Polarization or Segregation!

A theoretical exploration to distinguish the two socio-spatial regimes and their impact on social norms

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Social Norms Conference 2025

30th April-3rd May,2025
Monte Verita, Ascona, Switzerland

Universität Zürich[UZH]

What's Inside

Topics Covered

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- Aim & Objectives
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- What differentiates the two socio-spatial orders?
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- How social norms are interlinked with spatial polarization
- How the new segregation type are generating new social norms
- Discussion & Conclusion

Introduction

- Polarization and segregation are two terms that are often used interchangeably in the social and spatial research.....but are they really same?
- Cities worldwide are struggling with segregation and polarization due to rapid economic restructurings but there is a lack of comprehensive literature in the urban domain that gives an idea that how these two phenomenon visibly differs
- Polarization is always consider as a general magnifier of the concept of segregation but they both denotes division between groups that are likely to channelize variation in social norms specially in a diverse country like India.

Research Question

How the dynamics of polarization and segregation unfolds in a developing neoliberal Indian city and how they are interlinked with the social norms

?

Objectives

- To theoretically explore the distinction between segregation and polarization through content analysis
- To analyze or understand how the social norms are associated with these two phenomenon in Hyderabad using both primary and secondary resources of surveys

- Segregation and Polarization both are social phenomenon and are different manifestations of inequality.
- Both have distinct spatial impacts called as spatial segregation and spatial polarization

Socio-Spatial Segregation

- The **process of separation and distancing between groups.**
- This **unequal distribution of population groups in the territory** can be manifested through the physical proximity between residential spaces, the social homogeneity of different territorial subdivisions, and the concentration of social groups in specific areas of a city (Dalmazzo,2017)

Socio-Spatial Polarization

- Polarization occurs when there is **concentration of population at the extremes of any social distribution (**Sassen, 1991)
- Indicates how individuals, families, or households are geographically concentrated and separated within a region or a city based on their income, and it describes the degree to which the population clusters around two separate poles (Zhang & Kanbur,2001)
- Got popularized following economic restructurings

What is segregation & Polarization ?

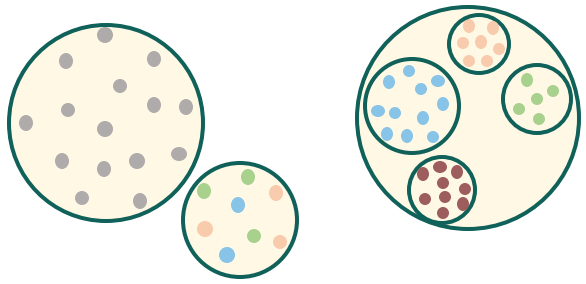
How these two terms are interlinked ?

Social Segregation

- When there are multiple groups in a society and there is a general process of separation between them (For eg. Between different classes/religions/ races)

Spatial Segregation

- uneven distribution of diverse population groups in a territory, usually by the place of their permanent residence, also called residential/settlement segregation (Baum et.al.,2014)
- A form of spatial polarization that occurs without social polarization



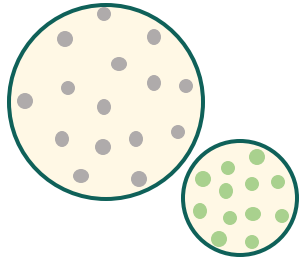
Social Polarization

- When the population is largely divided into two socially opposing identity (for e.g. The Rich and the Poor)

A special form of segregation

Spatial Polarization

- **If spatial segregation between the rich and the poor is increasing, and there is concentration in rich and poor environment respectively, in terms of collective consumption resources, housing, mobility and access to jobs, this spatial movement is an expression of overall polarization (Alves,2016)**
- **Very much bound to location in a city**



Interlinked but still different ?

	Spatial segregation	Spatial Polarization
Number of groups	• Two or more number of groups	• Essentially Two groups
Scale of occurrence	• Corresponds to spatial divide at neighborhood scale (Ismail,2013)	• Corresponds to spatial divide at larger scale • 'general signifier' of growing urban inequality in large urban areas (Ismail,2013)
Research Context	• It merely talks about the physical separation (an institutionalized form of social distance) (Shamskooshki,2021)	• It is not only about physical separation but also about their growing socioeconomic divide.
Type of occurrence	• To some extent natural and functional (Baum et. al., 2014)	• An exceeding level of segregation, which is not natural
Drivers	• Differences in social categories and social activities (Shamskooshki,2021)	• Major economic policies, mass immigration, insufficient spatial policies (Shamskooshki,2021)
Magnifying concept	• More simpler form of group division, Segregation cannot be called as polarization	• Considered a general magnifier of the concept of segregation, so it's a type of segregation (Dinzey-Flores, 2017). • Spatial polarization indicates a pattern of segregation that is moving towards more polarized unevenness (Crowell & Fosset, 2023)
Sharing of Locational outcomes	• The **groups share locational outcomes as they share the same space**	• **One group does not share location-based outcomes with other groups** (Crowell & Fosset, 2023) because it is bounded to location in a city

Interlinked but still different ?

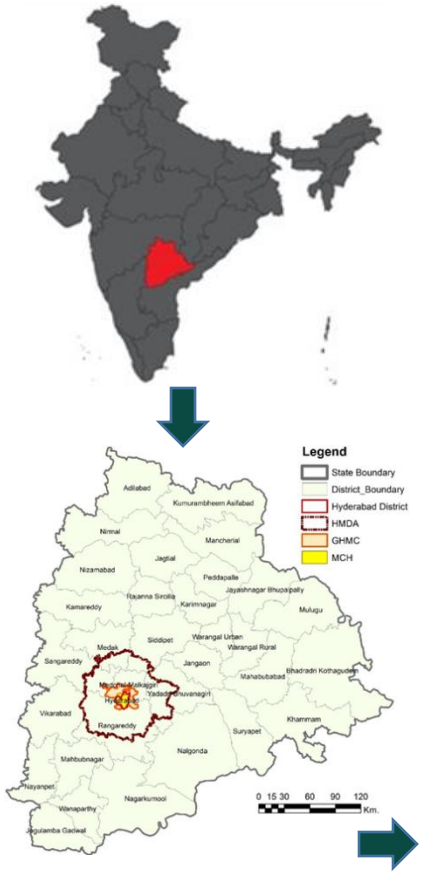
	Spatial segregation	Spatial Polarization
Measurements	• It mostly concerns the dissimilarity index	• All segregation index scores remain high in polarization but Separation index becomes a predominant factor (Crowell & Fossett, 2023)
Social Cohesion & social antagonisms	• Implies separation, but it is not an anti-thesis of integration	• Temporal dimension is important in stigmatization studies • [illegible] areas, creation of new excluded areas • Social erasures, magnified differences, social antagonisms (Dinzey-Flores, 2017)
Social Norms and perceptions	• Affects how people create and maintain stronger ties and therefore, the properties and **collective behaviours of the emergent social space** (Morales et.al., 2019) • Tendency to avoid potential mixing with different socioeconomic groups • Affects **norms regarding the daily activity/daily lifestyles** (Izhak & Yoav,1999) • **Intergroup prejudice and discrimination** (Bettencourt et. al.,)	• Low integration and **monopoly of specific groups in governance** • Leads to **politics of citizenship** in the urban system (Allegra et.al., 2012) • Contributes to **attitudinal polarization** • **if the fraction of people believing in a particular social norm is above a certain threshold then this social norm spreads in the urban area** and possibly in the whole city(Moizeau,2015) • Affects access to resources, limits political and social interaction and give rise to **perceptions of social injustice** (Letki & Mierina, 2014)

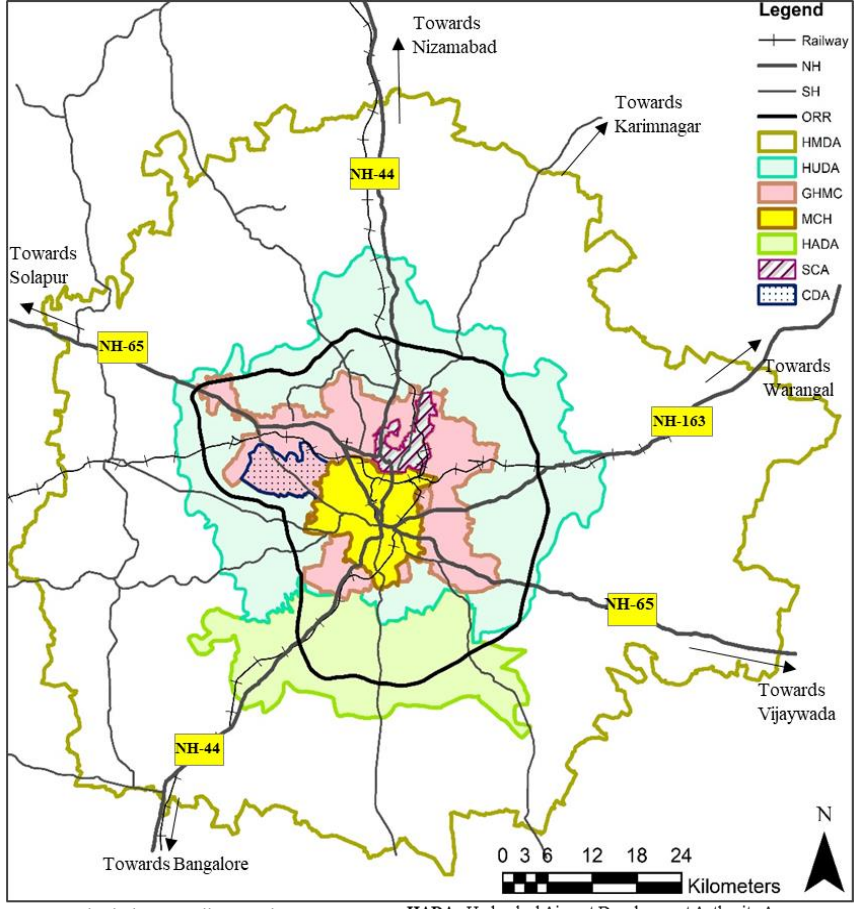
- **Impacts the behavior and expectations of people and how they interacts within the society**

Now, let us see the polarization & segregation in a neoliberal Indian city & how it is linked with the social norms-

A case of Hyderabad

A brief introduction of Hyderabad

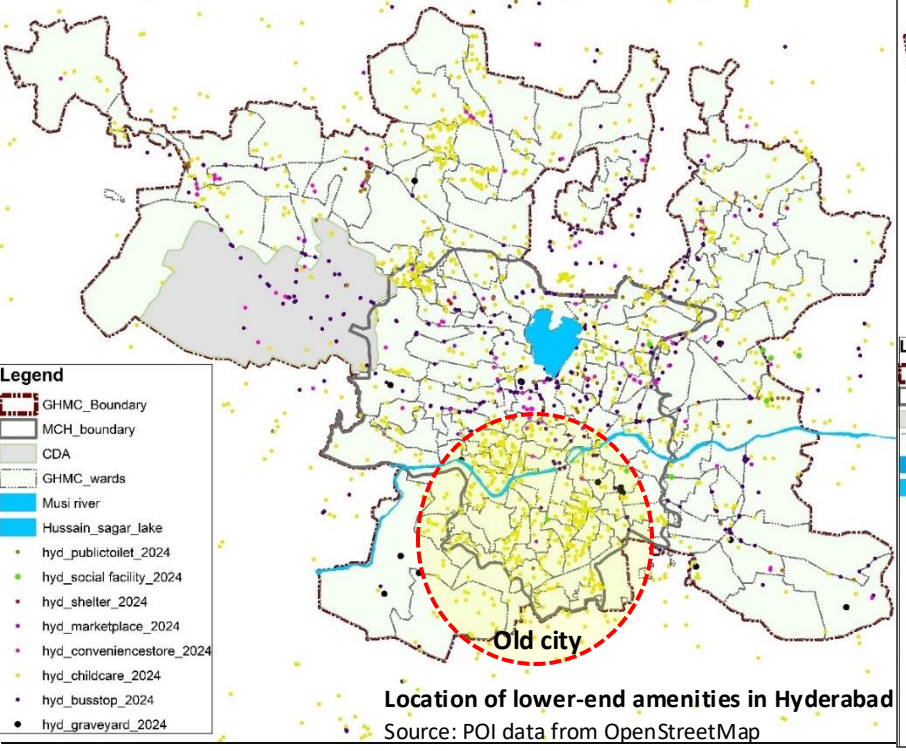




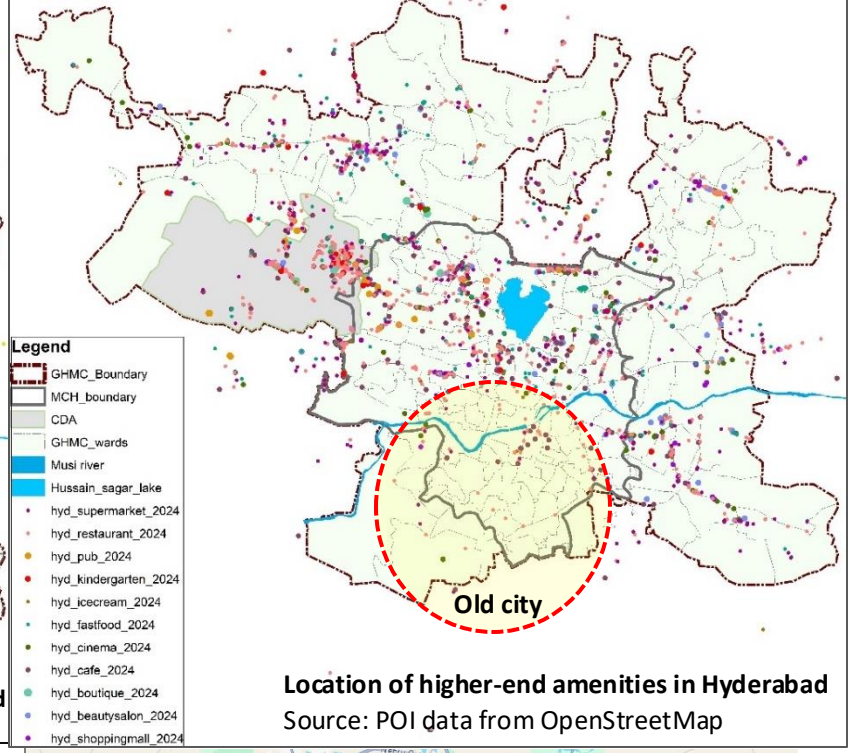
HMDA-Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Area
HUDA-Hyderabad Urban Development Area
GHMC- Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area
MCH- Erstwhile Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad area
HADA- Hyderabad Airport Development Authority Area
CDA- Cyberabad Development Authority Area
SCA- Secunderabad Cantonment Area

- Previously the capital of Andhra Pradesh state in India. Since 2014, capital of Telangana state in India
- Covers almost 650 sq. km. (Das & Lam, 2016) and its metropolitan area extends up to 7257 sq. km. (Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority, 2018).
- Till 1956, the city was under the Muslim ruler or the Nizam's but after that it was integrated with the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh
- Since 1990, the city observed rapid economic restructuring, creation of spatial enclaves like CDA, HADA to promote globalized environment…..renowned for its **HITECH city and Cyberabad**
- The transformations majorly remaine bounded to the Western part of the city.

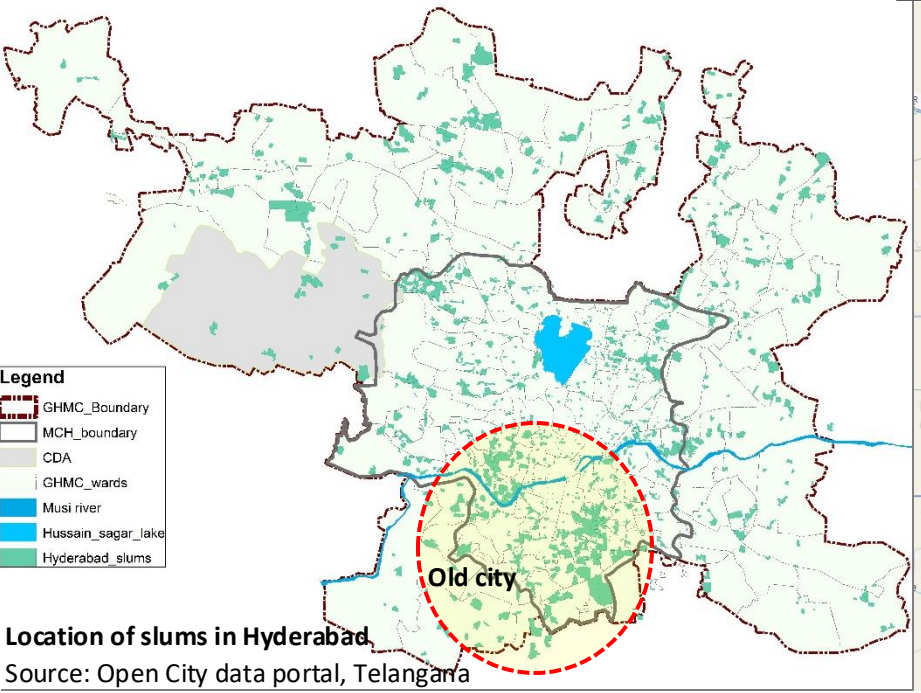
A Glimpse of Polarization in Hyderabad



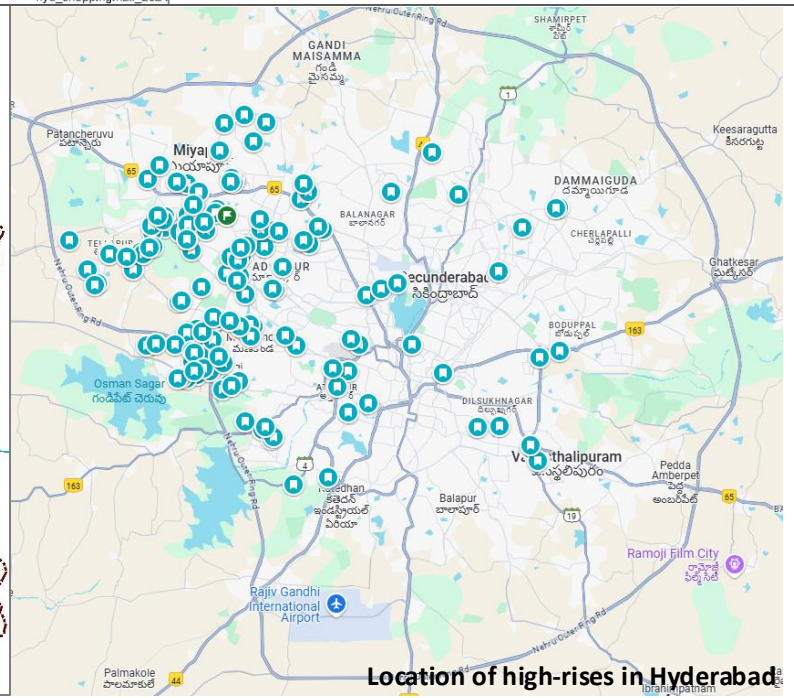
Location of lower-end amenities in Hyderabad
Source: POI data from OpenStreetMap



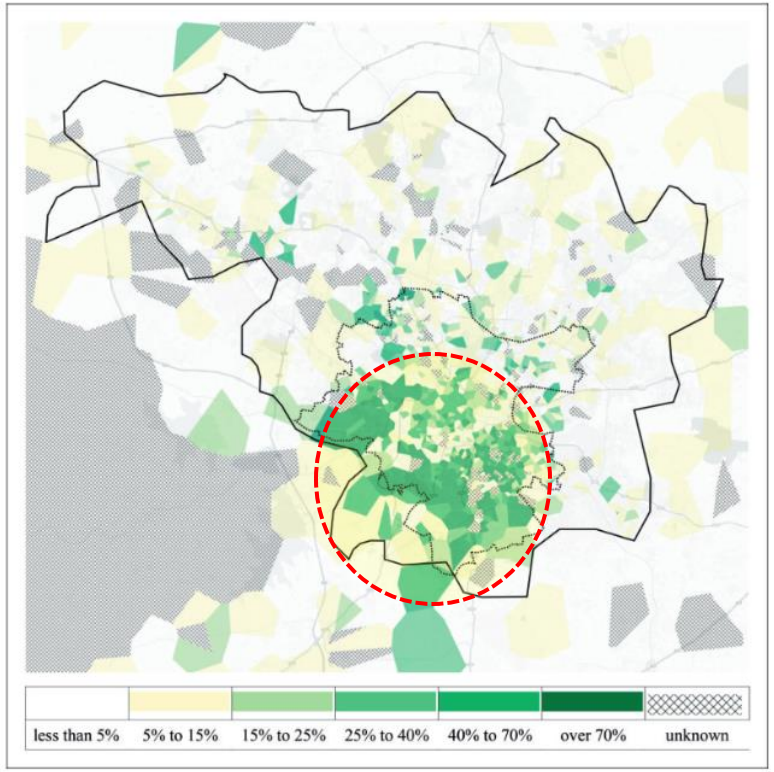
Location of higher-end amenities in Hyderabad
Source: POI data from OpenStreetMap



Location of slums in Hyderabad
Source: Open City data portal, Telangana



Location of high-rises in Hyderabad



Map of Muslim demography in Hyderabad
Susewind,2017

There are few things that we identified from these maps:

- The **lower income population, slums or the under-developed, poor infrastructure areas align with the areas bearing the highest muslim population** in a city like Hyderabad

- **Its not a mere segregation. It also simultaneously indicates a process of polarization: A division between a rich and a poor city**

- India being one of the culturally and religion-wise diverse region the question comes **are there any specific norms that have channelized this polarization?**

A Muslim predominated congested old city with 65% of the total slum population of GHMC.....

A high-tech Cyberabad area with condominiums.....

Some quick facts on the differing identities

- Muslims make up just over 30 per cent of the population of Hyderabad city as a whole, the majority **of residents in the Old City are Muslim and low-caste Hindus and today the area is still regarded as a 'Muslim enclave'** (Alam 1993: 149; Shankar 2014: 48).

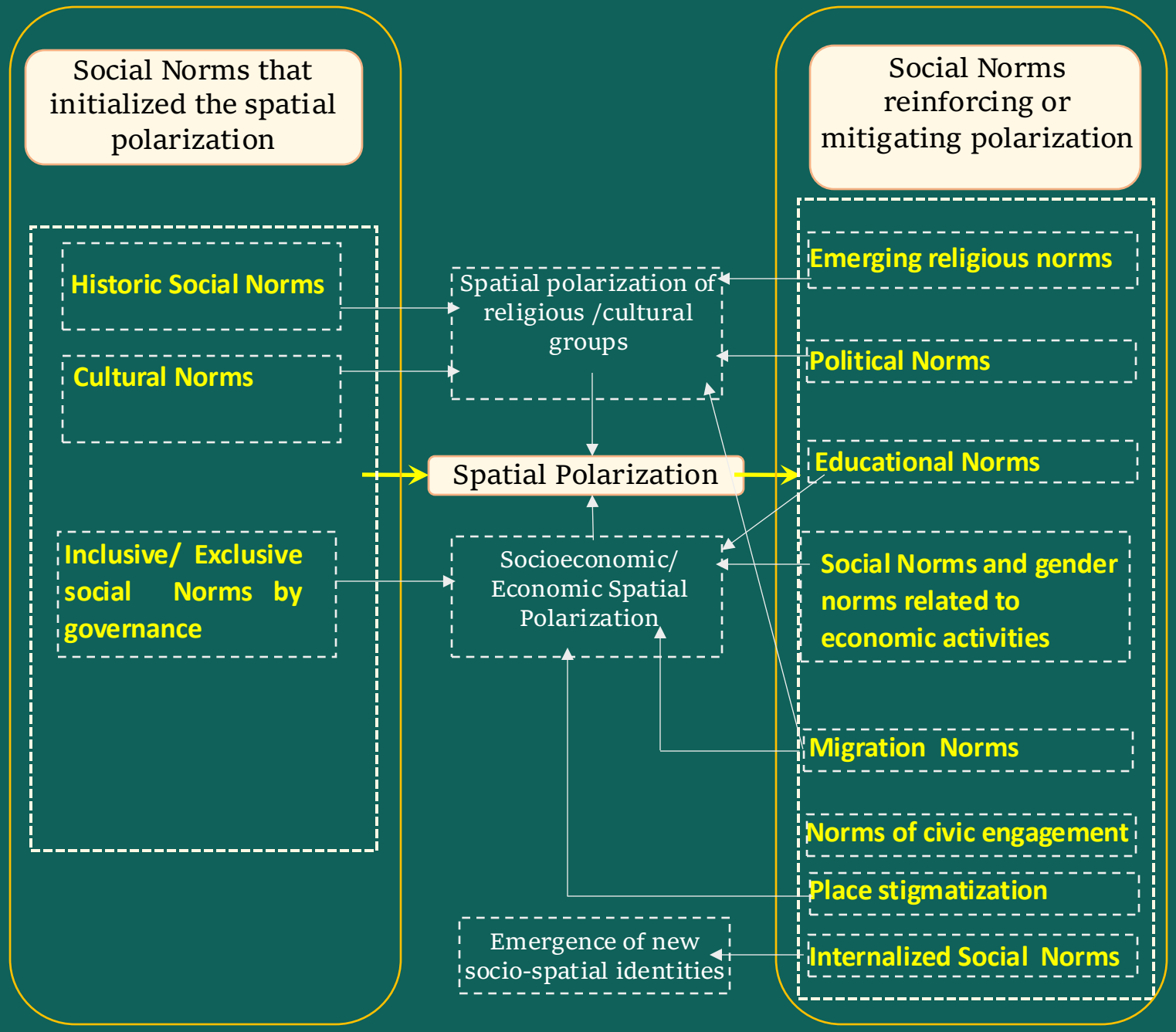
- Elite Muslims fled the old city after Police action…. Established families who stayed in their Old City townhouses watched as their wealth diminished until they lived almost as squatters in their own deteriorating homes.
- From 2001 to 2011, Hyderabad observed a **264%** increase in its slum population (Markandey & Alam, 2020) .
- The number of slums became 1476, and **66% of them sprung up within the MCH area** (The Times of India, 2012; Chugh, 2021), creating a **stark spatial divide between the MCH area and the newly developed urban peripheries, e.g., the Cyberabad area**

- Hitech city, on the other hand, was created to promote a globalized environment and attract MNCs and has a distinct spatial character
- **When considered for large densely inhabited area around Hyderabad the city seems much more segregated than its MCH level …even it is more segregated than cities like Delhi (Susewind 2017)**

How social norms are contributing to these polarized growth?

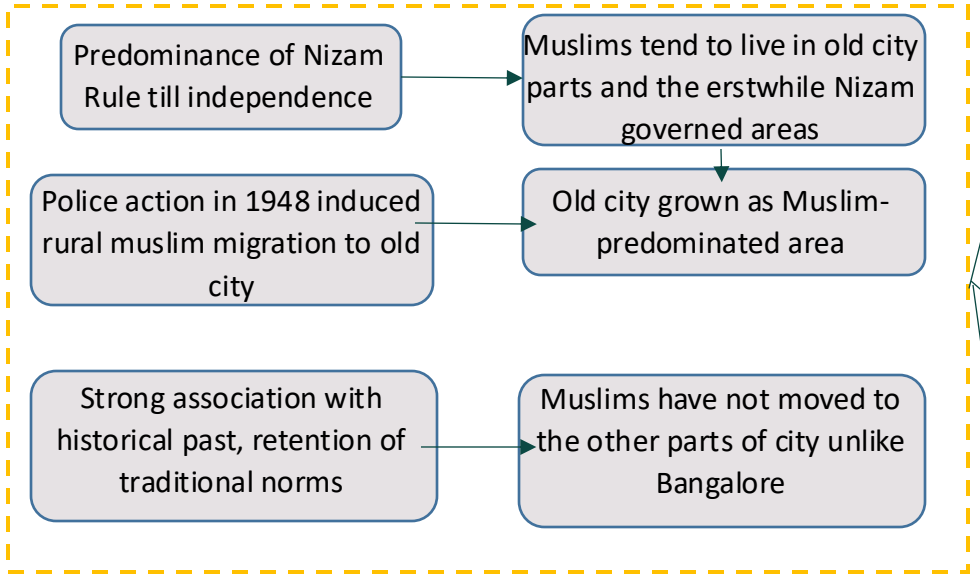
A polarization which is driven by both religion and socioeconomic conditions

The vicious process of polarization in Hyderabad



Social Norms that initialized spatial Polarization

Historic Social Norms



When we talk about the **identity between old city and new city , the norm is always to look at it from communal angle** (communal identity) (Surendra, 2010)

the identity of being Muslim, rather than identifying their neighborhood or economic class, **gained prominence over the twentieth century** and became the most salient identifier for Muslims (Zyskowski , 2008)

Like Bhopal and Lucknow, **ruling elites have left the cities but they have come to be inhabited by Muslims who have moved to those areas from other parts of the country** (Faisal,2013)

Cultural Norms

The difference in language spoken → Urdu/Deccani Urdu dominates the old city leading to polarization of Urdu speaking muslim groups (Zyskowski, 2008)

Inclusive/exclusive Social Norms by Governance

- The existing governance norms favors elitist urbanism to promote globalized environment
- A number of policies (IALA Framewok, Vision 2020, ICT policies 1999, 2002,2005 an 2010 introduced to develop Hyderabad's Western part on the lines of modern development ((Alam & Markandey, 2020; Kennedy & Sood, 2019; Das, 2015(a; Das, 2015(b)
- Old city growingly became predominant zone of informal settlements due to lack of investment and economic opportunities.

Social Norms that reinforcing spatial Polarization.....

Social Norms related to economic activities

Old city & the erstwhile Southern MCH area

Dependence on the informal and self-sustained economy

Muslim cultural norms

women are expected to be primarily inside the house

Women involved in informal works (bangle making or agarbatti making)

The women mostly saw themselves as housewives doing extra paid work ,consider getting involved as wage labourers or domestic workers below their dignity (Pande, 2008)

Men historically involved as artisans

Transition into peripatetic vendors as traditional bazaars are declining

Idea of kiosks and rehabilitation drive failed as it does not align with cultural pertinence

western concept of boutique or shopping malls cannot sustain in the old city because e it does not align with their traditional social norms (Tallavajjula, 2023)

Norms drive self employment/ micro-entrepreneurship/ skilled-semi skilled artisanal work (Sudhir et.al.2021)

Meagre income generation

informal settlements along the boundaries of Old Hyderabad belong to descendants of the inhabitants that shaped culture in the Old City – nearly a century ago **(Tallavajjula, 2023)**

Hitech City and Cyberabad area

Dependence on IT-based or its allied economy

- The IT based economy prevail
- Cyberabad contributes $30 billion annually in IT exports.
- corporatisation of the region has subsumed and transformed some of the traditional practices with IT professionals earning wages far above traditional workers

High-end IT jobs

Lower end jobs to support the IT based economy

- The norms of joining an economic activity is largely guided by the skills or the income profiles and not the religious norms .
- **The majority of the IT employees still remains Hindu in Hyderabad (96% in 2001, 94% in 2008) (Surendra,2010)**

Women's are equally participative in waged labour unlike the old city and also involved in domestic chores(Pradhan et. al., 2022)

Image Credit: Lakshmi Prabhala

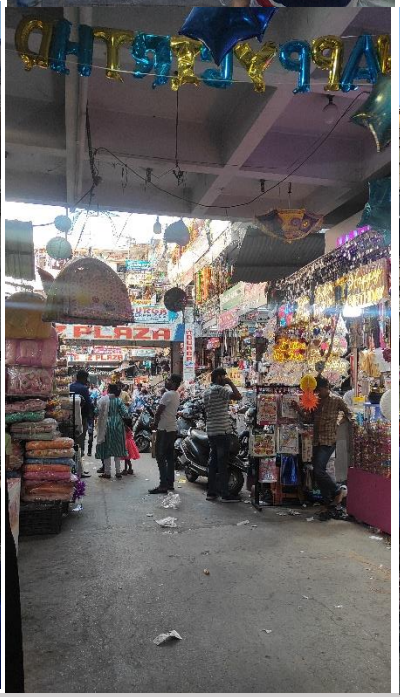


Image Credit: Pande,2007

Image Credit: Pande,2007

Self-sustained and informal economies in the old city

Large office spaces, IT and allied economies in Hitech city & Cyberabad region

Old city & the erstwhile Southern MCH area

Hitech City and Cyberabad area

Migration norms

Migration Norms in Men

- Hyderabadi muslims tend to **migrate towards Gulf countries** although they have Hitech City because it is their **culture of migration**
- **Existing perception that Hindus will not hire them** in the new city
- It has become **"normative" to migrate in search of work** [both for labourers and professionals], in large part to fulfil a man's duty to provide for his family'

source: Mclaughlin,2017

- The wealthiest residents (returning from Gulf countries) abandones old city but mostly lives in the Toli Chowki/ Mehdipatnam areas

Migration Norms in Women

- Norm of marrying Muslim women by Arabs leading to women migration (Ali, 2007)

- Migration from the coastal Andhra which are predominantly hindus contributed to the initial development
- No particular norms however exist as people from all backgrounds are migrating towards HITEC city
- Flow of both IT professional and informal labours

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NEWS / CITY NEWS / HYDERABAD NEWS / Most Gulf Migrants From Nizamabad & Hyderabad: Report

TRENDING Tirupati Laddu Prasadam Row Dharavis Subhani Mosque Police Constable Death Noida Road Accident

THIS STORY IS FROM DECEMBER 9, 2022

Most Gulf migrants from Nizamabad & Hyderabad: Report

U Sudhakar Reddy / TNN / Updated: Dec 9, 2022, 08:34 IST

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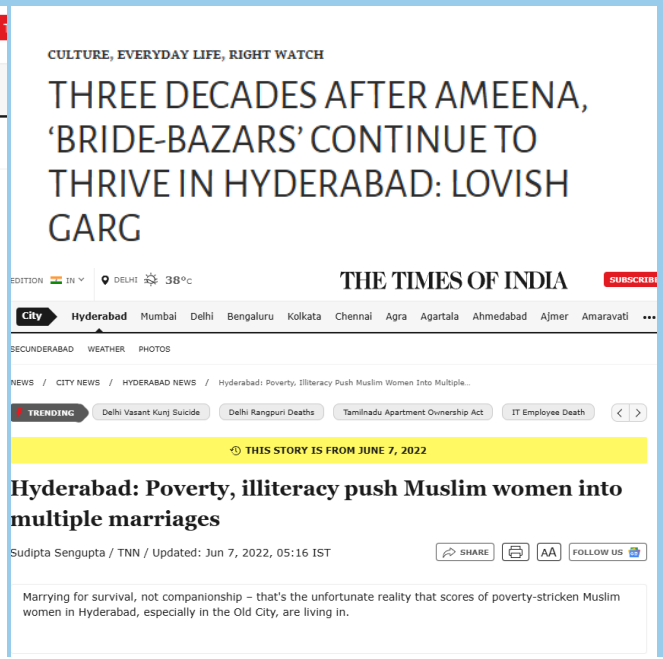
Most people from the state who migrated to Gulf countries in the past two years have been from Nizamabad and Hyderabad, data from the Ministry of External Affairs revealed. The data covers countries for which an emigration check is required (ECR).



CULTURE, EVERYDAY LIFE, RIGHT WATCH

THREE DECADES AFTER AMEENA, 'BRIDE-BAZARS' CONTINUE TO THRIVE IN HYDERABAD: LOVISH GARG

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NEWS / CITY NEWS / HYDERABAD NEWS / Hyderabad: Poverty, Illiteracy Push Muslim Women Into Multiple...

TRENDING Delhi Vasant Kunj Suicide Delhi Rangpuri Deaths Tamilnadu Apartment Ownership Act IT Employee Death

THIS STORY IS FROM JUNE 7, 2022

Hyderabad: Poverty, illiteracy push Muslim women into multiple marriages

Sudipta Sengupta / TNN / Updated: Jun 7, 2022, 05:16 IST

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Marrying for survival, not companionship – that's the unfortunate reality that scores of poverty-stricken Muslim women in Hyderabad, especially in the Old City, are living in.

- **Migration norms are strengthening spatial polarization in terms of both religious and socioeconomic terms**
- Not bridging the gap between the two separate identities of the old city and the new city

Social Norms reinforcing spatial Polarization……

Place Stigmatization & Place-based identity

Old city & the erstwhile Southern MCH area

The norms stigmatizes the old city as a breeding ground of communal violence and places of ruins

*"**latent threat of communal violence** which perpetuates the **Old City's poor reputation**, drives middle-class families away and diverts attention away from more pressing problems"* (Mclaughlin,2017)

*"The Old City has been marked—symbolically and physically—by its **violent and religiously doctrinaire reputation**, and is today identified as a 'problem area' to be avoided"(Pande,2008)*

*"A **continuous feeling of embarrassment** of living in the old city that strengthens the geographical divide" (Zyskowski, 2008)*

"The multiple deprivation of the old city is told from the lack of sanitation and public roads due to the development of slum-like pattern of settlements in the inner region of the city of Hyderabad that adds to the representation of the old city as a place of ruins—of ruined urbanisation and ruining by urbanization"

Hitech City and Cyberabad area

The HITEC city is associated with more modern morals

"There is a rising social norm, that everything is available for the Hindus and Muslims in the new city" (Zyskowski, 2008)

"….the new city has more modern morals ……" (Zyskowski, 2008)

Other Social Norms fuelled by spatial Polarization

Old city & the erstwhile Southern MCH area

Educational Norms

- Old city has less educational opportunities
- In an Indian society specially for the Muslim society the women's are always repressed
- **Women fear to travel leading to their illiteracy**

Norms of Civic Engagement

- Municipal neglect forces reliance on local institutions (e.g., mohalla committees) to enforce traditional norms
- Old city muslim residents generally associate themselves with **civic associations** so they can actively express their voice in a Hindu dominated governance (McLaughlin, 2017).
- The New city however is managed by special authorities, relies on digital policing , and do not have such stronger community associations

Image Credit: SIO Telangana, 2022

Emerging Religious Norms

- The old city is also inhabited by a few Hindus who are trying to reinforce their identity.
- **Representation of Ganesha through muscular bodies (Ganesh Pahlawan)** which in general represents a very harmless, calm god with a large belly (Eg. In Begum Bazar/Asaf Jahi area)
- Place based religious norms are changing (Mangiarotti,2019)

Political Norms

- The norms of retaining muslim identity for political gains

Image Credit, Farooqui , 2021

Social Norms mitigating spatial Polarization

Old city & the erstwhile Southern MCH area ⟷ Hitech City and Cyberabad area

Internalized Social Norms

Though old city and the Hitech city differs in terms of the Traditional norms and globalized norms, there are some **hybrid norms** that are actually mitigating the existing social norms

For eg. The study by Leclerc (2015) shows:

- IT workers adopt **hybrid norms** — Western corporate professionalism by day, traditional practices at home.
- Women in IT navigate patriarchal norms by working in **"secured" corporate campuses with night transport**
- Still **Shilparamam or places like Paradise Biryani try to bridge the social norms by creating more hybrid norms**

Secured corporate campuses in Cyberabad

Nightbazar at Shilparamam in HITECH City
Source:Leclerc,2014

Apart from Polarization, Hyderabad is also struggling with the burden of segregation

.....

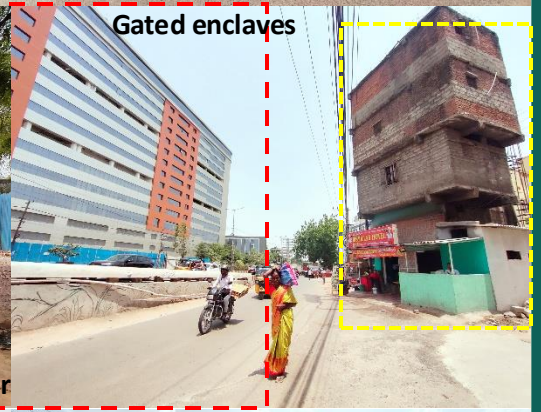
Now, let us see the new type of Segregation in Hyderabad city and its linkages to social norms

A new type of segregation in Hyderabad

- Segregation in Hyderabad is predominant in every parts of the city, even in old city where still a significant percentage of Hindu Dalits or other classes of people live along with the Muslim majority population.
- But in the new city parts/ Cyberabad area there is an emerging predominance of spatial segregation between different socioeconomic groups irrespective of their religion

Gated communities/ the elite enclaves

Enclaves of lower-income groups alongside the elite enclaves



Segregation of socioeconomic groups in the new city

Social Norms in the segregated spaces

- The segregation in these neighborhoods have become important through the lens of public services. It aligns with the statement "**Segregation in India is more prominent in disparities across public services**"(Asher et. al., 2024)
- The impact of religion or caste wise segregation is not prominent in these spaces, rather the **socioeconomic division is predominant**, so the **social norms in the new urban spaces are guided by income profiles.**
- **Lower-income enclaves** are however homogenous in terms of their places of origin, language or type of working activities so they have **more shared norms (For eg. The Artisans' Colony opposite to Hitex Charminar, where every person is a migrant from Uttar Pradesh/Bihar and is also an artisan)**

Other Social Norms driving these segregated spaces

Social norms that consider who is eligible for the service

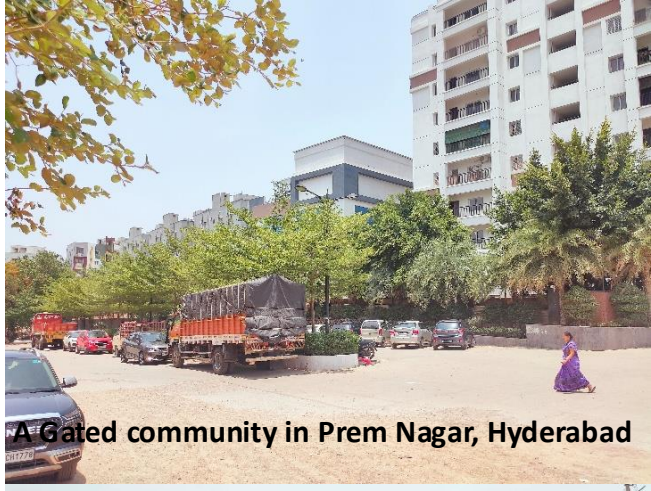
Norms of performing daily activities or using urban space

Norms related to the economic activities

Social Norms in the new segregated spaces

Social norms that consider who is eligible for the service

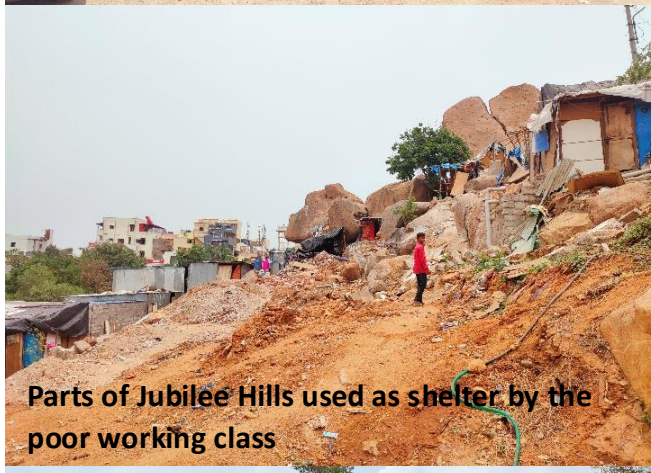
- **Globalization has particularly created a changing norm in society where the most focus is on the globally mobile population with less focus on the already established communities**
- The norm has shifted towards **institutionalizing poor as encroahers** and coopt the dominant groups as **'public Interest'**
- While the gated communities have 24 x7 services the poor struggle for basic facilities



A Gated community in Prem Nagar, Hyderabad

Norms of performing daily activities or using urban space

- In the new city , the enclaves of emerging middle class conceive urban space through **modern ideals of development**, consumerism and spectacular high-tech cities, while the **poor read urban spaces more in terms of survival.**
- For the poor the notion of property does not play much when choosing a spot for their activities, so they choose any vacant spaces from where they can carry out the informal works …….
- **For the elite there is a norm to perceive any open space as public space but for the poor it is just 'pablik' space which can be useable for their accommodation** (Bethune, 2011)



Parts of Jubilee Hills used as shelter by the poor working class

Norms related to economic activities

- The norm is only to involve in globalizing activity either as white collar workers or blue collar workers.
- The lower-income groups get involved in works (eg. Ragpicking, domestic help, construction works) that suffice the needs of elite
- There settlements, therefore, occur near the residential enclaves, reinforcing segregation

Perforated panels made by U.P Artisans for residents of HITECH city

Discussion & Conclusion

- In an Indian city polarization has been traditionally driven by the religion but **in the post-liberal period the polarization has also transcended into a socioeconomic** one primarily because of **social norms embedded within the specific religion and the existing political dynamics**

- With globalization the **'Us Vs Them'** debate is not confined within religious purview but it is more about non sharing of societal norms relevant to services and resources.

- **there are certain social norms that are inducing socio-spatial polarization, on the other side a polarizing urban fabric is leading to rise of varying social norms within the polarized groups that reinforces spatial polarization.**

- **Segregation of different enclaves of economic class are a major defining features of these developing cities where social norms are not guided by religion/class**, **it is more about the income profiles and being part of the globalizing activities.**

- **While polarization induces macro-level cultural/political divides** and **varying economic norms/cultural norms**, **segregation remains a localized phenomenon inducing enclave-specific norms and social isolation.**

- Segregation occurs at a more neighborhood scale which **affects the ability of communities to organize and *demand* public services so they face more exclusion in the urban space**

Research Contribution

The research provides a **theoretical understanding of spatial polarization and spatial segregation** and its **differential impacts on the social norms**

The research highlights **how polarization and segregation in a globalizing city of a developing country is interlinked with social norms** that are not only driven by religion but are also getting generated due to socioeconomic differences in a globalizing era

Indian cities face growing spatial polarization, driven largely by religious norms. However, the mismatch between *social norms* and *governance norms* worsens this divide by reinforcing socioeconomic segregation. **To counter this, inclusive policies and targeted micro-level interventions must address social norms directly—promoting integration rather than division.**

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Thank you for your attention!

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