

Examining Caste and Religion in Post-Industrial Mumbai

A Case Study of Mumbai's Ex-Millworkers Occupational Choices



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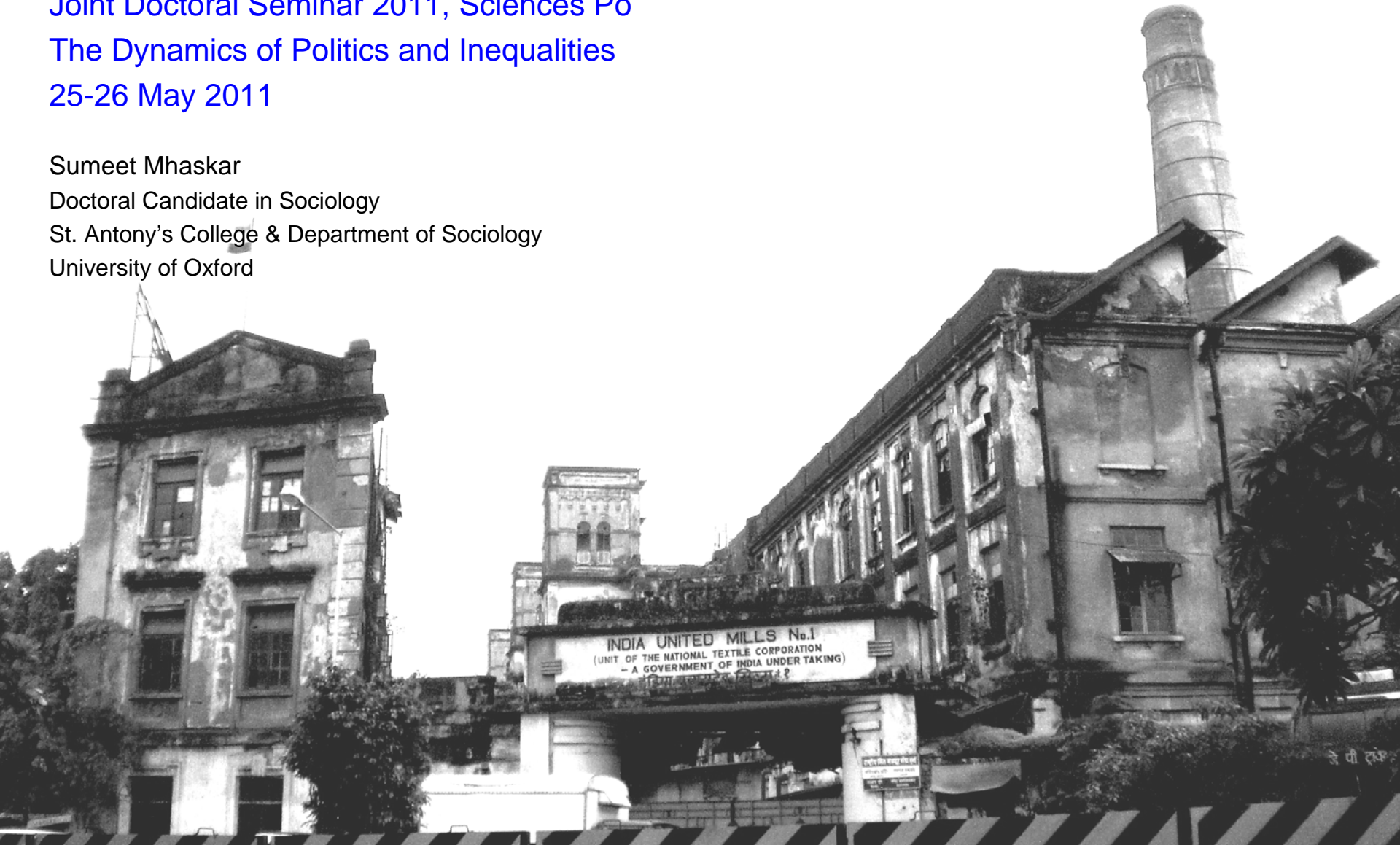
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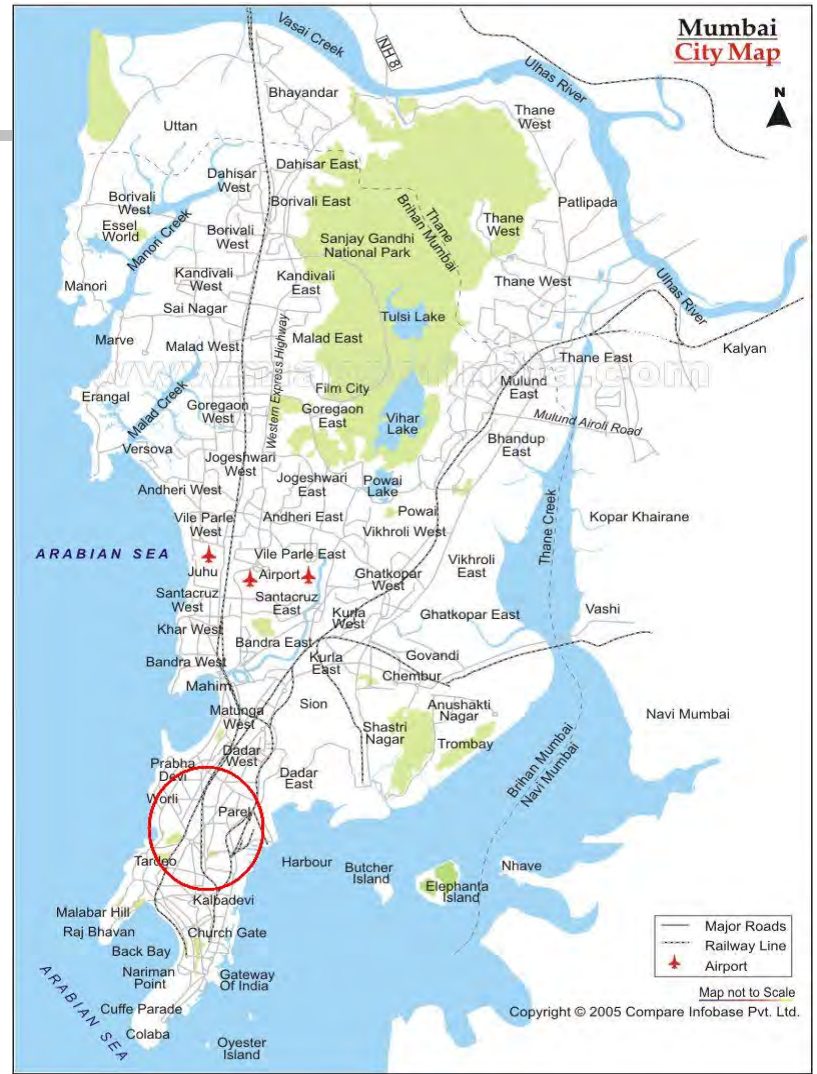
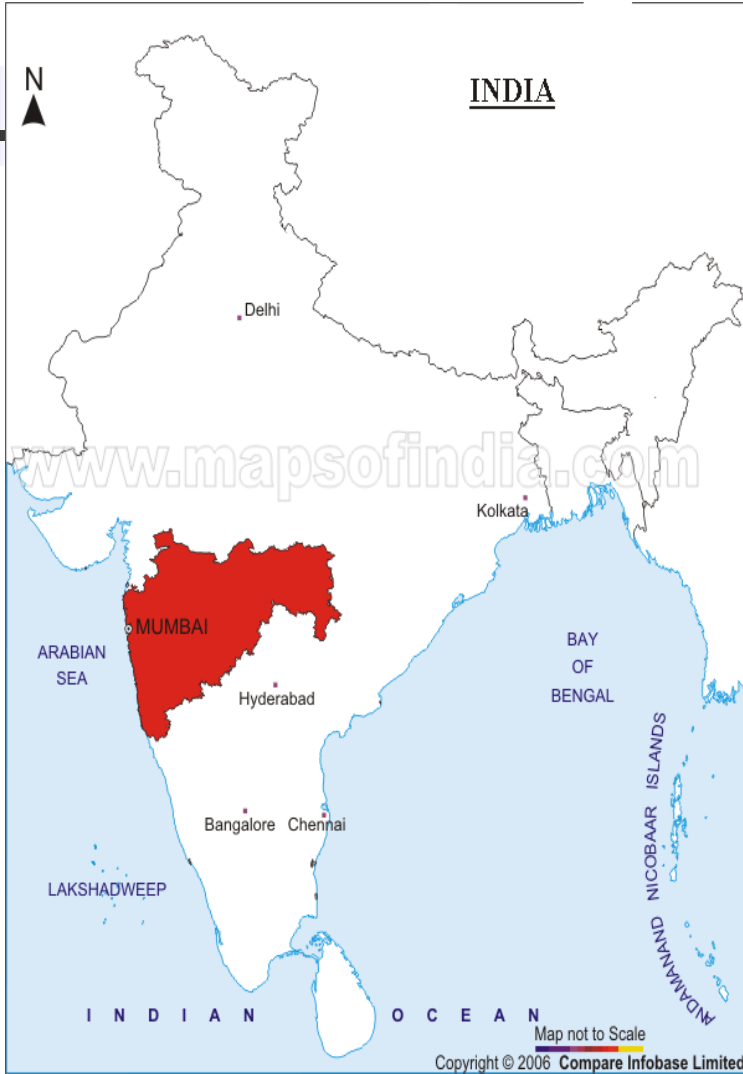
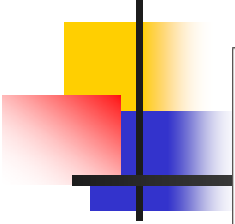
Sumeet Mhaskar

Doctoral Candidate in Sociology

St. Antony's College & Department of Sociology

University of Oxford







Overview

- Questions
- Data and Methods
- Towards a Post-Industrial Mumbai
- Caste, Religion and Occupation in Industrial Mumbai: Textile Mills, Parallel Work and 1982 Mumbai Textile Strike
- Caste, Religion and Occupation in Post-Industrial Mumbai: Employment and Small Businesses.
- Conclusion



Questions

- Are social institutions, such as caste and religion, affecting (or not) ex-millworkers' occupational choices?
- What is happening to caste and religion as social institutions and how far are existing inequalities and hierarchies buttressed?



Data and Methods

- Mumbai's Ex-Millworkers' who lost their jobs since late 1990s.
- Interviews: Snowball Sampling
- Survey Data : From Quota Sampling to Opportunistic Method.

Survey Data

Caste Groups	Freq	%	Freq	%
High Caste Hindus	441	43	386	42
Hindu Other Backward Castes	399	38	357	39
Dalits	107	10	94	10
Muslims	37	04	36	04
Miscellaneous	53	05	51	06
Total	1037	100	924	100

Interviews

Caste Groups	Freq	%
High Caste Hindus	19	24
Hindu OBC	03	04
Dalits	28	35
High Caste Muslims	24	30
Muslim OBC	04	05
Nomadic Tribes	02	03
Total	80	100



Mumbai: Towards a Post-Industrial City

- Textile Mills Closure in *Girangaon*
 - 58 Textile Mills employing around 250,000 in early 1980s and 150,000 by early 1990s
 - Allied Industries depending on textile industry.
 - Share of organized/formal sector employment has reduced from 65% in 1961 to 35% in 1991

- Post- Industrial Economy
 - Banking, Insurance, Information Technology Enabled
 - Shopping Malls, Entertainment Industry
 - Increase in the service sector employment from 303, 557 in 1980 to 753, 624 in 1998



Caste & Occupation: The Debate

- Caste (or *jatis*) and its association with occupations and status
 - Occupations ascribed by birth
 - Restrictions on occupational mobility
- Modernization Thesis: Weakening of community identities in urban industrial context (e.g. Srinivas 1969).
- Caste, religion and gender determined what work individuals did in the textile mills (Chandavarkar 1994).
 - Exclusion of Dalits (ex-untouchables) from Weaving Sheds
 - Muslims as 'neo-untouchables' (Hansen 2001).



Parallel Work

- 100/1037 (nearly 10 per cent) engaged in Parallel Work
 - Straddled formal as well informal economy.
 - Supplementing Income
- 15 % Engaged in Caste Based Work
 - Charmakars (Leather Workers), Sutar (Carpenter), Nhavi (Barber)
- 85 % Non-Caste Occupations
 - High castes in cleaning and manual occupations.
 - Fast Food: Absence of Dalits and Muslims.



1982 Strike Work

- 18 Months strike involving 250,000 workers
 - 608/1037, nearly 60 per cent in our survey were affected by the strike.
 - 405/608, around 67 per cent, did some work while the rest did not take up any work during the 18 months strike.
- Only 2% in caste based work
 - Barber, Carpenter, Goldsmiths, Leather Work
- Rest
 - 24 % Farming
 - Again, Dalit and Muslims absent from the fast food
 - Only Dalits and Muslims engaged in Scrap Metal Collection
 - Wage Labour relation weak & Small Businesses still relevant

Caste, Religion & Occupation in Post-Industrial Mumbai

- More than 60 per cent are engaged in some kind of job after the closure of mills.

- 70 % in Wage Labour
 - 40 % in Security, Courier & Shops.
 - Within each group: 46 % High Caste Hindus; 39 % OBC Hindus, 46 % Dalits and 16 % Muslims

- 30 % Small Businesses
 - Only 3 per cent in Caste based Occupations. Footwear Stitching & Selling, Religious Preacher, Goldsmiths, Carpenter, Barber, Laundry, Weaving & Fishing
 - Absence of Dalits and Muslims Fast Food.



Conclusion

- Very few ex-millworkers engaged in their caste based occupations.
- Wage Labour shows weak trend in terms of the influence of caste on occupation but does show some trend for the less participation of Muslims.
- Self –Employment/Small Businesses is where some caste clustering is seen. Esp. the absence of Dalits and Muslim from Fast Food and *only* their engagement in Scrap Metal Collection.
- New hierarchies are created by making Muslims are neo-untouchables.



Comments and Suggestions

Thank You