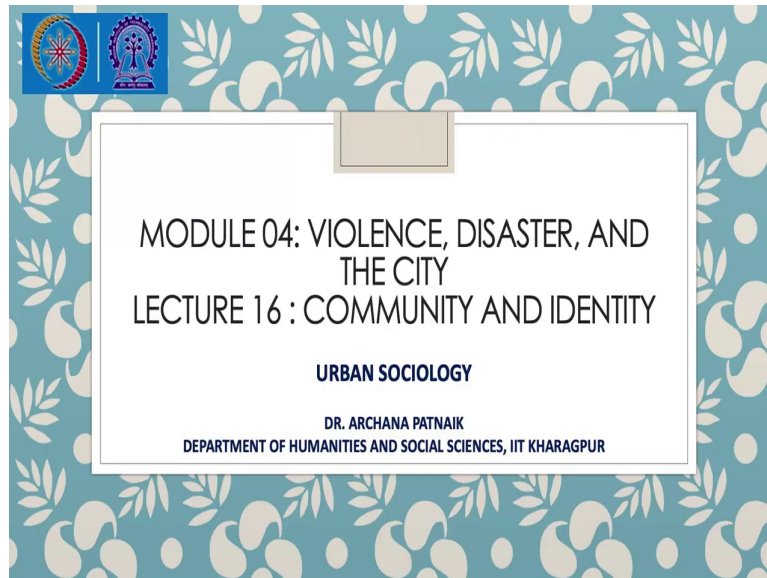


Urban Sociology
Professor Archana Patnaik
Department of Humanities and Social Science
Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur
Lecture 16
COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

(Refer Slide Time: 00:27)



Welcome to the fourth and final week of this course.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:33)



In today's class, I will help you understand how individuals derive their identity from their community and how these identities in turn strengthen the community.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:44)

The right to the city

- Originally coined by **Henri Lefebvre**
- Popularized by **David Harvey** in 2008
- Collective representation of a human right
- Robert Parks, an urban sociologist, argued city is man's "most successful attempt to remake the world he lives in more after his heart's desire" (cited in Harvey, 2008, p. 272)
- Cities are an integral part of who human beings are and what they want from their lives

The slide features three images: a night street scene with streetlights, a daytime city street with buildings, and a small inset of a woman speaking.

I will begin with the discussion of David Harvey's iconic work, the 'right to the city'. The term was originally coined by Henry Lefebvre and popularized by Harvey in 2008. According to him, it is the collective representation of a human right. Harvey draws from Robert Park, an urban sociologist who argued that city is man's most successful attempt to remake the world he lives in, in more after his heart's desire. So hence, the kind of the city that human beings want for themselves are an integral part of who they are, and what they want from their lives.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:30)

What is the right to the city?

Right to the city as "more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart's desire" (Harvey, 2008, p. 272).

Right to the city is the ability to shape the process in which cities are built and rebuilt

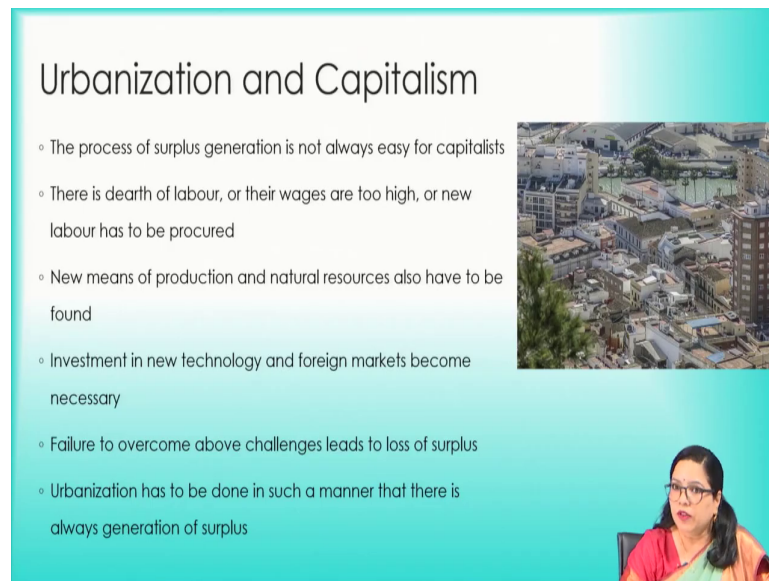
There is a connection between urbanization and capitalism

The slide features a small inset of a woman speaking in the bottom right corner.

Harvey defines the right to the city as more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies. And it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city mode after

our hearts desired. The city is remodeled through various urban processes that need the power of collectivity. So, what does it mean to have right to the city? According to Harvey, it is the ability to save the process in which the cities are built and rebuilt. There is a connection therefore, between urbanization and capitalism, since there is a need for surplus generation for the formal process.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:17)



The slide features a teal background with a white-to-teal gradient. The title 'Urbanization and Capitalism' is at the top left. A list of six bullet points is on the left, and a cityscape image is on the right. A woman's head and shoulders are visible in the bottom right corner.

Urbanization and Capitalism


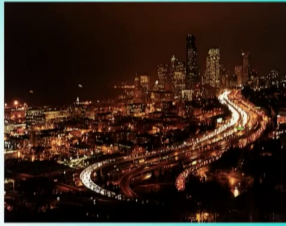
- The process of surplus generation is not always easy for capitalists
- There is dearth of labour, or their wages are too high, or new labour has to be procured
- New means of production and natural resources also have to be found
- Investment in new technology and foreign markets become necessary
- Failure to overcome above challenges leads to loss of surplus
- Urbanization has to be done in such a manner that there is always generation of surplus

However, the process of surplus generation is not always easy for the capitalist. Sometimes there is a dearth of labor or their wages are too high, new labor has to be procured or new means of production and natural resources also have to be found. Investment in new technologies and foreign markets become necessary in this case. Finally, the profit must be maintained. Failing to overcome these challenges basically creates or leads to the lack of surplus. Thus, urbanization in this case has to be done in such a manner, that there is always a generation of surplus.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:03)

Urbanization and Right to the City

- Urbanization calls for a complete transformation of lifestyle
- There is an illusion of choice but only rich people can afford quality life
- "Under these conditions, ideals of urban identity, citizenship and belonging, already threatened by the spreading malaise of the neoliberal ethic, become much harder to sustain" (Harvey, 2008, p. 276)
- As a result, there is very little chance of the residents coming together to claim their right to the city
- Deprives sections bear the brunt of "creative destruction"



Moreover, urbanization calls for a complete transformation of the lifestyle. People who are rich can afford a quality of city life, there is an illusion of choice, but it is actually only available to those with the purchasing power. In Harvey's words, under these conditions, ideals of urban identity, citizenship and belonging, already threatened by the spreading malaise of the new liberal ethic becomes much harder to sustain.

As a result, there is very little chance of the residents coming together to claim their right to the city. As the city is destroyed and reconstructed creative destruction as Harvey calls it takes place. And almost always the underprivileged sections of the society, in this case, are the ones who bear the brunt of it.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:03)

Accumulation by Dispossession

- Capitalists displace poor people from their original lands
- This phenomenon underlines urbanization in the capitalist era
- The original land-owners are illegal in the eyes of the law and lose access to their land



A process called accumulation by dispossession, through which capitalists displace the poor people from their original lands is what underlies urbanization in a capitalist era, according to Harvey. The original land owners get almost nothing after being violently ousted from their own land. The fact that their position is illegal in the eyes of the law does not help in their case.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:35)

Demands under Right to the City



- People must ask for "democratic control over the production and the use of the surplus" (Harvey, 2008, p. 277)
- The control of surplus must be in public hands so that the people who have suffered as the result of urbanization can have a say as to how it will



Harvey further explores what should be the demand of the collective, if they want to find a way to claim back their rights. According to Harvey, they must ask for democratic control over the production and the use of the surplus. The control of the surplus must not be in the private but the public hands, so that the people who have suffered as a result of urbanization can have a say as to how it will proceed.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:14)

Community and Identity



- in California, people identify as "a city person, suburbanite, small-town person, or country person, or rejected such identification as meaningless, stigmatizing, or constraining, or a source of identity conflict" (Hummon, 1986, p. 3)



Now that you know what is right to the city, let us see how different people identify with the community. According to Hummon's study in California, people identify as a city person, suburbanite, small town person, a country person, or rejected such identifications as meaningless, stigmatizing or constraining or a source of identity conflict.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:42)

Community and Identity

- Community identity "as an interpretation of self that uses community—specifically, a form of settlement—as a locus of attachment or an image for self-characterization" (Hummon, 1986, p. 4)
- It has been argued that there is no place identity in today's globalized world
- Other studies refute this argument and say that people still feel a sense of attachment to their homes and draw their identities from it



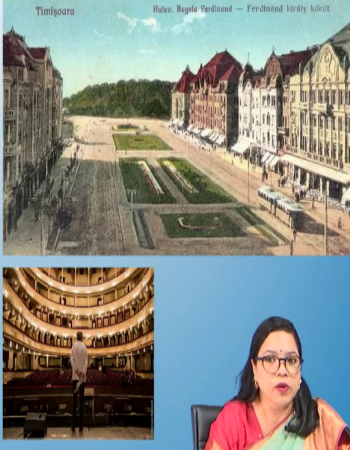
Modern urban society has brought with it a sense of ruthlessness, so much so that it has been claimed by the scholars that people do not have place identity. However, there are studies that refute this argument and say that people still feel a sense of attachment to their homes and draw identities from them. Through an example, we will discuss how Americans draw community identity from the community that they belong to.

Hummon (1986, p. 4) defines community identity “as an interpretation of self that uses community—specifically, a form of settlement—as a locus of attachment or an image for self-characterization”.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:39)

How do urbanists derive their identity?

- Community identity does not always correspond to one's place of residence.
- Urbanists claim to have 'sentimental ties' to cities. It is where they feel most at home.
- As a result, urbanists feel a sense of we-feeling towards other city people.
- Finally, a lot of urbanists claim to know better about cities and the way of life in them more than that of other places.






Community identity does not always correspond to one's place of residence. Urbanists, for example, no matter where they are currently stationed, claimed to have sentimental ties to the cities, it is where they feel that they are the most at home. Moreover, they have interests that only cities can cater to. As a result, the urbanists feel a sense of we-feeling towards other city people.

Finally, a lot of urbanist claim to know better about cities and the way of life in them more than that of other places. The way people articulate their community identity gives an indication of how they want others to see them. Let us see how small-town people, country people, and suburbanites do this.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:35)

How do small-townners derive their identity?

- Small town people like to portray themselves as friendly and amicable, and greatly invested in family lives as compared to those from cities.
- Small towns are seen "as a place of community, domesticity, and tradition" (Hummon, 1986, p. 10)
- However, some town people reject this identity since it is associated with provincialism, backwardness and narrow-mindedness


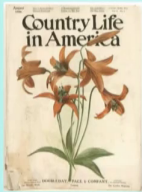



According to scholars, small town people like to portray themselves as friendly and amicable, and are greatly invested in family lives as compared to those of the cities. Small towns are seen as as places of community, domesticity and tradition (Hummon, 1986, p. 10). Whereas some small-town people reject this identity since it is associated with provincialism, backwardness, and narrow mindedness.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:08)

How do country people derive their identity?

- Country people mostly have a weakness for rural life rather than urban one.
- Men engage in outdoor activities in the natural settings, whereas, women like indoor activities such as crafting
- Even though they think of themselves as friendly and open, they also see themselves as self-sufficient and practical.



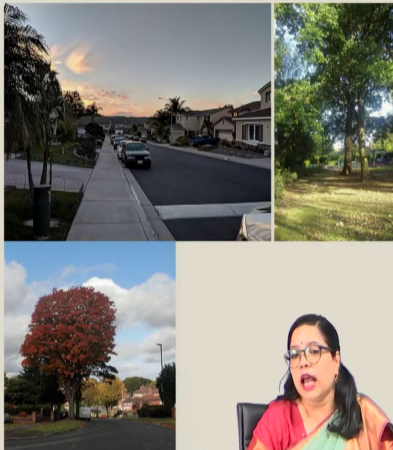
Country people mostly have a weakness for rural life, rather than urban life. They believe in the simplicities of life and want to stay close to the nature. Their life revolves around agriculture mostly. Men here engage in outdoor activities in the natural setting, whereas

women mostly like indoor activities, such as crafting. Even though they think of themselves as friendly and open, they also see themselves as self-sufficient and practical.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:43)

How do suburbanists derive their identity?

- The suburbs are seen as an amalgamation of rural and urban lives without the negative aspects.
- Suburbanists see themselves as family people, well-educated and well-established.
- They claim to be more interested in home, family, and community than the rest.

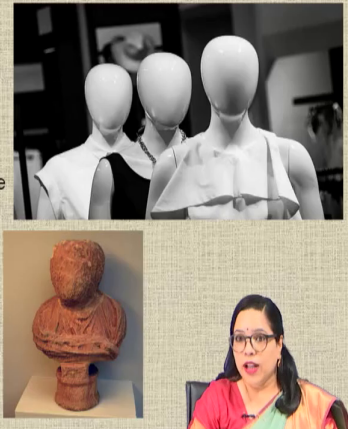


The suburbs are seen as an amalgamation of rural and urban lives without the negative aspects. Suburbanites see themselves as family people, well-educated and well-established. They claim to be more interested in home, family and community than the rest.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:04)

Rejection of Community Identity

- Some people find community identity redundant.
- Certain community identities are stigmatized.
- Other see themselves as capable of being able to adjust with their immediate surroundings.
- The idea of having a particular community identity is very limiting.
- People with multiple identities feel conflicted.



While most people derive their identities from the community, there are some who find it redundant. One reason could be because of the stigmatized nature of certain community identities. Others see themselves as capable of being able to adjust with their immediate

surroundings. Some people feel that the idea of having a particular community identity is very limiting.

It can be concluded that “people articulate a sense of belonging to a form of community, based on varied ties of sentiment, interest, value, and knowledge. They present an imagery of self as a type of person, appropriated from community imagery” (Hummon, 1986, p. 19)

No matter the stage in which society is right now, community identities have continued to exist.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:19)



Urban collective memory

- Collective memories of communities play a role in preserving intangible heritage in form of historic buildings in a place
- Project named “**Mapping Intangible Culture in the Historic Core: A Case Study**” based on the downtown region of City of London in Ontario, Canada shows how people within a community talk in terms of buildings to show their attachment to a place.
- **Aim of the project** is to bring back collective memories of historic buildings to the forefront so that plans for the cultural future profile of the city could be made.

LONDON at the time SHAWLMAN & INGRAM was Founded



Now, I will discuss the role that the collective memories of community play in preserving the intangible heritage in form of historic buildings in a place. The study that I will refer to was done by Roberta Santoro on the project titled, ‘Mapping Intangible Culture in the Historic Core: A Case Study’. It was based on the downtown region of the City of London in Ontario, Canada. The ethnographic project shows how people within a community talk in terms of buildings to show their attachment to a place.

The project aimed to bring back the collective memories of the historic building to the forefront, so that plans for the cultural future profile of the city could be made. When members of a community come together and relive the memories of a place, they can advocate for better management of places that are integral to the city's civic pride.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:30)



Cultural Mapping

- **Cultural mapping** has been defined as “a process of collecting, recording, analysing and synthesizing information in order to describe the cultural resources, networks, links and patterns of usage of a given community or group” (Stewart, 2007, cited in Santoro, 2016, p. 44).
- Engage community for the purpose of identifying both tangible and intangible historical assets
- Knowledge about forgotten places are collected through memories and stories as a way to counter globalization

The slide features three images: the 'London CANADA' logo with a tree icon, a photograph of a tall stone war memorial with flags, and a photograph of a modern sculpture in a park. A small inset image shows a woman speaking.

In order to identify such places, an UNESCO certified tool called ‘cultural mapping’ is used. It has been defined as “a process of collecting, recording, analysing and synthesizing information in order to describe the cultural resources, networks, links and patterns of usage of a given community or group” (Stewart, 2007, cited in Santoro, 2016, p. 44).

This tool is used to engage community for the purpose of identifying both tangible and intangible historical assets. These two aspects are however seen as interconnected and cultural mapping ensures that these intangible aspects that are not present in the official narratives can come forward. As knowledge about the forgotten places are collected through memories and stories, it becomes a way for countering globalization. As people are asked to jog their memories, they regain the lost enthusiasm for their surroundings.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:39)

Collective memory to collective solidarity

- University of Waterloo's digital platform, "Building Stories" is being used to map the stories
- The elderlies can relive their memories by listening to each other with the help of this platform
- It strengthens their awareness and memory of the different local historical places
- The solidarity helps while resisting developmental programs
- The buildings identified through this city are witness to a shared community culture.



In order to map the stories, University of Waterloo's digital platform, "Building Stories" is being used. The platform accepts submissions from community members in form of multimedia content. The elderlies can relive their memories by listening to each other with the help of this platform. It also helps to concretize their awareness of the different local historical places.



This solidarity comes in handy when it is time to resist the developmental pressures. It can also act as a promotional agent for tourism. Acc. To Santoro (2016, p. 45), "Cultural mapping is thus here used to inform local governance in the context of conservation strategies, planning of eco and cultural tourism and in order to empower the community through the creation of place-embedded symbolic tools and related information".

The buildings identified through this city are witness to a shared community culture. The project aims to make the community aware of its past, so that it can build its future on it.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:58)

Identity of migrants

- The identity of migrants undergoes changes when they move from their original place of birth to a different place for various socio-economic and cultural reasons
- Loyalty to the original community often makes things difficult for migrants
- In large cities, life is structured around characteristics such as **size, density and social heterogeneity** (Wirth, 1938)
- After coming to the city, the migrants have to adapt to the urban way of life which is highly regulated.




Moving forward, I will discuss how the identities of migrants', who are people who have moved from their original place of birth to a different place for various socio-economic and cultural reasons undergo changes when they move to the new place. We will see how the loyalty to the original community often makes things difficult for migrants.

Migrants are almost always attracted to large cities where the opportunities are greater. In such cities, life is structured around characteristics such as size, density and social heterogeneity as identified by sociologist Wirth in 1938. After coming to the city, the migrants have to adapt to the urban way of life which is highly regulated.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:53)

Types of migrant behaviour

- Karanov (2013, cited in Vershina et al., 2015, p. 1098) has identified 3 main types of migrant behavior:
- "1. Migrant follows the rules of behaviour and cultural norms specific to their new place of residence, identifying with the relevant community.
- 2. Migrant identifies with a particular residential area, but not with his/her community, keeping faithful to the social and cultural nucleus of the "mother" community.
- 3. Feeling alienated and unwilling to adapt to a new social and cultural environment, the migrant moves away."



Karanov (2013) has identified 3 main types of migrant behavior:

“1. Migrant follows the rules of behaviour and cultural norms specific to their new place of residence, identifying with the relevant community.

2. Migrant identifies with a particular residential area, but not with his/her community, keeping faithful to the social and cultural nucleus of the “mother” community.

3. Feeling alienated and unwilling to adapt to a new social and cultural environment, the migrant moves away.” (cited in Vershinina et al., 2015, p. 1098).

In the first model, the migrant gradually gets assimilated into the city life. In the second case, there is a chance of conflict as the migrants don't want to accept the host city community as their own community. Hence, the migrant may adapt to the life of the city but live according to the norms of their original community. Vershinina et al. (2015) have identified this problem in the Russian society.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:04)

Planning migrant-friendly cities

- Vershinina et al. (2015) have suggested the following ways in which a city should be planned to make it friendly towards migrants:
- The indigenous populations life should be improved
- Cultural identity of the city should be considered
- There should be balance of natural and manmade elements
- The city's economy should be stable

The slide features three images: a black and white photo of two young girls in dresses standing outdoors; a black and white photo of a group of people in a meeting; and a small inset photo of a woman with glasses speaking.




According to them, a city should be planned keeping in mind the following:

- The indigenous populations life should be improved
- Cultural identity of the city should be considered
- There should be balance of natural and manmade elements
- The city's economy should be stable

(Refer Slide Time: 16:27)

Migrants' dilemma

- Most migrants owe their allegiance to their original community making it difficult for all the residents of the city to have a shared identity
- Migrants often behave in this way due to the response they receive from the original inhabitants of the city.
- Vershinina et al. (2015) argue that globalization does not ensure a common identity or shared cultural experience for individuals all over the world.
- The concept of "new individualism" has become relevant now





Since the migrants owe their allegiance to their original community, it becomes difficult for all the residents of the city to have a shared identity. However, migrants often behave in this way due to the response they receive from the original inhabitants of the city. Hence, the author argues that globalization does not ensure a common identity or shared cultural experience for individuals all over the world. There is a need to consider the concept of “new individualism” since individualism has changed due to the factors of globalization, new information technologies and multinational capitalism.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:14)

Identifying with the host community

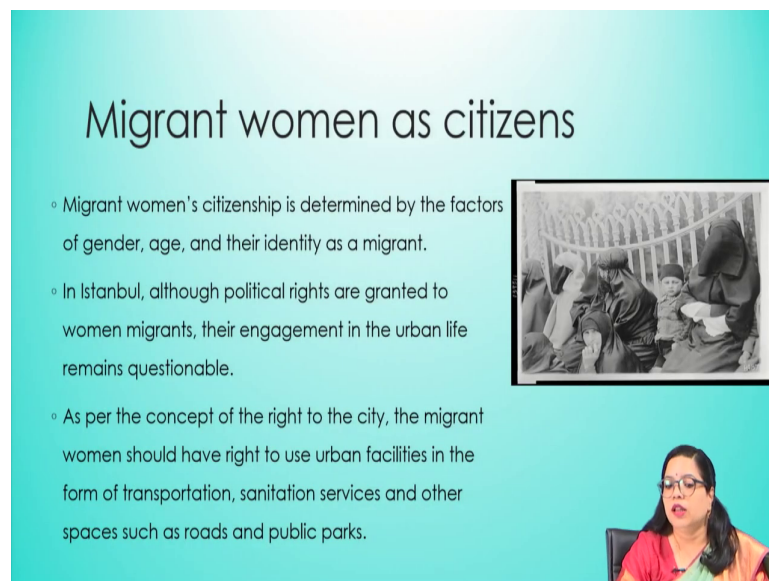
- Anna J. Secor migrant women along with the other urban residents navigate the imagined boundaries of Istanbul through constructed citizenship
- These women lived in shanty towns called 'gecekondu'
- “Urban citizenship is understood as a set of relationships between the individual and the city that takes shape through processes of identity-formation, social positioning in relation to the urban community, and claims to urban rights” (Secor, 2003, p. 148)



Contrary to what we learnt about the situation in Russia, where migrants refrain from identifying with the host community, I will now focus on a case from Istanbul undertaken by Anna J. Secor. Secor found that “migrant women of different ages and backgrounds position themselves in relation to Istanbul’s urban community, their own “right to the city” and the informal and formal channels through which claims to urban space and resources are pursued”.



Istanbul is full of shanty towns called ‘gecekondu’ in Turkish which are full of migrants. The migrant women along with the other urban residents navigate the imagined boundaries of Istanbul through constructed citizenship. According to the author, “Urban citizenship is understood as a set of relationships between the individual and the city that takes shape through processes of identity-formation, social positioning in relation to the urban community, and claims to urban rights” (Secor, 2003, p. 148).

(Refer Slide Time: 18:33)



Migrant women as citizens

- Migrant women's citizenship is determined by the factors of gender, age, and their identity as a migrant.
- In Istanbul, although political rights are granted to women migrants, their engagement in the urban life remains questionable.
- As per the concept of the right to the city, the migrant women should have right to use urban facilities in the form of transportation, sanitation services and other spaces such as roads and public parks.



For migrant women, their citizenship of the urban spaces is determined by the factors of gender, age, and their identity as a migrant. T. H. Marshall’s defined “citizenship as the civil, political and social rights and responsibilities that accompany membership in a community”. In Istanbul, although political rights are granted to women migrants, their engagement in the urban life remains questionable.

If one goes by Lefebvre’s notion of “right to the city”, which I have already discussed earlier in this class, the migrant women should have right to use urban facilities in the form of transportation, sanitation services and other spaces such as roads and public parks.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:26)

Migrant women as citizens

- Urban citizenship has always been constructed from a white cis-man perspective
- Secor (2003) studies “how processes of urban citizenship—processes that include identity formation, social positioning, and rights claims—are enacted in the everyday life of Istanbul” in case of migrant women.
- Migrant women’s understanding of what the urban culture in Istanbul is, and their conviction that migrants are different from and marginalized in the main culture is formed through their dealings in the avenues of **education** and **urban mobility**



However, urban citizenship has always been constructed from a white cis-man perspective where there is no place for women, let alone migrant women. Secor (2003) studies “how processes of urban citizenship—processes that include identity formation, social positioning, and rights claims—are enacted in the everyday life of Istanbul” in case of migrant women.

Migrant women’s understanding of what the urban culture in Istanbul is, and their conviction that migrants are different from and marginalized in the main culture is formed through their dealings in the avenues of education and urban mobility. Most women saw education as advantageous and a necessary component for their participation in urban life. They saw it as an advantage over women from the villages or their previous generations who did not have access to education.

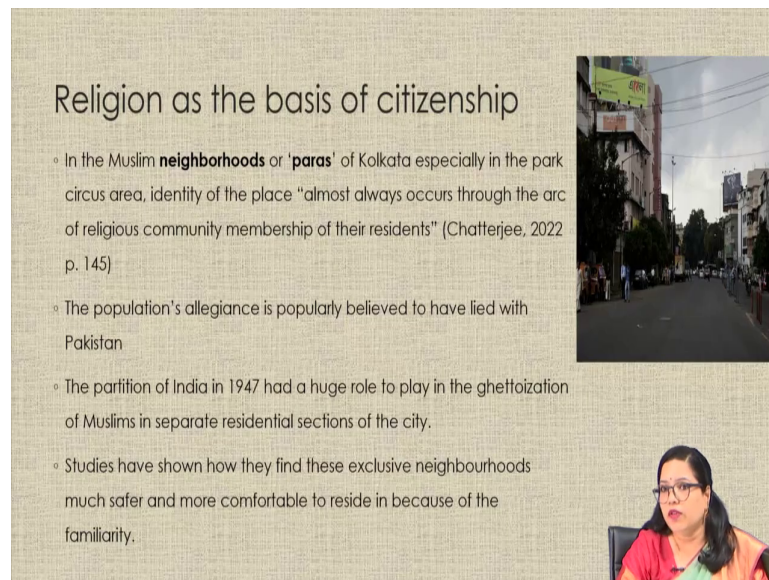
Although there are greater opportunities for education in the urban areas, it also opens too many avenues for which the women are not well-prepared or well-equipped. This study found that women in Istanbul move around a lot less than men. Moreover, since they live in gecekondü or the migrant shanty towns, they do not consider themselves as urban.

In spite of this, women seemed to be free of their inhibitions in their new environment. To sum it up, for migrant women in Istanbul, the issue of urban mobility revolved around factors such as “confidence, autonomy and personal comfort” (Secor, 2003, 160)

As Secor (2003, p. 164) puts it, “Access to and engagement with education and urban life, as markers of Istanbulite identity, appear as conduits for “urbanizing” women, channels through

which migrant women find themselves forging new self-identities and engaging with the urban environment”

(Refer Slide Time: 21:56)



Religion as the basis of citizenship

- In the Muslim **neighborhoods** or '**paras**' of Kolkata especially in the park circus area, identity of the place “almost always occurs through the arc of religious community membership of their residents” (Chatterjee, 2022 p. 145)
- The population's allegiance is popularly believed to have lied with Pakistan
- The partition of India in 1947 had a huge role to play in the ghettoization of Muslims in separate residential sections of the city.
- Studies have shown how they find these exclusive neighbourhoods much safer and more comfortable to reside in because of the familiarity.

The slide also features a video inset in the bottom right corner showing a woman with glasses and a red and orange sari speaking.

Finally, we will look at the case of Muslim neighborhoods or ‘paras’ of Kolkata especially in the park circus area where the identity of the place “almost always occurs through the arc of religious community membership of their residents” (Chatterjee, 2022 p. 145). Since the population belongs to a different religion than that of the majority in the rest of the city, they are always otherized and it is believed they are loyal to the country of Pakistan, a Muslim dominated country.

The partition of India in 1947 had a huge role to play in the ghettoization of Muslims in separate residential sections of the city. In spite of the segregated nature of their existence, studies have shown how they find these exclusive neighbourhoods much safer and more comfortable to reside in because of the familiarity.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:59)

Fragmented community

- The Muslims within these paras are not homogenous in nature.
- In fact, the residents maintain distance from each other by limiting interactions of any kind
- Chatterjee (2022, p. 151) writes, "relatively short distances in physical space translate into significantly large social differences among inhabitants".
- Muslim paras collectively maintain distance from the other neighbourhoods and vice versa
- The negative attitudes towards the Muslims lead to their exclusion from the main city but at the same time, also provides a separate protected living space



This, however, in no way means that the Muslims within these paras are homogenous in nature. In fact, there are multiple identities drawn from different contexts. The residents strive to maintain their distinctiveness from each other by limiting the interactions with those who are noticeably of different background.

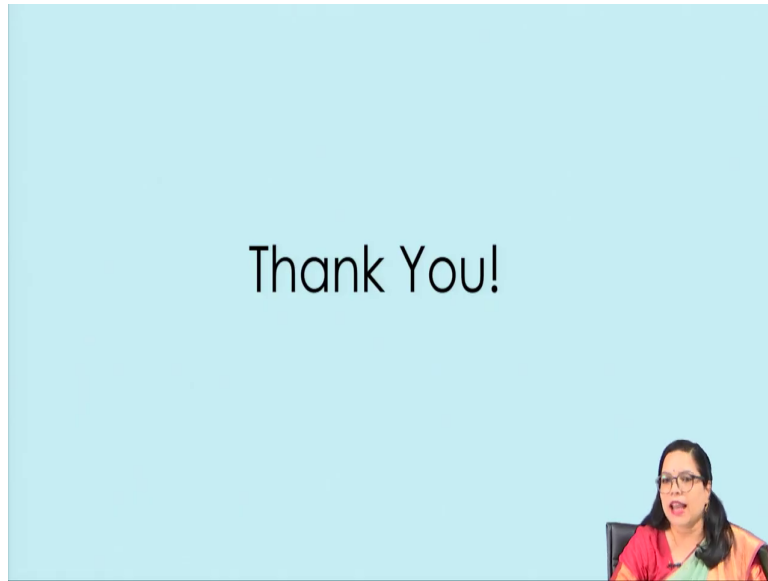
As Chatterjee (2022, p. 151) puts it, "relatively short distances in physical space translate into significantly large social differences among inhabitants". Additionally, Muslim paras collectively maintain distance from the other neighbourhoods and vice versa, as there is a general suspicion that others tend to view them with, given the consumption of beef and dealings with leather, both of which are abhorred by the Hindus.

Hence, the negatives attitudes can on one hand stigmatize the community, but on the other hand, can help them live a safe guarded life within the boundaries of their exclusive neighbourhood.

To conclude, in Chatterjee's (2022) words, "The case of Park Circus's Muslims is indicative of the reality of "embedded" identities derived from their particular biographies of membership to a post-colonial urban milieu where they have to continuously negotiate the demands of community and neoliberal modernity within a space that is heavily biased against their presence".

I hope through the discussions on these cases, you have now got a very good idea about how communities derive their identity from places and vice versa.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:58)



Thank you for listening and have a great day ahead.