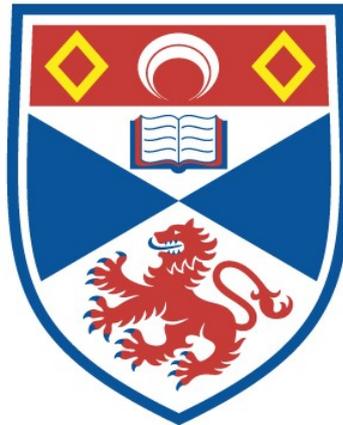# OF GARDENS, SUBURBS AND THE PARSI 'MIDDLING SORT': THE CASE OF THE DADAR PARSI COLONY IN COLONIAL BOMBAY

Vahishtai Debashish Ghosh

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
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Of Gardens, Suburbs and the Parsi 'middling sort': The Case of the Dadar Parsi Colony in Colonial Bombay

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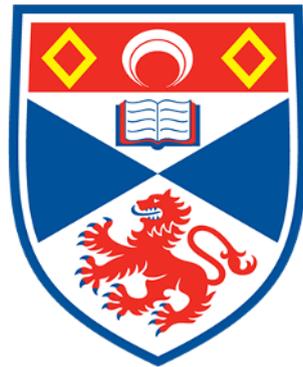
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July 2022

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of the Dadar Parsi Colony, a middle-class ethnic enclave located in an area of colonial Bombay which emerged in the early 20th century. The thesis argues that the Dadar Parsi Colony arose as part of Bombay's built environment due to the circumstances that were created by the 1896 plague. It shows that area was the outcome of the import of garden city planning principles into Bombay's urban landscape. It also argues that the Colony is an example of a microcosm of middle-class Parsi life. It enumerates the ways in which the Parsis who resided within the space of the Colony negotiated with notions of class and colonial modernity in the city. Finally, the thesis demonstrates that the spatial character of the neighbourhood was characterised and constituted by the cultural endeavours and practices of middle-class Parsis in the public and private spheres.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

I first visited the Dadar Parsi Colony as a child, on a trip to a doctor that practised in the area. Even then, I was struck by its verdant abundance. As I walked with my mother to the doctor's clinic, trees that were nearly a hundred years old towered above me. The Gulmohar trees, in particular, created a red carpet under my feet as I trudged through Mumbai's monsoon. It was evening time, and the birds had just begun to chirp as they entered the final part of the day. I walked past the bust of an upstanding older man, whom I later discovered was Mancherji Joshi, the Colony's founder. We moved on to the bylanes of the colony. Old Parsi men and women sat on their balconies, looking down at the cars and people passing them by. I was in awe of the beauty of its old-world buildings, and the serenity which enveloped them. It was then that I first developed my fascination with the enclave that stood in such stark contrast to the rest of the city, in its greenery, tranquillity and plenitude.

Thinking back on my memories of the Colony brings to mind an apocryphal story told to every Parsi child growing up. The narrative remains a pervasive analogy whilst recounting Parsi contributions to Indian society. I was reminded of it in walking the lanes of the Colony — a green sanctum for all to enjoy, but a distinctively Parsi space in the heart of the city. It concerns the arrival of the Parsis on the shores of India, and what followed. The tale and its versions are derived from the *Kissah-i-Sanjan*, or the 'Story of Sanjan', an account of the Parsi immigration to India written by a Parsi priest named Bahman Kaikobad Hamjiar Sanjana. Little is known of the author, other than that he wrote the story around the year 1600.[1] The Parsis had fled Persia, fearing religious persecution, and had come to India after an arduous journey. In my grandmother's version of the story, during their passage to India from Persia, they braved a storm that raged on the seas for seven days and seven nights. They prayed to *Ahura Mazda*, their divine protector, to see them through the voyage, and promised to consecrate a sacred fire in India if they lived. God listened to their prayer,

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[1] "The Qissah-i-Sanjan", Translated by Shahpurshah Hormasji Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*, Bombay, 1920, pp. 94-117. http://www.avesta.org/other/qsanjan.htm

and with his aid, they were brought safely to the shores of Sanjan in Gujarat. Once they had disembarked their ships, the learned priests who had travelled with the party were taken to the king of the region, Jadi Rana. They asked for sanctuary in his realm. The king responded by presenting them with a bowl, brimful of milk. The bowl of milk betokened that his lands could not accommodate more people than they already had, and that there was no room for the Parsis to settle there. The Parsi priests responded by adding a spoonful of sugar to the milk, implying to the king that they would be like the sugar in the milk; adding sweetness to the land and their society without causing any disruptions. The king was impressed by the gesture and allowed the exiles to stay in Sanjan, subject to a few conditions. They were to lay down their arms, wed only at night, dress like the locals, and learn Gujarati. The Parsis readily accepted these conditions, and so began their stay in India.

This tale is not entirely accurate of course, having been passed down through oral tradition for many centuries. But the memory of the story is important. The reason I tell it here, and the reason it crossed my mind all those years ago, and even in my recent traversals of the Colony, is in no doubt due to my positionality as a Parsi growing up in Bombay. I was taught that Parsis always lived up to the promises of their ancestors, and like sugar in milk, had always sweetened their surroundings with their tenets of *humata, hukta,* and *huvarshta*.[2] Even as a child, I was overwhelmed by the notion that the promises the priests had made to Jadi Rana had embedded themselves into the Parsi spaces I was so familiar with, and that was why I loved them so. My fascination with these spaces led to my choosing the topic of the Dadar Parsi Colony for a thesis subject. I was drawn to the matter as a result of my own subjectivity — I was eager to study the spaces that I, a person born to a Parsi mother, had some degree of access to.

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[2] Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

Although I grew up with a fairly large degree of exposure to *Parsipanu*[3], having only a Parsi mother and not a Parsi father meant that I was not seen as a Parsi by a large majority within the community. This would affect my research on the Colony, as I will detail in the reflections on my work in the concluding paragraphs of this thesis. Nonetheless, the episodic memories I had of the Colony and its surroundings presented themselves with a tellingly Parsi allure that was hard to resist. Furthermore, I was aware that my dual position as both an insider and an outsider to the community would shape much of my understanding of the subject and would also garner somewhat unique responses from the Parsi residents I chose to interview. My personal experiences and knowledge of Parsi life do indeed make their way into the pages of this work, but I do not believe that my subjectivity is a hindrance to it. In actuality, my positionality as a Parsi made much of this work possible and I would do well to acknowledge that here, lest it goes unrecognised.

As mentioned above, this thesis is a study of the Dadar Parsi Colony, a middle-class ethnic enclave that came into existence in colonial Bombay in the early 20th century. The chapters of this work present the argument that the Colony came to the fore following British urban planning interventions that took place as a result of the chaos that the outbreak of the 1896 plague brought to the city. These interventions, namely garden city planning principles, were imports from the British metropole that were implanted into Bombay's colonial landscape with significant digressions from its original form. I also argue that life in the Colony, both in public and private, constitutes a distinctively Parsi middle-class existence, and go on to enumerate the ways in which it does so. Furthermore, I argue that Parsi life in the Colony may be seen as an exemplar of the ways in which the Parsis as a whole negotiated with colonial modernity in the city. This work is important because it provides an addition to both, the historiographies of colonial Bombay and the Parsis, in that it traces not only the growth of Bombay's built environment but also how the Parsis themselves came to inhabit these spaces using the instance of the Parsi Colony. Lastly, the case of the Dadar Parsi Colony may be understood as a

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[3] The Parsi way of life

microcosm of middle-class Parsi life in the city. This study thus provides an example of a framework wherein the history of the Parsi community may be understood through the neighbourhoods they inhabit within the city. This thesis, therefore, combines histories of urban planning with the lived experiences of those occupying planned spaces to provide a more holistic approach to studying urban spaces that accounts for the plurality and dynamism with which they are often constituted.

Strolling through the Colony

My subsequent strolls in the Parsi Colony as an adult would be characterised by much of the same wonder and fascination that I felt as a child in that space. I was also acutely aware that walking the Colony would be an important aspect of my study, and I believed that documenting my first walk through the Colony would record not only my experience of exploring it as a researcher, but also reveal the spatial peculiarities that characterised the Colony. Christian Tagsold employs a similar technique in his book on Japanese gardens in the West. At the beginning of every chapter, Tagsold takes the reader on a walking tour of the gardens that he strolled through as a researcher. Tagsold paints a picture of each garden he walks through, and allows the reader an insight into the material experience of walking through them with his descriptions.[4] I aim to create a similar experience for the readers of this introduction, before delving into the historical aspects of the space I have chosen to study.

My first journey to the Colony after several years of not having visited it was on a pleasant winter evening in 2019. The taxi driver I hailed in Prabhadevi knew exactly where to go when I said "Parsi Colony, Dadar". We wound through the streets of my hometown, Mumbai, until we reached the familiar bust of Mancherji Joshi I had seen as a child. Little did I know at the time, that he would feature quite prominently in the story I had chosen to tell in my thesis. I alighted the taxi, and began my walk through the Colony. A corner building that

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[4] Christian Tagsold, *Spaces in Translation: Japanese Gardens and the West*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.

read *Dina Manzil* in bold Gujarati letters marked the beginning of the Colony at its southern end. Its light brown facade, partly wooden facings and antiquated balconies gleamed in the evening sun. The Colony had no walls or gates, and seemed to me that buildings like *Dina Manzil* made the limits of the Colony evident to its explorers with their quintessentially Parsi names and old building typologies.

Behind the bust of Mancherji Joshi lay two large modern buildings, *Della Towers* and *Nirvan Towers*, the former having been built by a Parsi developer and the latter by a Hindu one. *Della Towers* was most certainly a more ostentatious building than *Nirvan Towers*. It had been consciously built to call to mind images of ancient cities like Persepolis and Nimrud in Iran. Winged *Lamassus*[5] stood guard at its gates, while its facades were embossed with images of *Farohars*[6]. The Hindu building, notwithstanding its size, was rather nondescript in comparison. Nonetheless, the Hindu building drew more ire from the members of the Colony, as I later discovered in my conversations with them. They believed that the building had ruined the quaint character of the Colony, despite *Della Towers* being the more imposing (but clearly Parsi) building of the two. It was through conversations of this nature that I discovered that the material space of the Colony was contested terrain in very real terms. To its residents, the destiny of the Colony hung in the balance with every non-Parsi that chose to build a home there. The community that resided within the Colony was fiercely protective of it, and it was meant to be reserved mainly for Parsis or else it would cease to be a Parsi Colony altogether. I draw attention to the contentions that characterise occupying space in the Parsi Colony in order to highlight the fact that a hundred buildings within the space of the Colony are indeed covenanted buildings that can be occupied by Parsis alone.[7] Exclusivity is built into the space of the Colony and contributes to its

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[5] A mythical creature with a human's head, a bull's body, and wings. Often seen at entrances and were notioned to protect buildings in ancient times.
[6] Guardian spirits.
[7] Zareen Engineer, first interview with the author, 11 January, 2020, 22:00-23:00

distinctively Parsi character.[8] The threat of this exclusivity diminishing in any way struck the residents of the Colony as an unacceptable fate. Preserving the Colony's Parsi identity took precedence above all else for them.

I now return to my walk around the Colony. Strolling down Mancherji Joshi Road I felt the air around me become cooler — walking through the promise of an oasis of peace in the city ensured a safe haven from the heat, noise and dust that emanated from the urban jungle that I seemed to have left behind me. I was struck by how many buildings in the Colony had been preserved close to their original form. Many of these buildings had been erected in the 1920s and 1930s, when the Colony had first been established. Some buildings bore the markers of contemporaneity, having been extended upwards in a noticeably modern and contrastingly unattractive style to accommodate more people. I walked past the Rustom Framna Agiary, a fire-temple where the familiar smell of sandalwood beckoned devotees to enter and offer their supplications. It was a space that was restricted to me, and I remember thinking that I daren't enter as a half-Parsi, lest I was recognised or found out by an orthodox adherent of the Zoroastrian religion. While the Colony itself was open to visitors, some spaces within it were restricted to 'purer' Parsis alone, whether it was for the purposes of living or of praying. Residents would argue that this was how its character as a Parsi Colony was preserved, and ought to be preserved in posterity, too.[9] I trudged away from the fire-temple, and walked towards the famed Five Gardens. Here, signs of the city that surrounded the Colony crept back into its idyll. Traffic got busier, children played, adults exercised, and hawkers surrounded the park with their carts and stands full of food. To my right, a flock of Parsi boys played in the courtyard of the local Athornan Institute, a school for young Parsi boys aspiring to be priests. Disillusioned by the noise I walked back into the haven of the southern end of the Colony, towards Jam-e-Jamshed road, which was lined with the towering canopy of Asoka trees. I made my way to Panchgani Garden, named as such because residents claim to feel as if they were in the famed hill-station in its vicinity. I inhaled the smell of fresh grass as the sun began to set, and then made my way back

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[8] See Chapter 2 of this thesis.
[9] Mithoo Jesia, interview with the author, 22 April, 2022, 15:00-16:00

home. In the following weeks, I would often stroll around the Colony, taking in its sights and the tranquillity of one of its 14 gardens — an impressive number for Mumbai's mostly concrete cityscape. I would marvel at its antiquated buildings, and I would come to know some of their residents, who would graciously allow me into their homes and their lives. My tryst with the Dadar Parsi Colony would last several months, through the Coronavirus pandemic. It would impress on me its sense of tranquillity and repose, which I would come to cherish deeply.

The documentation of the first stroll I took through the Colony lays bare several facts. First, the Colony does stand in a degree of contrast with the rest of the city, and is known for being a haven of peace and quiet in an otherwise bustling metropolis. Second, while the Colony has no gates or walls enclosing it like other Parsi colonies, and while its boundaries are permeable, there are particular notions of what does and does not 'belong' within it. Third, these notions of belonging are mainly ascribed to things that are distinctively Parsi, such as the fire-temple, the Athornan Institute, the 'clean'[10] gardens that dot the Colony, or the homes within which Parsis themselves dwell. Fourth, these markers of Parsiness are materially palpable to those who choose to walk in the Colony. While these Parsi spaces do not comprise the entirety of the neighbourhood, the very fact that they exist within the boundaries of the Colony remains enough to define the Colony as a distinctively Parsi space to date. Lastly, these spatial markers of Parsiness are consciously preserved, and anything that impinges on them are thought to have a negative impact on the character of the Colony.

The emergence of the Colony

The Colony appeared on the city's landscape during a period of time that Prashant Kidambi characterises as a "watershed" moment in the history of colonial Bombay.[11] It was transformed from a flourishing port city and major point of entry to British trade into a thriving modern metropolis in its own right by way of

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[10] Cleanliness is a quality often attributed to the Parsis when it comes to their self-identification. See Chapter 3.
[11] Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*, New York; London, Routledge, 2007 p. 9

burgeoning industrialisation and capitalism. This also resulted in the migration of labour from the hinterlands of the subcontinent into the city. It was during this time that Bombay's colonial government deployed a series of intrusive urban planning measures in order to control the problems that were brought to the city as a result of mammoth levels of labour migration and rapid industrialisation.[12] One of the most pressing issues to the colonial government at the time was the spread of diseases that was exacerbated by the city's overpopulated nature.

In 1896, Bombay was struck by an outbreak of the bubonic plague, whose first victims were labourers in the grainhouses of Mandvi.[13] Mandvi was a densely populated and overcrowded area in the city that was mainly inhabited by Indian people. This outbreak instigated a series of coercive practices helmed by the colonial government in order to control the local Indian population that they believed were the greatest propagators of plague in the city. The Indian Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897 vested a great deal of power in the number of committees that sought to bring the disease under control by surveilling and even incarcerating the local population. Plague officers were mainly British government officials and military men who "descended" on mostly poorer Indians with a "zeal never before seen".[14] Control measures involved anything from flushing drains and sewers with gallons of carbolic acid,[15] to the cordoning off of entire homes and neighbourhoods suspected of harbouring plague,[16] and even to the involuntary internment of individuals into specially designated 'plague camps'.[17] The plague thus prompted sweeping changes in governance that placed their focus squarely on colonised bodies and their surroundings.

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[12] Ibid.
[13] Myron Echenberg, *Plague Ports: The Global Urban Impact of the Bubonic Plague, 1894-1901*, London: New York: New York University Press, 2007, p. 48
[14] Echenberg, *Plague Ports*, p. 57
[15] Ibid.
[16] Echenberg, *Plague Ports*, p. 58
[17] Aidan Forth, *Barbed-Wire Imperialism: Britain's Empire of Camps, 1876–1903*, Oakland: University of California Press, 2017, p. 78

Attempts to mitigate the plague manifested in Bombay's built environment as well, and the city was rendered into an object of surveillance and a site of control to be governed by the unshakeable authority of its colonial overlords.[18] It was believed that the plague was caused by miasmas, or foul air that circulated in spaces of the city that were left unexposed to sufficient light and air. Naturally then, the British government in Bombay mainly centred their anti-plague measures in neighbourhoods that were occupied by the poorer and underserved classes, who could not afford housing built along the lines of idealised British standards in the city.[19] By 1898, the Bombay City Improvement Trust was created through an act of the Bombay Parliament. This was an administrative body that comprised British colonial administrators and the city's elite that was tasked with bringing the plague under control in Bombay. To them, the plague was not merely a crisis of health but a crisis that endangered their rule. Sheetal Chhabria proposes that the Trust was a means through which the moneyed classes of the Bombay sought to protect their interests in the city.[20] The plague threatened to abridge their collection of capital by affecting their labourers, their channels for trade, and their investments in general. They thus sought to revive the "sanitary credit" of their city, which would ensure that their wealth and labour did not dwindle or escape the city as it had during the course of the epidemic.[21] The Bombay City Improvement Trust was thus a body that constituted the city's greatest bearers of capital, who sought to 'cleanse' the city, lest their interests were threatened any further by the plague.

The colonial government had already explored measures which involved quarantining and incarcerating the Indian population to combat the plague, and had failed to bring it under control. Once these were deemed ineffective measures, colonial bodies like the Bombay City Improvement Trust sought to use urban planning as a strategy to inhibit its spread.[22] This was in no way revolutionary, and concentrated attempts at combating

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[18] Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis*, p. 9
[19] David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body : State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India*, (University of California Press, 1993), p. 210
[20] Sheetal Chhabria, *Making the Modern Slum: The Power of Capital in Colonial Bombay*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019, p. 115
[21] Ibid.
[22] Chhabria, *Making the Modern Slum*, p. 117

the spread of disease through urban renewal were par for the course in the late 18th and 19th centuries.[23] The Trust began its work by carrying out 'slum clearances' in areas that they deemed were insanitary in the city. Once again, these were mainly areas occupied by the poorer and labouring classes.[24] Mass dishousing projects were carried out with the aim of replacing 'insalubrious' dwellings with sanitary ones that were built on the lines that were considered hygienic by British colonial standards. Eventually however, the Trust realised that their methods caused more tumult than it did resolutions. By 1910, Trust administrators had abandoned their dishousing projects and adopted strategies which involved the reordering of the city by method of "indirect attack".[25] This involved the expansion of Bombay city-limits, and the promulgation of urban schemes that sought to build up its suburbs in order to move a section of the city's population there. This demographic would eventually come to be mainly middle-class people who could afford the prices of housing in these newly planned spaces, and could also afford to commute into the city for work on a daily basis.[26] It was against this backdrop that the Dadar-Matunga area or Scheme V, where the Parsi Colony is located, came into being.

Suburban growth in colonial Bombay may be historically examined at two levels. First, it may be examined as a process that is unique in its own right and its study seen as an intervention in the historiography of suburbanisation that overwhelmingly focuses on countries in the Global North. As Nikhil Rao points out, patterns of suburbanisation in Bombay were categorically different from those that took shape in Anglo-American countries. It took place mainly within municipal city-limits, as opposed to outside of the city. Contrariwise, it did not result in the destruction of older neighbourhoods as it did in the United States. Lastly,

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[23] Helen Meller. "Urban Renewal and Citizenship: the Quality of Life in British Cities, 1890-1990." *Urban History* 22, no 1 (1995), p. 63
[24] Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis*, p. 76
[25] J.P. Orr, *Social Reform and Slum Reform: A Lecture Delivered to the Social Science Service League, Bombay, in the Servants of India Society's Hall, Bombay on 3rd September, 1917,* The Times Press, Bombay, 1917, p. 10
[26] Nikhil Rao, *House but No Garden: Apartment Living in Bombay's Suburbs, 1898-1964,* Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2013, pp. 15-16

it was characterised not by the rise of single-family homes or bungalows, but by apartment buildings.[27] Rao also posits that it was in Bombay's suburbs of Dadar and Matunga that new forms of dwelling, that is, the apartment building, began to become the constitutive form of living for Bombay's middle-classes. Thus, apartment living was pioneered in Bombay's suburbs.[28] Second, as this thesis demonstrates, the suburbs of Dadar and Matunga may be examined as a landscape formed primarily by the import of planning principles from the colonial metropole. This import was mainly that of garden city planning principles, that were pioneered by Ebenezer Howard in the late 19th century. Garden city principles were particularly chosen for their appeal, rooted in the notion that they would institute an end to overcrowding and the uncleanness that characterised Bombay as a city in the eyes of its colonial rulers. It was to do so with the promise of plentiful open spaces and gardens, wide tree-lined thoroughfares, and well-ventilated homes, all of which Howard had prescribed in his magnum opus, *To-morrow - A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. Nikhil Rao argues that the Dadar and Matunga area was merely envisioned as a garden suburb but finally had no comprehensive vision underpinning its material manifestation in Bombay's urban landscape, and does not dwell on the circumstances of its import.[29] I, on the other hand, argue that the sole intention of British administrators in planning a garden suburb in the midst of a burgeoning Bombay is worth enquiry, because it is a worthwhile contribution to the historiography of not only Bombay, but of garden city planning and its import to other colonial contexts as well. Investigating the import of garden city principles within the context of colonial Bombay offers an insight into the ways in which British colonial administrators tackled problems of urbanity with methods that they developed in the colonial metropole.

It must be noted here that the import of garden city ideas was not unique to Bombay's colonial context. As Liora Bigon and Yossi Katz point out in their edited volume on the transnational import of garden cities in

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[27] Rao, *House, but no Garden*, p. 8
[28] Rao, *House, but no Garden*, p. 5
[29] Rao, *House, but no Garden*, p. 35

the colonial world; the transfer of garden city planning was enabled across a vast number of colonial territories across the globe by the complex networks that characterised the metropole-colony relationship.[30] Not only are these transfers of planning ideas then a useful framework to analyse these relationships but also a means through which one may examine the ways in which modernity was conceptualised for colonies and embedded in their built environments.[31] These transfers occurred on a "selective and uneven basis", and not all features of Howard's original ideas were transmitted and diffused to colonial cities in equal measure.[32] As this thesis demonstrates, these incidences of unequal transfer have their precedent set in Britain itself, and Howard's ideas were not implanted into the British landscape in the form in which they were originally intended. Garden city planning, like all other utopian urban plans, was never quite brought to fruition in the forms in which it was originally designed. Scheme V in Bombay is thus an example of this pattern, and the fact that it does not quite parallel Howard's original ideas does not render it a lesser example of garden city planning.

Peopling the Garden Suburb

Scheme V was a site where new forms of middle-class identity emerged on Bombay's urban landscape. This was partly owing to the fact that it was a space wherein new forms of dwelling emerged by way of the apartment building. Garden cities and suburbs were in fact utopian spaces designed to be inhabited by people from all classes of society. However, when they were finally built in England, they were primarily occupied by the middle-classes, who could afford not only the housing in the newly built locales, but also transport to and from London for their daily business. Furthermore, the lack of industry in garden city spaces ensured that these spaces would remain inaccessible to the working-classes.[33] As mentioned in the previous section of this introduction, a similar situation evolved in Bombay, where the residents of Scheme V were primarily

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[30] Liora Bigon and Yossi Katz (eds.), *Garden cities and colonial planning: Transnationality and urban ideas in Africa and Palestine*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014, pp. 1–2
[31] Bigon and Katz, *Garden cities and colonial planning*, p. 3
[32] Bigon and Katz, *Garden cities and colonial planning*, p. 2
[33] Charles Benjamin Purdom, *The Garden City: A Study in the Development of a Modern Town*, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, Letchworth, 1913, p. 51

those who could afford not only the land in the area but the commute to the main centres of commerce in the city on a daily basis. The suburb had in fact been designed to separate the workplace from the dwelling, and it was deemed that industry would disrupt the idyll of what was primarily designed to be a quiet and green residential area. The new suburb thus introduced novel ideas of dwelling, which had hitherto been absent from a city where homes were characteristically close to one's place of work.[34] As Nikhil Rao points out, Scheme V emerged as a site wherein new forms of identity were made and re-calibrated through the combined notions of caste and class. Rao explores this by investigating the formation of the 'South Indian' community that comprised upper-caste and white-collar, middle-class people who came to settle in the area.[35] In a similar vein, I propose that Scheme V was also a site where middle-class Parsis consolidated their identity in the city by building and dwelling in the area. The Dadar Parsi Colony within Scheme V was not only the most faithful recreation of garden city planning within the neighbourhood, it was also constituted as a middle-class ethnic enclave by the Parsis residing in it.

Middle-classness was a project in self-fashioning that was constantly in the making for Parsis, as it was for other communities in India.[36] Along with objective social and economic factors, the middle-classes defined themselves through efforts of cultural entrepreneurship.[37] For middle-class Parsis in Bombay, these projects included efforts at housing reform, and thus the formation of housing colonies built exclusively for Parsis. These housing colonies were manifestations of the aspirations for exclusive housing colonies in the city – an aspiration that was shared by other communities such as the Saraswat Brahmins of Bombay, who were among the first to build co-operative housing societies operated along community lines in the city.[38] The creation of these co-operative housing societies was not only an exercise in cultural entrepreneurship, but also a way in

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[34] Rao, *House, but no Garden*, p. 5
[35] Rao, *House, but no Garden*, p. 8
[36] Sanjay Joshi (ed.), *The Middle Class in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. xix
[37] Ibid.
[38] "Chairman's Minute, dating 14th August 1914" in *Bombay City Improvement Trust Administration Report for the year ending 31st March 1915*, The Times Press, Bombay, p. 117-118

which those who lived in the city negotiated with colonial modernity. The institution of the co-operative housing was also an import from the colonial metropole. It was pioneered in Britain in the late 19th century and gained its popularity through the garden city movement itself. British colonial administrators actively encouraged the propagation of co-operative housing societies in Bombay and the city's middle-classes lept to the opportunity to use it to cater to their own interests. The institution of the housing colony allowed middle-class Parsis to not only garner resources from various sources, such as the charity of wealthier Parsis, but also allowed them to use these resources to consolidate the most coveted of all assets in the city — land. The use of the housing colony to acquire lands for housing may thus be seen as an exercise of cultural entrepreneurship that came to characterise middle-classness among the Parsis in the area. It was in using these methods of consolidating land that the Parsis came to occupy and people the space of the Colony.

Parsi middle-classness

Thus far, this introduction has traced the historical precedents that led to the emergence of the suburbs of Dadar and Matunga as well as the Parsi Colony that was established within it. I have argued that while it was the initiative of Bombay's colonial administrators that brought the space of the garden suburb into fruition, it was finally the projects of cultural entrepreneurship of communities like the Parsis that led to the area being populated by the city's middle-classes. I now move on to introducing notions of middle-classness as they were performed by the Parsis, especially within the space of the Colony. Analyses of middle-classness among the Parsis are inextricably tied to the notion of dynamism. That is to say, that notions of Parsi middle-classness were constantly in the making, and were influenced by the ways in which the community sought to negotiate with both, markers of class and colonial modernity. This thesis demonstrates that to be a middle-class Parsi was to aspire to certain notions of civility and gentility that were established by the practices of some of the city's elite, namely, wealthier Parsis and their British colonial rulers. Middle-class Parsis sought to emulate the

ways in which those 'above' they lived and dwelled, and in doing so, negotiated with notions of colonial modernity in their own distinctive ways.

These projects of aspiration and negotiation were carried out in both, the public and the private spheres. In the public sphere, middle-class Parsis initiated projects that aimed to concretise their social and cultural capital, and occupying a suburb wherein they lived in apartments with gardens surrounding them is a distinctive example of the way in which they negotiated the public to this aim. Apartment living was a new form of dwelling that was galvanised in the city through the conduit of colonial modernity. What this means is that apartment living was mainly brought to vernacular of the city's built environment by the import of colonial ways of living and dwelling. In adopting it, the Parsis displayed their readiness to embrace these markers of colonial modernity. This readiness was displayed even within the private space of the home, and Parsis negotiated colonial modernity even within the realm of the domestic. Here, Parsis adopted European patterns of consumption in a bid to fulfil the aspiration of being 'superior' than their middle-class peers in the city. These patterns of consumption extended to the categories of food and drink, home decor, and the management of the home itself. It should be noted, however, that whilst they assimilated and practised markers and rituals that may be ascribed to the colonial modern, Parsis also attempted to preserve traditions that were customary in the community in centuries past. As Jesse Palsetia notes, the Parsis endeavoured to do so to preserve their distinctive identity within a rapidly evolving colonial milieu.[39] This attempt at negotiating colonial modernity whilst simultaneously nurturing customs from a pre-colonial past ensured that middle-class Parsis developed an identity in the city that was unique to their particular position. The Dadar Parsi Colony, as a middle-class ethnic enclave, thus presents itself as an example of a space where this distinctive identity was nurtured and cultivated in colonial Bombay in both, the public and the private spheres.

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[39] Jesse Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, Leiden:Boston: Brill, 2001, p. 28

Plan of the thesis and sources

Read together, the chapters of this thesis use the Dadar Parsi Colony as an example of a space in which the Parsi middle classes built and occupied an ethnic enclave in the suburbs of colonial Bombay. It was within this enclave that Parsi middle-class notions of the public and the domestic may be analysed in action. I have arranged them such that the reader is introduced to the Colony on three successive levels — I begin with the planning of the suburb within which the Colony is located, move on to the built environment of the Colony itself, and conclude with the space of the home. This movement of historical scales from the city, to the neighbourhood, and finally to the home, presents a framework with which one may holistically analyse the constitution and spatial character of urban spaces such as the Colony.

Chapter 1 traces the emergence of Scheme V, the suburb within which the Parsi Colony was constituted. It argues that suburban expansion in colonial Bombay was galvanised by the 1896 plague. I present the argument that Scheme V emerged as the result of what William Glover terms the "colonial spatial imagination" which operates such that it transforms disorderly colonial spaces into idealised colonial forms. The chapter diverges from the existing historiography on suburban expansion in Bombay by demonstrating that the area was planned as a garden suburb, and locates Scheme V in the larger historiography of garden city planning across the globe. Lastly, I demonstrate that the Parsi Colony, with its self-contained nature, gardens and verdant surroundings, emerged as the most faithful recreation of garden city planning principles within Scheme V itself. The primary sources used for the chapter are varied, and draw from writings on both, garden cities and their planning as well as the administrative records of local bodies such as the Bombay City Improvement Trust. The chapter employs the works of garden city luminaries such as Ebenezer Howard and Charles Purdom, as well as writings from journals such as the Town Planning Review to present a picture of garden city planning in its original form. These are used to contextualise the import of garden city planning in Bombay. Among local sources, I have mainly used annual administrative reports of the Bombay City

Improvement Trust and newspaper clippings from the Times of India to detail how the dissemination and transfer of garden city ideas were finally carried out in Bombay's urban landscape. The secondary source material for the chapter draws from the historiography of colonial Bombay, urban planning in colonial cities, and garden city planning, among others. This is in order to paint a comprehensive historical picture of Scheme V and the Parsi Colony which includes the analysis of varied colonial and spatial contexts.

Chapter 2 argues that the Dadar Parsi Colony was constituted as a distinctively Parsi middle-class ethnic enclave. It explores the ways in which ideas of middle-classness and modernity were negotiated by the Parsis in the Colony, and emphasises that notions of middle-classness among white-collar Parsis was a project in self-fashioning that was constantly in the making. It draws from examples of Parsi cultural entrepreneurship in the public sphere to present the argument that the Colony materialised on Bombay's urban landscape as a result of these middle-class endeavours. The Colony thus becomes a site informed by these endeavours, and becomes a space in which they continually play out. In addition to using the Times of India and the Bombay City Improvement Trust records, I have also employed the use of the annual administrative reports of the Parsi Central Association Co-operative Housing Society (PCACHS) in order to examine the ways in which middle-class Parsis consolidated land in Scheme V to build the ethnic enclave they came to occupy. I have also drawn from the vast historiography of the middle-class as well as the historiography of the Parsi community in order to examine the Parsi middle-class as a discursive category.

Chapter 3 proposes the argument that the memories of the residents of the Dadar Parsi Colony and the Parsi community are integral to the constitution of the Colony as a space and a middle-class ethnic enclave. The chapter centres the space of the home, where these memories embed themselves into spatial surroundings before transcending to the scale of the neighbourhood. I also argue that the practices and customs enacted in the public space of the Colony implant themselves into

domestic rituals and performances in turn. I elaborate my arguments in this chapter with the use of memories of the Colony that I have collected through interviews with its elderly residents. Owing to a paucity of sources on life in the Colony, I have supplemented my examination of these memories with studies of memoirs and fiction that depict life as a middle-class Parsi in general terms. While the previous chapters largely deal with historical patterns and occurrences, this chapter presents itself in some anthropological and ethnographical ways. It reads rather differently from Chapters 1 and 2 as a result. However, I believe that this work is integral to understanding the community that thrives within the Colony to date, because it presents a more personalised account of what their lives in the neighbourhood were like. I thus centre the narratives of historical actors from within the Colony itself, in an attempt to paint a more comprehensive picture of their experiences. This, in turn, allows me to historically portray the nuances that made up the space of the Colony in a fuller way.

In sum, the effects of colonial modernity wrought lasting changes on the built environment of the city. It altered its spatial environment such that these changes present themselves in the city's landscape to date. Lastly, and as this thesis will demonstrate, these alterations were readily adopted by some of its population, such as the Parsis of the Dadar Parsi Colony, which adds to their enduring nature in the city's spatial milieu. In making these spaces their own, communities such as the Parsis of the Colony cemented the fate of these new spatial additions to the city's landscape, and ensured that they would linger well into the 21st century.

Chapter 1: Taking Root: Scheme V, the Garden Suburb and the Parsi Colony

"So the work goes on. One day Bombay will wake up to its new conditions. It will look out from Malabar Hill on a new suburb of neat bungalows in ample gardens." [40]

By the late 19th century, the seven marshy and mosquito-ridden islands of Bombay had transformed into a sprawling, "sparkling"[41] metropolis. The emergence of the 'Urbs Prima in Indis' was a direct consequence of British colonial enterprise; as a result, Bombay is an intrinsically colonial city that cannot be separated from its colonial past. By 1896, 'Bombay Beautiful' was struck by an outbreak of the bubonic plague. Faced with what they perceived as not only a crisis of health but a direct threat to their rule, colonial administrators in Bombay set about reordering the city. What ensued was the import of various town planning models and improvement schemes from the English metropole which, affected by regional concerns, and collaborations and contestations between Bombay's historical actors, took their own distinct form in the city's colonial context.

In this chapter, I argue that suburban expansion in colonial Bombay came to the fore as a systemic response to the 1896 plague. My argument diverges from the historiography on the expansion of Bombay by maintaining that the area, which would come to constitute the Dadar Parsi Colony in the Bombay City Improvement Trust's Scheme V in the Dadar-Matunga area, was imagined as a garden suburb, and was an expression of those principles attributed to the planning of garden cities and suburbs across the world. I also propose that the emergence of Bombay's suburbs in this form was the result of what William Glover in his historical study of Lahore terms the "colonial spatial imagination", which works to reform 'disorderly' native

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[40] "CHANGING BOMBAY: THE TRUST'S WORK.", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, Jun 01, 1907, p. 8
[41] Lord Harris, Governor of Bombay (1890-1895), quoted in Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*, New York; London, Routledge, (2007), p. 23

spaces into idealised colonial forms which were marked by colonial notions of public health and propriety.[42] In turn, the chapter explores discourses surrounding garden city planning in its original form and the urban problems it sought to address, and in that corollary, its role and import in town planning in the city in the early 20th century. The chapter begins with the circumstances that lead to the emergence of the Improvement Trust in Bombay, and analyses its motivations and the actions it took to reorder the city. I then move on to examine the emergence of garden city planning in England, and trace its development in the colonial metropole. Lastly, I circle back to Bombay's development, the establishment of its first garden suburb, and the materialisation of the Parsi Colony in its midst. In this way, I intend to trace a common thread that ties Bombay into a larger historical narrative surrounding garden city planning principles that hitherto remains unexplored in its historiography.

Prior to the 1990s, historical studies of modern South Asia remained deeply rooted in assessments of rural landscapes and populations. When the city did feature in these histories, it did so as a backdrop to the political, social and cultural histories of its citizenry.[43] It was only in the late 1990s that the 'urban turn' prompted a shift in this paradigm. Consequently, urban landscapes and built environments became a subject of popular historical enquiry.[44] Historians of the colonial city, regardless of regional context, note that the colonial practices of imperial powers in their myriad forms were integral to city-making. Discussions around coloniality and its impact on the built environment of cities remain central to this historical discourse. Colonising powers inscribed among the native milieu "new conceptions of space, new forms of personhood, and a new means of manufacturing the experience of the real".[45] Colonial powers

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[42] William J. Glover, *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City*, Minneapolis; London, University of Minnesota Press, (2008), p. 28
[43] Gyan Prakash in *Rough Transcript of the "Urban Turn", Panel Discussion at the Bombay Paperie December 2002*, p. 2
[44] Eric Lewis Beverly, "Colonial Urbanism and South Asian Cities." *Social History* 36, no. 4 (2011), p.484
[45] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt,* Berkeley, University of California Press, (1988), p. ix

sought to impose forms of order that would make native lives more legible and easily governable. Taxonomies of the population were important, and tools such as the census aided in what Timothy Mitchell in his study of Egypt calls "enframing" – the process of using plans to employ seemingly neutral and abstract 'space' to contain and discipline local populations. Spatial organisation in the colonial city thus remains inexorably linked to the utilisation of colonial power; in addressing the 'planning problem', colonial administrators attempted to use their influence to render the city's built form into what they considered sanitary, modern, and orderly.

Early scholars of the colonial city placed a very particular emphasis on the actions of colonial administrators themselves. The city was viewed as a space of duality, where the city itself was divided into two different architectural and socially distinct spaces[46] – "white town" or the colonial settlement, and "black town" or the native settlement. Scholars such as Anthony D. King located the centre of colonial power in the city in the "white town", from where it would control the lives of all within the native settlement.[47] King and his contemporaries therefore viewed the city solely as a construct of colonial power that successfully incorporated European ideology into its spatial environment with little to no resistance or assistance from the native masses. While these studies are useful in considering the sheer influence colonising powers had over native social and spatial milieus, they fail to consider the dynamic nature of these processes which very much involved the agency of the latter.

As Swati Chattopadhyay points out in her study of colonial Calcutta, dividing the city into black and white towns with no blurred boundaries between the two is an analysis drawn from

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[46] Janet Abu-Lughod, "Tale of Two Cities: The Origins of Modern Cairo." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 7, no. 4, 1965, p. 429
[47] Anthony D. King, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power, and Environment*, Routledge, New York, 1976, p. 48

little evidence and a static reading of colonial maps and plans. In actuality, these spatial and racial divisions were not inert. The black and white towns were interconnected entities, and the differences between them were blurred by the heterogenous population that occupied them for varied means.[48] Drawing from Doreen Massey's arguments on space, I propose that colonial spaces must be analysed as constructions of "heterogeneity and multiplicity".[49] In order to understand suburban expansion in Bombay, one must view the city's spatial environment as a product of the processes initiated by the actions of both, coloniser and colonised alike.

This study does not subscribe to notions of the dual city born of colonial hegemony alone, but one where the material space of the city of Bombay was built by what Preeti Chopra suggests is a 'joint enterprise'. While Chopra sees this joint enterprise as a collaborative effort between the city's native mercantile and industrial elite and its colonial government[50], I suggest that the reality of city-making in Bombay was even more multi-dimensional, and involved collaboration and resistance from historical actors of all classes. My argument is influenced by the works of Brenda Yeoh on colonial Singapore and Prashant Kidambi on colonial Bombay, who argue that colonial space was "multicoded", and a "terrain of discipline and resistance" among diverse communities.[51] To wit, while the use of garden city planning principles in Bombay's suburban Scheme V were most certainly an import of British origin, and an attempt to bring order to a city that the colonial imaginary perceived as filthy, overcrowded and unhealthful, its distinct form as a suburban enclave was also thoroughly informed by the agency of those Indians who opposed or engineered its creation.

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[48] Swati Chattopadhyay, "Blurring Boundaries: The Limits of 'White Town' in Colonial Calcutta." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 59, no. 2, 2000, pp. 154

[49] Doreen Massey, *For Space*, Sage, London, 2005, p. 9-11

[50] Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise*, p. xiv

[51] Brenda Yeoh, *Contesting Space in Colonial Singapore - Power Relations and the Urban Built Environment*, Singapore University Press, (2003), p.15 and Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*, New York; London: Routledge, 2007, p.12

Bombay's tryst with the plague

Throughout history, outbreaks of the bubonic plague have spurred concentrated attempts at urban renewal. The late 18th and early 19th century saw great efforts put into the physical reorganisation of cities in the hope that it would prevent the resurgence of a disease as calamitous as the plague.[52] When the plague finally arrived on Bombay's shores in 1896, its aetiology and origins were not well known. Practitioners of tropical medicine and colonial administrators who were influenced by miasmatic theories believed diseases such as malaria, cholera and even the plague were caused by very specific environmental factors. Noxious air was thought to be the primary cause of the disease, and it was believed that this was most often found in the overcrowded, ill-lit and ill-ventilated areas of the city, and therefore among those 'insanitary' indigenes that dwelled in these parts.[53] In the city of Bombay, the plague posed not merely a crisis of health but that of political and economic control. Bombay was the jewel in the crown of the Raj; a central node of the British Empire's political power, a visual representation of its glory, and an economic hub for its trade. Alarm spread rapidly throughout the city, and it was feared that the city's labouring and trading communities would flee from both the disease, as well as municipal efforts to contain it.[54] British administrators and native elites who benefitted from Bombay's prosperity therefore saw the plague as a threat to their interests and a conduit to urban chaos. It was their consensus that a concerted effort must be made to 'sanitise' the city and bring it to order. Thus, a direct consequence of the plague was the formation of the Bombay City Improvement Trust through an act of parliament in 1898 – an administrative body that would reorder Bombay to suit the vision of these classes.

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[52] Helen Meller. "Urban Renewal and Citizenship: the Quality of Life in British Cities, 1890-1990." *Urban History* 22, no 1 (1995), p. 63

[53] David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India*, Los Angeles: London: University of California Press, 1993, p. 210

[54] Arnold, *Colonising the Body*, p. 206

Modelled after the Glasgow Improvement Trust, the Bombay City Improvement Trust consisted of colonial administrators assigned by the British Government and members of Bombay's elite, drawn from the Municipal Corporation, Port Trust, Millowners' Association and Chamber of Commerce. The group aimed to rehabilitate the city from the plague by ventilating its densely inhabited parts, removing its 'insanitary' dwellings, and preventing overcrowding.[55] The Trust was therefore an organisation through which the colonial spatial imagination was constituted. It was based on this particular spatial imagination that the Trust saw the city as insalubrious, unhealthy and unclean. Thus, it sought to reform and reorganise its urban form through various town planning experiments. Much like urban planners in 18th century Europe, the leaders of the Trust saw the city as if it were a body, and wanted it to function as if it were "healthy… freely flowing, as well as possessed of clean skin".[56] The Trust began by carrying out slum clearances by demolishing settlements in older parts of the city that were deemed 'insanitary' in order to replace them with new, 'sanitary' dwellings. These areas were primarily inhabited by the labouring classes, and slum clearances were subsequently initiated at Nagpada, Mandvi Koliwada, Agripada and Nowrojee Hill.[57] The Trust also sought to fix the problem of ventilation with the building of east-west boulevards which cut across the city with the intention of bringing sea breeze to its most congested parts. These road schemes included the Princess Street Scheme and the Sandhurst Road Scheme in the southern parts of Bombay.[58] The Trust employed the Imperial Land Acquisition Act of 1894 to acquire large

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[55] *Bombay City Improvement Trust Administration Report for the year ending 31st March 1899*, The Times Press, Bombay, p. 3

[56] Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilisation*, W.W. Norton, New York, 1994, p. 263

[57] Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*, New York: London, Routledge, 2007 p. 76

[58] Ibid.

swathes of land and property in blighted areas so that they could carry out their schemes through official mandates.[59]

However, by the end of the first decade of its operations and under the new leadership of its chairman J. P. Orr, the Trust began to alter its approach to urban renewal. It was realised that the rapid wholesale demolition of buildings in the older parts of the city was not only difficult and expensive, but eventually led to overcrowding in surrounding neighbourhoods.[60] The people who lived in these neighbourhoods decried the activities of the Trust and organised among themselves to counter the Trust's attempts to usurp their homes. Neighbourhoods in the Indian Town were often occupied by members of specific castes or communities who invoked kinship ties to organise and resist the Trust's attempts at acquiring their land or places of worship. It was argued that the Trust's attempts to acquire their lands would not only cause them great hardship, but violated the rights they had guaranteed over them that were promised by governments in the past.[61] As Nikhil Rao points out in his monograph on Bombay's suburban expansion, the Trust's hopes were also dashed by what he calls the "burden of precedent". Grave problems arose for the organisation due to speculation and the lack of any uniform method of pricing land. Landowners quoted desperately high sums of money to the Trust and assessed their lands not only on their net rental value but also with the value of the building that stood on it and any potential money the land may yield in the future.[62] Land tenures themselves varied, and the price of any piece of land was also determined by the value of lands in its vicinity, which differed greatly.[63] The mass demolition of houses led to a lessening in the area of building sites as well as residential buildings themselves. This in turn led to an

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[59] Nikhil Rao, *House but No Garden: Apartment Living in Bombay's Suburbs, 1898-1964*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013, p. 26
[60] J.P. Orr, *Light and Air in Dwellings in Bombay: A Lecture Delivered before the Bombay Sanitary Association on 27th June, 1912*, Bombay: Bombay Electric Gazette Printing Works, p. 2
[61] Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis*, pp. 80-82
[62] Rao, *House, but No Garden* pp. 32-33
[63] Rao, *House, but No Garden*, p. 35

increase in the rents of houses across the city. The housing problem was thereby worsened by the Trust's activities which led to overcrowding, a rise in the price of land, and a rise in rents.[64]

By 1910 the Trust abandoned its strategy of directly attacking the unsuitable dwellings in the city and opted to reorder the city by methods of "indirect attack". This entailed the expansion of Bombay's suburbs and an improvement in communications to these areas by means of large north-south thoroughfares.[65] It was initially believed that the expansion of Bombay would draw the labouring classes who occupied the densely populated areas of the south to the north of the city. Orr and his associates then concluded that people from the poorer sections of society would not be able to commute from their homes to their places of work on the wages that they were earning on average at the time.[66] The poor would need to be accommodated near their places of work in the mill districts of Parel and Lalbaug. Trust officials then proposed that the improvement of communications and development of lands in the north of the island would draw attention and investment from the middle classes of the city. So began the full-scale development of colonial Bombay's suburbs, and suburbanisation was posited as the solution to Bombay's housing problem.[67]

Scheme V or the Dadar-Matunga street scheme was notified on the 14th of September, 1899, and the land surveys for the scheme began in 1900. One of the most important roles within the colonial administration of Bombay was that of the Land Surveyor. It was the outcome of a land survey that was used to decide whether or not a new spatial order would be enforced on a particular area. It was also an essential prerequisite in acquiring or confiscating land from its

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[64] Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis,* p. 91

[65] J.P. Orr, *Social Reform and Slum Reform: A Lecture Delivered to the Social Science Service League, Bombay, in the Servants of India Society's Hall, Bombay on 3rd September, 1917,* Bombay: The Times Press,1917, p. 10

[66] Orr, *Social Reform*, p.8

[67] *Bombay City Improvement Trust Administration Report for the year ending 31st March 1900*, The Times Press, Bombay, p. 3

previous owners.[68] It was therefore the duty of a land surveyor to begin the process of collecting

the information that would apprise the colonial spatial imagination. British land surveys were

one of the essential tools used to conceptualise and make legible the indigenous social and

spatial milieu. It was on the basis of what was understood of an urban or rural environment

that colonial administrators planned spatial interventions. Suburban tracts of land outside

Bombay were easier to observe and comprehend than the congested and diseased areas of the

inner-city. They were also easier to transform into the idealised forms that colonial

administrators imagined for an ideal urban landscape.[69]

The purpose of Scheme V as listed in the documents of the Bombay City Improvement Trust

was to build on large swathes of land in the north of the island.[70] The scheme had the support

of the Government of India in Bombay and was traversed on both sides by the Great Indian

Peninsula (GIP) and the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railways (BB and CI).[71] Scheme

V's proximity to these railways not only made the survey of these suburban lands more

convenient, but also made the city's expansion into the north of the island more feasible. The

City Improvement Trust also emphasised the presence of an existing tramway line in proximity

to the area under consideration.[72] There is little doubt that these modes of communication

themselves provided the Bombay City Improvement Trust with tremendous incentive to

expand northwards. It also enabled colonial administrators to carry out land surveys in a swift

and concentrated manner. Furthermore, it would encourage people to relocate from the

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[68] Robert Home, *Of Planning and Planting: The Making of British Colonial Cities*, E&FN Spon, London, 1997, pp. 42-43
[69] Glover, *Making Lahore*, pp. 28-29
[70] *BCIT 1900*, p. 8
[71] "THE SUBURBS OF BOMBAY: A GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION." *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, April 15, 1902, p. 6
[72] *BCIT 1900, p. 9*

southern, overcrowded areas of the city to buildings that the Trust intended to build on what they perceived as "vacant" land.[73]

In the same breath, the Trust acknowledged the existence of large belts of paddy fields in the region, therefore indirectly naming one of the chief occupiers of the land in the north of the city – the residents of villages that were already present in the region. It was these rice fields and villages that were to be acquired and filled out to build a comprehensive network of roads and building plots on the site.[74] Integral to the composition of the colonial spatial imagination was the classification of these lands as "small and insanitary villages" that were antithetical to the ordered suburb the Trust envisioned for Scheme V.[75] The landowners and ratepayers in the area protested and resisted the Trust's attempts to seize and acquire their lands with a fervent conviction. They argued that the Trust's attempts to build a planned suburb served only the interests of the rich who would be able to afford "attractive buildings" in the area. The Trust's plans did nothing to serve the poorer classes for whom sanitary and cheap housing near their places of work was the need of the hour.[76] Their protests were to no avail. The Trust argued that the acquisition of their properties for the development and the "natural expansion of the city" was inevitable, and "merely a matter of time". They also argued that those who were not engaged in agricultural occupations would either migrate to the inner city closer to their areas of work, or acquire larger lands elsewhere with the money they gained as compensation for their lands. By 1908, the lands that would encompass Scheme V had been surveyed and contoured in great detail.[77] An area of 440 acres of paddy fields was finally

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[73] *BCIT 1900, p. 8*
[74] Ibid.
[75] Rao, *House but No Garden*, p. 46
[76] "BOMBAY RATEPAYERS: THE DADAR-MATUNGA STREET SCHEME.", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, August 24, 1903, p. 5
[77] *Bombay City Improvement Trust Administration Report for the year ending 31st March 1908*, Bombay: The Times Press, p. 2

acquired for the scheme, and work began on Bombay's first planned suburb.[78] Thus the colonial spatial imagination worked to delineate lands in the north of the city as unhygienic and unhealthful to reorder these lands into the idealised colonial form of the garden suburb.

While historians of Bombay agree on the importance of Scheme V as a suburban expansion scheme, they disagree on how well the scheme appropriated garden city principles in a colonial context. Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra see the Dadar-Matunga area as an example of comprehensive town planning along the lines of garden city ideals.[79] On the other hand, Nikhil Rao posits that although it was envisioned as a garden suburb, no proper planning vision underpinned the actual scheme itself.[80] While Scheme V did not emerge as a garden suburb in its entirety, I argue that the intention to import garden city ideals itself is significant and worthy of further consideration, regardless of how incomplete they came to be in practice. The intentions of colonial administrators engage with other conditions within colonial social spaces. It is among these conditions that their intentions are often thwarted or are unsuccessful. However, these thwarted intentions themselves often manifest in entirely new forms in a colonial setting. Colonial intentions themselves are therefore highly consequential in colonial urban spaces.[81] They upend and transform local spatial milieus in radical ways, even if they are not fully realised in the forms in which they were planned. The intention to build a garden suburb in Bombay resulted in an urban form unique to the city. Scheme V in general, and the Dadar Parsi Colony that lies within it in particular, are manifestations of this intention.

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[78] Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra. *Bombay: The Cities Within*. Bombay: Eminence Designs Pvt. Ltd., 2001, p. 177
[79] Dwivedi and Mehrotra, *Cities Within*, p. 179
[80] Rao, *House but No Garden*, p. 35
[81] William Cunningham Bissell, 'Conservation and the Colonial Past: Urban Planning, Space and Power in Zanzibar; in Andersen, David and Rathbone, Richard (eds.). *Africa's Urban Past*, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 251 quoted in Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis*, p. 73

Ebenezer Howard's Garden City

To understand this, one must understand garden city planning in its original form. Sandip Hazareesingh proposes that urban development in the colonial metropole and its peripheries may be analysed through the concept of 'interconnected synchronicity'. This means that changes in the colonial metropole and its peripheries occurred as a result of "mutually transformative processes".[82] Analysing the evolution of garden city ideals in the colonial metropole thereby allows us to examine the mutually constitutive ways in which this particular mode of planning evolved in both, the imperial centre of London and the colonial periphery of Bombay. The garden city movement was pioneered by Ebenezer Howard in 1898 when he published To-morrow - A Peaceful Path to Real Reform. Howard was a stenographer who had no training in architecture or urban planning, but his vision for a new type of urban landscape was considered revolutionary at the time. He has since been hailed as the originator of the town planning movement and its aims in Britain.[83]

Howard grew up in a lower middle-class family in what was a Dickensian London.[84] As poverty abounded and income inequality grew, many families took residence in the overcrowded slums in the East End of the city.[85] The overcrowding problem was compounded by the migration of people from underserved rural communities into the city, who came looking for more opportunities than were available in the depressed rural landscape outside London.[86] London's municipal body, the London County Council, employed similar methods as the Bombay City Improvement Trust to address these urban "evils". Efforts were made to rehouse the poor by

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[82] Sandip Hazareesingh, Interconnected synchronicities: the production of Bombay and Glasgow as modern global ports c.1850–1880. *Journal of Global History*, 4(1), 2009, p. 8

[83] Robert Beevers, *The Garden City Utopia: A Critical Biography of Ebenezer Howard*, Macmillan Press, New York, 1988, p. 182

[84] Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, p. 1

[85] "EAST-END OF LONDON, POOR." *The North - China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette (1870-1941)*, November 16, 1887, p. 536

[86] T. W. Freeman, *The Conurbations of Great Britain,* Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1959, p. 49

demolishing what the County Council deemed "insanitary" dwellings. Similar to colonial Bombay however, this resulted in the overcrowding of nearby neighbourhoods where conditions would often worsen due to the mass exodus of the displaced to these areas. A lack of viable housing for London's teeming population also resulted in a tremendous rise in rents.[87] Much like Bombay then, London faced a housing crisis of enormous proportions. Ebenezer Howard loved London, and was deeply moved by not just the urban, but also the social and moral crises that befell his city. He wrote:

> "I went into some of the crowded parts of London, and as I passed through the narrow dark streets, saw the wretched dwellings in which the majority of the people lived, observed on every hand the manifestations of a self-seeking order of society and reflected on the absolute unsoundness of our economic system, there came to me an overpowering sense of the temporary nature of all I saw, and of its entire unsuitability for the working life of the new order - the order of justice, unity and friendliness."[88]

It was against this backdrop that Howard began outlining his plans for a new urban landscape - the garden city. In writing To-morrow, he put forth a plan that addressed the city's design, land use patterns, housing, transportation, finance, and even its administration. He thus contributed to a wide range of debates surrounding London's urban problems by designing an alternative society and city which represented the best elements of urban and rural England.

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[87] "THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL DECIDE THE RE-HOUSING QUESTION." *British Architect, 1874-1919*, December 02, 1898, p. 395.
[88] Ebenezer Howard quoted in Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier*, Cambridge: London: MIT Press,1977, p. 32-33

Howard's utopia was synthesised from a range of influences. He was particularly affected by the writings of Dr. Benjamin Ward Richardson, whom he first encountered in Chicago.[89] Dr. Richardson was a British physician and a pioneer of social medicine. He wrote a pamphlet titled Hygeia, A City of Health, which was published in 1876. It was in this pamphlet that Richardson put forth his prescriptions for a healthy city. He proposed that sanitary homes surrounded by gardens, large swaths of greenery and public parks, wide arterial roads running east to west, and a low population density of twenty-five people per acre were the key to a sanitary and healthful urban space.[90] Howard drew tremendous inspiration from Richardson's work, and incorporated these elements in his plan for his city.[91] Howard was also influenced by the economic writings of Alfred Marshall and Henry George, as well as the radical and socialist writings of Peter Kropotkin. Although he drew inspiration from these writings, Howard was opposed to reliance on the state and the nationalisation of land.[92] He was also aware of the work of the Levers at Port Sunlight, and the Cadburys at Bournville. These were model villages set up in the late 19th century, along similar lines as what Howard envisioned for his garden city.[93] Howard believed that his project would gain support from landowners and businessmen who would bring forth the capital he required for his enterprise, he therefore did not wish to alienate them with overly socialist or radical rhetoric.

Howard also drew from the writings of colonial administrators abroad — he was particularly taken by the work of Captain James W Petavel who was part of the Indian Polytechnic Institute

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[89] It is worth noting that Chicago was also called the 'garden city' and served as an inspiration for the title of Howard's own planned city. Duncan Bowie, *The Radical and Socialist Tradition in British Planning: From Puritan colonies to garden cities*, London; New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 142

[90] See "A City of Health" in Benjamin Ward Richardson, *Hygeia, A City of Health*, London, 1876, Project Gutenberg. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/12036/12036-h/12036-h.htm

[91] Fishman, *Urban Utopias*, p. 42

[92] Bowie, *The Radical and Socialist Tradition*, p. 147

[93] Patrick Abercrombie, "A COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF EXAMPLES OF MODERN TOWN PLANNING AND "GARDEN CITY" SCHEMES IN ENGLAND: "Illustrated"." *The Town Planning Review* 1, no. 1, April 01, 1910, pp. 34-36

at Calcutta. Howard included Petavel's writings on town planning and transport in the 1902 edition of To-morrow titled Garden Cities of To-morrow. Petavel advocated for the development of 'lineal' cities with low populations and cheap transport, as well as the decentralisation of industry within the city.[94] It is of little doubt that Petavel's recommendations were influenced by his experiences as a colonial administrator in Calcutta. It may therefore be concluded that Howard's work was a unique combination of extensive study, and that he drew from many sources of inspiration for his plans. These plans were undoubtedly affected by problems such as overcrowding and pollution, which had global dimensions and presented themselves as urban conundrums in both, the colonial metropole and its peripheries. Howard's work was thus one which had transnational scope, and this explains its appeal to colonial planners in cities such as Bombay.

Howard's proposal to build a garden city was essentially rooted in the will to alleviate the "evils" of big cities – uncontrollable overcrowding, unaffordable housing, unemployment, poverty and pollution.[95] It is important to note, however, that Howard was no pastoralist. He was not an advocate for a more rural life proposed by the "back to the land" movement that was seeing a revival in England at the time. Howard enjoyed the excitement and social aspects of city life even though he condemned other facets of it.[96] He acknowledged that the city possessed attractions such as greater social opportunity, places of amusement and entertainment, higher wages and better infrastructure than England's countryside.[97] He also acknowledged that the countryside possessed attractions of its own, including the beauty of nature, fresh air, low rents, and an abundance of natural resources. Howard proposed that his garden city would provide

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[94] Bowie, *The Radical and Socialist Tradition*, p. 146
[95] Charles Benjamin Purdom, *The Garden City: A Study in the Development of a Modern Town*, Letchworth: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1913, p. v
[96] Fishman, *Urban Utopias*, p. 37
[97] Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-Morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co, 1898. p.15

a third alternative to these two pre-existing options – a unique combination of the town and country that would possess the best attractions of both. He illustrated this proposal in his famous diagram of the Three Magnets, and argued that the people previously torn between either town or country life would be drawn towards a new type of city, one which abounded with the beauty of nature and affordable housing whilst simultaneously in possession of the sociocultural and economic opportunities the city had to offer. The city would be held to the "most admirable sanitary conditions" and also have plenty of gardens.[98] Thus, the garden city ideal provided not just an alternative form of an urban landscape but also the prospect of an alternative society altogether.

Howard laid down his conditions for the Garden City along these lines. The city was to have a low population density and was meant to serve as a home for around thirty thousand inhabitants from various classes. Howard's vision was utopic, and he believed that his city had the potential to bridge the class divides that had come to define much of England's society.[99] The estate was to be established in a sparsely populated agricultural district near London or any large metropolis – this was to draw people away from overcrowded city centres to rural areas. It was to be connected to the said metropolis by a pre-existing railway line, to which it would lie adjacent. The estate was also to be fitted with an economical drainage scheme and had to have an abundance of water supplied to it.[100] Howard's utopian city, like many other utopias, was to be radial. At its heart was to be a promenade and a large well-watered garden that comprised the Grand Avenue. Public life in the city was to be concentrated in the centre of the town and its public buildings were to line the border of the Avenue. These public buildings included a hospital, churches, a town hall, a concert and lecture hall, a theatre, an art

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[98] Howard, *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*, p. 19
[99] Purdom, *The Garden City*, p. 17
[100] Purdom, *The Garden City*, p. 29

gallery and a library among others. Howard saw the Grand Avenue as a space for social cohesion, and envisioned that the city's public and civic spirit would thrive at this sociocultural centre. Six grand tree-lined boulevards, 120 feet wide, were to radiate from this central space to the circumference of the city dividing it into six wards.[101] At the city's most basic unit, each family was to have a home surrounded by a garden. Howard hoped that the Garden City would be open to all classes and that each rung of society would be able to find substantial housing in the town.[102] Land was to be bought on a cooperative and philanthropic basis and at 99 and 999-year leases.[103] Most importantly the city was to be bounded, that is, its size was to be limited and it was to stand in absolute contrast to the ever-expanding metropolises that dominated urban landscapes at the time.[104]

The First Garden City Limited was established in 1903 and it began to buy the land to build Letchworth, the first garden city. It was designed by architects Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, and its development began in 1904.[105] Letchworth in its material reality was very different from Howard's ideal garden city.[106] Despite the details in his plans, Howard's directions were intended to be flexible guidelines that could be adapted to individual expression and taste, as well as varying sociocultural contexts.[107] Although housing reform was an integral part of Howard's scheme for the beginning, Letchworth would not be home to all classes of people as he had hoped. Instead, the first residents of Letchworth were middle-class professionals and businessmen who could not only afford the land and housing in Letchworth,

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[101] Howard, *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*, p. 23
[102] Fishman, *Urban Utopias*, p. 43
[103] Howard, *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*, p. 29 and Fishman, *Urban Utopias*, p. 44
[104] Robert Fishman, "The Bounded City" in *From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard*, (eds.) Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002, p. 59
[105] Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford: New York :Blackwell, 1988, p. 101
[106] Purdom, *The Garden City*, p. 39
[107] Frederick H.A. Aalen, "English Origins" in *The Garden City: past, present and future*, (ed.) Stephen V. Ward, London: New York: E & FN Spon, 1992, p. 29

but also transport from Letchworth to their places of work in the city. Furthermore, the lack of industry in the area prevented working-class people from residing there.[108] Visitors to Letchworth in the initial decades of its founding did not see a new type of city, but a small hamlet with scattered dwellings. The first garden city looked more like a village than a revolutionary and bustling combination of town and country.[109]

Raymond Unwin's departure from Letchworth to design the Hampstead Garden Suburb represented a new phase in the garden city movement.[110] It was realised that it was easier to build suburbs or villages along garden city lines than it was to build entire cities. Instead of becoming a means to societal reform, as Howard had intended, the garden city became a means to carry out housing reform that would help ameliorate the housing crisis in Britain. The provision of sanitary and affordable housing was the need of the hour.[111] Howard's successors declared the usage of garden city principles to extend existing towns an "absurdity".[112] Howard was opposed to the extension of pre-existing towns and believed garden cities should stand separate from them and wished to start anew. They believed the very notion of the same was antithetical to all that Howard's work stood for and that it was fundamentally wrong. Nonetheless, it was as early as 1906 that the Garden City Association added "the creation of garden suburbs" to its aims, and began to focus its energies on promoting town planning along garden city lines as part of its agenda internationally and at home. The Association began advising town planners and others on the creation of garden suburbs and even garden villages despite Howard's opposition to their existence. This change in its priorities marked the beginning of the import and translation of garden city principles to other urban forms.[113]

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[108] Purdom, *The Garden City*, p. 51
[109] Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, p. 109
[110] Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, p. 133
[111] Ibid.
[112] Purdom, *The Garden City*, p. 203
[113] Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, p. 134

As different as it may have been in practice, Howard's utopia still held great appeal to the wide range of people that it was presented to. As Robert Fishman puts it, Howard's plans garnered support because "they spoke directly to hopes and fears that were widely shared" among them at the time.[114] To understand Ebenezer Howard's work and its appeal to town planners across the world is to recognise it as a means to an end urban crises. Howard's utopia not only addressed the problems that engulfed the urban English landscape at the time, but also the problems of cities across the world.[115] They promised alleviation from frighteningly overcrowded and chaotic cities and in doing so, also promised a new urban space where the values of freedom and brotherhood could thrive.[116] Howard believed that the garden city's appeal would be universal, and penned To-morrow with a sense of transnationality in mind. He wrote in 1901, "to solve the great problem of the city of England, is to solve it for all of Europe, America, Asia and Africa".[117] Garden city practices gained the most momentum in Britain and the northern hemisphere, and were soon adopted to American, German, French and Russian contexts.

The garden city also adopted in the colonial world. This was despite the fact that its ideals of an equitable society were at direct odds with the principles upon which colonial rule was enacted.[118] Colonial rule thrived on racial principles of inequality and difference. As a result, garden city planning was most often promulgated in urban areas reserved for sections of society that comprised either European immigrants or, as in the case of Bombay, the native bourgeoisie and English educated, white-collar middle-classes. The working classes were categorically

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[114] Fishman, *Urban Utopias*, p. 7
[115] Beevers, *Garden City Utopia*, p. 31
[116] Fishman, *Urban Utopias*, p. 10
[117] Ebenezer Howard quoted in Stanley Buder, *Visionaries and Planners: The Garden City Movement and the Modern Community*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 133
[118] Robert Home, "Town planning and garden cities in the British colonial empire 1910–1940", *Planning Perspectives*, 5:1, 1990, p. 32

excluded from these spaces and where the garden city was implanted, colonial social hierarchies thrived.[119] The movement was disseminated by town planners and colonial administrators who took an interest in garden city planning as part of the international town planning movement that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century.[120] Many town planners who were in charge of these colonial projects grew under the tutelage of those who worked on garden cities and suburbs in Britain. Albert J. Thompson, for example, who was lead architect in charge of building garden suburbs in Cape Town and Durban, was trained in the architectural practice of Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker and was involved in the creation of Letchworth and Hampstead.[121] It was in this way that garden city planning principles were imported to different colonial contexts.

Bombay's garden suburb and the Parsi Colony

In a strictly British colonial context, remedies prescribed for urban crises such as plague were drawn largely from English intellectual and planning circles that were most active in and around London. These remedies included, as Howard also prescribed in To-morrow, better ventilated homes, open spaces and gardens, better drainage, and most importantly, an end to overcrowding. British colonial officials attempted to put these measures into practice, especially after the emergence of the Bombay plague and the promulgation of the Indian Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897.[122] As in most rapidly growing port cities across the British Empire, problems such as the housing crisis and overcrowding were addressed with colonial solutions that were put forth by municipal bodies such as improvement trusts.[123] As previously stated in

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[119] Charlotte Jelidi, "Symbolic usage of the 'garden city' concept during the French Protectorate in Morocco: from the Howardian model to garden housing estates", in *Garden cities and colonial planning: Transnationality and urban ideas in Africa and Palestine*, Liora Bigon and Yossi Katz (eds.), Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014. p. 46

[120] Robert Home, "Town planning", *Planning Perspectives*, p. 28

[121] Robert Home, "Town planning", *Planning Perspectives*, p. 30

[122] Robert Home, *Of Planning and Planting*, p. 87

[123] Liora Bigon, "Introduction" in *Garden cities and colonial planning: Transnationality and urban ideas in Africa and Palestine*, Liora Bigon and Yossi Katz, p. 18

this chapter, by 1910 the Bombay City Improvement Trust abandoned directly attacking congested areas in the heart of the city and chose instead to build a new suburb in the north of the city along garden city lines. This development was in direct response to the chaos caused in the city in the years after the 1896 plague. Colonial administrators believed this method of "indirect attack" to be more efficient and less expensive than the methods they had previously employed to tackle the crisis. Furthermore, colonial officials across the empire were more likely to use suburban expansion to fashion new forms of settlements as these were easier to mould into colonial ideals than inner cities. It was in the peripheries of cities that they encountered less resistance to their plans and where the colonial spatial imagination could, metaphorically speaking, begin to draw on a blank slate.[124] These lands were of course inhabited by local populations whose existence the colonial archive belies for reasons of both, discrimination and convenience. Nonetheless, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, colonial officials acquired these lands using their disproportionate power over these populaces to fashion their into forms which they believed were ideal.

The first mentions of planning along garden city lines appear in Trust reports dating 1911. Trust administrators chose an area of 440 acres of low-lying paddy fields in the Scheme V area to carry out their new project. This coincides directly with the Trust's shift to "indirect attack" and thus demonstrates that the creation of a new form of urban landscape in the city of Bombay was integral to this attack. What was also integral to the Trust's plans was the appointment of Frederick George Brudenell-Bruce Hawkins to the office of the Chief Architect in the same year. Hawkins was a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects and was appointed to the Trust at the recommendation of its president. He joined the Trust after a period of work in

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[124] Glover, *Making Lahore Modern*, p. 28

South Africa.[125] Much like Albert J. Thompson, his contemporary who was mentioned above, Hawkins spent time in the offices of Raymond Unwin at Hampstead.[126] Hawkins was charged not just with the erection of buildings on Trust estates,[127] but also the survey of streets and the "beautification of the city".[128] He brought to the Trust his expertise on planning garden suburbs from his work in Hampstead. It was thus through a small coterie of British elites that these planning models were diffused and imported to Bombay. Ideas forged in the colonial metropole had a profound impact on cities in the colonial periphery. The transfusion of British planning ideas usually occurred through the deployment of architects, hygienists and engineers to colonial cities. Although they did not identify as town planners, they concerned themselves with public works such as the laying out of new areas in the city or the improvement of old ones.[129]

It was with the help of Hawkins that the Improvement Trust intended to create a garden city on "modern lines" in the north of Bombay.[130] These "modern lines" included street layouts reminiscent of Raymond Unwin's plans for a garden suburb. It should be noted that reports of the Trust use the words "garden city", "garden suburb" and "garden village" interchangeably. This indicates that the Trust did not pay a great degree of attention to the finer details of Howard's work or the work of his contemporaries, but adopted garden city planning discourses to describe a layout that combined their notions of what they considered healthful with aesthetic beauty. It was also around this time that planners such as Patrick Geddes came to Bombay to deliver lectures presenting garden city type planning to Bombay's elite.[131] Regardless of their

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[125] "Appendix B" in *Bombay City Improvement Trust Administration Report for the year ending 31st March 1911*, The Times Press, Bombay, p. 111

[126] "THE HOUSING PROBLEM: MR. HAWKINS' SCHEME.", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, April 23, 1914, p. 5

[127] *Bombay City Improvement Trust Administration Report for the year ending 31st March 1912*, The Times Press, Bombay, p. 30

[128] "Appendix B", *BCIT 1911*, p. 111

[129] Home, *Of Planning and Planting*, p. 50

[130] *BCIT 1911*, p. 78

[131] "GARDEN CITIES & VILLAGES: PROFESSOR GEDDES' LECTURE". *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, March 20, 1915, p. 11.

inconsistencies, the garden suburb in Bombay was laid out on similar lines as garden cities and suburbs in England. It was roughly radial, with roads emanating from two gardens — the King's Circle and the area currently known as the Five Gardens in the Parsi Colony. These gardens were intended to be pleasure gardens open to the public for leisurely activities.[132] They also included the Eastern Avenue, a wide arterial road connecting the area with the south of the city, as well as the GIP[133] railway line in the east of the scheme, and the BB and CI[134] railway line in the west. Modes of transit to and from the heart of the city were important to the Trust as they relied on them to incentivise people to settle in the northern suburbs. The Trust also intended to set up various cottages to provide "sanitary" housing to the people settling in the vicinity of the scheme. Initially, the Trust envisioned Scheme V as a mixed-income suburb reminiscent of Howard's utopian planning vision for the garden city.[135] It was soon realised however that this would be impractical and not all classes would be able to afford to settle in the new suburb and commute to the heart of the city for their jobs. The Trust then believed that the middle-classes would be drawn to the suburbs by the cottages which offered them lower rents and "improved health and reduction of medical expenses".[136] Much like in Letchworth and Hampstead then, the garden suburb was to be populated by the middle-classes who could afford to build on the plots of land that they bought from the Trust in the area, and not the poor who lived in the congested areas of the city and needed the sanitary intervention the most.

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[132] *Bombay City Improvement Trust Administration Report for the year ending 31st March 1912*, The Times Press, Bombay, p. 127
[133] Great Indian Peninsula
[134] Bombay, Baroda and Central India
[135] Rao, *House, but no Garden*, p. 69
[136] *Bombay City Improvement Trust Administration Report for the year ending 31st March 1913*, The Times Press, Bombay, p. 37

The Trust's garden suburb project in Scheme V is an excellent example of what Sandip Hazareesingh calls 'colonial modernism'.[137] Colonial modernism was represented by infrastructural or technological projects that displayed the power and prestige of the Empire. These projects included new wide thoroughfares, imposing buildings, street lighting, transport infrastructure, and even the planning of cities. To deploy signifiers of colonial modernism was to assert colonial authority in any space. The building of the garden suburb had little to do with alleviating the sanitary problems of the city and more to do with reordering a piece of land to fit a colonial ideal. Native spaces were seen as "organic embodiments of a hygiene problem".[138] Even though the urban problems of London and Bombay were similar in nature, the British believed Bombay's "filthy tenements" and their "mushroom spawn" occupants far worse than the average British slum and its dwellers.[139] The British chose the garden city as the colonial ideal that best represented colonial modernism because it represented on paper all that was diametrically opposed to what they perceived as an overcrowded, squalid Bombay.

Howard's antithesis to London was also antithetical to Bombay — however, unlike Howard's utopia which was meant to be open to all classes, the British controlled who had access to Scheme V, that is, the middle classes of Bombay. Middle-class communities such as the Parsis who came to occupy this land furthered the British colonial imagination of who should be allowed to occupy these lands by buying the lands themselves and giving purchase to this vision. It must thus be noted that the implementation and execution of these ideas was made possible by communities in the colonial milieu who appropriated and performed similar notions of class and spatial division. The import of the garden city ideal to Bombay was far from utopian, and

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[137] Sandip Hazareesingh, *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay City 1900-1925*, Orient Longman, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2007, p. 6
[138] Garth Andrew Myers and Makame Ali Muhajir, "The afterlife of the Lanchester Plan: Zanzibar as the garden city of tomorrow", in *Garden cities and colonial planning: Transnationality and urban ideas in Africa and Palestine*, (eds.) Liora Bigon and Yossi Katz, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014, p. 107
[139] "The Slums of London and Bombay." *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, June 03, 1899, p. 4

such socio-spatial divisions were typical of all spaces where colonial modernism was inscribed.[140]

The transfer of ideas from centres of colonial power like London to colonised cities like Bombay was therefore not a unidirectional process. As Liora Bigon points out in her work on the transfer of garden city ideas to colonial territories, these processes were not unilateral, and to believe otherwise is reductive and keeping in line with centre-periphery analytical frameworks that have since been debased in historical studies of colonial landscapes.[141] The transfer of these ideas were in fact characterised by its spread across "complex and multiple frontiers" and included unexpected factors.[142] In other words, the diffusion of colonial planning notions in the colonial periphery was influenced by the resistance and cooperation it was met with in a colonised locale. Indicators of colonial modernism were profoundly affected by collaboration or resistance from colonised subjects. The spatial character of the garden suburb was not just rooted in the import of colonial layouts, but also the people who chose to settle in the area. These communities were varied, and comprised middle-class and upper caste members of South Indian communities, as well as Gujaratis, Punjabis, Sindhis and Catholics among others. In this chapter however, I focus on introducing the Parsi settlement within Scheme V, also known as the Dadar Parsi Colony.

The Parsi Colony was founded by Mancherji Edulji Joshi in the second decade of the early 20th century. It was built at a gradual pace over the span of 20 odd years and grew exponentially since its establishment. The Colony is currently home to at least 10,000 Parsis and is the largest residential settlement of Parsis in the world. The Colony emerged at a time

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[140] Hazareesingh, *The Colonial City*, p. 6
[141] Bigon, "Introduction", *Garden Cities and colonial planning*, p. 1
[142] Ibid.

when discourses surrounding 'model suburbs', 'model precincts' and 'model colonies' were rife among the British in Bombay. This was no doubt in part due to the prevalence of garden city ideas in planning at the time. Model suburbs were essentially spaces that were not only aesthetically appealing, but also self-contained. This meant that the residents of these suburbs would not have to travel to other parts of the city to access elements of public life. Model suburbs were to include schools, places of worship, markets, common halls and spaces for entertainment, gymkhanas, libraries, hospitals and so on. These model precincts were also to have gardens — one at the middle of the settlement, and others bordering the cottages around the settlement which were to be maintained by its tenants and their co-operative societies.[143] Land was to be bought and buildings built on a co-operative basis through the actions of co-operative housing societies. It was along these lines that the Dadar Parsi Colony was founded.

Mancherji Joshi was a civil engineer in the Bombay Municipal Corporation. He used his influence in the Corporation to collaborate with officials from the Improvement Trust to secure lands among the 800 plots available in Scheme V.[144] More of Joshi's aims and actions will be explored in the following chapter, but it must be noted here that his advocacy came at a time when housing was scarce for lower middle-class and middle-class Parsis. They could not afford the rents in the city that had been inflated due to the ongoing housing crisis in Bombay.[145] They also refused to live in chawls[146] which they could afford but considered too insanitary for the middle-classes. They had no windows, no attached bathrooms, were very small, and were far away from their places of work in the Fort area. The middle-classes, Joshi argued, were the

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[143] "BOMBAY HOUSING SCHEME: NEW GARDEN SUBURB AT SANTA CRUZ.", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, October 26, 1917, p. 7
[144] Kamu Iyer, *Boombay: From Precincts to Sprawl*, Mumbai: Popular Prakashan Ltd, 2014, p. 23
[145] "BOMBAY FETE: OPENED BY GOVERNOR PARSEE HOUSING SCHEME.", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, March 24, 1924. p. 12
[146] Tenement buildings

ones who were truly in need of an initiative that would fix the housing problem for them.[147] Joshi and other likeminded individuals set up the Parsi Central Association Co-operative Housing Society (PCACHS) in 1919 in an attempt to address the problem of the "dishousing" of middle and lower middle-class Parsis in the city.[148] The PCACHS paid high sums of money to acquire land from the Improvement Trust in Scheme V, a locality they considered "healthy" and suitable for the rehousing of the middle-classes.[149] They rushed to acquire the land and used their capital to secure it due to the fear that if they did not act then, they would lose the opportunity to buy lands in the scheme at all.[150] The PCACHS was not the only housing society buying land in the area for Parsis though, and the Dadar Parsi Colony is unique in that it is an ethnic enclave in Bombay with a property regime that is comprised of at least 17 different trusts.[151] Galvanised by Mancherji Joshi, these trusts used their capital to secure lands for the Parsis in Scheme V on larger and greener plots than their contemporaries in the area.

Another co-operative housing society that bought lands in the area was the Zoroastrian Building Society. In 1920, the Zoroastrian Building Society bought more plots of land in the area than any other building society. Not only this, the Building Society bought lands from the Trust only on the condition that the Trust would allow them to build an extra storey on their plots in a bid to reduce rents for the Parsi tenants that would occupy their buildings. Such was the influence of the Parsi trust that the Improvement Trust not only readily agreed, they also sanctioned the same without an increase in ground rents.[152] The Zoroastrian Building Society's

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[147] "HOUSING PROBLEM: A PARSI GENTLEMAN'S SUGGESTION." 1926.The Times of India (1861-2010), April 19, p. 7
[148] "BOMBAY FETE: OPENED BY GOVERNOR PARSEE HOUSING SCHEME." 1924.*The Times of India (1861-2010)*, March 24, 1924, p. 12
[149] Ibid.
[150] Rao, *House, but No Garden*, p. 109
[151] Leilah S. Vevaina, *Trust Matters: Parsis and Property in Mumbai*, Order No. 3683405, The New School, 2014, p. 40 https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/trust-matters-parsis-property-mumbai/docview/1658556633/se-2?accountid=8312.
[152] *Bombay City Improvement Trust Administration Report for the year ending 31st March 1920*, The Times Press, Bombay, p. 16

case is a good example in how powerful organisations formed by the native elite held sway over British actions in Bombay. Their influence on British policy did a great deal to inform the spatial character of Bombay in general, and Scheme V in particular. Like other areas in the city Scheme V was also a site of contestation, negotiation and collaboration between the colonising and colonised, and it was these interactions that informed its spatial character.

Over time, various Parsi trusts and landowners were able to buy large plots of land in the best area that Scheme V had to offer, that is, around the Five Gardens. That they were able to acquire these plots, despite fierce competition for the same, displays both the social and economic capital the Parsis possessed in colonial Bombay. The Parsis had amassed this capital within the two centuries of interaction they had with the British. The relationship between the Parsis and the British is a well-studied one, and the Parsi acquisition of wealth, influence and power can be directly traced to the rise of British colonialism in India.[153] Among the native elites in India, it was the Parsis that fashioned themselves along British lines the most. The anglicisation of the community extended into their social culture, their interactions within the public realm, and the organisation of Parsi spaces.[154] Parsis thus partook extensively in projects that were exemplars in colonial modernism. These projects began at the unit of the home, and extended into the unit of the neighbourhood through the actions of Parsi trusts and influential Parsi individuals. However influenced by the British, these spaces remained distinctively Parsi in nature by virtue of those occupying them.

The Dadar Parsi Colony is an exemplar of such a space. The Parsis settled in the Five Gardens area and built their model garden precinct around it. Dotting the wide tree-lined streets around

[153] Jesse Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, Leiden:Boston: Brill, 2001, p. 28
[154] Tanya M. Luhrmann, *The Good Parsi: The Fate of a Colonial Elite in a Postcolonial Society*, Cambridge: London, Harvard University Press, 1996

the Five Gardens remain an agiary[155], two schools, a madressa[156], a gymkhana, a library, and a community hall, all set up in the 1920s and 1930s. The colony, like the model colony of British discourse, is therefore self-contained and was home to a thriving Parsi public life. In addition to the Five Gardens the precinct contains 14 other gardens – more gardens than in the rest of Scheme V.[157] At the unit of the individual home, builders of the colony also offered to the Parsis of Bombay houses with gardens spaces surrounding them.[158] This unique spatial arrangement within Scheme V is typical only of the Parsi Colony. In building the Parsi Colony in the image of a "sanitary" and "healthy" self-contained garden suburb, the Parsis emulated colonial modernism in abiding by British standards of what was considered 'model'. Even so, the Colony was and remains distinctively Parsi, not only because it is populated by Parsis, but also because it is dotted with spaces that are essential to Parsi public life. The presence of an agiary, a madressa and a gymkhana for example, are integral to public life within the colony and lends to its spatial character. The Dadar Parsi Colony was therefore a unique space, in that it was a middle-class ethnic enclave built on model garden suburb lines within what was an already thriving city. The intricacies of the Parsi middle-classness that constitutes the Colony's spatiality will be explored further in the following chapter.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Scheme V in general and Dadar Parsi Colony in particular were manifestations of the import of garden city planning discourses to Bombay. The import of these ideas came in the aftermath of the city being besieged by the bubonic plague. This was anything but direct. It comprised a selection of those features of garden city planning that the British, and

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[155] Fire temple
[156] A school that trains and prepares young Parsi boys for priesthood
[157] Iyer, *Boombay*, p. 21
[158] "SUBURBAN HOUSING: PARSI COLONY AT MATUNGA." The Times of India (1861-2010), Jan 30, 1923, p. 13

consequently the Parsis, believed were most likely to solve a crisis of health, housing, and urban chaos. The colonial spatial imagination thus used town planning to build on a seemingly "empty" space in the city to address these issues. It was in this way that a utopian planning movement found expression in a colonial space as an example of colonial modernism. The fashioning of a model suburb along garden city lines that was also an ethnic enclave remains, to this day, an example of how collaboration, contestation and negotiation between Bombay's historical actors and the British affected its urban landscape. It was the efforts of and visions of both that finally gave Bombay its "suburb of ample gardens", and it was thus that the city partakes in a historical narrative that extends far beyond its borders.

Chapter 2:
The 'Middling Sort'
Analysing middle-classness among the Parsis of the Dadar Parsi Colony

"Want is the most potent incentive to change, and lest that cause should lead to any of their community forsaking them, the Parsis have devised every means at their command to prevent it. They hold it as one of their most important duties to befriend the poorer members of their body. Funds are always forthcoming to relieve the needy, and such a thing as a Parsi beggar is never seen in the streets of Bombay… and the Parsis have always maintained in Bombay their high character for liberality and benevolence. Number for number they distribute more money in charity than does any other community in India."[159]

The quote above was delivered in Calcutta in 1880 by the distinguished Bengali cultural historian and polymath Raja Rajendralal Mitra, to an audience of people who were part of the Bethune Society — an organisation that was established to cater to the spirit of inquiry that was pervasive among the rising literate middle class of the time. His words implicitly illustrate a narrative about the Parsi community in Bombay that has persisted to this day. A narrative of a Manichean nature, where the Parsi community exists and is perceived in the dualities of haves and have-nots, givers and takers, the benevolent and those that are receivers of benevolence, the rich and the poor. Where then, do middle-class Parsis fit? Are they givers, or receivers of charity? Do they want, or do they prevent want among others in their generosity? Is there purchase in these dualisms, or can a middling path exist for the 'middling sort'?

The previous chapter outlined the growth of Scheme V, a suburban scheme in the north of colonial Bombay that was built along garden city lines for the middle-class inhabitants of the city. It was within this suburban scheme that the Dadar Parsi Colony took shape. This precinct stood as the most faithful emulation of garden city planning within Scheme V — its radial plan, and verdant gardens surrounding its buildings (both public and private) stood in stark contrast to not only the rest of the scheme in question, but most of colonial Bombay at the time. Between the mid-1920s and 1930s, the Colony saw an influx of middle-class Parsis who saw the area as

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[159] The Parsis of Bombay: a Lecture delivered by Rajendra Lal Mitra on February 26, 1880, at a Meeting of the Bethune Society, Calcutta. 1880. *Calcutta Review,* 71(142), p. 16

an opportunity to escape the insalubrious surroundings and soaring rents that characterised the heart of the city at the time. In this chapter, I argue that the Dadar Parsi Colony is a distinctively middle-class ethnic enclave. I examine ideas of middle-classness and modernity in colonial Bombay in general, but among the Parsis in particular. Drawing on studies of the middle classes in India and elsewhere, I emphasise that notions of middle-classness among white-collar Parsis was a project in self-fashioning that was consistently in the making. This project of self–fashioning materialised through endeavours undertaken in Bombay's public sphere which included calls for housing reform, charity, and other forms of cultural entrepreneurship. I argue that the Colony is inherently informed by, and becomes a space in which this middle-classness plays out through projects of cultural entrepreneurship in the public sphere. In turn, this Parsi middle-class identity informs and gives the neighbourhood its distinctive spatial identity as an ethnic enclave. I will thus explore the work of Parsi Trusts and other organisations and individuals that exerted influence in the public sphere to bring this cultural and spatial project of self-fashioning to fruition. I do not propose a singular definition for this middle class, because I do not believe that a singular and pointedly defined category is useful to its analysis here. Instead, I propose that the Parsi middle-classes constantly defined and redefined themselves through a set of social and cultural practices in the public sphere. This chapter, therefore, contributes to the growing literature on the Indian middle classes by documenting the ways in which the Parsi middle-classes cemented their identity in the city in spatial terms. It may also be read as a contribution to the literature on suburban neighbourhoods, and emerging discussions on how processes of suburbanisation took place in colonial Bombay.

The middle-class: historical and historiographical perspectives

As the questions posited at the beginning of this chapter suggest, middle-classness among the Parsis is a discursive paradigm characterised by a degree of ambiguity and incommensurability due to its dynamic and constantly evolving nature. It is perhaps then worthwhile understanding who is *not* a middle class Parsi – economically speaking. Early historians of the middle class in India such as B.B. Misra treated the category as a truism that was made so self-evident by its wide usage that it hardly needed a definition of its own.[160] He argued that the middle classes were categorised chiefly by how they were different from the wealthy landowning and aristocratic classes and the artisans, peasants and workers that comprised the poor. It was their existence between these two stratas of society that defined them.[161] The history of Parsi elites who thrived under British rule, which include industrialists and merchants such as the Tatas, the Jeejeebhoys, the Readymoneys and the Wadias has been well documented.[162] These studies come together to form a great deal of the historiography of the Parsi community. Wealthy and visible Bombay Parsis such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Dinshaw Wacha, and Pherozeshah Mehta were among the most propertied landowners in the city and contributed greatly to its public life as well as its civic politics.[163]

The definition of who a 'poor Parsi' was, on the other hand, a contentious topic within and outside the community. 'Poor' Parsis in colonial Bombay comprised those who could, among

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[160] B.B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 1

[161] Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes*, p. 7

[162] See, among others, H.D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil,* Bombay: G. Claridge & Co., 1939, John R. Hinnells and William, Alan (eds.). *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*, London: New York: Routledge, 2008, pp.81-99 and pp. 119-135, Ruttonjee Ardeshir Wadia, *The Bombay Dockyard and the Wadia Masterbuilders*, Bombay: Godrej Memorial Printing Press, 1955, Mody, Nawaz B. *Enduring Legacy: Parsis of the 20th Century (Vol. 1 - Politics : before and after independence; Trade & industry : building a self-reliant nation)*, Mumbai: Nawaz B. Mody, 2005, Bakhtiar K Dadabhoy (ed.), *Sugar in Milk: Lives of Eminent Parsis*, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2008.

[163] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900-1940*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 17

other things, pay between 1 and a half to 12 rupees a month towards their rent.[164] "Lower

middle class" Parsis on the other hand, could pay anything between 20 to 35 rupees per

mensem in rent. Strangely enough however, their plight was portrayed to be synonymous with

the poor in discourses surrounding them by other Parsis despite their considerably higher

capital. They also lived in dwellings meant for the poor, due to a lack of housing elsewhere in

the city.[165] However, according to an enquiry into middle-class family budgets in Bombay City

from 1928, Parsis earned more per month on average than other communities in Bombay.[166]

These ambiguities prevailed in postcolonial Bombay. In a dispute concerning the allotment of

housing to poor Parsis, the Bombay Parsi Punchayet[167] proclaimed to the Bombay High Court

in 2012 that a 'poor Parsi' is one who earns 90,000 rupees a month. This is close to 100 times

higher than the average than the estimates of the Planning Commission of India, which

estimated that a sustainable living wage for a poor person in an urban area clocked in at 29

rupees a day, or 870 rupees a month.[168] This goes to show the blurred lines of delineation

between what it meant to be a poor, or middle class Parsi in India. As this chapter will

demonstrate, these blurred lines existed even in colonial Bombay. It was these blurred lines that

middle-class Parsis trod to their advantage in their public lives to secure social and material

capital in Bombay's spatial arena.

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[164]"... BOMBAY'S POOR: ... EXAMPLE OF THE PARSIS.", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, June 01, 1908, p. 8 https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/bombays-poor/docview/234759091/se-2?accountid=8312.

[165] Ibid.

[166] They were second only to Jews and Christians, but spent more on commodities such as fuel and lighting than all the other communities in the study. Furthermore, a larger number of Parsi family budgets were surveiled (124) as opposed to Jewish and Christian families (34 each), providing a more accurate picture of Parsi middle-class family budgets. See *Report on an Enquiry into Middle Class Family Budgets in Bombay City.* Labour Office, Bombay, 1928, p. 32

[167] The Punchayet continues to use a British version of the spelling of 'Panchayat'. I have continued to use it here.

[168] Rosy Sequeira, "Poor Parsi redefined: one who earns up to 90,000 a month", *Times of India*, June 12, 2002. (https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/poor-parsi-redefined-one-who-earns-up-to-rs-90000-per-month/articleshow/14035654.cms.)

These enduring discursive ambiguities regarding who can be categorised as a rich, poor, or middle-class Parsi prompt a shift from analysing class through the lens of objective economic indicators to a more cultural approach. Recent studies of the middle class in colonial India have critiqued the overemphasis on economic factors in understanding the middle class, and argue that the Indian middle classes are not a fully formed sociological category determined by these indicators alone. To understand the middle class in Bombay, and the Parsi middle class in particular, is to therefore understand their aspirations, cultural and social projects in Bombay's public sphere and spatial realm in tandem. It is in this way that one may acquire a fuller understanding of what it meant to be middle class. Sanjay Joshi in his monograph on the middle classes of colonial Lucknow argues that the middle class was constituted primarily as the result of cultural endeavours in the public sphere. Understanding the middle class thus involves understanding these cultural projects of self-fashioning that are constantly in the making, as opposed to basing these understandings on static economic or social parameters.[169] Much of this project of self–fashioning was inspired by the ideas and agendas of the Victorian middle-classes in Britain. This import was without doubt the result of colonial rule. It was understood that ambitious locals with the desire to move forward in life would do well to emulate the values of thrift, industry and education that were set forth as examples for them by their colonial masters. This sort of mimicry had historical precedent in India, where the upper-caste administrative classes had adapted their own tastes and behaviours to those of their superiors.[170]

What is important to note in discussions of the Victorian middle-class is that its constitution itself is in fact questionable. Historians such as Dror Wahrmann assert that middle classness was a myth and a rhetorical device created by a particular social group that pushed its own

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[169] Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 2
[170] Joshi, *Fractured Modernity*, p. 46

agenda with such force in the public sphere that the notion of the middle class itself came to be recognised as an objective and self-evident truth despite its many inconsistencies and contradictions.[171] Nonetheless, the middle class Indian pursuit of power and respectability was therefore characterised by a hodgepodge of old world prejudices and a modern outlook that gave primacy to the values of equality and fraternity. Social mobility was as important to the middle classes as was maintaining superiority over their social inferiors. These contradictions produced what Joshi calls a "fractured modernity". It was this fractured modernity that, according to him, characterised being middle class in colonial India.[172]

Notions that intertwine modernity and discussions around the middle classes are not novel in Indian historiography or otherwise. "Ideas of modernity and the middle class are so mutually implicated that it is almost impossible to disentangle them", as Simon Gunn says in his assessment of the English middle-classes.[173] Partha Chatterjee famously noted that Indian modernity in the colonial period was the splintered product of a "derivative discourse". What this means is that while the 19th century Indian bourgeoisie may have genuinely attempted to adopt European norms relating to domesticity, individuality, freedom and nationalism, these attempts did not produce a full-throated articulation of modernity in an Indian context. Indian modernity, because of this derivation, was in effect entirely ambiguous in its response to colonial

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[171] Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The political representation of class in Britain*, Massachusetts: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 18

[172] Joshi, *Fractured Modernity*, p. 174

[173] Simon Gunn, "Between Modernity and backwardness: the case of the English middle-class" in Ricardo A. Lopez and Barbara Weinstein (eds.). *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History*, Duke University Press, 2012, p. 70

rule.[174] Chatterjee and other subaltern studies scholars nonetheless also view our modernity as a unique combination of values that are particularly Indian, despite its derivative nature.[175]

It is then evident that the historiography of the middle classes places a considerable emphasis on the idea that it did not simply emerge as a result of pre-determined factors, but was made by the agency of those belonging to it. As E.P. Thompson in his seminal work on the British working classes suggests, "The working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making".[176] This may well be applied to the middle classes as well. Social classes are protean, they are constantly in the making and are not a given in social reality.[177] Brian P. Owensby in his historical documentation of the Brazilian middle class asserts that the formation of the middle class was a product of the interplay between the worldly and the mundane. It was the result of transnational influences that were enmeshed in the dialogues and practices of everyday life that brought about the middle classes of Brazil over a period of time.[178] He argues that the middle classes were made as much by their aspirations as their objective reality. They were not a monolith however, and these aspirations varied as much as their incomes, social mobility, and access to patronage.[179] Much like Joshi and Chatterjee, Owensby also recognises that middle class modernity was rife with contradictions, and involved thrift and extravagance, deference and dominance, merit and patronage, all in equal measure.[180]

[174] Partha Chaterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, London: Zed Books, 1986, p. 25

[175] Partha Chaterjee, *Our Modernity. A lecture published by the South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development (SEPHIS) and the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)*, Rotterdam: Dakar, 1997, p. 3

[176] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, New York: Vintage Books, 1963, p. 9

[177] Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power." *Sociological Theory* 7, no. 1, 1989, p. 18

[178] Brian P. Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-class lives in Brazil*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 2

[179] Owensby, *Intimate Ironies*, p. 9

[180] Ibid.

The middle classes were made in the private and the domestic spheres in as much as they were made in the public. Religion played an integral role in the formation of the middle classes in 18th and 19th century England, as Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff demonstrate. Religion and the meritocratic nature of Christianity bestowed upon the middle classes a sense of belonging that made them distinctively different from the aristocracy and the landed gentry. The religious morals of spiritual equality legitimised middle-class claims to both status and power. Religion also offered sanctuary and explanation when facing common disasters for middle-class families such as death or bankruptcy. Religious self-definition therefore lay at the heart of middle-class culture.[181] Their work also focuses on the recasting of familial relations in the forging of an intensely gendered middle-class world. At the same time as the middle-classes were advocating for an equality that was premised upon their religious beliefs, women were excluded from middle-class negotiations in the public sphere. Men organised themselves in voluntary associations which propelled their economic interests, their love for the arts, their political needs, and their obligation to charity. All these activities redefined civil society, whilst simultaneously excluding women. Middle-class England was no place for women, whose labour in the public sphere was often disregarded and neglected. Middle-class men predicated much of their authority in the public world on the fact that they were the heads of their households and represented the interests of their wives, children and servants even if this was not necessarily so. As a result, middle-class women in the second half of the 18th century focused their energies on attempting to penetrate this public world forged by men that sought to omit their presence.[182]

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[181] Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, London: New York: Routledge, 1987, p. 77

[182] Hall and Davidoff, *Family Fortunes*, p. 416

The private space of the home then acts as both a site and an artifact where modernity works to bring about new forms of dwelling.[183] The primary location of these changes in the Japanese context, as Jordan Sand points out, were among the bourgeoisie known as *churyu* — the "middle ranks", or the middle class. Changes to the home were thus contingent with the rise of bourgeois culture which was brought about through an array of channels in the public sphere. Social channels such as the school system, clubs, voluntary associations, the press, and reform societies all came together to create new ideas about class and individualism.[184] These changes extended to the private sphere and affected the ways in which gender operated in the private space of the home. The role of the housewife changed in late 19th century Japan, and institutionalised domestic education brought about the idea that the housewife was responsible for all chores related to the maintenance of the dwelling.[185] The trained and educated professional housewife then took up the onus of domestic work with a scientific dispassion. The home was dependent on a woman's "economic and managerial expertise", and women in turn became "scientists of the home and turned the kitchen into their laboratory".[186] This consequently also contributed to the formation of new class cultures in the public. As detailed in the following chapter, middle-class Parsis would also come to articulate new forms of identity within the space of the home. They were deeply affected by colonial practices and their negotiations with colonial modernity would occur in the domestic sphere as much as it did in the public sphere as a result.

The formation of the middle class in India was as much a transnational process as other historical processes. Modernity was a contingent process operating on a transnational terrain at different times in history. So too, was the formation of the middle classes across the world.

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[183] Jordan Sand, *House and Home In Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880-1930.* Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Asia Center, 2005, pp. 1-2
[184] Ibid.
[185] Sand, *House and Home*, p. 93
[186] Sand, *House and Home*, p. 94

The middle classes in India, like the middle classes elsewhere, were deeply affected by global processes such as colonialism. These structured were often shaped by unequal relations that came about as a process of factors such as colonialism and imperialism.[187] This is especially true of the Parsi middle-classes, who, like other middle-class communities in India came to the fore as a direct consequence of colonial interventions in the public and private. My intention in illustrating a short historiography of the middle classes in India and elsewhere is to draw attention to the fact that the Parsi middle classes came about as the result of many of the same historical processes that led to the emergence of middle-class communities elsewhere in India and around the globe. These processes were syncretic in nature, and involved a panoply of factors acting together to bring this social group to the fore. In Bombay specifically, discussions around middle-class Parsis first emerged as a response to Bombay's housing question. As the previous chapter demonstrated, a consequence of colonial modernity in the city was the colonial response to the housing question, which manifested in the creation of a new suburb for the middle-classes of the city. How Parsis therefore negotiated the consequence of this modernity in Bombay's suburbs can be studied as an exemplar in middle-class self-fashioning.

Suburbs, the middle classes and the housing question

Bombay's suburbs were developed as a direct response to the plague epidemic that besieged the city in 1896. Studies of suburbanisation in the Global North have often categorised suburbs as a distinctively middle-class mode of urban dwelling. Kenneth Jackson in his seminal work on American suburban growth points out that 'suburbia' characterises American culture and spatiality. It is a manifestation of all things associated with contemporary American culture— racial and economic segregation, conspicuous consumption, upwards social mobility, nuclear families, a reliance upon private means of transport vis-a-vis the car, and a division between

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[187] Dejung, Motadel and Osterhammel, "Worlds of the Bourgeoisie", p. 6

labour and leisure.[188] He therefore defines the suburb as a residential quarter of relatively low density, occupied by middle to upper class people, who live separately from their places of work and commute to it daily.[189] Jackson cites the example of Brooklyn, which emerged as a suburb to Manhattan during the Transport Revolution that overtook American cities between 1815 and 1875. Brooklyn was America's first commuter suburb, and doubled in size by the mid-1800s as it offered modest rents, pleasant tree-shaded avenues, and access to as well as respite from the bustling Manhattan.[190] Much like Dadar-Matunga and the Dadar Parsi Colony by extension then, Brooklyn became a haven for middle-class families in search of a better standard of living. Suburbia was thus an aspiration of the middle-classes as much as it was a product of those aspirations.

The main historical actor in the emergence of these aspirations and their products were the bourgeoisie, whose resources permitted them to bring them to fruition. Their relative wealth allowed them to form new patterns of living which were eventually emulated by those who were less affluent.[191] Preeti Chopra traces a similar pattern in colonial Bombay where the wealthy and the European, not the bourgeoisie, moved to the suburbs of an emerging city in the 19th century.[192] Even during the plague, many Europeans, as well as affluent Parsis and Hindus fled their homes to escape the disease and formed settlements along railway lines in the far away suburbs of Salsette which was then considered the countryside.[193] This formed a precedent for many middle-class families who, with the emergence of Scheme V along Bombay's railway lines, began to move away from the heart of the city to its municipal boundaries and settled

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[188] Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanisation of the United States*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 16

[189] Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, p. 27

[190] Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, p. 50

[191] Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia*, New York: Basic Books Inc., 1987, p. 12

[192] Preeti Chopra, "Free to Move, Forced to Flee: the Formation and Dissolution of Suburbs in Colonial Bombay, 1750–1918." *Urban History* 39, no 1, 2012, p. 83

[193] Preeti Chopra, "Free to Move", *Urban History*, p. 97

there in homogeneous neighbourhoods that comprised members of certain communities. It is in this corollary that Nikhil Rao traces the expansion of Bombay's suburbs. It is important to note that while there are similarities in the way cities have expanded in the Anglo-American world and the way they have expanded in Bombay, the latter poses certain differences. First, that suburbanisation in Bombay took place within existing city limits and not outside its municipal boundaries. Second, that the primary mode of living in these suburbs comprised apartments and not the single-family dwellings that informed suburbia in Anglo-America.[194] While the suburbs in Bombay did form critical new ground for the emergence of a new middle-class identity, it did so in the apartment or the 'flat', and not the bungalow or the tenement of old Bombay. [195] Furthermore, living in apartment buildings was inextricably tied to middle-class aspirations, wherein the middle-classes who could not afford bungalows and did not want to live in *chawls* found a more suitable mode of housing to dwell in that was both affordable and 'sanitary'. These new forms of dwelling in the suburb therefore became characteristic of the middle-class in the city.

Discussions around housing the middle classes of Bombay began to take precedence over other urban issues in the early 20th century. By the 1920s, the focus of those addressing the 'housing problem' in Bombay had shifted from the poor and the working classes to the middle classes of the city. Middle-class unemployment in the post-war years and their lack of housing in the heart of the city had taken centre stage in discourses about the social group in the public sphere. The middle classes blamed the government of Bombay for not taking enough steps to ameliorate their condition.[196] It is unclear what the exact markers of this particular middle-class were,

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[194] Rao, *House but No Garden*, pp. 3-4
[195] Ibid.
[196] "GOVT. BLAMED: MIDDLE CLASS DISTRESS AND UNEMPLOYMENT",*The Times of India (1861-2010)*, July 30, 1925, p. 8. https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/govt-blamed/docview/613302683/se-2?accountid=8312.

especially since the terms 'middle class' and 'lower middle class' were used separately to define a similar social group with similar problems. What is implied is that they were white-collar workers who were too respectable to occupy the *chawls* built by bodies such as the Bombay Development Department and the Bombay Improvement Trust. These chawls had been built for the working-classes, and were fitted with a number of features that were deemed appropriate for the same. They were very small, badly ventilated, damp, and present in areas of the city where the working-classes lived such as Parel and Byculla, because these were areas that were close to their places of work in Bombay's mills.[197] It was believed that the practices of the working-classes were the causes of diseases such as the plague, and so, the Development Department and the Improvement Trust designed *chawls* that they believed would keep this in check through the spatial modification of the dwelling. In an erroneous attempt to eliminate dampness (and therefore, plague) from these dwellings, for example, *nahanis* or washing areas were placed outside the tenements in a common area on the middle of each floor.[198] This was deemed unsuitable for the middle-classes who had begun to value a degree of privacy in their own dwellings. Furthermore, the *chawls* were described as 'windowless' and the absence of proper ventilation were also seen as reasons for them being uninhabitable by the middle classes.[199]The middle class were, on the other hand, no longer affluent enough to afford sanitary dwellings in the heart of the city due to a consistent rise in rents. Despite their relative prosperity, the middle-class Parsis of Bombay were not exempt from this situation. They, like many other groups across the city, therefore used their middle-class status, their existing social and economic capital, and these discourses to secure land for their own dwelling in the city. This was done through the workings of co-operative housing societies.

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[197] "HOUSING PROBLEM: A PARSI GENTLEMAN'S SUGGESTION." 1926.The Times of India (1861-2010), April 19, p. 7

[198] Frank Conlon, "Industrialization and the Housing Problem in Bombay, 1850-1940," in *Changing South Asia: Economy and Society*, Kenneth Ballhatchet and David Taylor (eds.), London: Asian Research Service, 1984, p. 64

[199] "HOUSING PROBLEM: A PARSI GENTLEMAN'S SUGGESTION." *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, April 19,1926, p. 7.

Setting precedents for housing reform

Before exploring the work of co-operative housing societies in Bombay and in the Parsi Colony in particular, it is worthwhile exploring notions of urban and social reform as they were discussed in 20th century Bombay. I mention urban and social reform together because they were considered inseparable from each other. Furthermore, they were integral to the activities of the middle classes in the public sphere. In an address to the Social Service League in 1917, Improvement Trust Chairman J.P. Orr urged the attendees present to engage with matters pertaining to housing reform. Those present were mainly members of the educated middle classes of Bombay. At the crux of his argument was the notion that modern housing reform would be carried out by social reformers. This 'modern' housing reform involved shifting public opinion in favour of dwellings with improved sanitary conditions and more light and air.[200] What was unspoken, but understood about this argument was that these social reformers would be drawn from the middle classes and middle rungs of society which acted as cultural intermediaries between British administrators and the urban Indian populace. It was these middle classes that populated the halls of organisations such as the Social Service League, and it was their notion that it was only the 'social work' of the middle classes that could ameliorate the pitiable conditions of the working classes.[201] These notions were central in middle-class negotiations of colonial modernity, and where therefore also imperative to the fashioning of the middle classes in colonial Bombay.

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[200] J.P. Orr, *Social Reform and Slum Reform: A Lecture Delivered to the Social Science Service League, Bombay, in the Servants of India Society's Hall, Bombay on 3rd September, 1917*, Bombay: The Times Press, 1917, p. 1
[201] "ORGANISATION OF INDIAN LABOUR - 1", *Bombay Chronicle*, 06 January, 1919, p. 6

Garth Andrew Myers in his conceptualisation of "verandahs of power"[202], suggests that power in colonial urban terrains operated on three levels. The upper rung of this verandah was constituted by the colonial elite, such as J.P. Orr and his peers in the Bombay City Improvement Trust.[203] The second rung was occupied by the 'colonised middle', that is, those people who worked for the colonised elite as cultural intermediaries. These intermediaries engaged directly with the colonial elite to bring colonial projects to fruition.[204] The third rung comprised the colonised urban majority, upon whom the actions of the colonial elite and the colonised middle asserted their impact.[205] I propose that in delivering his address, Orr sought to galvanise this colonised middle into action to carry out what was believed to be modern modes of social reform and therefore, housing reform. What is imperative to note is that these modes of reform were already being carried out in Bombay by cultural intermediaries in the public sphere. Locals were highly ambivalent towards the colonising project and took from it what they deemed useful to themselves and their communities.[206] An example of this, as Preeti Chopra points out in her monograph *A Joint Enterprise*, is the work of Khan Bahadur Muncherji Cowasji Murzban. Murzban was part of the Parsi bourgeoisie himself, and was an architect and the Executive Engineer of the Municipality of Bombay's Public Works Department (PWD). We now examine Murzban's activities to get a fuller sense of his vision, because it was he who set forth a model of housing reform that involved acquiring funds from the wealthy to inaugurate housing projects for a particular community — in this case, the Parsis. Further, this

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[202] A phrase originally coined by Elspeth Huxley in her introduction to Eric Dutton's memoirs. Eric Dutton was a British colonial officer and planner in East and Central Africa. He figures prominently in Myers' book. See Garth Andrew Myers, *Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and the State in Urban Africa*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003, p. 2

[203] Myers, *Verandahs of Power*, p. 11

[204] Myers, *Verandahs of Power*, p. 12

[205] Myers, *Verandahs of Power*, p. 14

[206] Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda", in Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Berkely: Los Angeles: London: University of California Press, 1997, p. 7

indirectly gave impetus to co-operative housing projects which drew from the same models.[207]

It was these ideas that influenced public individuals such as Mancherji Joshi. As I demonstrate later in this chapter, Joshi himself was a representative of the colonised middle and the middle-class founder of the Dadar Parsi Colony, and would eventually seek to follow this model in part. It is therefore worthwhile noting Murzban's work as it is these activities that emerge as an exemplar for modern modes of housing reform such as the homogeneous housing colony funded by philanthropy, carried out specifically for a particular community.[208]

Khan Bahadur Cowasji Murzban is great example of the colonised middle that worked to bring fulfil colonial projects in the hope of helping his own community. Murzban was part of the PWD from 1857 to 1893.[209] It was within his 36 year long career that Murzban established relationships with the colonial elite that comprised British administrators and wealthy native families who were mostly Parsis. It was the forging of these relationships that enabled Murzban from his bourgeois position in society to execute his vision of new forms of dwelling in the city. These spatial models, such as the housing colony, were also manifestly Parsi forms of dwelling. Murzban was deeply invested in housing the poor, who suffered the most as a result of Bombay's constant expansion and the negligence of its governors. He was an engineer particularly tuned in to discussions on sanitation that prevailed in Bombay city even before the 1896 plague. It was his belief that the city's sanitary condition would only improve if healthful dwellings were constructed for its poor. As most public figures at the time did, Murzban devoted his energies into the upliftment of his own community. Murzban's vision demonstrates the extent to which members of the colonised middle were actively tuned into the urban discourses

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[207] "The Homes of the Poor", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, December 22,1909, p. 6.
https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/homes-poor/docview/500378149/se-2?accountid=8312.
[208] Preeti Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the making of British Bombay*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, p. 107
[209] Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise*, p. 73

that were pervasive in colonial cities. It was thus by 1887, nine years before the outbreak of the

plague, that he prepared a scheme dedicated to the housing of the Parsi poor.[210]

The idea for these estates, much like other schemes that changed Bombay's spatial landscape,

was imported from England. They were inspired by George Peabody's housing blocks for the

poor. These were first erected in 1864 in London, and served as homes for artisans and other

members of the working class.[211] They were specifically built for these demographics, as

opposed to paupers who did not have a steady means of income or the same level of social

respectability. By 1890 Murzban had founded the Garib Zarthoshtina Rehetan Fund[212],

through which he collected charitable donations from members of the Parsi elite.[213] These

donations were put towards a fairly ambitious project in the Tardeo area of the city, which was

where the scheme was built. By 1908 at least 27 of these buildings had been constructed and

they at least housed 142 families or 600 people.[214] A total of 34 dwellings were built, slowly and

surely, until Murzban's death in 1917. These Parsi housing colonies also encompassed two

schools, a dispensary where free healthcare was available to tenants, and a reading room. They

were payed for by charitable donations by wealthy Parsis, often members of a single families

such as the Petit and Albless families. It was Murzban's opinion that the provision of these

facilities made the colonies 'self-contained'. This would mean that the residents of Murzban's

blocks could access elements essential to public and private life within the space of the colonies

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[210] Murzban Mancherji Murzban, *Leaves from the Life of Khan Bahadur Muncherji Cowasji Murzban*, Bombay: F.B. Marzban and Co's Printing Press, 1915, p. 107
[211] Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise*, p. 106
[212] The Poor Zoroastrians Building Fund
[213] Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise*, p. 107
[214] "HOUSING BOMBAY'S POOR: EXAMPLE OF THE PARSIS.", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, June 01, 1908, p. 8 https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/bombays-poor/docview/234759091/se-2?accountid=8312.

itself. As shown in the previous chapter, self-containedness was the most important aspect ascribed to model dwellings in the city, be it at the level of the suburb or the neighbourhood.[215]

It was after this period that the focus of the community shifted to housing the middle classes. The latter was indeed and in fact caused by the land boom that took place as a result of the construction of Scheme V and the opening up of newer residential areas in the city's suburbs.[216] Murzban was hailed in the post-plague years as "not only an architect but a Sanitary Engineer" who knew well the evils that marked Bombay's chawl system.[217] His work for the Parsi poor was thus exalted long after his death, and his vision as a cultural intermediary had lasting effects on Bombay's built environment and the lives of its Parsi residents as well.

What is worth noting is that the Parsi poor in this context included working class Parsi families, artisans, and widows. Similarly to those occupying the Peabody estates then, these people were carpenters, mechanics, domestic servants and so on. They paid anywhere between 8 annas to 12 rupees depending on the size of their dwellings. That they would have had to pay rent would have necessitated them to be gainfully employed, or, as Simin Patel puts it, "benevolently unemployed" in the case of the widows.[218] Respectability politics were of deep significance to Parsi leaders in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As far as the issue of the Parsi poor living in these accommodations went, it was a matter of pride that they were not mendicants or beggars, but respectable people with respectable occupations who did not do work that was considered too "low or unclean" in status. It was important that they displayed the alacrity to earn and a willingness to strive for a better social position. It was these Parsis who deserved the

[215] Simin Patel, *Cultural Intermediaries in a Colonial City: The Parsis of Bombay c. 1860-1921*, PhD Diss., (University of Oxford, 2015), p. 245
[216] Ibid.
[217] Murzban, *Leaves from the Life of*, pp. 110-111
[218] Simin Patel, *Cultural Intermediaries in a Colonial City*, p. 255

charity and benevolence that the initiatives of middle-class Parsis and the money of wealthy

Parsis could offer. It was they who would not abuse the goodwill bestowed upon them. As Patel

points out, these were discourses integral to Parsi self-fashioning at the time.[219] These dialogues

around respectability also characterised discussions around middle-class Parsis, as we shall see.

Khan Bahadur Murzban was ahead of his time in other ways as well. In 1889, Murzban bought

a plot of land in Andheri, 15 miles away from the heart of the city. It was here that he built a

country home to escape Bombay's squalid conditions. Other bourgeois people followed to build

cottages along 'sanitary' lines. Finally, the region expanded to become a small settlement that

was coined 'Murzbanabad' in recognition of Murzban's efforts.[220] The Times of India quoted

that Murzban had done "yeoman services" in bringing a steady supply of Tansa water as well

as a dispensary to the area.[221] Murzban's initiatives were exemplary in that he attempted to

create a self-contained housing colony and model town more than a decade before these two

modes of dwelling became popular discourse among both the British and local middle-class

housing reformers. As illustrated in the previous chapter, these discourses first emerged in the

popular vernacular around 1915-1917 and were strongly influenced by the advent of the

garden suburb in city planning.

What the current section of this chapter illustrates is that the impetus for housing reform among

the Parsis came from inside the community and amongst its middle-classes. These projects were

integral to the self-fashioning of the Parsi middle classes as it was strongly tied to middle-class

industriousness, and an urge to carry out reform in one's society that was common among the

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[219] Simin Patel, *Cultural Intermediaries in a Colonial City*, p. 258
[220] "MURZBANABAD" AT ANDHERI: ANNUAL BANQUET.", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, April 05, 1904, p. 3.
[221]"JASAN CEREMONY AT ANDHERI.", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, July 12, 1899. p. 5. See also Murzban, *Leaves from the Life of*, p. 112

middle classes across different contexts across the globe. This was closely tied to the middle class need for respectability and it was often that this was derived from a will to demonstrate their public-spiritedness and concern for those below them. Respectability was thus integral to their self-fashioning and a main goal of the bourgeois middle class.[222] They acted as compradors between the coloniser and the colonised to bring projects that they believed served their needs and the needs of society to fruition. These projects were often derivations and shared similarities with other colonial projects, but were not exact replications of colonial forms of modernity. Their ability to carry out these projects was also rooted in their position as a 'middling sort' between the wealthy and the poor. This is to say that they had access to both as a result of their intermediary position in society, and could simultaneously confer with the wealthy and use their resources for their own projects as well as provide assistance to the poor. All the while of course, by distancing themselves from the poorer classes of society and enforcing the disparities between themselves and the poor socially and spatially.

The Dadar Parsi Colony, Cooperative Housing and Flat living

To recapitulate, suburbia was an aspiration of the middle class as much as it was a product of these aspirations. The middle classes of Bombay moved to the suburbs because living in the heart of the city had become expensive and acclimatising to a lower standard of living in *chawls* had become unacceptable. A better standard of living was offered to them in the suburbs where their middle-class aspirations could play out to the fullest. Discourses surrounding housing reform were as important to the middle class as it was to their colonial masters, even if they were highly ambivalent to these discourses. They carried out a range of exercises in the public sphere to address the housing question for the benefit of their own communities. Enterprising

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[222] Christof Dejung, David Motadel and Jürgen Osterhammel, "Worlds of the Bourgeoisie" in Christof Dejung, David Motadel and Jürgen Osterhammel, in *The Global Bourgeoisie: The Rise of the Middle Classes in the Age of Empire*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019, pp. 10-11

individuals from within the Parsi bourgeoisie such as Khan Bahadur Muncherji Cowasji Murzban set precedents for housing reform in the city. These precedents were also adopted by the Parsi middle-classes to create spaces of their own such as the exclusive housing colony. This was an important component of middle-class self-fashioning.

Co-operative housing societies were important bodies that paved the way for these middle-class colonies to come into being. They were pioneered in Britain in the late 19th century and became especially popular alongside the garden city movement[223], which was illustrated in some detail in the previous chapter. Co-operatives gained popularity in India with the rise of other public associations in the early 20th century. These public associations were the paradoxical result of both, colonial intervention and non-engagement, so to speak. The hegemonic colonial state allowed public associations to flourish among middle-class intelligentsia partly due to their own principles of non-interferance with certain local matters and partly out of convenience. That they allowed a certain section of public life to thrive outside of their direct control resulted in the formation of these associations.[224] They were formed for the specific ends of their members, and sought to accomplish their aims via "dialogue, bargaining and persuasion" with others that participated in civil society including their local peers and the colonial government.[225]

Housing co-operatives in particular were formed with the express encouragement of actors within Bombay's colonial administration and in collaboration with its resident elite. In 1914, J.P. Orr and the one of the founders of India's co-operative movement S.S. Talmaki devised a series of lectures as propaganda aimed to further the cause of co-operative housing. It was their

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[223] Johnston Birchall, "Co-partnership housing and the garden city movement", *Planning Perspectives*, 10:4, 1995, p. 329

[224] Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis*, pp. 158-159

[225] Ibid.

opinion that the housing crisis that affected the middle classes of Bombay could only be solved if it could be provided at moderate rents to people of moderate means. An urgent call was made with the intention of spurring the local bourgeois intelligentsia into creating housing societies along the lines of co-partnership societies in England.[226] They responded with the creation of several housing societies between 1914 and 1915, all geared towards securing housing for their respective communities. Co-operative housing societies were a central plinth in advancing suburban growth in England, and this was no different in Bombay.[227]

Co-operative housing societies were (and are) essentially forms of land tenure with community at its heart. It provides a democratic model of joint ownership and action that allows its members to pool their resources and secure housing for themselves. Collective action through a housing co-operative reduced the cost of building, simplified the legal obligations involved in construction, reduced the cost of installing facilities such as electricity and water, and ensured that its members and tenants payed rents that were controlled by the society rather than the processes of demand and supply.[228] The rent collected by the society went towards the maintenance of its properties. Furthermore, housing societies in Bombay had the assistance of not only wealthy members of the communities forming co-operatives, but also the colonial government. The government would, for example, lend housing societies money at a rate of interest that was reduced from 6 per cent to 4-5 per cent.[229] Housing societies also had an important role to play in the cultivation of middle-class aspirations. The notion of owning a house was a powerful one, especially in colonial Bombay where the inflation of land prices

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[226] "BOMBAY HOUSING: THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, March 09, 1914, p. 5

[227] Martin Gaskell, "The suburb salubrious" in Anthony Sutcliffe (ed) *British Town Planning, the Formative Years,* Leicester University Press, 1981,p. 39.

[228] P. E. Weeraman, "Co-operative Housing" in International Co-operative Alliance, *Readings in Co-operative Housing*, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1973, p. 17

[229] "Co-operative House Building: Financial Help by the Government", *Bombay Chronicle*, February 13, 1919, p. 5

made this exceedingly difficult for a middle-class person.[230] Like other middle-class led public associations, housing societies in Bombay thus worked towards acquiring land in concentrated pockets in the city to create middle-class ethnic enclaves such as the Dadar Parsi Colony.

The Parsis, along with Saraswat Brahmins, were amongst the first in the city to heed the call to form co-operative housing societies. It was as early as 1914 that a Parsi group lobbied the Bombay City Improvement Trust to assign them lands for the building of middle-class dwellings in the Gamdevi estate. The Parsi committee was said to "mean business" as one of the pioneers of the housing association movement.[231] The ready adoption of British values and civil behaviours among the Parsis is well documented. The Parsis willingly and actively embraced British principles. This of course was key to their emergence in the subcontinent as a colonial elite. The Parsis drew tremendous advantage from their close emulation of the British, but simultaneously devised ways to preserve their own identity in the colonial milieu.[232] This ingenuity manifested itself in many forms, including the spatial. Parsis thus utilised their purchase with the colonial government in Bombay to exercise their influence in bringing about distinct spatial forms through the operation of Parsi organisations such as the housing colony. This is very evident especially in the Dadar Parsi Colony.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Colony is unique in that while it was founded by a single person, Mancherji Joshi, its property regime is controlled by 17 different trusts.[233] These trusts are a combination of housing societies and charitable organisations that used their capital to secure lands for middle-class and lower middle-class Parsis on the greenest and most

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[230] P. E. Weeraman, "Co-operative Housing", p. 19

[231] "Chairman's Minute, dating 14th August 1914" in *Bombay City Improvement Trust Administration Report for the year ending 31st March 1915*, The Times Press, Bombay, p. 117-118

[232] Jesse Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, Leiden:Boston: Brill, 2001, p. 28

[233] Leilah S. Vevaina, *Trust Matters: Parsis and Property in Mumbai*, Order No. 3683405, The New School, 2014, p. 40

appealing spaces that Scheme V had to offer. This was in response to the housing crisis that middle-class Parsis faced around the beginning of the 20th century. What is important to note is that these trusts or housing societies were most often led by middle-class historical actors who believed that it was their duty to use their social capital to secure spaces in the city for members of their community. These initiatives were an important element of their own self-fashioning as well as the fashioning of the spaces they occupied.

An exemplary organisation in this regard is the Parsi Central Association Housing Society or the PCACHS, led by Mancherji Joshi. The PCACHS was set up in 1919 with the aim of providing housing to middle and lower middle-class Parsis who were being "dishoused" in the heart of the city owing to soaring rents.[234] Joshi was an engineer in the Bombay Municipal Corporation and also had connections in the Improvement Trust.[235] He used these connections as Secretary of the PCACHS to secure lands not only from the Improvement Trust but from other Parsi building societies such as the Zoroastrian Building Society.[236] Understanding Joshi as a middle-class historical actor who was influenced not just by prevailing social conditions but also his own aspirations is integral to this thesis. While relatively little is known about Joshi, what is known points poignantly to his enterprising middle-class status. He was one of Khan Bahadur Murzban's protégées and was influenced by his work not only as an engineer but as a stalwart in providing housing for his community.[237] His middle-class aspiration to build a Parsi colony in the suburbs was no doubt inspired by the precedents Murzban set with both his housing colony for the Parsi poor as well as Murzbanabad in the outer edges of the city. Joshi was prescient, in that he realised rather early that it was difficult for middle-class Parsis to

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[234] "BOMBAY FETE: OPENED BY GOVERNOR PARSEE HOUSING SCHEME." 1924.*The Times of India (1861-2010),* March 24, 1924, p. 12
[235] Zareen Engineer, interview by author, 11 January, 2020, 0:00-1:00
[236] Draft Report of the Parsi Central Association Co-operative Housing Society, Ltd., for the year ending 31st March 1923, p. 1
[237] Murzban, *Leaves from the Life of,* p. 107

provide for their families as well as pay rent that was anything above Rs. 20-35 in Bombay's economy. It was these people that he served through his long career both as Secretary of the PCACHS as well as from his position in the Bombay Municipality. He had a keen sense of the housing problem in Bombay from his work in the Municipality and from his dealings with them as well as the Improvement Trust and the Bombay Development Department. The latter emerged as an arm of government in 1920 to address the housing question when the Improvement Trust was failing to do so.[238] As a housing luminary, Joshi's work in the PCACHS ensured the emergence of a new type of dwelling amongst middle-class Parsis — blocks of flats, controlled by co-operative housing societies, which contained two to five rooms and most notably, en-suite bathrooms.

Nikhil Rao, in his chapter on the emergence of the flat in Bombay's spatial realm has extensively documented how the area of Dadar-Matunga were home to new building typologies that came to determine the characteristics of Bombay's suburbs in posterity. Rao demonstrates that it was a boom and subsequent bust in land prices that, following 1922, led housing investors to abandon the cottage building type and embrace instead the less risqué multistorey dwelling as the chosen building typology for Dadar and Matunga.[239] What is perhaps notable however, is that the PCACHS that was formed during the period of the boom never intended to build cottage type dwellings in the first place. Their earliest reports confirm their intentions to only ever build flats of the A-D Type, that is, flats with rooms ranging from two to five rooms and a kitchen.[240] While the D Type flats with five rooms were on offer to the residents in Dadar Parsi Colony, the vast majority of tenants acquiring flats from the PCACHS opted for the A and B

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[238] MANCHERJI, EDALJI JOSHI. 1929. "HELPING POOR PARSIS: TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES OF INDIA."." *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, Nov 20, 14

[239] Rao, *House but no garden*, p. 107

[240] *Draft Report of the Parsi Central Association Co-operative Housing Society, Ltd., for the year ending 31st March 1923*, p. 3

Type flats with two to three rooms, leaving the D Type flats mostly vacant.[241] This suggests that middle-class Parsis who were on the wealthier side and could afford these dwellings chose not to move to the suburbs. Living in the heart of the city was a status symbol and a convenience that was not easy to relinquish.[242] Those who did move in large numbers, were middle-class Parsis who could afford both, the rents on offer in smaller flats as well as the cost of travelling into the city to work. This is not to suggest that the Parsis who did move to the suburb were in any way poorer than those who did — many Parsis who did move into A and B type flats owned cars which were a status symbol of their own, and used this to commute to work instead of taking public transport.[243] It suggests instead that the Parsis who moved to the suburbs were willing to fashion themselves as suburban residents which in itself was a distinguishing marker in colonial Bombay. The middle-class Parsis who moved to the Dadar Parsi Colony pointedly fashioned themselves as dwellers of suburbia, who chose "healthy" and "quiet" surroundings over the insanitary heart of the city.

The readiness of the Parsis to adopt more 'modern' colonial modes of dwelling may be demonstrated by the positioning of toilets within their flats. This was an important marker of the ways in which the Parsi middle-class fashioned themselves and their homes in a distinctive manner. Another distinguishing feature of the Parsi Colony and PCACHS flats were that unlike their counterparts in the Hindu Colony and elsewhere in Scheme V, their toilets were placed near bedrooms or were even en-suite, that is, inside their bedrooms.[244] This was most radical at a time when toilets, though having moved into the flat, were actually placed separately from the other rooms within a flat.[245] Toilets in the Hindu part of the neighbourhood were spatially

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[241] Ibid.
[242] Zareen Engineer, interview by author, 11 January, 2020, 2:00-3:00
[243] Arnie Aderianwala, interview by author, 20 April, 2022, 13:00-14:00
[244] Kamu Iyer, interview by author, 20 January 2020, 5:00-6:00
[245] Rao, *House but no garden*, p. 132

arranged within the dwelling bearing in mind predominant notions of caste purity. The separation of toilets from other parts of the room ensured bodily purity and also ensured that lower-caste domestic workers could access the toilets to clean them without entering the house at all. The Parsi community harboured their own notions of purity and pollution that also operated on caste-based lines. Indeed, many Parsi practices mirror the practices of their upper-caste Hindu counterparts in this regard.[246] For example, menstruating Parsi women were made to sleep in separate rooms on wrought iron beds to prevent their 'impurity' from impeding on the rest of the home.[247] With regards to toilets in their homes however, middle-class Parsis in the Dadar Parsi Colony in particular readily adopted the notions of English modernity which placed the toilet in the heart of the modern flat. This preference for convenience and modernity over what was widely considered 'sanitary' at the time is spatial evidence of the radical way in which middle-class Parsis fashioned themselves into the image of their colonial masters with alacrity.

The Colony is a concentrated space of Parsi life and was made to be so by explicit design. A hundred buildings within the colony were built under the purview of Restricted Use Covenants. It was thus codified into building legislation that while anybody can own these buildings, their occupants must be Parsis.[248] This covenant was not established as part of a trust deed, but was a private contractual agreement that was written into the deed of the building when it was constructed.[249] While its exact origins are fairly obscure in existing memory, they are often ascribed to Mancherji Joshi's eagerness to keep the Dadar Parsi Colony exclusive to Parsis to

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[246] Mitra Sharafi, "Judging Conversion to Zoroastrianism: Behind the scenes of the Parsi Punchayat case (1908)", in John R. Hinnells and Alan William (eds.). *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*, London: New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 163
[247] Parsi women as late as my own grandmother's generation still followed this practice with tremendous fervour.
[248] Nauzer Bharucha,"Court Restrains Builder Dealing with Non-Parsis: COVENANT CONTROVERSY." *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, December 24, 2009, p. 11 and Zareen Engineer, interview by author, 13 April, 2022, 22:00-23:00
[249] Vevaina, *Trust Matters: Parsis and Property in Mumbai*, p. 44

the best of his abilities.[250] These Restrictive Use Covenants are similar to the ones used in the establishment of *baugs* or walled and gated communities built for Parsis and occupied solely by them. What is notable about the Dadar Parsi Colony however, is that it is the only Parsi colony in the city not enclosed by a wall. By imposing restrictive covenants, the founders of the Parsi colony ensured the regulated use of the buildings such that a fairly uniform spatial quality could be ascribed to the area as it was occupied, just as it would be in a walled community. This was integral to not only the fashioning of the area itself but the self-fashioning of those living in it. In using 'modern' building practices the Parsis of the Dadar Parsi Colony were able to create an ethnic enclave that was restrictive in two ways — it was religiously homogeneous by way of covenants, and homogeneous in class by way of rents. In doing this, the residents of the colony delineated for themselves a spatial realm of their own where their middle-classness could play out.

Zareen Engineer, Mancherji Joshi's granddaughter, remembers him as an enterprising man who stopped at nothing to listen to and help the members of the community residing in Dadar whom she believed were always like a "family". She recalls Joshi holding audiences with the residents of the Parsi Colony to listen to their qualms in an attempt to fix them.[251] These sorts of ties were made possible by the fairly homogeneous nature of the community — they were all Parsi, and they all belonged to similar economic dispositions. Religious belonging, as Hall and Davidoff suggest in their own study, was a particularly strong incentive for the building of these communal bonds. But so was the homogeneity of class. The lack of relative class disparity amongst the residents of the Dadar Parsi Colony enabled them to build community bonds that are similar to bonds shared by Parsis in *baugs*.

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[250] Zareen Engineer, interview by author, 13 April, 2022, 22:00-23:00
[251] Zareen Engineer, interview by author, 11 January, 2020, 16:00-17:00

Self-fashioning in the Dadar Parsi Colony was therefore contingent on markers of both class and religion. Religion operated in explicit ways to create a definitive Parsi space in more ways than one. Buildings such as ceremonial prayer halls and *agiaries* were built with certain Parsi superstitions and notions in mind, as were residential buildings. Take for example the case of the PCACHS refusing to build a residential building on land that was occupied by a well. Even though the well had been filled up and the plot itself was centrally situated and ideal for building upon, the PCACHS refrained from doing so in lieu of the Parsi superstition that residential buildings must not be built upon wells.[252] Parsi scripture decrees that wells are holy spaces and the sanctity of the water must be preserved by its exposure to sunlight.[253] Furthermore, one must not offend the well-spirits in any way and the filling in of wells was most feverishly petitioned against by superstitious Parsis in colonial Bombay.[254] In ascribing to superstitious Parsi notions rather than simply building where is modernly ideal, the founders of the colony etched Parsi religious notions into spatial form. In simultaneously asserting their *Parsipanu[255]* with their modernity, they brought about a new an unique form of middle-class Parsi way of being — one which held space for both, their religion as well as their contemporaneity.

Charity played a tremendous role in the assertion of *Parsipanu* as well, and middle-class Parsis in Dadar Parsi Colony both, received charity and enabled it. Many of the buildings constructed in the colony were erected as a result of charitable donations from wealthy Parsis to bodies like the PCACHS. The famously wealthy and philanthropic Albless family, for example, donated money to the housing society in 1926 for the construction of buildings meant for the lower middle-class Parsis.[256] Most strikingly, the middle-class founders of the colony used their kinship

[252] Draft Report of the Parsi Central Association Cooperative Housing Society Ltd. for the year ending 31st March 1924, p. 4
[253] R.P. Masani, *Folklore of Wells: Being a Study of Water Worship in East and West*, Project Gutenberg, 1918, p. 6
[254] Masani, *Folklore of Wells*, p. 18
[255] "Parsiness", or "Parsi way of being"
[256] *The Parsi Central Association Co-operative Housing Society Ltd. Committee's Annual Report to be laid before the Sixth Ordinary General Meeting to be held on 14th August 1926*, p. 9

ties with wealthier Parsis to prevail upon them to donate to the cause of housing those who were less well off, but not quite destitute. It was their collaborations with the wealthy that enabled them to secure funds to build a space wherein they could dwell and fashion themselves. Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, the 5th Baronet, sat on the founding committee of the PCACHS as its Chairman. He certainly brought with him his connections and influence in the public realm to the group and gave it significant purchase in the Parsi public. Middle-class Parsi self-fashioning would be an incomplete project without the involvement of wealthier actors, as it was in collaboration with, and in relation to these actors that they were defined. Middle-class Parsis were thus both, receivers of and enablers of charity, especially when this charity was directed towards the needs of their own kin. Charity thus played an important role in the self-fashioning of both, the spatial and social character of the Parsi colony.

Where there is charity there is the question of respectability. Middle-class Parsis in the Parsi Colony ensured that they remained 'respectable' despite their dependence on the wealth and munificence of others, be it that of the housing society or wealthy Parsi. Discourses around respectability often stemmed from the emphasis that regardless of any concessions they might have received in the acquisition of their homes, middle-class Parsis still paid their own rent and did not rely solely on the benevolence of others. At the heart of this discourse lies the notion of the self-sufficient and honest Parsi — one who did not take undue advantage of the charity doled out to him. It is worth noting here that at this time discourses around home-ownership and respectability were dominated by men, who were still very much in control of their households at the time.[257] A point of great pride for Mancherji Joshi's family was that despite his influence within the Colony he was an "honest and upright" Parsi man who payed his rent

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[257] Farrokh Jijina, interview by the author, 16 April, 2022, 0:00- 1:00

till the day he died.[258] These notions of honesty and respectability were quintessentially middle-class Parsi and prevail to this day as integral components of *Parsipanu*.

Conclusion

It was in using colonial institutions such as the housing society that middle-class Parsis acquired space for themselves in a burgeoning city and made this space their own. The Dadar Parsi Colony was a product of Parsi middle-class self-fashioning. By the same token, it was a space where this middle-classness played out in its fullest through cultural projects which involved both, building and dwelling. These cultural projects were derived from notions of colonial modernity, which the Parsis used to consolidate their own spaces within the city, but were not necessarily exact replications of colonial models for the same. Parsis who settled in the Colony were concerned with housing their own and forming a homogeneous space wherein their middle-class aspirations could take centre stage in both the public and the private spheres. Like their counterparts in India and across the world, middle-class Parsis in colonial Bombay were increasingly concerned with not only modern notions of respectability and gentility, but also older forms of tradition. This gave middle-class Parsiness in colonial Bombay its distinctive attributes. Attempts at creating an exclusive housing colony for a particular class of Parsis were informed by precedence, and it was the actions of middle-class Parsis before them that gave the aspirations of the founders of the Colony their purchase. Finally, it was the cultural entrepreneurship of middle-class Parsis that allowed them to create a distinctive space of their own within Bombay city. A 'middling path' was thus paved by the 'middling sort' and the spaces belonging to them still carry the markers of this particular brand of middle-classness in the present day.

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[258] Zareen Engineer, interview by the author, 24:00-25:00

Chapter 3:
"Aiyan baddhu saru chhe"[259]
Life and Remembrance in the Dadar Parsi Colony

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[259] "Everything is good here"

"Don't you see, said Father, that you are confusing fiction with facts, fiction does not create facts, fiction can come from facts, it can grow out of facts by compounding, transposing, augmenting, diminishing, or altering them in any way; but you must not confuse cause and effect, you must not confuse what really happened with what the story says happened, you must not lose your grasp on reality, that way madness lies"[260]

The quote above is an excerpt from a short story in which a set of Parsi parents discover that their child is a writer who authors tales inspired by his childhood in one of Bombay's Parsi *baugs*. The mother worries about the historical inaccuracies and exaggerations that mar the stories in his book, while the father comforts her by reminding her that her son's fiction is merely rooted in fact, and is not required to be factual in itself. Simultaneously, he cautions her and the reader into remembering the difference between fact and fiction, lest they confuse the two and descend into "madness". What the father in the story fails to recognise is that memory, the resource upon which his beloved son draws from for his tales, though marred by inconsistencies and inaccuracies, is a useful, if not essential tool in reconstructing pictures of the past. Nostalgia or the remembrance of the past is only one way to relate to the past, and is not untrue or ersatz in essence.[261] The way a space such as the *baug* in the story above is remembered remains an important way in which spaces themselves are constituted in both, the past and the present. The memory of a space reveals its history in ways that a traditional corpus of archival material may not. It also reveals voices often belied by a traditional archive — the voices of people from the margins, which may include those from marginalised genders, servants, and so on.

This chapter is the result of my explorations of the memories of the residents of Dadar Parsi Colony and members of the Parsi community. I argue that these memories are integral to the

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[260] Rohinton Mistry, *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, London: Faber and Faber, 1992, p. 302
[261] Mieke Bal, "Introduction", in Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe, and Leo Spitzer (eds.). *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*, Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999, p. xi

constitution of Dadar Parsi Colony as a space and therefore as a Parsi middle-class ethnic enclave. I also argue that the space of the home is where these memories thrive and embed themselves into spatial surroundings first, before they begin to constitute Parsi middle-classness at the scale of the neighbourhood and then give the Colony its distinctive character. In turn, practices in the public space of the Colony embed themselves into domestic practices in it as well, through the performances of particular rituals and customs within the space of the home. I demonstrate this by drawing upon their memories of the colony and Bombay during British rule. I have supplemented the study of these memories with studies of memoirs and Parsi fiction that are not portrayals of life in the Dadar Parsi Colony, but life as a middle-class Parsi in general. This is partly owing to a paucity of written sources regarding the Colony itself but also because the middle-class Parsi experience in Bombay was a shared one. This means that the residents of Dadar Parsi Colony experienced commonalities with their middle-class peers in other parts of Bombay and that it would be useful to delve into these remembrances to augment my argument. The argument running through this chapter thus centres the place of memory in the home and the neighbourhood to show the ways in which Parsi middle-classness was constituted within the realm of the Colony. The chapter thus provides an addition to the historiography on the modern Indian home, the Parsis of Bombay, as well as middle-classness and the negotiations of colonial modernity in an Indian context.

Walking the Colony

On a rainy morning in 2020, right after the first rounds of the Coronavirus lockdown had been lifted in Mumbai, I joined a walking tour of the Dadar Parsi Colony with a long-time resident of the Colony, Mr Kaevan Umrigar. I was, at that point, well into conducting research for this thesis but saw the opportunity to learn more about the subject and joined enthusiastically. The tour began, and we walked past the bust of Mancherji Joshi into the tree-lined avenues of the

colony. Mr Umrigar set about telling us stories from the Colony, while its older residents peered down from their balconies, watching, and some even waving at the crowd as we passed by. What was most striking to me whilst walking the Colony was how distinctively Parsi most of these residents appeared even in the comfort of their homes. There was little doubt that this was indeed a Parsi Colony. There were visible, tangible markers of Parsiness on display within its space. The smell of *loban*[262] wafted through the air as we passed the Rustom Framna Agiary, where priests kept the sacred fire constantly burning for the residents of the Colony who frequented it for their prayers. Men wore their *sudreh*[263] and *kusti*[264] whilst they lounged on their balconies, while some older women still donned the *matha-bana*[265], one even adjusting it as she saw us walk past. Cars carried stickers of the *Asho Farohar*, the guardian spirit of the Zoroastrians. Buildings around the Colony were embossed with the same symbol. Parsiness was performed here, consciously and deliberately, and in more ways than one.

I continued to observe these displays of Parsiness even as I conducted interviews for my project. As I stepped into the homes of these Parsis, it became even more evident that the enclave had become a space where a certain lifestyle was painstakingly preserved by those who lived in the Colony. Traditional chalk rangoli patterns adorned the floors outside the front doors of nearly every Parsi home I visited. These were made with the gentle tapping of perforated metal trays on a wet floor, and always done in the mornings. I was urged to never take off my shoes inside, as was customary for Parsis but sacrilegious for others in the city. I grew up with this custom as well, having lived in a Parsi household. However, most Parsis cannot quite remember why this is the norm.[266] Having entered a home, one would see pictures and tapestries of the prophet

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[262] Incense
[263] Sacred mulmul shirt worn by Parsis who have been initiated into the community by a Navjote (an initiation ceremony)
[264] Sacred girdle woven with 72 strands of wool to represent the 72 chapters of the Yasna, a holy book
[265] A white linen scarf worn to cover a Parsi woman's hair
[266] Dr. Kurush Dalal, second interview by author, 22 June, 2022, 10:00-12:00

Zarathustra, among little shrines with a small *divo*[267] burning brightly in a corner of the room. Sometimes these shrines were relegated to the bedroom, the most private space of all. Often, I would hear the chant of the Parsi prayers, *Ashem Vohu* and *Yatha Ahu Vairyo* emanate from another room. "This is without a doubt a Parsi Colony, even if others are now living here", said the revered priest Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia to me while we were in conversation in his office at the Dadar Athornan Institute — a school that trains young Parsi boys to become priests, located in the heart of the Colony. Karanjia was making a reference to Mumbai's famed Parsi *baugs*, or gated communities contained by walls and exclusive only to Parsis. *Parsipanu*, or the Parsi way of life, was still alive and well here, even as the walls of the Colony remained non-existent and Parsi numbers continued to dwindle in the city. It is in this way that the residents of the Dadar Parsi Colony constitute it as a distinctively Parsi space, that is, with their daily rituals, tasks and beliefs, and of course, their traversals through the space itself.

Thus far, this thesis has focused mainly on the processes and people that brought the Dadar Parsi Colony into being with their planning and enterprise. I have analysed their designs for this middle-class ethnic enclave and discussed how they came to fruition. I now turn to the lived experiences of the people in the Colony, emphasising, as Michel de Certeau does in his seminal work *The Practice of Everyday Life*, the position of the "walker". He posits that the planner or the technocrat, who views the city through their "solar eye, looking down like a god" remains detached from the space of the city. Their position as voyeurs allows them to "read" the city, but by that same token, disallows them from "writing" its space.[268] It is the practice of the 'walker' who transforms static place into space by imbibing it with meaning with their

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[267] A small glass lamp with a wick that burns over oil, and sometimes a combination of oil and water depending on the financial status of the family. I saw more oil than water in most homes.
[268] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall, Berkeley: University of California Press,1984, p. 92

"swarming activity".[269] The 'walker' does this as a "practitioner" of the city, writing meaning into its physical form through their daily activities.[270] The residents of Dadar Parsi Colony, by walking and living in its space, have imbibed it with meaning that distinguishes it from other spaces, similar or otherwise, in the city. To walk the Colony as a visitor and researcher was to observe a part of the construction of this space in real time, and to behold it come to life in very real terms.

The Space of the Home

In the same corollary as the walker 'writing' space is the notion that the walker's memories inform this process. As Doreen Massey argues, "The identity of places is very much bound up with the histories which are told of them, how those histories are told, and which history turns out to be dominant".[271] Where there are people there are memories, and how a space is remembered in the past tells us much about not only the identity of the space itself but the people that occupy it. How spaces are collectively remembered by particular groups often binds those groups together.[272] Furthermore, as Maurice Halbwachs notes, when a collective comes to occupy a space, they mould that space to their own image, making it their own.[273] The spatial landscape they come to occupy then, becomes a palimpsest of collective memory and identity. The urban artifacts that are created out of these processes are therefore the result of a complex interaction between the city, its dwellers (or walkers), their memories and their identity.[274] Collective memory etches itself on the cityscape and it is these processes that colour not just the city's past but also its present. This process that is embodied in the scale of the city and

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[269] de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, p. 96
[270] de Certeau, *Everyday Life*, p. 93
[271] Doreen Massey, "Places and Their Pasts." *History Workshop Journal*, no. 39, 1995, p. 186
[272] Mark Crinson, *Urban Memory: History and amnesia in the modern city*, London: New York: Routledge, 2005, p. xiii
[273] Maurice Halbwachs, "La Mémoire Collective" quoted in Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982, p. 130
[274] Ibid.

neighbourhood begins, of course, at the scale of the home. This is not to imply that there are clear distinctions between the public and the private in the Colony — the practices and rituals in public inevitably spill over into the private and vice–versa. There is an implicit uncertainty in where one draws the line between the two. However, I focus on the category of the home here because domestic practice and memories of the home constitute much of the core practices and hierarchies one displays in society.[275] Domestic practices are inextricably linked to social and cultural practices and performances in the public sphere. One derives meaning from the other in syncretic ways. To understand the neighbourhood of the Dadar Parsi Colony is to therefore understand the daily lives of its residents and this begins at the scale of the home.

As Elizabeth LaCouture displays in her study of Tianjin's Chinese middle-class elites, analysing the memories of everyday living of the Parsis reveals the "individual gendered and classed subjectivities" of the community.[276] The space of the home becomes an integral site in the formation of community identity, and by extension, provides us with a glimpse of what it meant to be a middle-class Parsi living in Bombay in the early 20th century. The colonial domestic renders itself as an important site for examination because it was here that notions of class as well as negotiations with colonial modernity played out to their fullest. The home was also a site of resistance to colonial enterprise. If the public and the global was where imperialism had subjugated non-European peoples, the home, according to Indian nationalists, was where this power had failed. To them, the inner identity of "the East" remained sovereign and "master of its own fate".[277] However, the Parsi community was one that prided itself on its anglicisation, and the Parsi home was not necessarily a sanctuary for tradition in its truest sense. Parsi customs

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[275] Peter Saunders and Peter Williams, "The constitution of the home: Towards a research agenda", *Housing Studies*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1988, p. 82

[276] Elizabeth LaCouture, *Dwelling in the World : Family, House, and Home in Tianjin, China, 1860–1960*, Columbia University Press, 2021, p. 4

[277] Partha Chatterjee, The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 121.

and rituals did evolve within the space of the home, and the home was a place where Parsi identity was preserved. However, the Parsi home was also a site where colonial modernity was constantly negotiated with and where the results of these negotiations manifested.[278] A home in the Dadar Parsi Colony thus becomes a "site and an artefact"[279], where performances of class and social positions come into being.[280] Parsi middle-classness, which included negotiations with colonial modernity as the previous chapter has demonstrated, was conspicuously performed within the space of the home. The home is therefore a site where Parsi notions of class, gender, religiosity and domesticity play out, all within the purview of the colonial context in which they lived.

Building a Parsi Home

As early as the middle of the 19th century, Parsi writers such as D.F. Karaka noted changes in the ways in which urban Parsis in Bombay dwelled. Karaka was an Indian newspaper writer and public figure whose seminal work on the history and manners of the Parsis would become an authoritative text on the subject. Karaka was deeply sentimental about the thriving relationship the Parsis had cultivated with the British, and was a great admirer of the British Raj. Nonetheless, his text contains some of the only descriptions of Parsi dwellings at the time, and these descriptions of evince the ways in which Parsis negotiated colonial modernity at the level of the home. I use Karaka's work in abundance in the following paragraphs because his history of the Parsis was also reflective of the ways in which he believed the Parsis saw themselves as a community, and much of what he wrote rang true of the Parsis living in the 20th century as well.

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[278] Antoinette Burton, Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 9
[279] Jordan Sand, *House and Home In Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880-1930.* Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Asia Center, 2005, p. 1
[280] Sand, *House and Home*, p. 3

Karaka emphasised the impact of colonialism on the Parsi domestic, and even lauded the Parsi willingness to adopt to European customs and manners with great fervour. Karaka wrote that Parsi life could be increasingly described as "half European and half Hindu", with the Parsis adopting English customs increasingly by the day.[281] Prior to this, Parsi homes were described as "small and dark" as well as sparse with "little furniture".[282] The changes that took place in the Parsi home were a matter of pride to Karaka, and an indicator that the Parsis were advancing in their social and cultural standing in a colonised milieu. One of the foremost indicators of this progress to him was the fact that Parsis were now dwelling in homes that were built in "good taste" and were "admirably ventilated".[283] What he implies here is twofold — first, that the Parsis were increasingly living in dwellings built along European lines. Second, these dwellings also incorporated European notions of hygiene which were, according to Karaka, superior to dwellings built on local lines. Ventilation, as Chapter 1 has demonstrated, was an important sanitary component in European homes in India, where the fear of "miasmas" or disease-carrying foul air was widespread.

The period in which Karaka wrote was at least 40 years prior to the outbreak of the Bombay plague of 1896. This goes to show that Parsis were readily willing to adopt the physical schemas on which European homes were built well before there was a sense of urgency associated with sanitary housing reforms in Bombay due to the outbreak of the plague. It should be noted however, that at this period of time, these physical changes to the home were adapted at first by the wealthier among the Parsis, who could afford to build new houses along these lines.

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[281] Dosabhoy Framjee Karaka, *The Parsees: their History, Manners, Customs and Religion*, London: Bombay: Smith and Taylor Co., 1858, p. 70
[282] Gooloo H. Sahiar, *Social Change with particular reference to the Parsi Community*, Phd Diss., University of Bombay, 1955, p. 159
[283] Karaka, *The Parsees, their History*, p. 71

Karaka explicitly mentions "villas and garden houses" in his work, indicating that this paradigm shift was relegated to the wealthier classes at the time.[284] However, this willingness to adapt to European notions of domestic design displays the aspirations of the wealthy among Parsi community, and would eventually come to define aspirations among their middle-classes. These changes in dwelling which involved a move towards European building typologies were slowly adopted by other Parsis such as those dwelling in the Dadar Parsi Colony in the post-plague period. Middle-class Parsis therefore aspired to possess houses of their own in which emulated European ideals of hygiene and sanitation and did indeed build these houses in enclaves like the Dadar Parsi Colony when they could afford to. As mentioned in the previous chapter, they did so with the assistance of wealthier Parsis who often contributed to funds that went towards building residences for poor and middle-class Parsis. This is especially true in the case of the Dadar Parsi Colony, where a large number of apartment buildings were erected as a result of charitable donations from wealthy Parsis such as the Albless family.[285] Thus, the Parsis began to adopt European norms in building homes as early as the 19th century and continued to do so well into the 20th century. A degree of focus was paid to the fact that Parsi dwellings must be "sanitary", being as healthful as possible, and especially so in the years after the plague.[286] It was a combination of the Parsi willingness to adopt to European modes of dwelling, the aspirations of the middle-classes, and the issue of the plague itself that led to homes such as those in the Dadar Parsi Colony being built. The houses in the Dadar Parsi Colony, were therefore dwellings that followed European paradigms of health and sanitation, much like the homes of their wealthier predecessors.

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[284] Ibid.
[285] Report of the Parsi Central Association Co-operative Housing Society Ltd. for the year ending 31st March, 1927, p. 1
[286] "CONGESTION IN BOMBAY: RESIDENCIES FOR POOR PARSIS", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, December 21,1909, p. 10.

Inside a Parsi Home

The transformations and deliberate constructions that took place on the exterior of Parsi homes also made their way into their interiors. The way in which Parsi homes were decorated underwent tremendous changes as well. Karaka notes these changes, again, with a sense of pride. Where rooms were previously bare, they were now decorated with European style furnishings and chandeliers, their walls adorned with "landscape and historical pictures" that were undoubtedly also European in subject and in style. Indeed, the Westernised interiors of Parsi homes play a prominent part in how they are remembered and even how they are preserved. Boman Desai, in a semi-fictionalised family memoir, notes that the walls in his grandmother's house in Bombay were bedecked with prints of "Watteaus, Fragonards, Constables and Turners"[287], all of which were illuminated by the dim light of a chandelier that hung from the ceiling of the room.[288] I encountered these norms of decoration in the houses I visited in the Parsi Colony as well. Take for example, Zareen Engineer's home, which had been preserved in the form in which it was when her family first moved into it. Here, I would sit under a conspicuous chandelier, surrounded by embossed cherubs laid as patterns in the ceiling. Similarly, a glass chandelier hung from the ceiling of Arnie Aderianwalla's home, in which she lived since she was born. Katie Bagli, a naturist and writer who had lived in the colony in her grandmother's home as a child and then later moved into the Colony herself, told me about how her husband enjoyed collecting antique clocks and furniture that was passed down from his great uncle and grandparents.[289] Furniture and fixtures, according to Dr. Kurush Dalal, were assets that were chosen with the utmost care in these homes.[290] What can be inferred from these particular examples of domestic materiality is that furnishings,

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[287] Boman Desai, *The Memory of Elephants*, Chicago: London: University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 93
[288] Desai, *The Memory of Elephants*, p. 95
[289] Katie Bagli, interview with the author, 15 April, 2022, 6:00-7:00
[290] Dr. Kurush Dalal, second interview with author, 22 June, 2022, 9:00-10:00

particularly Western ones, were consciously chosen, built to last, and treated as heirlooms in Parsi households. That they were treated as heirlooms at all indicates a level of preciousness and value attached to these furnishings in Parsi culture. Parsis therefore deeply cherished markers of modernity in their homes, and those living in the Dadar Parsi Colony were not an exception to this.

It must be noted here that the use of Western style furnishings and decorations such as the table and chair or the chandelier was not uncommon among middle-class people in Bombay in the 20th century, and was indeed prescribed among those who were not Parsi as well. Western style furnishings were generally associated with not only good taste, but also comfort and necessity.[291] The table and chair, for example, came to replace sitting on the floor for one's meals as a matter of convenience. However, that old Western style furnishing was an integral part of how Parsi homes in the Colony were decorated and remembered implies a deliberate emphasis on the way in which the Parsis in particular adopted Western modes of dwelling and materiality into their homes.

It must also be noted that whilst the Parsi domestic was a realm that was predominantly occupied by women, it was their husbands who most often chose the ways in which their homes would be decorated.[292] This too was common amongst middle-class people in Bombay. Writers of the domestic such as engineer R.S. Deshpande, for example, emphasised the fact that while a woman's opinions on the subject were important, the design and decoration of a house was primarily a man's domain, and worthy of his time and attention.[293] This was mainly the norm

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[291] Abigail McGowan, "The Materials of Home: Studying Domesticity in Late Colonial India", *The American Historical Review*, Volume 124, Issue 4, October 2019, p. 1312
[292] Perin Mistry, interview with the author, 20 April, 2022, 20:00-21:00 and Katie Bagli, interview with the author, 15 April, 2022, 6:00-7:00
[293] McGowan, "The Materials of Home", p. 1312

with a few exceptions, even in the Dadar Parsi Colony. Parsi homes in the Colony were then mainly furnished according to the dictums of middle-class men, and only sometimes representative of the tastes and choices of the women in the household. The home was a site where the divisions wrought by patriarchy endured. While men put in the intellectual labour of designing the home, women were tasked with the physical labour of maintaining it. Designing house and home was thus a political project — it engendered not only the aspirations of those designing it, but also functioned in the reproduction of social hierarchies that characterised the public into the space of the private.[294]

Recurrent performances within the space of the home imbued the domestic with meaning that was sustained in practice. Parsis engaged in practices and performances that bolstered their respectability in colonial society. These practices, otherwise known in anthropological terms as "rituals", were enacted time and time again within the space of the home.[295] Rituals in the Parsi home also saw a series of changes in the 19th and 20th centuries. One of the most important changes was wrought on commensality, or the practice of eating together. Karaka notes that Parsis initially ate "like the Hindus". They sat on the ground and partook from a large dish with food laid on it, which they ate on plantain leaves.[296] An advancement from this, Karaka states, was that the Parsis were increasingly taking to eating on a table and chair, with their meals laid out in the English manner.[297] Karaka also records that it was around the time of his writing that men and women had begun to dine together, as a family, as opposed to sitting separately at mealtimes.[298] This tradition continued into the 20th century, and Parsi families within the Colony, as well as outside it, ate together around a dining table with Western

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[294] LaCouture, *Dwelling in the World*, p. 155
[295] Irene Cieraad, "Introduction", in Irene Cieraad (ed.), *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006, p. 4
[296] Karaka, *The Parsees, their History*, pp. 71-72
[297] Karaka, *The Parsees, their History*, p. 73
[298] Ibid.

cutlery.[299] This was considered an enlightened and civilised mode of living, as opposed to the primitiveness of Indian segregation practices. Parsis breakfasted on eggs, butter, bread and tea, much like their colonisers.[300] Tea culture thrived among the Parsis as they were ardent adherents of Empire, even as the beverage was deemed a "foreign" commodity during India's burgeoning independence struggle when attempts to foster a domestic market for tea was met with hostility by colonised natives.[301] Among the Parsi middle-classes, tea was most often served in tea pots covered in tea cosies, with milk and sugar on the side.[302] The Parsi adoption of certain patterns of consumption was a way in which colonial modernity was negotiated with within the private space of the home. In heeding modes of colonial consumption, the Parsis sought to distinguish themselves from their colonised peers. This was also a way in which notions of respectability were strived for and adhered to within the space of the Parsi home.

The place of taste and the practice of music

Central to discourse of both design and commensality is therefore the discourse of taste. Leora Auslander in her study of France argues that taste is formed as "a complex interaction of desires for emulation, distinction, and solidarity."[303] This was no different in the case of the Parsis. Taste played a tremendous role in the formation of Parsi identity within the space of the Colony and the city of Bombay by extension. Taste, as Pierre Bourdieu puts it, also functions as a marker of class.[304] He points out that to consume a work of art or a piece of music requires the understanding, deciphering and cognition of a cultural code that is inherited by virtue of

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[299] Dr. Kurush Dalal, second interview with author, 22 June, 2022, 5:00-6:00. See also, Boman Desai and his description of how his grandmother from Navsari ate very differently from his grandmother in Bombay, the former eating primarily with her hands and the latter preferring a full table setting and eating with cutlery. Desai, *Memory of Elephants*, p. 96
[300] Karaka, *The Parsees, their History*, p. 72
[301] Philip Lutgendorf, "Making Tea in India: Chai, Capitalism, Culture." *Thesis Eleven*, 113, no. 1, December 2012, p. 13
[302] Desai, *Memory of Elephants*, p. 137
[303] Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996, p. 2
[304] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, translated by Richard Nice, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984, p. 2

class.[305] Whether deliberately or not, the way in which people consume cultural goods such as music fulfils a function of legitimising, establishing and instituting social differences.[306] The Parsis of the Dadar Parsi Colony and of Bombay emphasised, in great part, their affinity to Western style music. This too began amongst wealthier Parsis before it was adopted by Parsis of more modest means. Eckehard Kulke notes that the children of wealthier Parsis were taught to play the piano or the violin by their English governesses in the 19th century. Furthermore, evening parties were celebrated to the sounds of waltzes and operettas, as opposed to the "ugly and absurd" beats of native music.[307] In emphasising their inclination to European music, Parsis of the wealthier classes sought to once again distinguish themselves from their Indian peers, and attempted to put forth an image of a community more civilised than the rest.

The ability to play and appreciate Western music is therefore inextricably linked to the acquisition of cultural capital in a colonial milieu. The practice of leisure, or the way in which Parsis sought to practice and perform recreational activities within the space of the home was also intricately bound to these developments in taste. For example, Tehmina, a character in Rohinton Mistry's *Tales from Firozsha Baag[308]* sways to the music of Strauss's 'The Blue Danube' in the space of her home, which brings to her mind the "simpler times" in which Parsis were respected regardless of their class disposition by those who lived outside their enclaves. She admits that even though her neighbours were bothersome to her, they had fantastic taste in music, and never played the "senseless and monotonous Hindi-film songs" that often blared from some other flats around in the Parsi housing society.[309] The residents of the Dadar Parsi Colony were not exceptions but examples of this paradigm of taste in music as well. It does in

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[305] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 3
[306] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 7
[307] Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change.* New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1974, p. 107
[308] Mistry uses a spelling of *baug* that is not common practice. I continue to use the usual *baug* when not referring to his work.
[309] Rohinton Mistry,*Tales from Firozsha Baag*, London: Faber and Faber, 1992, p. 37

fact loom quite large in their memories of life in the Colony. Zareen Engineer shared an endearing memory of the way in which Mancherji Joshi's family would come together to play music as a leisurely activity. The women sat at pianos and the men played violins whilst they all sang Western music together.[310] She tells me about how Mancherji Joshi himself would play the piano to relax after a long day of work, listening to the residents of the Colony come to him with their complaints.[311] When asked about the sort of music they were playing and singing as a family however, Engineer said that she does not remember precisely what songs, but they were of the "semi-classical" nature.[312] This is interesting, because what it implied to me was that Engineer and her family were likely playing popular music, because they were singing these songs as opposed to simply playing them on instruments. The fact that popular music was remembered as 'classical' or 'semi-classical' suggests that middle-class aspirations that placed importance on markers of civility were present in the memories of the residents of the Colony as well. Aspiration loomed large in their remembrances. This was often belied, but presented itself in conspicuous ways such as the details in Engineer's stories. Katie Bagli, on the other hand, points to an upright piano in a corner of her living room and tells me about how music played an important part in the lives of many Parsis.[313] She enthusiastically told me about the way in which her grandmother, who first settled in the Colony, played the piano. The tradition was kept alive by her husband who, notably to her, played mostly Western classical music. She told me that they both enjoyed the opera together at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai rather often.[314] To me, this was an explicit indication of the pervasiveness that markers of sophistication had in Parsi lives. Going to the opera was presented as an expression of superior taste and civility, and that this was inextricably associated with

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[310] Zareen Engineer, second interview with author, 13 April, 2022, 05:00-06:00
[311] Zareen Engineer, second interview with author, 13 April, 2022, 06:00-07:00
[312] Ibid.
[313] Katie Bagli, interview with the author, 15 April, 2022, 07:00-08:00
[314] Katie Bagli, interview with the author, 15 April, 2022, 08:00-09:00

being Parsi was telling of the ways in which Parsi middle-class aspirations remained prevalent in the present day. The acquisition and retention of cultural capital vis-a-vis the process of enjoying particular styles of music therefore was, and remains, integral to Parsi notions of class and identity.

Western music was enjoyed outside the space of the home and within Colony limits as well. The neighbourhood would often come together to watch a Navy Band perform at the bandstand in the Five Gardens. Rutton Dubash, a 93-year-old resident of the Colony, remembers rushing out of his home with his family to watch the band play.[315] This memory was shared by Colony residents Kamu Iyer and Zareen Engineer too. While the band's performance was mainly a public one and open to all residents of Bombay, the memory of the band playing in the Parsi Colony is attributed in these memories to the Parsis more readily accepting not only Western music but Western style bandstand performances of music as well.[316] Furthermore, this notion was relayed to me by Kamu Iyer, a Hindu resident of one of the non-covenanted houses in the Parsi Colony. It may therefore be noted that the idea that Parsis in the Colony were more anglicised than other residents in the neighbourhood was one shared by its non-Parsi residents as well. It was thus through the medium of music and taste for Western music that the Parsis, both within and outside the Colony, formed a substantial part of their middle-class identity. Aspiration was indissolubly linked with consumption, and the ways in which Parsis consumed Western music demonstrates this.

The middle-class notion of thrift

Middle-class Parsis thus revelled in materiality, having embellished their homes with material goods and engaging in patterns of consumption that elevated and then maintained their social

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[315] Rutton Dubash, interview with the author, 22 January, 2020, 59:00-1:00:00
[316] Kamu Iyer, interview with the author, 20 January, 2020, 9:00-10:00

status. Consumption was inextricably tied to notions of respectability, and what was consumed whether in terms of home decor, food, art or music was an important factor in the construction of social status. However, coupled with the need to solidify one's status with material goods, there was a simultaneous and conscious understanding that one should not live beyond ones means. The notion of thrift, or prudence with one's resources, was also a distinctive value among the middle-classes. If aspiration was key to the Parsi middle-class experience, thrift and saving money in parts is what made it possible. As Prashant Kidambi points out, thrift did not necessitate abstinence from the material altogether. It only called for distinguishing between what was a necessity and what was a luxury.[317] Furthermore, the invocation of thrift had moral connotations as well, and while it was recognised that material consumption was integral to the middle-classes, it was also a modern construct that one needed to be wary of.[318]

Notions of thrift were linked to the awareness that while conforming to colonial modernity was desirable and even necessary, it had made everyday living more expensive. Consider the case of Soonamai Desai, a woman from Navsari whose memoirs convey the life of a middle-class Parsi woman in colonial India. The town of Navsari in Gujarat was located around 250 kilometres away from Bombay. It was rather different from Bombay in that it was not a thriving industrial metropolis, but was a rather large city nonetheless. It was, at a time, one of the principal settlements of the Parsis on the western coast of India. Soonamai briefly moved to Bombay after she was married to support her husband's career in law, and spent much of her time in Bombay practicing thrift to make ends meet,[319] despite her martial and generational wealth which placed her squarely within the category of the middle-class. The fact that the

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[317] Prashant Kidambi, "Consumption, Domestic Economy, and the Idea of the 'Middle Class' in Colonial Bombay", in Sanjay Joshi (ed.), *The Middle Class in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 145

[318] Kidambi, "Consumption, Domestic Economy", p. 149

[319] Aban Mukherji and Vera Desai (eds.), Soonamai Desai of Navsari: A Biographical and Autobiographical Sketch, Mumbai: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 2007, p. 45

majority of Soonamai's life was lived out in Navsari poses a legitimate critique to my use of her memoirs in this chapter. However, it must also be noted that experiences Bombay's modernity was, as Rajnarayan Chandavarkar points out, constituted by a complex interplay of the experiences of those who came to the city from elsewhere and maintained their ties to their homes in other parts of the subcontinent.[320] I use Soonamai's experiences as a middle-class Parsi living in Navsari whilst analysing colonial modernity in Bombay here because of these connections. It was the experiences and aspirations of people like Soonamai that were brought to the city by their migration and characterised its modernity.

We now return to Soonamai's preoccupation with thrift. Through the vast majority of her memoirs, Soonamai emphasises her willingness to save and make do with a small budget for consumption. This did not mean that Soonamai was not in possession of money. "I could have lived lavishly, but my husband and I both had simple habits", said Soonamai.[321] She clung to these habits steadfastly, much to the disdain of her middle-class friends and relatives who accused her of being "stingy".[322] Her persistence was so great, that in writing her character as 'Bapaiji' in his semi-fictional family memoir, Boman Desai emphasises her penchant for thrift as one of her foremost qualities. Bapaiji states with disbelief, "I saw the first electric lights, the first engine trains, the first motor cars, but none of them astounded me as much as inflation". Soonamai's middle-classness was therefore heavily characterised by the notion that there is virtue in living a simple life, and that modernity brought with it habits that were unsustainable and indeed, astonishing to the average middle-class person.

[320] Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *History, Culture and the Indian City*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 15-16
[321] Mukherji and Desai, *Soonamai*, p. 18
[322] Ibid.

Soonamai's insistence on living a simple lifestyle belies several facts — the first and foremost, being that her lifestyle did indeed incorporate luxuries that may be attributed to middle-class living. Soonamai employed servants throughout her long life. She lived a thriving public life, access to which would have been immensely difficult had she been working-class in a city like Navsari.[323] She travelled to Europe in 1931 and wrote extensively on her experiences in foreign lands.[324] She spent a tremendous amount of money on the Navjote ceremonies of her grandsons, and "spent like a fountain" where it was required.[325] Furthermore, she was in possession of enough money to send her son to Edinburgh for his higher education; a tremendous luxury in pre-independence India.[326] She attributed her ability to carry out all these endeavours to her thrifty habits, and believed she was able to live the life she did because of the money she had saved as a person who valued the quality of thrift above all else.[327]

The notion that thrift, and living within one's means was an essential prerequisite to the middle-class experience is not limited to Soonamai's example alone. In my interactions with residents of the Colony, I came across people who were of the staunch belief that they lived frugally whilst they were growing up and were of modest means. This was regardless of the fact that they came from relative privilege, employed servants, and had family members who were sent to study abroad. I encountered this during my conversation with Perin Mistry, an elderly lady with the warmest and most welcoming disposition. Perin had seven siblings, two of which had left India to study in London. Perin began to work immediately after school, having been cognisant of the fact that her father had spent a tremendous amount of money to send her siblings to foreign lands for their education.[328] It must be noted however that while Perin had

[323] Mukherji and Desai, *Soonamai*, pp. 57-61
[324] Mukherji and Desai, *Soonamai*, p. 17
[325] Desai, *Memory of Elephants*, p. 79
[326] Mukherji and Desai, *Soonamai*, p. 52
[327] Desai, *Memory of Elephants*, p. 76
[328] Perin Mistry, interview with the author, 20 April, 2022, 8:00-9:00

a large family and notes that she came from modest means, her family history attests to a lifestyle that was distinctively middle-class. That is to say, Perin's family maintained markers of middle-classness including spending on patterns that maintained their status as middle-class, but were simultaneously concerned with their financial position and encouraged thrift and enterprise to maintain this position. The duality of consumption linked to aspiration and frugality is thus a predominantly middle-class disposition, and can be noted in the histories of the lives of those who lived within the Dadar Parsi Colony as well.

The employment of servants

While middle-class Parsis tried to save money through thrift, they also spent money through the employment of servants. This was an integral component to the constitution of middle-class identity among the Parsis both within and outside of the Dadar Parsi Colony. This may also be linked to middle-class aspirations, because it was with the employment of servants that members of the middle-class were able to concretise their social standing. Brian P. Owensby notes the dualistic and paradoxical nature that characterises the category of the middle-class. They worried about their incomes, and yet spent on material goods so that they could maintain their status in society. They also aspired to equality with the wealthy and still demanded deference from those less privileged than them.[329] The household becomes a microcosmic site where these dualities and paradoxes play out. An important element in the constitution of the middle-class in the Parsi Colony was thus the institution of domestic servitude. This is not limited to the Colony or the Parsis, and as Raya Ray and Seemin Qayum point out in their study of Kolkata, the institution of domestic servitude acted as a "bedrock" upon which middle and upper-class Indian households were managed. The management of servants, in turn, was an essential prerequisite in the "modern" household, which was managed by an increasingly

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[329] Brian P. Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-class lives in Brazil*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 9

"modernising Indian elite".[330] Cultures of servitude normalise hierarchies in society wherein social relations of domination and subordination permeate through both, the private and thus the public.[331]

At the heart of these hierarchies lie the relationship between the employer and the servant. These relationships were not only present, but certain in middle-class Parsi households. What all the residents I interviewed had in common was the presence of servants in their households, both in the past and in the present. Servants, mostly women, enacted the vast majority of domestic rituals, while the 'lady of the house' supervised these chores. Katie Bagli recalls that her grandmother, who lived in the colony, had a servant whom she would observe from a "comfortable chair" in the kitchen, whilst the latter conducted her daily labours.[332] Similarly, Perin Mistry, whose parents were forced to live 'frugally', employed one, and sometimes two servants to carry out housework.[333] The presence of servants in day-to-day Parsi life has been noted by the chroniclers of the community in their fiction. Servants, whilst important members of a household, occupied only certain spaces within a home. Rohinton Mistry writes that living as servant meant living "close to the floor after serving (them) at the dining table".[334] Boman Desai on the other hand, writes of a servant squatting in the corridor of a living room after serving the protagonist's grandmother and her companion tea.[335] Having finished their chores, servants were only allowed to occupy the liminal spaces of a home, if they were allowed to occupy the home at all.[336] Commensality at the dining table was reserved for members of the family, and servants often dined in the kitchen or in the corridors of a house. Servants of Parsis

[330] Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum, *Cultures of Servitude: Modernity, Domesticity and Class in India*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 2
[331] Ray and Qayum, *Cultures of Servitude*, p. 3
[332] Katie Bagli, interview with the author, 15 April, 2022, 16:00-17:00
[333] Perin Mistry, interview with the author, 20 April, 2022, 22:00-23:00
[334] Mistry, *Firozsha Baag*, p. 51
[335] Desai, *Memory of Elephants*, p. 137
[336] Mistry, *Firozsha Baag*, p. 51

were often called *dubras*, *dubris* or *gangas*. This was a practice of othering that ensured the subsistence of social hierarchies within the space of the home. What may hence be inferred from all of the above was that servants, however important in the daily lives of Parsis within and outside the Colony, were kept in their place. This is regardless of the fact that a point of Parsi pride is that they treat those with lesser means than them with the utmost care and respect, owing to the Parsi virtues of charity and kindness. Domestic relationships in Parsi households were marked by persistent social hierarchies which were seldom ever transgressed. These domestic relationships, in turn, lent themselves to the characterisation of Parsi households in their everyday functioning.

"Cleanliness is Parsiness"

Among the other services they provided, servants were mainly employed in the Parsi household to keep it clean. Another Parsi virtue that was, and continues to be held in high regard within the space of the Colony is that of cleanliness. Cleanliness was associated with class too, and to be clean was to distinguish oneself from the working-classes of the city who, while employed in the household, were considered unclean. In describing a Parsi home to me, the elderly Arnie Aderianwalla said, "they are very neat and clean. They are very well decorated and updated".[337] In addition to Parsi homes being sites for negotiations of colonial modernity in their adornment, they were also sites where age-old religious customs had taken on new meaning. Parsi notions of cleanliness were heavily drawn from Zoroastrian laws of purity and pollution. As one of *Ahura-Mazda's* foremost creations, the Zoroastrian body was to be kept conscientiously clean at all times.[338] Purity having been regarded as a virtue therefore meant that avoiding ritual uncleanness was ascribed a tremendous degree of importance among

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[337] Arnie Aderianwalla, interview with the author, 20 April, 2022, 05:00-06:00
[338] Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, London: Routledge, 1979, p. 43

Zoroastrians.[339] These notions naturally extended to the space of the home, and the Parsi home was to be kept scrupulously clean at all times. These practices translated into the daily lives of modern Parsis, who saw the cleanliness of the home as a virtue to be upheld as followers of the Zoroastrian religion.

The ways in which the space of the Dadar Parsi Colony was remembered also reveal the degree of importance the quality of cleanliness was granted in everyday Parsi lives. Residents of the Colony often said that the reason their families moved to the neighbourhood and appreciated it as much as they did was that it was 'clean', and consequently different from other neighbourhoods in Bombay. Everyday activities in the neighbourhood were remembered as rituals carried out to keep the neighbourhood clean. One resident I encountered in conversation on the street said as a point of pride, "our roads were cleaned all the time, a cart used to traverse the Colony with water flowing from it to clean the roads". It was in my interaction with Rutton Dubash that I later learned that this was carried out to keep the dust from the macadam roads of the Colony at bay, and not necessarily as a measure to keep the Colony clean.[340] However, the manner in which this activity was remembered in the Colony demonstrates the manner in which Parsi notions of cleanliness extended outside of the home into the space of the neighbourhood as well. To be clean was to be Parsi, and to be Parsi was to be clean. The neighbourhood was characterised as a Parsi neighbourhood because it was kept clean, and there was a sense of exceptionalism that permeated through this idea as well. The Dadar Parsi Colony and the homes within it were thus deemed quintessentially Parsi because they were kept 'clean', in a city where cleanliness was not often observed.

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[339] Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, p. 45
[340] Rutton Dubash, interview with the author, 22 January, 2020, 32:00-33:00

Evolving notions of religiosity

Cleanliness was just one example of the way the daily practices of middle-class Parsis which were tied to class were also tied to religion. Religion and religiosity played an important role in the everyday life of Parsis who dwelled in the Colony. Other than its cleanliness, one of the foremost reasons that the Dadar Parsi Colony is recognised as a Parsi space is the presence of an *agiary* in its vicinity. The Rustom Framna Agiary, established in 1928, lies at a corner of crossroads on Mancherji Joshi Road and is frequented by Parsis who live within and outside the Colony as well. Zareen Engineer recollects that her grandfather, the founder of the Colony, had the *agiaryi* built in a bid to attract Parsis from the Fort and its surrounding areas to the suburbs where the Colony was established.[341] The importance that the erection of the *agiary* held to founders and founding residents of the Colony implies that performing religiosity was a significant aspect in Parsi day-to-day life. Aspects of religious life made their way into the Parsi home as well, and Parsi homes in other parts of the city were built with *chuhlavatis*, or small hearths tended to by women where a holy fire would burn within the house.[342] However, this element of the Parsi household was conspicuously missing from all the flats I visited in the Colony, which implied that religious practices within the Colony were evolving around the time that the Colony was established. These homes always possessed a shrine, as mentioned in the introductory paragraphs of this chapter, but never a *chulhavati*. Material indicators of religiosity that were built into the home were thus notably absent in the space of a neighbourhood that was deemed characteristically Parsi. This suggests that religiosity was practiced in other ways within the space of the homes the Colony as the Parsis adopted more modern means of dwelling. A *divo*, or an oil lamp, served the religious purposes of keeping a fire burning in the space of the home whilst being categorically easier to maintain in a more modern setup such as the apartment.

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[341] Zareen Engineer, first interview with author, 11 January, 2020, 11:00-12:00
[342] Farrokh Jijina, interview with the author, 16 April, 2022, 18:00–19:00

I noticed markers of the personalisation of religion above all else in the homes of those I visited in the Colony. Most of the elderly residents I met in the neighbourhood insisted that they were indeed religious and staunchly Parsi. They acknowledged that the presence of an *agiary* in the Colony was indeed important and even essential to them. However, by that same token, they acknowledged that most of their prayers were conducted within the space of the home itself. Armaity Tirandaz, for example, insisted on her position as a steadfast follower of the Parsi religion, who prays every day but carries out these prayers mostly within the space of her home.[343] There was also an admittance that the previous generation of Parsis, the parents and grandparents of the elderly, were more religious than they.[344] This former generation not only prayed through the day but regularly carried out Parsi rituals of purification, such as the untying and retying of the *kusti* or sacred girdle after every visit to the toilet.[345] These practices were not followed by the vast majority of the older Parsis I interviewed in the Colony. However, this did not mean that the current residents of the Colony whom I had spoken with identified as any less Parsi than their forebearers. The change in these practices implies two things — first, that religious practices within the Colony were increasingly centred within the space of the home despite the importance of the *agiary* in the neighbourhood. Second, that these practices had evolved as Parsis in the neighbourhood modernised, and adapted to notions of modernity which saw the personalisation of religion as a result. It was thus that religious practice evolved and continues to evolve within the space of the Dadar Parsi Colony.

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[343] Armaity Tirandaz, interview with the author, 13 April, 2022, 19:00-20:00
[344] Mithoo Jesia, interview with the author, 22 April, 2022, 34:00-35:00
[345] Perin Mistry, interview with the author, 20 April, 2022, 39:00-40:00

Exclusion and "nuisances"

Thus far, this chapter has considered the practices, rituals and people that were integral to life in the Dadar Parsi Colony. However, those elements that the residents of the Colony sought to exclude also reveal not just people, but practices that were unwelcomed or 'did not belong' within the space of the Parsi Colony. Considering these so-called "nuisances" are important, because in willing their absence, the residents of the Colony indirectly demonstrated those elements which they desired as part of their neighbourhood. For instance, any gathering that was considered "noisy" or a disturbance to the peace and quiet in the neighbourhood was deemed undesirable. Writing to the Times of India in 1930, Mancherji Joshi stated that it was for the "healthiness and the quiet surroundings of the garden colony" that Parsi people had come to the area.[346] Joshi was widely considered a spokesperson for the Colony by its residents. It vexed him that the serenity of his surroundings were being disturbed by "beggars and hawkers", as well as Congress workers with their slogans of "*Swaraj lengey*"[347]. Joshi went so far as to denounce these "nuisances" as a threat to the "health" of the residents in the Colony.[348] Among these, the "hawker nuisance" was deemed "somewhat a necessity", as the residents of the Colony required hawkers to meet their daily needs in the Colony, which was, at the time, still rather isolated by way of being in the suburbs of the city.[349] Beggars were considered 'dirty' and indecent, and their presence was distasteful to the middle-class dwellers and walkers of the Colony.

What these examples demonstrate is a categoric will to exclude and debar all which was deemed undesirable to an idyllic Parsi life within the space of the Colony. Beggars, hawkers, and even

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[346] M.E. Joshi, "OUR READERS' VIEWS: NOISY BOMBAY THE BEGGAR NUISANCE TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES OF INDIA."." *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, July 26, 1930, p. 17
[347] "We will take our independence"
[348] M.E. Joshi, "OUR READERS' VIEWS", *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, p. 17
[349] Ibid.

Congress workers were all examples of elements that disturbed the bucolic nature of the Colony. In this corollary, it may therefore be inferred that what was desired within the Dadar Parsi Colony was a setup of quiet idyll, that was clean and respectable, as were its middle-class residents. A model middle-class Colony not only included those who practiced civility and gentility in very specific ways, but excluded those who did not practice these virtues in the same manner. The aspiration of living in a model space meant that this space had to be constituted without elements that were considered distasteful to the average middle-class person who valued their image above all else. Anything that was antithetical to these very particular values that the residents of the Colony associated with middle-class *Parsipanu* was unwelcome in its space.

Conclusion

It is in displaying aspiration, patterns of consumption and practices of exclusion that remembrances of the Colony as well as the history of its material culture come to characterise its space as a middle-class Parsi ethnic enclave in great measure. These sites and rituals, which are bound to the domestic but extend to the public, are integral in its characterisation. The home thus stands as a "site and artefact" where these rituals embed themselves, awaiting chroniclers to decode their texts. Memories of the Colony thus subsist a peculiar lifestyle that is, perhaps almost paradoxically, constantly in the making whilst tremendously tied to older ways of Parsi life in the city. This is not the only paradox that marks the Colony — whether it is the duality of consumption and frugality, or the notion that one must keep servants whilst working towards the emancipation of the poor, or even the tension between seemingly modern and older ways of living and dwelling, the 'walkers' and dwellers of the Parsi Colony live in the grasp of dualisms that are complementary and contradictory all at once. These modes of living

not only persist in the memories of those residing in the Colony, but in their contemporary day-to-day lives as well.

Conclusion

Bombay, now Mumbai, has changed dramatically in the years since the establishment of the Dadar Parsi Colony. What was then a suburb of the city in the north now lies at its heart, and this has had lasting implications on its spatial character as well. Dadar Parsi Colony's Wikipedia page describes the space as an "upper class Parsi colony in midtown South Mumbai".[350] This description is not only an indicator of the changes that have been wrought on Colony, but also an insinuation of the fact that its spatial character is no longer the same as it was in pre-Independence India. As the city has expanded, the value of properties in the Colony increased and this had an impact on which Parsis can reside there. The greenery and beauty of the space certainly adds to the inflated price of real estate in the neighbourhood. Those who do not have family homes in the Colony that were bought several decades ago but still choose to stay there are undoubtedly of a wealthier disposition. "Those are all rich Parsis, how can you call them middle-class", said Dara Tavadia, my grand-uncle and a longtime resident of the Khetwadi area in Grant Road. Grant Road is still home to many poorer and middle-class Parsis, who are certainly less well off than those living in Dadar. It is known for its crowded and winding streets which serve as a poignant dissimilarity to the verdant orderliness of the Dadar Parsi Colony. It is worthwhile to note, however, that perhaps in the most middle-class way of all, those residing in the Colony do not quite see themselves as immensely privileged, even as the material value of their homes has increased exponentially. Here also lies the notion that despite their aspirations of gentility, the older Parsis living in the neighbourhood cling to a way of life that has long since endured the markers of change.

The current generation of people residing in the Colony also strive to preserve its Parsi character in ways that they know best. Megha Shah's article on the Colony in Verve Magazine demonstrates this notion. Much like their forebearers who placed a great degree of emphasis on cleanliness, they actively collaborate with municipal bodies to rid the Colony of garbage and any unwanted and unwelcome elements that are noisy or

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[350] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dadar_Parsi_Colony#cite_note-1 I am using the Wikipedia description here as an indication of popular perception, and not as a necessarily factual statement.

disrupt the peace of the space. They now use social media to carry out these activities, and maintain a close

relationship with their locally elected Corporators to see their endeavours to fruition.[351] Cleanliness thus

remains important in the space and is maintained with a modicum of Parsiness. These efforts to preserve the

Colony in a specific way do not come without its difficulties. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis,

the Dadar Parsi Colony remains a contentious neighbourhood in the city to date. Its residents were most

recently embroiled in a legal battle that occupied front-page news and spanned half a decade in the Mumbai

courts, concerning the re-development of covenanted properties in the Colony. The late Rustom Tirandaz

said to a news reporter in 2007, "as long as the Parsi Colony was a Parsi colony everything was hunky-dory.

Now the Parsis have gone broke and they are selling out to outsiders keen to commercially exploit the

tranquility and peace of this area".[352] Tirandaz echoed the feelings of many residents of the Parsi Colony, who

believed that it was best that it stay closed to developers, lest its character be disturbed. The courts upheld the

covenant, and decreed that these flats were to stay privy to Parsis only, effectively upholding the exclusivity

which was built into the Colony at its establishment.[353] "They're especially wary of developers, so don't be

taken aback if someone asks you why you're taking photographs in the Colony", said Kayomi Engineer,

Zareen Engineer's daughter-in-law and administrator of the precinct's Instagram page. The suspicion of

outsiders looms large in their utopia, and the Parsis of the Colony fight hard to protect it from them.

A form of this suspicion of outsiders made its way into my interactions with the residents of the Colony as

well. It would be remiss of me to not reflect on them here. My unique position as a half-Parsi was viewed with

both curiosity and sometimes, contempt, but mostly with an initial sense of apprehension that dissipated

after some conversation. Some wondered why I had chosen to study Parsis at all, and dodged speaking to me

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[351] Megha Shah, "The Dadar Parsi Colony's Design Embodies The Ideals Of A Community In Pursuit Of Perfectionism", *Verve Magazine*, July 22, 2019
[352] Sunil Nair, "PARSI ENCLAVE: SKYLINE SEES UPS AND DOWNS." *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, October 03, 2007, p. 7
[353] Nauzer Bharucha, "Dadar Parsi Colony to Stay 'Exclusive'." *The Times of India (1861-2010)*, December 24, 2009, p. 1

until another Parsi had vouched for my integrity. Others offered their opinions on inter-marriages, even when it was not a subject I had intended to breach in my interviews at all. Still others probed into the specific circumstances that led to my parent's marriage, only to express their discontent at the same. Some interviews were not pleasant experiences, even if they were very illuminating regarding Parsi life. Notwithstanding these experiences, I eventually built a great rapport with most of my interviewees, who likely took comfort in the fact that I related to the more Parsi of their experiences, or did not retaliate to their curious probing or subtle provocations. They invited me into their homes and lives, treated me with spectacular warmth, and granted me tremendously valuable insights regarding life in the Colony. Memory, whilst fallible is profoundly telling of the nuances with which spaces are made. Their memories were immensely beneficial to this project, and in great part made the analysis presented in it possible. Furthermore, these remembrances enabled me to effectively explore the space of the neighbourhood and the home, without which my analysis of the Dadar Parsi Colony would remain incomplete.

In this thesis, I have attempted to use the case of the Dadar Parsi Colony to present the argument that the area emerged as a result of the import of garden city urban planning that was brought to Bombay's shores through its colonial administrators. The space was then populated by members of the Parsi community who, in settling in the area, constituted the space into a middle-class ethnic enclave. Chapter 1 traced the emergence of the locality which would come to house these Parsis and argues that it emerged on Bombay's cityscape as a result of the 1896 plague. Colonial administrators attempted to use garden city planning principles to build a suburb that would be antithetical to the city's overcrowded, unplanned and disorderly nature in the early 20th century. These attempts resulted in an articulation of garden city planning that was not quite faithful to its original tenets. Nonetheless, the intention to build a landscape that countered the city's urban problems lead to the emergence of Bombay's first planned garden suburb. It was in this suburb that middle-class Parsis chose to reside and build an ethnic enclave for themselves. Chapter 2 analyses notions of middle-classness

among the Parsis and examines the ways in which Parsis used cultural entrepreneurship in the public sphere to bring their housing projects to fruition. Housing in colonial Bombay was a contentious subject, and middle-class Parsis thus used their cultural capital to acquire lands in the city where they could build a haven for themselves. Chapter 3 employed the use of memories of the Colony to argue that it was these remembrances that were integral to the constitution of a space where middle-class Parsiness could thrive. The chapter focuses on the space of the home, and argues that the home is where these memories, as well as domestic customs and practices embed themselves before coming to characterise the space of the neighbourhood. I have also demonstrated that practices in the public space of the neighbourhood come to characterise the space of the home in turn. These practices uphold notions of *Parsipanu* as well as the social hierarchies that inform Parsi life. Put together, the chapters move from the scale of the city, to the neighbourhood, and finally to the space of the home, in order to present a holistic picture of the constitution of a middle-class ethnic enclave in colonial Bombay.

I would like to conclude this thesis by presenting some avenues for future research. Its framework may be used to examine the advent and growth of the several other Parsi *baugs* that peppered colonial Bombay's urban landscape. These *baugs* share some similarities with the Dadar Parsi Colony, even if they were not built under the same radical urban circumstances and are surrounded by walls. Firstly, they may also be examined as self-contained microcosms of Parsi life. Many of them, such as *Cusrow Baug* in the Colaba area of the city, emerged around the same time as the Dadar Parsi Colony and possessed *agiaries*, gymnasiums, dispensaries, and other features that made them self-contained and ensured that Parsi life thrived within its vicinities. Secondly, many present themselves as case studies for the ways in which middle-class and poorer Parsis chose to live and dwell within colonial Bombay's city limits. This project may also be used in a comparative manner, and one may also examine the differences between open colonies such as the Dadar Parsi Colony and other gated colonies across the city. Much of the contentiousness that characterises the Dadar Parsi Colony's terrain

comes from the fact that it is not enclosed by walls, and it would be interesting to note how the residents of gated colonies experience notions of belonging and otherness in comparison. Lastly, this thesis analyses issues of gender in some parts, but in doing so I have mostly examined Parsi lives as they fall into the categories of 'male' and 'female' alone. This is due to the fact that all of my sources, including my interviewees, perceived gender in binaries. This is reflected in my work, and I have referred to people as men and women alone. However, I believe this thesis also provides a framework with which the lives of queer, transgender, and non-binary Parsis in the city may be examined, especially using the methods I employed in Chapter 3. Attempting this will present itself with its own problems, as many people living in spaces such as Parsi colonies do not readily identify as queer owing to their conservative, patriarchal and often queerphobic environments. However, delving into the memories of queer Parsis that live in these colonies will provide a novel way in which to understand their spatial character, as this work has not been carried out before and awaits its chroniclers.

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