NEOLIBERAL ISLANDS: GATED SPACES, PERMEABLE BOUNDARIES
AND URBAN HYGIENE IN MUMBAI, 1990-2013

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This thesis sets out to understand the manifestation of power and its varying relationships with identity through a spatial analysis of neoliberal Mumbai. It aims to illustrate ways in which sweeping global visions are received in specific localized ways on the ground, and the ways in which these are influenced by, and influence the identity of the users of that space.

The appropriation of power, and its resultant degrees of displacement, is being viewed through the lens of spatial analysis theoretically informed by Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space*, which sets up a tension between perceived, conceived, and lived space. The notions of displacement are informed further through the lens of hygiene, brought out in Mary Douglas’ conceptualization of dirt as matter out of place. These hierarchical relationships, and manifestation of control, range from a fair degree of compliance to a strong resistance, impacted deeply by the identity of the user.

The positioning of the observer and observed is greatly informed by a feminist lens, which also helps provide an intersectional understanding of identity. The research was conducted through interviews, on-site observations and informal conversations at various sites in Mumbai. Spaces repeatedly mentioned as symbols of modernity and hygiene evoked my curiosity, leading to observations and further interviews. The spaces that held particular interest for me were the call center, the gated community, and the mall; all are spaces that proliferate in specific ways through neoliberal policies.
While the idea of a gated community is not new in India, there is a particular form of gated community that has accompanied the advent of neoliberalization. This gated community is being conceptualized as a myopic spatial locus of various conceptions of gated: gated spaces, gated minds and gated lives. A mall often caters to a populace similar to the one inhabiting the space of the gated community, and influences the setup of hermetically sealed networks in the landscape of the city. While the call center clearly manifests the workings of the neoliberal policies through the insertion of an alien, globalized object within the dense urban fabric, this thesis attempts to unearth the manner in which local networks of adaptation are formed in relation to it.

The thesis demonstrates the manner in which space elucidates aspects of displacement, how hierarchies in societal structures have been re-formulated, yet stabilized, despite claims of liberation from tradition, and how attempts at adaptation through compliance, negotiation and resistance take place in space.
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introduction

This thesis brings out the relationship between manifestation of control and intersectional identity through a feminist spatial analysis of spaces epitomizing change emerging from neoliberal policies in the city of Mumbai. It uses the lens of hygiene to understand the nature of displacement emerging from change; the systems of control as well as the reaction to this power in the gated community, the mall, and the call center, all spaces that have proliferated in distinct ways in the past two decades. The argument is that these changes play a role in shaping and polarizing users’ identity. However, these attempts are not received unequivocally, and the reactions they face, in the form of compliance as well as resistance, make for specific iterations of generically understood global processes. Space becomes both a container as well as an exemplifier of these ideas.

These understandings have been shaped through ethnographic research that I conducted by interviewing women of different classes and occupations, and by making observations in the spaces they occupy. This is being framed by theories that address ideas of exclusion and spatial analysis in order to identify perception and activity in space as indicators of broader systems. This thesis aims to open up complex, partial understandings of the workings of large socio-economic and political systems at various scales.

Since the 1970s, and intensifying in the 1990s, the phenomenon of globalization has become immanent in formulating a discourse on the relationship between culture, people and knowledge. India began to plug itself into these networks through its increasing interest in
the urban, which was institutionalized with the establishment of the National Commission for Urbanization in 1988. With the liberalization of its economy in the 1990s, the nation shifted from a centrally planned to an increasingly free-market economy, bringing about significant changes in Mumbai, the commercial center of the country. Global entities in various roles of production and consumption started to exist alongside local economies that were struggling to adapt themselves to increasing competition. Along with numerous other cities around the world, Mumbai was being rapidly transformed from a regional hub for administration, small-scale manufacturing and commerce, to a strategic global center, acting as a node for the flow of activity, economy and people. Paradoxically, this also led to territorialization within the city of Mumbai, a phenomenon observable in other rapidly growing cities as well, such as Istanbul, Shanghai, Sao Paulo and others. Partitioning of urban space is often seen as a major catalyst in creating new structural conditions that are both the cause and effect of globalization.

The interpretive lens through which changes in these cities are viewed is most often that of “developmentalism, an approach which broadly understands these places to be lacking in the quality of city-ness, and which is concerned to improve capacities of governance, service provision and productivity...This imposes substantial limitations on imagining or planning the futures of cities around the world.” The government and private developers in Mumbai have been hinging on this mode of understanding in order to maximize profit and portray a

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certain universal image of the city, thereby capitalizing upon the city as a resource. Certain explorers in the fields of urban studies, architecture, filmmaking, art, and literature have been growing increasingly skeptical of the myopia in this kind of vision. They often find government policies and the resultant increase in privatization exclusive and elitist, ignoring peripheral voices.\textsuperscript{3} In their works, these researchers attempt to be more inclusive, displacing the existing hegemony by presenting the perspective of those marginalized by gender, class, caste, ethnicity, age or profession. I intend to contribute to this body of work. In accounting for a multitude of subjectivities while forming the framework for the thesis, gender is of particular relevance to me. I find this account often absent in research approaches towards the city, and I believe this could provide an important wedge for introspection into the nature of change. However, as I began conducting the research, I found gender as a category inadequate for the questions I was seeking to answer, and began nuancing it through the idea of an intersectional identity presented in feminist theory\textsuperscript{4}, where various facets of one’s identity can provide insight into structural causes of choices and opinions. The feminist analysis goes beyond the provision of gender inclusivity, to bring out struggles of power and dismantling of binaries through intersectional identities, as well as help in situating me as the researcher.


My perspective as an insider or outsider to the city of Mumbai was muddied at various times in the research, often intentionally, sometimes not quite so. This dilemma takes place while conducting interviews, visiting spaces and considering the audience for the work. These positions of the insider and outsider are not polarized binaries, and while they often create confusions, I believe they allow me a critical reflexivity while writing about my observations.

I have lived in Mumbai for most of my life, and that has a deep influence on my choices regarding various aspects of the research. However, my knowledge of the city does not stem merely from an internalization of a lived experience of the city, but additionally through academic as well as professional engagements.

I believe the city itself faces a similar inside-outside conundrum. Even in a contemporary understanding, Mumbai [known as Bombay before circa 1995] is most often considered a product of colonial times, with interventions led by the British as well as the native elite\(^5\). It is perceived as being relatively distanced from its immediate hinterland, both physically and notionally, although there are attempts to reinforce cultural connections through the construct of a historicist geographical boundary that would foster cultural ties indicative of a glorious past\(^6\). Even within itself, there are simultaneous times that exist in conjunction with one another, giving rise to various lenses and possibilities, as the city is: “…in a continuous state of transformation and are comparable to a palimpsest: a text or a parchment that has been written on, erased, and written on again…A city is made of multiple layers, making this


exercise of digging up the past an archaeology of the city”. Various layers of community and infrastructure from different moments in time are present within close proximity in the geography of the city. These do not get slickly effaced, but leave behind certain vestiges. The tool of the palimpsest becomes an interesting way to understand landscapes that may appear as conflicting through a positivist lens. The seemingly contradictory landscapes require grounded fieldwork to detangle its complexities, without allowing for naïve polarization.

The fieldwork for this project was conducted mainly during the months of May and June in 2012. I conducted semi-structured interviews, where themes often emerged during the course of the interview, or through conversation in the gaps between questions. In all of these, I found assumptions and choices influenced by gender as well as ethnicity and class complicating easy correlation of gender with formation of opinion. Places mentioned repeatedly, particularly as allusions of modernity, caught my attention. As I began to visit them, I met people who worked there as well as those who were visitors. Conversations with them ranged from rants about the city to the way they found their personal agency within the rapidly changing urbanscape. An iterative process of research was set up through periods of reflexivity between interviews and observations on site.

From various interviews and on-site conversations, what struck me strongly was the repetitive mention of the word or notion of hygiene used adjectivally for domestic as well as public spaces. It was brought up in conversations about dust, grime, their kitchen, street food and in multifarious other ways. It was used to make associations with their assumed

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role in cleaning spaces, about advertisements related to cleaning and sanitation, in how the interviewees made choices about spaces they were comfortable going to, and in how they viewed new developments as well as infrastructure. In some interviews, their version of the history of the city seemed to indicate a rapid deterioration of the city through increasing levels of unhygienic conditions.

From the fieldwork, I began to realize that spaces could act as the loci, from whence conversations about hygiene as a regulating device could begin. The question of control within spatial analysis is framed through the idea of hygiene. The idea of exclusion was formed through the way Douglas conceptualizes dirt, as

…matter out of place. This is a very suggestive approach. It implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt then, is never a unique, isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements.8

In this way, it is possible to decipher patterns that are formed through imaginations of order, and the way in which they get transgressed when that imaginary construct gets trampled upon. In order for things to remain easily identifiable as coherent, an element has to be identified as dangerous, thereby securing the rest as being normalized and in order. This is not a notion that has emerged solely in contemporary times. In chapter one of the thesis, there are examples of the way sanitation was used as a strategy for control in defining

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boundaries for populations in colonial times. There is a historical continuity in the application of these ideas, with specific iterations arising with the advent of increasingly globalizing forces informing this process of defining “the other”. The thesis also demonstrates ways in which boundaries and the resultant displacement are not merely a result of top-down control, but also manifested in the ways people monitor themselves. These ideas are theoretically expanded using Michel Foucault’s ideas of governmentality⁹.

These offer a segue into related ideas of the behavior of a body in space, and how certain acts, and resultant spatial manifestation, can be seen as compliance or resistance to a prescribed system of control. Individual acts are seen as indicator of patterns that lead to a “discursive construction of power and knowledge and the political contestation of relations of domination and subordination.”¹⁰ These acts of the everyday, often disregarded as mundane, provide important links to broader shifts in economy, society, and space. A spatial analysis of these relationships proves insightful, as space becomes the stage as well as the initiator for manifestations of change. I borrow my framework for spatial analysis from Henri Lefebvre’s The Production of Space, where a triad between perceived, conceived, and lived space is set up. These modes of understanding are not set up as a binary, but rather a manner of thinking within which the social interactions within a space can be used to bring out the politics that govern the making of space, and also the ways in which the making of space can affect the interactions that take place within it. Space is understood neither merely as a set of co-ordinates, nor as a set of activities, unaffected by those very co-ordinates.

A framework set up through the expansion of the theoretical understandings of power, identity, and spatial analysis has been expanded in Part One. Following this is the analysis of three spaces in the city using that framework. The gated community, the call center, and the mall; spaces that symbolize changes taking place in the city, the country, and various parts of the world as a result of neoliberal policies, are being used to describe the relationships between power and identity in space.

As elaborated in chapter four, the gated community is understood as a spatial locus of various conceptions of gated; gated spaces, gated minds and gated lives. While the idea of the gated community is not new in India, there is a particular form of gated community that has accompanied the advent of neoliberalization. Presenting myopic illusions of community and the way in which they are to live, these spaces clearly project a desired user. The notion of boundaries, the creation of a controllable cosmos, and the transgressions from these in gated communities is being explored. Depictions in visual culture and media are being used to support the on-site observations and interviews in the gated communities.

The call center is explored in chapter five. This space has mushroomed as a result of neoliberal policies, leading to rapid and often fairly abrasive changes, as well as a multitude of fresh forms of negotiations. I am attempting to understand this by shadowing female call center workers in their spaces of work, rest, leisure, and consumption. The imposed spatial artifact attempts to displace existing systems, while traces of these continue to hover. Understandings about changes in the environmental system, property ownership, tenements
and flexible use of spaces through time are derived through a spatial analysis in and around a call center.

The space for shopping underwent a radical shift in the 1990s in India with the advent of the mall, as illustrated in chapter six. This led to shifts in the idea of shopping, as well as the shopper. The privatized cosmos of shopping that has been introduced with the arrival of the mall, extends hermetic networks beyond itself, leading to the seepage of privatized and exclusive ideas in other spaces or experiences of city life as well. Through interviews conducted within as well as at the edge of the mall, various forms of insiders and outsiders are revealed, along with the role played by the image of modernity that is touted in the architecture of the mall.

Through these, there is a broadening in the understanding of spatiality, justifying subjective accounts with the plea that outright objectivity is also created using a subjective basis. I think these tools for understanding and representation can go a long way in informing processes that formulate change. These constructs can help unravel transformative possibilities present in acts of resistance. While I am not opposed to the idea of change, and truly believe it is perpetual, the thesis is meant as a pause to process changes taking place, and provide a critical lens for viewing them.

The perception and behavior of different women in a variety of spaces is being used to bring out relations to power and knowledge, thereby allowing one to challenge prevailing constructs of space. My research visualizes the role and position of different women in
society through an inclusive spatial narrative, thereby also informing the discourse on feminism in India through a prioritization of intersectional identities. Given the global forces that create increasingly strong linkages between cities, the relations between gender and space I chart in this research reveal specific conditions of Mumbai’s complex urbanity, while pointing towards implications at a much larger scale.
part 1
“A power relationship...can only be articulated on the basis of two elements that are indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that “the other” (the one over whom power is exercised) is recognized and maintained to the very end as a subject who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up.”

— Michel Foucault

The notion of power does not exist in a vacuum. It is contained within various sets of relationships: between power and resistance, between the perpetrator and subject of power, the setting or space within which power is manifested, and the manner in which it is represented. Power may be considered the actualized or potential ability to veer control of thought or material. However, this abstract idea does not help one to fathom its working, which makes it necessary to contextualize it through components such as the actors, space, representations or other factors that makes it discernible. It operates by attempting to narrowly define the range of possible behaviors that an individual, community, or populations may exhibit. Through methods that range from subtle to overt, power directs the choice of conduct. My ideas about power borrow heavily from Michel Foucault’s conceptions, brought out in his lectures, and books about institutions, particularly in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. His constructs often seemed totalizing, with no space for emancipatory action. As a reader, I felt pushed to prove that in every situation where I was able to use his theories to understand the play of power, there also simultaneously existed ways of resisting.

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power + struggle

The transformative ability of both power and the struggle it encounters make their relationship fragile, with “each constitut[ing] for the other a kind of permanent limit, a point of possible reversal. A relationship of confrontation reaches its term, its final moment (and the victory of one of the two adversaries) when stable mechanisms replace the free play of antagonistic reactions.” 12 Even in the condition of relative victory of the forces of power, there exist subtle tactics through which forms of domination are adopted or at the very least are rendered manageable.

The struggle against forces of power throw light upon its forms and the populations that there is an attempt to regulate through displacement, and simultaneously provide clues for changing the boundary of power. Boundaries manifested by power present a paradox of sorts, as the setting of a limit itself makes it vulnerable to transgression: “The limit and transgression depend on each other for whatever destiny of being they possess: a limit could not exist if it were absolutely uncrossable and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows.” 13 In this way, the relationship between power and struggle is thrown into a state of potential flux.

neoliberalization

Ideas of power are being used to analyze a space and time that has been deeply impacted by neoliberalism as a mindset, in its influence on the economy, and subsequently finding its way

12 Foucault, The Subject and Power, 341.
into myriad aspects of everyday life. In its pressing focus on privatization, neoliberalism redirects the role of the government in creating a setting that favors “strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade”\textsuperscript{14}. The government recedes from an active role in economic intervention, removing or at the very least reducing former restrictions on trade, and promulgating privatized enterprises. In this way, the state plays an active role in guaranteeing the freedom of certain individuals. Neoliberalism works “under the assumption that ‘a rising tide lifts all boats’, or of ‘trickle down’, [and] neoliberal theory holds that the elimination of poverty (both domestically and worldwide) can best be secured through free markets and free trade.”\textsuperscript{15} This has been further facilitated through the ease in movement of capital across former controlled geographical boundaries, except at times where the idea of the nation is threatened.

While these ideas allow for a broad generalized understanding of neoliberalism, its applications vary significantly with location as well as over time, despite its relatively short history. The intertwining of localized dynamics and external forces lead to the formation of iterations that are complex as well as unique. However, there is a persistent undercurrent of increasing marginalization of the “least fortunate elements in any society”.\textsuperscript{16}

**neoliberalization: Vision Mumbai**

In attempting to understand the shifting boundaries of power brought about through neoliberalization in Mumbai, the ‘Vision Mumbai’ report provides a useful starting point.

\textsuperscript{14} David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2.

\textsuperscript{15} Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 73.

\textsuperscript{16} Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 118.
The report was prepared in 2003 as a set of recommendations by a private consultancy, McKinsey\textsuperscript{17} hired by a citizen group, Bombay First\textsuperscript{18}. With the aim of transforming Mumbai into what McKinsey calls a 'world-class city'\textsuperscript{19}, it provides directions for development in the subsequent decade in Mumbai. The recommendations attempt to bridge the gaps between identified issues and aspired standards. It reflects an elevated degree of comfort with ideas of privatization, characteristic of neoliberalism, which began accumulating in the 1990s in India.

Vision Mumbai depicts a dismal image of Mumbai based on what it recognized as the inadequacies in the contemporary condition of life in the city. Calibrations are set up to compare Mumbai with other international cities. It uses Cleveland, Ohio, USA, and Shanghai, China, as its international models of wrecked cities that have been converted into prosperous, flourishing financial centers. The tone used to describe the state of the city is morbid; “[Mumbai] must implement the eight initiatives outlined above, and it must do so now. Otherwise it is in grave danger of collapsing completely”\textsuperscript{20}. Prepared within a period of four months, the report presents the need for a radical shift in mind-set “rather than continuing to think incrementally”\textsuperscript{21}. It demands the shift in focus to privatization of various aspects of urban life. It presses for the idea of making Mumbai a center for consumption. Instead of attempting to improve existing services, which are often inadequate, there is a

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\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{17}McKinsey & Company is a consultancy that has worked with businesses, governments, and institutions in various industrial sectors to provide solutions that would maximize efficiency and economic growth. It started in the 1920s, and currently has 102 global offices.
\textsuperscript{18} Bombay First was conceptualized in 1994 in a seminar focused on developing Mumbai as an important global financial hub. It has committees that deal in various areas of expertise, and is a consultant to the State Government.
\textsuperscript{19} Private enterprises as well as government often use this term with the connotation of a city that is a center of technology, finances, professional services and easy availability of amenities.
\end{flushleft}
strong inclination towards spending huge amounts of money in providing new services for people who are considered the legitimate citizens of the city. The report serves both to reflect ideas of privatization that were present in ways of thinking about the city, and also serves to deepen those notions.

While responding to ideas immanent in the report and in the minds of various people involved in decision-making for the city, the thesis tries to problematize the effects of privatization through an ethnographic understanding of the perception of space. This thesis attempts to position these observations within a framework set up by those in sites of power, and while both types of narratives refer to one another, they also contain facets of information that vary widely. It is through this difference that the domination and simultaneously the reactions to it are made visible.

**hygiene + displacement**

In understanding domination through a notion of boundaries, the aggressive act of setting limits causes displacement. Probing into the nature of this displacement can be fruitful in partially uncovering the larger scheme of power. In her seminal work *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, Mary Douglas conceptualizes dirt as matter out of place. Through this understanding, it is possible to understand various types of displacements. It establishes the position of power through what it displaces. It also helps to understand that in a certain situation or condition, an element may be considered dirt, but this would necessarily be relative. Additionally, it complicates the easily naturalized relationship between dirt and disease.
If this displaced dirt is imagined to have agency, then it brings to light that boundaries are spaces of tension. If boundaries are “pulled this way or that the shape of fundamental experience is altered. Any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins.”\textsuperscript{22} The use of sanitation in demarcating urban space and regulating behavior is present in contemporary conversations, such as the Vision Mumbai report, as well as in urban planning schemes in colonial times.

**hygiene + displacement in the colonial project**

In the history of Mumbai, these ideas are observable from the nineteenth century, at which time the British were occupying India. Assuming power in various guises, separation as a method of marking presence was a tool that was effectively understood and employed. The distance provided by separation allowed for observation as well as self-protection from perceived danger. This danger may have been in the form of a physical attack or stemming from fear of being contaminated by the local populace. These separations also helped in marking territory and reconfiguring spatial relations, causing an affirmation of attempted hierarchy. This is palpable in large-scale urban reform, which was justified through the often constructed need for sanitation. This is evident in the list of key events that take place in the development of Bombay as listed in Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra’s book titled *Bombay – Cities Within*, particularly in examples of administrative setups for regulation, construction of road infrastructure, open space configuration, founding of hospitals and asylums, and laying of water works.

At this time, scientific theories of sanitation were being developed in Britain, and being implemented in the form of planning practices, particularly in their colonies. This scientific understanding was being used to naturalize the link between sanitation and progress. Amongst other theories, one that held great traction was the “one linking disease to noxious gases or ‘miasmas’ arising from poor or contaminated soil or the exhalation of organic decomposition from the earth [placing] great emphasis on environmental conditions as central to health”\(^{23}\). Similar to European contexts, the germination of an epidemic directly resulted in the creation of an establishment to bring about urban reforms in the colonies. In the case of Bombay, the bubonic plague of 1896 led to the inception of the Bombay Improvement Trust. However, urban reforms based on ideas of sanitation proliferated in thought far and beyond the repercussions of a single event.

The persistent application of sanitary regulations and urban reforms was intended to be the route to improved health in the city. During the nineteenth century, slums were feared and denounced as health menaces, moral reproaches, and social dangers to society. They constituted an aesthetic affront and a functional liability to ‘modern’ cities.”\(^{24}\) With the idea of contagion deep-seated in the mind of planners, and others who had a say in the development of cities, congestion and other outcomes of industrialization became a source of concern. Wide scale transformations, often displacing people and their houses rather than disease were touted under the guise of sanitation. The promise of reformation was a city free of dirt, and thereby free of evil. There was a lofty notion that a person would be cured of his


problems, and thereby progress as a citizen. Instead of a move towards egalitarianism, the model of hygiene served to deepen existing fissures and reinforce inequality. However, once the dirt shifted beyond the visual realm of the British, it ceased to be a priority in their minds as well. It is this that truly brings out the fallacy of the egalitarianism of the project of urban reform based on a model of sanitation.

The city of Bombay seems to have had several simultaneous times that existed in close geographical proximity. Various layers of community and infrastructure from different times were present in close adjacency in the geography of the city. These were not entirely erased and replaced, but left behind certain vestiges. These vestiges, as well as the close proximity of indigenous settlements and newer enclaves of the British are important to understand the nature of changes that were taking place in the city of Bombay. In addition to this, Bombay was not planned to be a large-scale city. It developed as a port, and expanded on the basis of need. Because of this, there had never been large-scale master plans developed for the city, which made the application of modern technological methods to bring about sanitation a difficult project. These factors caused even the colonists to enforce schemes that could maneuver more carefully within the existing fabric. Techniques of isolation and separation had to be carried out at smaller scales.
The relative distance of Bombay from the hinterland furthered the need to create spots of isolation within the city instead of spreading out radially. While the city did grow in a linear manner, the potential for growth was relatively constrained. This led to the formation of enclaves within the fabric of the city. Newer development came up in close immediacy to earlier settlements.

Roads became an efficient tool for the purpose of isolation. The primary purpose of roads was to facilitate movement, especially that of goods. However, the decision for roads does not seem to be driven purely by a model of efficiency. Schemes for roads often proposed an east-west orientation, which seems counter-intuitive to the pattern of north-south growth of the city. In order to uncover the intent of these projects beyond allowing an objective
passage for movement, it is useful to reverse the understanding of roads from that of connectors to that of dividers. The network of roads often bounded within them native communities, while allowing for ease of passage on the edge. In this way, the British could navigate and bypass areas without having to enter them. The projects of Princess Street (1905) and Sandhurst Road (1909) exemplify these notions.

Figure 2. EW orientation of Sandhurst Road (north) and Princess Street (south). Author, 2013. Base map: openstreetmap.org/ (accessed April 2013).

A number of prominent roads led to tree-edged esplanades (locally called *maidan*); a massive colonial undertaking. The esplanades directly fronted colonial institutional projects, and could not fulfill one of its predominant aims of providing relief to people who lived in dense inner city conditions, which were at some distance from the Esplanade. On the contrary, they provided a buffer space between the colonial engagement with the city and the inner city areas, thereby containing the spread of disease from the native town onto the British enclaves. In addition to this, the Esplanade was of too large a scale to provide shade during
the harsh summer in Mumbai. The largeness of scale was more suited to the show of power than any promotion of well-being.

The British were not alone in their agenda of exclusivity in planning city spaces and using sanitation as a mode of separation. Local elites adopted these ideas in order to prove their separation from the remainder of the native populace. Amongst the local elite, the Parsis play a pivotal role in Bombay. The Parsis are an ethnic minority. They are members of the Zoroastrian community, which migrated from Persia to Western India sometime between the 8th and 10th century. Most of their population resides in Mumbai. They play an important role in the development of industry in India, and are widely known for their philanthropic enterprises. As brought out in Preeti Chopra’s 2011 book titled *A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the Making of British Bombay*, the participation of the Parsis dismantles the notion of a singular powerful and a singular powerless, and renders categories of race limiting. The perspective of the insider and outsider as polarized binaries also becomes muddied in this framework. The Parsis lie on the fringe, between the colonial ruler and the native mass. As a community, they play the role of slightly detached narrators, who can neither be considered outsiders, nor desire to be complete insiders. In this process, the Parsis not only caused transformations in the city, but also reformulated their own identity. Their contributions made it “often seem as if the Parsis, rather than the British, built British Bombay.”

The Parsis carried out widespread building activities. Amongst many other typologies built by them, hospitals, asylums, and gated communities are effective in addressing questions of sanitation and segregation without diminishing the overarching philanthropy that is certainly inherent in their work.

The Parsis established a large number of medical institutions. They adapted plans for these buildings from those in continental Europe, incorporating notions present in Indian religious complexes as well as climatic adaptations.


Within the male quarters in the hospitals, there were separate areas reserved for the Parsi community. Similar ideas were incorporated into the designing of asylums as well. These divisions were based on race and caste (and implicitly, class) as well. However, while there was a clear gendering of spaces, there was not always a clear differentiation between spaces
for European and native women. Morality played its way into spaces for women, leading to
the inclusion of separate rooms for women of ‘doubtful character’. Nuanced notions of

clean from dirty patients, beyond ideas of physiological sickness and health, were present in

the organization and layout of the hospital and asylum spaces.

While medical institutions were of a more public nature, the Parsis set up segregated spaces

for living. These gated communities have prevailed up to the present day. In the building of

these gated communities such as Cusrow Baug, veins of stratification within the community

are exposed as well. With restricted ownership as well as entry, these walled off spaces

signify a parallel project of colonization. Despite this, they are not cut off from their

surroundings, as all other activities of daily life are carried out in the urban realm.

Figure 4. Cusrow Baug, a Parsi gated community with restricted entry, 19th century. Source: Marzee
2012).
The play of power, and the displacement it causes becomes manifest at various scales, including individual behavior, community beliefs as well as in built form and policy. These differences cause shifting boundaries, which are also observable through time. An important aspect in any manifestation of power is that the reaction to it can vary from resistance to compliance. This compliance can lead to a mode of behavior where subjects of power may exercise the acts of control over and possibly, against themselves. The unraveling of identity is important in understanding both the construct of the subject and forms of resistance. The following chapter addresses the way in which the ethnographic study in neoliberalizing Mumbai unravels the importance of an intersectional identity in understanding choices and perceptions of space.
I began fieldwork in Mumbai during summer in 2012 by asking questions about their daily lives to my mother, my aunts, and other middle-class women they put me in touch with. The intention was to problematize their everyday by questioning hegemonic systems where male biases and production of knowledge is co-constituted, thereby validating the experiences and spaces of the everyday as sites of knowledge. This is in keeping with the philosophy of feminist standpoint epistemologists, who are keen to situate knowledge by “start[ing] thought from problematic lives and tak[ing] everyday life as problematic.”

fieldwork

In these interviews, I asked women about their routines, temporally as well as spatially. I also took note of how they thought of these spaces through the way they chose to describe these to me. Sometimes an informal conversation following the interview provided greater insight than the set of prepared questions, and helped me refine the set of questions for the subsequent interview. I began to find that my interviewees often chose to diverge from the questionnaire. In this way, the structure of the interview was not limiting, as the interviewees often attempted to break out of it. My prior familiarity with my mother and aunts’ routine

26 Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective” Feminist Studies 14, no. 3 (Fall 1988), 575-599.
and spaces of everyday allowed me to navigate fairly easily through the interviews. However, the easy correlation of hygiene with progress through spatial analogies at multiple scales was fairly revealing to me.

![Figure 5. NS orientation of the railway line. Author, 2013. Base map: openstreetmap.org/ (accessed April 2013).](image)

The reference to the sea in creating a sense of boundary recurred along the course of the interviews. It was an edge many enjoyed interacting with, and did so without apprehension. The north-south axis of the city was an important geographical reference as well. This was further emphasized if they extensively used the railway or waterfront (both of which are predominantly north-south) to situate themselves. The east-west references were significantly fewer. While some of these women commuted for work, others worked from
within or near their houses, and the rest described themselves as housewives. The women who commuted regularly often occupied more linear domains, while women who worked from home frequented a more radial network extending outwards from the space of home into their more immediate neighborhoods.

Religious activities played a significant role in the lives of many women, extending from the spiritual realm to include the social as well. Food and activities associated with it was another important marker for many of my interviewees. This included various parts of the process, including grocery shopping, preparation of the meal or eating out, and planning for these things, as is evident in this quote by T, a 38 year-old housewife:

On a weekday, I start early morning with making, I mean, just start with a little bit of breakfast planning first. And then, the tiffins 28 for the children...and even for my husband. So all that has to be done like they all leave in that range; by nine they’re all gone. So you know the first thing is getting all the food organized. Once the breakfast and lunch is looked at, and then you start dealing with what other things you need over you know the week. Sometimes I plan it for a week and sometimes I plan it for a couple of days. It all depends invariably because we are vegetarians so a lot of fruits and vegetables you need on daily basis. And also making you know different kinds of salads and stuff so you need all the ingredients. So you take an hour to see what all is required for the week or a couple of days.

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28 Tiffin usually refers to a packed lunch.
**emerging themes**

Over several cups of nimbu paani (lime juice) or hot tea with middle-class women, I was explained how the city was a safe place to live, but was incredibly unclean, dirty, and unhygienic. I did not press too much to elicit a more detailed commentary about their notions of safety, aspects of which are interestingly explored in Why Loiter?... particularly uneven geographies of safety in the city, the difference between geography of fear and violence, and the gendered difference in the understanding of safety.

I was keen to understand what they meant by the words unclean, dirty, or unhygienic, which were used synonymously in and across conversations to refer to both spaces and people. The idea of Mumbai as unhygienic seems to be a subject of constant discussion, both colloquially and officially. Colloquially, people are constantly lamenting about the state of the city in contrast to its potential, as is brought out in the following quote by P, a 50 year-old self-employed entrepreneur:

> Mumbai is not clean. No, not at all. Mumbai brings so much revenue but still it doesn't have the best of facilities... anything coming up anywhere. It is pretty random.

In official discourses, this is reflected in the mottos of various citizen groups, such as Bombay First, in the *Clean Mumbai, Green Mumbai* campaign and others. However, in my conversations, I saw a point of difference from earlier discourses about the lack of hygiene

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30 Although adopted informally by various citizen groups, Clean Mumbai Green Mumbai is the motto of the NGO ‘I love Mumbai’ which was started in 1989 under the leadership of Nana Chudasama.
in the city. While earlier discourses illustrated the lack of hygiene in the city through comparison with other cities, in my conversations with my interviewees, I noticed they often deployed a comparative model with other spaces within the city itself. The aspirational spaces were new, ‘clean’, and exclusive. There was a dialectical relationship set up between hygienic (or unhygienic) spaces and the people who did, or could inhabit them. This did not include those responsible for their upkeep. I was curious about spaces that were spoken of as new and clean, and the implications of such a portrayal, as well as physical presence of these spaces. Some of my interviewees recommended that I visit these spaces to understand the hints of progress, albeit few, that had been made through private endeavors in the city. The spaces being referred to are privatized spaces emerging in relation to neoliberal policies including gated communities, malls, and new office complexes.

insider-outsider

I am born and brought up in Mumbai, and familiar with a significant number of spaces mentioned in the interviews. However, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed my interviewees to provide insights into facets of these spaces that I had not considered, greatly informing the fieldwork. I was an outsider to some of their ways of thinking, while being an insider in other ways. My position as an insider is not formed merely by living in the city, but also involves academic and research endeavors. Elizabeth Grosz suggests a way in which the relation between the inside and the outside can be employed in order to develop a position, which I have found to be useful while attempting to piece together my understandings of the city that are neither those of a complete outsider nor those of a ‘true’ insider. I am skeptical of the notion of a ‘true’ insider, as I believe that can become a
platform to justify statements that are being made about a space, without requiring any clarification. It places the researcher in a position of superiority by their very virtue of being from a place, often without allowing for a critical examination of the work. Grosz suggests an *inside out* and an *outside in* structuring to demonstrate

how the processes of social inscription of the body’s surface construct for it a psychical interior. In other words, [she attempts] to problematize the opposition between the inside and the outside by looking at the outside of the body from the point of view of the inside, and looking at the inside of the body from the point of view of the outside, thus reexamining and questioning the distinction between biology and culture, exploring the way in which culture constructs the biological order in its own image…

While Grosz is attempting to provide a broad possibility of a relation between any body and the city, I am specifically attempting this method of analysis for myself, where I am temporarily removed from the physical context of my city, while attempting to critically analyze a certain condition within it. Through this relation, it might be possible to suggest “…a model of the relations between bodies and cities which sees them, not as megalithic total entities, distinct identities, but as assemblages or collection of parts, capable of crossing the thresholds between substances to form linkages, machines, provisional and often temporary sub- or microgroupings.”

Through this process, the writer ceases to be a detached, all-seeing eye, and becomes part of the process through which a particular person or group of persons is understood. Instead of

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setting up a binary between the ivory tower and an anthropological model where the researcher gains a completely objective knowledge of the subject’s perspective by immersing in the culture, these help understand the way in which careful negotiations can take place between the positionality of the researcher, and the nature of their writing. “As Haraway says, ‘the political struggle is to see from both perspectives at once because each reveals both dominations and possibilities unimaginable from the other vantage point’.”

After conducting about fifteen semi-structured interviews, I began to visit areas or locations in the city that were mentioned repeatedly in interviews. Alongside, I continued the process of interviews, conducting about twenty-five more. These were different from prior visits to these areas, as they were consciously informed by my interviewee’s perceptions in addition to my own. These perceptions also helped me position myself, through the premise of relational identity: “Who I think I am depends on me establishing in what ways I am different from, or similar to, someone else. We position ourselves in relation to others.”

Primarily, I visited Malad, Lower Parel, and Bandra, localities my interviewees believed (and I thought so as well) had undergone perceivable transformations in the past two decades.

33 Gillian Rose, “Feminism and Geography: an introduction” In Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 1-16.
34 Rose, Feminism and Geography: an introduction, 1-16.
Upto the 1990s, Malad was a suburb in Mumbai consisting of a fishing village and housing for an ethnically diverse middle class. It became an ideal location for various forms of development because of relatively low real estate rates coupled with strong connectivity by rail to the remainder of the city. The landscape of Malad has now become speckled with call centers and malls. The service industry of call centers was outsourced mainly from the United States and malls were introduced as havens of consumerism. The mushrooming of these programs has led to the development of various ancillary programs, leading to rapid and abrasive changes.
On my visits to Malad, I spoke to vendors outside the call centers in order to gain insight on the work and activity patterns of call center employees. I also had the opportunity to interview a female call center worker. In addition to this, I spoke to randomly selected people on the street who were willing to impart their views on the neighborhood and the changes it has undergone. On a visit to a nearby mall, one of the largest in the city, I also learnt, amongst other things, about a different set of hours offered to cater to the needs of call center employees.

I went to some apartment buildings located on a major arterial road close to the call center, and interviewed various households in these apartments, gaining their insight about the area. Some housed traditionally understood ideas of families, while others were occupied by a group of young migrants who had moved into the city in search of a job in the film industry and were temporarily working in the call center. While people in these apartments were leading radically different lives, there were networks of convenience that had formed within the apartment complex, such as a tiffin service.
The next site of exploration was Bandra. Bandra is a suburb that has always had a mixed demographic, with a large number of ethnic villages within it.

Figure 8. Snapshots of Bandra: Linking Road, Bandstand, view from Bandra skywalk, old bungalow in Bandra (clockwise starting top left). Author, 2012.

The Portuguese established it, and there are still some vestiges of their presence in the architecture of the houses and churches located here. This area has undergone significant gentrification in the past couple of decades, and a new wave of elite lies in close proximity to the ‘native’ population of this area. It has become one of the most prominent areas for gourmet food and street shopping.
Visiting Bandra is an everyday experience for me, as I live in close proximity to it. When I went with the purpose of ‘studying’ it, I often met people I knew. A casual conversation with them about their insights of the area became far more in-depth accounts because of familiarity. A lot of them had lived in Bandra for a long time, spanning several decades. There was a sense of pride about living in an area that has now become a popular area in the city. However, there was also a strong outsider-insider relation between people who live here, and others who only come in the evening to shop or eat in these areas. While Bandra does not house the call center, mall or gated community that I will speak about in following chapters, some of the people I spoke to in Bandra drew interesting comparisons of their shopping experiences in Bandra with the newer malls. Gourmet restaurants and boutique stores in Bandra often tend to attract the populace living in some of the newer gated communities, making it a useful place to gain insight into other spaces that I subsequently studied in greater detail.

The third and final site I visited was Lower Parel. Parel was one of the original seven islands that formed Bombay, and housed the cotton mills from the colonial times up to the 1980s. Most of these have now shut down, and after a fair degree of contestation\(^{35}\), malls and offices for multinational companies have replaced them. There is juxtaposition of old architecture with newer functions, as well as a lot of new construction. A lot of mill workers’

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\(^{35}\)After most of the mills shut down, the government drafted a regulation to allow redevelop mill lands. Through an arm-twisting of the policy that provided an equal division of gains between the owners, laborers, and the city, the new policy allowed for almost all of the land to get transferred to owners. They subsequently went in for private development, which is currently underway.
families still reside in chawls, which are facing a serious threat of redevelopment. In addition to this population is a large floating population, which comes in during the day to work in malls or offices in this area.

Figure 9. Snapshots of Lower Parel: Grand Thornton office, sidewalk near freeway, remnants of mills, view from bridge leading to railway station (clockwise starting top left). Author, 2012.

I visited this area at different times of the day and spoke to people who were variously employed. I also spoke to people who lived in this area; in the chawls or in the newer gated communities, which are on the rise in this neighborhood.

The chawl is a housing type in Bombay that was inspired from army barracks. It was meant to provide quarters for male migrants who had come to the city to work in the cotton textile mills. Subsequently, they moved in with their families.
**intersectionality**

I made observations of the landscape, trying to see it through the way my interviewees spoke about it, while attempting to somewhat disentangle these from my former conceptions of those spaces. I was provided a rare insight by people who lived or worked (or both) in these areas, of which I hurriedly made notes after completing conversations with them. These ranged from rants about the city to the way they found their personal agency within the urban fabric. This process of going back and forth between interviews and observations in new landscapes helped inform both processes. Most of my interviewees on site were women as well, belonging to a different section of society than those I had formerly interviewed. I realized that there was a need to treat these varying social positions in relation to one another, and not view people through the singular category of gender. Power relations became more decipherable through the unraveling of various segments of people’s identity. This intersectionality of identity helps foreground a richer and more complex ontology than approaches that attempt to reduce people to one category at a time. It also points to the need for multiplex epistemologies. In particular, it indicates that fruitful knowledge production must treat social positions as relational. Intersectionality is thus useful as a handy catchall phrase that aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it.\(^{37}\)

The complex layering of identity, particularly bringing out the relation between gender and other factors such as ethnicity or class makes one question assumptions about choices made by a person or group of people that seem natural, but can be tracked down to conditioning in a specific layer of society.

I became interested in the way the relation between hygiene and control sets up domains of spatial perceptions that vary, but are not polarized, for different individuals. Instead of attempting to stratify perceptions through the multiplicity of (seemingly never ending) categories of individuals, I am exploring hygiene as a regulating device through the mall, gated community, and call center. I am attempting to use these spaces as the loci in marking out domains that exist for some users of this space. Evading from the idea of boundaries as a static concept, I am simultaneously probing to unravel the way in which acts that are compliant or resistant to the prescribed system of control emerge. These could potentially help address the “discursive construction of power and knowledge and the political contestation of relations of domination and subordination.” From this emerges the construct of identity in a way that can valorize a subjective perspective to understand broader shifts in economy, society and space.

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chapter 3: spatial analysis

“The past leaves its traces; time has its own script. Yet this space is always, now and formerly, a present space, given as an immediate whole, complete with its associations and connections to their actuality. Thus production process and product present themselves as two inseparable aspects, not as two separable ideas.”

— Henri Lefebvre

conceptualizing space

There are seemingly limitless facets of identity that play a role in shaping the different, yet not polarized perceptions about the condition of change in Mumbai. Seen through the lens of hygiene, these can help unravel relationships between control, boundaries, and transgression. This has been further focalized using space as a locus. Space, as described by Lefebvre in his 1974 book titled *The Production of Space*, manifests intent, embodies change through time, and contains activity. The dialectical forces of power and the struggle that it faces are present in space, made visible through boundaries, domains and modes of occupancy. The manifestation of power relationships historically as understood through the lens of hygiene, and causalities emerging from contemporary policy may be observable in a single space.

The synonymous description of space and people in this ethnographic endeavor indicates a convergence in their associativity. Broadening the range of interviewees providing this description to include users embodying divergent intersectional identities allows for a

multiplicity of perspectives to shape the formulation of space. As the researcher, I straddle between these understandings in order to construct an understanding that is inclusive, yet partial. The simultaneity of time and perception produces a space with facets that may seem indecipherable, but are not unrecognizable. The creation of this construct of space is to enable an insightful glance at the relations between processes that lead to its formation. The space itself is then “what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others. Among these actions, some serve production, others consumption (i.e. the enjoyment of the fruits of production).”

Space and its representation, if synthetically separated, lie between these spheres of production and consumption, fulfilling the requirement for neither fully, while containing aspects of both. Space is both itself, and its representation. Conversely, representation too stands in for space, as well as for itself. Using either or both as a point of entry can reveal how space produces an effect that causes and results in practices. Through this effect, space (and its representation) lies in between the processes of production and consumption. Cindi Katz, a feminist geographer, has described this affect as ‘spatial fetishism’.

**Lefebvre’s triad: perceived, conceived, and lived**

Distilling these separations through Henri Lefebvre’s triad clarifies the relationships between intent, manifestation, and activity. In his book titled *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre describes the triad of perceived, conceived and lived space (alternatively spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space). The relationship within the triad,

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40 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 73.
Lefebvre suggests, can occur through the consideration of the *body*, which allows the triad to shift from the spatial terminologies of spatial practice, representations of space and representational space to one which accounts for a concrete realm, perceived, conceived and lived. A move from a dualistic understanding to a triad is intentional in preventing “echoes, repercussions, or mirror effects”\(^{42}\), purposefully evading the cataclysmic eventuality of a straightjacketed comprehensive system. The slippages that occur in the attempt to control through the veil of hygiene can be better explained through a system that is intentionally not complete. My positionality as the researcher allows me to draw relationships between the different modes of spatial thought within the triad.

Perceived space (or spatial practice) is the emergence of a distinct space from a particular society. However, as Lefebvre imagines this process to be a slow one, he projects that society itself is also being shaped as the conceptualization of the space comes into fruition. With globalization, imaginations of the shrinking world could be considered a spatial practice. In the neoliberal economy, this metaphor is taken forward at particular instances, as will be explored subsequently with the call center. Conceived space (or representations of space) is where the instrumentalists of the economy come in. Through them, the intent of the policy or society is manifested into built form. The examples I am exploring in this thesis are predominantly conceived through builders. Lived spaces (or representational spaces) are the ways in which society recognizes itself in space. This is often the dominated realm. However, the lived experience is not static, and there are imaginative strategies at play in these everyday realities.

\(^{42}\) Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 39.
The degree of looseness in these helps recognize control and the reaction to it. Forms of control are responsible for setting up boundaries within space. In its most direct form, these may be conceived through policy, which then get translated into concrete manifestations through architects and builders. The inhabitants of that space may be displaced from existing ways of living and subsequently forced to make adjustments. However, even as one reads this, one realizes the limitations of a causal chain of explanation. With a cursory glance, one can begin to point out several fallacies: 1) Space can never fully embody the intent or ideology of the policy 2) space does not get used exactly as it is intended to be, which is in itself hard to define 3) there may, certainly, be different degrees to which there is compliance or resistance to its intended usage 4) representation of the space plays an important role in translating intent.

**transgression, ethnography, intersectionality**

The third point brings to light the importance of ethnography in illustrating space and its effects; particularly the effectiveness (or not) of boundaries, both tangible and intangible, in privatized public spaces that aids exclusive attitudes and often serves to displace people. The enactment of this control may not be limited to a top-down manifestation alone, but is often internalized as well. In order to move beyond lamenting about the effects of top-down power, it is important to understand the reaction to power. Spatial acts can help us understand compliance, negotiation, resistance, or internalization of structures of power. Tools to resist power, I believe, already exist in acts of subversion that are observable in space. The descriptiveness in the ethnographic method can help segue from an analytical to an emancipatory model. The framework of space can also delimit the proliferation of
intersectionality, which has sometimes been critiqued in providing endless categories of people, thereby losing collective meaning.

There is an attempt to understand the relationship between control and resistance in space, through an intersectional notion of boundaries by analyzing the gated community, the call center and the mall. The following three chapters present the fieldwork in and about these spaces analyzed through the framework presented thus far. The attempt is to portray a glimpse into the present, documenting perceptions of built form that is currently underway, or has been completed relatively recently. It is meant to provide a place for ongoing reactions from the ground in a way that subsequent changes may be imagined.
part 2
chapter 4: at home in the gated community?

One can observe the transformations in the form of the home across the trajectories of time, location, economy, and occupants. Despite this, there is a prevailing overarching enduring notion about the home as a space for residence or refuge. There are observable differences in the individual appropriations of this space, even while maintaining its more sanctified association. The divergences follow trends that may emerge from cultural conditioning, economic needs, land pressures, or a host of other factors. These divergences inform spatial configurations, and are also formulated by the same. The relationship between the spatial configuration of homes and their individual appropriations framed by intersectional identities is being explored in a distinct iteration of the gated community, one that has emerged in Mumbai in the past two decades as a result of neoliberal policies. I explore this through interviews with women who live or work in and around these spaces, and on-site observations. The role of women becomes particularly relevant in light of their association with the home. The lens of hygiene becomes a useful tool in framing this relationship, particularly in unraveling complex causalities and navigating seeming paradoxes.

In order to understand the increasingly private sphere in landscapes that hitherto had a greater public component, I apply the tension between perceived, conceived, and lived space as brought forth in Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space*. It helps distinguish between policy that illustrates the growing apathy and divestment of the state from public housing.\(^4^3\)

\(^{43}\)The study on housing typologies by CRIT for the Urban Age program of the London School of Economics describes 21 housing typologies in the city of Mumbai. This brings out that there are a decreasing number of housing initiatives by the state, starting from the 1990s.
advertisements by builders indicating the desired inhabitant of new housing enclaves, and the ethnographic study conducted for the purpose of this project, which shows differing degrees of compliance or resistance to these new forms of housing.

As the researcher, I strive to understand the relationships and divergences between these understandings. For this purpose, I conducted my research in gated communities in the summer of 2012. I had easy access to the gated communities. As a privileged member of the upper-middle-class, I was not perceived as a threat. This was evident from my appearance, and I was not looked at with suspicion. Once I started clicking photographs, however, it was an entirely separate matter. Security guards and gardeners became suspicious of me, and would often warn me against doing so. While I tried to take photographs surreptitiously, I avoided doing so excessively, as I did not want to be prevented from entering, nor did I want people who allowed me to get in to get into trouble. Most of my work on gated communities took place through interviews of women who lived or worked in them. It also extended to interviews of women who did not live in gated communities, but who aspired to do so.

gated

A literature on gated communities in India clearly demonstrates a resistance to the conception of the gated community as a causality of Western influences, particularly those from the United States, and emphasizes their historical connections to earlier housing

44 Various advertisements on websites and newspapers have been used as points of reference in this chapter. While they show some variation in the services they promise, depending mostly on location, most new gated communities seemed to be geared mostly towards employees of MNCs and NRIs (Non Resident Indian). Most of the NRIs rent out their properties.
forms. Despite the presence of historical precedents, there is a significant disjunction between the present iteration of gated communities and older forms. Falzon describes the difference from former gated communities as, “…the degree of ‘inward-orientation’ they offer. …the new developments broaden the interactive field (even when they restrict it to the few) and offer a lifestyle wherein residents do not merely reside but live within the protective walls” (italics: mine). While older forms provided walls dividing residents from the surroundings, they were evidently more dependent on the surrounding neighborhood to carry out other activities of daily life. The newer gated communities are portrayed as independent from their adjacencies, offering alternatives to shift facets of daily life, which were formerly enacted in public space, to privatized, fortified spaces.

Presenting myopic illusions of community and the way in which they are to live, these spaces clearly project a desired user and use. This behavioral expectation evokes reactions of differing degrees of compliance and resistance from the users of the space, bringing forth important implications of the system. The reaction to a certain pure ideal of behavior from the users is in keeping with the Hindu idea of purity:

In Hinduism, for example, the idea that the unclean and the holy could both belong in a single broader linguistic category is ludicrous. But the Hindu ideas of pollution suggest another approach to the question. Holiness and unholliness after all need not always be absolute opposites. They can be

47 As discussed through the example of Cusrow Baug in chapter two.
relative categories. What is clean in relation to one thing may be unclean in relation to another, and vice versa⁴⁸.

The inward move emerges from a need for protection against perceived violence from the poor in the city as well as from other communities. This perceived threat stems from a xenophobia that has been on the rise for the past couple of decades, promulgated by fundamentalist right wing political parties⁴⁹. These prejudices mark religious minorities as well as lower-class migrants as outsiders. In becoming a locus for various conceptions of gated, these housing complexes demonstrate how gated spaces, gated lives, and gated minds, show an increasing degree of overlap⁵⁰. These somewhat synthetic divisions become useful in making distinctions between historical continuities, causal relations and growing xenophobia.

Gated spaces refer to the physical manifestation of these housing complexes, which solidify boundaries and create separation from existing networks. High walls and lack of visual connectivity create a cosmos that supports the portrayal of self-sufficiency. Gated lives refer to modes of living, where one may choose not to engage with the city around them. While this may arise due to a variety of factors, I am addressing choices (often class-based) that one may make in order to maintain social hierarchy and elitism:

⁵⁰ Stanley Brunn, in his essay "Gated minds and gated lives as worlds of exclusion." (Geojournal 66 :2006) broadens the notion of ‘gated’ from space to include attitudes as well. While he speaks broadly, and about both voluntary as well as involuntary forms of 'gated'-ness, this paper focuses on specific manifestations of these ideas.
Not unconnected to urban camouflaging, these spatial practices exceed embodiment and involve the all too familiar forms of bunkering and fortressing of particular patches of real estate as well as the increased gating of communities; urban, suburban, and otherwise…. Citadelization performs security, but so selectively that it almost rehearses and reinforces the very vulnerabilities it is staged to counter.\(^51\)

I relate gated minds most closely to issues that emerge from ethnicity, and ways of distinguishing oneself through categories that may be reiterated in media or political propaganda. Gated minds and gated lives are not mutually exclusive, but there may be moments of divergence.

**situating and projecting**

The Property Times supplement in one of India’s top selling newspapers, *The Times of India*, gives valuable insight into the projected expectations of prospective homeowners. Location seems to be of paramount importance. This is not restricted to connectivity to facilities, but rather its positioning in the geography of the city. Areas get re-named in property advertisements to re-locate it in one’s imagination, in the attempt to make them more prestigious, and thereby more desirable. This is observable in the advertisement of luxurious apartment buildings by the Lodha Builders\(^52\), where Lower Parel, which is associated with mills and middle-class housing, gets named as Upper Worli. Certain areas within Worli are elite residential areas, and have been so for several decades. The replacement of Parel by


Worli signifies a symbolic status shift. This symbolism has been deployed to leverage property values.


The projected user of a gated community may change depending on the location of the gated community within the city. On interviewing people who have recently bought apartments in gated communities, I found differences in the reason behind the choice to move into gated communities. The users who chose to move north were keen to buy larger houses, and this seemed like the most logical choice as real estate in Mumbai gets exponentially cheaper as one moves north. Land value determined by location often overrides facilities as well as size of tenements. The gated communities in the northern suburbs seem to cater to traditional multi-generational or nuclear families, or at least convey such a proclivity in their advertising. The gated communities in the central suburbs of the
city, which lie in close proximity to offices that are coming up on former mill lands, tend to
cater to a newly emerging middle class.

Figure 11. Map indicating the location of the northern and central suburbs. Author, 2013. Base map: openstreetmap.org/ (accessed April 2013).

This is made clear in the advertising of Kanakia builders\textsuperscript{53}, who build mostly in the Northern suburbs, and seem to cater to the richer within the existing populace, whereas the newer gated communities in Central Mumbai seem to cater more to NRIs (Non Resident Indians) and employees in new multinational corporations\textsuperscript{54}. Typically, their demographic consists of a slightly younger age group. Often, these are young couples where both partners work in


multinational companies with workplaces in close proximity to these apartment complexes. This is the demographic that is comparable to many of its counterparts elsewhere as well, and seems an imagined product of globalization: “Bombay’s middle class participates in aspects of global consumer culture (including globalized fast food, branded consumer goods, mobile phones)… Middle-class culture produces middle-class lifestyles, which include particular perceptions of space and its organization.”\textsuperscript{55} The other type of demographic in these localities are often moneyed youth whose families have made huge profits through the sale of former industrial lots; now prime real-estate, to developers. While these are trends conveyed through a few interviews and advertisements, it is difficult to ascertain these with surety, as gated communities are still on the rise, and have not been fully occupied.

The other point of interest conveyed through amenities listed in advertisements is the range within their claims. On the one hand, they offer top-notch ‘world-class’ facilities such as surveillance systems, swimming pools, manicured lawns, play parks with expensive equipment, gymnasiums, recreation centers, etc. On the other hand, they list drinking water, and proximity to public transport; facilities that one would consider a basic necessity for such a lifestyle. However, it has been observed that several townships have arisen without being plugged to public infrastructure. There have been times when there is a promise of a manicured lawn, but had no drinking water available.\textsuperscript{56} In order to avoid trepidation about such an outcome, developers find it necessary to add basic necessities as ‘amenities’.

\textsuperscript{55} Falzon, \textit{Paragons of Lifestyle}, 145-167.  
The gated community is flaunted as a hermetically sealed object floating within the supposedly dangerous landscape of the city. The notion of security is overwhelmingly present in the advertising of gated communities. This act often involves displacement or sealing off of an undesired population. The bliss of being cut off from the surrounding urban fabric requires a great deal of purposeful ignorance to existing conditions. New networks are formed to adapt to the aggressive act of establishing a privatized cosmos\textsuperscript{57}. This cosmos is to serve as a getaway from the city, while being located within the existing fabric of the city. Networks that are made with the existing city are often unimagined, or at least unacknowledged. There are also networks that are laid down in relation to malls\textsuperscript{58}.

\textsuperscript{57} Sequeira, \textit{Luxury Real Estate Trends in Mumbai}, August 2008.
\textsuperscript{58} This has been expanded in chapter six.
There is a perception of violence that promotes the shift to gated communities. T, a 38 year-old housewife, brings out the presence of objects that are meant to monitor and control behavior, and further the perceived need for a safe haven, in the following quote:

We feel safer in this new society. Because everything is surveilled, none of those dirty people from outside will come inside. It adds to the protection you know. This way we know everything that is going on, and everything that everyone is doing. Everyone will watch what [they] do.

However, I argue it does not do much beyond “...authorize a security state and routinize the ever-presence of terrorism in our midst. This routinization engages the popular imaginary and reproduces docility vis a vis the state and its security operations. And this is, of course, the intent of making visible that which is designed for invisibility”59. Instead of being placed

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59 Katz, Banal Terrorism, 349-361.
in a subtle way, the intent is that security cameras gain a strong presence, with a continuous reminder that monitoring is underway.

In the case of the gated community, this separation from the dangerous ‘outsider’ is present within the complex as well. While entry is restricted, the presence of domestic help is recognized, and there are often separate elevators for invisible people who have to be forcibly acknowledged. In this way, boundaries get transgressed, but with sufficient foresight, this transgression is controlled as well. The perception of violence is not only from the ‘other’ who is poor, but may also be directed towards those belonging to other ethnicities or religious groups as well. Earlier gated communities, with less ‘gated’ conceptions of living, purported similar sentiments through physical manifestations such as a temple dedicated to a certain deity, ensuring a corresponding occupancy. While these strategies continue to exist, there is simultaneously seepage of an unprecedented orthodoxy. Vegetarian fundamentalism has begun to gain ground, providing guidelines for people’s lifestyle choices within the boundaries of individual homes through prohibiting the preparation of meat.
This was illustrated during an interview with B, a 45 year-old housewife who occasionally participates in her husband’s business:

Where we used to live earlier, there were some Gujaratis, some Sindhis, and some Catholic people living. But this new place we have moved to; only Gujaratis live here. See, if you cook non-veg, you are not allowed only in this place. So we have mostly Gujaratis, and then there are some Marwadis here as well. But this is good you know, I had not really paid too much attention to this earlier, but this way I don’t have too much smell that comes when they cook chicken and especially fish.

Most large communities that are vegetarian are wealthy business communities, and have the clout to spatially demonstrate a newfound intolerance for certain religious or ethnic groups.
These are demonstrated either formally in the society’s set of rules and regulations, or informally by controlling sale of apartments.

Thus, while seeking to adapt oneself to an image of modernity, there are other factors that come into play, muddying the idea of a direct translation of Western values into Indian society. This hybridization in transformations occurs in space, lifestyle as well as behavior. One can see the myriad complexities that accompany the process of change, the various iterations that take place at the level of the individual and society in order to transform, as well as change in symbolic value of a certain act or expression across place and over time.

**spaces within**

The idea of control in creating a cosmos is also present in the way the relation to nature is imagined. Nature is turned inward, present through locally unavailable exotic flora, as well as expensively maintained lawns. There is an attempt to capture views of nature present beyond the walls of the gated community through high-rise windows in individual apartments. The idea of embracing nature through consumption is a popular marketing strategy. In reality, the view may be of another high-rise in close proximity or of a slum, which one may not want to acknowledge, as M, a 35 year-old financial consultant suggests:

I did not realize that Parel had so much greenery till I saw the ad. Actually, I must tell you, it is only from one room that we see the green properly. But it is nice to have that from your house. [Other than that], we mostly see the slums around, but the builder was saying that they won’t be there for long. Everything is getting redeveloped, so they will get removed. After those are
gone, we will be able to see the green properly…(after a while)...but maybe more buildings will come up, then I’m not sure what the view will be.


Nature in all its forms becomes a commodity, beyond the green grass and the sea that one can consume through one’s window, to include unpolluted air, open space and protection from the overwhelming city.

Turning in from the window, one can see the dining or living space in the house. This is the social space of the house, where guests can begin to get a peek into the way one lives their life. The process of cleaning is primarily the responsibility of the woman, which she may do
herself or re-allocate to domestic help. The cleaning helps create a certain image of the house that can be portrayed to an outsider, which gets closely linked to the worth of the dutiful woman, as S, a 51 year-old housewife, speaks about during her interview:

I have her [domestic help] coming in the morning and in the evening. She does all the dusting, and sweeping and mopping of course. She also does vessels and washes the clothes. I call her extra when I have family who is going to come. You know how they are – if everything is not [absolutely] spick-n-span, then I am not a good wife.

Even if she is able to set up a hierarchy where domestic help is present for kitchen chores, “it is usually women who shoulder the responsibility for choosing, shopping for, preparing and cooking ‘proper meals’ for the ‘proper family’, and that they privilege their partners’ and children’s preferences over their own tastes.”* The relation between the woman of the house and the domestic help often becomes an interesting play of power. While the woman of the house is in a far superior situation financially, she is often the one confiding in the domestic help, as well as attempting to extract gossip about her neighbors. The domestic help working in various apartments in the complex socialize with one another in service areas of the building, or while they baby-sit the children during their time of play, and exchange news and stories about their respective employers. In this way, an alternative trail of knowledge is formed about the happenings in people’s lives. They are often in close contact with the security guards in the buildings as well. In these ways, there can sometimes be an anomaly to the top-down distribution of power. The maid as the confidante holds an

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important position, one that may be advantageous on occasion. Often, their invisibility, particularly at times of family gathering, make them an important, though ignored, presence.

Figure 14. Service cores housing invisible populations. Author, 2013.

Decoration is primarily the responsibility of the woman in the house, so that the image of the house and the food on the table often become a representation of her as well. There is a new age orthodoxy that makes its way into the planning of space as well. Vaastu Shastra and Feng Shui, in their modern, supposedly scientific forms, have become mechanisms to re-configure space adapting mythic norms of healthy lifestyles, which can help ward off any evil faced by the family. These ideas perpetrate into the arrangement of furniture, as well as the choice of hues and objects that form the space. I argue that these do not lie in contradiction with the Westernization of one’s lifestyle. In order to preserve a mythic
spirituality against a corrupting (yet considered necessary) outside influence, constructs of tradition are created for people to hold on to.

The fear of losing one’s identity to a corrupting Westernization is strongly reflected in television since the late 1990s as well. On television, there is a strong portrayal of woman as the ambassador of culture. Increasingly regressive, television soaps strongly promulgate that women in society are to maintain its honor. This is demonstrated through various soaps, which deploy the archetype of the evil mother-in-law\textsuperscript{61} and the docile daughter-in-law who is to maintain the honor of the family. Despite rapid change, there is a stabilization of gender roles through television, and to a somewhat lesser extent, in daily life as well.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{fig17.png}
\caption{Vaastu Shastra shaping the design of an apartment. Source: Vastu Compass. Available from: http://www.vastucompass.com/FengShui.asp (accessed December 2012).}
\end{figure}

A host of other activities take place in the living space in ways that may not have been originally intended. It may serve as a multipurpose space, with the possibility of becoming a workspace during the day. Numerous women work as entrepreneurs from home, running cooking classes, tuitions for high school students, or yoga classes. These spaces are adjusted to their needs, often returning to normalcy when the man of the house returns in the evening. P, a 50 year-old self-employed entrepreneur speaks about this:

After lunch, this space becomes where I conduct my tuitions from. In the evening, we re-arrange the tables a bit, because my husband likes to see this as a family space. I also like it that way. This way, we can have both things happening, just at different times. When guests are over, we don’t actually have guests very often, but when they come, we put a tablecloth over, so that it looks more comfortable.
Figure 19. Tables arranged for classes conducted from home, re-configured as dining space. Author, 2012.

This is, however, seen decreasingly in apartments in gated communities. There is increasing polarization maintained between the homemaker and the career woman. G, a 43 year-old housewifespeaks about her move to a gated community:

Earlier, we used to have yoga classes from home. When I initially moved into this new house, it did not seem like the type of housing society that would allow for yoga classes, and it seems a little inconvenient, especially because I would need to go downstairs to allow people to come upstairs. But after some time, we re-started, but mostly with other ladies who live in this society itself. In the afternoon time, when our husbands are at work, and children are at school, and we are done cooking for the evening. Actually, I also heard that in one of the other flats, they do have regular classes.

The liminal space, allowing for flexibility in work, seems to be on the decline. This may be because this form of the gated community is still new, and requires greater adaptation to suit the lifestyles. Or it also likely that people have begun to adjust their lifestyle to the demands of this space.
conclusion

The newer form of the gated community is distinct from earlier forms, in its attempt to create a culmination of different conceptions of gated. Various means are adopted for the conceptualizing an oasis that can be cut off from its immediacies, both physically as well as notionally. The acknowledged interaction with the city takes place through a commodification of the aspired views from apartments in the gated community looking out into the vegetation in the city and the sea beyond it. Fear is used effectively as a rhetorical device in order to make changes that can help combat this projected fear. This is done at multiple scales. At the scale of the gated community, this includes the insertion of high walls and surveillance systems to keep out dangerous elements while keeping oneself safe inside, while also controlling the behavior of those who are meant to be protected. At the scale of the home, fears of losing one’s identity to increasing Westernization are combated through allusions to the idea of tradition. However, there are various ways in which these forms of control do get transgressed, though this liminal space of adaptation and negotiation seems to have somewhat diminished in scope. Despite the claims of progress, gender roles are often stabilized, an idea that is strongly reinforced in various media, particularly on television. Media plays a pervasive role in conveying manufactured collective aspiration and methods of differentiating between populations. Even in the face of rapid changes, various forms of hierarchy through processes of cleansing are maintained.
...was a notice on a flyer I had seen several times while traveling in the Western railway in Mumbai in the early 2000s. Contact details and fees accompanied these signs. A significant number also provided details about the type of accent they could train a person to speak in; British, American, or Australian. The majority focused on training people to speak with an American accent. It is important to observe that they are aiming for a crowd that could already read English (as these notices were mostly in English), and is focused on honing skills for speaking English without the vernacular accent. This training was meant for people who wanted to work in call centers, where the lion’s share of their work was to answer customer service calls from pre-prepared templates in geographies removed from their own.
This chapter looks at gendered spatial perceptions of a call center in order to understand the manifestation of control that accompanies neoliberal policies, and compliance and resistance to it. The landscape of certain pockets of the city of Mumbai has become speckled with call centers and malls in the past two decades as a result of neoliberal policies. The mushrooming of these programs has led to rapid and often fairly abrasive changes, as well as a multitude of fresh forms of negotiations. I am attempting to understand this by shadowing female call center workers, a new demographical addition to the area. Their spaces of work, rest, leisure and consumption are being explored to shed light on their perception of the space of the call center and its immediacies. The imposed spatial artifact attempts to displace existing systems, while traces continue to hover. The new space also creates its own set of displacements. A spatial analysis can prove insightful, as architecture becomes the stage as well as the initiator for manifestations of change. Temporal mapping helps understand adaptive use of space and transformed spaces for new programs. The dead of night, commonly assumed to be an unsafe time for women to be out in the city, is the time at which these women enter or leave work. There is a palimpsest of older beliefs juxtaposed with imported ideas that are neither perfectly aligned nor radically opposing.

For this chapter, a broader understanding of the built, social and natural landscape of an area in Mumbai has been carried out, leading to specific observations about ways of living, and the changes in these because of new jobs and spaces. Like “Entrikin [who] moves beyond the confines of a dualistic perception, deploying the concept of betweenness relative to place as a fusion of space and experience, the argument oscillates between objective and subjective
realities, the former being represented by “scientific” analyses of place and the latter by the notion of place as being defined by the particular meanings of individual people’s lives.”

Moving between the confines of dualistic perceptions helps bring out traces of existing modes of living that continue to prevail, which may seem subversive to the way an imagination of the global system has been disseminated. This global system sets up clear boundaries of inclusion and, thereby, exclusion. However, patterns of behavior demonstrate how these boundaries are often transgressed. A lot of these individual acts of resistance (often not intended to be so) go unnoticed even by those attempting to set up a critique of developmentalist ideas. I am trying to uncover these in order to nuance the hegemonic discourse of unidirectional flow of power.

The aspect of time hinges multiple aspects of the call center. There are renewed ideas of time that get introduced through the introduction of a program that may function at Eastern Standard Time instead of Indian Standard Time. This creates alternative landscapes of the night, ideas of safety, and understanding of the space around the call center during the day. Networks of adaptation are formed, through the occurrence of a small number of associated entrepreneurs. These help understand the unanticipated edge conditions that occur between the call center and the surrounding space of the city.

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emergence of call centers

In the 1990s, the Indian government opened up the economy to allow foreign companies to invest in India. “Spurred by the logic of the marketplace, the state strategically flexe[d] its policies to make the local environment conducive to the flow of capital. Illustrative of this move is the creation of spaces in India designated as Special Economic Zones, which are advertised by the state as “hassle-free environments” promising various types of incentives for foreign investments.” Changes were made to facilitate construction of new buildings to house offices for multinational companies, and to allow women to work at times they were hitherto legally forbidden from doing. This was mainly to accommodate call centers, which would have to operate at nighttime in India in order to serve customers in time zones such as Eastern Standard Time [USA], Pacific Standard Time [USA] and Western Daylight Time [Australia]. India proved to be an ideal location for call centers, as there was a significant population that spoke English, had technical know-how, and still required lower wages. The location was also of convenience geographically, well situated between the Americas and Australia, so that it could serve time zones in Australia, Great Britain and the United States. However, most of the call centers were serving customers in the United States. The early 2000s marked an accelerated growth in call centers, particularly in Mumbai and New Delhi. They served a variety of multinational companies, some of which include “British Airways, TechneCall, Dell Computers, Citibank, GE, HSBC, CapGemini, SwissAir, America On-Line,

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and American Express”64. However, the rate of growth has significantly slowed over the past five years, starting in 2008.

The idea of working in call centers was popularized through notions of liberalization from tradition for the youth in India, who supposedly was looking West to break free from the shackles of age-old conventions that were restricting their growth. Advertising for call centers contained the idea that working in these Business Process Outsourcings (BPOs) would get the Indian youth closer to Western ideals and ways. Working in a call center has often been compared to living on an American campus. The call centers shroud themselves in mystery, attempting to isolate programmatically, architecturally, and temporally from the surrounding landscape. The contained box of the call center exudes signs that become associated with modernity, by imitation of an imagined West. Western influences go beyond the function of the building, and are incorporated in the architecture as well. By creating a form that is distinct from its surroundings, it marks a strong presence. This was certainly true when call centers first came up across various cities. However, with the proliferation of multinational offices, this image is no longer as unique, though still contains the impression of outside influence.

Once these call centers opened, the media “depict[ed] the employees as enjoying their fiber-optic journeys into a new identity. A popular thread of reportage claims that call-center jobs have liberated Indian youth and turned them into avid consumers, thereby providing a

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necessary nudge to the traditionalism of Indian society, especially with regard to women.”

Unlike other types of jobs in multinationals, which, while having their own set of issues, do allow for an upwardly mobile career graph for their employees, the employees in call centers are mostly in a dead-end job, with little scope for growth. The job profile also prevents a great deal of interaction within the workers, thereby “producing a class of workers who are isolated, dispersed and effectively invisible.”

**process of research**

I conducted my research around the call center in Malad, Mumbai over the past summer. Unlike the gated community, I had great difficulty in gaining access to the call center, so the bulk of the research was through conversations with people while they moved in and out of the space. During the process of waiting, I had extensive conversations with entrepreneurs who had set up mobile food stalls on the edge of the call center. They were free to talk while waiting for people to move in and out of the call center. There were certain slots in the day when they were relatively relaxed, and could interact with each other. A lot of them worked in different locations during the day, and came to the area around the call center late in the evening and stayed till late in the morning. Most of them lived in fairly close proximity.

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66 Sassen, *Global Cities and Survival Circuits*, 254-274.
There was a strong presence of security and surveillance that extended beyond the physical boundaries of the call center. Photography was prohibited even on the streets around the call center. This was not enforced through the presence of signs, but rather through security guards who prevented me from taking any photographs. It is unclear whether there was an aspect of illegality in the construction of the call center, or whether it was simply a strategy for intimidation and the show of power, or both. While visiting apartments in the neighborhood around the call center, I had the opportunity to interact with families who have no direct affiliation with the call center or call center employees who were residing in the same apartment complex. They held interesting perceptions of one another, although these were not completely consistent across conversations with different people. There was a significant variance in the use of space by these different groups.
I am studying Mindspace, the first call center in the city of Mumbai, which was built over a former dump. This former edge of the city was suddenly integrated into the narrative of the city, although through a program that did not intentionally set up the possibility of ties with the city.

Historically, the British handed out large tracts of land in what is now Malad to various Parsi families as rewards for loyalty. Amongst these the prominent landowners were Byramjee Jeejeebhoy and the F. E. Dinshaw Trust. Their descendants often found it difficult to keep slumlords and encroachers off these large properties. As a result of this struggle, negotiations leading to various types of settlements cropped up within the precinct. Malad was
predominantly a fishing village with low-rise settlements for middle-income housing\textsuperscript{67}. As this was the northern edge of the city a few decades ago, it was viewed as a potent barren land to dump the waste of the city. This lasted from 1968 to 1998. As development constantly pushed the boundary of the city northwards, the dumping ground for the city also followed suit. In 2002, the dump was unscientifically shut down after a Supreme Court order. The land was leveled and handed over on lease by the F. E. Dinshaw Trust to the C. L. Raheja group for development. It suited their requirements both because of its well-connected location as well as its low price. As the transformation from a dumping ground to a site for development did not take place in a scientifically approved manner, it led to the release of toxic gases into the construction of the call center and multinational offices\textsuperscript{68}. In these constructions, electronic equipment ceased to function because of the toxicity of the gases. However, they pressed on, substituting equipment while continuing to expose human beings to it.


Numerous movies as well as television shows are shot in this area. While some of it takes place because of its proximity to Film City, which lies on the other side of the highway, a lot of bungalows given out on rent in this area are used for shoots. These are usually located close to the sea, and have a small beach. They can be considered representative of the introverted nature of the imagined future communities that are to inhabit this neighborhood. They build their own cosmos, with no reference to the conditions around. Taking this forward in a hyperbolic manner is a still from the popular mainstream movie called Enthiran (released with English subtitles as Robot), in which there are massive human formations that are shot in this area of Malad. These represent schizophrenic futuristic models of human society, where human beings are merely part of a larger formation that is controlled by
technology. The selection of this area for this scene may be considered satirical, marking the beginning of standardization pushed forward by technology.

The buildings housing the call centers as well as offices of multinational companies are built in concrete framed construction, with cladding of glass and metal panels. In India, this was symbolically a sign of development, through the importing of ideas purported as Western. This sealed architecture, fairly alien to the sub-continent, was aspirational as it represented a sign of modernity, and thereby, prosperity. However, these materials do not respond well to the hot, humid climate of Mumbai, requiring vast amounts of money to be spent on air-conditioning.

The sense of isolation from its surroundings is evident in this call center. It is located at the edge of the coast, and would have a direct view of the sea along its long elevation. However, there are no windows along that side, and this facade contains most of the servicing for the building, including the toilets. The building is faced with glass, where it is not possible to peer in from outside. However, the reverse is not easily viewable either. The offices are arranged so that the employee is not distracted by views of the outside, and can focus solely on their computer screens. In this way, it marks itself as separate from its surroundings.
Jobs in call centers are enticing as the starting salary is significantly higher than other jobs requiring similar qualifications. It is often likely that the call center worker is better educated and has easier access to resources than their customers, who may be unwilling to do this job because of the stigma associated with it. The average call center worker is in their mid-twenties, with only a few going over early 30s.\textsuperscript{69} Piecing together excerpts from documentary films\textsuperscript{70} as well as conversations on the edge of the call center, the people working in call centers may be loosely imagined in three categories. The first are young students, who are tempted to quit higher studies in order to pursue a job that can give them immediate monetary benefits. However, there is limited scope for upward mobility in these jobs. The second are those who are the primary breadwinners for their family. This job is central to the income of the family, and they earn far more from this job than they would have otherwise with their qualifications. The third consist of a populace bored with their existing lifestyle, and who have joined call centers in order to pass their time while doing something somewhat respectable. While the call center has a fairly constant demographic of the middle class, it does manage to have a fairly wide range within it. Apart from the telephonic

\textsuperscript{70} Ashim Ahluwalia, \textit{John and Jane} (future east films, 2005)
operations in a call center, there are types of services that are required for maintenance and upkeep of the call center. These services take place both outside and within the call center, and people who do these are fairly invisible in the imagination and discourse of a call center. A lot of them are cleaners, who form significant anomalies in the system. They are disregarded by the system, while working to maintain the image of the call center.

The work in the call center has very particular implications for women. Unlike a lot of other globalized industries, there has not been a significant gendering of labor in this instance, especially in India. Both male and female call center workers are present, and organizations like to promote the idea of gender neutrality. However, it has been observed that women do not usually rise to higher positions within the call center\textsuperscript{71}. This is also related to the fact that most do not work at call centers for as long as their male colleagues because they are expected to start a family at a certain age, and there is an expectation that a ‘decent’ married woman would not work at a call center. However, there are often instances when this is not the case, particularly when the woman is the primary breadwinner. There is an aura of independence for the new-age woman that is created around the job of the call center worker. However, there is a simultaneous presence of a certain stigmatization directed towards the woman working at night. Unfortunately, the defense for this has also been created by setting up a binary between the decency of the call center worker and the more questionable prostitute who works at night. This serves to reiterate the theme of hygiene, marking a body as clean through an analogy with another that is comparatively unclean. The

\textsuperscript{71} Mukherjee, \textit{Women and work in the shadow of globalization}, 275-290.
privatized nature of the call center creates an additional sense of surveillance and perceived security for the woman, thereby making her more visible.

There are other bearings of this work as well, on both genders. Their social life is reduced, as they are unable to maintain it with ease because of their work timings. K, a 36 year-old call center employee addresses this in her interview:

Day not too many people end up coming because everyone know that my timings are very odd. So I’m generally sleeping during that day. If at all anybody wants to come, I prefer if they come when I have a holiday or an off. But it’s really hard. My friends are accommodating and all, but it’s difficult.

Leave for national holidays and festivals is not granted, as the schedule of work is supposed to be in sync with the country of the customer, who may not be celebrating a certain festival. The nature and timings of the work has a significant impact on health. There is an impression of ‘here today, gone tomorrow’, which contributes to the anxiety associated with this job, creating competition, and affecting the mental health of the worker. The interaction with people in different geographies also leads to a cultural influence. The employees are exposed to another society through their telephonic conversations as well as the training they receive at the call center: “The post recruitment training normally includes four to eight weeks of in-house orientation in voice/accent, soft skills and grooming English speaking in accents. Exposure to TV shows and Hollywood blockbusters; reading fiction and so on are
resorted to train the agents and familiarize them with western culture and etiquette”\(^{72}\). There is intent to integrate consumerism into the psychological make-up of the call center employee. Several programs that come up in association with call centers build up on the needs of a consumer who has been constructed through this exposure\(^{73}\).

A physical and psychical denaturalization of the self takes place through the change in name, adoption of an American accent and the nature of the work itself. The conflict between the ‘material outside’, where influence from Westernization is permitted and the ‘spiritual inside’, which has to remain uncorrupted from Western influences, is demonstrated well in the case of the call center worker. This seems to reflect ideas that are expressed about the idea of mimicry and slippage during the period of British colonization of India\(^{74}\).

**re-appropriating other programs**

The construction of offices has been accompanied by a proliferation of new housing. New apartment buildings are often hastily built, and builders make promises far beyond what they are able to provide. They purport a homogenous user group as occupants for these new apartments. New buildings have sometimes been depicted as gated conceptions, without any reference to an existing context.

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\(^{73}\) Mathangi Krishnamurthy, “Resources and Rebels: A Study of Identity Management in Indian Call Centers” *Anthropology of Work Review*, vol. 25, no. 3-4 (2004), 9-18.

\(^{74}\) Amongst others, Homi Bhabha, in his book titled *The location of culture* has expanded on these concepts.
Within these singularly imagined spaces, there have been multiple individual adaptations. Instead of a homogenous family entity that lives in the apartment, there are multiple ways in which it begins to get used. Some of these are families, some apartments get converted into offices, and some get occupied by paying guests, where many employees of call centers as well as migrants with other occupations live together in a single apartment. They have modified the apartment to suit their needs but cannot make any permanent changes in the structure of the apartment.

A 2-bedroom apartment sometimes becomes a home for 6-8 people. Usually, all the occupants are of the same gender. Partitions may be added to provide a sense of privacy for
different occupants. In some cases, the living room becomes an additional bedroom, so each room in the house apart from the kitchen becomes a private space for different members. There are apartments in which the kitchen does not get used at all, as they order all their meals from outside. Because of this, the area of the kitchen becomes an additional private space in the house. If an occupant is a call center employee working in a night slot, their bed might get used in shifts, so that two users can claim ownership to the bed, albeit at different times of the day. In this case, the routine has to continue on weekends as well. They adapt to one another in order to find their place in a city that they are trying to make their own.

Figure 25. Configurations within apartments within the same apartment block: rented by call center employees, conventional household, and transformation into office (left to right). Micha Baumgartner, Lukas Nacht, Kunal Bhatia, Aparna Parikh, 2009.

The conventional furniture present in an apartment is often used in ingenious ways. Spaces for display of artifacts become closets for someone who is using the couch in the living room as their bed. If there is no existing furniture in the apartment, paying guests do not get a great deal of their own, as they do not consider it their permanent home. They mostly buy second-hand furniture from the immediate vicinity. Stores selling construction material, as well as furnishings have cropped up in this neighborhood.
Families who live in the building are often not in favor of these paying guests, as they consider them a nuisance because of their odd working hours. There are negotiations made between these user groups, as each of them define territory and thereby lay claim to space. The common spaces in these buildings sometimes remain unused if occupants of the building are uncomfortable around one another. The builder too, does not pay great attention in designing these spaces, although their brochures consistently project green spaces in and around the building.

Malls, theaters, and restaurants have emerged in this area for the entertainment of the people who live or work here. These spaces are also meant to attract crowds from different parts of the city. These spaces invert the idea of recreation from outdoor to indoor spaces. The architecture of these spaces follows a similar language in its making. Unlike other malls in the city, these are open at additional times in order to accommodate call center workers, who are an important demographic consideration. This is especially true for the food court within the mall, which receives a large crowd from the call center. However, the food in the mall is usually an occasional treat for a call center employee, not an everyday fare.
The nightscape of this vicinity has undergone a radical shift because of call centers that operate to suit daytime hours in North America. There are movie timings that are adjusted to fit their schedule, street vendors who come in at specific timings depending on when these employees arrive or leave, breakfast places; both informal and formal that get set up to provide meals that substitute dinner for call center workers, and networks of cabs proliferate, especially for those who do not get a pick-up or drop service from the company itself. These vendors sometimes act as the eyes on the street at night, providing a sense of security for the call center workers.
Figure 27. Time usage of space, where light indicates areas active at different times in the same geography. Micha Baumgartner, Lukas Nacht, Kunal Bhatia, Aparna Parikh, 2009.

Cab drivers hired by call center companies may provide door-to-door service, or drop off the employees at the railway station, from where they can take a train to where they live. The cab drivers usually belong to a lower class, and are received somewhat suspiciously. There is an element of danger associated with a lower class migrant, who is assumed to be a perpetrator of crime. An incidence of homicide in Bangalore, where a cab driver raped and killed a female employee immediately questioned the possibly promiscuous character of the woman in question, as well as criticized all lower class male migrants.\footnote{Hegde, \textit{Spaces of Exception: Violence, Technology and the Transgressive Gendered Body}, 2011.} There was an assumption made that a lower-class migrant is likely to commit crime because they know no
better. However, outside of official circuits of knowledge, there are often relations that get established between the call center employees and the cab drivers, while living in fairly different worlds. The cab driver often becomes the confidante of the employees, and they are privy to intrapersonal relations between employees. A cab driver told me that he would never allow his daughter to come to the city, as he was afraid she would be tempted to work in a call center. He believed that it was not the type of job that a decent young girl should desire. It would lead her to become a ‘night girl’ (I think he meant prostitute), and she might also begin to desire products that contained traces of Western influences.

**conclusion**

This research has led to seemingly distinct findings that have a significant impact on each other. By exploring spaces and activities, a broad range of interrelated inferences, from the dramatic changes in the environmental system to property ownership, tenements and flexible use of spaces is derived. A mapping of temporal use of space helps one articulate the proliferation of programs dotting the urban streetscape during the night. These changes share a relation with the existing landscape that varies from abrasive to symbiotic. The chapter helps bring about a systemic, holistic understanding of these shifts and tensions through observations that are embedded in the nuances of daily existence.

While the call center is not unique in its appearance, it marks, in some ways, the epitome of the globalized image. It attempts to isolate itself from local conditions in order to respond to global needs. It does so through its architecture, its function, and the way it projects itself. The isolation is also present in the job of the call center worker, who is barely expected to
communicate with others while they do their job. However, it can be seen that edge conditions define themselves through entrepreneurs and moments of pause in ways that may not have been presupposed by those who were planning it. Agency can also be found in ways that people use call centers as stepping-stones, or temporary arrangements.

postscript

According to a 2011 article I read in New York Times, the Philippines have taken over India in the call centers that are exported from the United States. Apart from better infrastructure and safety in urban areas that are used to claims for the shift, the industry of care that has been exemplified by Filipinos in various industries seems to make itself present here as well. The article suggests that despite the higher wages that are paid to call center workers in the Philippines, most companies seem to agree that this has been an advantageous shift, as it has resulted in less dissatisfied customers. People from Philippines “learn American English in the first grade, eat hamburgers, follow the N.B.A and watch the TV show “Friends” long before they enter a call center”\(^76\); aspects of American culture that help them better empathize with their customers, and leave a lesser number dissatisfied.

\(^76\) Vikas Bajaj, “A New Capital of Call Centers”
chapter 6: moving in the mall

“The risk is that strategies of building ‘defensible’ networked spaces may exacerbate, rather than reverse, processes of spatial segregation and social polarisation. There is a clear redistribution of ‘risks’ involved in the entrenchment of ‘suspect populations’ in outcast, under-protected, disordered ‘ghettos’, and of ‘innocent populations’ in over-protected, ordered consumerist ‘citadels’ and residential ‘enclaves’.

- McLaughlin and Muncie”

The Vision Mumbai report prepared in 2003 by McKinsey & Co. for the citizen group Bombay First (now Mumbai First) depicted an image of Mumbai based on what it recognized as the slippages or inadequacies in the contemporary condition of life in the city. Its focus, amongst others, was to set up the city as a hub of consumerism. While some of the outcomes it proposed may have been desirable, the report depicts a lack of understanding of the workings of the city, and thereby was not able to provide workable suggestions. It also had a limited approach towards the notion of the citizen of the city. The Vision Mumbai report played a role in portraying and shaping the mindset for growth in the city of Mumbai through fast-paced private consumerist enterprises. This chapter deals in particular with the focus on the creation of malls as privatized cosmoses for shopping and recreation.

earlier spaces for shopping

There are various types of shopping spaces that have existed in the city prior to the entry of the shopping mall. These spaces continue to exist. There are bazaars, or markets, where

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individuals set up small stores or stalls where shopping occurs. These often present products within a wide range of prices, allowing for interaction between different user groups. The state government usually fixes prices in these stores. In addition to this, street shopping is popular in Mumbai, with vendors selling their wares on the street, or in immediate proximity to it. Prices are usually not fixed in the street shopping process, allowing for negotiation and interaction between the vendor and buyer. There are also shopping centers, set up in various precincts of the city, where the government sets up the basic infrastructure in a space reserved for shopping, and entrepreneurs subsequently rent or buy a lot within it. These may often have a more well defined demographic of buyers and sellers within it. These are somewhat fading from existence, though they are by no means extinct.

Figure 28. Street shopping at Colaba Causeway. Author, 2012.

emergence of malls

The first modern shopping mall in India came up in the city of Mumbai in 1999. This mall, then called Crossroads Mall (now Sobo Central), set up a precedent for numerous others.

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78 An example of this would be at Linking Road in Bandra.
79 An example of this would be at Sahakari Bhandar in Juhu.
that sprung up at various locations in the city. In this mall, a person could enter as a consumer only if s/he owned and carried a mobile phone, which was a fairly exclusive commodity at the time\(^8^0\). This was a differentiating method, instantly filtering the population who could enter the mall. While this rule was short-lived, it left a significant impact on the way malls were perceived thereafter. Long after the absence of an official rule regulating entry into the mall, the architecture of the mall continues to symbolize limited access.

The intended user of the space gets narrowed further through the advertising of a mall, which projects the ideal user of the space. There are possibly three user groups who visit, or are intended as consumers in malls. The percentage of each of these groups varies significantly, temporally, spatially and by location. These groups consist of middle-class and upper middle-class youth, both college-going as well as emerging professionals, conventionally understood family units, and middle-class and upper middle-class women.

However, there are certainly differences between various malls that have emerged in the city. Analyzing the type of retail in a mall brings out the variations of demographic within the middle-class, upper-middle class and elite that a mall aims to serve. The location, and the type of dominant demographic that exists in that neighborhood may play a role in defining these aspects\(^8^1\). It may, along with other programs, come up in a locality that is undergoing

\(^{80}\) D Sirisha, “Crossroads: Retailing Lessons” ICMR Case Collection, ICFAI Center for Management Research (2002).

\(^{81}\) The Milan Mall in Santacruz has grocery stores along with other stores that sell more expensive products. The grocery stores cater to the dominantly middle-class population that resides in that locality. This is a strategy adopted by some of the other malls as well.
change; thereby shaping the demographic that would enter the area. There are also cases where the mall does not, in any way, serve the population in its immediate vicinity, instead catering to a population type (usually elite) from all around the city. Its location in the city is also a determining factor in the size of the mall, depending upon the availability of land. Some of the malls in northern suburbs come up as oases in retail deserts, while some in denser conditions depend upon proximity to other forms of retail. The variety of amenities offered in a mall apart from retail mostly depend upon the size of the complex within which the mall is housed. Other amenities in a mall often include a food court, movie theaters, bowling alleys, and other spaces for entertainment.

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82 Kohinoor City Mall in Kurla exemplifies this idea, where the mall comes up at the time of construction of a gated community, and becomes an indicator of the demographic that is touted as the new desired inhabitant of that neighborhood.

83 Atria Mall, located in Worli, contains stores with products that often seem unaffordable even to the middle-class population living in that vicinity, and intends to serve a rich section of the population from across the city.

84 Eternity Mall in Thane, at the junction of major arteries: LBS Road and Eastern Express Highway is an example of such a condition.

85 Malls that crop up in Linking Road, Bandra depend upon populations who come to the popular shopping street for business. These malls in themselves are substantially smaller than others.
Despite the differences, the space of the mall attempts to flatten the complexity that exists in the city, an urban space that thrives on negotiation to adapt itself to shifting social situations.
In the mall, spaces for negotiation are forcibly removed. This space for negotiation then situates itself on the edge outside the fortified space of the mall within the messier urbanism around it. This can be seen in spaces around malls, and other forms of exclusive retail, where one often finds vendors who sell food or products at more affordable prices. Window shoppers as well as those who are intimidated and thereby hesitant to enter the space of the mall fulfill their aspirations through spaces on the edge.

**creation of need**

In malls, there is an inversion of recreation from the outside to the inside, and in creating restricted enclaves. They are also similar in their goal of creating consumers in unprecedented ways. Advertising and other forms of media projections about products in malls play a significant role in the creation of the consumer. There is a need for products created, where hitherto none existed, as exemplified in the following quote by M, a 48-year-old physical therapist:

> Of course I prefer shopping in malls than where I used to go to earlier. You know, they have so many things in [some] stores in the malls. I did not even know that I would need some of those things, especially to clean the house, but this is everything that people in America use.

It is important to keep in mind that “these are not false needs, distinct from objectively determined ‘real’ needs; rather they conflate material and symbolic aspects of ‘needing’ in an
ambiguous, unstable state.” In this way, the range of available products informs the domain of needs.

**High Street Phoenix**

I interviewed various women and visited malls that they spoke of. This was not my first visit to these malls. Earlier, I had gone to these malls as a consumer to watch movies or to dine with my friends. On a rare occasion, I may have shopped there as well. However, the visits in the summer of 2012 differed from earlier ones as I was making observations of various people who inhabited the space of the mall, extending beyond the consumers to include the people who worked there as well. It was revealing for me to see how I had missed out on seeing the workings of a space when I fleetingly around as a consumer. I spoke to shoppers, cleaners and security guards within the mall, as well as entrepreneurs and taxi drivers whose space of work was on the outside edge of the mall. After visiting a few of them, I felt drawn to study High Street Phoenix, which was built on a contentious site, and presented an array of paradoxes. It was amongst the first cotton mill sites to get converted into a mall, through an order passed by the Supreme Court of India in 2001, with the addition of Section 58(2) in the Development Control (DC) regulations: “If the land in question is less than 15% of the total land occupied by a mill, DC 58 (2) allows it to be sold without observing the one-third formula. All proposals till 2002 invoked this exemption and mill lands have been sold off piecemeal.”

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The development within High Street Phoenix (earlier: Phoenix Mills) has taken place in a piecemeal manner. In the 1990s, there was a bowling company that built the city’s first bowling alley and nightclub in the compounds of Phoenix Mills, following the demolition of the spinning units of the mill in an allegedly accidental fire. From the 2000s, various spaces for shopping have been built at this site, ranging from Big Bazaar for groceries and produce to stores such as the British luxury brand Burberry and the Spanish clothing retailer Zara. The construction of Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts is currently underway in the same complex. It describes itself as “the first consumption centre developed in India… consisting of urban agglomerations with ‘mixed use developments’”. The chimney of the original mill, which is reminiscent of the past of the site, has been retained as per the orders of the government. The mill continues only as an image, while the physical space around it transforms completely, erasing any other trace of the history of that place. As the mills had shut down, and been shifted outside of the city, it was expected that the function would be replaced. However, as the mills that had been leased out by the government were transferred almost completely over to the mill ‘owners’, the mill workers could claim almost no stake in the transformation.

90 Shirish Joshi, Caught between malls, 2011.
spectators and consumers

As the spaces for shopping within High Street Phoenix developed incrementally, there is an awkward private open space that gets formed between them. The various divisions within the middle class, who shop in different spaces within this larger complex, assimilate in this open space. In a conversation with a woman who cleans this courtyard space, it was brought out that this space has a variegated set of users who occupy it at different times of the day and week. I translated what R, the 42-year old cleaning lady said regarding this:

groups of rich jobless women who come on weekday afternoons, after having shopped at the most expensive stores in the mall, and the evenings usually see groups of college students, or professionals in business suits who work in offices of multinational companies that have opened in this vicinity. On weekends, there are usually throngs of family crowd, who come to look
around, shop a little, and eat in the food court. The kids also use the rides and the trampoline that is a part of the entertainment complex of High Street Phoenix.

Figure 31. Courtyard in High Street Phoenix, cleaner at work in the courtyard (left to right). Author, 2012.

This is in the open spaces between shopping centers. R does not consider herself or her colleagues to be part of the crowd that is present in the shopping mall. She is invisible to the consumer who comes to visit the shopping mall, and is invisible to herself as well. She is sarcastic in her references to the wealthy patrons with no need of employment who visit the mall, possibly masking her helplessness at knowing that she cannot get her son to this mall, as she would be unable to afford anything there. However, she is simultaneously condescending towards people who:

are blissfully unaware of the realities that surround them while they get fooled into buying nonsensical products. The size of the shopping bag is a dead giveaway about who could actually afford to shop in that mall, and who
was trying to fit within that crowd. I can gauge their consumptive powers by nuances within their attire and shoes.

Her colleagues, who joined us afterward, also made similar acute observations about the consumers and the spectators in the mall.

**edge conditions**

![Figure 32. Informality between symbols of modernity: the mall and the freeway. Author, 2013.](image)

The cleaning woman who gave me her opinion about the shoppers and their attributes subsequently directed me to the *dosa* (salted Indian crepes) stand situated outside of the mall, where she went to eat in case she did not have sufficient time to pack lunch for the day. The woman who ran the dosa stand had never entered the mall. Her customers were usually men who worked in offices near the malls, most of whom had never entered the mall either. Her perception of the walkable spaces within her neighborhood had shrunk after the building of the mall. The chawl she lived in had not undergone redevelopment, but to her, and some
others, it seemed as if their surrounding built form had enlarged in an intimidating manner, rendering the experience of walking in the neighborhood more compact. She believed, like some of the other vendors on the street, that malls or the multinational offices had done nothing to improve the neighborhood, as it was all ‘just show with vacuum inside’. People have carved new paths to get to work, with an attempt to avoid malls, multinational companies and the traffic of vehicles that accompanies this development. These spaces seem like hermetic containers that are creating barriers, and redirecting urban flows in unprecedented manners. These containers are connected through freeways, and other major arterial connections, which attempt to allow one to bypass the ‘city’ in order to get from one sealed space to another.

Figure 153. Hermetic networks over city space. Author, 2013.
**hermetic networks and spaces**

Networks are also created to gated communities in the vicinity. The takeaway details in a restaurant in the shopping mall provided some interesting insight in this matter. In lieu of a radius within which the food would be delivered, there was a list of gated communities. This conveniently bypassed surrounding neighborhoods, under the assumption that people living in them would not be able to afford the food prepared in this restaurant. In this way, it also made sure that people in those neighborhoods would become aware that they were unable to afford that restaurant. The delivery boys working for the restaurant often live in the neighborhood around, and it is likely that outside of work timings, they do not have any access to spaces of the mall and the gated community that they traverse between. They move in the urban space between these privatized hubs in order to provide connections between them. These spaces are separated from the other layer of the city, which gets treated as a leftover space, where new ways of adapting and negotiation are sought. The conversation with the cleaning women brings to light that these negotiations often take place through the awareness of the power of knowing that one can enter these spaces without their presence being acknowledged. While this sounds bleak, it has the possibility of becoming a mode of indirect, unanticipated empowerment.

These hermetic spaces of the mall use shiny materials, such as glass and metal panels, on their facades to portray an image of cleanliness and modernity. There is a continuous surge of people who are cleaning the glass, and sweeping the floor in order to preserve that image of cleanliness. Within the space of the most high-end mall, the ceiling contains an image of a blue sky with white puffy clouds, so that one can breathe artificially cooled air, enjoy a view
of a fake sky, thereby re-creating outside environments on the inside. The escalators are arranged in a manner so that one has to walk along the length of a particular shopping center, instead of its breadth, before one can go to another floor. In this way, there is a sense of a crowd created, making this space gain an image of a popular one. It evokes the memory of the earlier shopping spaces, without its dizzying congestion. The congestion, in this case, takes place in the vehicular traffic, which is pushed to the edge of the mall. On Sundays, however, there is a huge rush of people within the mall as well, particularly in the courtyard space between the different shopping spaces.


Despite the seeming inclusivity of the space, especially as it appears on a Sunday, it is essentially a homogenous space with fairly insignificant variations. The major variations are those of the invisible population within the space. Homogeneity is maintained through the portrayal of the imagined user of the space in media and in the architecture of the space, and
the strong sense of entry and the presence of surveillance, masked under the pretense of security, that is present in the mall. The strong sense of entry is conveyed in various ways. There is a forbiddingly limited point of entry in the mall. The rest of the complex is shrouded with the help of a wall over which one cannot easily peer. The service entry is usually located in a service alley, and at a distance from an intuitive path used by pedestrians and customers. The single entry is strengthened through a security checkpoint where one is frisked, and one’s belongings have to pass through a metal detector. Once within the space of the mall, one is constantly being watched, or at least being given that impression, through the presence of the security cameras that are omnipresent within the mall. The idea that one’s actions are being watched, and thereby being controlled, is supposed to be less intimidating than the idea of insecurity that is apparently present in public space in Mumbai.
conclusions

Malls exemplify the valorization of privatized enclaves for consumption that accompanies manifestations of neoliberal policies. In doing so, it manifests a deliberate attempt to move from existing lifestyles through a projection of what is supposed to be the good life. This is
heightened through the presence of security and hermetic networks that are set up with other privatized enclaves within the city, particularly gated communities. The particular example of the mall being explored in depth in this chapter brings out the contested relationship with the past of the site, symbolized through the presence of chimney of the mill that lingers on. It symbolizes not only a time that has passed, but also populations that have been displaced. While they may still reside in close proximity to these sites, they now found new ways of navigating about the neighborhood, bringing out the complex layering of movements of different populations that often do not overlap. These differing populations represent the wide spectrum ranging from service providers and spectators (categories that may not fully overlap) to consumers in the mall.
part 3: conclusions

“Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.”

– Italo Calvino

This thesis illustrates several effects of the process of neoliberalization as it occurs in its architectural manifestations in Mumbai, an effort that is largely in line with the goals of neoliberal ideologies, yet distinct in the nuances of its manifestation. These subtleties can be read in the transforming relationship between the perception, conceptualization and lived experience of space; brought out through partial subjectivities in this thesis. The spaces addressed are those symbolizing the exemplification of neoliberal policies; the (present form of the) gated community, the mall, and the call center. Power processes deployed to establish hegemony are made visible through everyday knowledge and lived experiences of individuals, also helping recognize slippages in the purportedly smooth translation from intent to manifestation.

These slippages are also affected by the role of tradition in shaping identity. Tradition does not exist as a static concept through time, and transforms itself to fit the needs of the psychical interior. Applying a discourse similar to that on colonialism, which attempts to articulate the effect of rapid westernization on Indian society through the notion of hybridity, I believe that the contemporary condition marking a rapid influx of western influence co-exists with a valorization of tradition. This is manifested then, in examples such as the use of Vaastu Shastra in determining the ideal layout of the home. While these

influences are present within homes, the materiality and articulation of façades often allude to more Western influences. Parallels with an imagined West are construed through materials that are sometimes unavailable locally, and unsuited to the climate of the region. Greek and Roman motifs are used on the façades of buildings in order to align themselves with the roots of Western civilization. I argue that in this way the hold of tradition within the home does not lie in contradiction with the process of modernization, but that the two are co-constituted.

The use of mythical fixes to home layouts also alludes to the fear of the other. Fear is a powerful device in triggering change, and is deployed in maintaining hierarchy as well as creating new forms of it. This type of fear does not invoke direct strategies of coercion towards hegemony. It is internalized, and results in actions that exude hegemonic hierarchical structures. Amongst other strategies, the rhetoric of hygiene is deployed in guiding these acts. Using this rhetoric as a lens is useful in bringing to light the palpable effects of power, as it simultaneously addresses projections, acts and displacements. It can also be understood across scales, as well as through historical connections.

The effectiveness of the rhetoric of hygiene, in its unique modern iteration helps understand the internalization of forms of control as well as ways in which consent is manufactured for change that may have otherwise been questioned. This often takes place through media and advertising, where ideas of differentiation, cleansing and modernity in space are present. This was brought out for all three examples. The gated community is projected as an oasis away from the dirt and grime of the city. The image-making of the gated community is often
without reference to its immediate context, as well as the nature of amenities offered by it, convey these notions. This also plays a role in reifying gender roles as spaces, and their expected uses are often gendered in representation. Similar to this is the mall, where a beacon of modernity is to provide a consumerist getaway from the immediacies of urban life, and thereby re-constitute it. It is also to provide a break from earlier forms of living, while maintaining gendered binaries. This disjuncture from an earlier lifestyle is also present in the marketing of jobs for call centers, where a move to Westernization is to be guaranteed through TV shows, American accents and conversations with people in the United States.

These modes of isolation valorize privatization and consumerism that is strongly in keeping with the tenets of neoliberalism. There is also an increasing commodification at various scales, from products and spaces to nature. At the scale of the individual, consumerism is introduced through the range of products available in malls that are to shape the aspired need of the desired user of that space. It is also present in the training process of the call center employee, who is sold into Westernization through consumerist ideals. At the scale of the city, this is achieved through a commodification of nature as views from one’s window in a gated community. The urban scale is also invoked in consumerist fantasies as a space that can be bypassed using hermetic networks in order to move from one space of consumption to another. These may be present as freeways, which often connect concentrations of retail and upper-class residence while bypassing the city surging below it.

The sealing off of spaces creates a leftover that becomes the city. The leftover then is purported to be unhygienic and dangerous, terms that are to constitute an inherent internal
relationship. This remainder is both avoided and produced through privatized enclaves inserted in the urban fabric. A keen notion of security accompanies these endeavors. This is present in space through the strong presence of surveillance and construction of high walls. It is also manifested in the construction of built form, which is often extravagant in an attempt to mark a distinctive presence. I argue that this is not an exploration of space, but a show of opulence that creates a strong class-based hierarchy. Class-based differences certainly existed in architectural manifestations prior to the introduction of neoliberal policies, but the newer types set off an unprecedented degree of polarization.

This plan for separation is by no means foolproof. Transgressions to these systems of control often take place in unanticipated ways. While these are not often acknowledged, they have a significant impact on the experience of space. Invisible networks are at play in the city, and while a holistic overview of these systems may be unfathomable, the thesis uses an ethnographic study to reveal the complexity of their functioning. While the process of bringing these to light in itself may be deemed insufficient, it can become a starting point for a nuanced understanding of the working of a system at multiple scales.

The adaptations to space, as well as the deviation from expected behavior around space is brought out in various examples. Vendors who situate themselves at the edges around call centers as well as malls exemplify unanticipated outcomes of policies and lead to the formation of informal economies. This can also be seen in the case of call center employees who are migrants to the city. They make adjustments within singularly imagined apartment blocks in order to lay claim to space. While these adaptations emerge in response to
policies that encourage sequestration, there are other ways of using space in a flexible manner that continue to prevail, even though they are somewhat diminished in newer gated spaces. An example to illustrate this could be self-employed entrepreneurs, particularly women, who run different types of services from home during the day, and re-configure the space in the evening. Through these invisible networks and deployment of flexibility, one can begin to extrapolate the manner in which reaction to change takes place, ranging from internalization and compliance to negotiation and resistance. These do not take place in a compartmentalized manner, but share complex relationships with one another. This seems contiguous with the palimpsest-like nature of the city, where different moments in time seem to lie in close proximity to each other. Time does not cause effacement, or mere replacement, but brings out displacements, which if mapped in a nuanced manner provide clues towards envisioning more sensitive forms of development and change.
Can you tell me about your daily schedule?

   a. What do you do in the mornings before going for work?
   b. At what time do you leave for work?
   c. Where do you go for work?
   d. At what time do you get done?
   e. What do you do on your way back?

Where do you get your supplies?

   f. Where do you shop for groceries from?
   g. Where do you buy clothes from?
   h. Is there any particular beauty salon you like to go to? Why?

What do you like to do on weekends?

   a. Whom do you like to meet on weekends?
   b. Where do you like to carry out your social activities?
   c. Where do you like eating out?

What is your favorite time of the year?

   a. Does this include any particular festival?
   b. Would you like to spend this time in the city, or get away from it?
Do you like living in Mumbai?

a. When did you move here? Would you consider living elsewhere?

b. What do you think of the new skywalks?

c. What do you think of the upcoming metro?

d. If you have to meet up with someone, what would your choice of place be?

e. From where / whom do you find out about new places to go in the city?

(Showing a map of the city)

Where all you have been?

Where do you go often?

Where do you go on a daily basis?

Where have you never been?

Imagine that I did not know the areas you were speaking about, direct me there, and describe them to me.

Choose between:

Walking on the pavement or walking on the street

Going to a market or to a supermarket

Autos / taxis / buses / trains?

Skywalk / street level walking?

Parks / waterfronts?

Unisex parlor / only-women parlor?

Single screen theatre / multiplex?


