Caste and Space in the Indian City: Evidence from Hyderabad and Mumbai

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Abstract

One of the defining features of the twenty first century is the rise of China and India, which have witnessed growth rates that are among the highest in the world. In India, while fueling growth, urban spaces have been witnessing a massive transformation since economic reforms were initiated in the early nineties. Despite growth, deprivations in urban India have not seen significant reduction and various disparities have been exacerbated. In this paper, we focus on an under-researched issue, viz. caste-based spatial inequality in urban India, by intensively examining the cities of Mumbai and Hyderabad using data from the decadal Census and secondary literature on these cities. While previous studies have provided a snapshot in time (e.g. 2001, 2011), we seek to provide a dynamic picture by tracing changes since the early nineties. We document trends in spatial inequality in these cities, showing that there are both similarities and differences. We also reflect upon how caste-based spatial inequality is different from other forms of spatial inequality.

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