged with prominent academic institutions and national and international donors. In Mumbra, the Rehnuma Centre has served as a library, resource and training centre, and progressive space for girls and women since 2003. Awaaz-e-Niswaan itself is a feminist collective that aims to confront violations of women’s rights, and Rehnuma is a space of and for women from Mumbra, with all its employees from the area. Not only are two organisations positioned differently, but they also operate very differently, which directly impacted my fieldwork. While Apnalaya has several field workers embedded in different parts of Shivajinagar, Rehnuma only had a handful of employees that managed and taught at the centre.

The NGOs were gatekeepers of the neighbourhoods and this may have impacted the research in many ways. Firstly, in terms of the range of participants: this narrowed the pool of participants to those known to members of the NGOs. I was sympathetic to the work of the two NGOs and built relationships with their members, occasionally accompanying them about their day and helping with their activities. Through this process, I was able to discuss my research and the types of participants I was looking to meet. Yet, accessing the field through gatekeepers emphasised the need for constant reflection in navigating research relationships. In Shivajinagar, for instance, many initial participants were familiar with academic research having participated in research projects in the past. Here I was concerned both about researcher fatigue and the extent to which participants may tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. After I brought this up with the staff, I was introduced to a much wider range of residents. I further extended this with snowballing as many participants referred me to others in their networks.

Another concern in using gatekeepers related to how participants would perceive me. In Mumbra I was introduced to a considerable proportion of participants through personal connections, but in Shivajinagar I was more dependent on institutional introductions. While some scholars have commented that using organisations like NGOs as gatekeepers poses challenges in terms of their efforts to maintain control to retain their credibility and ensure the researcher does not jeopardise their relationships in the community (McAreavey and Das, 2013; Chaudhuri, 2017), in my research, NGO workers and volunteers introduced me to participants but allowed me to work independently. Nevertheless, being conscious of the risk of participants viewing me as a representative of the NGO, I emphasised my ‘neutral’ position, stressing my role as a student. Thus, I do not expect that participants’ narratives were coloured by their perception of me as a representative of the NGO.

Further, my research and the topics discussed at interviews did not focus on the main work of the NGOs, meaning we rarely discussed the functioning of the NGOs during interviews.

In Mumbra, I also worked with a research assistant, Nasreen, who was an invaluable help during the fieldwork. She provided useful insights in revising topic guides, helped recruit participants and co-ordinated interviews. Although we did not agree on everything, this allowed for interesting discussions that led us both to reflect on our beliefs and enriched the research. Nasreen did not participate in all interviews; she sometimes sat in at the beginning but left if it seemed that the participant preferred greater privacy. For the interviews she attended, she played a crucial role in building rapport with participants, especially for those that seemed hesitant or nervous, but was mindful to not steer the conversation. Through her “insider” status, Nasreen was able to help get to greater depths in discussions that my positionality might have made difficult for me to further investigate.

Positionality:

My own identity and positionality have also importantly influenced the research. Commonalities with research participants sometimes facilitate greater depth in research, but certain differences may be difficult to overcome and thus impact the research (Moss, 1995).

I was conscious that my social background as an upper-caste middle-class Hindu represented the classic position that feminist qualitative researchers have warned against (McCorkel and Myers, 2003): a member of a dominant and privileged group attempting to study a marginalised group. Yet, in practice, my positionality seemed more uncertain and complicated. Naples (1996) argues that “outsiderness” and “insiderness” are not static positions but are relative and fluid such that the researcher is never really inside or outside a community, and this relationship is constantly renegotiated through everyday interactions embedded in race, class and gender relations (Naples, 1996). The existence of this insider-outsider perspective reinforced the need to approach the fieldwork with critical reflexivity. In doing fieldwork, different facets of my identity – relating to my gender, class and religion – were salient in shaping me an insider in some ways and outsider in others. Both positions offered some advantages and disadvantages and, although I emphasised certain aspects of my identity at certain times, I was always honest when asked questions about my background during fieldwork.

I grew up and have lived for much of my life in the city of Mumbai. Thus, I had many shared experiences with research participants, including relating to gender which was a focus of the research. I am fluent in the main languages spoken in these neighbourhoods (Hindi, Urdu and Marathi) and being able to converse in colloquial languages was important to build comfort and

enable smooth conversation. Most interviews were conducted in Urdu/Hindi and a small number were in English and Marathi, although being able to shift between languages also made certain participants more comfortable as language is also closely related to identity construction.

Class was a crucial identity marker which needed to be negotiated in the field. My relatively privileged position in terms of class and education level played out differently in the two neighbourhoods and among different participants. In Mumbra, I spent extended periods of time at the centre, and many participants knew a lot about me through informal conversations before I interviewed them. While this sometimes situated me as someone with privilege, these interactions were premised on solidarity which mitigated power asymmetries. Indeed, there were many commonalities between the regular volunteers and me: being in my late 20s, I was able to identify with many of the women and vice versa; within the centres we looked and dressed similar, as no one wore *burkas* inside. On the other hand, in Shivajinagar, the disparity between the social worlds of many participants and myself was apparent as a considerable portion of the neighbourhood is very deprived. Here, I tried to be mindful of the same, invested time in ensuring participants were comfortable, and paid particular attention to informed consent to ensure participants knew they could terminate the interview at any time.

Although I attempted to be critically reflexive to my class position, in Shivajinagar, my position in the field sat uncomfortably as I often felt I was in an extractive position, not being able to give back to participants who gave their time (often with warm hospitality, but also sometimes with some scepticism as they knew my presence would not change their circumstances).

Additionally, given the research focus on ethno-religious segregation, religion was something that regularly came up during the interviews. While both neighbourhoods are identified as Muslim areas, I did not only interview Muslim women or lead discussions towards religion. Some participants assumed I was Muslim and some asked questions to ascertain my religion (and caste position). This was often through questions about my full name, as names reveal much about one's background. While my first name is distinctly Hindu, my surname is more ambiguous being the name of a Muslim town. In all cases, while I did not volunteer information about my religion or religious views, I was always honest about my background when asked. I never suspected that this facet of my identity impacted participants' interactions with me. Even with participants that asked about my religion, interviews were all premised on an sense of solidarity.

Finally, the question of gender is crucial in a study that investigated gendered social relations. Most participants in my research were female as I wanted to emphasise and privilege women's voices and experiences and focus on their situated knowledge. My own identity as a woman enabled me to gain access to other women without having to overcome reservations regarding gender that exist in a patriarchal society and allowed me access into the spaces of women. In addition, my positionality as a

woman who is also navigating similar social obstacles was a commonality and shared experience with participants, which also contributed to them feeling more comfortable sharing personal experiences.

Simultaneously, this identity may have posed challenges. Given the scope of my research, interviews with men was not a major source of my qualitative data but within the few interviews with male participants (young men that were sympathetic to the research) and informal conversations with men, I encountered definite limits to the scope of topics I could effectively discuss. Additionally, my gender also posed challenges which impacted the methods I could use. As already discussed, I complemented interviews with participant observation, but it was difficult for me to substantively engage in “hanging out” or loitering in the neighbourhoods, particularly after dark, due to my own visibility and safety concerns. In Mumbra, I could conduct observations in prominent places at any time of the day and late into the evening. However, in Shivajinagar I was often advised to leave the neighbourhood after the NGO centre closed around sunset. Thus, while I was studying barriers to women’s access to urban space, I was myself subject to those same constraints.

Undertaking an intersectional analysis of belonging focused on class, religion and gender meant that these very elements of my own identity may have impacted how I was perceived by participants both as they sometimes marked me as an outsider and as they created power asymmetries. Throughout the fieldwork I attempted to be transparent about the motivations of the research, and my associations with local NGOs helped to draw focus to the commonalities of our socio-political objectives – although this did not eliminate power imbalances, it helped create a common space in which to communicate. It has been said that emotional involvement can provide a rich resource for ethnography (Hochschild, 1983; Brackenridge, 1999; Hoffman, 2007), as investing in friendships as a methodological technique is argued to diminish hierarchy (Tillmann-Healy, 2003), create a dialogical relationship and an ethic of caring (Fine, 1994) between the researcher and participants. Thus, building rapport helped mediate some of the power asymmetries in the field, gave me insights into the social worlds of participants, and built an honest relationship where I was open about my position as a researcher, and endeared myself to subsequently have richer interviews with participants.

While I invested in building rapport with participants, genuine friendships or even acquaintances were fostered with a small number. Additionally, the use of friendship as method does not negate power imbalances. When trying to mitigate power imbalances, Owton and Allen-Collinson (2014) outline, following Bakhtin (1986), dialogue involves not only acknowledging that no speaker is self-sufficient but also abandoning the notion that we might, even out of solidarity, merge with another person. They argue that although construing others as different can have negative consequences, it provides space to research participants to express their unique experience and to have it acknowledged as

such. Thus, although I built rapport by emphasising our commonalities, I was mindful to base conversations on empathy and solidarity rather than assuming a commonality of experience.

In addition to how I was perceived by participants, my situated position also impacts how I perceive the data. Critical feminist theory argues that a researcher cannot separate themselves from their emotions, values and past (Rose, 1997) and thus cannot be completely objective and context-free. Likewise, power is almost entirely invested in the researcher when she interprets and writes up the research (Mullings, 1999). In this context, I have attempted to reflect on how my subjectivity has impacted the interpretation of the data and attempted to respectfully depict the voices of participants without reinforcing unequal power relations (see Section 3.4.3). Finally, while reflexive consideration of positionality is important, solidarity requires a longer and deeper engagement. In this regard, I have endeavoured to keep in contact with connections and friends made during fieldwork, visit and when I am home for holidays, and express solidarity as possible. I also hope to go back to the neighbourhoods to share my research and support ongoing resistances building to claim belonging.

3.5.2 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations have directed the research through fieldwork as well as in analysis and writing up (see Appendix 3 for approved ethics assessment). During fieldwork, especially in Shivajinagar, working in a marginalised community without being able to provide any assistance raised a personal ethical dilemma. Despite being motivated by solidarity with participants, I was constantly aware of the inherently extractive nature of my role as a researcher; I was taking up people's time and personal stories for what is admittedly my own instrumental purpose without being able to contribute in equal measure. This was something I grappled with throughout the fieldwork, although it was mitigated in a small way by the fact that I was introduced to participants through NGOs that served the local community, and I was able to direct them to someone that could offer some assistance.

Nevertheless, from this standpoint, my main strategy was to be as honest and clear as possible with all participants. I began all interviews by informing participants that I was a student and unable to offer any incentives for participation and was mindful to not impose on their time more than necessary. In addition, where participants were open with their stories, I attempted to reciprocate when they asked me questions about myself, the fieldwork and my presence in the neighbourhood. Before interviews I would tell participants a little about the aims of the research, and then confirm that their participation was voluntary and that they knew they could terminate the interview any time they wanted.

Informed consent remained essential throughout the fieldwork. While I initially intended to provide and go through a written consent form at the start of each interview, and provide participants with

my business card, I soon realised that this approach was impractical. In practice, the added layer of formality impeded the interviews. Nevertheless, full informed verbal consent for participation in and recording of interviews remained essential, and I ensured all participants had my contact details should they need further information or wish to withdraw participation.

A prime consideration related to anonymity and data confidentiality, which was especially essential given the personal nature of many of the topics discussed. I endeavoured to ensure anonymity of all participants, the only exception being for public officials who were interviewed in their institutional capacity. For residents from case study neighbourhoods, I kept a list of personal information in a separate file which was saved in password-protected storage. In all other places, including recordings and transcripts, personal information including participants' demographic details was associated with a pseudonym to ensure anonymity.

Finally, while I undertook most of the transcription and translation of interview recordings myself, due to time constraints, some of these were outsourced. I ensured that none of these interviews contained particularly sensitive content or personal information, and that sections of recording with identifying information of participants were dropped before sharing with consultants. Finally, I required consultants to delete all files on completion of the task, which was reconfirmed at the end of the assignment.

3.5.3 Data analysis and representation

Data never speak for themselves; they are always mediated by interpretation. In social science research, it has been argued that it is important to begin analysis while collecting data in the field. While more formalised analysis was conducted after completing fieldwork, I informally analysed data in the field, which served two purposes: first, this was crucial to the iterative revisions of topic guides for interviews; and second, my field diary outlining emerging themes from interviews and ethnographic observations aided in the initial identification of themes framing the thesis.

A second phase involved systematically analysing interview data. Anderson (1995) outlines two aspects to a feminist epistemology: how the consideration of gender influences what "counts" as knowledge, how knowledge is legitimised, reproduced and represented to others; as well as how socially-constructed gender roles, norms and relations affect the production of knowledge. In this context, my individual perspective has inevitably influenced the privileging of certain types of knowledge. Here, the markers identified within the intersectional approach employed have influenced the themes discussed in the thesis. In addition, related to Haraway's concept of situated knowledge, both my and participants' social and physical locations have influenced the analysis (Cope, 2002). Thus, analysis and representation refer not only to the process of thematic analysis but also

interpretation and reflection on the meanings and implications of the data. I attempt to describe these processes below.

Almost all interviews were audio-recorded, and the first step in analysis was transcribing the interviews. This involved judgements about the level of detail and translation, which themselves comprise a degree of interpretation and analysis. Transcription began in the field and continued when I returned to Cambridge. Ideally, I would have transcribed interviews in the original language of the interview and delayed translation to English to preserve participants' own words but, due to time constraints, I combined the translation and transcription processes. I undertook most of the transcription-translation myself, sentence-by-sentence for most interviews. For the transcriptions that were outsourced, owing to the interpretative nature of translation, I listened to the recordings alongside reading the transcription and my interview notes to correct errors and ensure consistency across transcriptions. Thus, where I outsourced the transcription-translation, the transcriptions received served as a rough version which I then personally revised.

The formal analysis involved coding the transcribed data. Although I began by using Atlas.ti for analysis, I later decided against using a computer software as I felt it impeded my engagement with the data. I therefore later used hard copies of interview transcripts to conduct thematic and conceptual analysis. A first round of coding involved in-vivo codes from the translated transcripts alongside which I created a map of rough categories and themes. A second close reading helped identify themes, which were then revised and further narrowed through an iterative process that extended through the writing-up phase. Following from the relatively open approach taken during fieldwork, I employed a process of open coding to analyse interviews by looking at what participants' statements meant for the research questions rather than superimposing theoretical assumptions on the data or compartmentalising issues into a rigid framework. Admittedly, the main themes reflect and flow from the epistemological approach taken in the research, thus attempting to privilege women's perceptions of belonging and exclusion and the micro-politics of urban space. From this process, the broad arguments contained in the thesis began to emerge.

A final consideration related to the representation of the data in the thesis, which requires reflection both in terms of 'who' is represented and 'how' their voices are represented in the thesis.

People's experiences, opinions and politics are inevitably influenced by their identity and situated position. While I make every effort to anonymise the identities of respondents, I include broad social identifiers when referring to participants as women's social locations and identities are closely related to their lived experiences. Considering the scale of case study neighbourhoods, these identifiers remain broad enough to maintain anonymity while providing some context of their individual

circumstance. Gender, class and religion are major axes of inequality that influence social relations in India, and the research explicitly explores the construction and intersection of these identities. Here, the difficulty to completely avoid being essentialist when talking about the intersectionality of power is a concern. At the same time, anti-essentialism and intersectionality have not been immune to critique: for instance, applied fully, they make it impossible to talk of oppression. In this context, Spivak (1988) advocates employing “strategic essentialism” which provisionally accepts essentialist foundations as a strategy for collective representation to pursue chosen political ends. While unconscious, self-protective essentialism should be avoided, essentialism itself is often unavoidable. Here, strategic essentialism serves as a pragmatic strategy rather than a universalizing theory (Grillo, 1995; Eide, 2016). Thus, in attempting to capture the complexity of lived experience, I examine the linkages of different types of power relations by adopting strategic essentialism to explore the gendered politics of everyday life as it coexists with other social structures.

Finally, in order to remain close to the data in writing up, I rely heavily on direct quotations from participants. This strategy directly includes participants’ voices yet outlines how interpretations and analyses were formed. I retain certain key words in the original language if they lack exact English translations or have multiple interpretations and include a discussion of their interpretation. Here, issues relating to translation are not just linguistic but also indicative of the need to “vernacularize” theory and in doing so contribute to the project of decolonising urban theory to understand the local meanings attached to socio-spatial objects. For all quotations used in the thesis and in building its arguments, I went back to the recordings to reconfirm that the quotations adequately represent the spirit and intent of participants’ narratives.

While it has been argued that often only brief and persuasive data that support the research question are ‘mined’ for quotes in qualitative research (Silverman, 2000), I include less clear and even contradictory data in order to be open about the ambiguities inherent in exploring people’s lives. Where these were not adequately clarified during fieldwork, they pose challenges in interpretation but still lend themselves to unpacking the complexity of conceptions of belonging as well as further contributing to transparency relating to the limits of the research.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological choices made in undertaking this research and contextualised them within discussions on methodology in urban and gender studies. As with all social sciences research this is a subjective and partial project; the collection, interpretation and representation have all been impacted by my approach and positionality. While qualitative research inevitably involves academic interpretation at various stages, I have made every effort across the

research project to reflect on and be transparent about how my methodological choices and positionality may have affected the arguments that follow and to not diminish the agency of participants within the research. Nevertheless, this chapter has been an explicit attempt to directly address such concerns as they sprung up in fieldwork and writing up this thesis.

Chapter 4. Gendered constructions of public space and community

4.1 Introduction

On an average day in Shivajinagar, the grid of streets and the inner lanes are dotted with open doors. Several people sit at the entrance of their homes talking to neighbours, women doing handiwork or filling water into a drum from the pipe that comes through the lane. Young children abound playing. Groups of men sit at the intersections, and some can be spotted playing cards and some drinking from the late afternoon. About 30 kilometres away, in Mumbra, the main street is packed with people and traffic most times of the day, with residents walking to work, the market, the mosque, or to drop children to school. In the open undeveloped spaces, groups of boys play football and cricket. While in Mumbra the nature of mixing is characterised by busy corridors and the residential streets are hidden inside, Shivajinagar lacks this type of space and is largely residential. These scenes are familiar in most South Asian cities. However, they conceal as much as they reveal about the history and socio-political contestations in these neighbourhoods. Both Mumbra and Shivajinagar have experienced significant changes in their socio-spatial environment over time, which have directly and indirectly impacted the everyday lived experiences of girls and women in the neighbourhood urban space.

Ideas around gender and women's place are constructed through repetition and negotiated within specific historical, social, and spatial contexts (Duncan, 1996; Alcoff, 1996). Thus, gendered urban space is scripted according to norms in a particular place and time. This enables examination of the role of urban space (and different urban spaces) in shaping gender performances. As this chapter demonstrates, even at the local level of the neighbourhood, expectations around gender performances and socio-spatial politics can vary substantially in different places.

This chapter examines the gendered meanings of and practices in urban space to complicate understandings of urban social space in segregated neighbourhoods. By examining women's engagements in urban space, and the multiple meanings places hold, the chapter examines urban life and space in segregated neighbourhoods through a gendered lens. Specifically, it explores two questions:

- What is 'public' about gendered urban space?
- What does a gendered reading of space reveal about gender and community in the segregated neighbourhood?

In exploring these questions about gendered negotiations of urban space, this chapter draws on a combination of data sources. The first two sections elaborate on empirical evidence drawn from primary fieldwork conducted during 2017-18 as well as reflections from political developments that

have occurred since the completion of fieldwork. Here, the discussion of more recent political developments builds on socio-spatial-political actions and momentum that were already incipient during the time of fieldwork. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 elaborate on the empirical material on gender performances and socio-spatial politics through four frames. Section 4.2 examines women's claims to urban space and citizenship through (i) political mobilisation and protest, and (ii) performative acts. Next, Section 4.3 explores gendered urban space through the lens of everyday life, focusing on both (iii) prominent public spaces, and (iv) intimate or parochial spaces. These two sections introduce the empirical material and outline varied types of gendered negotiations across urban spaces. Subsequently, Section 4.4 builds on the empirical observations from the previous sections and develops the conceptual argument of the chapter. This section reflects on women's diverse socio-spatial negotiations to examine what a gendered reading of urban space can reveal about gender and notions of community. In doing so, this section outlines the conceptual insights and theoretical contributions of the chapter by relating the arguments to existing scholarship to complicate notions of community and public space in the context of urban segregation. A short final section concludes.

4.2 Gendered claims in/to urban space: Protest and performance

This section outlines women's evolving contestations in urban space through two different types of collectivities. It first explores political protest, describing the increasing salience of Muslim women in prominent political protest. The second section discusses efforts to reclaim public space by girls and women for sports through performative acts. Although these claims may not always employ an explicitly political vocabulary, they challenge gendered social norms and serve as a tool to mobilise social and political change.

4.2.1 Taking space: Protest and political participation

Urban space has long been used to stake claim to physical and symbolic space. For instance, right-wing Hindu mobilisation in Mumbai has often used religious processions, such as *maha-aartis*, to code the city as a Hindu space (Hansen, 2001b). Yet, in the past two decades, women – and Muslim women's groups in particular – have played an increasingly central role in political action making claims to citizenship and rights, pushing them into the public sphere and public spaces of the city. During my fieldwork, I attended women's marches and protests in public spaces within the neighbourhoods. These mobilisations were attended not only by political activists but also women from varied sections of society, including "ordinary" or "private" women. These protests were largely framed in terms of justice and rights, but beyond making political demands for the issues that they mobilised around, they also served as a means to shift the perception of women, and particularly Muslim women, from being understood as in need of "saving" (Abu-Lughod, 2013) to those playing a crucial role demanding change. Each of these mobilisations built on the momentum generated by

previous protests that have solidified the political participation of women from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods. In this section, I trace Muslim women's recent political mobilisation and identify the growing role of political mobilisation and collective action as a means through which Muslim women have expanded their political engagement and expanded their role and claims in the public sphere are spaces of the city.

A prime example relates to the protests precipitated by the introduction of the Citizenship Amendment Bill in December 2019 which redefined citizenship based on religion. Four days after the passing of the Bill in both houses of Parliament, the Delhi police stormed into Jamia Milia Islamia University claiming to look for violent protesters that were hiding in the university, thus using alleged violence to justify their actions. The police fired tear gas in the university campus and assaulted students, including many studying in the library. A prolonged clash between the police and students extended beyond the university campus and culminated in a reported 28 students being arrested and over 200 injured. Soon after, a video of a brutal incident began to circulate, depicting a group of women from Jamia protecting a man that the police were beating. This incident and two of women in the videos – Ayesha Renna and Ladeeda Farzana – became symbolic of the bravery shown by protestors, as the protests transformed into a movement across Delhi and India.

The most emblematic of them was in Shaheen Bagh, a short distance from Jamia, that continued for three months until the lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic in late-March 2020. The protest began with a group of women staging a peaceful sit-in protest on a public road; others from the neighbourhood joined and were followed by hundreds more, including from surrounding states. Eventually, Shaheen Bagh was transformed with thousands of women sitting in protest, seven days a week, with continuous cries and songs for justice and *azaadi* (freedom). Commentators have labelled the political imaginary of Shaheen Bagh as one of the most powerful citizenship movements in postcolonial India (Chatterjee, 2020). While it has been argued that women often need to imitate men to participate in the political sphere, here this was not the case: Ghertner and Govil (2020) assert that the women-led infrastructures of care at Shaheen Bagh served as a spatial claim to citizenship against majoritarian dichotomies of nationalists versus anti-nationalists, and Hindus versus Muslims. Shaheen Bagh inspired waves of protests across India led by young and old women; students, working women, and stay-at-home mothers and grandmothers, many of which were met with repression by the State. Muslim women-led urban occupations held a salient position in protest.

In Shivajinagar, protests organised by civil society groups and opposition political parties alike witnessed wide participation. Women played a crucial role in these protests despite (sometimes

violent) police intervention to remove them.¹⁵ In Mumbra, hundreds of women sat in continuous protest along the main road, similar to the protest in Shaheen Bagh. In late January 2020, Ladeeda Sakhloon and Ayesha Renna from Jamia visited the ongoing protest in Mumbra (which also continued until the lockdown in March) as part of a tour expressing solidarity with protests across the country.¹⁶

While the anti-CAA-NRC protests have been iconic, women's prominence in them is a culmination of their growing presence in the public sphere and political protests in recent years. For instance, during my fieldwork, I participated in a few women's protest marches in Mumbra held in parallel with others across India in April 2018 demanding 'Justice for Asifa', for action to be taken against the perpetrators of the rape and murder of an 8-year-old girl in Kashmir, as well as in March 2018 opposing the Triple Talaq Bill. One of the women that attended, Mauzama (50) explained, "[the rally extended] from here until there, and it went up to the police station [at one end of Mumbra] ...I can't say how many there were! There were a lot Masha'Allah". The protest was indeed well attended and was reported in various local and national newspapers alongside similar protests organised across the country. Notwithstanding the complex politics of the legislation, the process leading up to its enactment in 2019 recorded an increasing presence of Muslim women in political action.

The protests against the Triple Talaq Bill in 2018 divided Indian Muslims, feminists and the Muslim women's movement, and the various positions taken in response to its introduction highlight the precarious position women occupied in the public sphere. Many of the protests, including in Mumbra, were organised by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB). While many groups opposed the Bill, the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) did not. In the context of the protests, BMMA leader Zakia Soman argued, "The AIMPLB-organised 'women's marches' are nothing but blatant instrumentalization of women".¹⁷ While some women supported the legislation criminalising triple talaq, these same women came out in large numbers to challenge the government when it came to the CAA-NRC. In this case, however, notwithstanding the leadership and overwhelming participation of Muslim women in resistance movements, some BJP leaders echoed claims that women were being used as pawns in the protests. For example, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, argued "They started making the women sit at roads...the men are sleeping under the quilt and the women are made to sit at roads".¹⁸ While originating from opposite ends of the political spectrum,

¹⁵ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/caa-protests-women-allege-assault-by-police-in-govandi/article30730339.ece>

¹⁶ <https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/other/2-jamia-girls-energise-protests-in-mumbra/articleshow/73536594.cms>

¹⁷ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/muslim-women-want-a-family-law/article23564994.ece>

¹⁸ <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/india-news-raising-azaadi-slogans-in-name-of-protests-amounts-to-sedition-yogi-adityanath/346065>

both Soman and Adityanath's statements highlight the complicated role Muslim women continue to occupy in the public sphere and political movements.

Notwithstanding this, in a context of rising Hindu majoritarianism, Muslim women's mobilisation has cemented their visibility in the public sphere and urban public spaces, generally considered the male domain (McDowell, 1983; Bondi and Rose, 2003; Sandercock and Forsyth, 2005). Yet, women's place in public is determined by their multiple identities and the nature of the spaces they inhabit. In the mobilisations against the CAA and Triple Talaq Bill, women's public presence arguably represented their religious community and thus received greater social support. However, when understanding women's belonging in public space the question must be posed of how this may vary when challenging different structures of power – not only through their identities as Muslim women fighting Hindu majoritarianism but also as women encountering patriarchy. The next section explores women's efforts at reclaiming their right to the city and urban space through performative strategies that target social norms.

4.2.2 Reclaiming space through performance

The past decade has recorded a growing prominence of issues around women's right to the city, and their access and safety in urban spaces. New forms of feminist action have utilised varied strategies to challenge gendered social power structures. This section investigates collective efforts of girls and women to claim urban space and subvert gender norms through the example of sports.

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on women in sports, including both NGOs efforts working through the logic of 'sport, gender and development' (e.g., the Girl Effect) and self-organised initiatives (e.g., Black Girls Run! in the United States, or the women's Jeddah Running Collective in Saudi Arabia). Researchers have demonstrated that sport is a useful tool to contribute to gender and development in various ways, particularly to enhance girls' and women's education, health and self-esteem, and challenge gender norms and perceptions of women's place in urban spaces (Hargreaves, 2007; Forde, 2008; Saavedra, 2009; Wilson, 2011; Carey and Hicks, 2011; Sehlkoglou, 2016). Sports have thus gained popularity as a strategy for girls and women to challenge gendered social, religious and cultural relations and practices (see Kirk, 2012; Chant et al, 2017). In turn, a growing number of NGOs working with young women have initiated programmes that focus on sports, typically associated with male bodies. As these are rarely done in private spaces, they simultaneously emphasise women's claim to public spaces and disturb normative notions of gendered division of space and activities.

In Shivajinagar, Apnalaya initiated a programme engaging young women to mentor adolescent girls learning to play kabaddi¹⁹. The programme initially ran for two years, where mentors conducted training sessions on social issues and took the girls to a nearby playground to play kabaddi weekly, culminating into a tournament.

“It was very tough to convince them...That girls will go to play kabaddi wearing jeans and top: ‘No, what will others will say’...But after handling those problems came a time where parents themselves asked ‘When will you take them to play?’...Even today some parents do not agree...Actually, it is a very big thing to come out and play kabaddi in Shivajinagar, so parents do not agree easily...But the girls felt very good to play; they do not get the chance to go outside and play, so they enjoyed a lot, they had freedom...Now again they are trapped in the house.” [Noori, 21, Shivajinagar]

Noori, who served as one of the mentors, raises several issues. First, she talks of how participation in sports gave the girls a sense of freedom and independence that they did not otherwise enjoy. Noori also spoke with pride when she told me about how she helped a few of her mentees re-enter formal education and even assisted one girl to negotiate with her family to delay early marriage.

Nevertheless, wider social change is often slow to come. A key challenge relates to societal judgement and perceptions of girls’ propriety when it comes to sports - whether relating to their clothing or their defiance of gendered social roles. Noori acknowledges that girls playing kabaddi in a public space makes a big statement in challenging existing gender norms.

Admittedly, the freedom that the girls enjoyed was enabled by institutional structures that supported their participation, and provided protection in public space, which does not otherwise exist. On being asked why the girls may not continue playing after the programme ended, Noori explained, “We would pick up the girls from their houses and drop them. Now there is no one to collect or drop them so parents do not allow, because on a daily basis there are [safety] issues. Parents are afraid, as are the girls.” This highlights how such initiatives may not transform gender norms as girls’ sports may not always be possible without formal structures in place to enable it.

While the initiative in Shivajinagar was relatively new, female sports in Mumbra is marked by longer-term continuity. In fact, Mumbra has received attention and, in some ways, been rebranded through sports. In 2018, a television advertisement by a multinational bank highlighted Mumbra, stating “there is a culture brewing in Mumbra: the culture of sports.” Two teenage girls clad in salwar-kameez say, “Mumbra means football: watch the match, practice, and if there’s free time play again.

¹⁹ Kabaddi is a popular contact team sport in South Asia, where players run into the opposing team's half of a court and aim to tag as many of their defenders as possible and return to their half in a single breath.

For me, now, Mumbra is just football.” A young boy adds, “My mother would worry that I will while away time and fall into bad habits, so she sent me to school for practice. And now it is a habit. People from Mumbra can become players too. Now that’s the dream.” The ad not only promotes the Bank’s sponsorship of lighting for Mumbra’s stadium, but also represents a perspective of Mumbra as a hub for sports, rather than merely of criminality (see Chapter 6).

This development also reflects acknowledgement from politicians and officials on the importance of space for young people, and girls in particular, to play; they have often sponsored sports competitions in Mumbra and the corporate funding for lighting the stadium facilitated by them may be viewed as an extension of this support. The introduction of this infrastructure does not simply reflect patronage or vote-bank politics but is the culmination of years of advocacy and co-operation by organisations working with young people in not only convincing residents to allow their daughters to participate in sports but also attract institutional support to enable the advancement of local amateur sports.

At the entrance of the Rehnuma Library Centre in Mumbra are three shelves showcasing trophies and awards won by members – for not only football, for which they have a long-standing team, but also kabaddi and running. A new trophy was added to the shelf on 8th March 2018 when Mumbra hosted a football tournament to commemorate International Women’s Day. Girls from two local teams played a series of short matches against teams from other parts of the city as their mothers, sisters and friends cheered them on. Afterwards, local politicians came and distributed prizes. The afternoon ended with a celebration of the occasion with music and dance, and the young women took selfies to remember the occasion. While this may not sound noteworthy, feminist, minority and queer activists have argued that selfies can serve as a means for people to represent and take pride in their identity. For instance, Datta (2019) argues that selfies can represent visual stories of women’s negotiations and activities outside the traditional realm of domesticity as they navigate the male-dominated city.

Yet, while girls’ sports have gathered momentum, young women do not play sports everywhere or all the time. Girls often play sports in semi-private spaces, usually the grounds of one of the schools in Mumbra. As in Shivajinagar, when one walks around Mumbra, the open spaces are populated with boys playing. Girls and women continue to require structured spaces and institutions for leisure and sport, remaining absent from the neighbourhood spaces where boys and young men play. Latham and Layton (2019) stress the importance of the public facilities that allow sport to happen and stress the interconnected issues that impact access to sporting facilities. This highlights the need to examine how characteristics such as race, gender, sexuality and disability can limit people’s access to sports (Wilste, 2007; Coen et al, 2018; Coen, 2018). Clearly, in both Shivajinagar and Mumbra, the continued existence of institutional structures remains important to enable girls’ and women’s sports. This has

been cemented through longstanding efforts by multiple actors in Mumbra although it remained new in Shivajinagar.

Nevertheless, in Mumbra, the tournament in 2018 was by no means a first. Every year Mumbra hosts girls' football tournaments. This is, in part, due to the political support that girls' sports have strived to attract. Notably, in 2014, the Thane Municipal Corporation promised a female-only football field in Mumbra, following a petition organised by a local NGO, Parcham. Significantly, this ground was handed over to the NGO in March 2019, following years of iterative lobbying and negotiations between local NGOs, politicians, and municipal authorities. These efforts reflect the power of concerted action to apply pressure to dismantle gender norms relating to girls' and women's presence in urban public spaces undertaking activities not traditionally associated with femininity. It also represents an explicit political acknowledgement of the legitimacy of women's rightful claim to urban public space – notably for the purpose of sports and recreation – and reflects the ability of groups of women to contest and gain their right to the city and its spaces.

A final point relates to the role of NGOs and corporations that financially contribute to sports for girls and women. Hickel (2014) argues that corporations view initiatives premised on the logic of gender empowerment as apolitical enough to be safe to promote without undermining their own interests, and compelling enough to use in PR campaigns that disguise their extractive relationships. Corporate involvement in such efforts is symptomatic of consumer-based philanthropy more broadly, as development aid has increasingly been privatised (Crouch, 2011; Hayhurst, 2014). Additionally, programmatic approaches are criticised for their lack of sustainability; as programme benefits often end with donors' contributions, they fail to confront underlying inequalities of power (Ferguson, 1990; Brown, 1998; Mansuri and Rao, 2004; Jackson, 2005; Easterly, 2006; Li, 2007). However, the local impacts of programmes can vary across time and place. For instance, girls' football in Mumbra first began in 2012 through an NGO programme.²⁰ Over time, it expanded through local ownership by regular participants and coaches that played a crucial role in recruiting girls and negotiating with families and authorities. Indeed, the existence of women's sports in Mumbra has involved continuous political negotiations at various levels.

Notwithstanding significant progress, these developments may not reflect how participants engage in urban space in other aspects of their lives. The project of "undoing" gender may therefore remain incomplete as these activities remain deliberate performances. While in Mumbra there has been growing momentum around women's sports which has enabled sustained progress, in Shivajinagar it remains more dependent on institutional structures. Despite significant progress of efforts to subvert

²⁰ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/happy-feet-in-mumbra/article5042555.ece>

gendered social norms and reclaim urban space through repetitive performative acts, social norms are slow to change. Thus, where this section focused on women's claims to space through organised sports, the next section examines their individual negotiations of urban space through the lens of everyday life.

4.3 Negotiating space through everyday life

Everyday life is routine and yet it forms the basis of social interactions in the city and can provide insight into the spatial practices that shape gendered experiences. The everyday socio-spatial construction and contestations of gendered space are themselves deeply political and viewing these through the lens of 'ordinary citizenship' (Staeheli et al, 2012) can help reveal the role of everyday in the structuring, practice and enactment of citizenship. The lens of the everyday can be related to Bourdieu's (1990:53) concept of 'habitus', which constitutes a sense of one's place in their lived environment, which then may reproduce the dichotomous division between female and male spaces. This conception inherently acknowledges that social relations are both constructed by and contribute to the structuring of power based on different positions (such as of class, gender).

Spatially, it has been argued that everyday life – especially for girls and women – generally happens in the intimate spaces of the city. Beebeejaun (2017: 331) argues that when taking a gender lens, "instead of the agora, the public square, or other civic locations more usually associated with the right to the city, the everyday and the unmapped gain importance". Thus, ordinary spaces that may often be overlooked in planning and political discourse are where gendered everyday life is contested and constituted. Beebeejaun's distinction between the prominent public spaces associated with 'the right to the city' and the ordinary spaces of gendered everyday life mirrors the typology outlined by Beauregard and Bounds (2000), who distinguish between two types of spaces: the 'public' – which includes sidewalks, markets and plazas – where strangers congregate; and the parochial, where acquaintances and neighbours come together. They stress that the distinction between these spaces is not simply between the meeting of strangers and acquaintances, but contains a political component: individuals and groups craft their interests and identities in parochial spaces and publicise them in public spaces.

In examining everyday contestations of space, it is useful to look across these two types of the 'public' to unpack how different identities are expressed in urban space. Limiting study to parochial spaces risks neglecting gendered performances in 'public' spaces where patriarchal norms are known to discriminate against women. Buckley and Strauss (2016) argue that while a focus on the everyday is important, it should not be privileged over the global, and propose bringing a gender lens to the right to everyday life and the right to the city. While 'public' spaces are where identities are performed,

they influence identity formation and interactions in everyday life. Accordingly, I argue that “the agora, the public squares...” should not be relegated to the background when analysing gendered negotiations of space. Consequently, this section discusses gendered socio-spatial constructions of public and parochial spaces to examine the nature of gendered space in the segregated neighbourhood.

4.3.1 Everyday life in urban public spaces

One Sunday afternoon, I was invited to a friend’s house in Mumbra. In the evening, we went out for tea and snacks to a small outdoor café along the embankment of the main pond in Mumbra, which had been developed as a recreational space. Around us groups of young people hung out, families spent time together, and men socialised after visiting the mosque next door. After we finished our tea, we sat by the water. Visually, we were a group of women sitting and chatting, taking photographs, and having a good time. There was no further purpose and indeed this was a public space where we did not need to engage in any consumption. When I brought this up, Saleha [24] casually exclaimed, “Yes, it is our time now!”

Feminist geographers have argued against the perpetuation of dichotomous distinctions between public and private spaces where, in the *city of separate spheres*, a woman’s rightful place was perceived as the domestic private sphere (McDowell, 1983; Bondi and Rose, 2003). Yet, any access to public spaces is predicated on the existence of public spaces in the first place. In general, Indian cities – particularly dense neighbourhoods in Mumbai – are marked by a distinct inadequacy of open and public spaces. Therefore, the streets often serve as the main public space in the neighbourhood. In Mumbra, a common refrain among participants was of the distinct lack of public spaces:

“Where are they? Public spaces, there are just these small gardens...Where can we go there?...You can go, but there is no safety...This is why we mostly don’t go only, isn’t it? It is not that this [harassment] happens only in Mumbra, but it happens a lot here. Then, you must wear the burqa and go, you can’t remove the burqa...So, the environment is very suffocating.” [Sayeeda, 30, Mumbra]

“If you see there [in Thane and Mumbai], there are places to roam. Here, this has not happened. Sometimes if the children have holidays, we go to Thane chowpatty [beach]...Now this has not been made yet [in Mumbra], like a beach or something. They say they are going to make one. Whether it gets made or not, only Allah knows.” [Mariam, 32, Mumbra]

As Sayeeda and Mariam outline, there is a distinct lack of public space in Mumbra. A considerable number of women, when speaking of public space, referred to various restaurants and cafes, some

lamenting the lack of a mall or cinema. Many spoke of visiting Thane or Mumbai to access such spaces.

Yet, there have been some developments within Mumbra:

“It was so congested and even the local boys are problematic so you couldn’t go anywhere. Now Alhamdulillah there are places we can go... Even now the same problem exists, but if you have money you can sit in a restaurant comfortably and eat. Otherwise not even that.” [Madiha, 27, Mumbra]

Madiha concurs with Sayeeda and Mariam in identifying the dearth of places to visit, and access being constrained by the street harassment that women routinely face. She points out spaces of consumption such as restaurants where women can enjoy recreation and safety “if you have the money”. Madiha’s observation is consistent with scholarship that traces some extent of ‘feminisation of the flaneur’ through privatised public spaces in the neoliberal era (Featherstone, 1998). For instance, Abaza (2001) argues that shopping malls may not serve the same function in the Middle East and Southeast Asia as in America where, due to the shortage of public spaces and gardens, malls serve as spaces for socialisation as much as consumption. Yet, Phadke (2007) argues that although middle-class women are welcomed into such spaces, where their presence is a marker of the urban modernity, these are not “public” spaces as entry remains regulated through acts of exclusion and performance of a class habitus plays a crucial role.

Madiha’s comments may at first glance reflect a trend towards a middle-class conception of privatised public spaces associated with neoliberalism. However, her references to other spaces indicate a broader conception of public space. While privatised public spaces shape urban identity and function as sites of modernity for women from the new middle classes who identify restaurants and malls as public spaces they can access for leisure, these women commonly lamented the lack of parks and waterfronts, which exist in other parts of the city. Indeed, references to the pond or the proposed beach in Mumbra were made with some sense of pride as symbolic of Mumbra’s development more than as examples of spaces they would occupy or enjoy in their everyday life. Likewise, the significance of malls may symbolise more than just women’s widened access to privatised public space but rather their inclusion in neoliberal ideas of modernity and progress (discussed in Chapter 6).

Shivajinagar, on the other hand, is an extremely dense settlement. Here, there is a near absence of public spaces and most places outside the home may be more appropriately classified as parochial spaces. Arguably, the network of parallel roads within the plots of Shivajinagar – which contain the local markets – serve as public spaces. For many of the surrounding housing clusters, the main open

space available to residents that was used as a playground and for grazing cows and goats was the landfill (Contractor, 2012a). In recent years, the municipal authorities have effectively prohibited access to the dumping ground, and the road alongside it now serves this purpose. Otherwise, the neighbourhood suffers from a distinct lack of public spaces. Thus, when residents speak of public spaces in the neighbourhood they refer to the narrow streets and lanes of the settlement or the communal toilets. Thus, the discussion in this section draws mainly on the experience of women in Mumbra, and Section 4.3.2 elaborates further on Shivajinagar.

Many women in Mumbra spoke of how improvements in the *mahol* or socio-spatial environment had enabled women to realise their claims to public spaces. The street market and public spaces would be populated with large numbers of women, young and old. During the month of Ramzan, people from across Mumbra spent long evenings in the streets as the market expanded to stretch along most of the length of Mumbra. A common refrain when discussing public spaces was how women feel safe even late at night. For instance:

“Earlier we would not go out at all...It was not good. Now Masha’Allah, we can send our daughters anywhere. Even at night, there is no tension...See, all places have good and bad [elements], and I believe that whatever it is, it is in our hands. If we go straight on our way no one will harass us...If anything happens, people stand around and see what is happening. That way it is good for women. Compared to places outside, in Mumbra there is no tension for girls.” [Mauzama, 47, Mumbra]

Mauzama outlines that although street harassment persists, this is not unique to Mumbra and women everywhere need to manoeuvre these risks. She explains that in case of any harassment or risks of gendered violence, there are always people on the street to intervene. This is evocative of Jane Jacobs’s (1961) argument in *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* for urbanists to value streets and sidewalks for how they actually function. She argued that those streets with the greatest outward signs of chaos are the most vibrant, safe and liveable urban spaces; as the continuous presence of people serves as “eyes upon the street” (Jacobs, 1961: 35) that prevent and detects trouble. In contrast, Datta and Ahmed (2020) critique ideas of public safety through citizen surveillance, arguing that the construction of crowded public spaces as safe is often largely defined by male presence in the crowd. This suggests that these arguments can play out differently in different places and times, based in part on whose “eyes” are on the streets.

Segregated spaces often involve distinct socio-spatial dynamics. An important feature of contemporary urbanisation has been the proliferation of upper-class isolation through gated complexes. Phadke et al (2011: 166) describe how through these spaces one is “lulled into a false sense of actually having access to the public” but access is limited to a privatised public space owned

and operated by the community. These spaces serve as an extended harem wherein women remain hidden from the public gaze. While gated complexes exemplify the 'citadel' as one kind of segregation, Mumbra represents an ethno-religiously segregated neighbourhood.

Notably, girls and women are present in all public spaces of Mumbra – the main street, the market, the embankment by the pond, and the stadium (although, admittedly, many women cite difficulties in leaving Mumbra). Here, rather than women being restricted to the house, the 'Muslim neighbourhood' itself arguably serves as a type of '*zenana*' where women have free access subject to demonstrating belonging. Literally translated to "of the women", a *zenana* in South Asia refers to the inner part of a house for the seclusion of women, with entry of men restricted to only those within the family. Although women largely practise *purdah* (or veiling) outside the home in Mumbra, here the family is replaced by an imagined community in the segregated Muslim neighbourhood. Women are still not flâneurs but remain visible, performing gender through their everyday lives. Thus, while on the one hand the neighbourhood can serve as a *zenana* or safe space for women who perform their identities in socially approved ways, this often remains premised on the demands of social respectability. The "eyes on the street" that observe potential offenders also serve to police the behaviour of women:

"Outsiders are more concerned than our own family members. Where does she go? Whom does she meet? People here take notice of all these things." [Yasmin, 22, Shivajinagar]

"When you walk, people pass comments in the area. The way they talk and look, you understand what they are talking about. Some things come from our own families. Some say, 'She is a girl, why are you taking her out like this? Why isn't she covered with a shawl?'" [Fatima, 47, Mumbra]

Yasmin and Fatima outline the predicament of women where neighbours often have a strong voice in judging and shaping their actions. Yasmin speaks of how she would like to help support her family financially, but the only job she could get was working in a mall and explained that her family did not permit it because "*the thinking here is that girls who work in a mall, they are bad. People look at her in a wrong way*". While Yasmin lives in one of the slum clusters in Shivajinagar, Fatima lived in a chawl²¹ in a deprived part of Mumbra. In both cases, due to the greater blurring between the public and private spheres, there is a lower ability to avoid the parochial spaces and judgements of neighbours. Thus, socially constructed norms of 'good' and 'bad', and 'right' and 'wrong' proclaim how girls and women should dress, where they can go and what types of jobs they can do.

²¹ Chawls, mainly found in western India, are a type of housing consisting of a large building divided into separate tenements, offering cheap, basic accommodation.

The strong voice of neighbours overpowers any wider notion of the 'public', which is perceived to be enjoyed in more middle-class areas where the immediate community plays a muted role. Patriarchal norms thus dictate how women access public space. This can be related to Foucault's notion of the gaze that adopts Jeremy Bentham's model of the Panopticon²² to explain how power is created and distributed through society. According to Foucault (1977: 156), it is through the panoptic, all seeing "gaze" that power is produced, and individuals are controlled: "There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints... Just a gaze." As individuals are constantly aware of being watched, they adopt socially acceptable patterns of behaviour.

However, Foucault's theory also includes the potential for resistance (Bordo, 1993; Krips, 2010). Power relations are always constructing new forms of resistance which can range from large performances to gradual and local shifts in power structures. Here, neighbourhood surveillance is countered in several different ways. In the quotation above, although Fatima claims neighbours and her relatives disparage how she and her daughter do not practice purdah, this has not changed their behaviour. Through our conversation she stressed how she and her daughter were both "respectable", for instance highlighting that her daughter was a teacher, yet they negotiate space by stretching the bounds of acceptability and respectability. Within prevailing conceptions of modernity it was clear that women employed various tactics and strategies to realise their own agency and expand their claims to space, countering neighbourhood surveillance. Here, women here use socially condoned gauges of progress as a way of negotiating their rights and space in the public realm (discussed in Chapter 5).

Returning to the incident at the start of this section, of the outing at the pond: this was a set of young women hanging out in the late evening without any purpose, having a good time. On reflection, Saleha's exclamation that our presence at the waterfront was a sign that it was women's time to enjoy life may not necessarily have been as rebellious as it first seemed. The group were still aligning with the main purpose of the space, which indeed was recreation. In this context, without the development of public spaces of this type, the girls may not have been able to appropriate space in this way: indeed, as this was a space of leisure, loitering was reason enough for women to occupy the space too. Yet, while identity is performed in the public spaces, it is in the parochial spaces that they are contested and fought out, which is discussed in the next section.

²² Bentham's Panopticon represents a prison structured with cells open to a central tower with a guard. Although it is impossible for the guard observe every cell at every moment, inmates cannot know when they are being watched, which induces a sense of permanent visibility and causes them to always behave in a manner acceptable to eventually adopt a regime of self-policing.

4.3.2 Neighbourhood cultures in intimate public spaces

“If a girl was harassed by someone, her mother would beat her saying it was her fault, ‘If you hadn’t gone out, no one would harass you’. How long can that girl stay home and not go outside? She must go out, to the toilet, for studies. How long will she stay home afraid?” [Rosie, 40, Shivajinagar]

Rosie notes the difficulties that young women experience in accessing basic infrastructure outside the home, but expresses a fatigue with expectations that they should avoid the public sphere, rhetorically asking, “How long will she stay home afraid?”. This section explores women’s everyday negotiations of urban space through a focus on the quotidian and intimate spaces of the neighbourhood.

In dense urban settlements – especially in slum neighbourhoods – the distinction between the private, parochial and public often remains unclear. Across Shivajinagar, children play in the lanes and men and women sit outside their houses to conduct routine work. The blurring of boundaries between the public and private also complicates women’s relationship with the public realm as social relations are shaped and embodied in intimate urban infrastructures (Star, 1999; Larkin, 2013). A key infrastructure that illustrates this point is sanitation. Sanitation is more than just an infrastructure; it is a social issue relating to fear and safety for women in marginalized neighbourhoods (McFarlane, 2014). Toilets lie in the liminal space between the public and private for residents of the slum and are a useful example to explore everyday socio-spatial negotiations.

Figure 4: Spaces in Shivajinagar (i) A main road of Shivajinagar I; (ii) Lane in Shivajinagar II



In Shivajinagar, the relatively organised plots fare differently in terms of the extent of blurring between the public and private sphere compared to surrounding clusters. While a larger share of households in the plots have their own toilets, even here many still access external toilets (municipal,

NGO or private). Here, women's engagement in the public sphere is not optional, although it comes at a considerable financial and time cost, in addition to posing health and safety risks (Chant, 2011; McIlwaine, 2013). As residents explain:

"There is the dumping ground, where women used to go [to defecate] ...The women would go during Maghrib [evening prayer] or Fajr [early morning prayer]. Now they [the authorities] have built a wall and there is no way to go there. When women went there, there were cases of harassment, so they stopped going. So they need to go very far away. How far can they go? If someone is in a hurry, they can't go there" [Abdul, 19, Shivajinagar]

"I cannot say anything about the public toilet. As far as I know, they don't keep it clean. We have it in our house...The house is small, but my father built it...He said that it is better than going outside. Here it is like, the toilet is there and next to that five or six rowdy boys will be doing drugs. If a girl passes, they will comment; one or two comments are bound to happen." [Yasmin, 22, Shivajinagar]

Abdul and Yasmin's statements concur with the sentiments articulated by many other residents about sanitation infrastructure. Common concerns relating to women's access to public toilets span the cost, the time spent walking and in queues, and lack of water and hygiene. As evident from the quotations above, girls and women face gendered harassment and violence when accessing sanitation facilities. These issues are not unique to Shivajinagar and similar concerns are widespread in informal settlements across India and the global South.

The impacts of sanitation infrastructure (or lack thereof) are experienced across scales, and advocacy efforts prompting institutional change involve the state. A prime example is the "right to pee" campaign organised by a coalition of 32 organisations and headed by CORO, an NGO working in Shivajinagar and other underprivileged areas. The campaign challenges the dearth of female public toilets in Mumbai and the fact that women need to pay to use toilets while men can often use urinals for free. Their focus is not limited to low-income neighbourhoods but the city as a whole, as the movement applies pressure on authorities to expand sanitation facilities for women. Silver and McFarlane (2019) connect campaigns like "right to pee" to Holston's (2008) conception of insurgent citizenship wherein the concept of citizenship rights is expanded through infrastructure and participation (discussed in Chapter 6). Notwithstanding challenges in access, advocacy around the politics of sanitation is already framed through the vocabulary of rights and, implicitly, urban citizenship.

Common responses to the gendered concerns and issues raised by Abdul and Yasmin above have often been to emphasise the need to recognise gender in urban planning and infrastructure provision. Datta and Ahmed (2020) draw on Rogers and O'Neill's (2012) notion of "infrastructural violence" to

identify the symbolic and intimate structural violence related to the denial of everyday infrastructures. They argue that lack of access to infrastructure itself constitutes passive violence and while physical infrastructure will not eliminate gendered violence its absence can heighten risks in public spaces. Yet, Datta (2016a) argues that material interventions may help alleviate gendered violence, but they fail to tackle the drivers of gendered violence. Thus, Datta (2016b: 176) argues that the “toilets to prevent rape” argument must be unpacked to uncover its gendered and potentially misogynistic assumptions. Similarly, Phadke (2007) outlines that claims that assume that access to toilets will prevent gendered violence are premised on reducing contact with strangers in the public realm and thus based on restricting women’s entry into the public spaces.

This calls for a better understanding of intimate socio-spatial power relations at the neighbourhood level. Datta and Ahmed (2020) categorise communal infrastructure in low-income neighbourhoods as sites of intimate violence that serve as extensions of domestic violence, arguing that both domestic and public infrastructures become intimate through male social behaviours emanating from the home. As Yasmin and Abdul identify, areas around public toilets are often appropriated by groups of men, making them unsafe for women.

Here, the sociocultural constructions of masculinity within patriarchal society underpin gendered violence (Connell, 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Flood, 2011). In this context, while women often speak of proximate fears for their physical safety when occupying these spaces, they also express fears relating to the negative socio-spatial local environment when it comes to their sons and brothers, complicating the simplistic divisions between the categories of “us” and “them”:

“I don’t like this area. The children get spoiled seeing others. How much can we control them? Children go out to play, they get spoiled seeing bad things around them. Boys are spoiled because of bad friendships...This street is unsafe...This street is no good.” [Rita, 38, Shivajinagar]

“There are children and adults, people from our own area that we consider as family, they sit and do these things...So if we shout or try to prevent people from other places coming it has no impact on them. Why? Our own people are sitting with them...Anyway we are not scared, four or five women among us, we don’t get scared – whatever happens, we deal with it. So we have some relief.” [Sayeeda, 39, Shivajinagar]

Rita, who has two adolescent sons, expresses her fear that they may succumb to the antisocial behaviour prevalent in the streets outside her home, and a helplessness in protecting them from the negative environment. In a similar low-income neighbourhood, Datta and Ahmed (2020), argue that the blurring between public and private space is the domestic spills over into public spaces, with alcohol abuse viewed as the state’s responsibility rather than that of individuals perpetrating violence

in homes and public spaces. They observe that even when gendered power relations are questioned, alcohol and substance abuse is often sanctioned as normal male behaviour. In contrast, in Shivajinagar, as outlined by Rita and Sayeeda's comments, substance abuse in the neighbourhood, while considered widespread, is neither normalised nor relegated to the control of the state. Sayeeda's statement highlights multiple aspects of the politics of parochial spaces in the slum. The blurring between the public and the private realms is evident when she talks of how people sit at her doorstep. Many houses in her part of Shivajinagar were made of temporary materials, without proper doors, following the demolition of the area, and are thus not properly sealed from the 'outside'. The public consumption of alcohol and drugs partly occurs due to the lack of private spaces or demarcated marginal public spaces for such activities to take place. Thus, both Rita and Sayeeda express a frustration with the inability to control how the 'marginal outside' impacts their household. Finally, Sayeeda's comment also problematizes what is understood by (and sometimes romanticized as) community and the sources of threat in slum neighbourhoods. Social relations in the neighbourhood sometimes represent solidarity and a certain oneness; for example, Sayeeda refers to the group of women that work together to prevent people from using drugs in their lane. However, she mentions that while some of them are outsiders, others are "people from our own area that we consider as family"; thereby making it difficult to unambiguously 'other' these individuals. In this context they are othered in terms of their actions rather than identity. Relatedly, Datta (2016b) refers to the slum as the "intimate city" where the violence of an exclusionary city is built into its material and social conditions and experienced through everyday life.

In Shivajinagar, as parochial spaces are considered to be dominated by marginal elements that pose a threat to women, there is an explicit avoidance of this space and a desire to reinforce the boundaries between the public and the private. In Mumbra, in contrast, most people live in individualized housing in buildings with a marked distinction between the public and private spheres. Here too, however, those participants that lived in chawls and informal housing expressed similar views. For instance:

"Luckily our neighbours are very nice Masha'Allah. They don't ask where we have gone, they don't ask questions. The place we lived earlier, the neighbours would have a panchayat²³: 'what time did these people go, when did they return'...They dwell on petty things...But now there is no tension. We go and come; all have a job. When people have a job, they don't have the time to look in each other's houses...Such third-class people that stay idle, don't study, sit at home and have a panchayat...I find all this, I feel really bad about such things." [Shagufta, 28, Mumbra]

²³ A village council that discusses and intervenes in local matters

“The environment [near home] is a little bit, drugs and things...When we go anywhere we wear the niqab and go out ...If we have to go anywhere we go out of the house, but not outside [within the area]. A lot of people sit outside in our chawl, but not us...Now Mumbra has become safe. You can go anywhere, even in the middle of the night...it’s not an issue.” [Rehana, 53, Mumbra]

Shagufta, who talks about moving from a chawl to a flat relates the individualised living in flats to greater privacy and less control and judgement from her neighbours. Whereas Datta (2016b) argues that slum life is laid bare of all its “private” elements to the public gaze of officials and the community, the shift to more privatised housing offers greater privacy.

In this context, it is useful to compare these narratives with findings of other research that traces a shift from informal to formalized housing. For instance, Bardhan et al (2019) find that lack of communication and participation by female occupants in planning contributes to the perpetuation of gender inequality in slum rehabilitation housing. In addition, whereas the blurring of the public and private in Shivajinagar resulted in the spilling of the domestic into the public sphere, ironically there is evidence that as communities are moved from slum settlements into formalized housing, greater privacy may reinforce the silences around domestic violence (Meth et al, 2019). While violence behind closed doors indeed remains hidden, here the women focus the protection from the experience of violence and social surveillance from neighbours within more privatized housing.

Thus, in contrast to findings around slum rehabilitation, in Shagufta’s case, the move from the chawl to her current flat was enabled by some degree of economic mobility into (lower-)middle class housing. A key difference here therefore relates to the element of choice: rather than being assigned housing, Shagufta’s family elected to move based on perceived benefits and, moreover, perceptions of this housing as upward mobility. In terms of the surroundings, Shagufta contrasts the residents of the new building that are “all have jobs” with those “third-class people that stay idle”. Thus, these narratives demonstrate the aspirational, emerging middle-class neighbourhood culture characterised by the declining importance of parochial space. Here, parochial or communal neighbourhood spaces are engaged in for superficial exchanges but not much more.

Rehana, who lives in a chawl in a relatively deprived part of Mumbra, complains about the environment near her home similar to Rita and Sayeeda. However, her statement notes a key contrast: while she outlines that the parochial spaces of her immediate surroundings pose risks, she acknowledges wider improvements across Mumbra. Rehana thus claims she can enjoy improvements in public spaces and the perception of Mumbra overall, while simultaneously avoiding parochial spaces near her home. In contrast to Shivajinagar, where women complain of widespread open alcohol and substance abuse, this is more concealed and limited to only certain marginal areas in

Mumbra. This may be in part attributed to greater availability of private spaces (e.g. commercial establishments like video game parlours) or relatively contained areas where activities are undertaken. In contrast, due to an inability to delimit perceptions of marginality to an 'outside' in Shivajinagar, a negative perception arguably sometimes envelopes the neighbourhood in its entirety, even by residents themselves. In general, there is a greater presence of women in the public spaces in Mumbra, but their engagement in the parochial spaces of the neighbourhood is often limited.

In sum, the role and prominence of parochial spaces varies in different places, depending on the nature of neighbourhood relations. In practice, parochial spaces in segregated neighbourhoods often continue to be perceived as marginal, in part due to the structural factors that shape them as such. Consequently, women – especially young women – may actively avoid although they remain integral to everyday life.

4.4 Conceptual discussion: a gendered reading of public space

When I first embarked on this research seeking to understand gendered negotiations of public spaces, an initial challenge pertained to delineating what was meant by 'public' space. Different people held different understandings of the term 'public space'. The term 'public' commonly refers to people, with public space conceived of as spaces occupied by the 'public'. It is also associated with civic identity, with public space understood as that owned by the state. Similarly, notions of community were also diverse: in the context of urban segregation (and informality, in Shivajinagar), the Muslim neighbourhood or slum is often considered a community yet, in practice, fractures and divisions exist in social and spatial relations as the 'community' is far from homogenous.

This section is a departure from the previous two sections as it draws on and brings together the empirical evidence on gendered socio-spatial negotiations in urban space described through the frames of protest, performance and everyday life to conceptually examine notions of public space and community through a gendered reading of urban space. This section therefore explores different types of urban spaces and the gendered politics that shape them in a common frame and provides insights into the multiple spatial practices that illuminate gendered experiences. In doing so, it reflects on the two questions set out at the start of the chapter: what is public about urban space? and what does a gendered reading of space reveal about gender and community in the segregated neighbourhood?

4.4.1 Gendered public spaces

By examining women's negotiations of public space through both deliberate performances of resistance and everyday strategies and tactics, this section unites the different constituent fragments

of gendered urban space. The configurations of gendered bodies in urban space are relationally constructed in different places through micro-political contestations in the city. Kirmani (2020: 321) argues that although the existence of urban violence is undeniable, its overemphasis neglects other aspects of urban life, asking: “If one is writing about violence, how does one also write about all of those moments when violence is not taking place? And if one is researching gender-based oppression, then how does one include all of those moments when women are neither being oppressed nor necessarily actively resisting power structures?” In this context, this section brings together the discussions of gendered contestations in urban space from the previous sections to complicate understandings of gendered urban life in segregated urban neighbourhoods.

Urban public spaces have long been used to perform identity and stake claim to physical and symbolic space. In recent years, women’s prominent role in political action and protests has contributed to reshaping the perception of women, and Muslim women in particular, as citizens and political agents. For instance, Muslim women-led urban occupations played a particularly salient role in protests against the CAA-NRC. Crucially, although the recent protests discussed in Section 4.2.1 have seemingly been instigated by a single issue impacting one group, the protests no longer remained a ‘minority’ issue but assumed centre-stage of national politics, often bringing several political collectivities into coalition. These waves of political mobilisation, indeed acts of insurgent citizenship, have brought the figure of the Muslim woman into the forefront of the political sphere.

Notwithstanding the importance of these protests at the national level, their organisation also provides insights into socio-spatial dynamics and relations at the neighbourhood level. In the context of rising Hindu majoritarian politics, Muslim women have played a crucial role in representing not only themselves but also their communities. However, these protests rarely challenge gendered social relations. Even protests around gendered violence in public spaces broadly demanded safety and accountability in addressing violence against girls and women without challenging gender norms (Phadke, 2020), which may have enabled the broad support they received.

In understanding women’s claims to public space, a question that remains concerns how this may vary when challenging different types of power: Muslim women claim space not only through their identities as Muslim women (fighting Hindu majoritarianism), but also as women encountering patriarchal social norms. The example of women’s sports discussed in Section 4.2.2 illustrates new ways in which women are claiming public spaces by disturbing normative notions of the gendered division of space and activities. These initiatives parallel other recent efforts based on similar principles of fun and affect that target micro-transformations through a combination of protest and performance in claiming space without always employing a political vocabulary (e.g. Why Loiter, where groups of women loiter on the streets and in parks; or Blank Noise’s Meet to Sleep, which

invites women to sleep in parks to claim space). While claims for women's economic and political participation have gained legitimacy, Phadke (2020) argues that the demand for fun is often seen as frivolous and undermining the feminist project. Indeed, such embodied politics have been often classified as 'feminism lite' by some scholars (Kapur, 2012), as such strategies are not considered revolutionary enough to constitute political resistance.

Others argue that the pursuit of fun can serve as an important channel for women to act in defiance of patriarchal norms (Kirmani, 2020; Anjaria and Anjaria, 2020). Phadke (2020) relates the aims of such initiatives to Ahmed's (2010: 60) argument that "the female troublemaker might be trouble because she gets in the way of the happiness of others." She argues that when women occupy public spaces, they are perceived as 'troublemakers', often creating unhappiness for their families and communities. Relatedly, Leider (2018) argues that women participate in loitering not only to become more comfortable doing nothing in public spaces, but also to perform for an audience, normalizing the idea of women doing nothing in public spaces of the neoliberal city.

Similarly, the introduction of performative initiatives engaging women in sports to claim public space serves as a project of both self-empowerment and political change. This project remains incomplete to the extent that they remain deliberate performances and depend on institutional structures.

However, such initiatives hold the potential for change. As demonstrated in Mumbra, local ownership and leadership can and have gone a long way in amplifying such initiatives beyond performances as women negotiate and navigate structures to produce change. The allocation of a sports ground for women's football in Mumbra reflects how concerted feminist action can realise political acknowledgements of the legitimacy of women's rightful claim to urban public space.

While resistance through protest and performative acts are effective means for women to claim and contest urban space, the narratives and insights they produce may not always reflect their everyday engagements in urban public space. Here, understanding everyday socio-spatial relations in public space first demands explicit consideration of what is meant by public space. Postcolonial scholars have argued that Western conceptions differentiating public and private spaces may fail to incorporate the fundamental distinction between European public-ness and non-Western ideas of commonness, and may be less useful in India (Chakrabarty, 1992; Kaviraj, 1997; Arabindoo, 2011). Open spaces in precolonial India were based on commonness, distinct from European public spaces, and lacked clear boundaries, authorisation, and impersonality (Kaviraj, 1997). The daily functioning of Indian society was premised on a distinction between the inside and outside rather than public and private (Chakrabarty 1992; Kaviraj 1997). Here, the outside presented "a total confusion of the private and public" in the ways it was used (Chakrabarty, 1992: 541) and "did not constitute a different kind of valued space, a civic space with norms and rules of use of its own" (Kaviraj, 1997: 98). The colonial

administration tried to introduce the modern notion of public space, but activities that took place in outside spaces relied on the participation of the crowd, as nationalist leaders employed concepts of the common and the crowd in the independence movement (Freitag, 1991), but reinforced inherited colonial administrative structures intended to discipline the everyday conduct of the poor in the postcolonial period (Kaviraj, 1997). However, Chakrabarty (1992) observes that people in India did not adopt the call to discipline and public order, arguing that they were unwilling to give up 'old pleasures' as they had not witnessed sufficient cultural benefits from the new.

The introduction of neoliberal policies in the 1990s has renewed attention to public spaces, with a focus on spaces of consumption. Millennial visions of Indian cities are often characterised by bourgeois imaginaries of public spaces based on aestheticized models of order and cleanliness (Arabindoo, 2011; 2012; Ghertner, 2011). Economic liberalisation policies have been accompanied by the rise of new middle classes with distinct consumption practices that have spatial reconfigured class inequalities and resulted in exclusionary forms of cultural citizenship centred on claims over public space, aiming to cleanse such spaces of the poor (Fernandes, 2004). Where Chakrabarty observed that the non-bourgeois failed to accept the modern conception of private spaces, Doron and Raja (2015) argue that recent developments largely hold these populations responsible for filth in public spaces, and propose that rather than asking who is responsible for the filth in public spaces a more important question is who has the choice to retreat to the private sphere. They observe that tolerance for filth in public spaces is lower among the new middle classes who no longer wish to retire to the interior spaces of the home but rather claim public spaces for private consumption.

In this context, some scholars have claimed that privatised public spaces have enabled some extent of 'feminisation of the flaneur' (Featherstone, 1998; Abaza, 2001). However, others have argued that while these new spaces of consumption welcome middle-class women, these spaces are not "public" (Phadke, 2007). Others argue against the tendency to view such changes as an undemocratic transfer to the private domain and suggest that such spaces can elicit useful insights about public space. For instance, Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo (2009) argue that privately owned spaces devoted to consumerism can function as places where racially- and socially-diverse people can exert their right to the city, and propose the term 'publicization' as the process where private spaces acquire a public dimension. They argue that the emergence of public space has never been accidental but is the result of socio-political processes which are complex and fraught. Relatedly, Staeheli and Mitchell (2007) argue, "[T]he quality of publicness – the publicness of space – seems to consist of the relationships established between property and the people who inhabit, use, and create property." Here, a consideration regarding the publicness of a space is access. Consequently, publicity has no fixed or

settled meaning: it fluctuates and is contested. Those groups excluded and 'othered' from public space have thus often had to contest and make claims to space.

Against this conceptual background, what does the experience of urban space in Mumbra and Shivajinagar reveal about gendered public space? In Mumbra, as discussed, girls and women are abundantly present in public spaces. Participants constantly reiterated how safe Mumbra is for women at all times of the day and night. But while the 'eyes on the street' produce a safe environment for women to enjoy the public spaces of Mumbra, they also monitor women's behaviour. Thus, women's presence in public spaces cannot be likened to the feminisation of the flaneur but rather I argue the segregated Muslim neighbourhood functions as a type of *zenana*, where women have unfettered access to the public space to the extent that they perform an identity appropriate to these spaces, thus demonstrating their belonging to the (imagined) community.

Yet, power relations constantly construct new forms of resistance, and women frequently employ a variety of tactics to expand their claims to space, including in covert ways. Kaviraj (1997) argues that Indian society has been characterised by a politics of insubordination rather than revolutionary projects; while the two share in their resentment and anger, he outlines that insubordination does not require the education or, importantly, cultural preparation to produce an alternative and emancipatory imagination of the world. While Kaviraj is focused on class relations, here, everyday gendered relations are negotiated through a combination of tactics and strategies (discussed further in Chapter 5) that women employ to make claims to space.

Further, while women in Mumbra can perform their identities (and modernity) in prominent public spaces, in dense settlements such as Shivajinagar, the boundaries between private, parochial and public spaces are often blurred. Here, intimate public spaces are the sites at which gendered power relations are contested. In such contexts, Datta and Ahmed (2020) suggest that the intimate is itself a domain of power and violence emanating from the private but extending into the neighbourhood and the urban. They criticise policy responses which emphasise the need to recognise gender in urban planning arguing that such solutions do not tackle the drivers of gendered violence but rather reinforce patriarchal claims that the home is safe for women, when women can and do face a variety of violence within the home (Doron and Raja 2015; Datta, 2016b). Yet, these criticisms perhaps prematurely judge such solutions to be reinforcing patriarchal norms by viewing them within the narrow frame of violence and safety. Here, I argue, that while women undoubtedly contend with legitimate issues and risks when accessing basic services, safety is not their only motivation for reinforcing the public-private dichotomy.

In slum settlements while women's engagement in the public sphere is not optional, and concurrently it is more difficult to keep out the negative elements associated with the outside due to the blurring of the boundaries between the public and private. While the private sphere itself houses complex social power relations, the perception of parochial spaces of the slum neighbourhood as being dominated by marginal elements that pose a threat to women, produces a situation in which women seek to avoid these spaces and attempt to reinforce the boundaries between the public and private.

Beyond fear of violence, however, the desire to reinforce the boundaries between public and private is also shaped by aspiration. In a similar vein, Gherner (2011) argues that the making of world-class cities occurs through the dissemination of a compelling vision of the future which he calls a 'world-class aesthetic' and the cultivation of a popular desire for such a future. He demonstrates that slum residents that risk being displaced from public land and ostensibly have the least to gain from world-class redevelopment both oppose and simultaneously adopt the vision of the world-class city as a basis for framing their own world-class aspirations. In practice, less privileged women in slum settlements do not have the choice to avoid the public sphere. Here the public is not a sanitised, elite construction and the nature of public spaces these women occupy (or are obligated to occupy) varies substantially and would largely be categorised as parochial space.

'Public' spaces, on the other hand, though not a part of everyday life, is where identities and interests are performed and thus reveal the imaginary of self and community. While neoliberal public spaces are discussed as a bourgeois public (Baviskar, 2003; Arabindoo, 2011) the public represents an aspirational space to which women can still make claims. The aspirational, emerging middle-class neighbourhood culture is characterised by a desire for the decline in the importance of parochial space. Where women are abundantly visible in public spaces in Mumbra, parochial spaces continue to be perceived as marginal, and women often actively avoid them. In Shivajinagar, owing to an inability to delimit perceptions of marginality to an 'outside', there is arguably a negative perception that sometimes envelopes the neighbourhood in its entirety, even by residents. Here, the ideal of public spaces (both in and off themselves as well as in corollary to private spaces) offer a chance of the experience of anonymity to women in the segregated neighbourhood – thus the 'public' which has been considered absent in the postcolonial context has had a resurgence not only among the dominant elites but also in marginal and segregated places.

4.4.2 Community in the segregated neighbourhood

This section conceptualises the relationship between the neighbourhood and the community. The two concepts are often used interchangeably, particularly in studies on segregated neighbourhoods where the neighbourhood is understood as an apparently obvious sphere of normative solidarity.

However, Wellman and Leighton (1979) argue that the two concepts may or may not be closely associated. They propose three competing arguments about community through the typology of community lost, found, and liberated. The “community lost” argument contends that the transformation of Western societies to centralized, industrial bureaucratic structures has weakened primary ties and communities, making individuals more dependent on formal organizational resources. The “community saved” argument proposes that neighbourhood communities have persisted as key sources of support, and urbanites retain a sense of local community. Finally, the “community liberated” argument calls for the reinforcement of other social networks to supplement the traditional ones of the neighbourhood, proposing that community need not necessarily be tied to the neighbourhood. Wellman and Leighton (1979) argue that while the three arguments are often presented as competing alternative depictions, or evolutionary successors (from pre-industrial saved communities to industrial lost, and subsequently post-industrial liberated communities), instead all three arguments have validity.

The two neighbourhoods studied here, Mumbra and Shivajinagar, are often described both as ‘Muslim’ communities or neighbourhoods. Wellman and Leighton (1979) observe that ethnic minority and working-class neighbourhoods often contain densely knit ties and tight boundaries associated with “saved communities.” The ghetto simultaneously serves as a sword ensuring the closure of the minority group and a shield offering protected space, leading to Wacquant’s (2004: 3) depiction of the ghetto as a ‘Janus-faced’ institution. However, this sense of community in the neighbourhood is not necessarily fixed, and is experienced from the situated positions of residents within the neighbourhood – which indeed is not necessarily homogenous. While community ties within the segregated neighbourhood may be strong, a second question of the nature of these ties remains important. This section discusses how ‘community’ is conceptualised and imagined by women within the neighbourhood.

I argue that two parallel notions of community exist at the neighbourhood level. As with space, different conceptions of community co-exist, representing the abstract and the concrete, the imagined and tangible, which I call the ‘imagined’ and ‘immediate’ communities. The two conceptions alternately overlap and conflict with each other, and parallel some of the comparisons between public and parochial spaces.

Imagined community in the ‘Muslim neighbourhood’

Benedict Anderson (1983) in his book *Imagined Communities* argues that the nation is a socially constructed imagined political community. Yet, Anderson stresses that being ‘imagined’ is not the same as being false or fictionalised but rather is the exercise of abstract thought. As with the nation,

ethnic collectivities are constructed around boundaries that divide the world into ‘us’ and ‘them’ and are also Andersonian imagined communities (Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler, 2002). In Mumbra and Shivajinagar, different interpretations of imagined communities emerge from women’s narratives. In Mumbra, a distinct ideal of modernity is reflected through the social and material improvements in the town which is then related to constructions of community. In this context, the imagined community is shaped by religious cultural identity (and gentrification of Muslim identity) in conjunction with neoliberal aspirations of modernity. In this way, the imagined community is the Muslim neighbourhood itself although this does not manifest in the form of a Muslim Ummah²⁴ but rather in imaginations of the neighbourhood:

“Anyway, everyone is Muslim, we are in a Muslim area, right... It happens that ‘no, they are Muslim, we should help them’. There is a lot of love here, if you look at it. If one person has a problem, then everyone stands [with them].” [Sameena, 40, Mumbra]

Sameena narrates how although there may be conflict in the negotiation of everyday life, she still holds on to a wider sense of unity based on common identity in the neighbourhood. While there has arguably been a growing religiosity in Mumbra, this has also taken the form of a neoliberal modernity which is not viewed to be in contradiction with a Muslim cultural identity. Therefore, belonging to the imagined community here can be understood in the context of Jamil’s (2017) proposition of how the ‘good Muslim-bad Muslim’ binary proposed by Mamdani (2005) has been adopted and customized for India with different classes being treated differently in discriminatory processes.

The imagined community can take precedence over the immediate community when the latter is less contested and socially or politically charged. Thus, the existence of neighbourhood public spaces where strangers *that belong* can interact (although this belonging is unequally experienced) has contributed to the creation of an abstract sense of community. For instance, while Mumbra does contain marginal areas and groups which are ‘othered’ in many ways, women can inhabit the public spaces of the city at any time. This arguably reflects an abstract sense of belonging and imagined community within the neighbourhood which overshadows localised political contestations in parochial spaces. The imagined community here is one that represents their belonging within the neighbourhood but also within an aspirational emerging middle class.

Immediate community: shifting notions of ‘us’ and ‘them’

While women in Mumbra often relate to an imagined community, there is little reference to this in Shivajinagar. Here, residents experience considerable insecurity in everyday life. As a result, there is a

²⁴ The notion of the Ummah or Muslim community is a fundamental concept in Islam expressing the essential unity and theoretical equality of Muslims from diverse cultural and geographical settings.

greater dependence on cooperation with neighbours and other residents. This follows from Simone (2004a) who proposes the notion of “people as infrastructure”, emphasizing how collaboration among marginalized urban dwellers serves to provide for life in the city. Similarly, Silver and McFarlane (2019), demonstrate the role of ‘social infrastructure’, which they define as the practice of connecting people and things in socio-material relations to sustain social reproduction among marginalised populations, for coping with inequality and poverty.

In this case, girls and women are averse to interact with parochial spaces which are associated with marginality and pose immediate risks. Nevertheless, the ability to avoid them is often low. The proximate everyday experience thus gains prominence and overshadows an imagined community. In turn, the immediate community is not an aspirational one but also one of marginality. In the context of the ‘intimate city’ of the slums (Datta, 2016b), the immediate community – through close personal ties at the local level – have a strong voice in shaping women’s practices and engagements in urban space and dictating codes of what they should and should not do.

Of course, the immediate community is not simply a homogenous grouping punctuated by the frustrations of everyday life among people in close proximity but is divided and contested based on various structures of power and exploitation. This is not to say that residents don’t imagine themselves as part of a common community. Although fragmentations exist at times, and divisions along caste, regional and class lines punctuate ideas of community (which are beyond the scope of this thesis), there exists an abstract notion of belonging to an imagined community. Depending on the context, the immediate community, which is determined by intimate personal relations and is arguably more contested and volatile, may align with or contradict the conception of the imagined community. Both conceptions work together – as with different conceptions of space – to reveal a fuller idea of how community is experienced within the neighbourhood.

Thus, a gendered reading of public space reveals that two parallel conceptions of public space and community exist at the neighbourhood level: one is intimate and immediately experienced and another is more abstract and imagined. As such, both are equally ‘real’ and co-inhabit the spatial and social imaginary of residents, thereby simultaneously – sometimes in concert and sometimes in contradictory ways - impact gendered socio-spatial relations and the strategies and tactics girls and women employ to claim and make space for themselves within the segregated neighbourhood.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter unpacked the different gendered socio-spatial relations in different spaces to understand the emerging nature of gendered public space and community within the segregated neighbourhood.

It aimed to conceptualise the socio-spatial construction of gendered space and thus how urban citizenship is structured and practiced in terms of realising the right to the city and everyday life.

Urban public spaces have long been used to perform identity and stake claim to physical and symbolic space. In recent years, women have been playing an increasingly significant role in political action and protests. This has contributed to reshaping the perception of women, and Muslim women in particular, as active citizens. In the context of everyday life, however, even when women are visible in public spaces, they may remain ambivalent about the proximate neighbourhood and parochial spaces which are perceived as marginal spaces even if their ability to avoid these spaces is limited. In this case, public space offers a chance for the experience of anonymity to women in the segregated neighbourhood associated with progress and upward mobility. Thus, where the concept of the 'public' has been considered problematic in postcolonial India, the desire to emphasize the boundaries between the public and private has found increasing purchase not only among the dominant elites but also in marginal and segregated places.

An examination of these spaces shed light on how the notion of community is constituted in women's everyday lives. A gendered reading of public space reveals that two parallel conceptions of community and public space exist at the neighbourhood level: one is intimate and immediately experienced and another is more abstract and imagined. The conceptions of spatialised 'community' are characterised by the immediate community, that residents engage with in their everyday life, that exists alongside the imagined community, which holds symbolic social meanings associated with the neighbourhood. Within the segregated neighbourhood, aspirations and notions of morality and help imagine self-improvement and attachment to an (improved) imagined community which is performed in the public spaces of the city rather than the immediate community in the parochial spaces of the city. As such, both are equally 'real' and co-inhabit the spatial and social imaginary of residents, thereby simultaneously – sometimes in concert and sometimes in contradictory ways - impact gendered socio-spatial relations and the strategies and tactics girls and women employ to claim and make space for themselves within the segregated neighbourhood.

Chapter 5. Narratives: Negotiating agency and the gendered self

5.1 Introduction

“This is the thing, here we educate girls, and then marry them off...In our Mohammedan [culture], even if a girl is educated, they will say ‘no, don’t do a job, do the housework’. No matter how many degrees she has, she will stay at home only, it is our izzat (honour)...The old type [of thinking] prevails...And then this same, hitting and beating, talaq, teen talaq, all this happens. They marry early and there is no work...so the man removes his tension on the woman.” [Sayeeda, Mumbra, 30]

Sayeeda rehearses a commonly repeated narrative about Muslim women in India. Yet, this does not reflect her own life experience: Sayeeda, herself, worked part-time at a local children’s nursery, something that her husband and family encouraged her to do, and attended classes to learn English and computers at the NGO centre where I met her. Despite this, Sayeeda reiterated these stereotypes about Indian Muslims, raising the question of how such narratives emerge.

While the Muslim male has often been demonized in popular media and political discourse, the image of the Muslim woman has been manipulated based on political expediency within dominant narratives. On the one hand, they are often depicted as victims of Islam or Muslim men. Abu-Lughod’s (2013) book “Do Muslim Women Need Saving?” confronts the pervasive image of the abuse experienced by Muslim women victimized by Islam, which has contributed to the consensus in the West that Muslim women need to be rescued. Bilge (2010) similarly explains that recent conceptualisations of the veiled Muslim woman have paradoxically portrayed her both as a victim of her oppressive patriarchal culture and male kin, and as a threat to Western modernity and culture of freedoms. In India, the Hindu Right political establishment has employed a similar trope, portraying Muslim women as victims in need of being saved (Abu-Lughod, 2002; 2013) from both their families and Muslim society and at the same time stigmatized for belonging to this group.

The notion of the citizen in India has been located within essentialized communities, which are inextricably linked to women’s experiences. Menon (2015) argues that in India national identity has been constructed through deterministic communities, and understandings of what it means to be a woman in each of these (caste, religious or other social) groups. Similarly, Mookherjee (2013) outlines how individuals are viewed as entrenched in “culture” and various collective categories (like kinship, religion, caste) in South Asia, compared to the idea of the ‘self’ as a product of an individualised rational modernity (the dominant narrative in liberal western contexts). However, she argues that unpacking the unconscious structures of collective registers interwoven in ideas of the self may have crucial insights in understanding shifting socio-political and economic terrains.

Despite these caricaturised portrayals of Muslim women, there is little everyday, scholarly and policy consensus regarding the position of Muslim women in India. Women's identities do not exist in a vacuum but are part of the wider socio-political context, as identity is contextual and relationally constructed (Hall, 1992; Dwyer, 2000). In this context, Kirmani (2008) finds that the category 'Muslim woman' only comes into being in certain discursive contexts; as religious identity is only one component of the complex self, she argues that this element mainly gains prominence in discussions relating to topics concerning the religious community, such as the burqa or personal laws. As such, women construct their identity and aspirations in complex multi-layered ways and, therefore, analysing identity only in terms of religious identity does not allow for a holistic exploration of women's multi-faceted experiences negotiating various contexts.

Poststructuralism has had a large impact on feminist constructions of gender identity.

Poststructuralist critiques posit that human subjectivity is variously constructed by ideology, language or discourse, which then shape an individual's actions (Ashcroft et al, 2000). Judith Butler (1993: 2) provides a rich theoretical language for thinking about gender through the theory of performativity, which emphasises the ways in which identity is brought to life through discourse and repetition. Butler's (1990; 1993) concept of "doing gender" describes how gendered subjects emerge through a process of recurring discursive imitation and repetition of gender norms. In many ways, Sayeeda demonstrates Butler's assertions about the impact of the repetition of dominant narratives as performative acts or discourse impacting subject formation; these ideas about Muslim women have been repeated so many times that she has internalized them and contributes to their perpetuation.

Yet, understanding (gender) identity as an outcome of repetition excludes a significant account of agency (McNay, 1999; 2003). Butler argues that gender performativity involves a dialectic of freedom and constraint, where the subject is constituted through subjection and invested with the capacity for autonomous action. Yet, poststructuralist thought privileges constraint over freedom in identity construction (McNay, 1999). In this context, narrative has emerged as a central analytical tool for feminism as several issues associated with gender are regarded amenable to narration (Plummer, 1995). Narrative shares with post-structural theory the presumption that gender identity is discursively constructed and culturally variable, but by considering the ways in which coherent notions of selfhood are maintained, both on an individual and collective level, narrative offers a more substantive exploration of agency (Benhabib, 1992, 1999; Lara, 1998; McNay, 2003).

This chapter examines how girls and women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods negotiate identity in their everyday lives. This chapter does not serve as an ethnography of 'Muslimness' or 'Muslim women' but rather, it explores how women in segregated neighbourhoods narratively construct and negotiate their own identities within their various communities. Consequently, the chapter highlights

the importance of narratives, not only methodologically in understanding women's constructions of themselves, but also in terms of the value narratives have for women themselves in negotiating and reconciling competing priorities. Jamil (2018) identifies that if Muslim women construct a social self that is derived from dominating discourses, by corollary, they can also conceptualise an alternative sense of self and bring it into existence. Picking up from this argument, I explore the importance of narratives in shaping ideas of the self. As the diverse contexts of women's social locations influence their identity formation, I do not focus on essentialised identity groupings or culturalist questions of identity but rather how women negotiate their aspirations, subjectivities and agency through social power relations using narratives. As I argue in this chapter, narratives serve multiple, often overlapping and/or conflicting, functions: they can be both restrictive and empowering, they are both internally and externally imposed, and they are both imagined and practiced. Scholarship on the narratives of identities finds them as being more or less stable and coherent in different social and temporal contexts, and to be shaped by both routinized constructions of everyday life and moments of crisis and transformation (Yuval-Davis, 2010). I argue that women's narratives are fundamental in determining how women navigate urban life, both individually and collectively, in terms of social and spatial identities, perceptions and practices.

This chapter follows from the previous chapter, which discussed imaginaries of socio-spatial community, to examine the role of narratives in women's everyday exercise of agency and negotiation within local communities. Although religious cultural identity often remains salient, its modes of expression are not uniform or static. Women's narratives often delicately balance normative notions of respectability and morality on the one hand, and aspiration and modernity on the other, both of which are constantly contested through women's narrative identity construction and negotiations within their communities through everyday life. Everyday life does not always reflect macro narratives, and generally involves bargain and negotiation, as well as conflict and cooperation, in various spheres. To understand this requires examining the extent to which different elements of narrative and identity variously gain prominence among women. This is explored through a focus on everyday life, aspirations, and social relations – an area where social scientific literature remains thin (Gupta, 2015) – and on how women balance their own aspirations and desire for social respectability within the constraints and freedoms imposed by narratives.

The chapter is organised as follows: Section 5.2 connects women's narratives of their aspirations to identity formation. Subsequently, Section 5.3 examines how women strike a balance between their own competing priorities of aspirations and modernity on the one hand, and morality and respectability on the other, with the female body as the site at which these priorities are negotiated. Section 5.4 outlines how women are challenging narratives through negotiations within the

household and societal relations. Finally, Section 5.5 examines the different strategies and tactics women employ through their everyday lives to negotiate their agency, and reconcile narrative constructions of aspirations with lived realities. A short final Section 5.6 concludes.

5.2 Narratives constructing emerging aspirations and identity

On departing Mumbra station and taking a rickshaw down the main road, the built environment of the town visibly reflects its aspirational character (Figure 5). The entrance to the train station is marked by billboards promoting educational institutions or tutorial classes. The dividers on the main road of Mumbra advertise various institutes and training courses. Similarly, when speaking to women about the changes in Mumbra, a key development recurrently mentioned is the proliferation of educational institutions. Notwithstanding concerns around the quality of education (an issue common across India more generally), the growth of such institutes and perceived accompanying expansion of opportunities for individual academic and vocational progress is routinely discussed when talking about Mumbra. Women draw on developments in both the physical and social infrastructures in the neighbourhood to support the the narrative of Mumbra as an ‘emerging’ area, and locate themselves in the aspirational urban middle class.

Figure 5: Billboards in Mumbra illustrating educational aspirations



This takes an added prominence from a gender perspective as young women are perceived to be making significant strides in educational attainment. In fact, the dominant narrative is that girls and women are making more progress than boys in terms of education:

“Boys...they leave their studies and spend their time running behind girls. If she ditches [him] he walks around heartbroken and gets into drugs and destroys his life...In girls, you will not see this. Girls remain bindass [carefree]...There is a need to develop people’s mentality. That is happening among girls, but boys continue falling back.” [Madiha, 27, Mumbra]

Madiha identifies that young women in Mumbra appreciate and remain focused on their education, even in the face of distractions. In comparison, she attributes the boys of Mumbra to be susceptible to neglect their education and instead to spend their time trying to impress girls or doing drugs, some of the same tropes that categorize stereotypes of Mumbra.

Rizwana (45) who has a 22-year-old daughter and two teenage sons, is more pessimistic about the environment, particularly for her sons. She elaborates:

“Even the good people that come [to Mumbra] get spoilt...They pick up bad habits, of doing drugs and this and that. This only is happening - they are not looking at their life...From a little it is becoming more...and then they don't care about parents at all” [Rizwana, 45, Mumbra]

She suggests that as there are vocational training classes for girls – such as for tailoring, beautician classes, computer classes – they could have similar classes for boys to help them progress. She acknowledges that people in Mumbra are making their lives for themselves but says that young men are vulnerable and need to be motivated to improve. These observations may well be anecdotal (data to verify school attainment or other indicators at the neighbourhood level are unavailable), yet the repetition of such narratives from several women indicates a perspective of changing gendered social progress.

As these narratives are repeatedly voiced, they start to form ‘the’ narrative of a place/group irrespective of the level of accuracy. Thus, for Butler (1990: 2), ‘performativity’ is understood not as “the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names, but, rather, as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains”. Here, discourse is not a given, but has a history: it “accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices” (Butler, 1990: 227). Therefore, in this case, identities as performative discourses depend on their continued narration but not on particular people. In Mumbra, there is a strong aspiration for young women to break barriers and achieve success not only for themselves but also to improve Mumbra’s reputation more generally.

For example, Parveen, who has lived in Mumbra for 20 years, recalled her experience of poverty: her family often didn’t have enough to eat when she was growing up in Dharavi, due to which she and her siblings would sometimes have to beg for food in the city. Now, however, she was optimistic as her four children – both sons and daughters – were either getting an education or working:

“Children are progressing... I want to tell all the mothers in Mumbra that they should support their daughter and let her progress...I will be proud of Mumbra’s daughters if they are successful and be so successful that the whole country is proud of them...If a girl from Mumbra progresses, they will understand that our girls are worthy.” [Parveen, 40-50, Mumbra]

Parveen explained how she made every effort to support her daughters in pursuing their desires and progressing in life. This articulation is in line with wider urban aspirations for social mobility. For instance, Roy (2012) argues that upwardly mobile women are commonly framed as subjects of hope and futurity. Here, however, it is worth noting that Parveen articulates a desire for success not only for her daughters but also more generally for all the girls in Mumbra. Therefore, while women are considered bearers of community honour and cultural representatives of the community, her statement may be understood as the other side of the same coin, where her narrative aspirations are not only for her family individually but collectively for “Mumbra’s daughters” as metonymic of progress in the marginalized neighbourhood. Similarly, Jamil (2018), also finds that Muslim women’s aspirations in India are often linked to those for the family, community and larger society. More generally, there has been a concerted effort by women to gain cultural capital, and concomitantly narratives of women’s progress have begun to be repeated as Mumbra has grown.

When speaking of aspiration, at one extreme, among India’s new urban transnational elite, aspiration refers to a desire for educational or professional attainment as much as for a ‘global Indian’ class identity (Radhakrishnan, 2009; 2011). In Mumbra, despite a different context, I argue that growing aspiration among women and girls is driven by similar motivations, not only for social mobility but also to recast their own identity and that of Mumbra’s women more generally, as articulated by Parveen.

This change does not necessarily map directly onto narratives of “community purification” in Muslim neighbourhoods (Hansen, 2001a: 160). Instead, there has been a marked effort among girls and women to accumulate an embodied cultural capital through education and related markers of modernity to improve their image (and rehabilitate that of Mumbra), at least in part as an effort to eschew perceived marginality on account of them living in this ‘black-listed’ area (discussed in Chapter 6) and enter the ranks of the aspirational middle classes of urban India. Many women I spoke with have internalized stigmatized perceptions of their neighbourhood but acknowledged that they did not expect to have the financial resources to move away from Mumbra. Yet, here, the circulation of empowering narratives around women’s aspirations and dreams of greater achievements that reinscribe how they view gender relations and their own place and potential within society.

Yet, these aspirations are often tempered when it comes to the future:

“My parents were very strict with me – don’t go here, don’t do this – we couldn’t even study properly. When I finished class 8, my father got me married – imagine, I was 14 or 15 years old. I had a lot of pressure, but I won’t put that on my daughters. They should have a free mind at my home. I don’t know what it will be like for them after they get married so they should enjoy life now, study and have fun.” [Lubna, 40, Mumbra]

“Previously women were not allowed to work. Now they work. When the girl is educated, she can work until she gets married. The routine in a woman’s life has changed a lot.” [Nahida, 46, Mumbra]

Both Lubna and Nahida speak optimistically, identifying a considerable shift from the past and intergenerational change as they imagine a better life for their daughters. Lubna refers to the pressure she experienced at a young age, which she attributed to a combination of financial pressures and cultural expectations, due to which she was married at a young age. Simultaneously, Lubna seeks to create a new narrative around the place and freedom she vows to allow her daughters to have more freedom to enjoy their youth. Yet, while she herself works full time, she does not focus on her daughters’ realizing educational or professional aspirations in the future but rather is focused on them achieving their aspirations *now*, until they get married, thereby acknowledging uncertainty after marriage. Similarly, Nahida, whose daughter was studying pharmacy while her three sons were all engineers, spoke of women receiving higher education or working as a sign of progress, of partaking in a type of modernity as a lifestyle rather than as an investment for future (financial) returns. Here too, there is an acknowledgement that this could be punctuated by marriage (which is common in India), and thus – as in the case of some young women themselves – the focus on education and employment was an opportunity to enjoy themselves before they progress to the next stage of life, consistent with Sayeeda’s narrative.

This is not to say that these women don’t aspire or dream for themselves and their daughters. Bourdieu (1984: 65) argues that people self-select into or away from opportunities due to internalized cultural assumptions regarding success for people of their station: aspirations themselves serve as narratives that are shaping the future and are grounded in class habitus, a “realistic relation to what is possible, founded on and therefore limited by power”. Thus, aspirations must thus be understood within women’s specific social locations.

Vijayakumar (2013), in research with lower-middle class women in the IT sector in small-town India, identifies a phenomenon she calls “flexible aspirations”. She argues that, instead of adopting aspirations to an urban professional career, workers engage in what Bourdieu (1984: 471) calls “the practical anticipation of objective limits”, arguing that even when the future is uncertain, the act of

aspiring itself can help produce a gendered class distinction. As Lubna and Nahida illustrate, these aspirations are indicative of an attempt to consolidate a classed identity and experience of modernity in a constrained context rather than to dream unshackled. Here, the distinction between the two contexts is worth noting: whereas the upwardly mobile women working on the fringes of the knowledge economy are prominently featured as symbolic of the social benefits of liberalisation, women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods are often painted as being 'in need of saving' (Abu-Lughod, 2013). In Mumbra too, women engage in "flexible aspirations" as the perceived limits that help determine what women believe is possible for themselves are produced by repeated narratives around social norms.

Yet, women do not always perceive marriage as the end of aspiration. In this sense, growing educational attainment is not only a way of delaying women's entry into marriage as a patriarchal system, but marriage is perceived as an uncertain change in different ways. For instance, some believe that marriage may bring greater autonomy:

"I want to [get married]...There are quarrels at home...My way of thinking is different from my family, like I wear such clothes at home even though I am not allowed to, and I even come out in such clothes. So, we fight...Although my three brothers are younger, they taunt me. I can't live like this forever. So, I feel I should get married to someone who is understanding. After that we can see if it works out." [Mejhim, 25, Mumbra]

Mejhim expresses optimism at the unknown after marriage within a situation where she has frequent clashes with her family, stating 'we can see if it works out or not' in terms of being able to have greater agency over how she lives her life or dresses. In this instance, marriage is not the end of aspirations but perceived as an opportunity to renegotiate household relations and gain agency.

While Mumbra represents emerging aspirations, Shivajinagar is, in many ways, metonymic of the 'Muslim slum' in the megacity. Here, the repetition of narratives of the neighbourhood as a marginalized area both within Shivajinagar and by the media and political classes outside (discussed in Chapter 6) serves to reproduce this image as a 'slum'. Speaking of Shivajinagar, Contractor (2012a) argues that due to a combination of the state's violent spatial strategies and the Hindu Right's cultural populism and communal politics, being a Muslim slum dweller in Mumbai has become not just a socio-economic disadvantage but can also serve as a precursor to peripheral living. Therefore, while women's identity in Mumbra is coloured by aspiration, those in Shivajinagar encounter proximate barriers to accessing cultural capital or social mobility due several structural factors.

"The girls have problems going out. The men or boys keep harassing them...Even when we go out, boys harass us. If they can tease us, these are young girls [so it is much worse for them]. I can't

come alone at night after 9 o'clock...It's very scary...In our street, there are many men who are drunk at night." [Kulsum, 45, Shivajinagar]

Safety concerns are a prominent reason for girls dropping out of school even in circumstances where families would otherwise have liked to educate their daughters. Another proximate cause for the low levels of education attainment is that the area does not have higher secondary schools, beyond class 8 [when children are 13-14 years old], so students have to either enrol in private schools, which can be prohibitively expensive, or travel outside the area to attend schools and colleges, which poses additional challenges and costs. Therefore, operating in a constrained environment (both economically and socially), women's aspirations and achievements appear more muted in Shivajinagar. This is not to say that they do not exist, but rather that they take different forms:

"Everyone says she is a woman, but she has the courage of a man. She educated five people. This is no ordinary thing...No man supports me...I'm illiterate but I swore that I will not let my children be illiterate." [Fatima, 40, Shivajinagar]

Fatima, as many other women I met with during my fieldwork, speaks of the sacrifices she made to ensure that her children were able to attain an education. Being a single mother, Fatima had to work multiple part-time jobs to support her family. She explained how she went through hard days, "only I know how I have suffered" as she lost her parents at a young age and worked extremely hard and was "even now pulling on in the same situation". Yet, she was optimistic, and explained, "It is a few more days now; once my children are successful, then the struggle will be over." Such narratives are as much about aspiration as those in Mumbra. Here, evoking tropes of courage (similar to narratives of those fighting for housing rights, discussed in Chapter 6), women's aspirations and efforts to achieve them (which may or may not be fulfilled) – although driven by more survivalist tactics and motivations – demonstrate strength and perseverance in the face of marginality and exclusion.

Arjun Appadurai (2004) speaks of 'the capacity to aspire', where he argues that ideas of the future are embedded and nurtured in culture and that it is by strengthening the cultural capacity to aspire that progress (which he defines as development and poverty reduction) is made possible. Jamil (2018), engaging with this argument, argues that poor Muslim women face what Appadurai (2004:12) calls "a brittle horizon of aspirations" where aspirations remain unattainable as knowledge on how to reach them is flawed and scarce. Thus, in this way too aspiration is shaped by social position and grounded in habitus. Thus, while aspirations may be more moderate – due to considerable barriers in terms of financial capacity, infrastructure availability and information about opportunities – here too aspirations nevertheless still exist and shape identity formation through narratives of courage and perseverance.

As with Fatima who, despite difficulties, educated all her children, other narratives also illustrate that there has been progress and that girls and women do not necessarily accept subordination within their constrained environment. A prime example was Amina [19], a child and youth advocate from Shivajinagar. When I met Amina, she told me that she had conducted 250 training sessions with girls in her neighbourhood. She had previously been nominated for the International Child Peace Prize, and was invited to showcase her work in her *basti* [settlement] at the UN General Assembly later that year.

Her mother, Parveen [48] told me how she and her husband wanted to educate their children but struggled financially as she didn't work and her husband was casually employed at a shop and did not have a stable income. Amina, who was in her first year of university explained, "Now, for FY [first year], I have to go far away. That's why some parents don't allow it, because you have to travel a lot." This was true of her own parents as well. Parveen explains, "That's why I got my eldest [daughter] educated till class 9 [when students are 14-15 years old], and then withdrew her...Going back and forth, and then she's a girl, that's why after class 9 - she passed, she didn't fail - I took her out of school, and got her married." About Amina, Parveen admits, "She's a bit slim and thin, she doesn't even look [like a woman], so I allow her to go. She looks more like a child". Amina too had dropped out of school after finishing class 10, but re-enrolled and since became an advocate for girls' education in her area.

She told me about how, based on her own experience, she realised that several girls may face the same constraints. This motivated her to talk to other parents in the neighbourhood and convince them to send their daughters to school: "If school is out [outside of our *basti*], why don't we go there in a group?" In this way, Amina helped 10 other girls from her neighbourhood re-enrol for higher education. Over time, she took up several other issues facing the neighbourhood and has been playing a key role in advocating for the progress of her *basti*.

Although different from Fatima's experience in many ways, Amina's narrative too encapsulates perseverance in the face of obstacles. Both view education as a way of overcoming the constrained environment they find themselves in but do not take it so far as to see it as a means of social mobility in terms of a classed differentiation or middle-class aspiration. A final point worth noting is that Amina is motivated by a desire to not only educate herself but also to help other girls in the area progress, and her other endeavors reflect a similar commitment to community solidarity. While this is not dissimilar to what Parveen, in Mumbra, said ("I will be proud of Mumbra's daughters if they are successful"), a key difference lies in how the two understand and articulate their sense of community: Amina in terms of her neighbours, and Parveen to the girls in Mumbra in an abstract sense (as discussed in Chapter 4).

In both neighbourhoods, women balance freedom and constraint and construct aspirations narratively. Even within the social and economic constraints that women are amply cognizant of, they find spaces to dream and aspire. Here, although women may in practice face “a brittle horizon of aspirations” (Appadurai 2004: 12), the act of articulating desires among themselves opens up the potential for their realization at least in the present. Narratives then serve as an emancipatory tool of self-formation, allowing girls and women the opportunity to dream within a broader discourse that portrays their victimisation. Yet, as the next section outlines, narratives as techniques of identity construction are not always empowering, and can also be restrictive. As women inhabit different roles and priorities, internally and externally imposed constraints impact their narrative construction as both imagined and practiced.

5.3 A balancing act: Between modernity and morality

This section outlines the complex and diverse ways that women themselves define narratives that manifest in discourses and practices, how they reflect on the complexity of their lives and the various meanings they attach to their identity. It focuses on the gendered body as the site of negotiating identity and examines how women balance ostensibly competing priorities of morality and aspirations within their multi-layered identities.

Although religious identity and social power relations remains salient, their modes of expression are not straightforward. Butler (2004: 3) contends that “if gender is a kind of doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one’s knowing and without one’s willing, it is not for that reason automatic or mechanical. On the contrary, it is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint.” Here, the suggestion of the embodied-performative reproduction of social structures itself contains the potential for resistance to hegemonic norms, as power can be subverted through a balance between agency and constraint (Boucher, 2006). Thus, women neither unconditionally accept nor reject social norms and discourses of their place within the family and society. Instead, I demonstrate in this section, they often craft a delicate balance between normative notions of respectability and morality on the one hand, and aspiration and modernity on the other. Both these conceptions are constantly contested as women imagine their identity and negotiate within their communities to establish them.

Women have long been considered central to processes of ethnic or cultural reproduction, and often understood as ‘carriers of ethnic traditions’ (Phinney, 1990: 509). Perhaps the most common trope associated with Muslim women, in India and internationally, is the practice of veiling. The image of the woman shrouded in a black burqa often appears in the media to represent Muslim women and Muslims in general as insular, backwards, and both fearful and to be feared (Kirmani, 2008). The

preoccupation with veiling has been criticised for oversimplifying, objectifying and fetishizing Muslim women (see Mabro, 1991; El Solh and Mabro, 1994; Yegenoglu, 2003).

A critical intervention relevant to this discussion is Mahmood's (2005) *Politics of Piety*, which moves beyond the binary of subordination and resistance in conceptualising agency. Mahmood (2001; 2003; 2005) argues that the liberal-progressive agenda underlying feminist theorizing on agency is unable to consider the complexity of women's piety. Her ethnographic account of women in the mosque movement in Egypt draws on Butler's (1990: 12) understanding of 'becoming' and elucidates a form of pious agency that is disinterested in subverting gendered norms and values, thereby decoupling agency from resistance.

Similarly, Hussain (2010) finds that women and Islamic groups in Dhaka negotiate modernity and religion to manage forces of modernization and globalization, and in redefining modernity also redefine tradition. Here, women are vital actors in processes of religiously mobilized identity negotiations in engaging modernity: whereas veiling was previously perceived as the absence of modernity, the increasing adoption of the *hijab* by educated, urban, middle-class, young women exhibits their wealth and piety without losing modernity.

In India too, the burqa holds multiple meanings in terms both religiosity and socio-cultural identity for Muslim women. As such, several authors have pointed to the variety of definitions and interpretations of veiling and a wide range of motivations for this practice. While some of these are clearly restrictive, in other cases the burqa is a means of gaining increased mobility (discussed in Chapter 1), or as a symbol of socio-cultural assertion. For many, it is perceived as a symbol of respectability, as a primary marker of a woman's assumed propriety in India has been clothing.

Yet, as many revealed during discussions, although the burqa may be adopted as a way of representing respectable identity and claims to safety, it is not always successful in this regard:

"Today one is not safe in any [emphasis] clothing...Whatever girls wear, it is their choice. But the ones that are looking, if their minds are dirty then we cannot do anything about it...What is safe? Neither are they safe in a burqa nor are they safe in less clothing." [Mehr, 50, Mumbai]

Mehr outlines a commonly repeated narrative that women are not safe irrespective of their clothing choices. In this context, many girls and young women protect their modesty in public spaces by not engaging or looking at strangers (which many speak of as '*parda* of the eyes'):

"When I go out, if someone looks at me, I simply bow my head down and go on my way. If I do not give him any response, he will not cross the limit...My family has a good reputation...If we make any mistake our family respect is defamed." [Nahim, 19, Shivajinagar]

Yet, this is not always the case and increasingly women are redefining the tropes of honour to claim greater agency in terms of protecting themselves rather than retreating into the private sphere (whether physical or within the burqa). Many young women talk about how greater exposure has given them the courage to retort when men make comments as they pass the street.

“If someone teases us, we can answer back. Whenever we go out if boys pass comments, uncles pass comments, we answer back. We don’t keep quiet...Women’s honour and safety [are important]...If boys tease them, they can answer back...Some girls, not 100% but 90% girls, are weak...They are taught self-defence so that they can answer back.” [Zeba, 17, Mumbra]

Zeba explains that boys and men on the street often pass comments about women’s attire. In Mumbra this was often the case, she says, if they wore ‘short clothes’ or a ‘fitted’ burqa. Here, she explained that she and her friends no longer accepted harassment quietly but rather learned to fight back. Thus, in practice, the dynamics around discrimination is found to take a more complex form than a dichotomy between helpless traditionality and empowered modernity. Mahmood (2005), building on Foucault’s work on ethics, conceptualises agency as residing in multiple ways of inhabiting norms, including ways in which norms are ‘performed, inhabited, and experienced’. Here, women’s complex narratives navigate both constraint (which is imposed internally to meet their own expectations of their propriety and morality) and emancipation (to speak up and demonstrate agency and courage within society).

Yet, when thinking of women’s bodies and dressing as a site of negotiation of agency and respectability, these dynamics play out in distinct ways in different contexts. This can be seen, for instance, in the comparison between how women from Mumbra believed they were perceived in professional contexts, as the burqa often holds different associations outside the Muslim neighbourhood. For example, when it came to jobs, Hafiza (23) elaborated:

“It is perceived that [Muslim] girls are hardworking. If they are given some work, they do it diligently. If any boy goes for a job from Mumbra, he faces a lot of difficulties. Because he belongs to Mumbra, he will not get a job. I went for a job in a call centre and there were some boys with me, and they were immediately expelled because they were from Mumbra.” (Hafiza, 23, Mumbra).

Hafiza spoke of her own experience of discrimination from employers in a Hindu-dominated area of Thane. She explained that she progressed through two rounds of interviews for a job and was invited for a third interview. While she was dressed in jeans the first time, she went to the interview location in her burqa the second time. She recalled she was rejected upon arrival and told that there was no vacancy and so they did not need her to interview. When she complained and called out the unfair

treatment, she was told “she was talking too much”. Hafiza explained, “When you are doing something wrong, I have to say something. You have rejected me because I am wearing a burqa.”

Hafiza’s name revealed her religious identity, and thus the recruiters knew she was Muslim even during the first interview. Therefore, this was not explicitly discrimination based on religious identity but rather based on preconceptions relating to the burqa, which although it signals respectability within the Muslim ‘community’ is perceived to not instil respect in terms of women’s professional capability.

Such perceptions are often internalised by Muslim women who, though they may generally don a burqa in public spaces, perceive that expressions of religiosity may be cause for discrimination in professional contexts by the Hindu majority:

“I go for a job then I wear a burqa here, but I don’t wear a burqa there. There, we keep it in our purse...When one wears a burqa, people look at you differently. They see it as, ‘oh she will not be able to do anything’. This is what happens.” (Mauzama, 40, Mumbra)

As Mauzama outlines, while dominant narratives depict Muslim women as helpless victims, their everyday lived experience in encounters with difference are often complicated by such essentialised perceptions. The burqa produces differential responses by not eliciting ‘respect’ outside the Muslim neighbourhood compared to the ‘respectability’ it establishes within Muslim society. A report by the Sachar Committee (2006: 19) appointed by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to study the socio-economic status of Muslims in India noted that women had become ‘torchbearers of community identity’ as their ‘lives, morality, and movement in public spaces’ were under constant scrutiny and control, and as the Muslim minority identity came under siege, women withdrew into boundaries of the home and the “ghetto”. In general, Indian Muslims’ struggle for morality through community purification and the preservation of “Muslimness” from the intrusion of Hindu majority culture (Hansen, 2001a; Kirmani, 2008) has had gendered impacts. Nevertheless, narratives as in the Sachar Committee’s report neglect women’s agency in these decisions. Moreover, scholars such as Lateef (1990), argue that religious identity does not impact women’s rights and restrictions, as all Indian women face similar oppressions.

Here, an additional factor relates to socially constructed perceptions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ work for women, which then are mapped onto women and their reputations. This is illustrated in the quotes below, relating to work in malls and call centres:

“I like to do a job as it is better to be independent...But there are many difficulties getting a job. We do not get jobs easily, no matter how much you try. I mean, you get a job, but in a mall. My family

does not allow working in a mall. Although there is nothing in a mall or call centre, the thinking is that girls who work there are bad...People look at her in a wrong way.” [Yasmin, 21, Shivajinagar]

“The easily available option is working in call centres but there are restrictions on working in call centres, that girls shouldn’t be allowed to work in call centres because there are night shifts...I think if girls are good, then any work is good...People’s mindset is that girls who work in call centres are not good...But now girls know what is good and bad, so give them freedom.” [Fatima, 47, Mumbra]

Yasmin, outlines that her parents give her a lot of freedom, allowing her to work and go out wherever she wants. She qualifies this saying *“I have to tell them before going; whatever you want to do, inform them and do it so no one can point fingers that ‘we saw your daughter in such-and-such place’, so it doesn’t spoil their reputation”*. Yet, she explains, she is not allowed to work in a mall as the perception is that such jobs often demand long working hours, which is then judged by the neighbours who keep track of when people are leaving and returning home. However, she argues that even in socially respected jobs like teaching one may need to stay late *“if there is some extra work”*. So, although there has been progress in educating girls, who were previously deprived of education, she says, *“It is because of the fear of defamation that they do not let their girls live with freedom.”*

Kirmani (2008) found among middle-class Muslim women in Delhi’s Zakir Nagar that teaching was a socially acceptable form of employment for women from ‘respectable’ families. As teaching hours suited women who were expected to carry the burden of childrearing and housework, Kirmani (2008) argues that teaching was a way to bargain within a constrained system to undertake paid employment while posing little or no threat to gender roles. In this sense, jobs in malls or call centres associated with upward social and economic mobility for women low and lower-middle class women explicitly challenge gendered social roles in different ways.

Fatima, who had herself been ‘boycotted’ by her family, who believed that working women were ‘not good’, expressed that she often felt like a stain on the family name: *“Firstly, I was a divorcee, then I worked. So, my family didn’t think I was a good person”*. Fatima’s daughter, Tasbiya, was in her final year of university and worked as a teacher at a local school. While Tasbiya’s work as a teacher is considered respectable, Fatima herself worked several different jobs over the years to support her two children. She explained that she not only faced criticism for working after her divorce but also was now chastised as her daughter had begun to work:

“I hear a lot from other people, they say that I have worked, and I am letting my children follow my footsteps and spoiling my children. They don’t understand that I am working for my children.”
[Fatima, 47, Mumbra]

In Fatima's case, as her family neither supported her after her divorce nor took any support from her, she steeled herself to not seek on family approval. Nevertheless, she continued to hold onto notions of a good daughter and sister and chose to move to live near her brothers once she had the financial capacity to do so, and even helped take care of their children, thereby playing into the gendered social norms and dominant narratives of women as caregivers, even in a context where she was also a financial provider. This exemplifies her own balancing of aspirations for herself and her children in terms of being independent and building a good life for themselves on the one hand, with still emphasising morality and respectability through a commitment to her family (on her own terms) on the other hand.

While the previous section focused on the relationship between narratives and women's aspirations, here I have demonstrated how narratives can simultaneously constrain women. On the one hand, women restrict themselves in pursuing small and large (ordinary and significant) aspirations on account of internally and externally imposed constraints. Yet, at the same time, this is not to say that women do not have agency within their actions. Rather, following Mahmood (2005), I understand agency as going beyond the binary of subordination and resistance. Indeed, although women may pursue their aspirations, certain narratives around gendered social norms and roles prevail and remain internalised in society and often among women themselves. By discussing these instances, and the ways in which they are centred around women's bodies – through their ability to work particular jobs, their dressing, and their relationships and commitments within the household – this section has outlined how women manoeuvre through their social locations, and construct narratives and identities that balance these seemingly competing objectives of morality and constraint as well as independence and aspiration.

5.4 Challenging narratives: Navigating community and social relations

This section examines women's negotiations of social power structures through their everyday lives. While these are shaped by various structures of gender, class, religion and caste, women are constantly engaged in negotiating with these structures within the household and wider society to redraw social boundaries and redefine social norms and power structures. Here the slogan from the student movement and second-wave feminist movement in 1960s United States that "the personal is the political" rings true and is impacted by the intersections of their multiple identities. I discuss the ways in which women challenge dominant narratives and social constructions, sometimes overtly and often covertly, through their everyday practices and narratives as they engage in their social communities.

Decisions around gender roles are made within the private sphere of the household and family (albeit strongly affected by external societal and religious expectations). Within the family, Kandiyoti (1988) famously posited that women strategize within a set of concrete constraints, termed the 'patriarchal bargain', which influence both the potential for and forms of women's resistance to oppression. In her depiction of 'classic patriarchy' in South Asia, Kandiyoti (1988) outlined the cyclical nature of the power accorded to women across the lifecycle: while young daughters-in-law are subject to the dictates of their husbands and in-laws, women enjoy a degree of autonomy as they get older and gain authority in the family if and when they become mothers-in-law. The cyclical nature of this system ensures that women have an interest in maintaining gender roles as it is an investment in their future security. Yet, Kandiyoti (1988) emphasises that such bargains are neither uncontested nor immutable, and their actual operation is diffused and diverse. The resultant forms of consciousness and struggle that emerge require examination.

In the context of the spread of religious fundamentalism in India, Agarwal (1998) argued that this has justified male chastisement of women who 'transgress' into predominantly male public spaces. She outlines that this has not only given greater social sanction to husbands and relatives to chastise women for their behaviour but also that 'whereas earlier the exercise of patriarchal authority rested only with particular men — fathers, brothers, husbands and extended family kin... shifts [now give] the right of control to all men' (Agarwal, 1998: 20-1). Crucially, she emphasises, that these acts and processes should not be misunderstood as remnants of the past that testify to South Asia's incomplete modernization but as part of the process and experience of modernity.

However, in the context of contemporary change, there is a growing uncertainty among women in realising their share of the 'patriarchal bargain'. While Kandiyoti focused on the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law relationship, there have been marked changes in terms of agency and the realisation of aspirations which have been shaped by supportive relationships between mothers and daughters. Across both case study neighbourhoods, mothers were increasingly ensuring that their daughters had opportunities (even if only until they progress to the next stage of their life course, where they may play a subordinate role).

Take, for example, Munni (50), who had lived in Mumbra for 22 years. Munni's 17-year-old daughter was training to play football. At the start of our interview, Munni told me: *"It doesn't make sense to keep secrets...I'm not educated at all. My daughter says, 'Don't say this, when you're asked to sign you ask to give thumb impression instead'. I can't sign so I say this clearly...If I can't do something, why should I be embarrassed?"*

When I spoke with her about her daughter's participation in football tournaments, Munni explained:

"She [my daughter] started playing football in school...She didn't even tell me about it. Later she told me that she played...I said, 'Go ahead and play. If you like it, go ahead and play'... The children must progress. Children of today aren't simply going to stay at home. If they are doing something, it's good...People talk: 'Your daughter is playing outside' so, her father forbids her to play, as does her grandmother. I say, 'Let it go. Go ahead and play. Enjoy your life. I spent my life staying at home, you enjoy your time'." [Munni, 50, Mumbra]

While Munni supported her daughter in playing football she explained that her husband and mother-in-law forbid her from playing due to societal pressures. She explained that she encouraged her children and outlined that this support was based on trust. Thus, she maintained that children should "stay within limits" and "not do anything which might disgrace their parents". Here, although Munni takes a broader conception of respectability in that she permits football to be within the remit of her daughter's 'limits' this support nevertheless exists within the limitations of 'good' behaviour. In this way, while she is encouraging contesting patriarchal norms by supporting her daughter's wishes for freedom within the constraints enforced by her husband, this contestation exists within a discourse of morality.

Similarly, Sameena expresses a desire for girls and young women to progress and have fuller lives:

"Girls should also progress. Everyone has, you know, become a little free. And if there are household problems, as much as boys don't give support, that much the girls give it. Now if there are (marital) problems, girls will say, 'We are there, leave daddy. We will earn and give you.' That's how it goes...So, now on girls there is more [reliance]...they show courage and understand, they understand the mother." [Sameena, 40, Mumbra]

Sameena's comments are pertinent in a context of wider ongoing discussions around women's rights in and beyond marriage, as women's emerging personal strategies and struggles reflect these tensions. In this case, women fight and aspire for themselves and their daughters not only as a classed aspiration but also, equally, as a source of protection for themselves in times of possible hardship – wherein daughters may then serve as a support within a context where they can contest and reshape their role within the patriarchal bargain. Sameena elaborates that the repetition of this support from daughters also gives women greater courage. Conceptually, then, the empowering narratives that construct strength and courage also serve to produce these attributes (of courage and strength) within women, which further impact their sense of agency and ability to act (e.g. leaving an abusive marriage). It is not that the narrative necessarily changes their circumstances, but rather that the

internalisation of the empowering narrative serves an important role in reshaping perceptions of gendered agency and women's possibilities.

At the same time, faced with an uncertain future, investing in social capital is viewed as a means to increase women's bargaining power. Bina Agarwal (1997: 4) argued that a person's bargaining power in intra-household dynamic depended on their 'fallback position', the outside option of how well-off they would be if cooperation failed. A woman that can control her income independently will have a stronger position in household bargaining. Thus, Sameena's aspirations for her daughter are shaped by potential future trajectories that may not explicitly challenge patriarchal social norms in the present but improve their position within the household.

It is through navigating social and community structures and relations and the ways in which these impact women's narratives and self-conscious process of identification in particular contexts that the idea of the intersectional 'self' can be reshaped and its boundaries slowly redrawn. Exposing the everyday contestations and relationships within the Muslim neighbourhoods reveals a more complicated notion of community which is contingent and shifting based on the context and issue. This section has therefore highlighted how everyday engagement in social relations can help push the boundaries and narrative representations of identity and community overtly and covertly. The next section focuses on how these negotiations with local communities are conducted in practice and the strategies and tactics women employ to balance competing objectives and realise their aspirations.

5.5 Reconciling realities: Bargaining and other strategies

The previous sections outlined emerging narratives around women's sense of identity and how they balance competing priorities of establishing their respectability while pursuing their aspirations. However, invariably, these trends are far from straightforward. Not only is there a great diversity in how women construct and negotiate a sense of self, but also identity is itself fluid and multidimensional. These elements are constantly negotiated, sometimes supporting, and sometimes contradicting one another. Where conflict arises, this is often negotiated through diverse strategies, including bargaining, secrecy or flexible aspirations. This section highlights how women balance competing priorities through their narrative identities often by blending the real and the imagined. Here, real and imagined narratives are coterminous and coexisting, and represent the varied strategies women employ to negotiate their agency. This section explores some of the narrative strategies, practices and tactics they employ in producing and subverting social norms in the construction of the gendered self.

One afternoon I spoke to Farah [23, Mumbra], who taught English at the NGO, about a participatory research project she undertook under the mentorship of a research collective in the city. She

explained that they would have weekly meetings for the project. However, in weeks without meetings, she said:

"We would tell [our parents] that we have a session and then roam around. We were not allowed to go out so we took our chances when we could. How else could we go out? We want to roam around, we are not doing anything wrong. The trust our mom and dad have on us, we kept that trust. Yes, we hung out with boys too. Many times, my dad came to know about this. So, I always made excuses that no, there are tomboys in our group who seem like boys from the back, but they are girls! [Laughs] We had to tell lies like this!" [Farah, 23, Mumbai]

Farah earlier faced many restrictions in terms of going out. Her family did not encourage her association with the NGO in earlier years, as it contributed to her questioning patriarchal social norms and the unequal treatment she received compared to her brother. Yet, explained that her work at the NGO now helped support her family, revealing how her income helped her negotiate greater agency in her everyday life and ability to go outside the home:

"The people in the building would comment on this [when I first started working]. We cannot be answerable to everybody...Still, when these things were said, it gave a lot of stress, but now I laugh about it...because things have now become opposite to this. Previously, they [father and brother] wouldn't allow me to go outside the house. Now, if I go outside, [only] then is there food to eat or they will remain hungry. I bring the vegetables, the ration...So, they can't stop me go outside the house." [Farah, 23, Mumbra]

In this way, by being indispensable in the home both in terms of the income she brings but also in terms of her domestic role purchasing groceries and running the house, Farah has been able to be more uncompromising and claim more freedom. Here, however, as discussed in the previous section, her identity construction is not through rebellion but rather remains within a vocabulary of caring, empowerment and contribution to the household.

A second example is of Saleha. When I first met Saleha [24], she differentiated herself from her friends, who told me they usually only step out of the house to spend time at the NGO library every afternoon:

"I go to a lot of places, but they don't know at home. I like to do cycle stunts, because in India I have never seen anyone do cycle stunts, at least not a girl. And I want to be that first girl to do it. So, I am learning cycle stunts. My friends teach me. [I go] when I get time." [Saleha, 24, Mumbra]

Her friend who sat nearby laughed, adding, "She bunks [classes at college] and goes to MM". I was curious as to where her family thought she was when she went to MM Valley to learn to do stunts on

the cycle, to which she laughed, saying, “What do they think? I get caught! Then I have to say I was at the mosque!”

Saleha’s humour concealed some of the reality of the situation, however. Once, when a group of young women planned a picnic to a park an hour away from Mumbra, Saleha was not permitted to come along. This did not surprise any of her friends: “her mother rarely allows her out”, they said. Several months later, I recalled our initial conversation and asked Saleha if she still practiced cycle stunts. At first, she did not know what I was talking about; after a while, she recalled our previous discussion and admitted that it was something she only did a few times, without any regularity. Here, what Saleha once pronounced as a part of her everyday routine was not necessarily so. In part, this can be attributed to her initially performing to me as an outsider and a researcher (and highlights the benefits of repeated interviews). However, this narrative and many others like it simultaneously continued to inform her self-image. Over several months of my fieldwork in Mumbra, Saleha was often in trouble with her mother for breaking her strict curfew. Clearly, notwithstanding the fleeting occurrence of the cycle stunts, Saleha attempted (and often struggled) to strike a balance between being a good and obedient daughter and expressing her rebellious nature.

Thus, in both her and Farah’s case, a similar theme emerges of using various strategies including secrecy and lies to negotiate agency and space for themselves. This is very common among young women that remain answerable to their parents until marriage, and later to their husbands and in-laws. However, this often does not get discussed except in playful banter with other friends in a similar situation. For instance, Krishnan (2018: 71) based on research with middle-class college girls in Chennai, argues that young women ‘play with time’ in ways that allows them to participate in transgressive practices that may endanger their ability to live respectable lives as ‘good’ women as they go on into their ‘real life’. She argues that they achieve this through their construction of secrecy and truth: by saying they are ‘doing nothing’, young women engage in wasting time in ways that might be dangerous, whilst simultaneously defining these practices within a time that ‘does not count’. Krishnan reports inconsistencies in the way young women told stories about their lives, weaving from one version to the other depending on context. These stories were no less real to them than the ‘truth’ which was the respectable front that their stories took on in the presence of authority.

Both Farah and Saleha through their narratives display similar traces of secrecy and white lies to negotiate their space and agency. At the same time, the experience of the respectable ‘truth’ is also real in their lives. For both, as much as they want to have fun, the trope of respectability, of not breaking trust and of duty to their family remains prominent in the narrative. Therefore, while they wish to experience a modernity through doing bike stunts or meeting boys on the weekend and

achieve this through bargaining and other strategies, they also construct a co-existing sense of their respectable self, which is also just as real. As Dwyer (1999) argues in research among British South Asian Muslim girls, although the construction of collective identities draws on ideas of history or culture and can be described as both 'fictional' as well as actively 'imagined', this is not to say that such narratives do not have efficacy or political meaning.

Thus, identity is a contested concept. When conceptualising identities as narratives, or stories that people tell about who they are and who they would like to and should be, Yuval-Davis (2010) explains that identities are not just personal but instead that collective identity narratives provide a sense of order and meaning. She relates to Hall (1996) who emphasizes that the production of identity is always 'in process', never complete and explains that 'order' should not be seen as coherence but rather a sense of agency and continuity that encompasses change, contestation, even rupture within identity boundaries of the individual and/or collective subject. Within this framework, while identities are specific forms of narratives regarding the self and its boundaries, the discussion of Farah and Saleha's narrative identities and practices demonstrates the ways in which these also serve to push and expand the boundaries of identity and thereby produce agency.

While the previous sections traced how women express their aspirations, how they balance their aspirations with the objectives of morality and respectability, and subsequently grounded the communities within which identity and agency are negotiated, this final section has focused on the strategies and means by which women negotiate these spaces. In doing so, it elaborated on how women employ varied strategies to negotiate their identity and pragmatically exercise agency when balancing various competing priorities.

5.6 Conclusion: Shifting constructions of the 'self'

Postcolonial theorists argue that we know our worlds through our interactions and lived experiences (Mirza and Joseph, 2010). In this context, this chapter has explored varying constructions of self of girls and women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods, aiming to connect narratives of their constructed identity with their socio-spatial environment. The different imagined and experienced realities demonstrate a fine balance between an aspiration for a type of modernity – variously defined, in part in classed and religious terms – and how these are mediated by the perceived marginality and aspiration in neighbourhood.

While their lives are inscribed by gender relations, class structures and racialised religious discourses, identities seen as discursive formations, constituted within particular social, cultural and economic relations reveal a complex balance between different conceptions of the gendered self. Here, by situating identity narratives and practices within the interplay of structure and agency, analysing

women's narratives has allowed for a substantive exploration of their experiences as multi-faceted individuals negotiating within various contexts, from their homes to the locality and beyond. Narratives then serve an important function in understanding how women construct their social worlds, as also themselves produce and construct women's identity and social world. In this case, narratives are not merely articulations of aspirations or constraint, but rather are themselves both restrictive and empowering. These parallel aims of narratives relate not only to how women construct their own individual identity but also their collective identity as Muslim women and place identity as women from segregated neighbourhoods. Finally, by focusing on the processes involved in narrative construction rather than merely their outputs, this chapter has argued that these narratives, unlike post-structuralist constructions of identity, are constantly being redrawn and recreated by women through their everyday negotiations and engagements in their social worlds through various strategies. In doing so, this chapter has highlighted the shifting nature of the 'self', which is reconciled through various strategies, to privilege the role of women in narratively constructing their own identity and perceptions of their place in society.

Chapter 6: Negotiating belonging from the segregated neighbourhood

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores perceptions of belonging through the everyday lived experiences of women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods. It examines the connections between material and metaphorical spaces and explores how marginalisation impacts subjectivities of women in spaces of relegation.

Notwithstanding difficulties in applying the concept of the “ghetto” to the Indian context (see Chapter 2), the segregated neighbourhood as a spatial manifestation certainly racializes or ethnicizes residents and shapes their claims to urban belonging in complex ways. Both Mumbra and Shivajinagar are widely stigmatised as marginal areas in both the media and public discourse, and are notorious in the urban imagination as sites of crime, including drug trade and even terrorism. Most notably, Mumbra is etched into the memory of Mumbaikars as the home of Ishrat Jahan, a teenage girl who was a suspected terrorist and who was killed in an alleged “encounter”²⁵ with the police in Ahmedabad in 2004.

Yet, the experience of marginalisation in Shivajinagar and Mumbra are distinctly different in several ways. Although cities are critical sites for encountering and constituting the ‘other’ (Holston and Appadurai, 1996; Isin, 2002), they are also “brimful of different kinds of political space” (Thrift and Amin, 2002: 157). Even within the same city, social differentiation and experiences of segregation can vary across time and place even in neighbourhoods shaped by similar types of exclusion, as differences in levels of integration may affect self-identification (Rumbaut, 1994; Small, 2007). This emphasises the importance of exploring the diversity of experiences and narratives of belonging and exclusion, and resultant strategies to claim space in and from segregated neighbourhoods.

While the previous two chapters explored the gendered politics of everyday life at the neighbourhood scale, this chapter examines the relationship between the Muslim locality and the city. Specifically, it asks: to what extent does the segregated Muslim neighbourhood belong in the city, and what are the ways in which socio-spatial exclusion manifests itself? In doing so, it connects the neighbourhood to the macro level of the urban and examines the socio-spatial politics of segregation. To clarify, this chapter does not trace the political economy or structural factors that cause segregation or the consolidation of Muslim neighbourhoods as ghettos or enclaves (cf. Jaffrelot and Gayer, 2012; Jamil, 2017). Instead, it examines how residents in these neighbourhoods perceive and negotiate exclusion

²⁵ An encounter is a euphemism used in India to describe extra-judicial killings in which police or armed forces are involved.

from the city, and the role played by neighbourhood identity – which is often entwined with religious, class and other identities – in shaping urban belonging.

An important frame through which state-society relations and notions of urban citizenship have been understood, negotiated, and studied has been that of infrastructure. There has been a recent shift in academic scholarship in terms of viewing infrastructure as relational (Ward, 2010) – for instance, through “people as infrastructure” (Simone, 2004a), infrastructural lives (Graham and McFarlane, 2014), or infrastructural citizenship (Lemanski, 2019c) (discussed in Chapter 2). As such, an extensive literature investigates the techno-political dynamics and negotiations of infrastructure and I will not repeat these arguments (see, for example, McFarlane, 2008; Anand, 2017). What is missing in this scholarship is an understanding of infrastructure as belonging. This chapter does not focus on the techno-politics of infrastructure, but instead builds on this work by understanding infrastructure as a relational assemblage that impacts stigmatisation, marginalisation and belonging – an aspect that remains underexamined in the infrastructure literature. Here, through an analysis of the experiences of marginalisation and segregation in Mumbra and Shivajinagar, I tease out the linkages between infrastructure and belonging to conceptualise infrastructural belonging as a framing through which urban belonging/exclusion may be perceived and negotiated.

The chapter is structured as follows: Section 6.2 examines the experience of segregation of women from Mumbra from the spaces of the city, and the ways in which recent developments within the neighbourhood have contributed to building a sense of urban belonging through improvements within the segregated neighbourhood. Section 6.3 then explores how residents in Shivajinagar negotiate with the city – in particular, through the state – to claim their right to the city. Subsequently, Section 6.4 brings together the discussions from Mumbra and Shivajinagar and discusses how the everyday politics of urban space and infrastructure influence perceptions of belonging and exclusion in terms of wider urban politics. A brief final section concludes.

6.2 Metaphorical separateness in Mumbra

Mumbra, previously administered as two villages, was incorporated into the jurisdiction of the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) in 1984, two years after its formation. Despite integration into Thane’s urban administration, however, Mumbra remains separate in a few ways. Physically, Mumbra is delineated by physical boundaries on three sides: the Parsik Hills demarcate its western boundary, while the river Ulhas and Thane creek bound the northern and most of the eastern end of Mumbra, posing physical barriers that divide it from surrounding neighbourhoods.

Demographically, Mumbra remained relatively rural until the 1990s: As thousands of Muslim migrants left Bombay or moved from mixed areas to seek refuge in Muslim-dominated neighbourhoods,

Mumbra experienced a significant wave of Muslim-centric population increase. This trend continued in the new millennium, as large numbers of mostly Muslim poor and lower-middle class households displaced from Mumbai for the construction of large infrastructure projects, and migrants (especially from the northern states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) to Mumbai moved to Mumbra due to its affordable rents, enabled in part by the boom in unauthorized construction of residential buildings (Jain, 2014). As such, Mumbra is often described as one of the largest “Muslim ghettos” in Mumbai and, indeed, in India, in the popular media.²⁶

Notwithstanding the potential for greater solidarities within the Muslim neighbourhood, the territorial stigma associated with Mumbra persists to exclude residents from feeling a sense of belonging in/to the city. This sense of othering extends across various aspects of life – ranging from shared spaces in public transport to finding work and jobs and to intimate personal relationships. Here, through women’s narratives I explore the gendered experiences of urban belonging and exclusion in terms of women’s perceptions of both the socio-spatial position of Mumbra in the city and their individual experiences in the city. The second half of this section then examines the ways in which residents from Mumbra attempt to claim a sense of belonging to the city. Here, in the context of socio-political alienation and continued ethno-religious segregation, I argue that neighbourhood improvements (partly enabled through the in-migration of middle-class Muslims) have helped change residents’ perception of Mumbra from a ghetto to more closely resembling an enclave. Although the benefits of these improvements have differentially impacted different parts of Mumbra, this ‘Muslim gentrification’ has reframed Mumbra as a place worth belonging to, thus producing belonging through infrastructure.

6.2.1 Territorial stigmatisation

“When we came to live here, we had a lot of questions: Mumbra is a city of terrorists, it is little-Pakistan, because we had never gone there before. Even at [the previous] home, people would ask ‘how can you go and live there?’ So that was one fear.” (Sonam, 30, Mumbra)

Sonam’s family had lived in Mumbra for over ten years when I first met her. Speaking from her experience of moving to Mumbra, she explained that she herself had several fears about moving there, particularly due to the neighbourhood’s reputation as a “city of terrorists” and “little-Pakistan”. Several scholars have observed how the media and state have contributed to furthering the rhetoric of the dangerous and deviant Muslim and, by labelling them ‘Pakistani’ and imagining them as an

²⁶ <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/in-indias-largest-muslim-ghetto/article7330090.ece>;
<https://thewire.in/culture/pride-and-prejudice-in-the-ghetto>

enemy within their own country, effectively denationalising Indian Muslims and alienating them from citizenship (Shaban, 2012; Jaffrelot and Gayer, 2012; Bhide, 2015; Anand, 2017).

Sonam's family previously lived in Kurla, an eastern suburb of Mumbai where most (about 90%, in her estimation) neighbours were non-Muslim. Despite initial fears, she explained that the actual experience of moving to Mumbra was very different from what she had expected: *"We had freedom there, but we got even more freedom here. We can come and go whenever, there are no restrictions...Because people like us only live here."* Additionally, like other residents that moved from predominantly Hindu neighbourhoods to Mumbra, Sonam appreciated the experience of celebrating religious festivals in Mumbra: *"We would feel festivals very little [in Kurla] ... When we moved here, we saw a lot of it. Like you have Eid, Bakra Eid, it felt very normal to celebrate them."*

Sonam's experience, similar to that of many other participants resonates with Wacquant's (2004: 3) depiction of the ghetto as a "Janus-faced" institution that ensures the socio-spatial closure of a minority group while simultaneously providing them with a protected space that enables rich internal affinities and solidarities among the outcast group. Mumbra's composition as a place where Sonam believed "people like us only live" enabled Sonam to experience a high level of belonging and freedom within the neighbourhood. As such, she articulated experiencing a high level of freedom in Mumbra, even though she did not welcome the initial move due to stigmatising narratives about Mumbra.

Similar narratives were articulated by many other women, which I explore through this section to identify women's perceptions toward moving to and living in Mumbra over time. Rizwana, for instance, expressed how she too was afraid of Mumbra when she was first moving to the locality, but her family were able to feel comfort and belonging in Mumbra as they got used to living there:

"Oh, Mumbra, it was hard. I would feel very scared. We had heard many things earlier, somewhere a murder is happening, somewhere something else. When we moved here that maulana [religious leader] had killed a woman in her house...I used to feel very scared, even at home...With time, living here, it became a habit. Neighbours are nice, our complex is very nice. Now we don't fear, we live very free." (Rizwana, 45, Mumbra)

Rizwana too had reservations and fears about moving to Mumbra due to its notorious reputation but, like Sonam, overcame these fears with time, in part as she grew accustomed to living there and negotiating the neighbourhood. Importantly, both women referred to enjoying freedom in Mumbra (although the gendered experience of socio-spatial freedom is uneven across different spaces, see Chapter 4). Notwithstanding the development of some positive emotions towards Mumbra, which

Rizwana attributed in some part to getting used to the area, her ambivalence about the neighbourhood continued. She explained:

"In Mumbra, it is out of compulsion...Outside [in Mumbai], you don't get cheap rooms and [...] here, you get them. That is the only reason for us, but it is not safe in Mumbra. The mahol is not right. Forget children, even we will get spoilt, it is like that." (Rizwana, 45, Mumbra)

Rizwana attributed her continued apprehensions about living in Mumbra to the prevalence of drug use in the neighbourhood. In fact, many women with teenage children often expressed fears about their children – especially sons – succumbing to drug addiction. Similarly, several women also identified the lack of positive influences and role models that encourage young men to progress as a key challenge. For many residents, living in Mumbra was perceived as a constrained choice. This suggests that the decision to live in Mumbra was not an active 'choice' but rather it is due to the lack of the ability to make alternative choices that residents like Rizwana live in Mumbra, although some other residents, like Sonam, have embraced life in the segregated neighbourhood despite initial reservations. In this case, Rizwana raises several issues when speaking of how the 'mahol' or socio-spatial environment in Mumbra would spoil people.

Here, Rizwana's perception is indicative of Mumbra typifying Wacquant's conception of spatial taint related to territorial stigmatisation. Wacquant et al (2014) identify five characteristics of contemporary boroughs of dispossession that distinguish them from territorial stigmatisation of earlier times:

1. Territorial stigma is closely tied to but has become partially autonomised from the stain of poverty, subaltern ethnicity, degraded housing, imputed immorality, and street crime.
2. Territorial stigma has become nationalised and democratised as every country has some urban areas that are universally renowned and reviled across class and space.
3. Stigmatised neighbourhoods of the post-industrial metropolis are pictured as centres and vectors of social disintegration, fundamentally dissolute and irretrievably disorganised.
4. Stigmatised areas suffer from racialisation through selective accentuation or fictive projection.
5. Stigmatised areas in the post-industrial city elicit overwhelmingly negative emotions and stern corrective reactions to penalise urban marginality.

The lived experience in Mumbra is characterised by many of these attributes. I first explore this from the perspective of women's engagement in the city beyond the neighbourhood. Whereas women often have limited mobility outside the neighbourhood, their encounters in the wider city are often

marked by alienation and discrimination. In the context of advanced marginality, Wacquant (2009) acknowledges the differential governance of women but has been critiqued by feminist scholars for his essentialist treatment of gender, as much of Wacquant's analysis has focused on men and carceral agencies (Mayer, 2010; Bumiller, 2013; Povey, 2019). Borrowing from Bourdieu's metaphor of the left and right hands of the state which respectively represent the social or spending ministries and the technocrats charged with enforcing new economic discipline, Wacquant (2009; 2016) refers to the maternal (welfare) and paternal (penal) arms that trap "two gender sides of the same population coin drawn from marginalised fractions of the post-industrial working class" (2009: 83-84). However, Wacquant's analysis is constrained by limited consideration of women to the maternal arm and of men to the carceral agencies (Mayer, 2010 cited in Measor, 2012). In India, whereas dominant discourses have often associated Muslim men with danger, crime and even terrorism (including in terms of political manoeuvrings of the government in recent times), research with women has focused on their rights within the family as political debates about Muslim women have often been narrowly restricted to issues relating to Triple Talaq in recent years.

In Mumbra, however, while most women I spoke with had limited interactions with most state agencies, many expressed themselves experiencing a distinct othering and alienation when engaging in the city beyond the neighbourhood:

"When I travel by train, they all look down at us, they stare at us. [They believe] that people who are Muslim, the ones who wear burqa are bad or related to terrorists or something." (Aisha, 20, Mumbra)

"I've seen on the train, if we ask, 'Where are you getting off?' you meet some nice Hindus, they tell you themselves, 'I have to get off at Thane [so you can have my seat after that].' So, it feels as if humanity is still alive. Some people...they say [they will get off] 'last'...Turns out, they get off after one or two stations...This has happened with me two or three times...If you discriminate against your own countrymen, tell us, where should we go? Have we come from Pakistan? Is it our fault that we are Muslims?" (Yasmin, 27, Mumbra)

When speaking of their interactions outside Mumbra, women often recalled their experiences in Mumbai's suburban trains, which are the fastest, cheapest, and most convenient means of transport across the city. Mumbai's trains are notorious for overcrowding and present a shared space with the 'other' without any personal space. Through my travels in the local trains over the past decade, I have been fascinated by the systems of cooperation that exist within the trains. While the train seats are meant for three people, during busy times commuters adjusted by sitting closer together to allow a fourth person to perch at the end on the bench. At every station, women that boarded the train

would ask seated passengers where they were alighting and reserve a seat for when fellow passengers vacated theirs. As Yasmin noted, sometimes women would volunteer this information so she could take comfort in knowing she would have a seat for some of her journey. However, within this shared space, with hundreds of other passengers, the emergent systems of cooperation are also perceived as containing discrimination, as described in the two quotations above. Here, Aisha speaks of how she perceives fellow passengers looking at her with suspicion based on her visible religious identity, within a wider political and security context that has come to become defined by stereotypes of the 'Muslim terrorist'. Similarly, as a mundane form of discrimination, Yasmin relates her visible religious identity to be a cause for fellow passengers to deny her a seat on the train by intentionally lying about where they are alighting the train so as not to assist her, which heightens her sense of alienation from the city and country as she asks *"Where should we go? Have we come from Pakistan?"* There is thus a perception of othering from citizenship and the idea of the nation itself.

Similarly, women spoke of perceptions of alienation when visiting Hindu-dominated parts of Mumbai:

"When I go to Hindu areas like Thane or Mulund, people stare as if we don't belong to the area or the community...I feel, 'why are people staring at me?' I ask my friends, is there any difference between us? She said your body language is different. You stay in a different place. You don't belong to our community...My body is fully covered, I wear burqa, that's all? Because of this they stare at me?... I could make that out from the way they looked at me." (Mejhim, 25, Mumbra)

In both cases, the discrimination is related to religion, as their outsider (and subordinate) religious identity from the Hindu majority is visible through their clothing. Thus, they are not only viewed as women in need of rescue, as is the common perception, but also themselves experience discrimination from majoritarian society. Undoubtedly religious segregation and discrimination remain a concern, and the alienation of Indian Muslims is an increasing challenge in the context of the growing Hindu majoritarianism in India.

Notwithstanding the wider context of Muslim alienation, however, the case of Mumbra illustrates that territoriality itself remains a crucial element of socio-spatial segregation and marginalisation. For instance, residents from Mumbra often articulated how they felt a sense of othering and stigmatisation not only from the majoritarian Hindu society but also from Muslims from more established, arguably more respectable, areas of the city. This experience is evocative of Wacquant's (2007: 67) conception of advanced marginality which "tends to concentrate in isolated and bounded territories increasingly perceived by both outsiders and insiders as social purgatories, leprous badlands...where only the refuse of society would accept to dwell." Irrespective of whether these areas are actually dangerous, "the prejudicial belief that they are is enough to set off socially noxious

consequences” (Wacquant, 2007: 68). Here, irrespective of the reality of Mumbra, the neighbourhood is perceived through stigmatised images not only by the majoritarian Hindu society but also Muslims themselves:

“People think that Mumbra is not a good place... Mumbra’s environment is not good. The girls here are not good. This is particularly the thought, that girls here are not good. According to you men are good and women are bad? Why are the girls not good?” (Fatima, 37, Mumbra)

“My ex-boyfriend would say that no one should marry girls from Mumbra. I said, ‘Yeah, you’re right, you shouldn’t marry girls from Mumbra’. Because [the perception is] the girl will have a father or brother who is a drug addict or a thug, or the girl wouldn’t be a virgin... Girls in Mumbra are fine for sex but not for marriage...Mumbra girls are just use-and-throw...The area you belong to makes a lot of difference [to how they see you]. Why do you spoil the reputation of one place or the character of people who live there? Even now it exists, I can’t say it’s over.” (Mejhim, 25, Mumbra)

Women have long been considered central to processes of ethnic or cultural reproduction, and often understood as ‘carriers of ethnic traditions’ (Phinney, 1990: 509). Considering the territorial stigmatisation experienced by Mumbra, the imagined distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ women is also worth noting. A report by the Sachar Committee appointed in 2005 by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to study the socio-economic status of Muslims in India noted that women had become the ‘torchbearers of community identity’ as their ‘lives, morality, and movement in public spaces’ were under constant scrutiny and control, and as the Muslim minority identity came under siege, women withdrew into boundaries of the home and the “ghetto” (Sachar Committee, 2006: 19). Thus, the struggle of middle-class Indian Muslims for morality often takes the form of community purification through the preservation of “Muslimness” from the intrusion of Hindu majority culture (Hansen, 2001a; Kirmani, 2008). From a gendered perspective this often takes shape through the creation of a spatial cocoon within which Muslim identity is pervasive and respected. Despite the fact that they feel the need to, and generally do, attempt to uphold the honour of their community through signs of respectability and morality such as clothing (although this is only one of many reasons women cite for donning the burqa), the stigma of Mumbra – based on historical stereotypes – is often assigned to women from Mumbra.

The story or myth of Mumbra which has been retold many times, and from where Mumbra continues to draw its notorious reputation, was that Mumbra was initially a *tadipaar* [exiled] area. I was told a few times that those exiled by the mafia in central Mumbai would be sent to Mumbra in previous times. Irrespective of its accuracy, this narrative illustrates how Mumbra’s negative reputation was intertwined with the imagination of the Muslim *badmash*. According to Hansen (2001a), the hard core

of the Muslim *badmash* — the hardened criminal, mafia don — became the ambivalent, frightening but ultimate symptom of Bombay's urban modernity, opposed to family values, decency, and civic norms. Since the 1970s, he argued, the contemporary mythology of the mafia gangs grew into a metonym of Bombay's Muslim world (Hansen, 2001a). This was evidently the case in Mumbra, which came to be tainted with associations related to the Muslim *badmash*, and moreover represented a repository of its worst elements. In this case while the men are associated with drug use and crime, the women who bear the burden of upholding community respectability and honour are likewise associated with promiscuity as “bad women” even within the Muslim communities of Mumbai. Despite growing religiosity, community purification and material improvement, many women from Mumbra perceive their own external reputation to be tainted along with that of Mumbra itself.

Thus, territorial stigmatisation in Mumbra has resulted in its imagination as a neighbourhood characterised by social disintegration including through fabricated negative associations, with a blurring between the stigma attached to Mumbra as a neighbourhood and the negative reputation and perception of its residents. Simultaneously, there is a close linkage between the normative relegation of Mumbra in social terms and exclusion in material terms. This mirrors the experience of marginalisation experienced across many “ghettos” as the selective denial of public infrastructure provisioning has been a key characteristic of Muslim socio-spatial segregation in India (Jamil, 2017). In this context, Mumbra's residents not only feel alienated from the city socio-culturally but also in physical and material ways because of their political relegation.

Participants often alternated fluidly between descriptions of relegation in the metaphorical and physical spaces of the city. Although Mumbra has some chawls and hutment areas, most of the built environment consists of buildings constructed by private companies and individuals as low-cost real estate. Thus, although not identified as a slum or ‘poor’ neighbourhood, over time Mumbra came to be identified by the proliferation of unauthorised constructions, often with poor foundations that have proved safety hazards²⁷ and yet that have provided cheap housing for its growing population.

Residents also commonly complained about poor infrastructure provision, particularly in terms of water, electricity, garbage collection, street cleaning and the prevalence of stray dogs in the neighbourhood — although most acknowledged these had improved over time (see Section 6.2.2). A key issue related to trash:

²⁷ In April 2013, newspapers reported a 40 hour of rescue and clean-up operation after a seven-storey building, Lucky Compound, collapsed; 134 people were trapped inside, of which 74 lost their lives. Since then, several buildings have been evacuated after being found to tilt and be structurally unfit for habitation.

“Earlier, just passing by [on the main road] you had to hold your nose shut and cover your nose with a dupatta. There was so much filth, and the whole world’s trash...It was so bad, the stench. The entire road would have dirt and stray dogs.” (Nasreen, 29, Mumbra)

“Everywhere, there are [stray] dogs...It is like they are brought and left loose in Mumbra...And the other [issue] is the trash...If you go out in the morning you won't get fresh air...When you wake up you see the world's trash out in the streets” (Rizwana, 45, Mumbra)

As Rosalind Fredericks (2018) explains in *Garbage Citizenship*, waste plays a crucial role in culturally coding value. She argues that infrastructures in postcolonial cities codify government priorities and unequal citizenship following from colonial urban space which was regulated by racial segregationist logics based on ideas of dirt and disease. The import of trash and stray dogs in these comments thus highlights not only physical challenges but also perceptions of politico-material relegation and neglect by the state. Therefore, here, the absence – or indeed denial – of infrastructure serves to produce an unbelonging to the city and reinforces perceptions of marginality among residents of the segregated neighbourhood.

In addition to the physical markers of relegation in the city, as experienced through the continued presence of waste and stray animals, women also identified alienation from the city in different ways. A key issue that participants lamented related to the enduring stigma routinely faced when engaging in the city more widely:

“People from Mumbra do not get jobs outside. There are companies that look at the resume and if someone is from Mumbra, they do not give jobs. It is a blacklisted area...10-15 years ago I heard this and today it is the same...We are not given loans...I had gone to an electronics shop and I asked why and again the same reason: Mumbra is on a ‘blacklist’.” (Madiha, 27, Mumbra)

This perception of being “black-listed”²⁸ was a common refrain by residents of Mumbra and has been found to be experienced by residents of Muslim neighbourhoods across Mumbai and other Indian cities (Jamil, 2017; Anand, 2017). In this context, it has been argued that ethnicised perceptions of the segregated urban neighbourhood, like a ghetto or enclave, racialise residents and shapes their claims to urban citizenship and belonging in complex ways (Redclift, 2012; Jamil, 2017).

²⁸ The English language is embedded with racism and discrimination against the word “black”: whereas white generally represents innocence, purity, and cleanliness (with positive connotations), black is associated with wickedness, evil, filth (Gao, 2013). Podair (1956) asserts that the attribution of the word “black” to undesirable things warrants examination as language not only “expresses ideas and concepts” but also “actually shapes them”. The unconsciousness of this process is notable especially since most participants had a very basic understanding of English and yet the word “blacklisted” had wide purchase.

The experience outside the segregated neighbourhood for women from Mumbra is sometimes one of socio-cultural othering and marginalisation. Wacquant (2004) describes the ghetto as ‘a relation of ethno-racial control and closure’ based on stigma and institutional encasement. However, the “ghetto” exists as both real and imagined, fact and fiction. Often it is unclear where the real ends and the imagined begins, but processes of marking space are both symbolic and crucial to the imagination of ‘the ghetto’ (Tonkiss, 2005). Here, the stigmatisation of Mumbra is not only about Muslim alienation but also the relegation of the socio-spatial entity of Mumbra itself.

Thus, stigmatisation is no longer only about religion but, over time, also a consequence of the internalisation of negative stereotypes associated with the locality. Firstly, the sense of alienation experienced in Mumbra is marked by a territorial stigmatisation that manifests in various aspects of everyday life in both social and material terms – from superficial interactions on public transport, to getting loans and jobs, and further to more intimate social relations. These perceptions of Mumbra are experienced not only through a socio-religious othering by the dominant Hindu society but are also accepted and internalised by Muslims themselves particularly those in other, ostensibly more respectable, parts of Mumbai. From a gendered perspective, women remain central to the maintenance of the community’s respectability and conversely find their own reputation marred by the stigmatisation of Mumbra. Critically, segregation is experienced in social as well as material ways, both of which are closely intertwined with perceptions of urban belonging and exclusion.

Whereas the denial of basic infrastructure has been perceived to represent a physical manifestation the ethno-religious exclusion of the Muslim minority, the next section discusses changes in Mumbra to explore how residents are increasingly attempting to contest the territorial stigmatization through negotiated socio-material improvements in the neighbourhood. In doing so, it further explores the connections between the socio-political and material dimensions of belonging and exclusion to develop the concept of infrastructural belonging.

6.2.2 Muslim gentrification: Challenging the rhetoric of stigmatisation

“To tell an outsider that we live in Mumbra, I would feel ashamed...In every way, it was bad. Now, Mumbra has become much better. I feel so proud like, yes, I live in Mumbra.” (Nasreen, 29, Mumbra)

Mumbra has undoubtedly experienced rapid and wide-ranging changes in demographic and material terms since the 1990s, particularly in the past decade. Several women I spoke with that had lived in Mumbra for a long time described the area as uninhabited and dangerous in the early days. Ayesha, whose family moved to Mumbra from Dharavi in 1994 after the traumatic experience of violence in 1993, outlines her initial experience of moving to Mumbra:

"It was like a jungle. We felt scared. Very few people lived here. We couldn't go out after 8 o'clock...It was really like a jungle. Many murders were committed here. It was all shrubs and swamp...Only 2-3 households lived in the building. It got inhabited later." (Ayesha, 29, Mumbra)

Mumbra's population is estimated to have increased from about 45,000 in 1991 to 208,000 in 2001 and further nearly doubled to about 408,000 in 2011 (Jain, 2014). Despite the rapid population growth, however, the development of infrastructure was slow to follow. Yet, Mumbra has experienced significant material, infrastructural and service improvements in the past decade, due to which many residents expressed a growing sense of optimism and pride in their neighbourhood:

"[When I came to Mumbra], there was no electricity even...We had many problems. I'd sit with the children and just cry all day. But as the environment kept changing, Mumbra has developed and become good...I have myself nine years ago filled water from a pipe or handpump. Now Masha' Allah, at least we get water for an hour every day...For electricity, sometimes in the summer we have a little problem, but still it doesn't go off...Roads and things, they are getting made...Many improvements have come about...We cannot call Mumbra bad anymore" (Lubna, 38, Mumbra)

"Earlier Mumbra station felt like it was a village...Now Masha' Allah it feels like you are in a city...Our own relatives would say 'coming to your place one feels scared at the station itself, like bandits live there'...Now when coming it feels like a city, it feels like a posh place." (Mauzama, 40, Mumbra)

A common refrain related particularly to how Mumbra previously experienced electricity cuts for several hours on Fridays, the sacred day of worship for Muslims, which many perceived as explicit discrimination by state institutions against the segregated Muslim neighbourhood. However, most women acknowledged that there had been notable improvements in recent years. It is evident that Mumbra has experienced a wide range of improvements in terms of infrastructure, with the expansion of networked infrastructure and more reliable provisioning of basic services, and the improvement of roads and public transport. Although quantitative data to measure the extent of progress are lacking at the neighbourhood scale, there was a widespread perception of improvements in infrastructure provisioning across the neighbourhood.

Several new residential complexes have been constructed, with newer areas of Mumbra having witnessed construction activity consistent with the same 'world class' development aspirations discussed in wider post-colonial critiques of cities in the global South (Roy, 2009). While previously Mumbra was composed of tightly packed, poorly maintained buildings, the eastern edge of the neighbourhood, where undeveloped land remained, has recorded the construction of a growing number of high-rise apartment buildings. Moreover, during my fieldwork in 2017-18, billboards on

the main road marketed upcoming projects for gated complexes. These upmarket buildings often had westernised names, such as Bellavista, Belmonte, and Planet North. Yet, it bears mention that such luxury housing complexes still constitute a very rare exception. Equally, while they are more luxurious than most existing buildings in Mumbra - taller (thereby affording better views), with lifts to go to higher levels and backup generators to ensure they work even during power cuts, and with parking and children's play areas - the flats are still fairly modest in the context of Mumbai as they mainly contain one- and two-bedroom flats. Nevertheless, their presence in Mumbra is significant. Several residents spoke of their construction as a signal of Mumbra's improvements, which contributed to their experiencing a greater confidence and pride in living in the neighbourhood:

"It [a housing development that was coming up in Mumbra] has health clubs, gyms, doctors, hotels, even schools - better schools - so each thing is here...Earlier the name was bad, right, very much 'third class', 'worst', now it is not like that...now it has become very nice." (Sayeeda, 30, Mumbra)

"There wasn't any building that was over four storeys in Mumbra, and the buildings would be crumbling, with a lot of filth around. Now nice towers have been built, [they are] clean, lights also don't go off. In each aspect there has been development." (Nasreen, 29, Mumbra)

"Many areas have been developed...There was a jungle where bodies would be thrown after people were murdered. We call it Shimla Park now, and it has become so posh...Tall buildings have come up...There are still areas we call 'third class'...People there don't know how to talk or behave...It is not a good place for women...Once it gets developed, we can say our Mumbra has fully improved." (Ayesha, 29, Mumbra)

The recent commercial housing developments mark the entrance of the formal real-estate sector to Mumbra: for the first time one of the mainstream real estate firms from Mumbai has undertaken construction in this segregated Muslim neighbourhood where previously nearly all buildings were constructed by relatively small Muslim builders. The development therefore represents an external perception of commercial opportunity and rent gaps that can be exploited in Mumbra (although, of course, this was only possible due to infrastructure improvements such as greater availability of water and electricity, and better roads leading to Thane and Navi Mumbai). These changes in the built environment of Mumbra, with a growing presence of better-quality housing and relatively premium amenities suggests the growing presence of an emerging middle class in Mumbra.

A short walk down the main road of Mumbra announces the rising aspirations within the neighbourhood. Improvements are evident not only in physical infrastructure but also in social services that enable and signal social mobility, such as the proliferation of educational institutions (see Chapter 5). While Mumbra has a few government primary and secondary schools, they are

inadequate for the population of the neighbourhood and their facilities are widely considered poor. With inadequate state provisioning and following the trend across India, there has been a significant growth in private schooling. Several private schools and technical training institutes have been established in Mumbra, primarily by various Islamic charities and trusts.

In terms of jobs, although participants often spoke of the difficulties in finding jobs, the growing educated population has indeed improved prospects to some extent. Further, anecdotal evidence among participants also indicated the prevalence of households where male members worked in the Middle East and sent remittances to the support their families that created purchasing power among a segment of households in Mumbra. In addition, while the initial waves of Mumbra's population growth was through people that were displaced by structural violence, as Mumbra has developed over time many newer residents have moved here due to its lower rents while still wanting to provide the best possible chances for their families.

Finally, the urban development and infrastructure improvements in Mumbra have been accompanied by a perceived improvement of the 'quality' of residents. Earlier, Mumbra was not considered safe – both in terms of external perceptions and the perspective of residents. These changes in Mumbra are often attributed not only to infrastructure development but also an improved environment or *mahol* caused by a shift in the quality of the population:

“Earlier there was a deadening silence; we would not go out after Magrib [evening prayers] – someone would see us or draw a knife. There were many gangsters, but now there has been a lot of change in people. Now mainly you see Namazi people, the mahol [environment] has become very good. Even if I come home at 2 am from Bombay, there is no fear.” (Rehana, 53, Mumbra)

When Rehana speaks of a transition from the town of gangsters to that of the religious *Namazi*, this also refers to a type of social reformation within Mumbra. Hansen (2001a) argues that in the cultural and political fields, Muslims in Mumbai have often responded to aggression from the Hindu Right through a strategy of “community purification” advocated by religious organizations. Yet, as discussed above, locally, this transition is not a simple one as the neighbourhood remains stigmatised in salient ways and its social fabric uneven. Nevertheless, these material and social changes have arguably transformed how many of the girls and women in Mumbra view their neighbourhood and created a perceptible sense of optimism.

Many of these changes are suggestive of the phenomenon of gentrification. Ruth Glass (1964) coined the term gentrification to describe the transformation of the economic, demographic, cultural and physical character of many central London neighbourhoods where she observed the social status of many residential areas was being ‘uplifted’ as the middle class (or the ‘gentry’) moved into working-

class areas, taking up housing, opening businesses, and lobbying for infrastructure improvements. Glass did not perceive gentrification as unambiguously desirous, and warned: “altogether there has been a great deal of displacement” as many that could not retain their spaces would be pushed away. Since then, there has been a proliferation of literature on gentrification but the suitability of “gentrification” to non-western and postcolonial contexts remains debated; some argue that the concept of gentrification is increasingly overstretched and incapable of integrating different trajectories of urban change (Zukin, 2010; Maloutas, 2011; Ghertner, 2015). On the one hand, Forrest (2016), for example, suggests something that looks like ‘gentrification’ may well be produced by a distinct set of processes and with quite different consequences. Similarly, Shin et al (2016) advocate studying the diverse urban processes that shape gentrification rather than over-generalising distinctive urban processes under the label of gentrification. On the other hand, Lemanski (2014) through an exploration of state-subsidised housing resales in South Africa, shows how similar processes of class-based urban change (gentrification and downward raiding) are rarely analysed together and proposes the concept of ‘hybrid gentrification’ to examine how experiences from the global South may bridge the North-South theory divide and enrich understandings of urban change.

Although gentrification may lack an exact definition, a defining feature is class change in terms of both residents’ class and neighbourhood class-based changes such as the uses of public spaces, cultural amenities, and service provision (Slater et al, 2004). In this sense, Mumbra exhibits clear symptoms of undergoing a particular type of gentrification.

In Mumbra, notwithstanding a history of governmental neglect, public provisioning of municipal services such as reliable supply of water and electricity has undoubtedly improved with time. Many participants attributed this to the election of their MLA or representative to the state legislature, Jitendra Awhad, since 2009 who has been an outspoken advocate for the neighbourhood. He is perceived to have united many of the local corporators at the municipal level and worked with the Municipal Corporation’s various agencies to negotiate for services to his constituency. Equally, improvements have also been possible through demographic changes in the neighbourhood with the in-migration of middle-class Muslim residents that have been able to invest in the neighbourhood, produce services, as well as more effectively lobby and negotiate with state representatives for improved services.

Neighbourhood transition through gentrification is typically understood to occur the inflow of affluent residents moving into and upgrading lower-income neighbourhoods and associated with heightened class conflict and the displacement of low-income residents (Wilson et al, 2004; Buzar et al, 2007). In Mumbra, in part due to its relatively peripheral location, the newer upmarket developments in

Mumbra have not come at the cost of older, lower class residential areas. Thus, Mumbra continues to be home to low rents for Muslims that cannot afford to live in the more central parts of the city. Indeed, gentrification can play out differently in diverse contexts. Yet others have found that the experience of gentrification for those that are not displaced, at least in the initial stages, can be positive as residents benefit from improved infrastructure and reputation of their neighbourhood (Doucet and Koenders, 2018). As such, the contemporary experience of Mumbra could well represent the early stages of gentrification.

In addition, it is also worth complicating understandings of gentrification to address the relationship between religion, ethnicity, race and gentrification, which has remained underexplored within urban geography (Lees, 2000). Here, Mumbra's socio-religious composition as a Muslim neighbourhood within the context of the persistent segregation and increasing religious polarisation in socio-spatial imaginary of urban India remains significant. Here it is germane to draw comparison with studies of Black gentrification, where race has been identified as a significant factor in terms of new residents' motivations for moving into neighbourhoods, their exclusion from other neighbourhoods, and pre-existing interactions with residents (see Moore, 2005; Freeman, 2006; Hyra, 2006; Pattillo, 2007). These works on black gentrification through the migration of black middle-classes identify problems with implicit race and class oppositions that presume middle-class gentrifiers as white and working-class residents/displaced as ethnic or racial minority. Moore (2009), for instance, finds a distinct pattern of neighbourhood change where middle-class African Americans migrate into low-income Black neighbourhoods. She argues that race shapes processes of gentrification in complex ways that surpass the simplistic classification of minorities as either victims of gentrification or emulators of White gentrifiers. Instead, Black gentrification constituted a distinct process shaped by racial and class stratification as middle-class African Americans sought to intervene in the victimisation of their community by investing their social, economic and cultural capital into improving their neighbourhoods. Thus, Black gentrification has different causes and outcomes as gentrification involving White gentrifiers. The experience of Mumbra resonates with these instances of minority gentrification, and yet demands situating Muslim gentrification within the distinctive context and politics of religious segregation in India.

In India, Jamil (2017) argues Muslim segregation is a necessary condition for capitalist accumulation in other spaces of the city. Here, real estate development and infrastructural planning are themselves shaped and historically stratified by social, ethnic, religious and caste segregation. Nevertheless, in the Muslim neighbourhood, Jamil (2017) demonstrates that Muslims can also profit by being in a Muslim dominated area, and thus spatial segregation may not be entirely involuntary but rather an economic choice as a segment of the Muslim population is able to benefit from the segmentation of

the real estate market. For instance, Laliwala et al (2020) find that the migration of middle-class Muslims with greater social, financial and intellectual capital to invest in and negotiate for improved public delivery of infrastructure has enabled the gentrification of Juhapura,²⁹ but find the improvements to be limited to certain parts, restricting the creation of class-based solidarities and producing citadels within the ghetto. Yet, Hansen (2019) counters this argument by demonstrating that the process of discrimination in the housing market was longstanding and builders operating in Muslim areas tend to be marginal players in the real estate market. Moreover, as Muslims broadly cannot afford to pay very much, the real estate market among Muslims is marginal, and generally not connected with large projects. He argues that the prevailing levels of segregation and the desire of most Hindus not to have Muslim neighbours plays a key role in the way property markets function, and the increased capitalization in the real estate sector has only intensified existing divisions in India. Others have argued that the relevant question is not whether Muslims choose or are forced to live in segregated localities but rather what constitutes choice (Jamil, 2019; Naqvi, 2019). Jamil (2019) argues that the visible clustering of different classes of Muslims close together is indicative of the limited choices Muslims have in terms of residential mobility. In Mumbra the changes must be viewed within the wider context of religious and class stratification in urban India.

While Muslim gentrification in Mumbra has been shaped by somewhat different causes compared to other areas - for instance, the ex-Mill areas of central Mumbai (see Harris, 2008) – it has also had different outcomes. One key characteristic has been the continued isolation of the neighbourhood from the outside, which has in fact increased as Mumbra has developed and residents' reliance on other parts of the city has reduced. A commonly recounted example among women in Mumbra related to the diminished need to leave the neighbourhood to buy food or clothes or other items. For instance:

"The facility for everything has become so good ...Now from clothes to food you get everything here. There is nothing now that you will get only if you go to Bombay." (Sayeeda, 30, Mumbra)

"Earlier, for everything I had to go to Bombay or tell my mother-in-law to get for me. Now, I have forgotten Bombay. You get everything here... So now it is far better than before." (Aisha, 48, Mumbra)

Aisha and Sayeeda outline how the development of Mumbra has been accompanied by a reduction in the reliance on Mumbai. Urbanisation and recent socio-material improvements along with growing purchasing power of residents in Mumbra have enabled the growth of a vibrant market, which many

²⁹ Juhapura is the largest Muslim "ghetto" created after the 2002 pogrom in Ahmedabad.

residents speak of with a sense of pride as a symbol of Mumbra developing. The development of Mumbra, however, had been accompanied by a growing separateness and isolation of Mumbra in some regards. For instance, Aisha, who grew up in the cosmopolitan western suburb of Bandra spent a lot of time reminiscing about her memories of spending time along the seafront. Yet, although she held great appreciation and affection for Mumbai – and indeed her two daughters attended college in different parts of Mumbai, which was relatively uncommon – she commented that with recent developments in Mumbra she had even “forgotten Bombay”. In the context of women’s restricted mobility, women in Mumbra often have reduced levels of interaction with the wider city. Khan (2007) links the restrictions imposed on Muslim women within religiously homogenous communities to the wider exclusion of Muslims in the city, within which women are viewed as markers of communal boundaries as those responsible for the ideological reproduction and transmission of culture and religion (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1989; Kandiyoti, 1991). Here, with the community perception of being viewed with hostility outside their neighbourhood both on account of their religion and territorial stigmatisation, as elaborated in the previous section, and due to the existing gendered division of labour and mobility more broadly, Muslim women from Mumbra have an even lower chance of engaging in the city beyond the neighbourhood boundaries.

Within the context of the persistent alienation of Muslims in the city which is compounded by the territorial stigmatisation for Mumbra’s residents, recent changes in Mumbra are notable. Yet, these developments by no means indicate a straightforward transition. Residents continue to perceive exclusion and stigmatisation from both the Hindu-dominated and Muslims from other parts of the city. Yet, although a separateness continues to exist, the social and material improvements in the neighbourhood have enabled residents to view their lives in Mumbra with a greater sense of belonging in the city. At its crudest level, these developments point towards a shifting perception of Mumbra from being a ‘ghetto’ or space of relegation or forced choice to slowly transitioning towards an ‘enclave’ (although both conceptions continue to coexist). Neighbourhood improvement and the development of physical and social infrastructures in the neighbourhood, both through investments by and opportunities produced due to a growing middle-class Muslim demographic that is able to demand state provision, have produced new understandings of belonging in Mumbra. Here, segregation remains a potent force and so it is not that Mumbra has been integrated into the fabric of the city. In this case, the conceptualisation of ‘infrastructure as belonging’ or ‘infrastructural belonging’ help to better understand the meanings people give to infrastructure: in the context of continued ethno-religious segregation, the development of infrastructure produces a sense of belonging such that residents continue to locate themselves within the Muslim neighbourhood, which over time is being redefined as a place worth belonging to. Therefore, whereas the absence or denial

of infrastructure was perceived as a method of exclusion, its development has produced a sense of belonging notwithstanding continued segregation.

Finally, Khan (2007) outlines that ghettoization is not experienced similarly in all Muslim-dominated areas, where it ranges from the subtle to the ruthless. Social differentiation and segregation play out differently across varied and shifting landscapes. Even among segregated neighbourhoods created due to similar types of socio-political forces, experiences of segregation (and the politics of inclusion/exclusion) can vary across place and time. The next section focuses on another segregated Muslim neighbourhood – Shivajinagar – to examine the differential experiences of exclusion and belonging constructed in similar yet different urban contexts.

6.3 The materiality of exclusion in Shivajinagar

Shivajinagar was one of the areas worst affected by violence during the riots in 1992-93. While it had always contained a considerable proportion of Muslims, following the riots, it became further segregated as large numbers of Hindu families left the neighbourhood. Although exact estimates of its religious composition are unavailable, Shivajinagar still contains a considerable non-Muslim population. Yet, it is often referred to as a 'Muslim area', which has meant that residents not only experience socio-economic disadvantage but have also been impacted by the state's violent spatial strategies and communal politics (Contractor, 2012a).

The following sections explore the perceptions of belonging and exclusion experienced by residents of Shivajinagar, and elaborate on the varied socio-political strategies they employ to stake their claim to urban infrastructures. Although they face acute material exclusions in terms of public provisioning of infrastructures, most residents have strong links with the city. Thus, although residents of Shivajinagar are subject to harsher material conditions, they do not experience alienation in the same ways articulated in Mumbra. It is important to note that whereas lack of access to basic infrastructure contributes to perceptions of marginalisation and exclusion, this is experienced unevenly across Shivajinagar. The discussion in this section draws mainly on the narratives of women from the 'slum' housing clusters of Shivajinagar-II where on average residents face more severe difficulties in accessing even the most basic infrastructures compared with residents of the more established plots.

6.3.1 State neglect and people as infrastructure

Located largely on marshland along the eastern periphery of Mumbai, the geographical location of Shivajinagar is itself one of physical relegation: the settlement lies adjacent to the country's largest and oldest open landfill. While those living in the plots are at some physical distance from it, the

landfill is a significant presence in the neighbourhood in general, where it has contributed to major health challenges as well as fostering an acute sense of physical marginalisation:

“Ahead, there is the dumping ground. Here they separate the garbage. I don't like it, why are people living here and why do they sort garbage? Even they are humans...But what we can do, we have to live here.” (Noori, 21, Shivajinagar)

“There's no one who is employed here. Everyone is a waste picker here. No one goes to office. No one. I have a grandson, he has studied till 12th grade. He does menial work despite being educated till 12th grade. When one doesn't get some employment, what will one do?” (Goda, 60-65, Shivajinagar)

The proximity to the landfill impacts the everyday lives of residents in the housing clusters near the landfill in particular. For example, the landfill exerts its presence within Shivajinagar through several waste sorting workshops. As Noori and Goda point out, a considerable proportion of the people living in the clusters of Shivajinagar have traditionally depended on waste picking and sorting for their livelihood. While previously organisations working with waste pickers focused on providing basic safety equipment, more recently – after several fires in recent years³⁰ – most waste-pickers have been barred from accessing the dumping ground, constraining their incomes. Nevertheless, other informal work allied to the waste sector continues to be a source of livelihood for many that live alongside the dumping ground, in the absence of other sources of income. Here, as Contractor (2012b) highlights, its association with ‘Muslimness’ is often depicted through negative images like a strong association with garbage in the minds of outsiders, which is often extended to the image of its Muslim residents.

Although most people I spoke with emphasised how they endeavoured to maintain cleanliness in their neighbourhood, they often complained about the existence of small and large mounds of trash on street corners and along the narrow lanes of the settlement clusters:

“Now, this what it is. Here the cleaning doesn't happen much, the roads remain dirty [with trash]. Like you can see - trash is still there everywhere ...I mean, it is better than before but still, it is there, and more can be done.” (Yasmin, 20-25, Shivajinagar)

A key complaint among participants related to the lack or very poor provisioning of waste collection and street cleaning. Garbage often takes on symbolic importance in cities as a visceral part of everyday urban life that signifies modernity or crisis, cleanliness or disorder, by its presence or

³⁰ The dump has seen three major fires — in January 2015, March 2016, and March 2018. The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) claims that highly combustible materials spark the fires on hot days, although others claim that these may be caused by the powerful garbage mafia in the city.

absence (Fredericks, 2018). Whereas in Mumbra residents complained about the poor provisioning of garbage collection, the residents of many of the clusters around Shivajinagar live in the shadows of most of the city's garbage. In a similar context, Fredericks (2018) views garbage as the material manifestation of political breakdown or dysfunction. In Shivajinagar this dysfunction and governmental neglect – and indeed criminalisation – manifests itself through varied material infrastructures. This includes lack of sanitation, open drains in the settlements and difficulty in accessing sanitation facilities among many poorer residents who do not have the space or finances to construct toilets in their homes and complain about the lack of hygiene and high cost of using the public toilets. In other networked infrastructures such as water and electricity too, residents face several challenges in terms of the unreliability in accessing services and associated costs, and finally housing in terms of the right to live and make a life for themselves in their homes when many of the most vulnerable areas are repeatedly under the threat of eviction. All these are related to the physical sense of relegation that they experience daily, that together contribute to perpetuating their perception of being on the margins of the city.

While the extent of infrastructural deficiencies varies across the different areas of Shivajinagar, there is a pervasive sense of exclusion in civic, political, social and material terms. In general, communal politics and its violent outbursts have resulted in what Wacquant (2008: 8) calls “neighbourhoods of exile born out of the forcible relegation of a negatively typed population”. This plays out through a vicious cycle of poor infrastructure access which causes people to access these services unofficially or illegally, which then once again serves as a cause for the reinforcement of their stigmatisation.

Let us consider the case of water. Contractor (2012b) illustrates how Shivajinagar's 'Muslim-ness' complicates access to services, where the pursuit for infrastructures such as water is marked by struggles that go beyond class. Here the marginalisation of Muslims is argued to facilitate not only ideological imaginations of a Hindu society but also capitalist aspirations of the city when determining the distribution of water across the city. In a similar context, Anand (2017) draws on theorisations of abjection to identify the ways in which Muslim settlers get disconnected from the municipal water system. He argues that Muslim settlements face water shortages not because they are “unrecognised” or marginalised by the differentiated categories of citizenship but rather that city engineers use the effects of abjection (such as lack of cleanliness and illegal connections) as the cause of their water problems. Thus, the lack of infrastructure maintenance in the area contributes to the production of abjection in the settlement.

The denial of official infrastructural services by state agencies in Shivajinagar obliges residents to depend on service provision through informal networks and intermediaries at high personal cost. While some organisation indeed exists and reveals a hierarchy within the neighbourhood, local

intermediaries are often engaged in small side businesses and make a living selling water to those who do not receive municipal water by drawing more water from main connections provided by the municipal authorities by attaching booster pumps to the network of municipal pipes. Contractor (2012b) demonstrates how intermediaries that are commonly depicted as the “water mafia” by the state and English media play a key role in making the state accessible through both acts of subversion and collaboration, similar to Bayat’s (1997) idea of quiet encroachment. Here, intermediaries use their marginal political patronage and knowledge of the state system to address everyday survival issues and counter the skewed distribution of water, which Contractor (2012b) frames as a claim to their right to the city through informal and covert everyday resistance.

While residents complain about the high cost of accessing services, intermediaries are not always viewed as an exploitative element within the neighbourhood. Indeed, in the absence of state provisioning they serve as a crucial infrastructure and are thus met with a degree of ambivalence, as below:

Sayeeda: There is a pipe, but we do not get water daily...They have a single tap which supplies water to the whole area, so it isn't possible for them to supply to us every day. If they give water every four days...you drink that stale water for five days.

[...]

Tanvi: And you need to pay for this?

Sayeeda: Yes...I buy drinking water for Rs 80-90 for a can. Sometimes, it is Rs 120-150. It's expensive...They have taken a connection [from the BMC]...We pay the people who installed the tap, as they spent money on it...Their pipes are cut often and they have to fix them and get the gutter cleaned... During the 2016 demolition, there was no water for 22 days, and my daughter fell ill...The hospital said her illness was due to unclean water. The water supplier went at 10 am [to clean the gutter] and he just escaped with his life as he got stuck in the well...From that day, I requested him not to work so hard, we would remain thirsty, but don't suffer this much. We'll eventually get water; if not today, then the next day...

Sayeeda was generally relatively sympathetic towards intermediaries that unofficially provided water compared to many other residents I spoke with. In part this can be attributed to the differentiated nature of intermediaries that exist within the neighbourhood, wherein the brokers that provided her with water supply were members of her own local community. Yet, she too complained about the high cost of securing potable water and the low frequency with which this was available (only about every four days). However, on both fronts she tried to justify the constraints faced by the intermediaries, explaining how they had to invest a lot in producing and maintaining the connections

and were limited in how often they could supply water to each household due to the large number of households that all depended on the same connection. In particular, she narrated the instance of when her young daughter, then only two years of age, was unwell at the time when her own house had been demolished. Despite her difficulties and need for water, even at that time she recalled how her compassion towards the water supplier or intermediary extended her to say, *“We would remain thirsty, but do not suffer this much.”*

Yet, most others I spoke with were less sympathetic towards private and state providers as their lack of access to the most basic amenities accentuated their experience of marginalisation. For instance:

“See this street, what a street this is! Stagnant water...Everyone's washrooms [with] gutters below, water is being drained there...The water stays stagnant. There's no path for water to drain away...We drink very expensive water! We fill up water worth 100 Rupees, which is finished in 3 days...There's no electricity meter here yet. We have to steal electricity. We spend days without electricity. They [the state] don't supply it. If we complain sometimes, they say, 'Yes, you will get meters' but they don't supply electricity out of spite.” (Afsari, 40-45, Shivajinagar)

Afsari's narrative highlights the experience of marginalisation in terms of lack of infrastructure across a wide range of basic services, including sanitation, water and electricity, in the slum cluster of Adarsh Nagar. The narrow lane that led to her house was composed of large flat stones laid over an open drain. During the monsoon, water would sometimes flow over the path or stagnant water would collect, posing health challenges and exacerbating perceptions of marginality. At the same time, while some areas have secured various levels of access to official water and electricity, she has to purchase these services – of uncertain quality and frequency – at a high cost from local intermediaries. For instance, regarding electricity, Afsari explains: “They [intermediaries and local strongmen] take Rs 500 from someone, Rs 700 from someone else. And then they cut off the electricity every now and then.” While complaining about the high cost of buying water and electricity having been denied municipal supply and having to “steal” electricity, she outlines a preference and demand for legally provided electricity and the installation of electricity meters that had been previously promised by the municipal authorities.

In connecting the techno-political to conceptions of belonging, it warrants highlighting that despite Shivajinagar's marginalisation and perception as a slum, the historical reality of the area is quite different: Björkman (2014) outlines the transformation of Shivajinagar from a municipal housing colony to illegal slum by the politically-mediated deterioration and criminalization of its water infrastructure through neoliberal reforms, and argues that Shivajinagar was actually a planned neighbourhood (discussed in Chapter 3). Yet, over time the entire area has been associated with

informality by the government as policy shifts hinged on a conceptual binary between the unplanned, illegal and informal 'slum' and the planned, formal, 'world-class' city (Björkman, 2014). More generally, various scholars have pointed out that housing regulations and aesthetic legal regimes have marginalised residents of "slum" settlements by marking their housing in the city as unsafe and dangerous (Roy, 2004; Holston, 2008; Ghertner, 2015). Ghertner (2011) demonstrates how Indian cities have come to be governed through a "rule by aesthetics" wherein a development is considered planned if it looks 'world-class' but considered unplanned and illegal if it looks polluting according to aesthetic mode of governing.

The case of Shivajinagar illustrates the state's production of a spatial hierarchy that prioritises the capitalist aspirations of the city's elite where its own construction as a Muslim slum relegates it to occupy a peripheral location in the context of the growing economic, political and socio-cultural alienation of its Muslim residents (Contractor, 2012a). The lack of state provisioning of services has contributed to Shivajinagar's notoriety as a Muslim slum. In the absence or inadequacies of state infrastructure provision, assemblages of residents have played a key role in making and remaking the neighbourhood through everyday life, as described above, similar to Simone's (2004a) notion of 'people as infrastructure'. When viewed in this way, infrastructure is more than just a materiality and is also inherently related to urban dwellers' activities in the city. Silver and McFarlane (2019) engage with Simone's conception and propose the conception of 'social infrastructure' that anchors urban life in urban informal settlements. Here, social implies more than narrow valuations of social interactions but rather encompasses the diverse ways people navigate the city on the margins of citizenship. However, they emphasise that social infrastructure represents a survival strategy rather than empowerment process. Thus, although it helps residents respond to the failure of the state service, it too has its limits – as evident in Shivajinagar.

To summarise, Shivajinagar has been one of the most deprived and marginalised areas of Mumbai. Here, the lack of state provisioning of services and denial of secure tenure have themselves played a crucial role in stigmatising the neighbourhood. In this context, despite the diverse networks of people that serve to make the city work within the settlement and compensate for inadequacies in material infrastructures, and the crucial role of intermediaries within the neighbourhood, residents continuously articulate a desire for official services even if they come at a cost – for instance, in terms of water supply and electricity meters. The next section explores the various negotiations with the state amongst residents of Shivajinagar as housing and infrastructure serve as crucial means through which urban citizenship and belonging are claimed.

6.3.2 Strategies to belong: Claiming citizenship through rights

“Our fight is only because of our hut. If the hut is there and the water and electricity are there, all our tension will be gone... This is the end of the discussion from our side.” (Shabnam, 45, Shivajinagar)

Shivajinagar’s clusters are characterised to varying degrees by acute physical and material marginality, leading residents to have a very precarious sense of belonging in/to the city – both physically, due to insecure tenures, and metaphorically, in terms of alienation related to the denial of citizenship. In this context, like Shabnam, a primary concern for many residents relates to infrastructure (or lack thereof). While residents typically rely on various informal practices and intermediaries to access infrastructure services, they simultaneously employ a combination of strategies through a discourse of the right to the city and citizenship. Due to the ways in which state agencies have excluded residents of Shivajinagar, a key priority has been demanding substantive citizenship from the State, both through everyday politics (or citizenship practices) and transgressive resistance (or acts of citizenship).

Citizenship is embodied in infrastructure for both citizens and the State, as the State is represented to citizens in everyday (in)access to public infrastructure, the State imagines and plans for citizens through infrastructure provision and maintenance (Lemanski, 2019c). In this context, Contractor (2012b) argues that the ways in which slum-dwelling Muslims engage with the State to manage and counter lack of services are continuous and complementary processes, which questions both the state’s accountability and the rules and meanings of citizenship. Residents of informal settlements mobilise various governmental and political practices traversing the boundaries between patronage and citizenship to establish access to services and, with it, evidence of their belonging to the city (Das, 2011; Anand, 2017).

From the perspective of infrastructure, Simone (2004b), in *For the City Yet to Come*, challenges perceptions that African cities don’t work or are replete with the constant struggles of the poor just to survive by demonstrating the ways in which these cities are creatively productive. He critiques “normative” urban and development plans which do not recognise people’s complex resources and the ephemeral modes of collaboration. In Shivajinagar, while “people as infrastructure” (Simone, 2004a) or “social infrastructures” (Silver and McFarlane, 2019) indeed fill a crucial role, residents importantly engage with the state to make claims to have their lives and homes recognised as legitimate. While in Mumbra the focus was on social legitimacy here in Shivajinagar, faced with structural exclusions and violence from the state, the priority focuses on political legitimacy. In this way, residents strive not only for the ‘city’ yet to come but for the ‘citizenship’ yet to come.

Citizenship often remains elusive for the most marginalised. Holston and Caldeira (1999) argued that while democracy has spread across the world, the substance of citizenship varies significantly. The development of citizenship is not linear or evenly distributed for all citizens, but uneven and heterogeneous or what they call “disjunctive”, where although political institutions democratize, the civil component³¹ remains diminished as citizens’ rights are systematically violated. Shivajinagar, despite originally being a planned settlement, has been politically redefined as an illegal slum due to the state’s production of a spatial hierarchy that relegates the “Muslim slum” to a peripheral location. The neighbourhood suffered structural and physical violence over time both in terms of non-provisioning of services, the threat and execution of evictions over time and the criminalisation of residents, but also importantly violence at the hands of the police during the 1992-93 riots which then solidified Shivajinagar’s reputation as a “Muslim” slum with the outmigration of a significant proportion of the Hindu population after the riots.

Residents often mobilize through networks of the urban poor, in part enabled by development NGOs (to negotiate with the state and secure access to basic services) and housing rights coalitions (to resist demolitions and evictions). Thus, the social histories of Shivajinagar teem with stories of protests in Azad Maidan, a prominent protest site near the municipal headquarters, visits to the municipal Ward Office with petitions and application forms, and long waits at the offices of municipal councillors. Here, housing and infrastructure claims have broadly been areligious and prominently employ a vocabulary of rights and citizenship. Geographically, Shivajinagar is located within the main city and near other low-income and slum areas largely populated by marginalised social groups (often Muslim and Dalit). Residents along with development NGOs in these areas, many of which are led by non-Muslim middle-class people residing in other parts of the city, have attempted through their advocacy to destabilize the involuntary ethno-religious categorization of a “Muslim” slum to a perhaps more politically palatable language of poor socio-economic conditions in the “slum” to secure basic rights and citizenship. In a similar Muslim slum in nearby Kurla, Robinson (2010) similarly observed that women hardly spoke of their Muslim identity or religious identity politics, and argued that this was not indicative of their ignorance of larger ethno-religious political complexities but rather an avoidance of such language as they understand its insidious capacity to recoil on them. Here, therefore, countering the processes of exclusion through negotiation with the state demands pragmatism and the careful manoeuvring of different socio-political subjectivities to have a chance of successfully realising their rights in a context of uneven or disjunctive citizenship.

³¹ Holston and Caldeira (1999) use “civil” to refer to an aspect of citizenship in the sphere of rights, practices and values that concerns liberty and justice as the means to all other rights, rather than the classic liberal separation that derive from the state/non-state divide

In Shivajinagar, residents employ multiple pragmatic routes to realise access to infrastructure services, many of which are facilitated by NGOs working in the neighbourhood. After the 1992-93 riots, several NGOs began working in Shivajinagar, initially on relief and rehabilitation work and, later, on poverty reduction often through a rights-based approach to development. Contractor (2012a: 33) notes the prevalence of NGOs focused on poverty reduction and religious reform along with the neglect and injustice from the state have “often left the residents with self-blame and victimhood as the only means to negotiate survival in the city.” Here, although they are severely constrained, this “victimhood as the only means to negotiate survival in the city” is met with creative strategies pieced together by engaging with both NGOs and the state. During my own fieldwork, many residents worked with multiple NGOs, leveraging their differential networks, capacities and proficiencies to try to build their lives (in terms of infrastructure, jobs, trainings, scholarships, housing, etc.) and also engaging with the state as rights-bearing citizens:

“Now we can talk directly with anyone, “do some work for us”. Previously, when houses were being demolished, we would stand there and watch... [Now we know] we can go to the leader and say that our lane is not constructed properly, build it correctly...Now we have that courage...Previously if someone would come and say nasty things to us, we would hear it. If someone came and beat us, we would bear their beating. It means we were afraid. But now the fear has gone...We have learnt that we can go anywhere and fight for our rights.” (Rosie, 40, Shivajinagar)

Rosie speaks of the changes created through local organisation to resist evictions and demand basic services built through community solidarity in her locality. As such, residents of Shivajinagar often lobby with the state through local coalitions to demand basic services. For instance, several groups of households have come together to petition the municipal corporation to collectively receive water connections. For instance, as Goda, who has been living in Shivajinagar for over 30 years and obtained a water connection through collectively petitioning the municipal authorities explains:

“For [installation of] taps, we formed a group of our 10 members. We gathered our 10 members and they [the NGO Apnalaya] took us to the BMC. We got the water tap for our lane, working together in groups. It was not as if one person from one house went and the other did not. Everyone went together: 10 homes in our chawl, and 10 homes from the next chawl.” (Goda, 65, Shivajinagar)

Similarly, a local NGO has facilitated groups of adolescents in different clusters to create petitions and follow up with the local ward office to ensure their lanes were paved and public toilets were constructed. For instance, Abdul (21) explained how after getting their lanes paved, he was working with a group of friends to secure a public toilet for the area. He explained that they first conducted a

survey of the neighbourhood to help make the case for the toilet, after which they wrote and submitted a letter to the ward office, and then revisited the offices multiple times to meet with the correct official. They then followed up multiple times in subsequent months after the authorities did not act, and helped locate a place for the toilet to be constructed. Yet, once again, they waited for a couple of months with no action, before following up again with letters to the municipal corporation. Following this, they visited their local representative to try and increase the pressure to construct the toilet. While this project remained incomplete at the end of my fieldwork four months later, previous successes of residents through persistent and iterative labour motivated Abdul and his friends to persevere in their efforts.

Yet, sometimes these interactions are much more confrontational. Between February and April 2016, the Municipal Corporation demolished approximately 470 houses from Adarsh Nagar and Indira Nagar clusters in Shivajinagar, with hundreds of families evicted from their homes without any promise of rehabilitation (Housing and Land Rights Network, 2017). Residents of these peripheral clusters did not have any legal protections from eviction and lived under the constant threat of eviction. In this case, the process was marked with several equivocations by the authorities. News reports about the demolition noted how many evicted households had not been served notice, and the notices sent only mentioned Adarsh Nagar, not Indira Nagar.³² Further, there was considerable confusion about the purpose of the demolition. While BMC officials were reported saying the land was cleared for a recreation ground, residents had differing information about this. For instance, one resident was cited in the Indian Express saying, “We were told that some space needs to be cleared to make a road. We were supporting the demolition of the homes on top of the nullah (drainage channels used to divert rainwater) to avoid flooding. We had even prepared to accommodate those who would lose their homes in areas inside Indira Nagar and Adarsh Nagar, but the BMC began razing all our homes.” The demolitions thus progressed without even prior intimation or information.

Following the demolition, the *Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao* (Save Homes, Build Homes – GBGB)³³, a grassroots civil society network for the rehabilitation of eviction victims, intervened and helped organise a number of protests within the area and coordinated at the city level across a number of other slums that have experienced demolition since the 2000s. Residents from the neighbourhood –

³² <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/govandi-demolition-drive-people-want-us-to-work-for-them-but-dont-care-how-we-live/>

³³ Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao was conceived by social activist Medha Patkar in 2005 after bulldozers razed Mumbai's Mandala slum, amongst others, and demolished the houses of thousands, and was envisaged to help with the rehabilitation of eviction victims.

and in particular women in large numbers - protested countless times, often staying there for two or three days at a time, at Azad Maidan. Despite this, their status remained precarious:

"After numerous protests, only then, our basti [...] was settled. There's no hope that it's been actually settled yet. Until a survey is done and we get something [a proof of residence], we don't know if it's actually settled yet or not." (Afsari, 40, Shivajinagar)

While the actions of the state instil a sense of marginalisation and victimhood on the part of residents in Shivajinagar, there have also been concerted efforts to bring residents together to fight for their rights. There has therefore been an altered relationship with the state, as attempts to evict slums are increasingly faced with people's resistance:

"Due to this demolition, there are a lot of problems. We cannot even visit our relatives, someone needs to stay here...If the GR rules are passed for 2011, it would benefit us...We can get more facilities and comfort. We have faced a lot of difficulties...Earlier, it was swampy; it has turned into land, and now the BMC wants to take the land. Take it, but move us somewhere." (Sayeeda, 39, Shivajinagar)

Two years after the demolition, Sayeeda and her family, along with hundreds of other households whose homes were demolished in 2016, continued to face several challenges. Some residents had faced eviction multiple times, as Sayeeda elaborated. Sayeeda references a Government Resolution (GR) passed by the Maharashtra State Housing Department in May 2018 under which slum dwellers who had lived in their homes before January 2011 would be provided houses (though they would have to cover construction costs themselves), either in-situ or elsewhere in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. This GR would bring relief to residents of an estimated 350,000 hutments (around 800,000 people) living in slums that were declared ineligible due to the original deadline of January 2000.

As others have demonstrated, legal connections to infrastructure services in India bring not only services but also bills which help establish their citizenship in the city (Bhan, 2016; Anand, 2017). As discussed above, therefore, residents undergo considerable struggle to obtain documentation that can support and legitimise their claims in and to the city. Afsari, when speaking of improvements stressed: *"It has changed a lot now...Polio workers come here... We have voting cards, ration cards, PAN card, Aadhaar card...Survey hasn't been done here, so people don't have the survey."* (Afsari, 40, Shivajinagar). Thus, although socio-economic exclusions persist and impact everyday lives in marked ways, a primary strategy to claim space and urban belonging has been through efforts to secure legitimacy in the city through diverse means.

In some cases, this exclusion also took a regionalist perspective, as Afsari (40), one of the residents whose home was destroyed, explained: during the demolition drive, on pleading with the police and

asking where they could go, she was told to “go back to their place”. She explained, “Most people here are from UP and Bihar. There were fewer Maharashtrians. So, BMC demolished the houses. They demolished twice or thrice.” Although she had been living in Shivajinagar for over a decade, and considered Mumbai to be her home, this perception of Shivajinagar being occupied by ‘outsiders’ – Muslim migrants from the northern states – was perceived to weaken their claim to the city.

Holston and Appadurai (1996) argue that formal citizenship is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for substantive citizenship. Similarly, Isin and Nielsen (2008) highlight how citizenship is not only about legal status but also involves social, political, cultural and symbolic practices – such that formal citizenship is differentiated from substantive citizenship, with the latter a condition of the possibility of the former. They propose a focus on ‘acts of citizenship’ which they define as “deeds that disrupt habitus, create new possibilities, claim rights and impose obligations... and, most of all, are the actual moments that shift established practices, status and order” (Isin and Nielsen, 2008: 10).

Chatterjee (2004) asserts that political negotiation for marginalised groups in India takes place not through the procedures of civil society but through political society, which he defines as the chaotic process of negotiations contesting existing rules, such that the ‘politics of the governed’ is a persistent negotiation between political society and the State through everyday struggles and protests.

Chatterjee (2004) argues that marginalised citizens often need to find creative ways to make claims to the State as political society. However, others have suggested the need to move beyond the dichotomy to address the dynamic and differentiated socio-political processes through which cities and citizens are produced. Anand (2017), for instance, finds that residents of informal settlements do not only mobilise as political society, but work hard to be counted, recognised, measured and mapped in government surveys as legitimate citizens and in doing so have shifted the terms of urban belonging through the occasional framing of a politics of rights. Some scholars have observed that for citizens on the socio-political margins, struggle and protest are the primary mode through which citizenship is and can be claimed (Holston, 2008; Chopra et al, 2011). Similarly, Jamil (2017: 121) argues that the juridico-political set up of the state was “the last recourse and only avenue of hope (however bleak) for the excluded.”

These theorisations again focus on the behaviours – acts and practices – which define citizenship. Veena Das (2011) takes this further and argues for understanding citizenship itself as a claim. She proposes that legal notions that you either have rights or you do not apply in the context of the diverse strategies the urban poor in India use in creating rights. Through ethnographic research exploring struggles over housing in a squatter settlement in Delhi, Das demonstrates that poor people’s claims to citizenship are crafted not only through formal legal procedures but also their labour of learning to deal with the judiciary and police and securing infrastructures that they can

invoke to establish incremental citizenship. Thus, Das (2011: 320) argues that poor people engage in politics and “not simply appeals to pity or use of traditional patron-client relations” but work across the binaries of legal and illegal, civil society and political society, and those who govern and those who are governed, which then “produce[s] the capacity to make claims on the state as a way of claiming citizenship” (Das, 2011: 320).

In practice these often occur together. On one hand, although their residence is often precarious, residents of Shivajinagar expand possibilities for different ways of urban belonging through “acts of citizenship” (Isin and Nielsen, 2008). On the other hand, they also engage in practices of citizenship that are an essential part of the relationships that construct and disrupt citizenship. In this way, through everyday politics and performative protests, engagements with the state contest and redefine the meanings and practices of urban citizenship. This is evocative of Staeheli et al’s (2012) conception of ‘ordinary citizenship’ that emphasises everyday practices and suggests that the complexities of citizenship are best understood as a part of the legal system *and* everyday activities.

These arguments draw out how the lens of everyday life can bring in to view the complex agencies that shape citizenship claims. In this context, the two struggles to claim citizenship rights (through efforts to secure infrastructure services, and to counter evictions) also highlight the blurred lines between practices and acts as residents simultaneously employ a multitude of strategies when engaging with the state to produce their citizenship. This therefore suggests that there is value in conceptually bringing together everyday practices of citizenship and acts of citizenship as these are not always perceived as distinct strategies by residents of informal settlements.

6.4 Taking space: Social differentiation beyond the “ghetto”

Muslims have traditionally constituted a substantial minority in Mumbai and played key a role in its economy as traders and mill workers in the textile industry even in colonial times (Chandavarkar, 1994; Hansen, 2001a). While the relationship between Hindus and Muslims was never without conflict, the shared spaces of contact that existed receded over the postcolonial period, as the Muslim working class was increasingly isolated economically and spatially (Hansen, 2001b). The subsequent rise in chauvinistic nationalist cultural assertion of the Shiv Sena in the 1960s marked the beginning of the communalisation of the culture and politics of the city (Lele, 1995; Appadurai, 2000). The emergence of Hindutva politics and intensification of communal violence have redefined the socio-spatial geography of many cities, particularly since the 1990s (Jaffrelot and Gayer, 2012). Muslims became even more alienated from public spaces, and boundaries between Muslim and Hindu neighbourhoods became pronounced (Mehta and Chatterji, 2001; Setalvad, 2006).

The consolidation of Muslim neighbourhoods in Mumbai following the violence of 1992-93 was accompanied by an increasing consolidation of a Muslim minority community identity in spatial terms. Violence not only reconfigured the city but also shapes everyday relationships and the ways in which people relate to community and the nation (Das, 2007). Thus, urban space and infrastructure serves as a useful analytic to understand the different logics of identity that come together in the moments of political exclusion and assertions to claim urban belonging. Here, I first explore the drivers and characteristics of segregation in Mumbra and Shivajinagar, before bringing together arguments from the previous sections to demonstrate the differential ways in which segregation has been contested. I argue that infrastructure as a relational assemblage of urban belonging is constructed in different ways based on the characteristics of segregation. Through these two cases, I develop an understanding of 'infrastructure as belonging' through two mechanisms: infrastructure sometimes produces a neighbourhood 'worth belonging to' in socio-cultural terms (as in Mumbra), and at other times demands for infrastructure through a vocabulary of rights and citizenship serve as a means to make political claims to belonging.

Mumbra and Shivajinagar have both been shaped in significant ways by religious structural violence, albeit in different ways. Both neighbourhoods have also expanded through the displacement of people from other parts of Mumbai due to the prioritisation of the aspirations of the city's elite to transform Mumbai into a 'world class' city. Migration from other parts of the country, especially the inflow of Muslim migrants from northern states, has also contributed to their population growth. Both Mumbra and Shivajinagar are widely identified as distinctly 'Muslim' localities, both in popular political discourse and by residents themselves.

"When I lived at my mother's house in Vikhroli, everyone was good. All were mixed: Hindu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marwadi, and us, Muslim people...Compared to here, that is nice...Here there is only one, Muslim" (Rizwana, 45, Mumbra)

"You are safe in your community, with your Muslim people...And you will not feel different. In Bombay you feel quite, like you are an exception, or something, if you wear burqa" (Aisha, 20, Mumbra)

"It's peaceful. All are Muslim, they are all from our baradari³⁴. They are all good like that." (Kulsum, 45, Shivajinagar)

These narratives illustrate some ambivalence among residents about the perceived homogeneity of their neighbourhoods. Urban scholars and policymakers have noted the emergence of the Muslim

³⁴ Literally brotherhood; represents caste group of South Asian Muslims

ghetto in Indian cities since the late 20th century. Yet, applying the concept of the 'ghetto' to the Indian context poses several challenges, and several scholars have warned caution when applying such concepts produced from specific historical situations to non-Western urban realities (Chakrabarty, 2007; McFarlane, 2010). Nevertheless, Jaffrelot and Gayer (2012) point out that despite the term not having an equivalent in most Indian languages, it is increasingly also adopted by local residents as well as the Indian media, political class and academics.

Yet, while all ghettos are segregated spaces, not all segregated areas are ghettos. Wacquant (2008) defined a ghetto as a 'bounded, ethnically, or religiously uniform socio-spatial formation born of the forcible regulation of a negatively stereotyped population.' A key criterion for a ghetto is that the spatial clustering is involuntary and characterised by constraint. On the other hand, the enclave, often considered the other side of the same coin as the ghetto, is defined as "a spatially concentrated area in which members of a particular population group, self-defined by their ethnicity or religion or otherwise, congregate as a means of enhancing their economic, social, political and/or cultural development (Marcuse, 1997: 242). Conceptually and practically, several challenges exist in differentiating between the two concepts. Urban neighbourhoods are not static and residents' motivations to live in them change over time with socio-political and material developments. Equally, different groups of residents could have varying motives for and levels of constraint in living in a neighbourhood. Thus, identifying constraint remains difficult.

Although both Mumbra and Shivajinagar contain diversity in terms of regional, linguistic and sectarian backgrounds of residents, religion is often the social identifier that dominates the commonality of experience in these neighbourhoods through the assertion of a homogeneous Muslim identity (although both also contain Hindu areas). It has been argued that the Muslim identity becomes particularly pronounced in segregated urban spaces. While the comments above illustrate the consolidation of a Muslim minority identity, the comparative exploration of segregated areas illustrates women's complex social and political subjectivities when negotiating urban belonging.

Finally, in terms of estrangement and closure from the city, Muslim-dominated areas do not all experience insularity in similar ways or to the same extent. While the "Muslim ghetto" has become common parlance, synonymous with poverty, parochialism, crime and even terrorism (Jaffrelot and Gayer, 2012), there is often a failure in both scholarship and policy discourse to distinguish between the slum as a socio-economic entity and the ghetto as an ethno-religious one. Differences in levels of integration often affect self-identification and the nature of urban belonging and citizenship. Yet, while there has been rising Hindu nationalism across India, equally new Muslim middle classes are emerging in some urban areas, surpassing the economic niches traditionally occupied by Muslims and cutting across caste lines (Jaffrelot and Gayer, 2012).

The discussions in this chapter demonstrate that segregation can have divergent implications on different places even within the same city. As elaborated in the previous sections, both Mumbra and Shivajinagar have been shaped in important ways by past ethno-religious violence, and the absence or poor provision of basic infrastructure has been perceived to be a central feature and material embodiment of their alienation from the city. However, while Mumbra has witnessed investment in socio-material infrastructures in recent years from both the state and private actors, Shivajinagar largely remains on the margins. In terms of socio-economic-political engagements in the city too, there have been some divergent experiences.

Women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods narratively construct their locality and belonging to the city through a diverse set of subjectivities. Although the conception of the 'Muslim ghetto' or 'Muslim slum' engulfs the socio-spatial imagination of these neighbourhoods, their residents employ diverse pragmatic strategies to claim their belonging in/to the city. Identity is multifaceted, and social and political subjectivities are fluid across time and space. Yet, residents of Shivajinagar often find themselves doubly marginalized both socio-economically and through a territorial stigmatisation. Here, negative stereotypes associated with Muslims of being dirty and unhygienic are amplified due to their proximity to the landfill and on account of their poor infrastructure access.

The experience of belonging in/to the city plays out differently in the two neighbourhoods both due to the different manifestations of exclusion and through the differing strategies residents employ to claim belonging. Here, the lens of infrastructure offers a productive perspective to analyse the ways in which belonging and exclusion are negotiated in social, political and material terms. When examining notions of urban belonging it is instructive to relate this to conceptions of citizenship and rights, a language explicitly used in Shivajinagar to secure inclusion within the unequal city, while in Mumbra this remains more implicit as narratives focus on rights across social difference. Thus, faced with exclusion and peripheralization, women in Mumbra and Shivajinagar negotiate the city and interact with social and political 'others' in different ways.

In Shivajinagar, the promise of citizenship to equal membership in the political community remains powerful and indicates possibilities of resistance and transformative change (Chatterjee, 2004; Holston, 2008). However, citizenship is not benign and impersonal, and instead represents a continually reconfiguring field of 'insurgent citizenship' (Holston, 2009), informed by conflict over who belongs, how, and on what terms. Roy (2014) outlines how on the one hand it is in this zone that new idioms and practices of citizenship are articulated that foreground its universalising aspects, and on the other hand the notion of citizenship remains deeply contested. Similarly, Anand (2017) argues that although urban citizenship is often perceived as more inclusive, it can be even more restrictive,

elusive, and precarious. He shows how discourses of urban belonging in religious terms in Mumbai may deny many residents de facto urban citizenship despite their long histories in the city.

Notably, in Shivajinagar while many participants spoke of socio-economic marginalisation, discussions about stigma in their everyday lives did not surface as often as they did in Mumbra. In part this may be a result of Shivajinagar being one among many contiguous deprived neighbourhoods – unlike Mumbra, which has a distinct identity and is physically isolated. In Shivajinagar, while there is a degree of physical segregation, the locality has close linkages to the rest of the city. For instance, the nearest station for the suburban rail network is past many middle-class housing complexes. Among those that are engaged in paid employment outside the home, this generally involves their participation in the city more widely. Similarly, while the lack of education facilities beyond class 8 is a major concern and barrier to social mobility in Shivajinagar, those that do participate in higher secondary and university education attend institutions in other parts of the city. Thus, once again, the level of engagement in the city is much higher and, as such, residents do not appear to hold a localised identity.

While it is a Muslim slum, it is very much a part of the city and residents' sense of separateness stems primarily from socio-economic marginalisation (although this is also related to social identity – see Contractor, 2012a). After the 1992-93 riots, where Shivajinagar was one of the worst affected areas, NGOs have played a role in filling the gaps in infrastructure provision and supporting communities. The presence of non-state actors is perhaps not too dissimilar to the experience of other 'slums' in the city. Yet, in a context where state policy has often been used as a weapon to deny residents their right to the city, particularly related to housing and basic infrastructure, contestations to claim belonging often engage with the state demanding official recognition. In part due to greater interaction with the wider city, residents here take a pragmatic approach to belonging by taking an areligious rights-based claim. Residents' claims to basic infrastructure serve not only as an end in themselves (in terms of accessing essential services) but also fulfil a wider goal of claiming belonging and their right to the city.

In Mumbra, segregation has a distinctly social dimension – where women feel a sense of alienation when engaging in the city beyond the neighbourhood. This is both from Mumbai's 'Hindu areas' where they are perceived to not belong and more established Muslim localities. They also face stigmatisation institutionally (for instance, in accessing jobs and loans). Hansen (2001a) notes that Muslim assertion in Mumbai through the 1980s entailed a dual strategy of a quest for 'internal purification and unity of Muslim community' across sects and a 'plebeian assertion' expressed through 'entrepreneurial spirits and lifestyles' related to small industry and informal businesses. From a gender perspective, it is said that Muslim women's access to public space is more closely policed by

their families and community due to the looming threat of violence towards religious minorities in public spaces. Gender-based fears of the public, experienced to some degree by all women in India, are magnified for Muslim women such that for a large number the only 'safe' space is within the boundaries of the community (Sachar Committee, 2006; Khan, 2007). This literature, however, largely views a unified Muslim community assertion through a reactive community purification or neo-fundamentalist orthodoxy.

Residents of Mumbra have long experienced continued territorial stigmatisation, and the relative physical isolation of the neighbourhood has meant that Mumbra as a socio-spatial entity continues to have a distinct reputation. However, Mumbra's Muslim gentrification has not only taken shape through strategies of community purification (illustrated, for instance, through a rise in veiling and stronger role of jamaats) but also through improved social and material infrastructures. Mumbra has progressed through an insulated self-improvement such that discursively residents have a greater sense of belonging in/to the city through making Mumbra a place that is worth belonging to. Here, therefore, faced with socio-spatial exclusion from a hostile city, women partake in a shared urban aspiration that contributes to a sense of belonging despite, or perhaps in part enabled by, separateness. In this case, the concept and framing of infrastructure as belonging helps integrate diverse experiences of ethno-religious segregation and the politics to counter it. The case of Mumbra demonstrates that practices and claims around infrastructure do not necessarily occur through a vocabulary of rights or citizenship but can also be understood through a socio-political reading of the meanings attributed to infrastructure and the ways in which they shape perceptions of belonging. This stands in contrast to Shivajinagar, where claims to housing and basic infrastructure are explicitly framed through a rights-based approach.

Space is not an empty container for political and social action but rather it is constitutive of social relations and identities (Massey, 1994). In this context, by reading into the social and political relations and emerging identities as they are constructed and performed when connecting the (segregated) neighbourhood to the urban, this chapter has complicated the experiences of socio-spatial segregation to better understand the diverse situated notions of belonging and exclusion faced by women in Muslim neighbourhoods.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to connect the neighbourhood scale to the wider urban level, to examine how residents within socio-spatially segregated localities situate themselves and their neighbourhood within the city. By examining the different factors that colour perceptions of belonging and exclusion – socially determined by gender, religion, and class and materially through infrastructure and cultural

capital – it has demonstrated the diversity in religion-based social differentiation and segregation within the city. It should be noted that the aim here was not to make a direct comparison between Mumbra and Shivajinagar but rather explore different manifestations of exclusion and related claims to belong to the city to illustrate different parts of the argument and experience of socio-spatial-political exclusion. I explored the entanglement of a Muslim minority identity shaped by the violence of the state and majoritarian society in the urban spaces of Mumbai to examine how women from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods negotiate urban space to construct and claim their urban belonging. Thus, claims to belong aimed at societal acceptance and citizenship have taken distinct approaches as residents in the two neighbourhoods have employed varied tactics based on their situated experiences of everyday politics and the dominant nature of exclusions. In this context, the chapter has complicated the notion of Muslim-othering to stress the need to understand the complex local geographies at play in neighbourhoods that have experienced similar socio-spatial segregation.

Chapter 7. Seeing the state: Cultural constructions of state-society relations

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the urban cultural politics that shape how women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods perceive and experience the state. While the previous chapter examined how women negotiated their belonging in and to urban space, and touched upon interactions with the state, this chapter focuses explicitly on state-society relations. It therefore continues to examine belonging and citizenship but is a departure from the previous chapters as it explores these concepts explicitly in terms of political space rather than from a socio-spatial perspective.

Experiences of the state are hugely diverse; deep divisions continue to exist within Indian society not only between rich and poor, but also along caste, gender, religious, linguistic and class lines. In this context, this chapter asks: through what socio-political imaginaries is the state framed by women from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods?

Efforts to develop a “state-centred” approach to the relationship between the state and society in the 1980s failed to move beyond a simplistic dichotomy between the state and society and retained assumptions of the state as a unified social actor (Evans et al, 1985; Migdal, 1988). Geographical and anthropological interest in the modern state was renewed in the new millennium, as scholars began to problematise understandings of the state. For instance, Hansen and Stepputat (2001) argue that conceptions of the state as a *thing* were contrary to the basic tendencies of how states develop, as their practices have become increasingly dispersed and fraught with internal inconsistencies and contradictions. Yet, they contend that instead of weakening the state, the strength of modern states arises from the coexistence of its dispersion and ubiquity. In approaching the state from the perspective of segregated neighbourhoods, I follow from scholarship that argues that the state is not a monolithic entity, in practice or perception, but instead should be treated as a historical and contingent system operating at multiple scales (Comaroff, 1998; Coronil, 1997; Fuller and Benei, 2001; Hansen and Stepputat, 2001; Scott, 1998; Steinmetz, 1999). Thus, I investigate the diffuse ways in which the state is perceived and represented among residents of segregated urban neighbourhoods.

Notwithstanding its dispersion, the state is an important presence in political life. Although it is analytically useful to denaturalise the state, the notion of the state remains a powerful lens through which society and the nation are imagined. Hansen and Stepputat (2001) argue that the state is not just a set of institutional forms but also has vital mythological dimensions. They relate this to Ernst Cassirer’s (1946) conception of the “myth of the state” as a product of fascist ideology and argue that the “myth of the state” persists despite everyday experiences of often violent and ineffective state

practices. Similarly, Ferguson and Gupta (2002: 981) suggest that “states are not simply functional bureaucratic apparatuses, but powerful sites of symbolic and cultural production that are in themselves always culturally represented and understood in particular ways.” Relatedly, Mitchell (1999: 89) argues that the state is the “abstraction of political practices” and advocates analysing the state “not as an actual structure, but as the powerful, apparently metaphysical effect of practices.”

There is growing recognition of the paradoxical quality of the state which requires acknowledging both the “powerful image of a clearly bounded, unified organization...as if it were a single, centrally motivated actor performing in an integrated manner” and “a heap of loosely connected parts or fragments, frequently with ill-defined boundaries between them and other groupings inside and outside the official state borders and often promoting conflicting sets of rules” (Migdal, 2001: 22). Hansen and Stepputat (2001: 9) argue that different images of the state function in productive tension to reveal the ambiguities of the state: “as both illusory as well as a set of concrete institutions; as both distant and impersonal as well as localised and personified institutions; as both violent and destructive as well as benevolent and productive”. Thus, modern states are in a continuous process of construction through a process that invokes a range of registers of governance and authority.

Yet, an exclusive focus on the symbolic production of the “imagined state” (Gupta, 1995) or the “myth of the state” (Hansen and Stepputat, 2001) neglects other ways in which the state is understood by citizens. For instance, Gupta (1995: 376) argues that research on the state focused on “large-scale structures, epochal events, major policies, and important people” (see Evans et al, 1985; Skocpol, 1979) has failed to illuminate quotidian practices (Bourdieu, 1977) of the state and its effects on the everyday lives of people. In this context, scholars have explored routine encounters between marginalised groups and the state, which have been variously articulated as ‘seeing the state’ (Corbridge et al, 2005), ‘experiencing the state’ (Rudolph and Jacobsen, 2006), and the ‘everyday state’ (Fuller and Benei, 2001). Corbridge et al (2005) investigate how governmental agencies are seen by different groups of rural poor people and demonstrate that sightings of the state by poor people are never straightforward or unitary as they are shaped by their engagements within local political society, past knowledge of state engagement, dominant discourses of development and patterns of socio-political exclusion.

In general, these accounts often tackle one element of residents’ interactions with the state, such as protest, subversion or entanglement in the state’s bureaucratic apparatus. Yet, terms such as ‘civil society’, ‘citizenship’ or ‘bureaucracy’ often fail to interrogate the complex, messy and contested nature of actual interactions between the state (at multiple scales) and society in India (Gupta, 1995; Kaviraj, 2001; Chatterjee, 2004). In practice, expectations and experiences of confrontation between society and the state co-exist with everyday practices of negotiation and clientelism, which also shape

residents' access to resources and their representations of the state (Oldfield and Stokke, 2004; Painter, 2006). Thus, studying the prosaic state-society relations can illuminate state effects, or the impacts of the state's actions, as well as how the state is reproduced in everyday life.

Bringing these two ways of 'seeing the state' together, Gupta (1995) asserts that studying the state requires both an analysis of the *everyday practices* of the state and the *discursive construction* of the state in public culture. Representations of the state are constituted, contested and transformed in public culture, which is the zone of cultural debate conducted through mass media and other modes of reproduction (Appadurai and Breckenridge, 1988). Understanding the state from both these perspectives, Gupta (1995) argues, can produce a nuanced understanding of the relationship between the state and social groups. He proposes that any theory of the state needs to factor its constitution through a complex set of intersecting representations and practices.

This chapter examines the construction of "the state" as both the imagined state and the everyday state from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods. In India, it is generally recognised that wide discrepancies exist between Indian secularism in theory and in practice, especially for India's largest religious minority of Muslims. An extensive literature documents the condition of postcolonial India's Muslims, highlighting their economic marginalisation (Hasan, 1998; 2001), lack of political representation (Ansari, 2006), and low levels of education (Alam and Raju, 2007). As outlined in Chapter 2, the rise of Hindu right-wing nationalism since the 1980s has deepened processes of Muslim marginalisation, encouraging socio-spatial segregation and self-reliance of Muslim communities in urban India, and Hindutva arguably appears more confident and brazen than before (Robinson, 2005; Khan, 2007; Anderson and Longkumer, 2018). While the previous chapters have taken the role and position of the state as given within the socio-spatial-political constructions of community and belonging, in posing the question "through what socio-political imaginaries is the state framed by residents of segregated Muslim neighbourhoods?", this chapter places the politics of segregation and the evolving political context as an empirical object of study in its own right.

The chapter first traces the evolution of the imagined state and state policy towards Muslims in India, to highlight the positionality of Muslims within national cultural politics in Section 7.2. In examining imaginations of the state, I combine an analysis of data collected during primary fieldwork with reflections of more recent political developments in India which reinforce insights drawn from fieldwork. Due to the salience of these macro political events within Indian politics in terms of the relationship between the state and society and understandings of citizenship and belonging, I bring analysis of data collected during fieldwork in conversation with this secondary material to connect the situated experiences of research participants with wider experiences from elsewhere in India. Subsequently, in Section 7.3, I examine the everyday practices of citizenship through local state actors

(police and elected representatives) who mediate access to the state for citizens at the most localised levels of neighbourhood-scale governance, where the state is often most viscerally felt. In doing so, I explore socio-political imaginaries of the state (embodied in these actors) as experienced in segregated neighbourhoods through everyday life. A brief final section concludes.

7.2 The imagined state: Perceptions of the majoritarian state

This section examines how Indian Muslims have framed, understood, and negotiated their own citizenship to the nation-state over time. In particular, it explores how residents in segregated neighbourhoods engage with the idea and imaginary of the state. In doing so, it relates interactions between the state and its Muslim population and outlines the political imaginaries through which this relationship is negotiated. The findings from the fieldwork do not represent an isolated moment, but instead capture politics within a continuum of time. More recent political developments since the completion of fieldwork in 2017-18 have continued to redraw the relationship between the Indian state and its Muslim citizens (in both *de jure* and *de facto* terms), and thereby reinforces the findings from primary fieldwork. This section draws on empirical material from primary fieldwork as well as events since its completion to trace the evolution of state-society relations over time (across temporal scales), as well as to situate the experiences of research participants within the macro political context (connecting spatial scales, from the neighbourhood to the nation). Likewise, the combining of evidence highlights the linkages between the grounded experiences and perspectives of research participants from two Muslim neighbourhoods and macro political changes across India.

Conceptually, we can speak of states, and not only nations, as “imagined” (Anderson, 1983); they are constructed entities that are conceptualised, represented and understood through particular symbolic devices (Bernal, 1997; Cohn, 1996; Comaroff, 1998). As Gupta (1995) outlines, constructions of the state must be situated, meaning certain symbolic constructions of the state must be located with respect to the context in which they are realised. Thus, these symbols or imaginations of the state may be perceived differently by people based on their socio-economic-political positioning. I discuss this through an examination of women’s perceptions of the state from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods.

On 28 June 2019, the Indian media reported a religiously motivated hate crime a few kilometres from Mumbai.³⁵ At 3 AM, Faizal Usman Khan, a taxi driver, had dropped off a passenger when his vehicle’s engine began to give trouble. A group of men on a scooter stopped and accosted him, dragging him out of the car to beat him. On begging to be released ‘in the name of Allah’, they stated they would only let him go if he chanted ‘Jai Shri Ram’ [victory to Lord Ram]. After beating him, they took his

³⁵ <https://bit.ly/2NixgEu>

mobile phone and left. A passer-by called the police and, as Faizal remembered their bike's registration number, the Mumbra police could locate the perpetrators.

Despite the severity of the attack, Faizal was fortunate to not be seriously harmed. Only a few days earlier, the newspapers had reported how a young man, Tabrez Ansari, was beaten to death by a mob based on the accusation of bike theft in the eastern state of Jharkhand.³⁶ A video of the incident shared widely on social media showed Tabrez tied to a pole pleading for his life, while he was beaten by a group of men that repeatedly demanded he chant 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Jai Hanuman'. After they finished beating him, they handed him over to the police, who locked him up before taking him to the hospital. Four days later, Tabrez died of the injuries sustained during the attack.

These incidents are but two among several dozen others that have occurred across India in recent years, as violence against Muslims has been on the rise across the country. Jayal (2019) argues that it is not for the first time, but in an accelerated way that violence is being systematically perpetrated on groups whose position in Indian society is deeply inequitable. The normalisation of vigilante violence – often with protections from the state – inflicted on marginalised groups has meant that, increasingly, unequal citizenship implies not only deficits in well-being, but also violence and oppression that are no longer episodic, but which increasingly find public justification as legitimate means of pursuing socio-political objectives by the majority (Jayal, 2019). In recent years this has occurred under several pretexts, including Hindutva activists accusing Muslims of staging a "love jihad", with the alleged intent of seducing Hindu women into marrying Muslim men to convert them to Islam; a campaign called *Ghar Vapsi* (homecoming), aimed to convert (or reconvert) Muslims and Christians to Hinduism; and the movement to defend the cow, which is considered sacred in Hinduism (Jaffrelot, 2017). Of these, cow protection efforts have gained particular momentum.

In the state of Maharashtra, where Mumbai is located, the BJP-led state government during 2014-19 criminalised the sale and possession of beef, punishable by a fine and up to five years in jail. Although beef consumption is legal in India, most states have laws that partially or fully ban cow slaughter. In the context of growing right-wing Hindu nationalism, militias and an umbrella movement called the Gau Raksha Dal (Cow Protection Organisation) have emerged to mete out vigilante justice against those perceived to be involved in cow slaughter or eating beef (Jaffrelot, 2017). There have been several reports of Hindu nationalists inflicting violence on Muslim farmers and seizing their cows based on (generally unsubstantiated) claims that animals were headed to slaughterhouses. Such measures by the state and actions of vigilante groups have economic implications that primarily

³⁶ <https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/article28758718.ece>

penalize Muslims, many of whom are butchers by trade,³⁷ and create a notion of citizenship that produces second-class citizens based on social identity. In May 2017, the central government banned the sale of cattle at markets for slaughter. Although the constitutionality of such “beef bans” is currently under challenge in the Supreme Court, such actions and their reporting in the media has helped produce a dominant narrative that serves to ‘other’ Muslim citizens in India. This is demonstrated through many of the narratives of women I spoke to during my fieldwork:

“There’s so much tension on Bakra Eid. What will happen to Muslims this time? It is our source of income. If you put a ban on it, what will we do?...Those who work as butchers, they aren’t much educated either...you’re banning their only source of income.” [Mehr, 27, Mumbra]

“Another drama, if you have cow meat, you will be beaten. One poor boy, his name was Sunny, he was 14 years old, and was travelling by train during Eid...He had a bag with meat in it. They thought it was beef and that boy was beaten and killed. Later they found out it was sheep’s meat...but his life is not coming back...If the government is good, then somewhere a person is safe.” [Madiha, 27, Mumbra]

“There’s no such thing in Mumbra but still, for Muslims, he has Muslims as his target. They are promoting all this violence themselves...Cow’s meat, this and that...There weren’t such issues earlier.” [Najma, 50, Mumbra]

Mehr identifies the economic impacts of the “beef ban” and the vulnerability it causes for butcher communities where there is a lot of “tension” both in terms of their livelihoods and with uncertainty around “*What will happen to the Muslims this time?*”, linking to physical fears for their wellbeing. Madiha relates incidents wherein vigilante groups have targeted Muslims under the pretext of them having beef to not only inflict violence on them, and the lives lost in such violence. Both Madiha and Najma hold the government responsible for the increasing violence against Muslims – saying “if the government is good then somewhere a person is safe” and “they are promoting all this violence themselves”. Although state agencies are not directly involved these instances of violence, there is an increasing blurring between state and non-state actors. Jaffrelot (2017) outlines that in Maharashtra, the state government outsourced the implementation of the “beef ban” by creating the post of “Honorary Animal Welfare Officer” and observes that all known applicants for these posts were *gau rakshaks* from various militias. This demonstrates the close associations between “the state” and non-state actors. Where scholars have pointed to the blurred distinction between state and society in postcolonial contexts such as India (Chatterjee, 1990; Gupta, 1995), here we see the blurring between

³⁷ Although many others belonging to various ‘non-Muslim’ lower-caste, lower-class communities are also closely associated with the meat industry.

the “majoritarian state” (Chatterji et al, 2019) and majoritarian society, both of which position India’s Muslim population as the outsider.

The sense of a Hindu majority as a dominant force in India has been evolving over the postcolonial period. Although this found (generally tacit) support among Congress leaders, the change brought about by the BJP has been an unrestrained social articulation and acceptability of majoritarianism, even at the highest level of the state (Chatterji et al, 2019). This has been accompanied by a distinct shift in the popular imagination of how Muslims in segregated neighbourhoods view the state. Indeed, the frequency of politically motivated violence, its pervasiveness in popular imaginary, and the perceived role of the state in sanctioning and condoning these activities has had an indelible impact on the imagination of “the state” and citizenship to the nation over time.

“Even if it is a government of Hindu people, it is impacting our Muslim people. Because they hate Muslim people. So, they are directly attacking people. We Muslims do not do this...If Muslims reach a certain level, then they don't have this thing to finish Hindu people...Why brother, have we done something to you? Why are you killing poor innocent children?” [Madiha, 27, Mumbra]

“The first time violence happened, my Ammi said it was these people itself, it was their government. Because I was very small, I don’t remember anything...But after that, people changed...We started getting a lot of messages, from TV and many places...Religion-based politics has started a lot...I feel a lot of danger because of this. Modiji’s government, I feel is a danger.” [Neha, 26, Mumbra]

Madiha refers to the violence perpetrated against Muslims in Gujarat in 2002, which officially recorded over 1,000 deaths (although other assessments estimate nearly double that number), when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of the state and was accused of complicity in the violence. Neha, on the other hand speaks of the violence in Bombay in 1992-93. Both women carry with them the lasting memory of spectacular violence against Muslims, and identify the religiously-polarised political environment and government dispensation to pose a “danger”. This resonates with Jaffrelot’s (Anderson and Jaffrelot, 2018: 468) argument that there has been an increasing ‘saffronisation of the public sphere’ through the emergence of a parallel state structure supported by those in government, which has enabled Hindu nationalism to permeate every aspect of life. He argues that this has not only created a parallel state, but also asymmetrical feelings and demands for calls to devotion (e.g. Faizal and Tabrez demanded to chant ‘Jai Shri Ram’). A critique of the BJP is often viewed as a critique of India, and this dispensation is characterised by porous boundaries between the government and ultra-nationalist groups that implement militant cultural policing (Chatterji et al, 2019).

While social polarisation does not always manifest through overt physical violence, yet the imagination of the same colour perceptions of everyday exclusions. For instance, for the women whose narratives have been included above, discourses produced by instances of violence and pervasive marginalisation of Muslims based on a wide array of pretexts have contributed to a growing feeling of alienation and persecution even if they have themselves not personally been directly impacted by violence. Here, clearly, Muslim women in segregated neighbourhoods hold the higher or centralised state, and the Prime Minister as the public face of the state, responsible for these developments. The enduring memory of violence against Muslims –in 1992-93 in Mumbai and in Gujarat in 2002 – that not only went unchecked by the state, but also is perceived to have been promoted by state actors, serves as an indication of the subordinate status of Muslims in India.

In the case of the beef ban, while many women associated the legislative measures with the state and majoritarian society as related entities, some others identify the disjuncture between these two entities and their internal differentiation. For example:

“We were going somewhere by train...I think at that time they had started this thing of banning cow slaughter. A Hindu lady was there, and she said, “we like it so much, in a month we eat it at least once.” ... So, when it comes to eating, there are a lot of Hindu people who eat [beef] as well, so this is another thing. This government should not win now.” [Neha, 26, Mumbra]

By relaying this incident, Neha she recognises that the legislations are not simply due to the priorities of the values of a unified majority of society, but a cultural tool intended to ‘other’ Muslims. Here, it is noteworthy that these politics are relevant not only in terms of religious divisions but also in the context of caste. While Muslims are the primary victims of the gau rakshaks and the focus of this research, Dalit and tribal communities have also been subjected to violence by vigilantes (Jaffrelot, 2017). Like religion-based occupational segregation, members of certain Dalit castes also follow traditional occupations of tanning and shoemaking which require them to work with animal carcasses for a livelihood. With food practices as well, while this thesis focuses on Muslim neighbourhoods, the beef bans equally represent a casteist development based on a narrow Brahmanical food hierarchy that serves to impoverish the material, religious, and physical well-being of both Muslims and Dalits as minority communities (Sarkar and Sarkar, 2016; Natrajan, 2018), although a more detailed discussion of this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In general, however, there has been a notable shift in discourse and state policy towards minority groups, and Muslims in particular. The idea of a plural Indian nationalism has been challenged since the emergence of Hindu nationalism in the 1980s (van der Veer, 1994; Nandy, 1998; Corbridge and Harriss, 2000; Jaffrelot, 2007). Jayal (2013), for instance, documents a shift from the inclusive

principles of citizenship articulated in the Constitution toward a less inclusive conception: though postcolonial India adopted a *jus soli* principle, the tension with a *jus sanguinis* principle existed since Independence. However, assessing recent reconfigurations of citizenship, Jayal (2019) argues that instead of the realisation of substantive citizenship, there has instead been a fundamental erosion of even formal citizenship for marginalised groups.

Whereas Chapter 6 identifies the unequal realisation of citizenship rights experienced by residents of segregated neighbourhoods, which resonate with Holston and Calderia's (1999) conception of "disjunctive citizenship", this section demonstrates that the opposite is also simultaneously occurring: increasingly, there is a shift towards a *jus sanguinis* regime which has, in many ways, eroded the official rights of Muslims to equal citizenship. In fact, Jaffrelot (2019) identifies the contemporary Indian state to resemble an 'ethnic democracy', which Smootha (2002) defined as a state with two-tiered citizenship, where the majority enjoy more rights than the minority. Jaffrelot (2019) argues that India has moved toward this model since 2014, exhibiting a specific variant characterised by the lack of major legal reform. Although the Constitution continues to embody ideals of secularism and equal citizenship, he argues that vanishing minority representation in the state apparatus and increasing vigilante cultural policing that enjoys support from the police and government have created a *de facto* ethnic democracy.

However, even since 2019 there have been further major shifts in the conceptualisation of citizenship, with the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 (CAA). The CAA took further the shift towards the principle of *jus sanguinis* that has been started in the 1980s, and for the first time explicitly linked religious identity to citizenship, thus decisively redefining Indian identity toward an ethnocracy (Mehta, 2019). While this legislative move is part of a longer history of the marginalisation and othering of Muslim minorities by the Indian state, it is for this reason more salient than earlier interventions.

The CAA was accompanied by proposals to initiate a nation-wide National Register of Citizens (NRC), which was included in the BJP's 2019 election manifesto, which would categorise the legal citizenship status of all Indian residents. As BJP leaders called for the national implementation of the NRC, which had been conducted in the state of Assam, the Home Minister and BJP president at the time, Amit Shah, referred to the four million people left off the list and denied citizenship in Assam as 'termites' and 'illegal infiltrators' who must be disenfranchised and deported.³⁸ Jayal (2019) argues that the

³⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/india-election-speech/amit-shah-vows-to-throw-illegal-immigrants-into-bay-of-bengal-idUSKCN1RO1YD>

term ‘infiltrator’ has become metonymic of Muslims in India, cultivating xenophobic support to denationalise even Indian Muslims.

The CAA drew sharp criticism from multiple sections of society and an autonomous resistance movement rapidly spread across India (discussed in Chapter 4). There have been varied points of denunciation of the CAA, from the exclusion of Muslim refugees as diverse sects and ethnicities of Muslims have experienced persecution not only in Sri Lanka, China and Myanmar but also in Muslim majority nations; to protests against the possibility of opening floodgates for Hindu refugees by states and ethnic groups in India’s north-eastern borders; as well as around issues of justice, equality, and secularism. While the future remains unclear, as protests stopped in late-March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, and the ensuing period was marked by repressive counter-actions by the government (discussed in Chapter 8), the resistance was noteworthy for several reasons. First, whereas the state previously portrayed and considered Muslim women victims of Islam, women played a key role in leading anti-CAA-NRC political mobilisations. Equally, these protests brought new political identities and solidarities to the fore, as the anti-CAA-NRC protests had strong connections with Dalit and LGBTQ movements, among others. Finally, while the protests were directed against government action, they were driven by a commitment to the nation, the Constitution and its ideals of secularism and equal citizenship. Protestors frequently read extracts from the Constitution, particularly the Preamble. Thus, while there is a distrust in the majoritarian government, Muslims continued to hold on to the idea of secularism. In a context where critiques of the government are met with accusations of “anti-nationalism” by majoritarian forces, this vocabulary of Constitutionality critically represented attempts at embracing a language of belonging to the nation-state and at reshaping the idea of what the nation represents and the inclusivity of its ideals.

The political events discussed in this section contrast with previous findings on the relationship between the state and Indian Muslims. After the 1992-93 violence in Bombay, Hansen (2001b) examined the state’s efforts at reconciliation through the analogy of Kantorowicz’s (1957) two bodies of the king³⁹: the sublime and the profane. Hansen argues that the profane dimension encompasses the brutality and partiality of the administration and the self-interest displayed by political actors. In contrast, the sublime qualities were imputed to a more distant state and the justice believed to prevail there (e.g. through the establishment of a commission headed by Justice Srikrishna to investigate violence). Hansen (2001b) viewed the Srikrishna Commission as a state spectacle which, he argued, revealed the profane sides of state power; yet its existence, Justice Srikrishna’s integrity,

³⁹ Eien Kantorowicz (1957) conceptualised political authority through a dual structure of the ‘King’s two bodies’ in medieval Britain, consisting of the sublime, infallible and eternal body of the King (the Law), and the profane, humane and fallible body of the King (the giver of laws).

and the exposure of misconduct asserted the sublime dimensions of the state. Similarly, Williams (2011), based on research in Varanasi in north India, finds that while Muslim minorities perceive the lower levels of the state (particularly the police) to be prejudiced against them, they believed that higher levels of the state and judiciary would uphold secular principles. Thus, while it was previously found that Muslim minority communities in Indian cities had greater faith in the distant state at higher levels, the discussions here represent a shift in the imaginary of the state amongst Indian Muslims. Faith in higher levels of the state has increasingly eroded, with a corruption of the agencies that were previously associated with the sublime elements of the state.

The resurgence of the right-wing Hindu majoritarianism in the imagination of “the state” and the increasing ‘saffronisation of the public sphere’ (Anderson and Jaffrelot, 2018) has instilled greater mistrust of the state and fear of persecution among Muslims. For them, enduring memories of structural and physical violence widely considered to be condoned by those in power, and legislative changes furthering the alienation of Muslims in India, have eroded faith in the imagined state and higher levels of the government. Despite the threat and experience of alienation, however, the idea of India – of Indian secularism and equal citizenship – is considered both fragile and yet worth fighting for. This is illustrated through the emergence of resistance movements which have begun to produce and solidify solidarities across political groups.

While Hindu majoritarianism encompasses the imagination of the distant state, at the same time, interactions with the everyday state at the local level in segregated neighbourhoods play out differently and are complicated by several other factors, which is explored in the next section.

7.3 The everyday state

This section focuses on everyday encounters with the state at the local scale in segregated neighbourhoods. It explores the formal and informal, and cooperative and confrontational tactics residents employ when engaging with the state and state actors through everyday life. These modes of interaction embody and frame citizens’ representations of, as well as expectations from, the state in both practice and perception.

In Mumbai, after the 1992-93 riots, Hansen (2001b) argues that the ‘myth of the state’, or the imagination of the state as a distant but constant guarantor of justice and protection from violence, was at stake. Among Muslims, who bore the brunt of the violence at the hands of the police and militant Hindus, the riots were the culmination of a long process of political marginalisation and everyday harassment by these two forces. The mainstream media reinforced depictions of Muslim areas as dens of drug trade, smuggling and violence, often labelled as ‘mini-Pakistan’, and Muslims themselves as fanatic and hostile (Hansen, 2001a; Setalvad, 2006; Shaban, 2012). While the Hindu

majoritarian imaginary of the nation-state has increasingly excluded Muslims from both the socio-cultural idea of India as well as impacted their lived experience of citizenship in tangible ways, everyday encounters with the state amongst residents of segregated Muslim neighbourhoods are perhaps more complicated. Williams et al (2011) observe that marginal communities often experience the state most regularly and intimately, and argues that marginalization occurs when the possibility of belonging to society exists but is denied or unrealized. Yet, at the local level, where the state is most viscerally experienced, engagement with the immediate state is more complicated than a binary opposition of neglect and persecution.

In this section I focus on citizens' relationship with, and perceptions of, the everyday state – by which I mean the state tiers that are most visible in low-income settlements, e.g. low-level administrators, the police, local politicians, and elected representatives. I examine the everyday practices of accessing the state and how state actors are viewed through gendered reading of segregated Muslim neighbourhoods. Scholars have previously critiqued assumptions of a dichotomous binary between the state and society, arguing that the division between these two conceptions is porous (Gupta, 1995; Harriss-White, 1997). On undertaking a gendered reading in particular, when it comes to localised state actors, the state is not simply located in opposition to society but rather women encounter the dual power structures imposed by both 'society' or 'community' as well as the 'state'. Consequently, I argue that although state agencies may be viewed with scepticism and distrust, they are often called up as women encounter a fractured community, itself constituted by unequal power relations. Here, state agents operate as mediators between state institutions and citizens as well as between different groups of citizens. Crucially, even residents that have internalised perceptions of advanced marginality of their neighbourhood still have expectations from the everyday localised state, even if these are rarely met.

In examining how residents of segregated neighbourhoods 'see' the everyday state, I explore their interactions through two sets of state actors: the police and elected representatives. These are two state actors that are most visible in these neighbourhoods, and equally residents view them as representing the state. They represent different positions within the state machinery as well as in terms of their relationship with residents, which is evident in their differential webs of interaction in the neighbourhoods in which they work. I examine these two actors in turn.

7.3.1 The police

A key function of state administration at the neighbourhood level relates to maintaining law and order and ensuring safety. Much has been written about the role of the police in Muslim neighbourhoods (e.g. Hansen, 2001b; Berenschot, 2009; Williams, 2012). In post-colonial Mumbai,

the increasing socio-economic isolation of Muslims has been accompanied by an intensified level of policing in Muslim areas (Hansen, 2001a; Shaban, 2012). In this context, both Mumbra and Shivajinagar frequently feature in the popular media as sites of minor and major crimes, varying from theft and drug trade, to kidnapping, rape and murder.

As discussed in Chapter 6, Wacquant (2009) outlines the differential governance of women in the context of advanced marginality through the metaphor of the maternal and paternal arms of the state. He argues that women are mainly positioned as recipients of social assistance payments, and their relationship with the penal state is relational via the male prisoner or probationer. Feminist critiques of this work identify problems with the essentialist treatment of gender (e.g. Bumiller, 2013; Povey, 2019), and as Chapter 6 demonstrates, for instance, women in Mumbra also experience territorial stigmatisation and discrimination which manifests itself through an exclusion from the domain of respectability. However, shifting our gaze from dominant society to the relationship with the localised state in the segregated neighbourhood reveals different configurations relating to the expectations that the state places on male and female subjects, and vice versa.

Several scholars have recognised that for young Muslim men in segregated areas, the police are an omnipresent and dreaded representation of the state (e.g. Hansen, 2001b; Jamil, 2017). This was also the case in the neighbourhoods I worked in, where women with adolescent or older sons expressed some consternation about the threat of the police.

"I have sons so I realise that someone big should help them, because they don't listen to their parents...They take the bike and roam around with their friends. I fear that tomorrow someone may pick them up. The police are always patrolling." (Rizwana, Mumbra)

Rizwana expresses that she is constantly fearful of the police picking up her son for roaming the streets in the evenings. Other women too echoed similar sentiments, with some explicitly identifying that the police disproportionately patrolled and made arrests in the neighbourhood on account of it being a Muslim area. Here, the need for the police to treat Hindus and Muslims equally was a recurring discussion:

"It is so obvious. All these things happen only to Muslims. If you call the police at midnight and they know it's a Muslim area, they only go there, that's it. Not elsewhere. The police are non-Muslim, 95% of them are Hindu and 5% Muslims...Only Muslims are targeted." (Parveen 42, Mumbra)

Thus, while on the one hand the police represent a source of threat for young men, on the other hand, several female participants in my fieldwork referred to the increasing police presence in the neighbourhood as a positive development. The police, as representatives of the everyday state, are

perceived to play a role within the neighbourhood in terms of negotiating gendered social relations, safety, and violence. For instance:

“There was a lot of sale of ganja, charas and alcohol, but now it is less. Harassing girls, whistling, singing, all these things have reduced... The police come on rounds...During the day they come for one or two rounds, then they come at night again. It's better than before.” (Fatima, Shivajinagar)

“Now it is safe. Earlier, we would be scared to leave after Magrib [evening prayers] ...Someone would do this, rob us, or beat us. Now, after 10 PM we have police standing all over. There is a lot of safety in Mumbra now. Sometimes I come home at 2 AM from Bombay, but I don't feel scared...There is always a vehicle, and both ladies and gents police patrolling. Earlier you would be scared but no longer.” (Rehana, Mumbra)

Thus, within a context of fear within the neighbourhood, many women express feeling protected due to police presence, especially at night. While Fatima and Rehana perceive greater safety due to police patrolling the neighbourhood, Rizwana stressed the dangers of the same. Arguably, whereas for women the watchful eyes of a patriarchal society serve as a disciplining force that functions to control behaviour, the police are often called upon to help enforce socially accepted behaviour for men in the public spaces of the neighbourhood.

More broadly, beyond gendered violence, residents often perceive local police as mediators within society. As with local leaders, the police too represent a certain level of authority that commands compliance and therefore they are situated in a position to mediate social relations. In turn, many participants spoke of the need for police presence to not only ensure good behaviour but also to settle disputes and disagreements of various types in the neighbourhood. For instance:

“Police take rounds at night and during day both. It started recently. We complained, so they have started taking rounds. It is much safer now. A police post has also been made here, but it is closed most of the time...If there is a fight or any problem, they come for an hour or so...Sometimes the vehicle comes for patrolling, but doesn't wait for too long.” (Kamil, 17, Shivajinagar)

Kamil was among a group of young men in one of the slum housing clusters around Shivajinagar that registered a complaint to demand increased police presence in the neighbourhood. In fact, several participants articulated a desire for greater police presence, either through calls for establishing more police posts or regular police patrolling. There have also been widespread efforts to make the police, as representatives of the state administration, more accessible to young people in both neighbourhoods. For instance, in Mumbra, the Personal Development Programme offered by Rehnuma, the NGO I worked with, would regularly take groups of young women to the local police station to interact with the local police and eliminate any fears associated with them.

Calls for greater policing, such as Kamil's, rarely viewed the police as representatives of the carceral state but rather as differently positioned yet constituent stakeholders in society when they functioned as mediators of disputes within the local community and to prevent crime and violence within a fractured community. Amongst other local actors – such as politicians, elected local representatives and social workers (who also function as political agents) – the police play a key role in brokering compromises between neighbours, family members and across other social relations. Berenschot (2010), for instance, found that marginalised groups in urban Gujarat frequently settle disputes through mediation by local politicians, who have their own enforcement mechanisms that convey implicit threat. Here, the local police play a similar role in maintaining and managing local dynamics as differentially powered actors within society themselves that command authority in the neighbourhood.

At the same time, the police also function as the face of the state and as perpetrators of state violence in these neighbourhoods (e.g. Brass, 2003; Willis, 2015). This was particularly the case in Shivajinagar where residents in some housing clusters have been particularly vulnerable to eviction and displacement, wherein the local police actively supported the Municipal Corporation to demolish their homes and move people out when carrying out demolitions, often by force. For instance, residents of Adarsh Nagar and Indira Nagar settlements within Shivajinagar that witnessed their homes being demolished in 2016 and subsequently lived in make-shift housing while the legal battle for their right to housing ensued, held strong and enduring memories of the confrontation with the police, which coloured their relationship of the state:

“They [the police] beat us with batons and we were beaten by them...Our case reached Delhi [the Supreme Court]. We are not backing down. We have struggled a lot. The police beat us, but we have not given up.” (Shabnam, 45, Shivajinagar)

“When the police came to demolish our homes, our children got scared because they beat us...My daughter gets frightened whenever she sees police. Even if one comes and jokes around, she gets scared. This is the condition... If someone here thinks their child may join the police, they don't want that because they are terrified of the police.” (Sayeeda, 39, Shivajinagar)

Thus, there is also a high level of fear and distrust towards the police among those groups that have directly been at the receiving end of state violence.

Moreover, for residents that experience severe precarity, this violence is often an ongoing experience that occurs through the dual role of the police as representations of an exclusionary state on the one hand and self-interested actors seeking their own ends on the other hand. Indeed, the terms 'state' and 'society' in this case suggest a false dichotomy of two bounded entities in opposition to each

other (Nugent, 1994) as in practice it is difficult to distinguish between the two. Here police officers can be viewed as differently positioned actors within the socio-political neighbourhood ecosystem.

“Drug addicts sit here. I fight with many of them: ‘Don’t do drugs here’, ‘Don’t sit here’...The police say to call them...Sometimes, if we call, they come and pick them up, but they take bribes and release them. Only we get defamed; they get released and come later at night and hassle and beat us. So, we don’t get the police involved. We explain to them with love...Gradually, doing this – and more people have settled here, so no one lets them sit by our homes.” (Afsari, 40, Shivajinagar)

In this case, as Afsari points out the police are called upon as mediators within local social relations to prevent individuals from partaking in drug consumption near their homes. However, here, she outlines that as the drug trade is a profitable endeavour for police officers. Similar to Hansen’s (2001b) observation in Muslim areas of central Mumbai, police postings in Shivajinagar and Mumbra are considered strenuous and dangerous but offer considerable rewards and bribes from the drug economy and other interventions. Thus, the police are not always reliable in terms of preventing such activities, and Afsari’s statement highlights the ways in which in this case the police instead function as differentially positioned (and powered) actors within the neighbourhood ecosystem that then function to pursue their own objectives.

This section has identified the wide range of ways in which residents of segregated neighbourhoods interact with, and perceive, the police – as both representatives of the state and non-representatives that seek to further their own interests through their position within local power relations. From a gender perspective, the police, as representatives of the everyday state, pose a source of threat for young men but simultaneously their increasing presence in the neighbourhood is viewed as a positive development for women who perceive the police as a source of safety. While scholars have pointed to the blurred distinction between state and society in postcolonial contexts (Chatterjee, 1990; Gupta, 1995), here we see the police alternately taking up the position of “the state” where they wield authority as they function as agents of state violence on the one hand, and at the same time mediate between residents to enforce order and settle disputes and are themselves implicated within subversive activities within the neighbourhood on the other hand. Some of these functions may seem like contradicting roles at first glance. However, in terms of the imagined state at the local level, this may not necessarily represent a blurring of the boundaries between the state and non-state or society but instead a dual role under which local police officers represent both “the state” and socio-political actors indifferentiable from society at different points in time.

7.3.2 Elected representatives

The relationship between residents and the local state involves not only the administration but also crucially political actors. Residents seek out their elected representatives with diverse requests ranging from complaints about cleanliness, water provision, electricity and public toilets, to school admissions, and further to problems relating to drug trade. It is widely believed that complaints to the government from elected representatives are acted on more promptly than those from residents (Berenschot, 2010). Local politicians mediate not only disputes within the neighbourhood between groups of residents, as do the police, but also between members of their electorate and the bureaucracy.

Crucially, their control over the administration extends not only to help residents secure services but also to arbitrate unofficial (sometimes exploitative) arrangements between residents and other state actors. For instance, after the demolition of her home in 2016, Afsari, who had lived in Shivajinagar for over 10 years, explained that the police would intervene in an attempt to elicit bribes if residents attempted to rebuild their homes:

“We had to pay them Rs 500-1,000 if we built anything, that's just how it was...After the demolition, we lived out in the cold. We would prop up a plastic sheet as a roof and sleep under it...The police would come as soon as we dug a hole, and we would have to pay them. One would go and send a second, the second would go and send a third. We'd be ruined like that.” (Afsari, 40, Shivajinagar)

Afsari explained that this went on for several months, until residents approached their elected state representative or member of legislative assembly (the MLA), who assured them that they could make their homes and the police would not return. Residents were initially sceptical and took tentative steps toward rebuilding their homes. But, even with time, the police did not return to harass residents or demand bribes, and families began to rebuild temporary homes.

While richer citizens might be able to access resources to deal with or circumvent the state without political intervention, political mediation is often the only option for poorer citizens who approach state institutions through political networks (Jeffrey and Lerche, 2000; Ruud, 2001; Veron et al, 2003). Thus, marginalized communities often rely on informal negotiations with state agents to avoid a harsh implementation of state regulations (Brown et al, 2010; McFarlane and Waibel, 2012). This resonates with Partha Chatterjee's (2004) conception of political society, which he distinguishes from the Western Enlightenment notion of civil society (discussed in Chapters 2 and 6). Chatterjee (2004) defined political society as the chaotic process of negotiations contesting existing rules, such that the 'politics of the governed' is a persistent negotiation between political society and the state through

everyday struggles and protests. Although the modes of claiming citizenship are varied across contexts and group circumstances, the lines between acts and practices are often blurred as groups employ a multitude of strategies (see, for instance, Holston, 2008; Das, 2011).

In terms of the ways in which residents “see the state”, then, although the distant state may be imagined as an image of coherence and dominance, exclusionary to marginalised groups in the context of an increasingly majoritarian state, the everyday state has multiple (sometimes conflicting) parts and pressure from various groups (Migdal, 2001; Hansen, 2005). As such, it is argued that the state-society boundary breaks down in encounters at the lowest level of the state apparatus (Nugent, 1994; Williams et al, 2011): on the ground it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the two as they are demarcated by a ‘blurred boundary’ (Gupta, 1995) or a ‘spongiform interface’ (Harriss-White, 1997). This hold of politicians over the everyday operations of the bureaucracy makes it difficult to see the state as separate from society, since it is through political mediators that different societal interests manipulate the operations of the state (Fuller and Harriss, 2001). Yet, many scholars have asserted that informality or political mediation is not an aberration, or an indication of a lower quality of citizenship but is instead deeply entrenched in the procedures, policies and habits that guide the daily functioning of state institutions and as such is a constituent characteristic of the state apparatus (Painter, 2006; Berenschot, 2010; Berenschot and van Klinken, 2018).

Yet, the distinction between these actors remains significant, with state actors reinforcing this hierarchy. For instance, Ferguson and Gupta (2002) contend that state authority depends on the reproduction of ideas of “verticality”, or the idea of state as above family, community, and civil society; and “encompassment”, of the state as encompassing ever widening units such as localities, regions, and so on. As such, states and state actors therefore represent themselves through specific metaphors and practices to secure their legitimacy and authority. The metaphors of verticality and encompassment together produce a spatial and scalar image of a state that both sits above and contains its various political communities and regions (Ferguson and Gupta, 2002).

In practice, the state is embedded in society such that its interaction with citizens is monopolized by various networks whose political (and financial) success depends on their capacity to manipulate state actions and policy (Blundo, 2006; Berenschot, 2010). The institutionalization of political mediation is argued to be caused by a dialectic between limited state capacity to provide public services and strategies of local politicians to win elections as the former generates the political field in which control over state resources shapes electoral success (Berenschot and van Klinken, 2018).

In Muslim neighbourhoods, access to basic services is often curtailed or denied in a way that contributes to a wider project of the marginalisation of Muslims from the city’s urban public

(discussed in Chapter 6; see also Contractor, 2012b; Anand, 2017). This often forces households to rely on informal networks of intermediaries, often at high cost, and their ability to seek redress from their elected representatives depends on their strength as an electorate. Here, to the extent that the “minority” Muslim community serves as an effective “vote bank”, politicians and elected representatives are incentivised to ensure some level of service provision for them, even if this only happens around the elections, and to be accessible to them. This may not be the case when minority groups constitute a minority within the electoral constituency. In the example above, where Afsari explains how the elected representative was able to prevent the police from harassing neighbours, she identifies the nature of electoral politics, wherein the political fate of the elected representative depended on the poor Muslim neighbourhood, to be a contributing factor. Therefore, it was less a relationship based on trust as much as one that was dependent on pragmatism.

More broadly, perceptions of the state and state actors are complex and mediated in precise contexts, often framed by previous experiences. For instance, Corbridge et al (2005: 8, 24) observe that residents variously inhabit and encounter the state as ‘a citizen, client and/or subject’ and the state in turn employs diverse, sometimes contradictory, practices to shape residents’ access to and notions of citizenship. In the context of mediated and informalized access to state actors and institutions, the nurturing of relationships plays a key role. The quality and strength of personal connections and networks often matter more than formal rights (Van der Muur, 2018; Hearman, 2018). Here too, participants often outline how they invest tactically in maintaining relationships with state actors to secure their ends. For instance, as Sayeeda explains:

“There was some problem, water was collecting near our houses and it would spark electricity...I had some medical tests that day. Some ladies went to the office [of the councillor] and shouted a lot. When I returned, some neighbours came and said that if I was there such things wouldn’t have happened...They told me that one neighbour was very rude to the Nagar Sevak [councillor]. I was shocked. I thought if he demolishes our huts tomorrow, what will we do? Soon it will be the monsoon too...If you have a problem, you should talk politely and explain. If we are angry, we shouldn’t show it. If they come to our door, we give them water and share our problems. If we talk nicely, they will listen to our problems.” (Sayeeda, Shivajinagar)

Sayeeda’s house was demolished in 2016 and her family had subsequently been living in a makeshift hut in Shivajinagar. She had been active in the political mobilisations following the demolitions through the *Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan*, and so did not always take a non-confrontational approach. Here, however, she expressed frustration at her neighbour who she believed did not behave strategically in her interaction with the Councillor. Williams et al (2011) argue that conceptualizing the margins as dynamic sites draws attention to the individuals and populations that

constitute marginal space, as they assert that subaltern agency extends beyond acts of resistance and includes practices of resilience and of reworking state and societal power in the everyday (Das and Poole, 2004; Katz, 2004; Mahmood, 2005). Sayeeda perceived the Councillor as representing an opportunity to secure some respite from the problems and challenges being experienced in her area. Her objection to her neighbour's actions was not for any other reason than a recognition of the importance of investing in "doing politics" as a way of securing support in the context of the mediated state at the lowest level.

Thus, while the imagination of the state has increasingly coalesced around an image of increasing majoritarianism and exclusion of working-class Muslims from the public sphere and from conceptions of citizenship, an exploration of the interactions with localised state authorities reveals a more complex picture of a relationship that is constantly renegotiated through everyday interactions (Guillaume, 2014; Tully, 2014). Here, both gender and segregation affect the ways in which residents engage with the state. At the more localised levels in the segregated Muslim neighbourhood the configurations between meso-level political actors are more complicated. Here, in part because they function as a significant constituency or vote bank that politicians are incentivised to serve (and not in small numbers that can be neglected), women's gendered subjectivities and priorities stand out rather than being encompassed within their communal identity. In tracing these configurations, this section has explored the ways in which the state and citizenship are constructed and experienced as relational concepts, and the power geometries that position political subjects. I argue that although residents largely distrust state agencies and actors, nevertheless they *do* leverage local state actors' vertical position of power to mediate the neighbourhood-scale unequal power positions, within a fragmented local society and state-society network. Thus, residents call on different state actors in different capacities to mediate within the community, as well as their interactions with other state actors. These encounters are not founded on perceptions of trust or altruism, but based on an expectation of reciprocity and incentives, which operate differently at the local level from the majoritarianism that has increasingly influenced perceptions of higher levels of the state.

7.4 Conclusion

In recent years, several democracies have witnessed the prominent rise of nationalist political movements, including religiously inspired majoritarianism. In India, the rise of the Hindu right wing which has permeated across both the highest levels of the state as well as the public sphere, has contributed to a distinct shift in the imaginary of the state. By combining an analysis of the imaginaries of the state (as both an institutional apparatus of government as well as through ideas of the nation) with everyday interactions with local state agents and representatives, the chapter aims

to produce a holistic understanding of the ways in which the state is imagined and experienced by women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods, and contributes to scholarship that argues that the state is not merely a unified entity.

On the one hand, there has been a significant erosion of faith in the state and growing perception of discrimination of the Muslim minority through an increasing threat of persecution perpetrated or condoned by those in power which has been experienced across domains. Despite increasing alienation and othering, however, the idea of Indian secularism and equal citizenship, although extremely fragile, is considered worth fighting for. On the other hand, notwithstanding the corruption of the actors and agencies previously associated with the sublime elements of the state, and an increasing Hindu majoritarian imaginary of the state which has served to exclude citizenship of Indian Muslims, everyday encounters with the local state in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods (which arguably reflect the profane dimensions of the state) are less straightforward.

In the context of urban segregation, state-society relations at the local level are more complicated than an experience of mere exclusion. The everyday local state is viewed as an entity that residents variously obey, challenge, negotiate and cooperate with. The ubiquity of those that represent the everyday state means that although interactions with the local state are imbued with ambivalence, residents approach them with a flexible pragmatism: the vertical position of power of state agents within the neighbourhood is leveraged to mediate unequal social power through both civil and political society. The chapter outlines how socio-political relations provide residents of segregated neighbourhoods opportunities to construct (and assert) subjectivities that cast them as political agents that can negotiate with local state agents through everyday micropolitics rather than accept a condition of entrenched victimhood. In this context, the profane and the sublime elements of the state come together in various moments as residents of segregated neighbourhoods call upon the authority of everyday state actors to mediate within the community and with government, even in the absence of trust in the state. Engagement with the everyday state is thus more complicated than a binary opposition of neglect and persecution. On undertaking a gendered reading, the chapter finds that the local state is not simply positioned in opposition to society but rather women encounter the dual power structures imposed by both 'society' as well as the 'state'. Thus, although the state and its representatives – including the police, administration and elected representatives – continue to be viewed with scepticism, they are often called upon as women encounter a fractured community constituted by unequal power relations at the neighbourhood level.

Others have previously argued for the need to understand and study the state as plural. While this was the starting point of the chapter, by examining the ways in which women in segregated neighbourhoods encounter, make sense of and negotiate with different faces of the state, this

chapter has developed an understanding of the multiple strategies they employ across different spaces and scales as an ongoing process of constructing their own sense of self and citizenship. In doing so it advances arguments that the state and citizenship are constructed and experienced as relational concepts where their varying power geometries position them differently as political subjects in different contexts and arenas by illustrating the varied ways in which these geometries play out in the context of ethno-religious segregation.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

Through this thesis I explore how gender mediates women's everyday socio-spatial-political claims to the segregated city. More specifically, I examine gendered practices and imaginaries of belonging, community, and citizenship in and from segregated neighbourhoods in Mumbai through a multi-scalar intra-urban comparison. In doing so, the thesis revisits debates on the distinctions between the 'public' and 'private', the 'religious' and the 'secular', and the 'spectacular' and 'mundane'. An overarching concern across this thesis has related to inclusion and exclusion from citizenship, and the practices and narratives that construct these categories in different contexts and at various scales. While Hindu majoritarianism has produced numerous forms of violence (mediated by class, caste and region), this research makes theoretical and empirical contributions to debates on social, spatial and political belonging through the exploration of urban space and socio-spatial-political relations in Mumbai.

This concluding chapter first summarises the main arguments of this thesis and then reflects on its theoretical contributions in Section 8.3. Then Section 8.4 serves as an epilogue, outlining events that have transpired since the completion of the fieldwork and primary research, and the final section identifies future directions for research.

8.2 Conceptual contributions of the thesis

This thesis explores contested constructions of urban belonging through the perspective of women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods in Mumbai through a period of socio-spatial-political change. In doing so, it examines the gendered production of identity and community as socio-spatial conceptions through a multi-scalar exploration from the individual level to the neighbourhood and finally the urban and national imaginary. The research contributes to debates on emerging urban social relations and the cultural politics of gender and religion in urban India as well as urban studies more broadly.

The main focus of the thesis has been to examine constructions of belonging and citizenship through two intersecting frames: the research critically links negotiated socially-constructed identities (taking a socio-political lens) to contestations of the interrelated material and imagined urban spaces in and from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods (through a socio-spatial lens). Existing scholarship on socio-political contestations around ethno-religious identity and belonging has often neglected a spatial perspective, whereas feminist literature on gender and space largely underexplores the processes involved in constructing socio-political identities and subjectivities. The thesis thus brings together these different academic strands, offering a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of

gendered socio-spatial-political contestations of urban space. In doing so, the thesis contributes to theorisations and debates from and on the global South on urban belonging and citizenship in the context of segregation. Equally, by examining the experiences, imaginations and practices of gendered space at different scales through a multi-pronged social, spatial and political approach, the thesis unpacks urban complexity and contributes to the project of comparative urbanism advocated within the post-colonial turn in urban studies.

The thesis makes an empirical contribution at a time that crucial questions about the nature of democracy and secularism in India have emerged, and the place and role of Muslim women have gained prominence within these discussions. Recent commentators have variously referred to India as an “ethnic democracy” (Jaffrelot, 2019), “illiberal” (Ganguly, 2020) and “ethnocracy” (Mehta, 2020), and these depictions have foregrounded the landscape for exploring the role and agency of Muslim women. While the thesis examines belonging and citizenship in the context of everyday life in and from Muslim neighbourhoods, the political moment remains salient. Thus, through an investigation of the lived experience of belonging at different scales and sites in the context of macro-political shifts, the research problematises the constructed nature of identity and community as they impact imaginaries, experiences and practices of belonging and citizenship in and from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods.

This section elaborates on the conceptual and methodological contributions of this thesis. Through a socio-spatial-political exploration of the lived experience and contestations of women’s belonging in and from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods, the thesis makes contributions across three main areas of inquiry, which are outlined below.

8.2.1 Constructions of community, belonging and citizenship

The thesis brings to light various facets of belonging and citizenship in the context of urban segregation through an analysis of the experience and construction of these concepts at different scales and spaces. The empirical findings of the thesis demonstrate the various exclusions that residents (and women in particular) of segregated Muslim neighbourhoods face that alienate them from the material and metaphorical spaces of the city. Yet, at the same time, exclusion is differentially experienced at different levels and spaces, and accompanied by differing invocations of ‘community’. Chapters 4 and 6 provide a nuanced elaboration of the ways in which belonging is understood and negotiated – which necessarily includes some over others – and, through a multi-scalar examination, argue that notwithstanding structural exclusions along gender and ethno-religious lines the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion are perceived to be negotiable.

In Chapter 4, I explore the gendered negotiations of urban space within the segregated neighbourhood, and show how expectations around gendered everyday socio-spatial politics can vary substantially in different spaces and contexts. I go beyond simplistic conceptions of safety and security to examine how different subjectivities help construct ideas around who belongs in urban space. Whereas women have increasingly played a central role in political mobilisation around citizenship claims, an analysis of the everyday politics of urban space helps complicate constructions of belonging and the socio-spatial contexts that shape gendered urban space. The chapter exposes the different conceptions of community that co-exist within the segregated neighbourhood. Although ethno-religious segregation emphasises religious identity, this is not the only conception of community that exists. In this context, Chapter 4 undertakes a gendered reading of urban space and shows how women can stake their belonging to the public spaces of the segregated neighbourhood so long as they demonstrate their belonging to the collectivity of the neighbourhood. On the one hand, aspirations and notions of morality help imagine self-improvement and attachment to an imagined community which is encountered in the public spaces of the city. On the other hand, the immediate community experienced in neighbourhood spaces in everyday life often continues to be perceived as a marginal entity, fractured by social structures and often having a strong voice in dictating codes of women's engagement in urban space. By outlining the ways in which these two conceptions of community and space co-exist, I elaborate on the role of imaginaries and everyday practices women employ in gendered claims to space within the segregated neighbourhood.

When moving from the neighbourhood scale to the urban, a different set of dynamics are at play. Whereas macro political shifts have served to alienate and denationalise Indian Muslims, the thesis examines situated perceptions and experiences of structural exclusion and goes beyond dichotomies of inclusion/exclusion to explore the ways in which women in segregated Muslim neighbourhoods demonstrate agency despite constraints to claim social, political and spatial belonging through everyday practices and acts of citizenship. Chapter 6 advances the concept of 'infrastructural belonging' to examine urban belonging in the context of ethno-religious and class-based exclusion. Whereas existing literature examines the nature and politics of urban segregation and stigmatisation, this often views these phenomena as a status. By conceptualising segregation as a process which is continuously under contestation, I examine how women perceive marginalisation in the material and metaphorical spaces of the city and how this impacts their subjectivities and strategies to claim belonging to the city. Existing scholarship has focused on the ways in which marginalised communities employ a discourse of citizenship to claim their right to the city (e.g. Graham and Marvin, 1999; Holston and Caldeira, 1999; Isin and Nielsen, 2008), but the comparison of the experience of Shivajinagar and Mumbra demonstrates the diverse ways in which segregation is negotiated. I explore

how claims to belonging are not always directed towards the state using a vocabulary of citizenship but, in a context of socio-political othering, may progress through continued segregation and neighbourhood improvement into a place “worth belonging to”. Here, in the context of widespread socio-political alienation, a wider understanding of infrastructure as an assemblage of belonging and stigmatisation produces valuable insights into understanding how exclusion is negotiated beyond state-society relations.

Nevertheless, even in this case it is not that the state is irrelevant, and rather it remains an important institution both in everyday life and as an imagined entity. In the context of Hindu majoritarianism and growing socio-political and legal otherisation of Indian Muslims, Chapter 7 explores the ambivalence and flexible pragmatism with which residents of segregated neighbourhood view and engage with the state and state agents. For instance, the legislation which criminalised the practice of *triple talaq* was projected by the Indian government as a move to protect of ‘Muslim women’ but was understood by many political commentators and research participants to serve to criminalise Muslim men. Yet, as discussed in Chapter 4, this legislation was met with very diverging responses from women’s movements as well as Muslim women’s groups. At the same time, at the local level, the state is not positioned simply in opposition to society but rather women encounter the dual power structures imposed by ‘society’ as well as the ‘state’. An investigation of these dynamics reveals the ways in which the state and citizens are constructed and experienced as relational concepts at every level, as varying power geometries position them differently at different socio-political scales.

Thus, through an investigation at these different scales (of the neighbourhood, urban and national levels) and sites (both spatial and socio-political), the thesis produces a nuanced understanding of the ways in which belonging is experienced and negotiated through differing constructions of community and citizenship. While it has previously been argued that citizenship to different communities should be understood to be multi-layered, the research expands on this body of work to advance an understanding of belonging that is inescapably dynamic co-constituted by socio-political subjectivities and socio-spatial contexts.

8.2.2 Negotiating gendered agency and social relations

“The better we understand how identities and power work together from one context to another, the less likely our movements for change are to fracture.” – Kimberle Williams Crenshaw⁴⁰

Since Crenshaw (1989) formally introduced the theory of intersectionality, intersectionality has become central to feminist thinking. Yet empirical application of intersectional approaches has been limited in the absence of consensus on how it should be applied (Davis, 2008). Debates on citizenship

⁴⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/09/24/why-intersectionality-cant-wait/>

and belonging have often homogenized the differential meanings of multiple identities. The quote by Crenshaw included above emphasises the importance of understanding how identities and social and political power structures come together in varied contexts. This has been a primary motivation and contribution of this thesis, which explores socio-spatial-political relations and claims to space in varied contexts and at different scales.

Gendered social relations are scripted according to specific norms in a particular place and time. The thesis demonstrates how not only do expectations around women's engagement in urban space vary substantially in different places, but also women draw on multiple strategies to claim their belonging and right to urban spaces. A contribution of this thesis has thus been to problematise the ways in which women in marginal neighbourhoods navigate socio-spatial-political relations across both public and private spheres, and through mundane everyday negotiations as well as spectacular or radical actions. In doing so, the thesis has highlighted the ways in which women from segregated Muslim neighbourhoods assert agency, even at times when this is constrained by social norms.

While Muslim women's increased political participation and mobilisation has been widely noted, most recently and markedly through their leadership in protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 (see Chapter 4), I identify the ways in which women negotiate multiple communities to make claims to space and. I examine the ways in which gendered social relations are constantly negotiated at different levels and spaces. Both through their actions and narrative construction, women negotiate urban space and socio-spatial-political relations by differentially emphasising particular aspects of identity.

Chapter 4 uses the lens of urban space and examines the varied strategies and politics through which women negotiate their right to belong in the urban spaces of the segregated neighbourhood. In a context of urban segregation and territorial stigmatisation, girls and women are averse to interact in neighbourhood spaces associated with risk as the immediate community is perceived to represent the marginal and repressive. However, in the 'public' spaces of the neighbourhood, which represents a space to interact with strangers that belong and perform their belonging, women perceive an imagined community that is shaped by religious and cultural identity in conjunction with neoliberal aspirations of modernity. This public space represents a space where women can make claims as it offers them a chance of anonymity associated with aspirations. In doing so, Chapter 4 brings together the social and spatial/material and contributes to feminist urban scholarship by complicating understandings of the gendered right to the city through an explicit engagement with women's subjectivities and the ways in which gendered claims to urban space interact with other social structures and notions of community.

Chapter 5 examines similar themes through a focus on women's narratives, demonstrating the ways in which narrative strategies complement their actions in urban space as a way of making claims to a situated agency. I argue that women's narratives themselves serve as a means to establish their agency although this need not always impact their actions, and thereby contribute to postcolonial feminist scholarship that conceptualises women's agency through its paradoxes and problematises agency beyond a binary logic of repression and resistance. The analytical contribution of Chapter 5 is thus to articulate the value of narratives for women in navigating through, negotiating and reconciling competing priorities, identities and communities. As women's multiple social locations influence identity formation, I look beyond essentialised and culturalist questions of identity construction and examine how women negotiate their aspirations, socio-political subjectivities and agency.

In the context of multiple structures of exclusion from urban socio-spatial-political space, I produce a nuanced analysis of the different ways in which women's actions (Chapter 4) and their narratives (Chapter 5) serve to negotiate social relations and the varying ideas of community, aspirations, and marginality that shape them. In doing so, the thesis contributes towards a theorisation of gendered agency even in the absence of feminist imperative, through a focus on the everyday micropolitics in the context of urban segregation.

8.2.3 Segregation in the Southern city: contributions to postcolonial urban studies

Finally, the analysis of urban space across the thesis makes both theoretical and methodological contributions to urban studies. By examining the diverse experiences, imaginations, practices and politics at different scales and through a multi-pronged social, spatial and political approach, the thesis unpacks urban complexity and contributes to the project of comparative urbanism advocated in the postcolonial turn in urban studies.

The past two decades have recorded increasing critique of the dominance within urban theory of experiences from the global North, in particular the Anglo-American context (Robinson, 2006; Roy and Ong, 2011). This thesis challenges the northern empirical bias of urban theory and makes critical interventions around key concepts in urban geography. The thesis neither eschews theorisations that have emerged from the global North nor does it simply verify how these concepts have travelled from the global North to the global South. Instead, it contributes to postcolonial and feminist critique of these concepts by examining the situated experience in the Indian context to make interventions into complicating how we may understand them.

In terms of public space, postcolonial scholars have argued that Western binary conceptions of public and private spaces neglect the distinction between European public-ness and non-Western ideas of commonness (Chakrabarty, 1992; Kaviraj, 1997; Arabindoo, 2011). The examination of gendered

contestations to urban space in this thesis makes a critical intervention to this scholarship. Whereas neoliberal policies since the 1990s have invoked bourgeois imaginaries of public spaces based on aestheticized models of order and cleanliness (Arabindoo, 2011; 2012) which are often internalised even by those that stand to lose from it (Ghertner, 2011), a gendered reading of urban space in segregated neighbourhoods in Chapter 4 brings together a feminist critique with a postcolonial perspective to urban space through an examination of differing notions of community and othering, and thus who belongs in different urban spaces. In doing so, it demonstrates the ways in which the desire to emphasise the boundaries between the public and private has found purchase not only among the urban elite but also in marginal and segregated places. From a gendered perspective, women's presence cannot be considered a feminisation of the flaneur but rather in the context of ethno-religious segregation in India the segregated Muslim neighbourhood serves as a type of *zenana*, where women have a claim to public space provided they demonstrate their belonging to the (imagined) community. These performances, however, don't merely demonstrate a religious habitus but strive to establish a class habitus through the performance of aspirations in the public sphere.

I also situate the understanding of ethno-religious socio-spatial segregation within the Indian context and Chapter 6 elaborates on the diverse ways in which segregation and social differentiation play out and the strategies through which they are negotiated by residents of segregated neighbourhoods. It also contributes to debates on gentrification in the global South (e.g. Lopez-Morales, 2015; Shin et al, 2016) and takes on the challenge offered by Harris (2008) to examine the global spread of gentrification while remaining sensitive to its geographically and historically specific manifestations. The emergence of state-led gentrification in the Global South, including in India, mirrors some of the experiences of cities in the global North. However, through the exploration of Muslim gentrification of the "ghetto", I examine the ways in which marginalised ethno-religious groups seek to claim urban belonging through a shared participation in material aspirations of development and modernity. By exploring the intersections of ethno-religious and class-based segregation, the thesis contributes a southern perspective to the relatively underexplored literature on marginal gentrification.

Finally, the thesis contributes to methodological debates within the postcolonial project of comparative urbanism. Although the research is focused on one city, intra-urban comparison of the gendered politics of segregation and neighbourhood territoriality emphasises the diversity of experience beyond homogenising narratives of urban segregation.⁴¹ As an empirical site, Harris (2012)

⁴¹ Yet, multi-scalar intra-urban comparison posed challenges as disparate socio-political subjectivities get invoked at different urban scales, which are sometimes difficult to reconcile. For instance, although Chapters 4 and 6 examine similar questions of socio-spatial belonging, very different perceptions and practices of inclusion and exclusion present themselves at these different levels; so much so that, at certain points, these chapters

remarks that Mumbai's emergence as a 'global' city since the 2000s has been accompanied by its inclusion in Western research, but scholarship often focuses on those locations that present commonalities with Western contexts and the urban fringe and townships remain underrepresented in theorisation (beyond development geography) although they play an increasing central role in the socio-political life of the region. Thus, while the research findings are situated and developed in the neighbourhoods of Mumbra and Shivajinagar, and demonstrate the diversity existing within a single city, the thesis is not only a study of Mumbai as a segregated city but also addresses questions about belonging in the context of urban segregation more broadly to contribute to urban theorisation that brings together the social, spatial and political in one frame. The multi-scalar and intra-urban comparison enables unpacking how social, spatial and material, and political dynamics of belonging are negotiated at different levels to produce diverse forms of inclusion/exclusion.

Overall, the research produces empirical and conceptual interventions on the gendered politics of urban belonging and citizenship in the context of ethno-religious segregation, and related continuities and breaks in gendered understandings of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983) in postcolonial cities. In doing so, the thesis contributes to scholarship on urban cultural politics, and feminist and post-colonial urban theory through an effort to decolonise our intellectual, social and political worlds, while also bringing together these literatures through the focus on bringing together a social, spatial and political analysis of the politics of gendered urban space.

8.4 Epilogue

While the fieldwork for this project was conducted between October 2017 and June 2018, several significant events have transpired in the final year of writing up this thesis. While I attempted to make inquiries about their impact in the case study neighbourhoods and reflect on this in parts of the thesis, the timing of these events has meant that they are not a primary part of the research. In fact, as space is always immanent and under construction (Massey, 2005), this research would never have closure. Rather, the thesis represents a particular space and time across the open continuum of time. Nevertheless, this section connects the period of primary research to more recent developments.

The Hindu right-wing BJP government have been in power at the national centre since 2014 (and in the state of Maharashtra until January 2020, in coalition with the Sena). During this time, numerous incidents of targeted violence against Muslim minorities have been reported in the news⁴², often without censure by state authorities. The state has contributed to the otherisation of Indian Muslims.

seemed like they belonged to different theses. Nevertheless, this approach helped complicate understandings of belonging, community and citizenship in different contexts.

⁴² <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/06/india-hate-crimes-against-muslims-and-rising-islamophobia-must-be-condemned/>

For instance, in the case of the practice of *triple talaq*, while the practice was already legally derecognised, the legislation criminalising it was seen as an attempt to target Muslim men and as an assault on the minority community. Finally, the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 is another legislative move in a long history of marginalisation of Muslim minorities by the Indian state, and for the first time explicitly connects religious identity to citizenship in India.

The introduction of the Citizenship Amendment Bill in December 2019 sparked non-violent protests and resistance across the country, including prominent women-led occupations (discussed in Chapter 4). However, with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, a national curfew was imposed in India on 22 March 2020, and there was a stringent lockdown from 25 March 2020. This meant that protest activities had to come to a halt. While instances of local communities and civil society groups coming together and supporting one another in providing food and other necessities to the millions across India have been heartening, the pandemic simultaneously aggravated existing divisions across society along class and religious lines in India as elsewhere.

The outbreak of the pandemic in India took on a communal angle in its early stages: the prominent Muslim group, the Tablighi Jamaat held a large event in Delhi, attracting over 8,000 followers in March 2020. While the Jamaat assert that they suspended the event upon the Prime Minister's announcement of national curfew, and many participants left, others were stranded as states began to seal their borders and public transportation was suspended as India entered national lockdown.⁴³ Many participants of the event contracted Covid-19 at the gathering and spread it when they returned home, causing the first big wave of infection in India. Communist women's rights activist Kavita Krishnan points out that although the Tablighi Jamaat gathering was a hotspot of the virus in India "They accused Muslims of spreading the disease deliberately, using it like a suicide bomb...They call this Corona jihad."⁴⁴ Based on this event, Indian Muslims found themselves blamed for the Covid-19 outbreak, and religious tensions continued to be aggravated.

Equally, while the protests came to a stop, several prominent protestors in Delhi were arrested during the lockdown. Commentators have argued that these actions represent a move by the Delhi Police to undermine democracy by criminalising dissent⁴⁵ (at a time the Supreme Court directed governments to decongest jails to prevent the spread of coronavirus). The targeting of Muslim residents was followed by criminal cases against several Muslim student activists under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act. Overall, the number of arrests was high but unverified due to restrictions on

⁴³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-52306879>

⁴⁴ <http://peninsulapress.com/2020/06/18/how-the-coronavirus-lockdown-impacted-anti-citizenship-law-protests-in-india/>

⁴⁵ <https://scroll.in/article/960619/arbitrary-arrests-of-caa-nrc-protesters-point-to-political-vendetta-under-the-cover-of-covid>

the media and legal services during the lockdown.⁴⁶ While the police proceeded with detentions and arrests, the list of “essential services” permitted did not include legal services. Further, the requirement that an accused person must be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours of detention was reduced to a formality and fulfilled in jail premises rather than in courts. As of writing this conclusion, many of these activists remain under detention.

In October 2020, the Supreme Court of India pronounced its judgement on a case about balancing the right to protest and the right to public movement in the context of the occupation of the Shaheen Bagh for anti-CAA-NRC protests. The Court declared “public ways and public spaces cannot be occupied in such a manner and that too indefinitely”, stating “demonstrations expressing dissent have to be in designated places”. While this judgement is currently under appeal, it has heightened concerns around the potential for dissent and collective mobilisation and raises important questions about the nature of Indian democracy.

The outbreak of the pandemic and lockdown also produced massive and rapid transformations in the ways in which cities and urban spaces were occupied. India had one of the most stringent lockdowns globally between 25 March and 31 May 2020. Given high levels of informality, millions of daily-wage workers found themselves without jobs or income, forcing over 10 million migrant labourers to attempt to return to their home towns and villages, many on foot.⁴⁷ News media initially reported migrant workers saying they would not return to the cities after being abandoned by employers and the state.⁴⁸ Yet, as the lockdown began to be lifted and states lifted travel restrictions in June 2020, large numbers of migrant workers who had left cities like Mumbai began to return. A senior government official reported, “More than 26 lakh [260,000] migrant officially left Mumbai by trains, while many more left by road...Now, many of them are coming back...Once things are normal in Mumbai, there will be more migrants flocking to the city.”⁴⁹ Indeed, whereas public spaces and streets of the city were emptied of people at the start of the lockdown, the situation began to revert as lockdown was gradually lifted, though this varied across the city (see Figures 6 and 7 for images of Shivajinagar and Mumbra in July 2020). Yet, while economic activity is slowly returning, the medium-term impacts of the pandemic on how we occupy cities and the extent to which these social-spatial dynamics return to “normal” remain open questions.

⁴⁶ <https://scroll.in/article/961431/delhi-police-is-making-arbitrary-arrests-and-crushing-dissent-under-the-cloak-of-lockdown>

⁴⁷ <https://qz.com/india/1903018/indias-covid-19-lockdown-displaced-at-least-10-million-migrants/>

⁴⁸ <https://scroll.in/article/963251/i-will-never-come-back-many-indian-migrant-workers-refuse-to-return-to-cities-post-lockdown>

⁴⁹ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2020/jul/05/covid-19-as-india-begins-to-unlock-migrant-workers-flocking-back-to-mumbai-for-work-2165468.html>

Finally, while lockdowns were justified on grounds of public health and safety, they have had several adverse gendered impacts. Not only did the lockdown increase women's burden of work (e.g. with the closure of schools), but the emphasis on remaining in domestic spaces and rising unemployment and frustrations caused by lockdown have reportedly contributed to a surge in domestic violence in many countries, including India (Singh and Bhattacharyya, 2020). It has been argued that COVID-19 and domestic violence have appeared as "twin public health emergencies" (Das et al, 2020). Although this thesis is focused on the public sphere and does not examine domestic violence as such, this development reiterates the close interlinkages between the public and private spaces and spheres.

Figure 6: Shivajinagar during phase 2 of 'Unlock' in July 2020



Photos courtesy: Nishant Sabnis

Figure 7: Mumbra during phase 2 of 'Unlock' in July 2020



Photo courtesy: Nishant Sabnis

8.5 Future directions

The events described above speak to the themes under investigation in this thesis, and leave several questions open: What will the pandemic mean for claims to public space, particularly in terms of protests? How are socio-spatial relations and segregation impacted by calls for “social distancing” (even in the absence of its possibility in practice) in a context already imbued with the equation of social difference (particularly in terms of caste and religion) with impurity? And how will emergent socio-spatial-political subjectivities and notions of belonging impact the Muslim women’s bodies and ability to make claims in urban space, both in terms of protesting within and on behalf of their various communities? These questions remain open at present, and it is difficult to be hopeful about constitutionalism producing a transformation in the relationship between Muslim citizens (especially Muslim women) and the Indian state. Nevertheless, the contributions of this research can offer suggestions to ongoing efforts in terms of realising gendered rights within the segregated city (which is something I hope to pursue in disseminating the research findings). It is essential in the present political moment to engage with these questions to understand and retain the gains made by recent mobilisations that represent the agency of Muslim women in staking their claim to social, spatial and political belonging and citizenship.

Reflecting on the research, a key gap has been the absence of male voices and experiences. The intentional focus on women has intended to give voice to women’s own perceptions, narratives and experiences of belonging and citizenship, which have been underexplored. The narratives of many women in the research highlighted the difficulties young men face through negative stereotypes and

risk of physical violence on the one hand, and exposure to toxic masculinity on the other hand. While these dynamics were beyond the scope of this thesis, future research could explore similar themes of belonging, citizenship and gendered social norms through a focus on men's experiences and emerging masculinities in segregated neighbourhoods.

Equally, further research on the gendered socio-spatial-political contestations of urban segregation can also compare the findings of this research with the experiences of women in Dalit neighbourhoods. Caste remains a significant social stratifier in India, as Dalits too experience social, political and economic marginalisation and violence. While caste-based segregation is often considered limited to rural areas, such segregation is found to be reproduced in urban spaces (Ganguly, 2018). Shaban (2012: 220-22) outlines a metaphorical map that arranges the city in three territories housing: higher- and middle-caste and class Hindus ("Hindusthan"); lower-castes ("Dalitsthan"); and Muslims (considered "Pakistan"). An important future direction for research is thus a exploring the situated experiences, negotiations and imaginations of women in Dalit segregated neighbourhoods. Unpacking the connections between the structural constraints faced in Muslim and Dalit neighbourhoods can also examine the challenges in establishing unity and solidarity between Dalit and Muslim communities through the lens of everyday life and cultural politics.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of participants

Table 1: Residents in case study neighbourhoods

| Sr. No. | Interview No. | Name* | Neighbourhood | Age | Gender | Interview type |
|---------|---------------|----------|---------------|-----|--------|----------------|
| 1 | 1 | Farah | Mumbra | 23 | F | Group |
| 2 | | Hafiza | Mumbra | 23 | F | |
| 3 | 2 | Nafissa | Mumbra | 26 | F | Group |
| 4 | | Tarannum | Mumbra | 24 | F | |
| 5 | | Lubna | Mumbra | 20 | F | |
| 6 | 3 | Rehnaz | Mumbra | 23 | F | Individual |
| 7 | 4 | Hafiza | Mumbra | 23 | F | Individual |
| 8 | 5 | Nazia | Mumbra | 22 | F | Individual |
| 9 | 6 | Saleha | Mumbra | 24 | F | Group |
| 10 | | Nazreen | Mumbra | 25 | F | |
| 11 | | Sayeeda | Mumbra | 30 | F | |
| 12 | 7 | Neha | Mumbra | 26 | F | Individual |
| 13 | 8 | Parveen | Mumbra | 42 | F | Individual |
| 14 | 9 | Anjum | Mumbra | 29 | F | Individual |
| 15 | 10 | Saleha | Mumbra | 24 | F | Individual |
| 16 | 11 | Zeba | Mumbra | 25 | F | Individual |
| 17 | 12 | Mejhim | Mumbra | 25 | F | Individual |
| 18 | 13 | Huma | Mumbra | 17 | F | Individual |
| 19 | 14 | Farhana | Mumbra | 18 | F | Individual |
| 20 | 15 | Samina | Mumbra | 17 | F | Individual |
| 21 | 16 | Feba | Mumbra | 17 | F | Individual |
| 22 | 17 | Shehnaz | Mumbra | 21 | F | Individual |
| 23 | 18 | Aisha | Mumbra | 20 | F | Individual |
| 24 | 19 | Ayesha | Mumbra | 29 | F | Individual |
| 25 | 20 | Fatima | Mumbra | 30 | F | Individual |
| 26 | 21 | Zaiba | Mumbra | 48 | F | Individual |
| 27 | 22 | Iram | Mumbra | 27 | F | Individual |
| 28 | 23 | Shabana | Mumbra | 38 | F | Group |
| 29 | | Ibida | Mumbra | 46 | F | |
| 30 | | Alisha | Mumbra | 18 | F | |
| 31 | 24 | Rizwana | Mumbra | 45 | F | Individual |
| 32 | 25 | Shagufta | Mumbra | 28 | F | Individual |
| 33 | 26 | Sakina | Mumbra | 18 | F | Individual |
| 34 | 27 | Laxmi | Mumbra | 22 | F | Individual |
| 35 | 28 | Jyotsna | Mumbra | 30 | F | Individual |
| 36 | 29 | Fatima | Mumbra | 37 | F | Group |
| 37 | | Tasbiya | Mumbra | 23 | F | |
| 38 | 30 | Nasreen | Mumbra | 29 | F | Individual |
| 39 | 31 | Nahida | Mumbra | 46 | F | Individual |
| 40 | 32 | Madiha | Mumbra | 27 | F | Individual |
| 41 | 33 | Nahim | Mumbra | 19 | F | Individual |
| 42 | 34 | Najma | Mumbra | 50 | F | Individual |

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|-----------|--------------|----|---|------------|
| 43 | 35 | Yasmin | Mumbra | 27 | F | Individual |
| 44 | 36 | Rehana | Mumbra | 53 | F | Individual |
| 45 | 37 | Mehr | Mumbra | 42 | F | Individual |
| 46 | 38 | Faiza | Mumbra | 65 | F | Group |
| 47 | | Sara | Mumbra | 55 | F | |
| 48 | 39 | Hasina | Mumbra | 45 | F | Individual |
| 49 | 40 | Sabina | Mumbra | 24 | F | Individual |
| 50 | 41 | Parveen | Mumbra | 45 | F | Individual |
| 51 | 42 | Mauzama | Mumbra | 40 | F | Individual |
| 52 | 43 | Munni | Mumbra | 50 | F | Individual |
| 53 | 44 | Sameena | Mumbra | 40 | F | Individual |
| 54 | 45 | Farida | Mumbra | 40 | F | Individual |
| 55 | 46 | Tubba | Mumbra | 48 | F | Individual |
| 56 | 47 | Lubna | Mumbra | 38 | F | Individual |
| 57 | 48 | Shamsheda | Mumbra | 30 | F | Individual |
| 58 | 49 | Mariam | Mumbra | 43 | F | Individual |
| 59 | 50 | Rushda | Mumbra | 17 | F | Individual |
| 60 | 51 | Sonam | Mumbra | 30 | F | Individual |
| 61 | 52 | Lakshmi | Shivajinagar | 48 | F | Group |
| 62 | | Jayashree | Shivajinagar | 25 | F | |
| 63 | 53 | Sufiyan | Shivajinagar | 17 | M | Individual |
| 64 | 54 | Sapna | Shivajinagar | 25 | F | Individual |
| 65 | 55 | Rosie | Shivajinagar | 40 | F | Individual |
| 66 | 56 | Kulsum | Shivajinagar | 45 | F | Individual |
| 67 | 57 | Amina | Shivajinagar | 19 | F | Group |
| 68 | | Parveen | Shivajinagar | 48 | F | |
| 69 | 58 | Rosie | Shivajinagar | 17 | F | Group |
| 70 | | Neha | Shivajinagar | 18 | F | |
| 71 | | Anjali | Shivajinagar | 18 | F | |
| 72 | 59 | Khadija | Shivajinagar | 28 | F | Group |
| 73 | | Nilima | Shivajinagar | 40 | F | |
| 74 | | Adeela | Shivajinagar | 45 | F | |
| 75 | 60 | Fatima | Shivajinagar | 40 | F | Individual |
| 76 | 61 | Noori | Shivajinagar | 21 | F | Individual |
| 77 | 62 | Suraiya | Shivajinagar | 44 | F | Group |
| 78 | | Shamina | Shivajinagar | 65 | F | |
| 79 | 63 | Afsari | Shivajinagar | 40 | F | Individual |
| 80 | 64 | Yasmin | Shivajinagar | 22 | F | Individual |
| 81 | 65 | Jameela | Shivajinagar | 35 | F | Individual |
| 82 | 66 | Sayeeda | Shivajinagar | 39 | F | Individual |
| 83 | 67 | Shabnam | Shivajinagar | 45 | F | Individual |
| 84 | 68 | Kamil | Shivajinagar | 17 | M | Individual |
| 85 | 69 | Afsari | Shivajinagar | 42 | F | Individual |
| 86 | 70 | Munovar | Shivajinagar | 50 | F | Individual |
| 87 | 71 | Mamta | Shivajinagar | 31 | F | Individual |
| 88 | 72 | Rita | Shivajinagar | 38 | F | Individual |
| 89 | 73 | Goda | Shivajinagar | 65 | F | Individual |
| 90 | 74 | Shashi | Shivajinagar | 55 | F | Individual |

*All names have been changed to protect participant confidentiality

Table 2: Key informants interviewed

| Sr. No. | Name | Role |
|----------------|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Jitendra Ahwad | Elected representative, Maharashtra State Legislature |
| 2 | Ashreen Raut | Elected representative, Thane Municipal Corporation |
| 3 | Ibrahim Raut | - |
| 4 | Saba Parveen | Representative, Rehnuma Centre |
| 5 | Kausar Ansari | Representative, Rehnuma Centre |
| 6 | Arun Kumar | Director, Apnalaya |
| 7 | Sharad Kale | Former Municipal Commissioner and |
| 8 | Smruti Kopikar | Journalist |
| 9 | Kamu Iyer | Architect and urban planner |
| 10 | Nandita Shah | Co-director, Akshara Centre |
| 11 | Jyoti Mhapsekar | Founder, Stree Mukti Sanghatana |
| 12 | Wilma Fernandes | Cultural theorist |
| 13 | Urmila Pawar | Activist and writer |

Appendix 2: Outlines of topic guides for semi-structured interviews

As outlined in Chapter 3, the topic guides for the semi-structured interviews were iteratively adapted throughout the fieldwork process. In the two case study neighbourhoods, different priorities and themes of interest emerged soon after I began fieldwork which were reflected in the changes in the topic guides. However, I include below the standard topic guide which served as a broad template at the start of the fieldwork.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. BACKGROUND | <p>Can you tell me a little about yourself?</p> <p>Tell me a little about your family?</p> <p>Whom do you live with? What does everyone in your household do?</p> |
| 2. EXPERIENCE OF SPACE | <p>How long have you lived here?</p> <p>Where did you live before this?</p> <p>Why did you move here?</p> <p>Do you own or rent, and do you experience any challenged in this regard?</p> <p>What was the area like when you moved here?</p> <p>What is your typical day like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompts: (1) Water for drinking and cleaning; (2) Toilets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where do you access it from (who provides, since when)? ○ Any challenges when accessing these? ○ How much do you pay for it? • Prompts: (3) School or college; (4) Domestic work; (5) Paid work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where do you go for these activities? ○ What is your experience of them? <p>Has the area changed over time?</p> <p>How was it earlier and now?</p> <p>How have the changes affected your life or those of your family?</p> <p>What are some of the public spaces in the area?</p> <p>Can you describe them?</p> <p>Do you use them in your everyday life?</p> <p>Are there any areas that you avoid? Why?</p> |
| 3. INTRA-HOUSEHOLD DYNAMICS | <p>How are decisions made about who does what in the family made?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt: access to (1) education; (2) leisure time; (3) spaces outside the home <p>Do you think your life is different from your mother's/daughter's when she was your age? In what ways? What has caused the changes?</p> |
| 4. SAFETY | <p>Do you feel safe around the area?</p> <p>What are some of the challenges?</p> <p>How do you think one can ensure safety? Does clothing matter?</p> <p>How can the area become safer?</p> |
| 5. CIVIC ACTION AND AWARENESS | <p>How long have you been involved with [NGO]?</p> <p>How did you first get involved?</p> <p>What has been the nature of your involvement?</p> |
| | <p>Who are some of the people that help with public amenities and safety?</p> <p>Do you have any interaction with the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nagar Sevak and MLA? • Strongmen? • Police? |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| | <p>Can you tell me a little about the people in your area?</p> <p>How do people engage with one another?</p> <p>Do you get along with people in your neighbourhood?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompts: Do people discriminate based on religion, caste, place of origin, or wealth? <p>Has tolerance increased or decreased over time?</p> |
| 6. URBAN CONTEXT | <p>Outside [neighbourhood], are there any places you visit often? That you like to visit?</p> <p>What do you think about the way the city is changing?</p> <p>What makes a good city, one that you would be happy to live in?</p> |
| 7. FUTURE ASPIRATIONS | <p>What are your hopes for the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the area? • In your own life? |

Appendix 3: Research ethics assessment

I include below the research ethics assessment form that was approved prior to commencement of fieldwork:

I have read and understood the "Research ethics: Guiding principles" and "project ethics" sections on the intranet. I do not have any personal or professional conflict of interest that is relevant to the research project. My research does not involve the use of social media. It will not be harmful or intrusive to people, the environment or animals. No financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) will be offered to participants.

Gatekeepers: I may require an NGO to connect me with respondents in selected communities. Here, I will be mindful of my positionality and any existing power relations between the gatekeeper and participants. I will seek to preserve existing links and relationships between gatekeepers and participants as well as myself and the gatekeeper throughout and beyond the fieldwork. Even when I have gone through a gatekeeper I will endeavour to follow the same ethical standards; I will conduct interviews privately to protect data quality and confidentiality. However, I will not have any formal or informal association with any government or non-governmental organisations during my fieldwork.

Vulnerable participants: The research will include interviews with elderly people, and other vulnerable groups. For these interviews, I will pay attention to going through the consent form to explain the project aims as well as provisions regarding data use and confidentiality, especially when requesting audio recording. I will also pay careful attention to ensure that elderly or otherwise vulnerable respondents are comfortable with the topics of discussion and reassure them that any topic they are uncomfortable with can be skipped.

Sensitive topics: The research is focused on the gendered politics shaping urban public spaces. Overall, I do not envisage this posing any pain to respondents. Nevertheless, interviews and focus groups may discuss women's perceptions of risk or vulnerability in public spaces. I will attempt to conduct all interviews privately so respondents can speak openly, and will consider safeguard their privacy if and when discussing sensitive topics. I will not press participants to discuss sensitive topics if they appear uncomfortable even if such topics come up to preclude any psychological harm. Moreover, if respondents appear distressed during or after the interview I will provide them with contact details for counselling services. I will reassure them that while I would like to assist them in seeking help, all content of the interviews will remain confidential.

Human participants: I will consider the ethical implications of having human participants in my research. I will provide each respondent with a consent form (which I will make available in English and the two main local languages, Hindi and Marathi). I will go through all the provisions of the form with them have participants sign a copy for my records. The form will state that I am a student, apolitical and independent from the government or any local NGO. It will include a broad overview of the research aims. It will clarify that data collected will inform my PhD thesis but also other publications in the public domain (academic and potentially also popular media) but privacy of all respondents will be respected.

Respondents will be informed that they can terminate participation at any time without explanation and I will provide them with my contact details in case they wish to retrospectively withdraw at a later stage (up to three months after the meeting).

The research design will be sensitive to the privacy needs of all participants. In this regard, the form will specify that any information shared in interviews will be anonymous but I may use anonymised quotes (with only broad descriptions of stakeholder type) in publications. In the case of focus groups,

the consent form will request all participants to respect the privacy of others but will state that I cannot ensure confidentiality due to the nature of interaction. All data collected (interview or FGD notes, transcripts and audio recordings) will be securely saved and anonymised. For local residents, the saved data will only include general area and socio-demographic characteristics. Similarly, with government officials of NGO representatives it will include the type of position and area of work, unless explicit and written permission is sought to attribute any quotes to them in their personal or institutional capacity.

Confidentiality of data from humans: The fieldwork will include interviews and focus groups with a range of people. I will do my best to conduct interviews in private as far as possible. Although this may not always be strictly possible, I will be mindful of the privacy concerns of respondents at all times during the fieldwork.

Confidentiality will be difficult in focus groups; I will emphasise it to all group members before a discussion to re-establish the importance of participants' privacy, but the consent form will state that due to the nature of focus group discussions I cannot control confidentiality. I will inform them that they can terminate participation at any time during the discussion. In addition, I will ensure that FDGs are conducted so that persons outside the group cannot overhear the discussion.

Thirdly, while interviewees will often be identified through snowball sampling, I will be mindful to not reveal any information provided by previous respondents and protect the privacy of individual respondents in these cases.

Finally, all data collected (interview or FGD notes, transcripts and audio recordings) will be saved in a password-protected drive, coded and anonymised to only include broad characteristics. The coded names with contact details for follow-up correspondence will be saved in a separate place and be password-protected.

Covert research: I will conduct participant observation in certain public spaces to understand how different spaces are being used by different groups of people (with a focus on gender and age differences). This data will be collected in busy public spaces, and for practical purposes it will be almost impossible to seek informed consent. Moreover, data collected will be anonymous, and therefore should not have any negative ethical consequences. Any visual data collected (e.g. photographs or videos) without explicit consent will also only be in public places where people do not have the same expectation of privacy as in private, and such data will only be publicly disseminated or published if the privacy of persons is protected and they cannot be individually identified.

Assistance: I will seek help from an assistant when conducting fieldwork in selected communities. In this case, I will go through the department's ethics guidance with the assistant prior to any field interaction to ensure that they comply with the same policy that I do.

International research: I will conduct fieldwork in India, where I was resident for 20 years and am a citizen. Since it is my home country and additionally I have previously undertaken desk-based and field research in the Indian context, I have a comprehensive understanding of the local cultural and political sensitivities.

Compliance with Data Protection Act: I will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. All data collected will be based on informed consent. Participants will be provided with a consent form which I will go through with them and request them to sign a copy. This form will include an overview of my identity, purpose of data collection, a description of how the data will be used and stored, and measures taken to safeguard confidentiality. I will also provide all participants with my contact details in case they wish to review the interview transcript or withdraw participation. I will only collect data

relevant to the project, which should be adequate to explore the main research questions but not excessively invading the privacy of respondents. Any visual data collected during or after interviews will be will explicit permission, and the consent form will include how this may be used and disseminated (except in public places, as discussed above). Finally, all data collected will be stored on a secure, password-protected drive with anti-virus protection to safeguard the data.

I will report all issues, however trivial they may seem, including if an incident occurs during the matters covered by this assessment.