Housing market discrimination in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region - a spatial analysis of caste-based and religious segregation

Abstract: This paper examines housing discrimination against Scheduled Castes (SCs/Dalits), Scheduled Tribes (STs/Adivasis), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region using various spatial dissimilarity indices. Social segregation in Mumbai’s housing market is well-established; unlike previous studies, however, we focus on segregation within its suburban/exurban surroundings, rather than just the city proper. This is especially relevant in Mumbai’s expensive, supply-constrained market, with discrimination further incentivizing marginalized individuals to live in underdeveloped, far-flung exurbs. Using census data as stored in SHRUG, a unified, geographically consistent spatial dataset of Indian socioeconomic indicators, we find convincing evidence for segregation and displacement of STs (Morrill’s D = 0.287, p = 0.01; Reard/O’Sull R = 0.114), while observing significant but less severe segregation of SCs. We conclude with limitations stemming from data availability/granularity, challenges related to computing kernel-based dissimilarity measures, and policy takeaways for Mumbai’s urban planners.