Negotiating Order: An Empirical Investigation of Variation in Caste Discrimination in Gujarat, India

by

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ABSTRACT

How do two seemingly distinct ways of thinking and acting – one premised on the belief that some people are inherently more privileged than others and the second that endows each individual with equal rights and responsibilities – co-exist? Specifically, do privileged castes accede to demands of the democratic system, which then results in transformation of social order? Or do they find ways of resisting and subverting the democratic process which preserves social order? In this dissertation, I attempt to explain the behavior of the privileged by focusing on a distinct feature of the Indian caste system - untouchability – discrimination against lower castes which is religiously sanctioned but constitutionally outlawed, focusing on the western Indian state of Gujarat.

I argue that the answer to this question is neither transformation nor preservation of untouchability, but somewhere in between. I build my argument in two parts. In the first part, I provide a historical understanding of the role of caste and untouchability in society. I argue that prior to Indian Independence, untouchability was understood to be a private issue and thus was outside the jurisdiction of the state. This however changed post-Independence when untouchability became a public issue which demanded state intervention. Despite several provisions to address untouchability, two problems are identified. The first is that the Constitution did *not* define untouchability. Second, the Constitution protects the freedom to practice any religion of one's choice, consequently protecting caste, but prohibits untouchability (which are caste behaviors legitimated by religion).

This ambiguity lies at the core of the observed variation in untouchability. As I will argue, this ambiguity in the law - caste legal, but caste based behaviors illegal, leads to ambiguities in the definition of untouchability - which in some cases is exploited to

preserve untouchability and in others, to transform. The locus of change, i.e., preserve or transform, - lies with the village-level upper caste elites and how they interpret the law and bargain with the state. Specifically, I contend that untouchability is *jointly produced* by two levels of bargaining of the village-level upper-caste elites. One with the state and the second within their own castes in the village. I expect high levels of bargaining at both levels to be associated with transformation of untouchability and low levels with its preservation.

The implications of the two parts are tested separately. For the first part, I use the Times of India archive from 1838 to 2005 to test hypotheses about the narrative of untouchability both pre and post-Independence. In the second part, I introduce a new village level dataset on caste discrimination and its covariates. I then develop a measure of untouchability. This measure treats every manifestation of untouchability as unique but dependent on other forms of discrimination, which is used in a regression framework to test my claims.

I find some support for both hypotheses. Prior to Independence, untouchability is framed as a private problem where “upliftment” of the untouchables depended on the benevolence of the state and upper-castes. Post-Independence however, the “untouchables”, now referred to as “Dalits” are depicted as “assertive” and aware of their rights. In the second part of my analyses - a quantitative study of 890 villages in Gujarat, I find that higher levels of bargaining with the state and within caste are associated with low untouchability and vice-versa.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1.0 Introduction

How do two seemingly distinct ways of thinking and acting – one premised on the belief that some people are inherently more privileged than others and the second that endows each individual with equal rights and responsibilities – co-exist? Is there a "clash of civilizations" such as that expected between the "East" and "West" (Huntington 1998) or is the answer to this question more nuanced in that there is neither a clash where one way of life trumps the other but both co-exist albeit in varying forms and capacities? (Sen 2006). This dissertation is an inquiry into this question. I focus the Hindu caste system. The Hindu caste system creates some untouchable individuals but the extent to which privileged castes observe this untouchability in practice varies widely. Untouchability is discrimination by higher-castes towards lower castes sanctioned by religion but outlawed by the Indian Constitution which was declared the *de jure* law of the land by the liberal democratic system adopted in 1947. What explains this variation? Why is it that some villages in the same state, report lower levels of discrimination while others report higher? This dissertation is an attempt to provide some answers to this question. I do this by examining caste variation within the Indian state of Gujarat (Figure 1.1).

My argument has two parts. I first provide some historical context around the issues of caste and untouchability. I show how prior to Independence, efforts were directed to privatize caste such that the caste affairs (which includes untouchability) remained outside the jurisdiction of the colonial state. This however was not to be the case post-Independence. It had become clear by that time to Indian lawmakers, that untouchability would never be solved by the "hearts and minds" of Hindus. The state had to intervene.

However what seems like a clear mandate for the state to address untouchability and punish its practitioners, the issue continues to affect the lives of millions of people, even after more than seven decades of Independence. I attribute this to the inherent ambiguity in the law which one, does *not* define untouchability and two, protects the freedom to practice the religion of one's choice (and consequently follow caste rules) but simultaneously makes illegal untouchability (which are caste rules grounded in religion). It is at this point that I argue that the state becomes entangled in an intractable conflict over the role of caste in society. While theoretically, it is easy to fragment caste into its *private* and *public* manifestations, in practice this fragmentation is contestable. This ambiguity allows for a variation of interpretations of the law by the citizens of the country. While some interpretations are in the direction of transformation of the social order, others tilt towards its preservation.

This is followed by the second part of my argument where village-level caste elites are central to my narrative. I argue that whether untouchability is transformed or preserved depends how the interpretation of the law by village-level upper caste elites and their ability to rally their caste members in the village. Specifically, I contend that untouchability is *jointly produced* by two levels of bargaining of the village-level upper-caste elites. One with the state and the second with their own caste communities in the village. I expect high levels of bargaining to be associated with transformation of untouchability and low levels with its preservation.

I find some support for both sets of my hypotheses. Using all articles published in/around Gujarat from 1838 to 2005 in The Times of India, I find that prior to Independence, untouchability is framed more as a private problem where the "upliftment" of the untouchables depends on the largesse of the state and upper-castes. Post-Independence however, this is no longer the case where the "untouchables" now referred to as "Dalits" are depicted as "assertive" and well aware of their rights. This is followed by a quantitative analysis of about 887 villages in Gujarat where I find that higher levels of bargaining with the state and within caste are associated with low untouchability and lower levels of bargaining are associated with high untouchability.

The rest of the Introduction is structured as follows: In the next section, I begin by describing caste and caste based discrimination. I then make a case for why this topic needs to be examined. This is then followed by a literature critique, where I show some of the dominant perspectives which could be used to explain variation in caste discrimination but are limited when applied to caste discrimination in Gujarat. I then proceed to describing my proposed theoretical framework for understanding variation in caste discrimination which draws insights from the literatures of state-building, distribution of public goods and social movements. In the last section, I describe the research design and methods that will be used to test the hypotheses.

Figure 1.1: Gujarat (shown in red)

1.2.0 The What and Why of Caste and Untouchability

1.2.1 What is Caste and Untouchability?

Caste is a system of stratification which is sanctified by sacred religious texts and which characterizes the social organization of the South Asian sub-continent (Jodhka and Shah 2010). It however is not exclusive to the countries of South Asia. It has been found to exist in countries outside of South Asia such as among the large diaspora communities in the UK (Waughray 2009).

As a stratification system, there are five large groups – *Brahmins* (educated and intellectual)*, Kshatriyas* (warrior)*, Vaishyas* (traders and businessmen) and *Shudras* (laborers). The untouchables constitute the fifth group and are associated with "unclean" occupations such as cleaning toilets and removing animal carcasses. Each of these groups is divided into thousands of smaller endogamous groups or *jatis* that are spread across the country (Srinivas 1980). Furthermore, the relationship between the *jatis* varies across both space and time. There is no one single overarching hierarchy which best captures the relationship among the *jatis* (Gupta 2000; Vaid 2015). For instance, it is usually assumed that the *Brahmins* are on the top of this caste hierarchy. But this assumption is based on a static view of how caste actually functions. There are three problems with this assumption. First, there is no one single cohesive homogenous group called the *Brahmins.* There are several hundred endogamous *Brahmin jatis.* Figure 1.3 in Appendix A (end of this chapter) shows that the 1911 census enumerated 65 *Brahmin jatis* only for the state of Baroda (part of modern day Gujarat). Secondly cases have been found where *Brahmins* are perceived to be polluting and thus avoided because of their association with conducting the last rites (Vaid 2014). And the third is that studies have been done where the lower and upper castes of one state are genetically more similar to each other than upper-castes across two different states (Gupta 2001).

Therefore, caste as a stratification system is composed of thousands of endogamous *jatis*. The relationship between these *jatis* cannot be characterized a single overarching hierarchy that has remained static over the past thousands of years. Instead, the reality

of caste is more accurately described by a constant struggle at the local level between different *jatis* to negotiate their place in the Hindu social order (Gupta 2000).

Untouchability is a distinct feature of caste. Untouchability are humiliating and discriminatory behaviors directed from upper castes towards lower castes who were formerly known as the untouchables. What makes these behaviors distinct are the elaborate rituals that accompany acts perceived as discriminatory (Gupta 2005; Vaid 2014). Gupta (2005) writes:

> "But what makes caste stand apart from other forms of stratification is that in this case there are elaborate and ritualized rules that ordain not just how distinctions should be maintained, but also prescribe sanctions should the norms be violated. It is this obsessive attention to the slightest variation in ritual ranking that marks out caste from other forms of stratification" (Gupta 2005: 410).

This ritualistic aspect of caste is based on a belief that some individuals are inherently more "pure" than others and this purity needs to be maintained. As there are no phenotypical differences between castes (Gupta 2005), it becomes the prerogative of the individual and/or community to construct and enforce rules which maintain the distinctions in everyday interaction. Any association or contact between a low caste and high caste constitutes a violation of the social order and thus in need of amends in order to restore the balance. These amends can be made by engaging in various rituals and sanctions for both the low caste and high caste. Although undeniably the sanctions are higher for the low caste person. For instance, one of the popular examples used to illustrate the obsession with rituals is of when the mere shadow of a low caste person would be enough to contaminate a high caste person. The latter would feel defiled and would have to undergo purification rituals (e.g., bath followed by prayers) in order to become clean again. So while untouchability clearly is targeted at lower castes, it affects both the higher and lower castes.

1.2.2 Why Study Untouchability?

Given the sheer magnitude of the phenomena both in amount of time (it's been around for thousands of years) and the number of people affected (166 million untouchables or

the 1 billion Hindus if a relational view is taken), there are two other reasons that untouchability requires extensive research. The first is that caste is not a rigid hierarchical structure. As the pace of this change is slow, caste has been assumed to be fixed and the relationships between castes have been taken to be constant i.e., the higher castes *always* have and will dominate the lower castes. This is based on the assumption that there is a hierarchy and every caste or *jati* has accepted their place in this hierarchy. However this assumption does not hold in the face of data (Gupta 2005). For instance, one of the politically dominant groups in current day Gujarat are the *Patidars*. However there is no mention of this group in the caste census of 1911 or 1921. This does not mean that they did not exist. They did, however, under a different name – *Kanbi*. They were formally recognized as a distinct group i.e., as *Patidars*, different from *Kanbi*, in the case of census of 1931. Arguably, during the British Raj the *jatis* had realized that enumeration in the census by the British was also linked to access to government benefits which could then result in an increase in status and prestige (Dirks 2001; Gupta 2005). Thus competition between *jatis* has been a feature of the stratification system which has too often been overlooked (Gupta 2005).

Second, and related to the first is that as caste is not constant, nor is its distinctive feature – untouchability. The liberal democratic order adopted by the country when it became independent in 1947, made all castes equal i.e., no caste was superior or inferior. This was a challenge to the socio-religious order that had managed to contain competition via both ideological and coercive means. However electoral democracy provided new arena where the competition between *jatis* could be played out. The question thus becomes what do the privileged do in such circumstances? Do they accede to the demands of democratic system, which then results in the transformation of the social order? Or do they find ways of resisting and subverting the democratic process which preserves the social order? What we observe is that neither the social caste order or the political democratic order has prevailed. Instead we witness a constant the struggle between the two forces and it this constant struggle between two ways of thinking and living which I will argue underlie variation in untouchability.

1.3.0 Literature Critique

In this section, I review two perspectives which can and have been used to understand variation in caste discrimination. The first one - social movements - is a bottom-up view in that the locus of change is the aggrieved community (i.e., lower castes) and the second one - political institutions - is a top-down view as it focuses on the role of the government institutions on discrimination. For each perspective, I first describe how different scholars have conceptualized the effects of mobilization and also what they found. This is followed by evaluating their understandings specifically to the case of caste-discrimination in Gujarat, India.

1.3.1 Social Movements

Arguably, the social movements perspective can be used for understanding variation in caste discrimination. Oliver (2008) traces the emergence of serious scholarship on collective behavior and social movements (CBSM) to the high levels of social and political unrest in the 60s and early 70s in the United States. The founding of this field, beginning with resource-mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald 1977) was to understand protest as strategy for social change - in the US context - a more just social order. The underlying belief was that collective action has the potential to change the status quo. Thus for my case, I would expect greater mobilization to be associated with less injustice and discrimination.

However as Lipsky (1968) writes, changing the status quo is conditional on the social movement organization/s (SMO/s) gaining the support of four constituencies - the constituency they represent, the larger civil society within which the protest is happening and who are being exposed to the protest by the media, third, the targets who actually have the power to meet the demands of the protesters and lastly, third parties who could be thought of as observers whose solidarity with the protesters can be beneficial. Maintaining a good relationship with each of these four constituencies and ensuring that their interests align is difficult (Lipsky 1968).

The current research can be largely divided into two camps - movement centric and target centric. Some scholars focus on features of the movement and propose mechanisms of

how those features affect the outcomes. Other scholars focus on the decision making calculus of those being targeted by protests and how that makes a difference to the outcomes. Additionally it must be made clear that all outcomes are not equivalent and that is why what we see is a disaggregation of outcomes where some are looking at political outcomes (Andrews 2001; Soule and King 2006; Wood 2003), others at economic outcomes (Luders 2006, King and Soule 2007), or biographical outcomes (McAdam 1989; Davenport and Trivedi 2013).

1.3.1.1 Movement-centric

Andrews (2001) proposes a "movement infrastructure" model in order to understand variation in government funding for anti-poverty programs across counties in Mississippi. Andrews argues that counties which received more funding as compared to those that received less, had a stronger "movement infrastructure". These features gives the movement the flexibility to change their tactics contingent on the situation and thus they are able to exert influence through multiple channels. Such an movement does not rigidly adhere to a single tactic i.e., disruption or persuasion. Rather they are able to calibrate their view of which tactic would have the maximum effect given the prevailing circumstances. Additionally, with a resource base which makes substantial contributions in terms of labor and money, the movement is able to sustain and expand their struggle.

Similar to the work by Andrews (2001), Wood's (2003) work on the transitions to democracy in El Salvador and South Africa makes a case for the use of varying strategies - both violent and non-violent - by insurgents to bring the apartheid government to the bargaining table. In addition to the tactics, Wood also finds that the division among the elite - with some supporting apartheid and others arguing against it - contributed to the transition. Some of the elite solidarity can be attributed to the sustained insurgency increasing the cost of doing business in South Africa. This hurt the at least the business elite who began to view the insurgency and the consequent repression by the government as hurting their profits.

And lastly, Soule and King (2006), use the implementation of the Equal Rights Amendment to show that policy implementation is a multi-stepped process. At each step

the factors that determine the actions of the politicians change. They find that SMOs are important in the agenda setting stage. However for them to get their claims on the agenda, they need to have some elite (politician) solidarity. But being on the agenda does not necessarily mean that their demands will be met. What they show is that SMOs matter more in getting demands on the agenda but not when it comes to the passage of law because by that time public opinion outweighs protests.

1.3.1.2 Target-centric

There are other scholars who have argued that instead of focusing on the internal features of the movement, more attention needs to be focused on the perception of the targets for understanding the outcomes of collective action (Luders 2006). In his work on how businesses in the US South responded to sit-ins, Luders lays out a theoretical framework which he calls an "economic opportunity structure" where the behavior of targets is a function of the cost of conceding to the demands of the protesters and the cost of disruption. There are four situations where he expects the targets to respond in distinct ways. When both the cost of concession and cost of disruption are low targets will conform to the status quo; when both the cost of concession and disruption are high, targets will vacillate between negotiations, concessions and repression; when the cost of concession is low but the cost of disruption is high, targets will concede to the demands of the movement and lastly the cost of concession is high but the cost of disruption is low, targets will oppose and may engage in repression of the movement (Luders 2006).

Along similar lines, King and Soule (2007) study the effect of protests on stock prices. Their argument is that variation in the stock market is reflective of the faith of investors. If stock prices fall, that means that the investors are losing confidence and on the other hand if the stock prices rise, it shows greater investor confidence. They find that media coverage of protest against companies that allegedly violate labor laws is likely to decrease investor confidence and thus stock prices are likely to fall (King and Soule 2007).

1.3.1.3 Limitations of the Social Movements Framework

From the review of work which looks at either the role of the movement or the targets, we learn that variation in outcomes can be attributed to a few common key features. The first is resources but more specifically, a reliance on indigenous labor and money. The second is engaging in multiple strategies as all tactics are not the same. A protest maybe targeted more towards mobilizing public opinion while the purpose of the strike maybe to impose costs on the oppressors. The third is having some elite solidarity. This is seen with federal support for anti-poverty programs (Andrews 2001) and is also seen in the split between elites in South Africa with some elites supporting the insurgents while others resisting their demands (Wood 2003). And the last is the role that the media plays in amplifying the demands of the aggrieved and communicating it to the larger public (King and Soule 2007). My review will focus on the last two features that will be shown to be either missing or only weakly present in understanding variation in caste discrimination in Gujarat, India.

1.3.1.3.1 Elite solidarity

Elite solidarity with the movement as expressed by the federal government's efforts for expanding civil rights for African Americans in the US South, or some elites showing support for the demands of insurgents in South Africa (Wood 2007) or politicians taking hate crimes against minorities seriously in US counties when pressured (McVeigh et al 2003), or womens' grievances making it into the agenda of senators (Soule and Olzak 2004; Soule and King 2006) is an important factor that is part of some dominant paradigms in the literature such as the political process model (McAdam 1982).

Gujarat has been a different and puzzling story about the role of elites in making visible and ending caste discrimination. While Gandhi started the movement against untouchability in Gujarat, his message never really took root in the state. Starting before the independence movement, we witness struggles between M. K. Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar about the place of caste in society with the former believing in retaining certain aspects of it (division of labor) but getting rid of others (untouchability) while the latter advocating its complete annihilation (Bhatt 1970). We also see tensions on the role of Congress in addressing caste based issues between leader such as Sardar Vallabhbhai

Patel and Indulal Yagnik[1]. Patel was the President and Yagnik was the Secretary for the Congress party in Gujarat. In the early 1920s Yagnik needed funds for building schools, boarding houses, and paying teacher's salary for children from the tribal and low-caste communities. Yagnik writes,

> "How can we uplift the untouchables by merely mixing with them in our meetings and processions? In the present meeting when the untouchables arrive, except when Gandhiji makes a special insistence, how close are they invited to sit? Besides, by making them sit near us for a while or by touching them a little bit, how can their progress be achieved? We should not have only a technical meaning of the removal of untouchability-it should be regarded as the first step towards realizing a new identity with the crores of such human beings. While holding their hands and making them merge with the entire people so as to cultivate their own service-minded cultured workers, we should get ready to establish some institutions. The foreign priests spends tens of millions of rupees to convert them. Could we not spend even a few thousands? Could we develop a powerful new nation by merging the crores of untouchable people by explaining to the caste people about the superficial removal of untouchability? Gandhiji had started a school for the uplift of the untouchables four years earlier at the time of the first Political Conference of Gujarat and now, the Congress had adopted a programme for their progress. Since we have started to secure national swaraj this year could we not run two or four such institutions like the modest lamps in our house compared to these sparkling institutions of the foreigners with a fund of Rs. 1.5 million? I told Vallabhai and other friends many such things but all of them were thinking about the entire question from the point of view of the Congress resolutions and realistic politics. They saw in my arguments airy utopias and feeble sentimentalism" (Pathak, Spodek and Wood 2011, volume 2, 23-24).

Yagnik was given a tiny fraction of the amount which infuriated him deeply. He writes,

> "I became very angry when I saw that the top workers of Gujarat, repeating parrot-like Gandhiji's Daridranarayan (My God I find by serving the poor), were cutting to pieces my small scheme. There was absolutely no scope for any argument against my colleagues, who had adopted such a poor policy and decided to hurl me in the pit of continued insolvency and futility. At the same time, I was not in the habit of subordinating myself to someone so as to maintain my institutions. When Vallabhbhai conveyed to me in determined words the decision of the Vidyapith to give me a paltry amount I conveyed to him my clear decision not to accept it" (Pathak, Spodek and Wood 2011, volume 2, 26).

Yagnik submitted his resignation which was accepted by Gandhi and Patel at the meeting of the Provincial Committee. This is just one instance of the conflict over the role of caste but we can safely assume that in many cases there was not much conflict because the independence movement was dominated by the interests of the upper and middle castes (Shah 1987). The conflict between leaders of the freedom movement such as that between Gandhi and Ambedkar or between Patel and Yagnik were symptomatic of the underlying tensions where India wanted to become a free, modern and democratic nation

[1] I thank John Wood for telling me about Indulal Yagnik.

but questions of the inherently unequal and oppressive social structure of caste would pose a dilemma about who would reap the benefits of a free, modern and democratic India.

The Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims (KHAM) alliance formed by the Congress party and led by Madhavsinh Solanki in the early 80s had a chance to engage in reforms and redistribution. This alliance included the three most marginalized populations in the state - tribals (adivasis), low castes (Harijans) and the Muslims. When in power Solanki tried to enforce the land ceiling act which would distribute land held in excess of the limits but his government was threatened by a breakdown of law and order if he were to do so (Sud 2012).

When Solanki decided to increase the percentage of seats reserved in government educational institutes, the state witnessed the first anti-reservation riots in the country. This was a precursor to what would happen across the country in the 90s after the V.P. Singh government decided to implement the recommendations by the Mandal Commission Report. In summary, elite solidarity is important, however as the history of the state has shown, the small number of elites who did express solidarity with the oppressed - ranging from Indulal Yagnik in the 20s to Madhavsinh Solanki in the 80s - have often been sidelined and ridiculed or had to face counter-protests which often resulted in the dilution of the social reform agenda.

1.3.1.3.2 Media

Media coverage of protest by the oppressed is one of the essential factors affecting how the public perceives protest and the protesters. It is the coverage of movement that links the movement to the larger public and communicates to the latter what the people are protesting about (Lipsky 1968). We also know from empirical work that what the public thinks affects decision making by politicians. For instance, McVeigh et al. (2003) shows that when there is media coverage of protest, politicians have a greater incentive to pay attention to the issues.

The history of media coverage in Gujarat of movements by the marginalized have shown a very distinct bias i.e., ignoring or demonizing people or movements who challenge the social order of caste as portraying them as “anti-nationalist” or “anti-development”. Mehta (2010) demonstrates this bias in her work on the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA). The NBA advocated on behalf of the tribals who would be displaced by the construction of the Narmada Dam in south Gujarat. They demanded adequate rehabilitation from the government and to that end organized several mass movements. Their work made the World Bank, one of the financiers of the dam, pay attention to the rehabilitation policy and when the Bank found that the government was violating the policy, they retracted their loans. Countering the NBA’s efforts, were mass movements led by non-state actors such as religious gurus and caste leaders (Mehta 2010).

Given that resources (labor and time) are scarce, strategies constrained by ideologies, lack of elite support and a media that seems to reinforce and support the dominant narrative, I have tried to persuade the readers that the social movements perspective is inadequate for understanding variation in caste discrimination.

1.3.2 Features of the Political System

In this section I present an overview of research that investigates features of the political system to understand variation in outcomes such as the importance attached to ethnic differences and variation in ethnic conflict. While both ethnic differences or ethnic conflict are not the same as ethnic/caste discrimination, the perception of difference is necessary for discrimination.

The research in this section covers different features of the political system and how they could account for varying levels of caste discrimination. The work can be largely divided into three broad areas. The first covers those who see elections as a means of reconfiguring relationships between groups in order to consolidate a winning coalition. Elections in this line of argumentation are seen to provide incentives for the creation of a new identity and the simultaneous undermining of the old mostly parochial identities. If this is successful, not only does a new identity emerge but those responsible for the

mobilization win elections and gain access and control over the distribution of public resources (Kothari and Maru 1965; Posner 2004). The second investigates the role that constitutionally mandated rules such as reservations/quotas have on caste discrimination. These quotas were instituted right after independence when the laws of the nation were being formalized. They were meant to alleviate disparities between disparate groups which were caused by institutionalized forms of discriminations (Chauchard 2014). And lastly, there are others who argue that to understand patterns of discrimination we need to go beyond proximate causes of variation such as political competition. They say that discrimination and conflict predate elections so we need to think about more long term historical processes such as the enduring impact of colonialism (Verghese 2016). I will review each one these lines of thought in detail below.

1.3.2.1 Political competition

There are some scholars who emphasize the role that political competition plays in how much weight people give to different identities. Identities in such research are not assumed to be static. Rather, identities are constructed and given meaning by people (Posner 2004).

The malleability of identities is mostly compellingly documented in Dan Posner's work. Posner argues that politics is organized on the basis of ethnicity in Malawi but not in Zambia because electoral rules incentivize the formation of groups which can effectively compete in elections. Using the case of Chewas and Tumbukas on both the countries he shows that in Malawi, they each constitute a substantial size relative to national electoral arena but not in Zambia. Now elections are hotly contested because holding office gives access to a several benefits such as the allocation of jobs in the government to distribution of contracts for public projects such as building roads, highways, and bridges, scholarships among other benefits. Thus relative group size affects how the two groups view each other - adversaries in Malawi and allies in Zambia.

Posner's "cultural demography" logic is a simple yet powerful explanation for understanding the circumstances under which certain identities become the basis for

political competition such that the perception of the groups in question is altered to view some as friends and others as foes. Furthermore, what Posner shows is the spillover of the friends/foes perception into the private lives of people i.e., his logic is not circumscribed by the electoral domain. For example, 55.2% of the respondents in Malawi said they would not marry a person from the other group as compared to 23.8% in Zambia and 37.6% say marriage to members of other groups is frowned up in Malawi as compared to 6.1% in Zambia.

Given that identities are constructed, there are two instructive examples which look at the actual behavior associated with the creation of an identity. Using the case of the Gujarat Kshatriya Sabha (GKS) in Gujarat, a caste association which represented "many castes and lineage groups, most of them drawn from the economically depressed communities of cultivators" (35), Kothari and Maru (1965) show the efforts to overcome caste differences in order to create a new identity. This new identity which would subsume *all* differences under one umbrella would be the "Kshatriya" identity which included groups "ranging all the way from Rajputs who are the highest in the Kshatriya hierarchy, to Bhils who are semi-tribal, with Bariyas (a Koli caste) middle on the way" (35). They write of the process by which the disparate groups were assimilated into the "Kshatriya" fold,

> There was a conscious and deliberate attempt on the part of the leaders of the movement to break with the tradition. Symbols of caste pollution were deliberately discarded. One of the first to go was the eating restriction, and high and low were made to sit together at common feasts" (Kothari and Maru 1965: 35).

What the case of the GKS demonstrates is that competition for power can induce those with more to "give up" some of their behaviors such that they can interact with lower castes. Thus it would be expected that in places where the socially dominant group needs the votes of the lower castes, there would fewer restrictions on interaction and also we would expect lower levels of discrimination.

Both the above mentioned pieces of research show that political competition is necessary to induce the dominant group into changing their behavior towards minorities.

1.3.2.2 Colonial Legacies

There are others who attribute variation in the salience of identities it to colonial legacies (Dirks 2001; Verghese 2016). Ajay Verghese (2016) asks why conflict revolves around one identity as compared to another identity? For instance, why does conflict take mainly religious overtones in one area as compared to being imbued with caste or language or tribe in other areas? Moving beyond electoral incentives (Kothari and Maru 1965; Posner 2004) Verghese probes deeper and attributes the variation in the selected cleavage around which conflict revolves to colonial legacies.

Verghese shows that British areas experience more caste conflict and non-British, i.e., princely areas experience more religious conflict. He attributes this to the bases of of power which legitimized different forms rule. The British used caste as a basis for training and recruiting natives in order to administer and rule portions of India. By default they selected people who could read and write and this coincided with members belonging to higher castes such as the Brahmins and Baniyas. The recruitment of educated members from these castes into administrative services made caste salient. Furthermore the British relied on these castes to learn and document about the other castes populating their territories. On the other hand, rule by the princes was religiously legitimized. A consequence of this was favoritism towards co-religionists and discrimination towards non-co-religionists.

1.3.2.3 Reservations

Chauchard (2014) is his study makes an argument that the political institution of reservation affects how villagers behave with lower-castes. He argues that when a low-caste person becomes the sarpanch, he or she brings in with him the laws of the state which make untouchability punishable under law. This awareness instills a sense of fear in the non-SC people and makes them less likely to treat SC members in a less discriminatory way as compared to villages where the post of the sarpanch is not reserved. What Chauchard makes clear is that upper-castes do not think change how they think about lower-castes or change their beliefs, but what changes is the perception

of what constitutes publicly acceptable behavior and the legal ramifications of deviating from the prescribed behavior.

1.3.2.4 Limitations of the Aspects of the Political System

From the review of research on different aspects of the political system and how they could account for variation in levels of discrimination, we learn that the variation can be the outcome of a few features - political competition to consolidate votes, colonial legacies and constitutionally mandated reservations. Now each of the aspects will be shown to be either missing or only weakly present in understanding variation in caste discrimination in Gujarat.

1.3.2.4.1 Political competition

Elections have been argued to have an effect on the salience of identities such as caste and religion. The effects that have been studied range from altering discriminatory behavior (Kothari and Maru 1965) to perceived differences (Posner 2004) to conflict and violence (Wilkinson 2004). The assumption underlying these studies is that the competitive nature of the electoral process motivates political entrepreneurs to mobilize people along existing cleavages which will maximize the chances of winning the election by building the largest possible winning coalition. The competition to consolidate people or votes can lead people to either view each other as friends or foes. Evidence for friendship comes from the Gujarat Kshatriya Sabha where leaders encouraged their members to set aside caste rules and bring into their ambit lower castes to create the KHAM alliance (Kothari and Maru 1965). On the other hand, Posner (2004) present proof of when an identity can be mobilized such that there is an increase in expressed hostility (Posner 2004).

There are five problems with arguments that emphasize the role of political competition. First, with respect to the formation of caste alliances with Dalits in Gujarat, there have not been many instances. The Dalits are classified as Scheduled Castes (SC) and the SCs constitute a small proportion of the total population, less than 7%. Their small numbers do not lend easily to the formation of alliances. The last alliance formed with the Dalits

(Harijans) was the KHAM alliance which brought the Congress Party led by Madhavsinh Solanki to power in 1980. When he tried to institutionalize reforms that were promised to his supporters, the state (and the country) witnessed the first wave of anti-reservation riots.

The second and third problems pertain to the lack of study of the effects of caste alliances or the emerging identities (in Gujarat or any other part of India). As identities such as the Kshatriya label by the Gujarat Kshatriya Sangh or Hindutva by the BJP are constructed for a purpose (winning elections), should it be assumed that the duration for which the effects of the new identity lasts are the same as the electoral cycle? We just do not know. Third is the range of spaces to which these new forms of behavior apply. For instance, we do not know whether inter-dining of castes is observed only during political meetings of the alliance or do they also spillover to the family and village. The temporal and spatial effects of electoral incentives to build inter-caste relationships in the Indian context have not received as much attention as much as the faith that is placed in their power to change deep-rooted caste behaviors.

The fourth problem with placing a lot of weight on elections is much more fundamental. The problem lies with the assumption about caste which underlies such arguments. The belief is that caste is a “political” problem that can be solved “politically” and after that it will meet its “natural” end. What this means is that caste is an issue that the state is responsible for “solving” and is doing so with measures such as reservations, special courts and the extra protection offered to the minorities. Nothing more is needed. In fact there are scholars who have prematurely rung the death knell of caste based on this assumption (Srinivas 2003). In Chapter 3, I will demonstrate that the diagnosis of caste as a political problem whose prognosis lies in legislations and policies have been deliberately constructed to limit the scope of the state in society.

This is not to say elections have no role in changing discriminatory behaviors. What I am trying to argue is that the role of elections in altering deep-rooted behaviors needs to be

qualified. Writing on the relationship between the electorate and elections Guinier (2008) writes:

> Do more elections produce more democracy? I answer that question with a qualified negative: rule by elections, or what I have come to call 'electocracy', does not adequately serve the values of democracy. By electocracy I mean a political environment that defined itself by sacred moments of choice. The act of choosing in a competitive contest produce a clear winner. By casting their ballots, citizens bestow democratic accountability on the victor. At the same time, who wins the contest is even more important than who votes. And who votes is more important than the quality and quantity of citizen participation in, or the political consequence of, other important political acts of self-government such as deliberation, persuasion or collective mobilization (Guinier 2008:2).

And lastly, is the issue of applying mechanisms from higher levels of aggregations - assembly constituencies - to smaller levels such as villages i.e., the issue of ecological fallacy. Most of what we know about the outcomes of competition between political parties are at the level of assembly or parliamentary constituencies. This makes sense because it is at this level that the contest takes place. However we cannot apply the same logic to the village. Here is why. An assembly constituency contains a few hundred villages. If there are anti-caste riots in this constituency then one would expect that *all* villages would have relatively high levels of caste discrimination as compared to a constituency where there wasn't a riot. This expectation just does not hold up because as I will show that levels of discrimination vary *within* constituencies.

1.3.2.4.2 Colonial Legacies

Moving beyond proximate causes such as elections, there is work by scholars who write about the enduring impact of colonialism on existing patterns of ethnic discrimination. Nicholas Dirks argues that the enumeration of castes by the British gave caste the appearance of permanence (Dirks 2001). India at that time was however was only partially ruled by the British. There were some areas that were administered by the British and others by princes and kings. Utilizing this variation in the forms of rule, Verghese (2016), argues that cleavages which forms the basis for conflict are rooted in varying forms of rule. He finds that conflict is oriented around caste in British areas while conflict takes on religious undertones in princely areas. The reason for this is that British administration used caste to organize their own affairs while the rule of the princes was

legitimized by God i.e., religion. The British selected literate and educated castes like Brahmins and Baniyas to run their administration. Martial castes like the Kshatriyas and Pathans were recruited to become a part of the British military services. The incorporation of different castes into the service of the British Empire reinforced prior patterns of privilege. This reinforcement was also accompanied by the creation of new forms of privilege. For example in his work on Banaras, Cohn shows that those who became incharge of maintaining land records and collecting taxes, were able to use the office to increase their own share of land (Cohn 1960).

On the other hand the rule of the princes was legitimized by religious authorities. Thus in order to rule those belonging to the same religion were more likely to be allocated benefits as compared those who belonged to a different religion. The point however is simple. Benefits such as jobs and scholarships were distributed along caste lines in British areas and along religious lines in princely states. Thus varying forms of rule cemented the organization of politics in different ways.

While Verghese's account is compelling, there are two problems. First theoretically, the dichotomous division into British and non-British is problematic. This is because of substantial variation within British administered areas (Naseemullah and Staniland 2016). Disaggregated studies show evidence of substantial variation even within British administered areas. While some areas were seen as important for the purposes of revenue, other more remote areas did not get the same degree of investment. Thus even within British administered areas there is variation in the form of rule. And if there is variation in the form of rule then according to Verghese's own logic, there would be varying levels of caste discrimination. Therefore what matters is not just who ruled i.e., British or prince, but also why they ruled.

Secondly, Verghese's data focuses on a very narrow form of caste conflict. He uses data on the Naxalite conflict in a few states in eastern India as a measure of caste conflict. This ignores several important episodes of caste conflict such as the anti-reservation riots which shook up the entire country in the early 90s.

Moving beyond Verghese, there are two very basic problems with relying on colonial legacies as a possible explanation for varying levels of caste discrimination or conflict. The first is that too much weight is given to the colonizers at the cost of denying agency to the colonized. What this account suggests is that the British were able to dictate norms of behavior in each and every dimension of life to the colonized Indians. That the colonized were complicit in their own oppression and that they conceded to the idea of the "civilizing mission" where the "civilization" propounded by the British was superior to theirs. This is far from the truth as evident in the emergence of nationalist thought as exemplified by the writings of people like Aurobindo Ghosh and Swami Vivekananda much before the emergence of the Indian Congress in late 19th century (Chatterjee 1993). So while the British dominated India, they did not have hegemonic control (Guha 1997).

The second is a more difficult problem. The problem is with the classification of Hindu-Muslim conflict as religious and caste as ethnic. Caste has religious foundations so then how does it get classified as "ethnic" when it should be "religious"? Treating caste discrimination and conflict independently of religion is a prevalent assumption. However the process by which caste came to be disassociated from religion but at the same time its continuing existence being legitimated by religion is a puzzle which needs to be empirically investigated. The disassociation cannot be assumed to be fact.

1.3.2.4.3 Reservations

The Constitution of India has allocated a certain proportion of seats in the government for members of the SC. This has been done to ensure representation of groups that have been historically oppressed. Whether reservations have "worked" is a difficult question and out of scope of this work[2]. However Chauchard's research is one of the first to look at how reservations impact the perception of SCs. Chauchard finds that while stereotypes about SCs do not change - i.e., non-SCs continue to believe that SCs cannot rule, are

[2] Most of the existing work focuses on whether reservations leads to more allocation of benefits to groups that the reserved seat is supposed to represent.

incompetent and not hard-working - what does change are the norms of legally acceptable behavior i.e., non-SCs know that caste discrimination is legally wrong. Chauchard attributes this change in perception about norms of acceptable behavior to reservations.

While Chauchard's work on assessing the psychological impact of reservation on discrimination is important and his methodology innovative, there are four problems. The first problem is the duration of these effects i.e., do these effects last as long as the reservation is in effect? The second is that these are reported attitudes and not actual behavior. Third, he talks to males and from my experience in the field I have found males and female to give varying responses.

Lastly and more relevant to the case at hand, Chauchard does not deal with the problem of "reverse discrimination" which has manifested itself in the form of anti-reservation riots in the state.

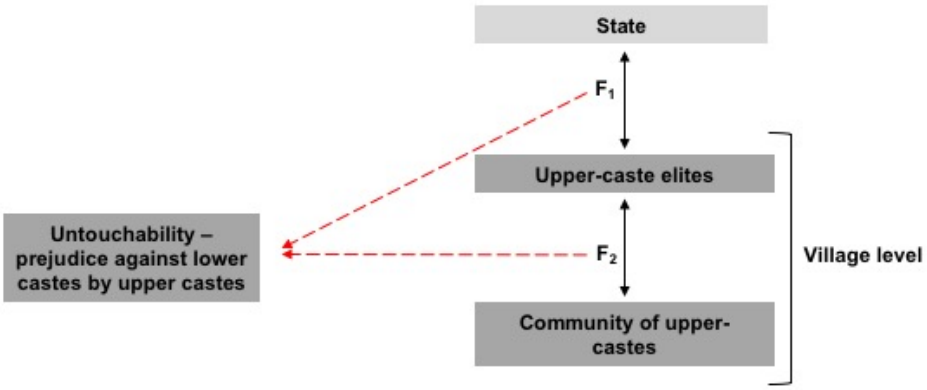
1.4.0 The Argument In Brief

There are two parts to my argument. In the first part, I discuss untouchability in a historical context. I show that untouchability has been and is a feature of the social structure of caste in India. There have been a fair share of struggles against untouchability across time. However, during the struggle for Independence, struggles against caste were given a different meaning. The Indian freedom leaders made untouchability a private issue which was to be addressed by Hindus themselves. The state - in this case the colonial state - was not allowed to interfere. In the process of confining and privatizing caste, the leaders were able to build a narrative of what it meant to be “Indian” and unite people based on an idea of India. While political freedom came our way - social freedom remained a distant dream. The nation was placed before caste. However lawmakers realized that untouchability would not simple disappear with Independence. And waiting for Hindus to introspect and then change their hearts and minds was an illusion. For untouchability to end, it has to become political i.e., the state had to be brought back in. This is exactly what was done when the practice of untouchability was made illegal in the Constitution of newly independent country.

However there were two issues. The first was the untouchability has never been actually defined by lawmakers. And second, while the Constitution made untouchability illegal, it simultaneously protected the freedom to practice any religion. Now we know that untouchability is caste-based discrimination and that caste is legitimated by religious texts so in a way untouchability too is backed by religious texts. So we see that on one hand people have the freedom to practice a religion of their choice but on the other hand certain religious behaviors - untouchability - are illegal. It is easy to imagine that prior to Independence, children from lower and higher castes did not go to the same school. However post-Independence, the state required that *all* children go to school. This put children from both lower and higher castes together in the same school. At its birth, facing political and social unrest, the Indian state was not in a position to send police forces to all of its few hundred thousand villages to make sure the law was followed.

I argue that what followed was an interpretive struggle of the place of caste and consequently untouchability in daily life. The state had provided the opportunity for changing social relations but it was not backed by enough state support. Therefore, the struggle could either result in the transformation of untouchability or its preservation. The direction of the struggle depends on the village-level upper-caste elites and their relationship with the state and their own village communities. I contend that untouchability is *jointly produced* (Figure 1.1) by the two forces - how village-level upper-caste elites bargain with the state and how they in turn bargain within their own castes. I expect high levels of bargaining to be associated with low untouchability and low levels of bargaining to be associated with high untouchability.

Figure 1.2: The *joint production* of untouchability



1.5.0 Research Design and Methods

I use two types of analyses to test my claims. As mentioned there are two parts to my argument. In the first part, I provide some historical context around the issues of caste and untouchability. To test claims about this, I need a descriptive source which goes back in time. I use the Times of India. In the second part, I focus in on the village-level caste elites and their interactions with the state and with their own caste members in their villages. For this I need a village-level dataset. I rely on a study done by scholars and NGOs between 2005-08 in Gujarat, India, and propose a new measure of untouchability. And I present a new cross-sectional village-level dataset of covariates.

1.5.1 Content Analysis

I relied on the coverage by the Times of India (TOI from here on) which started in 1838 in Bombay. TOI is the largest national English daily with some states having their own regional office. I was able to gain access to the entire TOI database consisting of *everything ever published* beginning 1838 and ending in 2005 via the University of Michigan's Hatcher Graduate Library. The TOI is a good source to test my claims about the changing perceptions of caste and untouchability (part 1 of my argument), because of two reasons. Theoretically, I needed a source which covered India (more specifically the Gujarat area) both before and after independence in 1947. The TOI provides coverage well before India became a part of the British Empire (1838-1857), then as a British colony (1858-1947), and finally an independent nation (1947-now). I use both automated and manual coding to examine different aspects of the texts. According to my claims, I expect the changing political contexts to capture the changing narratives on caste discrimination. I argue that these changing narratives reflect particular understanding of the problem and also the perceived solutions.

1.5.2 Quantitative Analyses

The quantitative analysis is done in two parts. In the first part, Chapter 4, I develop a measure of untouchability and in the second part, Chapter 5, I use a regression framework to account for variation in the measure. The data for both the measure and analyses comes from a study done by activists and scholars from Navsarjan which is an NGO

based in Gujarat, Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights, and scholars from the University of Notre Dame, University of Michigan, and University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. They came together between 2005 and 2008 to build an instrument which would record the varying manifestations of untouchability[3] in rural Gujarat. The survey (referred to as the Navsarjan study from here on) covered 1578 villages across 11 districts in Gujarat.

I use this data to first show that the experience of untouchability is not uniform across all Dalit groups within Gujarat. The Valmikis face the maximum levels of discrimination as compared to other Dalit groups. With a focus on the Valmikis, I then develop a measure of untouchability, which I call the *vulnerability score.* The creation of this scores takes into consideration two aspects of untouchability – (1) dependence i.e., various manifestations of untouchability maybe linked to each other and (2) uniqueness – each manifestation has its own distinct function and one cannot be substituted for another. The incorporation of these two aspects by calculating the joint probabilities of all possible combinations of untouchability practices results in a number or score which tells us how *vulnerable* a particular form of untouchability is to influence. It does not simply tell us the probability of finding a particular form of untouchability in a village or not. In fact it goes deeper than that and takes into account the relational aspect of untouchability. It attempts to provide a context within which untouchability is experienced. High *vulnerability scores* indicate that the practice is deeply embedded (strongly connected with other forms of untouchability) and thus less *vulnerable* to influence change and low *vulnerability scores* indicate that the practice is easier to influence (weakly or loosely connected with other forms of untouchability).

As each form of untouchability is considered to be unique, it has its own *vulnerability score* which tells us how strongly or weakly it is connected to other manifestations in the village. I focus on the variation in *vulnerability score* around a particular form of untouchability – discrimination around the distribution of electricity - in the regression analysis. I choose to focus on discrimination around the distribution of electricity for two reasons – one theoretical and one practical. Theoretically, I argue that each form of

[3] Chapter 4, Table 4.4

discrimination is unique but linked to other forms. Electricity being a scarce and valuable resource which was controlled by the Gujarat government up until 2003, has been argued to be a contestable public service (Min 2015). The distribution of this resource is contestable even within the confines of the villages where there is some evidence to suggest the capture of government resources by the village elite (e.g., Bardhan and Mookherjee 2006; Munshi and Rosenzweig 2008). Thus I expect discrimination around the distribution of electricity to be reflective of underlying village caste dynamics i.e., importance of caste and untouchability in everyday life.

Practically, there is disaggregated time series data about electricity distribution which is available for researchers in from different sources (e.g., district census handbooks and satellite imagery). The data availability allows us to test speculations about the link between different aspects of the political and social contexts and the distribution of electricity.

In addition to developing a new measure of untouchability, I also present a novel village-level dataset to test my claims. As no village level quantitative indicators of bargaining exist, I theorize what these measures would look like by drawing on the literature about state-building and the distribution of public goods. I then use government sources to quantify bargaining. I quantify bargaining between the state and village-level caste elites by coding when a village was electrified. The idea here is that villages electrified closer to state formation exert more influence on how the state distributes a scare resource like electricity. Gujarat as its own state was formed in 1960. Prior to that it was a part of Bombay Presidency. I expect villages found to be electrified in 1961 to have a greater influence on the government than villages which were electrified for the first time in 1981. I used the district census handbooks of 1961, 1971, 1981 which I found in the Gujarat Institute of Development (GIDR) library in Ahmedabad.

I then quantify bargaining between village-level caste elites based on a very interesting observation about how neighborhoods are named within villages. As mentioned earlier, the caste identity of any individual is very strong, especially inside the boundaries of the

village where everyone knows everyone. The strength of this identity is observable in the names of the neighborhoods which often take the name of the caste. For instance, it is not unusual to find a *Brahminvas* in a Gujarati village. This is the area where only *Brahmins* live or *Bhangivas* which is where *Bhangis* or Valmikis lives. However, there is variation. For instance, while in some villages *all* neighborhood names are *jati* names, in others some neighborhoods are *jati* names and some are non-*jati* or what I call "secular" names. This variation is interesting in that it shows a move away from being publicly associated with a particular *jati*. This movement however is not random. As there has not been much work done on this topic specifically, I use the work done about caste-based residential segregation (e.g., Thorat et al. 2015) to argue that changing the name of a neighborhood from that based on the *jati* to a non-*jati* names i.e., from a caste specific name to a secular names, is an outcome of internal deliberation or what I have referred to as bargaining within the caste. I expect villages which have a higher proportion of secular neighborhoods to be indicative of higher levels of bargaining. I used the electoral rolls publicly available on the Gujarat State Electoral Commission's website to develop this measure. More details about the extraction process can be found in Chapter 5.

These two measures – bargaining between the state and village-level caste elites and internal bargaining at the village-level – are what I argue in the next chapter (Chapter 2) to be involved in the *joint production* of untouchability. Hypotheses are tested in a regression framework in Chapter 5.

1.6.0 Dissertation Outline

The rest of the chapters of the dissertation are laid out with a brief description of their contents. Chapter 2 is devoted to laying out a theoretical framework for understanding variation in untouchability. In the first part of the argument, I show that the efforts to privatize caste were part of the larger movement for Independence. This is followed by a discussion about the role of the Independent state of India in addressing untouchability. In the next part I argue the ambiguity in the state's position on untouchability has provided village-level upper-caste elites ample opportunities for interpreting the role of caste. They can either engage in transformational efforts or preservationist. What they decide to do (or not) is a determined by their relationships with the state and with their own caste members. I then proceed to show that untouchability is *jointly produced* by these two levels of interactions.

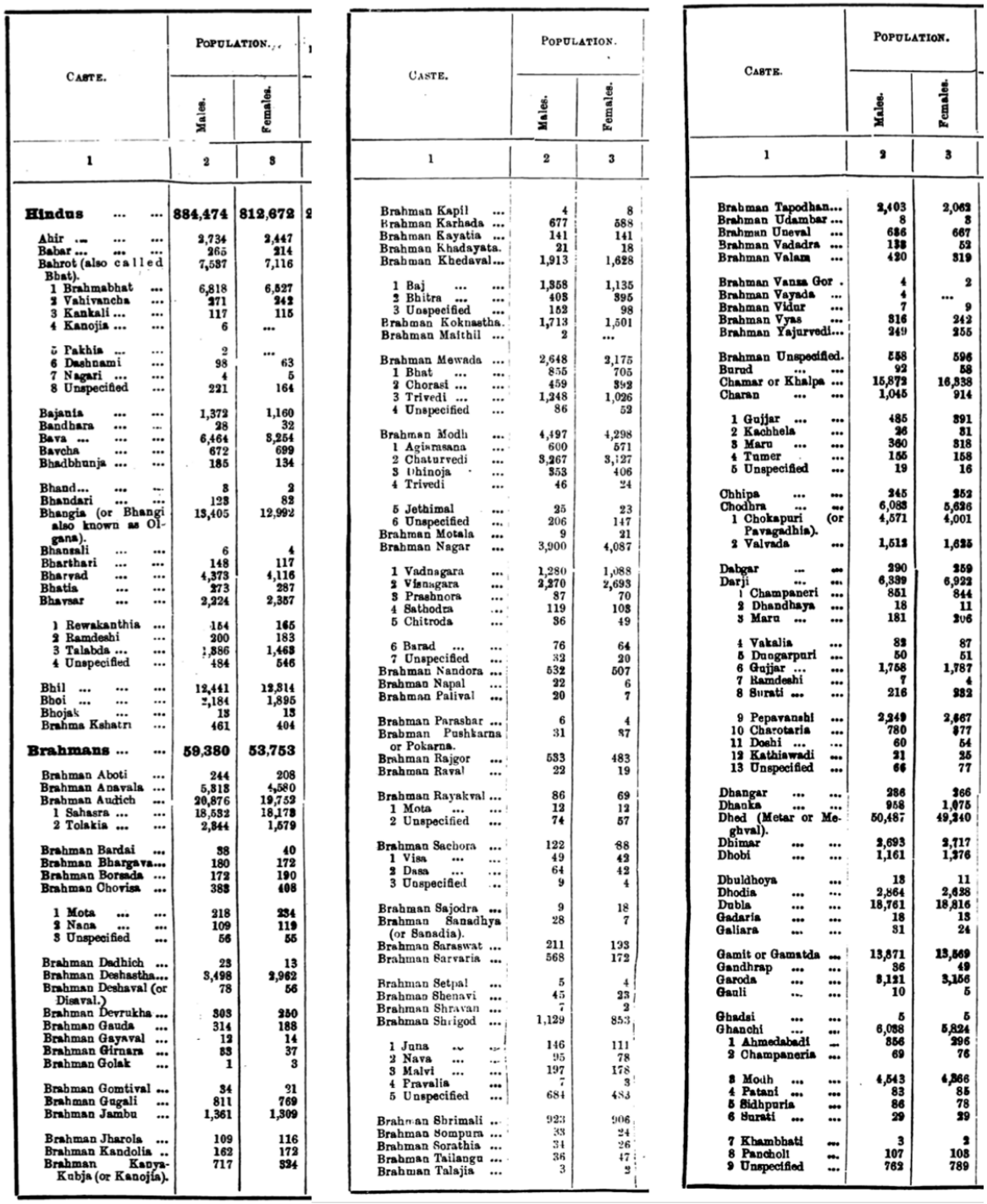
In Chapter 3, I use the TOI to test the more qualitative aspects of my argument. Specifically, I analyze the content of newspaper articles published between 1838 and 2005 in and around Gujarat, to test my claims about the narrative around caste and untouchability i.e., was untouchability indeed a "social" issue pre-Independence and a "political" issue post-Independence? The difference lies in the role of the state where in the former the state is seen as more distant while in the latter the state is actively involved. Additionally, the "untouchables" are depicted as dependent and helpless in the former, while in the latter, they are more self-aware and demand the state address their grievances.

Chapters 4 is devoted to creation of the untouchability measure - *vulnerability score*. I also introduce the data that would be used for creating the measure and show that the experience of untouchability varies across group. Choosing to focus on Valmikis, the group facing the most discrimination, in Chapter 5, I use a regression framework to analyze variation in the untouchability measure.

And lastly, in Chapter 6 I provide a summary of the argument, the results, its contributions and identify a few shortcomings and ways to move forward.

1.7.0 Appendix A – 1911 Census of Baroda State

Figure 1.3: Brahmin *jatis* as enumerated by the 1911 Census for Baroda State (princely kingdom in Gujarat



Caste.	Population.	
	Males.	Females.
1	2	3
Hindus	**884,474**	**812,672**
Ahir	2,734	2,447
Babar	265	214
Bahrot (also called Bhat).	7,587	7,116
1 Brahmabhat ...	6,818	6,527
2 Vahivancha ...	271	242
3 Kankali	117	115
4 Kanojia	6	...
5 Pakhia	2	...
6 Dashnami ...	98	63
7 Nagari	4	5
8 Unspecified ...	221	164
Bajania	1,372	1,160
Bandhara	28	32
Bava	6,464	3,254
Bavcha	672	699
Bhadbhunja	185	134
Bhand...	3	2
Bhandari	123	82
Bhangia (or Bhangi also known as Olgana).	13,405	12,992
Bhansali	6	4
Bharthari	148	117
Bharvad	4,373	4,116
Bhatia	273	287
Bhavsar	2,224	2,357
1 Rewakanthia ...	154	165
2 Ramdeshi ...	200	183
3 Talabda	1,886	1,468
4 Unspecified ...	484	546
Bhil	12,441	12,314
Bhoi	2,184	1,895
Bhojak	13	13
Brahma Kshatri ...	461	404
Brahmans	**59,380**	**53,753**
Brahman Aboti ...	244	208
Brahman Anavala ...	5,313	4,580
Brahman Audich ...	20,876	19,752
1 Sahasra	18,532	18,173
2 Tolakia	2,344	1,579
Brahman Bardai ...	38	40
Brahman Bhargava...	180	172
Brahman Borsada ...	172	190
Brahman Chovisa ...	383	408
1 Mota	218	234
2 Nana	109	119
3 Unspecified ...	56	55
Brahman Dadhich ...	23	13
Brahman Deshastha...	3,498	2,962
Brahman Deshaval (or Disaval.)	78	56
Brahman Devrukha ...	303	250
Brahman Gauda ...	314	188
Brahman Gayaval ...	12	14
Brahman Girnara ...	53	37
Brahman Golak ...	1	3
Brahman Gomtival ...	34	21
Brahman Gugali ...	811	769
Brahman Jambu ...	1,361	1,309
Brahman Jharola ...	109	116
Brahman Kandolia ...	162	172
Brahman Kanya-Kubja (or Kanojia).	717	334
Brahman Kapil ...	4	8
Brahman Karhada ...	677	588
Brahman Kayatia ...	141	141
Brahman Khadayata.	21	18
Brahman Khedaval...	1,913	1,628
1 Baj	1,358	1,135
2 Bhitra	403	395
3 Unspecified ...	152	98
Brahman Koknastha.	1,713	1,501
Brahman Maithil ...	2	...
Brahman Mewada ...	2,648	2,175
1 Bhat	855	705
2 Chorasi	459	392
3 Trivedi	1,248	1,026
4 Unspecified ...	86	52
Brahman Modh ...	4,497	4,298
1 Agiarsana ...	600	571
2 Chaturvedi ...	3,267	3,127
3 Dhinoja ...	353	406
4 Trivedi ...	46	24
5 Jethimal ...	25	23
6 Unspecified ...	206	147
Brahman Motala ...	9	21
Brahman Nagar ...	3,900	4,087
1 Vadnagara ...	1,280	1,088
2 Visnagara ...	2,370	2,693
3 Prashnora ...	87	70
4 Sathodra ...	119	103
5 Chitroda ...	36	49
6 Barad	76	64
7 Unspecified ...	32	20
Brahman Nandora ...	532	507
Brahman Napal ...	22	6
Brahman Palival ...	20	7
Brahman Parashar ...	6	4
Brahman Pushkarna or Pokarna.	31	37
Brahman Rajgor ...	533	483
Brahman Raval ...	22	19
Brahman Rayakval ...	86	69
1 Mota	12	12
2 Unspecified ...	74	57
Brahman Sachora ...	122	88
1 Visa	49	42
2 Dasa	64	42
3 Unspecified ...	9	4
Brahman Sajodra ...	9	18
Brahman Sanadhya (or Sanadia).	28	7
Brahman Saraswat ...	211	193
Brahman Sarvaria ...	568	172
Brahman Setpal ...	5	4
Brahman Shenavi ...	45	23
Brahman Shravan ...	7	2
Brahman Shrigod ...	1,129	853
1 Juna	146	111
2 Nava	95	78
3 Malvi	197	178
4 Pravalia ...	7	3
5 Unspecified ...	684	483
Brahman Shrimali ...	923	906
Brahman Sompura ...	33	24
Brahman Sorathia ...	34	26
Brahman Tailangu ...	36	47
Brahman Talajia ...	3	2
Brahman Tapodhan...	2,403	2,062
Brahman Udambar ...	8	8
Brahman Uneval ...	686	667
Brahman Vadadra ...	138	52
Brahman Valam ...	420	319
Brahman Vanza Gor .	4	2
Brahman Vayada ...	4	...
Brahman Vidur ...	7	9
Brahman Vyas ...	316	242
Brahman Yajurvedi...	249	255
Brahman Unspecified.	558	596
Burud	92	58
Chamar or Khalpa ...	15,872	16,338
Charan	1,045	914
1 Gujjar	485	391
2 Kachhela ...	26	31
3 Maru	360	318
4 Tumer ...	155	158
5 Unspecified ...	19	16
Chhipa	245	252
Chodhra	6,088	5,626
1 Chokapuri (or Pavagadhia).	4,571	4,001
2 Valvada ...	1,512	1,625
Dabgar	290	259
Darji	6,339	6,922
1 Champaneri ...	851	844
2 Dhandhaya ...	18	11
3 Maru	181	206
4 Vakalia ...	83	87
5 Dungarpuri ...	50	51
6 Gujjar	1,758	1,787
7 Ramdeshi ...	7	4
8 Surati	216	232
9 Pepavanshi ...	2,249	2,467
10 Charotaria ...	780	877
11 Doshi	60	54
12 Kathiawadi ...	21	25
13 Unspecified ...	66	77
Dhangar	286	266
Dhanka	958	1,075
Dhed (Metar or Meghval).	50,487	49,240
Dhimar	2,693	2,717
Dhobi	1,161	1,276
Dhuldhoya ...	13	11
Dhodia	2,864	2,638
Dubla	18,761	18,816
Gadaria	18	13
Galiara	31	24
Gamit or Gamatda ...	13,871	13,869
Gandhrap	36	49
Garoda	3,121	3,156
Gauli	10	5
Ghadsi	5	5
Ghanchi	6,088	5,824
1 Ahmedabadi ...	356	296
2 Champaneria ...	69	76
3 Modh	4,543	4,366
4 Patani	83	85
5 Sidhpuria ...	86	78
6 Surati	29	29
7 Khambhati ...	3	2
8 Pancholi ...	107	103
9 Unspecified ...	762	789

Chapter 2

A Framework for Understanding Variation in Untouchability

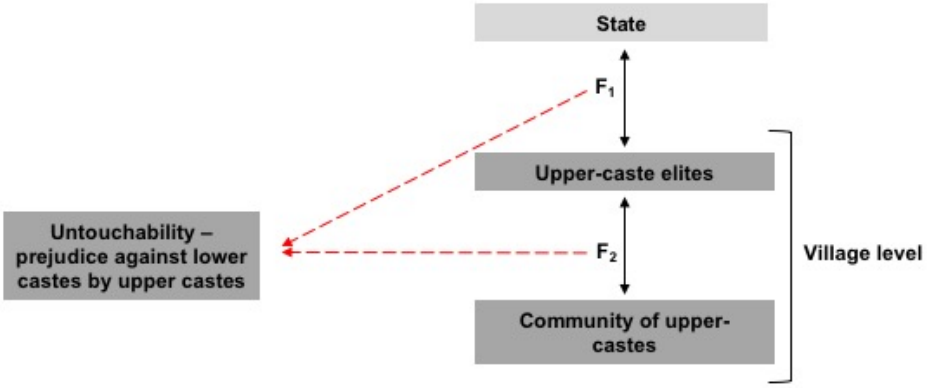
2.1.0 Introduction

In this chapter I will present a framework for understanding variation in untouchability i.e., caste-based discrimination. In brief, I argue that variation in untouchability can be understood as *jointly produced* by two forces - bargaining between the state and village level upper-caste elites and within caste bargaining. Before I delve into the details of the argument, I briefly re-describe the phenomena under investigation – untouchability and secondly, I clarify the actors and where they are situated relative to each other.

In Chapter 1, I described caste and untouchability. Untouchability is a feature of the social stratification system of caste. Simply put it comprises discriminating and humiliating behaviors directed from the higher castes to lower castes. However what sets it apart from other forms of observed discrimination is its ritualistic aspect. Each manifestation of untouchability is accompanied by a set of elaborate rituals that prescribe correct behavior and what should be done in case of violation both by the high and low caste (Gupta 2005). Untouchability as a phenomena pervades all interactions between low and high castes. As I will show in this Chapter, it is not something that can switched off or left behind, when moving from one place to another. While it consists of specific observable behaviors, I will argue that untouchability also constitutes a way of understanding the world and the individual's place within it. However developing a framework to understand its variation in its manifestations across villages will be the primary focus of this chapter

The village is the smallest unit of the Indian administrative system and is the unit of analysis. The next level is the sub-district (or taluka), followed by the district and lastly the highest level is state[1]. There are four actors - state, upper-caste elites, community of upper-castes and the lower-castes. Figure 2.1 shows the relative position of the actors. F_1 represents bargaining between the state and village level upper-caste elites. F_2 represents within caste bargaining. I will present an argument which will show that variation in untouchability, which is prejudice against lower-castes by upper-castes, can be accounted for by the interaction of F_1 and F_2.

Figure 2.1: The *joint production* of untouchability



I set up my argument in 5 parts. Each part is shown in Figure 2.2. In Section 2.2.0, I show that the struggle over classification of caste as a *public* or a *private* issue was grounded in the perceived role of the colonial state in the daily lives of people. *Public* being domains where the state has a clear mandate to intervene and *private* being spaces where the state has limited or negligible influence such as in the personal sphere (families and homes). As religious texts were being reinterpreted by leaders of the freedom movement to construct a broad Indian identity which would transcend religion and caste, caste and consequently untouchability, were confined to the *private* domain where the colonial state and later the post-colonial state were not allowed to intervene (Figure 2.2, *part 1*) (Chatterjee 1993, 1995).

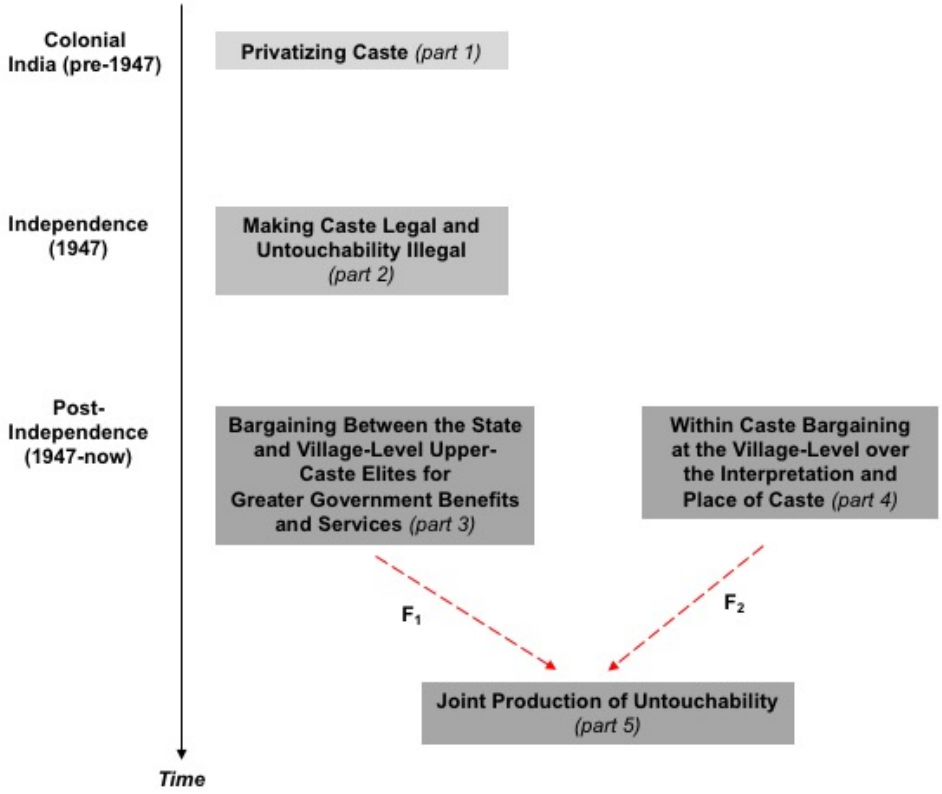
[1] The state is embedded within a country.

This is followed by examining the conflict over the place of caste in society in the Constitution of independent India in Section 2.3.0. As untouchability is rooted in caste, one cannot understand the former without understanding the role of caste. While on one hand the Constitution outlaws untouchability making it a punishable offense, it simultaneously protects the freedom of people to practice their own religion. A consequence of this has been to make caste discrimination illegal without doing the same to caste (Figure 2.2, *part 2*). This ambiguity in the law - caste being legal (freedom of religion) but untouchability being illegal (discrimination based on caste is banned) - is what I argue to be fundamental in understanding variation in untouchability. In some cases this ambiguity has been exploited to preserve untouchability and but in others, it has been used for transformation.

In Sections 2.4.0 and 2.5.0, I show that the locus of change (preserve or transform) lies with the village level upper-caste elites and how they bargain with both the state and within their own communities in their villages. Bargaining with the state takes the form of mobilization for government services (such as irrigation, agricultural subsidies) (Figure 2.2, *part 3*) and bargaining within the caste takes the form of reinterpretation of caste rules (Figure 2.2, *part 4*).

In the last Section (Figure 2.2, *part 5*), I draw out the implications for untouchability in villages. I argue that untouchability can be understood as *jointly produced* by how upper-caste village level elites bargain with the state and with their communities. These implications are formulated as testable hypotheses in Section 2.6.0.

Figure 2.2: Flowchart of the Argument



2.2.0 Colonial India – Privatizing Caste *(part 1)*

Chatterjee (1993) in his book *The Nation and Its Fragments* asks a provocative question. Probing the concept of "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983) as the basis for a nation, Chatterjee asks whose imagination is used to build a nation (specifically India) because if colonialism were completely successful, then it had to have colonized the minds of Indians[2]. If however, colonialism was not as totalizing as expected, then the effects would be limited. He argues that if the former were true i.e., successful colonization of the minds of Indians, then the anti-colonial struggle would not have taken the form it actually did as the colonial regime would have instilled complete obedience - both in thought and action. However, what was observed was both the ability of the colonized not to just imagine but also act in ways contrary to the expectations of the colonial regime thus showing the limited effects of colonialism, at least in the minds of the colonized. Chatterjee (1993) writes:

> "By my reading, anticolonial nationalism created its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power. It does this by dividing the world of social institutions and practices into two domains - the material and the spiritual. The material is the domain of the "outside", of the economy and of the statecraft, of science and technology, a domain where the West has proved its superiority and the East had succumbed. In this domain, then, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated. The spiritual, on the other hand, is an "inner" domain bearing the "essential" markers of cultural identity. The greater one's success in imitating Western skills in the material domain, therefore, the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one's spiritual culture. This formula is, I think, a fundamental feature of anticolonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa" (Chatterjee 1993:6).

This "spiritual" or "inner" domain that Chatterjee refers to is the preserve of the ""essential" markers of cultural identity" such as religion, family, position of women and important for us, caste. It is a space where the state is not allowed to dictate the norms of behavior. The separation of experience into these two distinct domains - public and private - had a purpose. It was the creation of a space (*private)* where the past could be reinterpreted in a way to meet challenges in the present. For the anticolonial struggle, it was in this "spiritual" or *private* space that the meaning of being an Indian was

[2] My focus is India, however his argument can be applied to colonies both in Asia and Africa.

This hypothesis of the colonization of mind may bear some semblance to the idea of "false consciousness" whereby the oppressed believe and thus are complicit in their own oppression. Their consciousness is not truly theirs, it belongs and has been instilled by the oppressor, hence the term "false consciousness". But even this idea of hegemonic control has been challenged through evidence of resistance and rebellion by untouchables in India and slaves in the US (Scott 1990).

redeemed from imperialism's epistemic violence. It was in the *private* sphere, that the leaders of the anticolonial struggle could challenge and invalidate claims about Indians being "superstitious", "barbaric", and "uncivilized". It was in this space that they could imagine an Indian and thus a community called India which would transcend the contours of what the colonizers had propagated who an Indian was (e.g., "traditional", "superstitious", "uncivilized") and what India was (land of darkness which needed the West to educate and civilize its inhabitants).

It was in this *private* domain that India was imagined by one of the most popular and remembered leaders of the Independence movement, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Gandhi from here on). Gandhi, writes in *Hind Swaraj,* which is his exposition of his own political philosophy:

> *I believe that the civilization India has evolved is not to be beaten in the world. Nothing can equal the seeds sown by our ancestors.* Rome went, Greece shared the same fate; the might of the Pharaohs was broken; Japan has become Westernized; of China nothing can be said; *but India is still, somehow or other, sound at the foundation*. The people of Europe learn their lessons from the writings of the men of Greece or Rome, which exist no longer in their former glory. In trying to learn from them, the Europeans imagine that they will avoid the mistakes of Greece and Rome. Such is their pitiable condition. *In the midst of all this India remains immovable and that is her glory*. It is a charge against India that her people are so uncivilized, ignorant and stolid, that it is not possible to induce them to adopt any changes. It is a charge really against our merit. What we have tested and found true on the anvil of experience, we dare not change. *Many thrust their advice upon India, and she remains steady*. This is her beauty: it is the sheet-anchor of our hope.
>
> Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. ...
>
> *If this definition be correct, then India, as so many writers have shown, has nothing to learn from anybody else, and this is as it should be*. … We have had no system of life-corroding competition. *Each followed his own occupation or trade and charged a regulation wage*. It was not that we did not know how to invent machinery, but our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts after such things, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre. ... They further reasoned that large cities were a snare and a useless encumbrance and that people would not be happy in them, that there would be gangs of thieves and robbers, prostitution and vice flourishing in them and that poor men would be robbed by rich men. *They were, therefore, satisfied with small villages*. They saw that kings and their swords were inferior to the sword of ethics, and they, therefore, held the sovereigns of the earth to be inferior to the Rishis and the Fakirs. *A nation with a constitution like this is fitter to teach others than to learn from others.* …

> *And where this cursed modern civilization has not reached, India remains as it was before. ...*
>
> *Now you see what I consider to be real civilization. Those who want to change conditions such as I have described are enemies of the country and are sinners* (emphasis mine).

I have quoted Gandhi at length not because his words are the truth, but instead to show what his conception of India looked like. As the leader of the Congress party which also made him the leader of independence movement, he was to have a huge influence in the prioritization and sorting of issues into seemingly rigid dichotomies such as the *public*/state and *private*/non-state spaces. For Gandhi, the "true" India, untouched by modern/Western civilization was in the villages. In his interpretation, it was in the villages that there was peace and harmony. As people were organized by caste and knew their place in society, there was no competition. Without competition, the probability of conflict would be greatly reduced. It was this idea of India - that stressed on one's moral duty (*dharma*) and the path of right action (*karma*), - which was to provide the basis for mobilizing a mass movement. However caste-based discrimination and conflict were inevitable as this idea of India was based on an illusory separation of the "material"/*public*/state and the "spiritual"/*private*/non-state.

Caste is typically depicted as a religious hierarchical social order with Brahmins on the top and the untouchables at the bottom. In between are the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Each of these five groups are divided into thousands of endogamous *jatis* and the social position of each within a local unit such as a village is subject to contestation (Srinivas 1980). The untouchables who are at the bottom, however, have historically had the least amount of resources and opportunities for negotiation and thus upward mobility. One of the defining features of this social order is the phenomena of untouchability. Untouchability are a prejudicial behaviors that are legitimized by ancient religious texts and whose goal is to maintain distance between higher and lower caste members (*jatis* classified as untouchables). One of the purported reasons being that their hereditary occupations are associated with the handling of objects considered to be both materially and spiritually polluting (Randeria 1992). These objects range from the removal of animal carcasses, skinning animal carcasses for leather, cleaning

cremation grounds, cleaning streets, cleaning toilets, and messengers of bad news such as death. In addition to their association with "dirty jobs", they have also been considered impure because of their dietary habits that includes the consumption of meat. Because of their association with items considered to be both spiritually and materially degrading, there exist several practices which maintain a distance (e.g., no inter-caste marriage, residential segregation, prohibition of entry to homes and temples) and serve to remind them of their place in society (e.g., separate drinking cups in schools and restaurants, forced to sit on the ground during panchayat meetings, forced to wait by the village well till the arrival of an upper-caste person).

This is not to say that there have been no challenges to both caste and untouchability. The challenges mostly stemmed from observation of the immense suffering, humiliation, and oppression that is an outcome of adherence to caste beliefs rules[3]. While delving into the history of resistance to caste is not the subject of the thesis, what is relevant is the indispensability of the state (both colonial and post-colonial) to bringing about a change in the status quo. A successful intervention by the state would be the banning of certain behaviors backed by a credible threat of punishment. For instance, Chatterjee writes, "the period of "social reform" was actually made up of two distinct phases. In the earlier phase, Indian reformers[4] looked to the colonial authorities to bring about by state action the reform of traditional institutions and customs. In the latter phase, although the need for change was not disputed, there was strong resistance to allowing the colonial state to intervene in matters affecting "national culture"" (Chatterjee 1993: 6). Caste was one the traditional institutions that was being bought under the purview of the colonial state. There are a few documented examples of such intervention. Viswanath (2014) examines how lower castes with the help of missionaries used the legal apparatus of the colonial state to challenge upper caste dominance and improve their own

[3] Religions such as Sikhism and Buddhism were a reaction to the Brahmanical orthodoxy. Juergensmeyer (1982) traces the Adi-Dharm movement in Punjab. There were also the founding of sects to move away from a blind adherence to prescribed behaviors which were in most case steeped in prejudice. Some of the sects that are widely known are the Arya Samaj started by Dayanand Saraswati in 1875 and the Brahmo Samaj started by Raja Rammohan Roy in 1828 in West Bengal. And the Satyashodhak Samaj founded by Jyotiba Phule in 1873 in Pune, Maharashtra.

[4] The example of Raja Rammohan Roy is well known. He used the state apparatus to bring about a ban of *sati* in 1829 which was a practice where widows were required to kill themselves by sitting on their husbands' funeral pyre.

conditions. Rudolph (1965) describes the efforts of the Shanans to use the state to defend the right of their women to cover their upper bodies which until then had been a prerogative of only upper caste women.

While the colonial state was used to transform caste behaviors, what is clear from the accounts is that for such to happen, upper-caste elite support was to a certain extent necessary and the issue had to be mobilized enough to pose a threat to the law and order of the colonial state. Once deemed a *public* issue, the state had the mandate to intervene. The literature on social movements have provided us with substantial evidence about the importance of framing issues and grievances in ways to get not just attention but also the implementation of solutions (Benford and Snow 2000; McVeigh et al. 2004).

However, with the growing mobilization efforts of the Independence struggle, caste was being gradually displaced from the *public* sphere to the *private* sphere. What this meant was that the state could no longer intervene in caste related matters. Caste was increasingly being framed as a "spiritual" problem over which the colonial government had no authority. In 1936, this displacement of caste as a *public* (political) to a *private* (social) problem is observed and recorded by Ambedkar:

> The path of social reform, like the path to heaven (at any rate, in India), is strewn with many difficulties. Social reform in India has few friends and many critics. The critics fall into two distinct classes. One class consists of political reformers, and the other of the socialists.
> ...
> It was at one time recognized that without social efficiency, no permanent progress in the other fields of activity was possible; that owing to mischief wrought by evil customs, Hindu society was not in a state of efficiency; and that ceaseless efforts must be made to eradicate these evils. It was due to the recognition of this fact that the birth of the National Congress was accompanied by the foundation of the Social Conference. While the Congress was concerned with defining the weak points in the political organization of the country, the Social Conference was engaged in removing the weak points in the social organization of Hindu society.
> …
> But soon the two wings developed into two parties, a 'political reform party' and a 'social reform party', between whom there raged a fierce controversy. The 'political reform party' supported the National Congress, and the 'social reform party' supported the Social Conference. The two bodies thus became two hostile camps. The point at issue was whether social reform should precede political reform.
> …

> It was, however, evident that the fortunes of the Social Conference were ebbing fast. The gentlemen who presided over the sessions of the Social Conference lamented that the majority of Hindus were for political advancement and indifferent to social reform; (Ambedkar 1936: 210-11)

Ultimately, for Ambedkar the solution was to "give up" Hinduism whose religious texts promote untouchability. This position was in contrast to Gandhi who responded to Ambedkar saying:

> In my opinion the profound mistake that Dr Ambedkar has made in his address is to pick out the texts of doubtful authenticity and value, and the state of degraded Hindus who are no fit specimens of the faith they so woefully misrepresent. (328)

Instead, what Gandhi believed was that while untouchability was a serious defect in Hinduism, it could be treated through reflection of "true" religion is accompanied by introspection of individual Hindus on their own behavior. Regarding untouchability, he writes in *Hindi Swaraj,*

> At this time of the day it is unnecessary to dilate upon the necessity of the removal of this blot and curse upon Hinduism. Congressman have certainly done much in this matter. But I am sorry to have to say that many Congressmen have looked upon this item as a mere political necessity and not something indispensable, so far as Hindus are concerned, for the very existence of Hinduism. If Hindu Congressmen take up the cause for its own sake, they will influence the so-called sanatanis (traditionalists) far more extensively that they have hitherto done. They should approach them not in a militant spirit but, as befits their non-violence, in a spirit of friendliness. And so far as Harijans are concerned, every Hindu should make common cause with them and befriend them in their awful isolation - such isolation as perhaps the world has never seen in the monstrous immensity one witnesses in India. I know from experience how difficult the task is. But it is part of the task of building the edifice of swaraj. And the road to swaraj is steep and narrow. There are many slippery ascents and many deep chasms. They have all to be negotiated with unfaltering step before we can reach the summit and breathe the fresh air of freedom

While the ideological debate on caste[5] would continue, leaders who were in charge for the day to day mobilizing of people for the Independence movement had to confront the reality of caste. These leaders recognized that without the support of the village level caste leaders, which meant turning a blind eye to social evils like untouchability, it would be difficult to build a mass movement. The presence of local caste leaders would add

[5] Whether social change should precede political change (likes of Ambedkar) or political change should precede social change (likes of Patel and Tilak). The question about the sequence in which different rights (social or political) are achieved (Guttmann).

legitimacy to the movement seeing which their caste brethren would join. Anil Bhatt's work on the *Patidar Yuvak Mandal* (Patidar Youth Organisation) in Gujarat is an instructive example of the indispensability of local caste leaders. Bhatt observes,

> In their task of organising public support for the national movement at the local level, the leaders confronted several problems. First of all they had to prepare the traditional leaders to relate their roles to the political movement, by supporting their caste reforms[6] while at the same driving home to them the utility of political means in achieving their goals. Secondly, they had to seek the approval of higher level leaders whose style and idiom were dominated by universalistic and secular symbols. They had also to gain recognition from the urbanised, high-caste sections of society. Since political activity in this period was confined to a small section of the English educated urban elite, the efforts of these rural leaders towards a mass movement were often looked down upon or even ridiculed, by the former. It was therefore important, in the beginning, to win their recognition, and by a slow process to incorporate some of them into the new leadership and to make them see the utility of traditional society and loyalties for a broad-based political movement (Bhatt 1970: 285).

What the leaders of the Independence movement, both at the local and national level, realized (more so at the local than the national) is that building a nation, imaginary and real, like India could not happen without the cooperation of village-level caste elites. And thus an attack on the bases of their legitimacy,- religion, - and consequently its products, - untouchability, - could not be a part of the public nationalist agenda. Doing so would alienate their deeply religious and hence casteist supporters. The result was the confinement of problems of untouchability to the *private* sphere where individuals were responsible for their own conduct.

[6] Education within caste; widow re-marriage within caste. Extent of reform was limited to caste members.

2.3.0 Making Caste Legal and Untouchability Illegal in an Independent Nation *(part 2)*

In the previous Section, I showed that the struggle over classification of caste and consequently untouchability as a *public*/*private* issue was grounded in the particular interpretation of religious texts brought about by the matter of political Independence taking precedence over social reforms. As certain religious principles were being appropriated by leaders of the freedom movement to construct a broad Indian identity which would transcend caste differences, caste and thus untouchability were relegated to the private domain where the colonial state was not allowed to intervene. Articulating Indianness and instilling a sense of pride was imperative for mobilizing people into the freedom movement. Framing what it meant to be a part of a larger Indian community as conditional on values of *dharma* (moral duty) and *karma* (right action), like Gandhi did, preserved caste and consequently (but unintentionally) untouchability. However imagining a nation where caste was a *private* affair, as argued by Ambedkar, threatened the very principles which were being used by leaders such as Gandhi to define what it meant to be Indian.

While we know that Gandhi prevailed over Ambedkar, the latter, in his role as independent India's first law minister, enshrined into the Constitution legal provisions for addressing caste discrimination. By doing this, he made caste a *public* problem where the state can intervene. However during the debates of the Constituent Assembly, making caste and consequently religion a matter of state intervention i.e., a *public* problem, was not easy. He is recorded as saying:

> The religious conceptions in this country are so vast that they cover every aspect of life from birth to death. There is nothing which is not religious and if personal law is to be saved I am sure about it that in social matters we will come to a standstill …. There is nothing extraordinary in saying that we ought to strive hereafter to limit the definition of religion in such a manner that we shall not extend it beyond beliefs and such rituals as may be connected with ceremonials which are essentially religious. It is not necessary that the sort of laws, for instance, laws relating to tenancy or laws relating to succession, should be governed by religion ...I personally do not understand why religion should be given this vast expansive jurisdiction so as to cover the whole of life and to prevent the legislature from encroaching upon that field (Ambedkar cited in Chatterjee 1995: 19)

Imposing a democratic political order which held sacred the principle of equality before law would drastically curtail the power of the village-level caste elites. The lawmakers led by Ambedkar came up with provisions to address the history of oppression of weaker communities such as lower castes, tribes, and women. They did this through quotas which reserves seats in colleges, universities, civil services, police, panchayat, municipalities, legislative assemblies and the parliament. They also passed laws which banned untouchability and which protected minorities in cases of coercion and violence. Article 17 of the constitution bans untouchability but it does *not* define untouchability. But from Article 15 which prohibits discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, we know that the spaces that Article 17 applies to. These are: (a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment or (b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing *ghats*, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of state funds or dedicated to the use of general public.

However at the same time the Constituent Assembly also gives the citizens of India the freedom to practice one's own faith and religion. It is at this juncture that the Indian state becomes embroiled in an intractable controversy over the place of caste in society. One on hand untouchability, which is discrimination based on caste is banned but on the hand people have the freedom to practice their own religion and thus engage in caste practices. Simply put, *caste is legal but certain caste based behaviors are not*. The State cannot interfere in religious practice because it is the *private* domain. It exercises its power in the *public* realm which are the spaces listed in Article 15. So for example, the state cannot do anything about endogamy i.e., no inter-caste marriages, because it is a *private* affair. But the state can exert its influence when Dalits are denied employment or Dalits are beaten up or are denied seats on public transport.

The fragmentation of life into the *public* and *private*, where in the former laws of the state apply but in the latter the very same laws are inapplicable, causes much ambiguity i.e., much space for interpretation and bargaining as to what counts as untouchability. It is this ambiguity, that I argue, lies at the core of the observed variation in untouchability. As I will argue, this ambiguity in the law: - caste legal (freedom of religion) but caste

based behaviors illegal (discrimination based on caste is banned), leads to ambiguities in the definition of untouchability - which in some cases is exploited to preserve untouchability and but in others used to transform untouchability. The locus of change, - preserve or transform, - lies with the local village elite and how they interpret the law and bargain with the state. It is to them that I turn in the next section.

2.4.0 Independent India – Bargaining Between the State and Village-Level Upper-Caste Elites *(part 3)*

So far I have shown two things. The first part of my argument (Figure 2.2, *part 1*) shows how the struggle for Independence resulted in the separation of the "material" (*public*/state) and "spiritual" (*private*/non-state) (Chatterjee 1993, 1995). Caste and untouchability were assigned to the *private* domain thus restricting the right of the state to intervene. In the second part of my argument (Figure 2.2, *part 2*), I show how this fragmented worldview found its expression in the contradictory mandates of the Constitution regarding untouchability. The law on one hand makes caste legal as it protects the freedom of religion but on the other hand makes certain aspects of caste in certain spaces, namely, untouchability illegal. While this separation of untouchability of caste may work in theory, the next two sections will demonstrate the ambiguity of this separation. I will show that in some cases this ambiguity has been exploited to preserve untouchability and but in others, it has been used for transformation.

In this Section I discuss the relationship of village-level caste elites with the state (Figure 2.2, *part 3*). So far, I have focused on the ambiguity around caste and untouchability at the level of the law. The law undermines certain aspects of caste, namely untouchability in *public* spaces but protects it in *private* domains. However assuming compliance in *public* spaces is a naive assumption. Additionally the data (Chapter 3 and 4) shows the variation in compliance in *public* spaces. The problem with a sole focus on the state assumes that the implementation of laws are a top-down process and as such is unable to account for variation in untouchability. This is because a state-centric explanation has a more fundamental problem. This view denies agency to the people for whom the laws are intended. It assumes blind compliance and obedience to laws of the government by the people.

There is disaggregated research from the state-building literature which warns us from adopting such a top-down perspective. Jim's Scott's research (1990, 1998, 2009) bears testimony that those in positions of power and authority often do not have hegemonic control over the lives of their subjects. What may look like compliance may not indeed

be so and this is demonstrated through the scripts (public and hidden) adopted by the oppressed such as slaves in the United States and untouchables in India (Scott 2009) and strategies of continually moving to evade state control (Scott 2009). More recently disaggregated research on state-building have shown a variation in the forms of rule which is the result of how local leaders negotiate with the state.

Drawing on her deep ethnographic work in post-conflict Afghanistan, where President Hamid Karzai was given mandate of rebuilding the country, Mukhopadhyay finds that even though observers in the United States and Western Europe may frown upon the reliance on local leaders for state-building, these apparently “undemocratic” leaders are indispensable. She demonstrates variation in the relationship between the center and periphery - i.e., while some leaders are “strongman governors” who promote the mandate of the central government, others retain the role of “warlords” and cannot be ruled (Mukhopadhyay 2014). Returning to Asia, scholars have documented evidence of varying relationships between the state and local elites (Naseemullah and Staniland 2016). Cases have been documented where the state shares authority with the local elite or as Naseemullah refers to it as “hybrid regimes” (Naseemullah 2014) or where the state is complicit in the durability of the conflict (Baruah 2005), or the state outsources law and order to militias (Staniland 2012), or as the state simply does not care (Slater and Kim 2015).

The continued authority of the local leaders or “traditional chiefs” has also been argued to actually increase responsiveness of the government (Baldwin 2016). In her work in Zambia, Baldwin argues and finds evidence that citizens tend to trust their traditional unelected chiefs more than the elected politicians. This is because of the incentives each faces. A traditional leader has a longer time horizon as compared to the politician whose time horizon is as long as an election cycle. This variation causes citizens to trust traditional leaders more for mobilizing the state for development projects. Thus the traditional leaders are seen as a bridge between the people and the democratic electoral system (Baldwin 2016).

Evidence of the link between mobilization and government services has also been documented by scholars of social movements and public goods provision. Andrews (2001) finds that US counties which had strong movement infrastructures were more likely to receive funding as compared to those who did not. Weitz-Shapiro (2006) finds that protest has a positive effect on redistribution in Argentina although the effect changes with time.

The common denominator in the studies mentioned above is the varying mobilization capacity of the local elites to bargain with the state for resources and/or sharing power. In the case of some African states, it has been found that higher level of mobilization pre-independence resulted in higher levels of government services post-independence. Bates (2008: 37) refers to this as the "fruits of independence". These are the rewards that local elites and their supporters expected for their participation in the independence movement. And these rewards came in the form of "jobs, loans or cash" (Bates 2008: 38).

Returning to the case of our village-level caste elites, I expect patterns of public goods provision to be reflective of the bargaining and mobilization efforts that occurs between the state and village-level caste elites. If the group is deemed to be a credible threat to the political order by the state, then there is a high chance of accommodation and political inclusion. If this is not done, then there is a high chance of civil conflict (Wucherpfennig et al. 2016).

Village level elites who are successfully included by the political system find it "easier" to reconcile with laws which undermine their authority in *public* spaces. This is because they have become part of a political system which gives them the opportunity to extend their influence beyond the village. Thus, they become transformative agents for both caste and untouchability. On the other hand, village level caste elites who find themselves excluded by the political system, hold on to their power and do not comply with the laws of the state. In this process both caste and untouchability are preserved in the *public domains*.

2.5.0 Independent India – Reinterpretation of Caste Rules at the Village-Level *(part 4)*

In the previous section I discussed the relationship between the state and village-level caste elites. I argued that the law is perceived to threaten the power of the caste elites by making particular caste behaviors (untouchability) illegal. In order to counter this threat, caste elites need to mobilize to retain or enhance their positions. I argued that one way of doing this was through incorporation into the democratic political system. Several scholars have documented participation in the democratic political system as a way of political inclusion (Rudolph 1965; Kothari and Maru 1965; Jaffrelot 2003; Witsoe 2013; Baldwin 2016). Now given that the law seeks to undermine upper-caste authority, and that the elites mobilize to become a part of the political, there is one more crucial actor whose behaviors determines the treatment of lower-castes. These are the constituents or supporters of the upper-caste elites whose loyalty is required for successful political inclusion (Lipsky 1968). It is to them that I now turn. In this section, I discuss the relationship of village-level caste elites with their caste members within the village (Figure 2.2, *part 4*).

While on one hand local elites mobilize and bargain with the state for the distribution of resources, they also simultaneously need to be in touch with their own supporters. We know that meeting goals is contingent not just on receiving attention (and benefits) from the target (in this case the state) but also ensuring that the leadership remains loyal the demands of the supporters (Lipsky 1968). How do the upper-caste elites interpret the law such that they retain the support of their own constituents? Given the ambiguity in the law - untouchability is *not* defined but is made salient contingent on the space i.e., *public* or *private* - it is precisely at this point that there arises the opportunity for a reinterpretation of caste rules and thus a change of what constitutes the *private*/spiritual domain such that it aligns with the *public/* "material reality". And more importantly, it is this reinterpretation that provides for the transformation of untouchability.

I will use an example to demonstrate what I mean by reinterpretation of caste rules. Mario Rutten (2002) studies the attitudes of the Patidar community in Gujarat. Prior to

Independence, there is no mention of the Patidar caste in the caste census of 1911 and 1921. They were formally identified as a group in 1931. Before that they were classified as "Kunbis", an agriculturalist group. Today the Patidars are a politically and socially dominant group in Gujarat. What Rutten shows is a change in their attitudes towards the poor (mainly lower castes) over time. While they used to be associated with agriculture and land-based work, they no longer wish to be associated with manual work. They regard manual work as "dirty" and something to be done by lower-castes. Earlier, manual work was acceptable and even encouraged. But given the increasing prosperity of the group which was a direct result of their mobilization efforts[7], attitudes towards manual work have changed. Accompanying changes in perception of manual work are also changes in obligations towards the poor mainly lower castes in their village. While earlier there was an expectation of donating food and clothes, these are now seen as a burden (Rutten 2002).

Similar behavioral changes have also been documented by Scott (1976). He documents that state-sponsored industrialization often led to traditional obligations between the rich and poor being perceived as burdensome. As this perception grew, age-old norms of hosting feasts and distributing food during festivals withered away. The terms of reciprocity which ensured that the poor, mostly peasants, could subsist in a precarious agrarian economy, gradually eroded. While Scott ties this rebellion by the peasants, my point is to use this example to document changing attitudes and behaviors of the upper-castes and/or rich in Indian villages as a function of their upward mobility which is made possible by the state.

Both Scott (1976) and Rutten (2002) attribute these changes to state-led industrialization efforts. While that is a part of my argument (elite mobilization for state resources - Figure 2.2, *part 3*), we need to probe how these changes are actualized within the village. I argue that the adoption of new ways of acting are accompanied with new ways of thinking which simultaneously delegitimize the old. Karl Deutsch (1961) writes: "As Edward Shils has rightly pointed out, the original images of "mobilization"

[7] While there is no systematic study of the rise of the Patidar group, the story of their upward mobility is not new.

and of Mannheim's "fundamental democratization" imply two distinct stages of the process: (1) the stage of uprooting or breaking away from old settings, habits and commitments; and (2) the induction of the mobilized persons into some relatively stable new patterns of group membership, organization and commitment" (Deutsch 1961: 494). This idea of mobilization – where people are uprooted from an old order and absorbed into a new order – is central to understanding variation in untouchability.

To illustrate this process, I will use a particular caste rule which was the topic of intense negotiation and bargaining in 19th and early 20th century India as evident in the media reports of caste conferences being organized to discuss this topic. This was the ban on travel by sea. This ban also applied mainly to the trading/business community as it was them who needed to travel. If a member traveled, a meeting of the caste was called where the punishment for violation would be decided. More often than not, the violator was excommunicated. Over time however, this ban was lifted as the benefits of traveling were being realized. While it carried some risk, but if successful, it would bring prosperity for several generations. Caste rules were reinterpreted such that this ban was lifted and travel by sea became the norm instead of exception.

Of reinterpreting the past to justify actions in the present, Weiner (1984) writes:

> There is also the well-known phenomenon of reinterpreting the past to bring it more in conformity with contemporary beliefs and practices. Although all societies do this to some extent, Indians are particularly skilled in the art. They reinterpret the past without deceit, considering it to be no more dishonest than the practice of Japanese or Chinese artists who painted in the style of the predecessors and then forged their signatures, in order to demonstrate their skill in emulating the great masters (Weiner 1984: 112)

Practically the reinterpretation or giving new meaning to actions has to accompanied by mobilization. The people need to be mobilized into doing actual physical work to convince themselves that reinterpretation is in their own interest. Overy (1982) shows this by studying the "constructive" work done by Gandhi. For instance, while Gandhi preached that untouchability was wrong, he also practiced it and made people around

him act *as if* they believed it. While this aspect of Gandhi is highly under researched[8], it formed an integral part of all his anti-colonial efforts (Hardiman 2014).

Writing about Kamaraj Nadar, a former chief minister of Tamil Nadu and a leader in the Congress Party, who came from a caste that were historically toddy tappers and thus considered a low (polluting) caste, Rudolph (1965) writes:

> The story of the Shanans illustrates in some measure the general processes of social change and political modernization which have affected traditional Indian society. Castes, "the stereotype and disconnected units" which Marx, over a century ago, described as having survived the break-up of the village economy and government, but which were to be dissolved by the effects of industrialization, have not yet been so. Instead, they seem, in good Hindu fashion, to have reincarnated in a modern form as the caste association" This has become a vehicle for internal cultural reform and external social change (Rudolph 1965: 981).

How did this "reincarnation" happen? Rudolph lists few actions taken by the Shanan community such as claiming the right to clothe their upper bodies, which was the exclusive domain of higher caste women, and that eventually resulted in the Travancore Riot of 1858. The British Governor intervened and found no objection to Shanan women covering their upper bodies. Claiming the right and simultaneously getting the society writ large to accept the claim was one measure. The Shanans also started to claim that they were descendants of high caste Kshatriyas. Schools were opened for the education of the Shanan boys. They changed their marriage rituals such that they resembled that of the high castes. And one of the actions that formalized the transformation of the Shanan to the Nadar was the Census of 1921 according to which the term "Shanan" was no longer to be used for official purposes.

Returning to the case of our village-level caste elites and their relationship with their communities, I expect greater levels of reinterpretation to be associated with lower

[8] Most researchers tend to focus on his interaction with the British authorities, However the outcome of his interaction with British authorities depended on his interactions with the local people and local authorities. That is was he able to convince them of his methods and then were they able to endure the consequences of his methods. If not, we know that Gandhi called off action such as when he called off the Non-cooperation movement in 1922 when the demonstrators burnt a police station killing all people inside. This was known as the Chauri Chaura incident and was provoked when the police opened fire on the peaceful demonstrators.

levels of untouchability. The push for reinterpretation however comes from greater levels of inclusion in the political system.

2.6.0 The Joint Production of Untouchability *(part 5)*

In the last part of this Chapter, I list the implications of each part of my argument as as testable hypotheses.

From *part 1*, where I argued that caste and thus untouchability were *privatized* by leaders of the Indian freedom struggle, I expect:

> ***Hypothesis 1:*** Prior Indian Independence, untouchability would be depicted as a "social" issue.

From *part 2,* where I showed that the struggle over the role of caste and the state in addressing untouchability made it into the Indian Constitution. What the law does is protect religion and thus caste but make untouchability illegal. There is however one ambiguity and one limitation. The ambiguity comes from the fact that untouchability is *not* defined. And the limitation comes from the state being able punish violators only in certain public spaces. Thus I expect:

> ***Hypothesis 2:*** Post Indian Independence, untouchability would be depicted as a "political" issue.

Part 3 and *part 4* of my arguments have an interactive relationship. I expect:

> ***Hypothesis 3:*** A ***higher*** (***lower***) level of state-caste bargaining ***decreases*** (***increases***) the probability of untouchability. This probability however depends on the degree of within-caste bargaining. ***Greater*** (***Lesser***) levels of within-caste bargaining ***decrease*** (***increase***) the probability of untouchability.

The outcomes from Hypothesis 3 are displayed in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Implications for untouchability

		Level of caste and state bargaining	
		Low	High
Level of within caste bargaining	Low	High public discrimination	Medium public discrimination
	High	Medium public discrimination	Low public discrimination

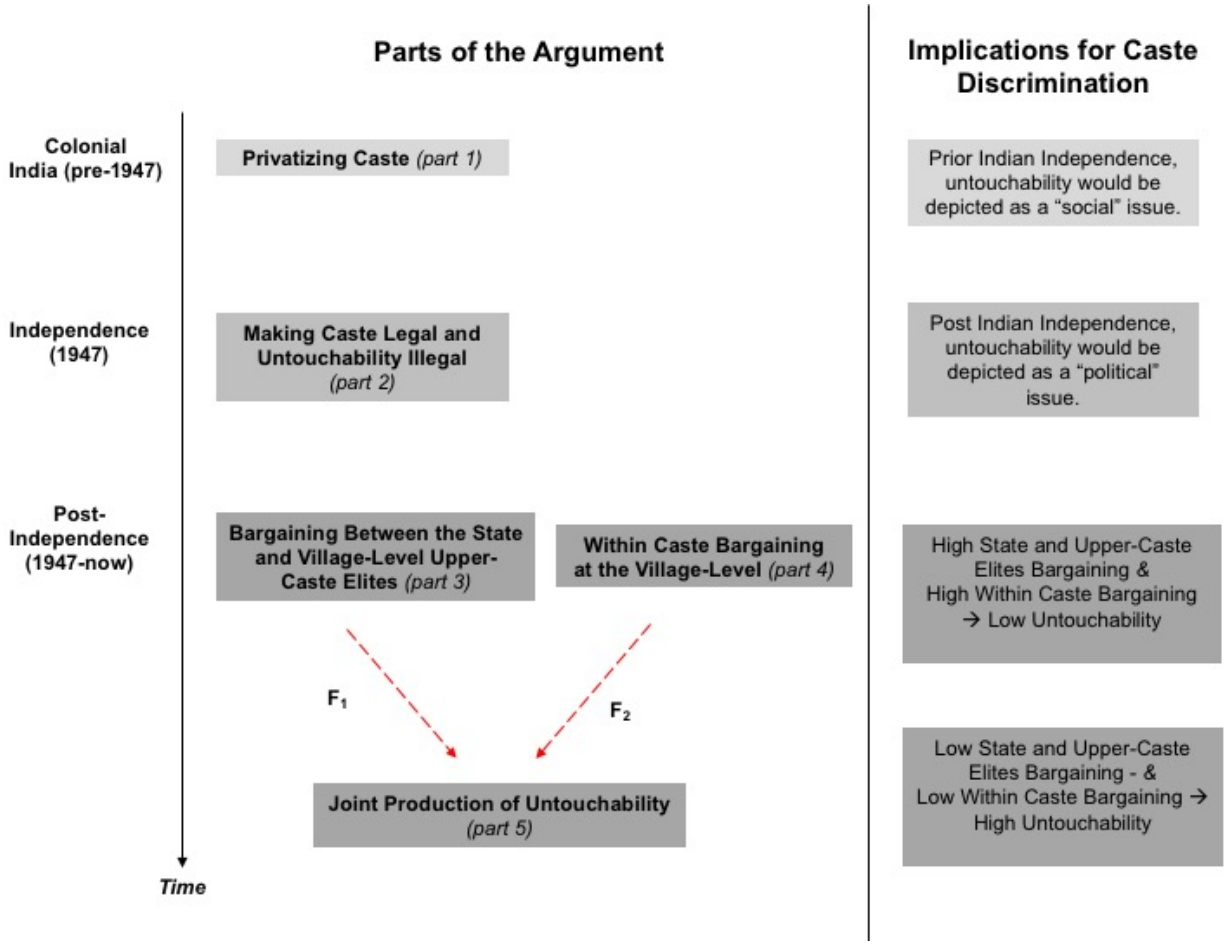
2.7.0 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented a framework for understanding variation in untouchability. Figure 2.4 shows the different parts of the argument along with the implications of each part for caste discrimination. I started the argument with locating the problem of caste and untouchability in the history of the struggle for Independence. I used postcolonial scholarship (Chatterjee 1993, 1995) to show that making caste and consequently a *private* issue was important for building the idea of nation. Privatizing caste severely restricted the ability of the state to intervene in the issue of untouchability. This however was to change with Independence when lawmakers gave the state teeth to address untouchability as its presence was antithetical to the idea of a nation where everyone, at least, in the eyes of the law, would be considered a citizen with equal rights.

However, the manner in which this was done was ambiguous and thus leaving room for much interpretation. The most glaring ambiguity is that the lawmakers did not define untouchability. Instead they mentioned certain public spaces where behaviors can be argued to be discriminatory and thus punishable under the law. Both the efforts to private caste in colonial India and make certain parts of caste - untouchability in public spaces - come under the jurisdiction of the state in independent India were formalized in two hypotheses which will be tested in Chapter 3.

What this ambiguity has done is given space for reinterpretation i.e., what constitutes caste and what is untouchability. I made an argument that as the state did in some way undermine the power of village level elites, they had to do something. They could either engage in transformation or preservation. Using insights from the literatures on state-building, distribution of public goods and social movements, I presented hypotheses where high levels of bargaining with state and high levels of bargaining within castes, would be associated with lower levels of untouchability. Lower levels of both would be associated with higher levels of untouchability. I present a way to measure untouchability in Chapter 4 followed by a statistical analyses in Chapter 5.

Figure 2.4: Argument revisited with testable propositions



Chapter 3

An Exploratory Investigation Into How Caste Discrimination is Framed in The Times of India

3.1.0 Introduction

During the course of my research on caste discrimination in Gujarat, people often asked me “So, do you find discrimination in Gujarat?”. My response was a long awkward pause followed by a slowly drawn out yes. I found it very difficult to understand where this question comes from. I have not been able to understand why would one *not* find caste discrimination given that our social fabric is dyed in caste. Caste is everywhere. But then if it is so obvious to me, why is it not for those asking me this question. While the main purpose of this Chapter is to test two claims laid out in Chapter 3, I also come to a tentative answer to my question. In brief, media coverage of caste discrimination in Gujarat is rare, very rare. If we are to assume that people learn about what is happening in other states (and the world) via newspapers, then it makes perfect sense for them to ask, “So, do you find discrimination in Gujarat?”. Because if reports on caste discrimination are rare, then discrimination must not exist, right? In this Chapter, I show that while reports on discrimination are rare, in reality, discrimination varies from some villages where lower castes report experiencing less discrimination to villages where their experience is much worse[1].

[1] Focus of Chapter 5.

The primary empirical contribution of this Chapter is creating a dataset[2] to test claims about of how a media outlet - The Times of India - reports about caste-based discrimination. To create this dataset, I used a combination of automated and manual coding. I use this dataset to test the following two claims:

> ***Hypothesis 1:*** Prior to Indian Independence, untouchability would be depicted as a private issue.
>
> ***Hypothesis 2:*** Post Indian Independence, untouchability would be depicted as a public issue.

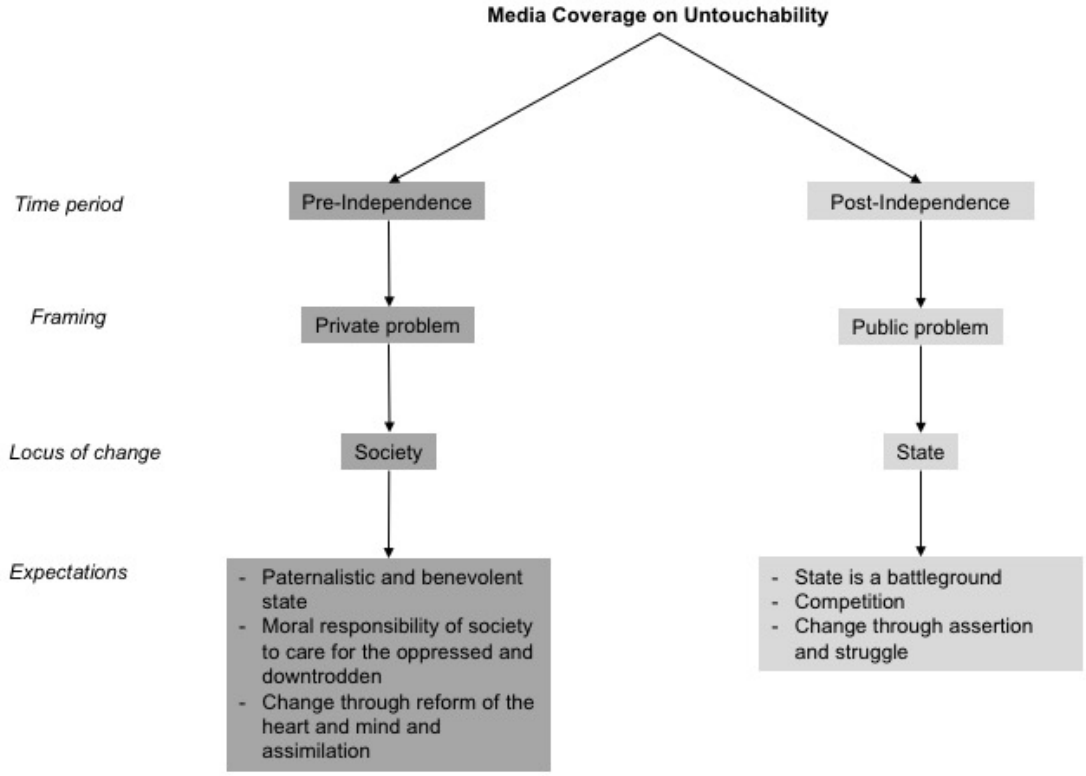
Figure 3.1 is a visual representation of hypotheses 1 and 2.

The Chapter is organized as follows. I start by laying down the research design. In this section, I describe the data and then the methods used to create the dataset. This is following by exploratory analyses of the dataset. I explore different aspects of the data ranging from the variation in names associated with the "untouchables" across different political contexts, to exploring how the issue of "untouchability" is covered.

In brief, I find that coverage by the Times of India (TOI) as observed in the frequency of articles on caste and the salience of caste discrimination as observed in the frequency with which the terms associated with caste discrimination appear in the headlines of articles, is relatively rare. Regarding hypothesis 1, I find that prior Independence, the narrative around caste discrimination is focused more about the "reform", "welfare" and "upliftment" of "Depressed Classes" or "Harijans" through education where the state plays a paternal role. And lastly I find little support for hypothesis 2. What is seen across the texts post-Independence, is that the "Dalits" are portrayed as "assertive" and are associated with "conflict" and "rights".

[2] In my review of existing literature this is the first dataset of its kind. Christian Davenport helped me find one exception. Shah (1994) studies the coverage of the 1990 anti-reservation protests across the country by the TOI. Verghese (2016) in his work used the Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS) to study caste conflict. However, the data he uses is limited to the Naxalite movement. This is problematic for two reasons. The first is that armed conflict against the state is not the same as discrimination. And secondly, caste affects every person living in the country and not just those who are a part of the Naxal movement. The TOI have been used to code religious conflict such as the dataset on post-independence Hindu-Muslims riots by Wilkinson and Varshney (2006).

Figure 3.1: Visual representation of hypotheses 1 and 2



3.2.0 Research Design: Data, Methods and Results

I relied on the coverage by the Times of India (TOI from here on) which started in 1838 in Bombay[3]. TOI is a national English daily with some states having their own regional offices[4]. I was able to gain access to the entire TOI database consisting of *everything ever published*[5] beginning 1838 and ending in 2005 via the University of Michigan's Hatcher Graduate Library[6].

I used the TOI to test my claims for two reasons. Theoretically, I needed a source which covered India (more specifically the Gujarat area) both before and after independence in 1947. The TOI provides coverage well before India became a part of the British Empire (1838-1857), then as a British colony (1858-1947), and finally an independent nation (1947-now). According to my claims, I expect the changing political contexts to capture the changing narratives on caste discrimination. The changing narratives reflect particular understandings of the untouchability i.e., what is the problem (diagnosis) and what is to be done (prognosis). There is research that what newspapers publish and also the narrative is influenced by the political context. For instance, in their work Baum and Zhukov (2015) argue that under democratic conditions the press is more likely to publish articles that may be critical of the status quo. They are more likely to publish events that are large-scale, dramatic (some violence) and urban based. They do find support for this using media coverage of the Arab Spring across 113 countries. Their finding has received support from research done earlier by Davenport and Ball (2002). In the case of Guatemala, the authors find that a few correlated factors such as democracy and the number of human rights organizations increase the probability of human rights violations

[3] Current day Mumbai.

[4] Given that TOI is an English newspaper, its readership mostly consists of urban English speaking people. Now how closely does this section's perception of caste reflect the dominant narrative of caste is an empirical question which is out of scope for this thesis.

[5] Everything that gets filed does not necessarily get printed. I only have access to what appears in print. (http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/caste-matters-in-the-indian-media/article3114199.ece)

[6] I thank Catherine Morse, Scott Dennis and Shevon Desai at the UM Hatcher Graduate Library for working with Times of India to help me acquire the entire database. This work would have taken years had not it been for their help and negotiation with the TOI.

by the state being covered (Davenport and Ball 2002). On the other hand, under non-democratic (in my case colonial conditions), however, the probability that a media outlet will publish something that goes against the state is very low.

While so far the research has looked at how political contexts (democratic or non-democratic) influence the coverage of atrocities (protests and political violence in the case of Baum and Zhukov (2015) and human rights violations by the state in the case of Davenport and Ball (2002)), what I am trying to learn from the data is slightly different. In addition accounting for political constraints, I am investigating *how* it is covered i.e., the narrative. The language used to write about discrimination is, in my case, central to understanding the perception of consumers of news on caste. The narrative, as mentioned earlier, reflects current understandings of the issue. Thus the long time period of the TOI corpus make it well suited to test my claims about caste being a private issue (state is distant, responsibility for change lies with the society) or a public issue (state is closer and responsible for combating discrimination).

And the second reason for choosing the TOI is practical. TOI agreed to share their entire news corpus with the University of Michigan in a text format. This eliminated the need for Optical Character Recognition (OCR)[7]. The availability of the data in a text format saved a lot of time and allowed me to focus on exploring the data.

3.2.1 Data

The TOI archive[8] contains *everything* ever published by the paper when it started in 1838 up until 2005. In total this archive is 24GB and contains 6,828,509 documents which is a mixture of articles, opinions, letters to the editor, advertisements, matrimonial

[7] Converting images and PDFs to text relies on OCR. Different OCR softwares have varying levels of accuracy in extracting text. This process in itself is time consuming and labor intensive.

[8] The zipped/compressed TOI file is about 8.5GB.

advertisements, weather reports, stock quotes, etc. The focus of this analysis will be only on articles[9].

3.2.2 Methods

I relied on both automated and manual coding of articles published in the TOI. Automated coding is used for three purposes. First, I used Python to automate extraction of information that has a structure. For instance, I wrote a script which relies heavily on BeautifulSoup[10] (Python package to parse HTML) to extract the header details of all articles (i.e., metadata). These details include, if found, the date, headline, sub-headline, type of report (article or op-ed), dateline (date and place of publication) and the contributor. As all the documents have the same header structure, this information is relatively easy to extract with a high level of accuracy.

Second, I relied on automated coding to give me the subset of documents that were used to test the claims. I used regular expressions in a Python script to search through all the 6.8 million documents to see if there was any mention of "Gujarat". If there was a non-zero count of "Gujarat", that particular document was copied to a separate folder. There were a total of 111,773 documents which had a non-zero count of "Gujarat" out of the 6.8 million documents. Out of these 111,773 documents, 51,669 (46.23%) were articles[11].

And lastly, I use Python to search for terms associated with caste-based discrimination which were later classified into private/public. I then use R to quantify the association between these terms and caste-based discrimination. In R, I primarily relied on the text mining package, *tm*[12].

---

[9] While I cannot make the raw data public, I will make all my Python scripts which were used to extract information available on GitHub. So if a user has an article in the text format then they can reproduce my results using the available scripts.

[10] https://www.crummy.com/software/BeautifulSoup/bs4/doc/

[11] Classified ads (mainly matrimonial) consisted of the next highest type of reports - 35.56%, followed by display ads (4.9%), stock quotes (3.4%), front page (3.17%), and weather (2.74%) editorial article (1.09%), letter to the editor (1.01%). The other article types comprised less than 1% each.

[12] https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/tm/tm.pdf

While automated coding is suitable for relatively straightforward tasks such as extracting header details and finding key terms, the more difficult portion, however, was extracting the context around the "relevant" information from the text (Franzosi et al. 2012). In my case, this was to figure out a way of classifying text as either private or public. The classification was done manually using the rules listed in Figure 3.7.

3.2.3 Results

3.2.3.1 What's in a Name?

The following poem[13] by Neerav Patel, a pioneer of Dalit literature in Gujarat, shows the emotions associated with different labels:

When you call me *'dher'*
I am hurt
And wish to kick you in the belly
When you call me untouchable
I am offended
And wish to slap you on the face
When you call me Harijan
I am humiliated
And wish to spit on your back
When you call me a member of the Scheduled Caste
I am insulted
And wish to money at your ...
When you call me Neerav Patel
I suspect you call me convert
(a crow that dyed his feathers white to be called a swan)
and wish to turn away my face
when you don't call me anything
I am annoyed that you neglected me altogether
And wish to call you back to call me ...
Yes, it's all a mess since the beginning
like the tale of a seven-tailed mouse.

What this poem shows is that while we talk of untouchability and the untouchables, their experience of the phenomena is reflected in the names used to address them. For instance, in the poem, calling a low caste member an "untouchable" is perceived to be offensive. So the first step to building the dataset was listing all the possible words and

[13] I thank Achyut Yagnik for showing me this.

phrases most commonly associated with “untouchables” as there have been several. The search is restricted to documents containing a non-zero mention of “Gujarat”[14]. Table 3.1 lists the terms commonly associated with “untouchables”.

Table 3.1: Popular variants of “untouchables” used across time

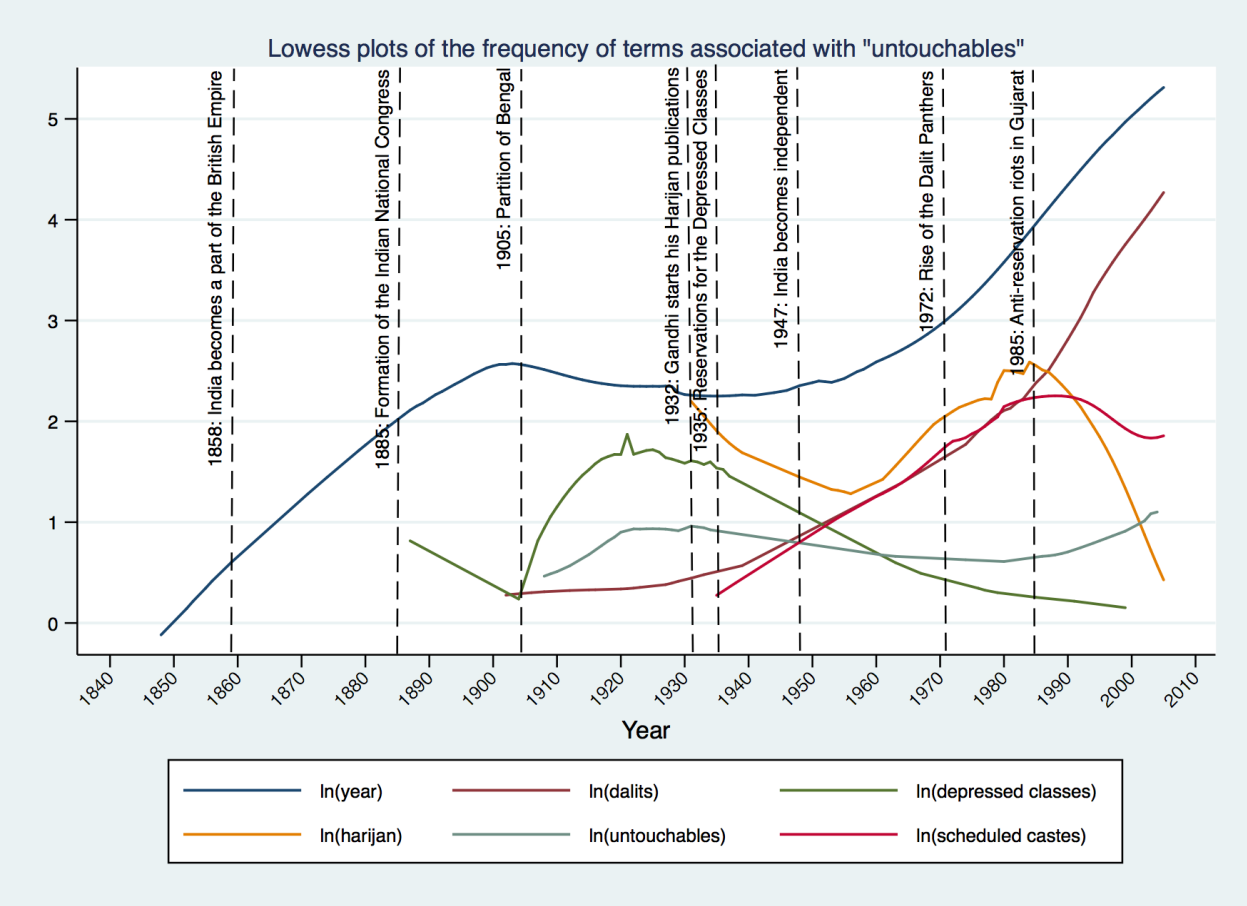
Term	***Brief description***
Untouchables	The lowest ranked caste in the 5 caste varna system.
Depressed Classes	This was the phrase used by the British to classify the “untouchables” starting in the 30s.
Scheduled Castes	Term introduced by the British to refer to the Depressed Classes in 1935 and formally adopted by the Indian Constitution in 1950.
Harijans	This term literally means “children of God” and was popularized by Gandhi starting in 1932 when he started his Harijan publications.
Dalits	This term had been around prior to Independence but became increasingly popular with Ambedkar and then the emergence of the Dalit Panthers[15] in the 70s in Maharashtra. Allegedly, this is the most preferred term.

Figure 3.2 shows the variation in the usage of the terms listed in Table 3.1 by time. I have also marked significant events as references to provide some historical context. The numbers being plotted are the natural logs of the total number of articles that mention each of the terms listed in Table 3.1. A lowess plot is generated for a smoothing effect which is helpful in observing general trends in the data. The Figure contains five interesting observations.

[14] Now Gujarat as an independent state came into existence in 1960. Prior to that it was a part of Bombay Presidency. However, there is no change in the name of the area currently known as Gujarat.

[15] A radical Dalit group whose name was inspired by the Black Panther Party in the US.

Figure 3.2: Variations in terms used across time along with significant events in the history of India



First, the lowess curve for “caste” dominates all other curves. This is not surprising. The coverage of “caste” in itself does not tell us much about “caste discrimination” and that is why it is necessary to disaggregate “caste” by the actors involved who are - “Untouchables”, “Depressed Classes”, “Scheduled Castes”, “Harijans”, or “Dalits”. What is interesting is the plateauing trend between 1910 and 1950. This was the period of the independence struggle. And perhaps the focus was more on “nation”, rather than “caste” (Chatterjee 1993).

Second, we observe that the term “Harijans” and “Scheduled Castes” begin to appear in the paper beginning 1932 and 1935 respectively. This is because in 1932, Gandhi started his Harijan journals where untouchability was a core issue he discussed with his readers.

And in 1935, the British government started reserving seats for the hitherto group known as “Depressed Classes” and began to use the term “Scheduled Castes”. The Indian Constitution adopted this term post-independence, and thus the legal term used for the untouchables is “Scheduled Castes”.

Third, related to the second observation is the inverse relationship between “Depressed Classes” and “Scheduled Castes”. It is to be expected that as the use of the former term decreases, the use of the latter will increase.

Fourth, is the dramatic divergence in the use of “Dalits”, “Harijans” and “Scheduled Castes” after the 1985 anti-reservation riots in Gujarat. While the use of the term “Dalits” increases, the latter two see a sharp fall. The term “Dalits” is often viewed as more assertive as compared to the other two which are viewed as patronizing and condescending.

And lastly, a few minor observations. In 1885, the Indian National Congress (INC), a nationalist party, was formed in Bombay. Soon after this, the print media starts to mention “Depressed Classes”. Perhaps this signifies that the INC started to mobilize this section of the population which was being picked up by the TOI. In 1905, Bengal was partitioned between a Muslim dominant area (current day Bangladesh) and a Hindu majority area (current day West Bengal). Perhaps the coverage of the partition took priority and coverage on caste and “Depressed Classes” decreased as seen in the plateauing of the “caste” curve and sharp drop in “Depressed Classes”. And finally, the observation that the use of the word “untouchables” is the most infrequent[16].

Based on observations from Figure 3.2, it is clear that in order to analyze the discourse around caste discrimination, we need to be pay careful attention to the terms being used. Different terms were used by different actors at different periods of time. The British introduced “Depressed Classes” and “Scheduled Castes”. Gandhi started the use of

[16] These are mostly speculations in my last point however given the lack of event data based on newspapers for India and empirical testing of such data, I think these speculations can be developed into hypotheses subject to more rigorous testing.

"Harijans". And lastly, the untouchables themselves introduced "Dalits" to the vocabulary. The term used, as I have tried to make a case, reflect the particular understandings of both caste and caste discrimination.

3.2.3.2 Changing Names, Changing Narratives

I used regular expressions in a Python script to search through all the 6.8 million reports for each of the terms listed in Table 3.1. Table 3.2 shows the percentage of *all* articles beginning 1838 and ending in 2005 that mention "Gujarat" which also mention each of the 5 terms from Table 3.1. Caste is found to be mentioned in the text of about 3.58% of the articles. The other terms are found in less than 1% of the articles. The term "untouchables" is the least common (0.18%) and "Dalits" is the most common (0.91%).

Assuming that the headline conveys the primary issue being covered in an article, I calculated the proportion of articles whose headlines contained the terms in Table 3.1. I find that "Depressed Classes" is mentioned in the headline in 17.69% of all articles and "Dalits" is mentioned in the headline in 4.8% of all articles. This is interesting if we are to think about the consumers of the news when the term "Depressed Classes" was prevalent vs. when "Dalits" became more prevalent. In the former, it was mainly the British people and urban, upper class, English educated Indian elite and in the latter case it is urban, English speaking people. So what were the British and elite Indians learning about the "Depressed Classes"? An article dated August 26, 1910 reports the following:

> "The so-called depressed classes the Deputation pointed out who form the outcast population of India have lived and are living in condition of ignorance and depression which would hardly be believed by anyone who had not intimately studied their conditions. Until quite recently the deputation said the feeling of religious impurity which divided them from the main mass of the Hindu population was so intense that it was almost impossible to arouse any interest in their condition or to give them an opportunity to utilize the powers intellectual which they possess. Not only have they been Helot class but Helot class religiously impure cut off from the contact and interest of the remainder of the people and they are not a small body of people though they exist in larger numbers in Bombay and Madras than in other parts of India. The magnitude of any question regarding them may be seen from the following numbers Total population of India 294,361,053; depressed classes 53,206,632; percentage 18. Total population of Bombay Presidency 25,468,209; depressed classes 3,479,084; percentage 12. Up till the present the only opportunity of rising out of this Helot condition has been furnished by three agencies. In the first place Christian Missions have taken noble part in refusing to acknowledge any distinctions of caste or anything in the nature of pariah class and have done much to educate such of them as have come under their influence. In the second Mahomedanism has also received

> and welcomed into full membership any member of any class without distinction of caste and thirdly the British Government has established the principles of equal treatment of all without distinction which has given an opportunity under which small but constantly increasing number of the depressed classes have attained to positions of credit and even of distinction."

What the readers were learning were that the condition of the "Depressed Classes" was poor and the only ways out of their misery was either through the Missionaries, or conversion to Islam or through opportunities given by the British Government. These forces were all *outside* of the fold of Hinduism. Only external forces could *save* or *uplift* them out of their "Helot condition". Perhaps this image of the Missionaries and the Government was required for continued support of colonizing India.

While such discourse was common around the term "Depressed Classes", this narrative changes when it comes to "Dalits". The following is an excerpt from an article about the Dalit Panthers published on August 8, 1980:

> "The Dalit Panthers who had taken out morcha[17] yesterday to the Council Hall to demand the renaming of Marathwada University after Dr. Ambedkar turned violent according to the police today. The police said they threw stones at passing motorists on the road and damaged the glass showroom of Sadguru Photo Framers. When sub-inspector Amolik who was escorting them tried to prevent them from throwing stones he was assaulted by the mob. Another sub-inspector Jivan Johari who came to his rescue was also assaulted. The injured sub-inspectors were later treated at St Georges Hospital for minor injuries."

There are some striking differences between the two articles. While both are about the same group - the "untouchables" - they do so very differently. In the former (before Independence), the "untouchables" who are referred to as "Depressed Classes" are portrayed to be in need of help from the outside world. While in the latter (post-Independence), the "Dalits" have their own voice and their own demands. They do not need saving and are shown as having the both the capacity and will-power to mobilize and demand what they perceive to be their rights. This transformation from "subjects" to "citizens" has been documented through in-depth studies (Rao 2009; Viswanath 2014).

[17] A march.

I also find that 24% (82/339) articles with “Harijans” in it, 8.6% (41/474) articles with “Dalits” and 6.9% (9/130) articles with “Depressed Classes” are reported from within Gujarat i.e., dateline contains a place in Gujarat. Others are filed outside Gujarat.

Overall, I find that coverage by the TOI, as observed in the frequency of articles on caste and the salience of caste discrimination as observed in the frequency with which the terms associated with caste discrimination appear in the headlines of articles, is rare. I also find that within Gujarat, which is our focus area, articles refer to “untouchables” more as “Harijans” than as “Dalits”. This could be due to the fact that the term “Harijan” originated in Gujarat with Gandhi. It should also be remembered that “Harijan” is associated with an image of acceptance of the Hindu social order while “Dalit” is associated with an image of assertion and challenge to the caste order.

Table 3.2: Proportion of articles with each of the terms associated with “untouchables”

Term	***# of articles (n)***	***% of articles ((n/N)*100)***	***% of articles with term in headline/subheadline***	***Reported from within the state of Gujarat***
Caste	1850	3.58	2.3	
Untouchables	92	0.17	5.4	
Scheduled Castes	301	0.58	0.6	
Depressed Classes	130	0.25	17.6	9
Harijans	339	0.66	5.3	82
Dalits	474	0.92	4.8	41
N=51,669				

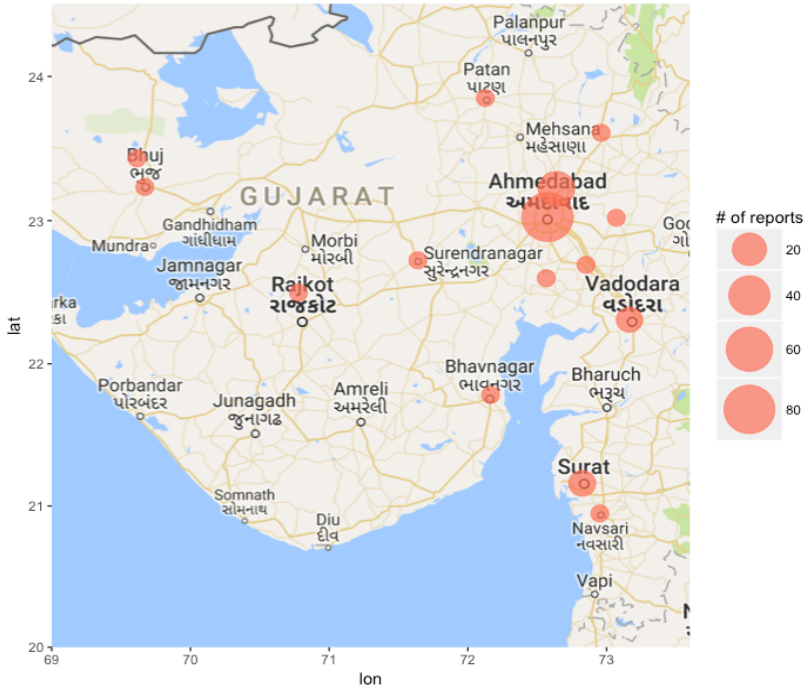
3.2.3.3 Geography of Reporting in Gujarat

In their paper, Davenport and Ball (2002) find that human rights violations which occur in rural area are underreported as compared to those that happen in urban areas. This is because the primary readership of newspapers, especially English dailies, reside in urban areas. Similar trends are observed with respect to reports on caste in Gujarat. Figure 3.3 shows the geographical distribution of all the articles based in Gujarat[18]. There are a total

[18] This was done in R using the *ggmap* package.

of 132 articles which are reported from Gujarat and contain some reference to one of the terms listed in Figure 3.1. From the Figure we can see all reports are based in cities/urban areas. The maximum number of reports come from Ahmedabad, followed by Gandhinagar and then Vadodara and Surat. These are the four main cities of mainland Gujarat. We observe that not only are urban areas represented more than rural areas, certain urban areas (mainland Gujarat) are more represented than peninsular Gujarat (Saurashtra).

Figure 3.3: Geographical distribution of articles published in Gujarat



3.2.3.4 Exploring Frequencies

In order to calculate the word frequencies, which is done in R, stopwords[19] such as “the”, “a”, “an”, are removed from the texts that are reported from within Gujarat. Undoubtedly, these words have the highest frequencies but they do not convey much information. I choose to focus on words of substantive interest. Figures 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 show 10

(D. Kahle and H. Wickham. ggmap: Spatial Visualization with ggplot2. The R Journal, 5(1), 144-161. URL http://journal.r-project.org/archive/2013-1/kahle-wickham.pdf)

[19] R has a list of stopwords (https://www.rdocumentation.org/packages/tm/versions/0.7-3/topics/stopwords)

frequent words occurring in texts containing “Depressed Classes”, “Harijans” and “Dalits” respectively.

Figure 3.4: 10 frequent words occurring in texts containing “Depressed Classes”

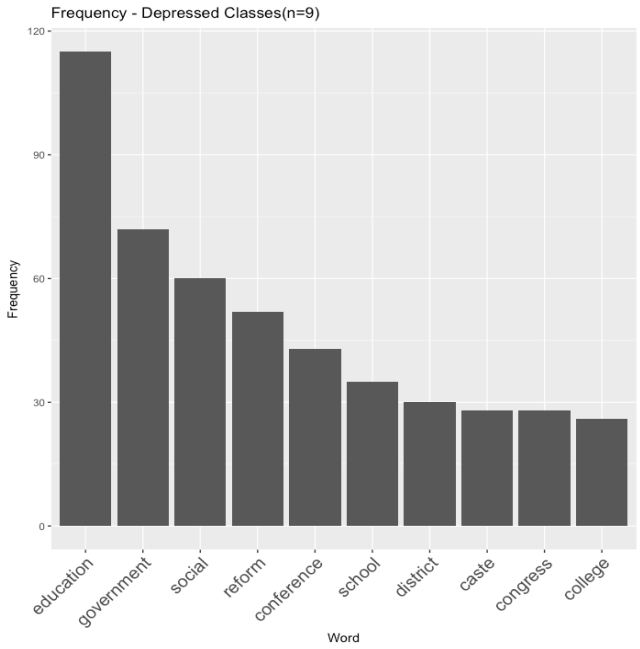


Figure 3.5: 10 frequent words occurring in texts containing “Harijans”

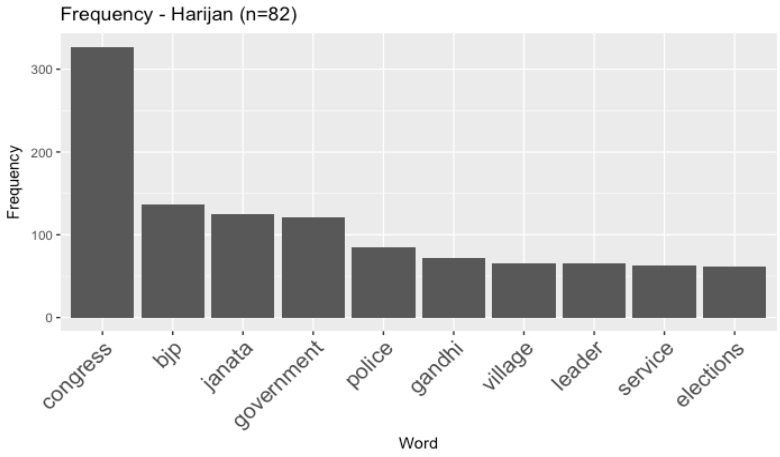
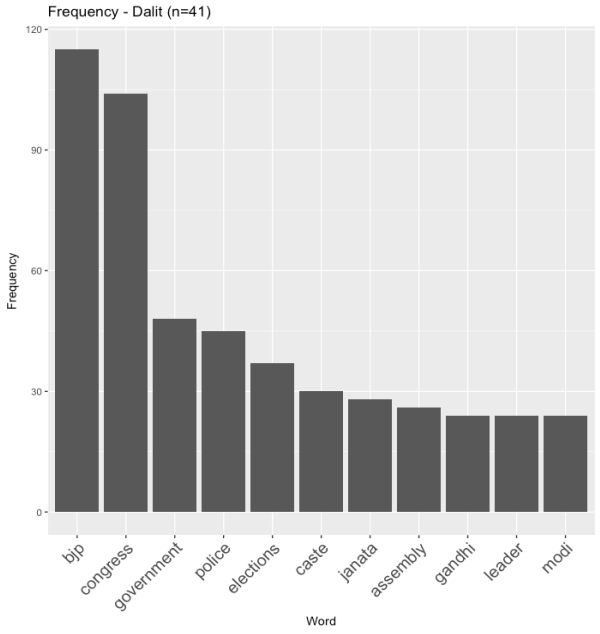


Figure 3.6: 10 frequent words occurring in texts containing “Dalits”



3.2.3.5 Word Associations

Figures 3.8 and Figure 3.9 show the association between the three terms - “Depressed Classes”, “Harijans” and “Dalits” - and a list of words i.e., the correlation between two words existing in the same document[20]. This association measure which I have labeled as an *association score* ranges between [0,1]. 0 means that the two terms are never found in the same document and 1 means that they are always found together. But before that we need to clarify how words have been classified as private and public.

By looking at the frequency distribution of words for each term listed in Table 3.1, I came up with lists of words which could be classified either as private or public. Strictly speaking, the classification of words into private or public would be based on whether the state is involved in the actions/words which are being coded as private/public. If yes, then they would be classified as public and if not then private. While this is one straightforward variable which would determine the classification, my argument from Chapter 3 is little more nuanced. Figure 3.7 displays the rules used to classify words. There are three rules

[20] Measured in R Package *tm.*

- (1) representation of the state, (2) representation of the society and (3) representation of untouchables. It is not whether the “state” is reported to be involved, what is more important is in what capacity is the state involved. According to rule #1, what matters is whether the state is reported to be distant or close. Moving onto rule #2, does the report represent members or organizations from the society as taking an initiative towards changing the status quo or are they comfortable with the status quo. And lastly according to rule #3, are the “untouchables” portrayed as helpless and downtrodden whose betterment depends on the magnanimity of caste Hindus or are they depicted as “assertive” where they know what is good for them and they do not need any favors from caste Hindus. Table 3.3 lists the words and their classification.

Figure 3.7: Classification rules

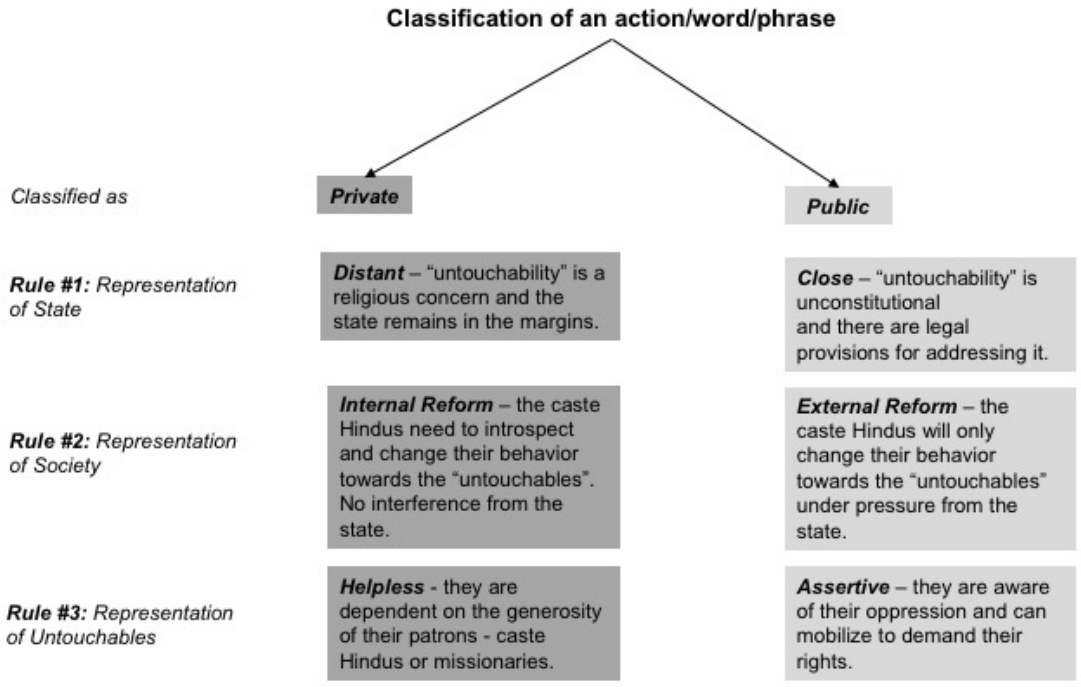


Table 3.3: Classification of words – Private or Public

Private	Public
School, Uplift, Welfare, Hindus, Hinduism, Caste, Reservation, Educate	Discrimination, Adhikar (rights), Violence, Non-Violence, Activist, Atrocities, Untouchability, Conflict, Asserted, Protest, Leaders, Reservation, Representation, Literature

In Figure 3.8, the *association score* was calculated for *all* the documents which mention "Gujarat" and contain any of the three terms - "Depressed Classes" (n=130), "Harijans" (n=339) and "Dalits" (n=474). And Figure 3.9, the *association score* was calculated for *only* the documents which were published in "Gujarat" and contain any of the three terms - "Depressed Classes" = 9, "Harijans" = 82 and "Dalits" = 41.

The scores for each of these three terms are displayed in panel 1, panel 2 and panel 3 respectively. The 3 panels contain identical words on the y-axis, however their order varies depending on the value of the score. The scores are arranged in ascending order in each panel. The colors for the scores for "Depressed Classes", "Harijans", and "Dalits" are blue, dark green and red respectively.

"Untouchability" is another word for "discrimination", however what emerges from Figures 3.8 and 3.9, is that it was not an issue for the "Depressed Classes" (correlation is 0.04 for "untouchability" and 0 for "discrimination" in Figure 3.8 and 0 for both in Figure 3.9) or the "Harijans" (0 and 0.11 respectively in Figure 3.8 and 0 and 0.05 in Figure 3.9). It however is an issue for the "Dalits" (0.1 and 0.17 in Figure 3.8 and 0.35 and 0.16 in Figure 3.9). This does lend some suggestive support for Chatterjee's (1993, 1995) idea which I engaged with in the first part of my argument presented in Chapter 2 about the privatization of caste and thus untouchability. It is possible that as caste was considered to be a *private* affair, the colonial state could not address untouchability. It is only after Independence, when ending untouchability became a part of the state's mandate, does it become a *public* issue.

Looking at the association of these words with the leaders who made untouchability either a private or public in Figure 3.8, we would expect “Depressed Classes” to be associated more with Dr. Ambedkar than Gandhi as the former tried to mobilize them and get separate representation. This is found to be the case. The correlation with Ambedkar is 0.23 and with Gandhi is 0.02. Then we would also expect “Harijans” to be strongly associated with Gandhi, the originator of the term, than Ambedkar. This too has some support. “Harijans” and Gandhi is 0.17 and “Harijans” and Ambedkar is 0.07. And lastly, we would expect “Dalits” to be strongly associated with “Ambedkar” than Gandhi. This again has some support. “Dalits” and Ambedkar is 0.24 and “Dalits” and Gandhi is 0.01. Similar trends are observed for reports published in Gujarat (Figure 3.9).

Moving beyond the individuals who popularized the terms, and looking at words which have the highest correlations with the terms, we find that “Depressed Classes” is most closely associated with “representation” in both Figures 3.8 and 3.9 (0.28 and 0.83 respectively). “Harijans” is most closely associated with “school” and “uplift” in Figures 3.8 and 3.9 (0.23 and 0.24 respectively). And “Dalits” is most closely associated with “Ambedkar” and “conflict” in Figures 3.8 and 3.9 (0.24 and 0.55 respectively). These association scores provide some support for both my claims. From Figure 3.3, we can see that “school” and “uplift” have been classified as “social” while “conflict” is “political”. What is interesting is the association of “Depressed Classes” with “representation” which has been classified as “political”. Here we see that changes accompanying nomenclature - from “Depressed Classes”-“representation”-public to “Harijans”-“uplift”-private and finally to “Dalits”-“conflict”-public. This change is exemplified by the struggle between Gandhi and Ambedkar which culminated in the Poona Pact of 1932. While the “Depressed Classes” were mobilizing for separate representation prior to Gandhi, Gandhi saw this is counterproductive to building the nation as it would divide the people and thus he protested (by fasting) separate representation for the “Depressed Classes”. He advocated social reform of Hindu society and of “Harijans” and not the mobilization of “Depressed Classes”. Post-independence, Ambedkar re-ignited the movement for “Dalits” to find their own voice and demand rights as his experience had demonstrated that social reform of Hindu society was a far-fetched dream.

It is interesting to note the gradual increase in the *association scores* for two terms which I have classified as public - “literature” and “adhikar” as we move from panel 1 to panel 3 in both the figures. The word “adhikar” is a Hindi word which means rights. In Figure 3.8, panel 1, the score is 0 for both, in panel 2, it is 0.02 for both and in panel 3 it is 0.18 and 0.19 respectively. In Figure 3.9, panel 1, the score is 0 for both, in panel 2, it is 0 and 0.05 respectively and in the last panel it is 0.43 and 0.21 respectively. Both these words are closely associated with “Dalits” as compared to “Harijans” and “Depressed Classes”.

Figure 3.8: Words associated with the 3 terms for all reports with “Gujarat” in them

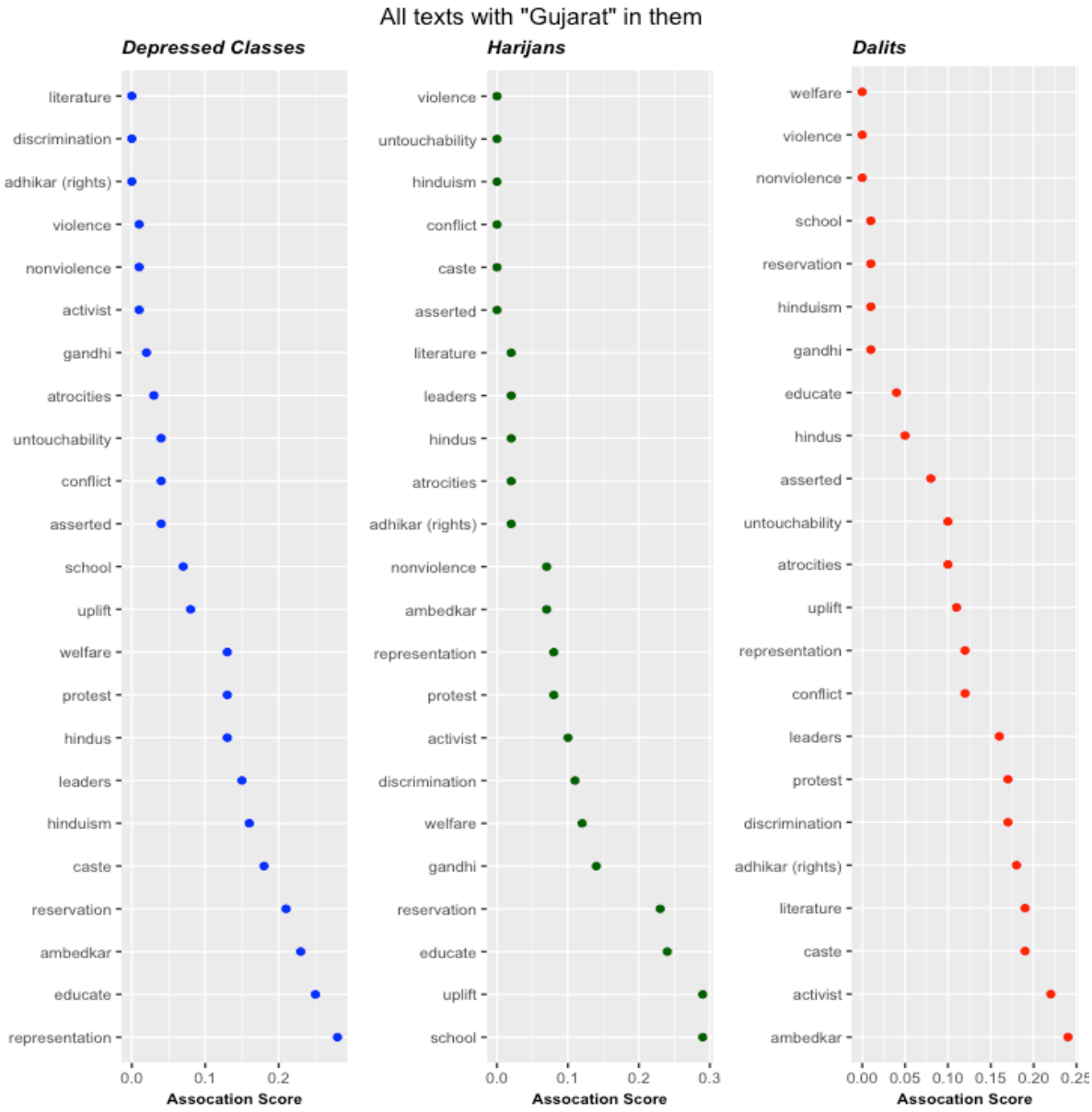
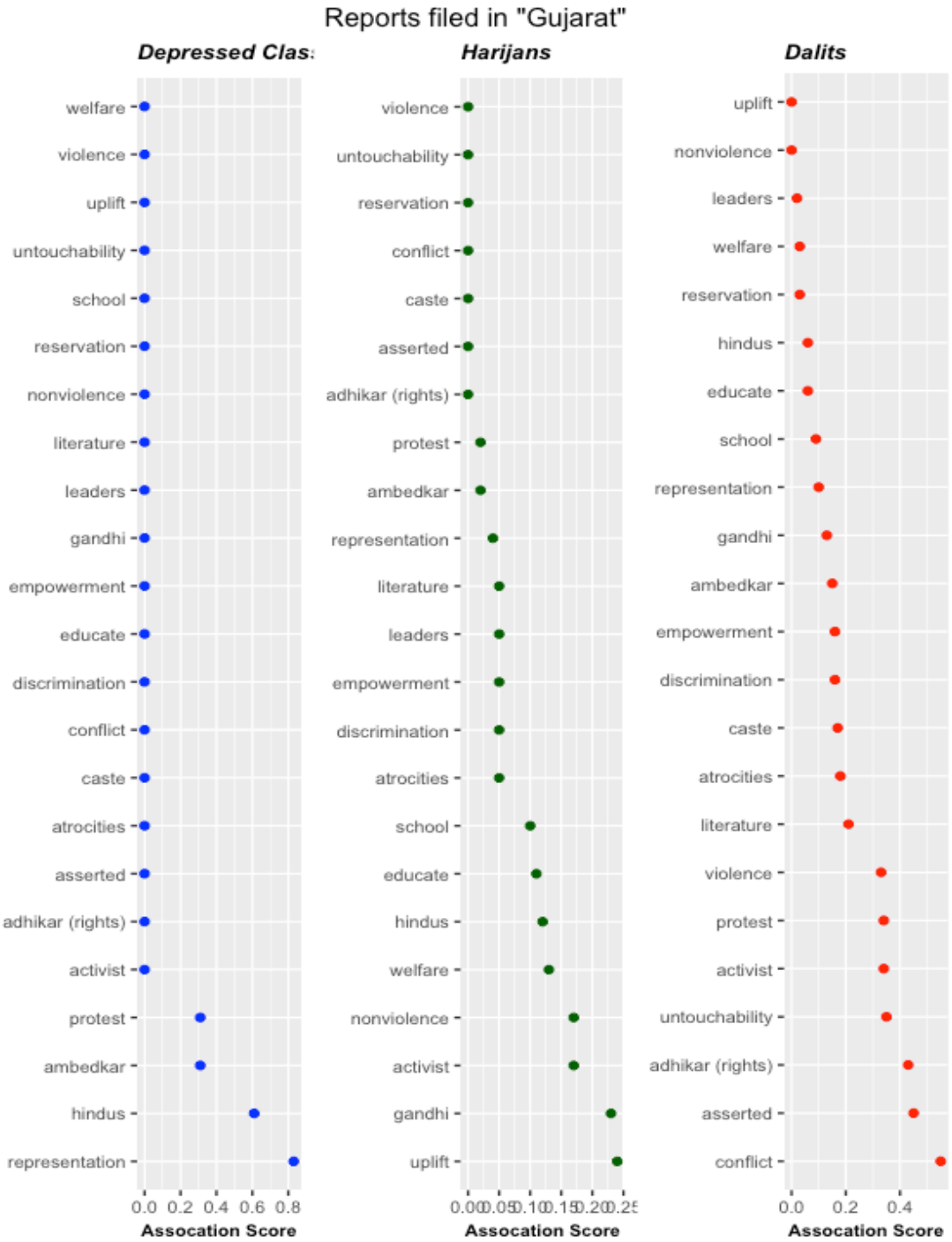


Figure 3.9: Words associated with the 3 terms for all reports published in Gujarat



3.3.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, in this Chapter I have done two things. First, I demonstrated that in order to use print media to study caste-based discrimination, it is imperative to build comprehensive lists of all possible terms associated with the victims. The variation in the associated terms reflect changing political contexts and changing understandings of caste and caste discrimination across time. I then used automated coding to explore different facets of the text data - relevance of the issue, rural/urban divide, and common words used in the news articles.

And second, I tested hypotheses about the nature of the coverage of untouchability. I did this by developing some rules of how to classify words into private and public. And then I used text mining software in R to get *association scores*, for each of the terms associated with the "untouchables" and each of the words classified as either private or public.

The next two chapters are devoted to constructing a valid measure of untouchability (Chapter 4) - *vulnerability score* - followed the analyzing variation in the measure using a regression framework (Chapter 5).

Chapter 4

Quantifying Untouchability

4.1.0 Introduction

While caste and untouchability have been around for thousands of years, it is surprising that there have not been more intensive efforts to gather information and provide measures[1]. In this Chapter I address this concern by providing a model of untouchability and proposing a quantitative measure. I begin with a conceptualization of untouchability. This is followed by descriptions of the data collection and the data which will be used to study variation in untouchability. Third, I explore three possible ways of operationalizing the concept but focus on the my chosen model. The chapter ends with a brief summary of the proposed model and the measure of untouchability.

A note on terminology. The "untouchables" were classified as the "Depressed Classes" by the British and then as "Scheduled Castes" by the Indian government. Gandhi called them "Harijan" which literally means children of God. This term was however felt to be patronizing. Instead, the term "Dalit" is preferred. It is a Marathi word which means "broken". I will however show that even the terms "Dalits" or "Scheduled Castes" are problematic as they tend to homogenize diverse experiences of different Dalit groups. In this Chapter I use the terms "untouchability" and "caste discrimination" interchangeably.

[1] There are several in-depth studies such as M.N. Srinivas's *The Remembered Village* (1978), Shalini Randeria's unpublished dissertation (1992), Lancy Lobo's *The Thakors of North Gujarat* (1995), Mario Rutten's (1995) on caste and untouchability in Gujarat. I am not saying that quantification of untouchability is better. I think given the prevalence of the phenomena, and its variability across space and time, relying on any single method is not enough. Case studies provide the details and valuable insights such as possible links between practices across different spaces which can then be incorporated into creating a measure which tries to capture the phenomenon as is. I see quantification as a means of accounting for linkages between practices and then comparing caste discrimination across villages in a relatively homogenous geographical area i.e., Gujarat. Macwan et al (2010) provide the first ever measure of untouchability. Desai (1976) was the first to document various forms of untouchability.

4.2.0 Conceptualization

4.2.1 Describing Untouchability

Untouchability is caste based discrimination. Shah et al. (2006) write that untouchability:

> "is a distinct Indian social institution that legitimizes and enforces practices of discrimination against people born into particular castes, and legitimizes practices that are humiliating, exclusionary and exploitative. Although comparable forms of discrimination are found all over the world, untouchability is made unique by the fact that its parent institution - the caste system - is found only in the Indian subcontinent" (Shah et al. 2006: 19).

It is crucial to remember that both caste and untouchability are deeply rooted in Hindu religious texts[2] that continue to provide Hindus a way of looking and interpreting the world around them. These texts legitimate untouchability. For example, it is considered to be morally wrong for an upper caste Brahmin to dine with lower caste persons. It constitutes a violation of what is understood to be their *dharma.* So while non-government organizations may advocate inter-dining between castes to change perceptions and behaviors towards lower castes, some interpreters of religious texts will rail against it as it would be seen as being morally wrong.

Untouchability being rooted in religion thus becomes an important factor responsible for the perceived stability of the Hindu social order. The stability of any order is measured by how it manages and minimizes conflict (Gaventa 1982; Jackman 1994). While untouchability serves to distinguish on the basis of caste, this distinction has been made stable and conflict kept to a minimum, because of the emphasis on one's *dharma* or duties. Being born a Hindu means that the individual is born into a caste and must follow his or her *dharma*. The community takes precedence over the individual. If there were a violation of the *dharma*, instability would ensue. Compliance to one's *dharma* is enforced by two principles – one, is by the use of *danda* (means literally stick) or coercion/force and second, is the idea of *karma* which justifies an individual's place in the social order. What a belief in *karma* does is say that being born in a certain caste is *not* because of chance. Instead, one is born in the caste that they are in the current life

[2] Their interpretation by priests that is. These texts are written in Sanskrit and the probability that a Hindu can understand Sanskrit is very low. Thus their interpretation is left to priests and gurus.

because of their actions in the previous birth. If the actions were according to one's *dharma,* then one is born into a higher caste (Brahmin, Kshatriya, or Vaishya) and if not then, then one is born into a lower caste (e.g., Shudra or untouchable). Therefore, according to this logic, mobility lies across lifetimes instead of within a lifetime. *Danda* and *karma* are both attributed with a causal role in the maintenance of the social order i.e., caste system and thus untouchability. They are responsible for minimizing conflict between different castes by placing very strict limits on aspirations and detailing the consequences of attempting to aspire more than one's birth position allowed (Thapar 1978).

4.2.2 The Spatial Dimension of Untouchability

The forms of untouchability which actually constitute discrimination remain ambiguous. This is because, as I wrote about in the previous chapter, the Constitution does *not* define untouchability and nor does it list the various forms of behaviors which count as discriminatory and thus punishable under the law. While the Constitution does *not* define untouchability, it does list the spaces where behaviors can be claimed to be discriminatory. These are: (a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment or (b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of state funds or dedicated to the use of general public (Constitution of India).

While the state has the mandate to intervene in public spaces, untouchability is manifested in domains which lie outside the jurisdiction of the state such as in homes and neighborhoods. What the separation of spaces into state/public and non-state/private means for the experience of discrimination remains to be investigated. This is best illustrated with an example.

At the time of Independence, it was decreed by the new Indian government that *every* child will attend school and will receive a free education. This was a big deal because it was believed up until then that lower castes do not need education and only children of certain higher castes should to go to school. Now for the first time, there was an

institution - the state - whose mandate was very clear - *every* child regardless of caste, class, gender will go to the public school. This challenged the caste system because it forced children from all castes to sit together in school (Dreze 2017). Let us also assume for now that because of fear of breaking the law and thus losing their jobs, the teachers did not segregate children i.e., they did not seat Dalit and non-Dalit children separately. But then what happens outside the school premises? How does desegregation in school affect the life of a Dalit child outside of the school? One can easily imagine that outside of the school, the identity of the Dalit child does not simply vanish. The truth is that the Dalit child continues to live in a segregated neighborhood. The child continues to be told that she should not venture into the non-Dalit neighborhood. The child continues to witness the servility and subservience of her parents in front of members of higher castes. The Dalit child is being given two conflicting signals - the state tells her that she is equal while her village reminds her that she is not. Thus the point is simple: just because Dalits can attend school and sit alongside non-Dalits, discrimination does not end.

What the example above shows is that understanding discrimination cannot be done by focusing on a single manifestation - such as the school or neighborhood or local government. For instance, in the example above, focusing on education, it would be easy to conclude that there is no discrimination. This however is an observation based on a sliver of reality whereas discrimination continues to affect lives of Dalit children outside school. Mehta (2003) best summarizes the experience of discrimination:

> The difference between masters and servants in traditional aristocratic societies and democratic societies is this: in traditional societies, this relationship had caste-like characteristics. You are subordinate not simply because you are under a contract to carry out particular tasks, your identity as a servant permeates the whole of your social being and the scope of social possibility. If you are a servant, you cannot sit with the master or in his presence, you cannot inhabit the same social spaces, you may not speak unless spoken to; even in urban settings, there is an ensemble of practices that makes the distance between human beings match the distance between species. Even outside the confines of your workplace, that fact that you are servant remains an indelible social fact (Mehta 2003: 85).

The experience of the “servant” that Mehta refers to is similar to that of the Dalit experience. So if we want to measure untouchability, we need to observe its

manifestation in several spaces - schools, neighborhoods, buses, banks, shops, restaurants (National Research Council 2004). Because clearly, the diminishment of untouchability in one space does not necessarily mean it will decrease in other spaces. Places of learning ranging from primary school to universities can become desegregated, but where people live or work can continue to be segregated. This is not unique to the experience of caste in India. It has been documented extensively in the case of racism in the United States (Marx 1967) and apartheid in South Africa (Adam 1976). The totality of the experience of discrimination cannot be fathomed by looking at a single dimension in isolation of others. In fact disappearance in one domain may mean an increase in other domains. As Shah et al. wrote in what is the first national study of untouchability in 2006:

> In some areas, practices of untouchability are being erased, while in other spheres, new forms of untouchability are being invented. Therefore efforts to document various forms of untouchability always lag behind the new adaptations and innovations in its practice (Shah et al. 2010: 63).

4.2.3 Modeling Untouchability

In this Section I will propose a model of untouchability whose operating rules are similar to that of the game of Jenga[3]. Jenga is a game that is played with rectangular wooden blocks. Three blocks are put together to make one level. Then another set of three blocks are put perpendicularly on top of the first storey. Like this, the remaining blocks are arranged such that each level is perpendicular to the one below it. Each player removes a block from anywhere but the topmost level and puts it on top using only one hand. Eventually the stack of blocks becomes unstable. The player that causes it to collapse loses the game.

Now imagine each form of caste discrimination to be a block. The arrangement of the forms however is not random i.e., there are particular blocks which form the base, others that form the middle and the remaining go on top. So while Jenga blocks are *interchangeable* and *independent* and it does not matter where a block is placed in the

[3] I thank Christian Davenport for putting the seed of this idea in my mind.

stack, it is not so with forms of discrimination. Now if forms of discrimination are not *interchangeable*, then how do we arrange them in a Jenga stack? Here is where I use the prevalence of different forms to guide how I would put the blocks. The blocks that form the base are the invariant forms of discrimination i.e., they are reported to affect Dalits in more than 75% of the villages. And the top most blocks are the most variant i.e., reported in less than 25% of the villages.

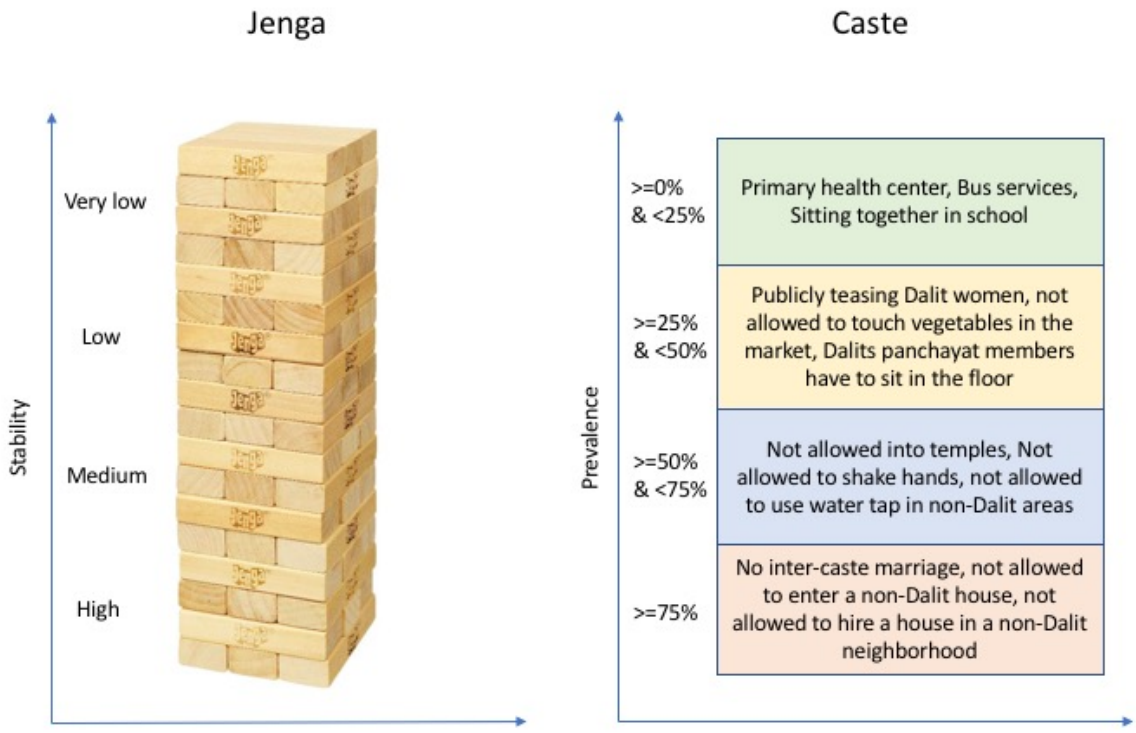
Figure 4.1 shows both the Jenga stack and the stack of discriminatory forms side by side. The stability of the Jenga stack decreases from the bottom upwards. What this means is that removing a block from the bottom will cause the entire stack to fall but doing the same from the top is less likely to result in the whole stack come crashing down. Just as the stability of the blocks varies from bottom to up, the forms of discrimination are arranged such that their prevalence varies from the most prevalent to the least prevalent. I have listed 3 distinct forms for each of the 4 rates starting from the bottom: greater than 75%, between 50% and 75%, between 25% and 50% and less than 25%[4]. Starting from the bottom of this stack, Valmikis[5] face discrimination in the following forms in more than 75% of the villages - not allowed to marry outside their caste (75%), not allowed to enter the house of a non-Dalit (83%) and not allowed to rent a home in a non-Dalit neighborhood (80%). Going up one level, Valmikis are not allowed to enter temples in about 73% of the villages, they are not allowed to shake hands with non-Dalits in 53% of the villages and need to wait for a non-Dalit to come and pour water in their buckets in about 50% of the villages. Moving up another level (prevalence between 25%-50%), in about 26% of the villages Valmiki women are publicly teased and verbally harassed, in 31% of the villages Valmikis are not allowed to touch vegetables at the shop while shopping and in 36% of the villages, Valmiki panchayat members have to sit on the floor. And in the last level, we find that discrimination in hospitals, schools and buses is the least prevalent i.e., less than 25%.

[4] The prevalence rates of all the practices are given in Table 4.4.

[5] A Dalit sub-caste that experiences the maximum discrimination. The decision to focus on this group will be explained in detail in the next section.

Just like in Jenga, if we pull out the bottom most block, we know that probability that the stack will is high. This is similar to the construction of a building i.e., a weak foundation will bring the entire structure crashing down. Now if we look at the bottom most level of the caste stack, it comprises of a restriction on marriage partners i.e., a Valmiki can marry only a Valmiki. Several prominent reformers such as Ambedkar made a case that marriage was the cornerstone of the caste-system. With the ban on inter-caste marriage removed, caste would collapse - just like the Jenga blocks. Gandhi too shared a similar sentiment and said he would not attend a wedding unless it were an inter-caste marriage. These were very strong statements made by extremely influential men and as such they did pose a challenge to the Hindu social order.

Figure 4.1: Using Jenga to model untouchability



Using Jenga is just *one* way of thinking about untouchability and how its varying manifestations may be linked. I have used this model because there are plenty of historical examples that lend credibility to the forms of discrimination that form the

various levels of caste discrimination. I am not arguing that thinking of types of caste discrimination like a Jenga model captures the *true* reality of caste. I think the Jenga model is a reasonable heuristic which needs to be tested empirically to learn about its usefulness (Moore 2001).

The next section provides details about the data instrument and the data that will be used to build a measure of untouchability.

4.3.0 DATA

4.3.1 Data Instrument

Keeping in mind the multiple forms and sites of untouchability across multiple spaces, activists and scholars from Navsarjan which is an NGO based in Gujarat[6], Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights, and scholars from the University of Notre Dame, University of Michigan, and University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, came together between 2005 and 2008 to build an instrument which would record this. The survey (referred to as the Navsarjan study from here on) covered 1578 villages across 11 districts in Gujarat. A list of 98 manifestations of untouchability (see Table 4.4) was drawn up. This list is a census and hence comprehensive in that it covers all possible forms of untouchability that could possibly exist in the districts where Navsarjan operates. Questions were asked about the prevalence of each practice along with the most likely perpetrator and the most likely victim. Specifically with regard to each of the 98 practices the survey asked:

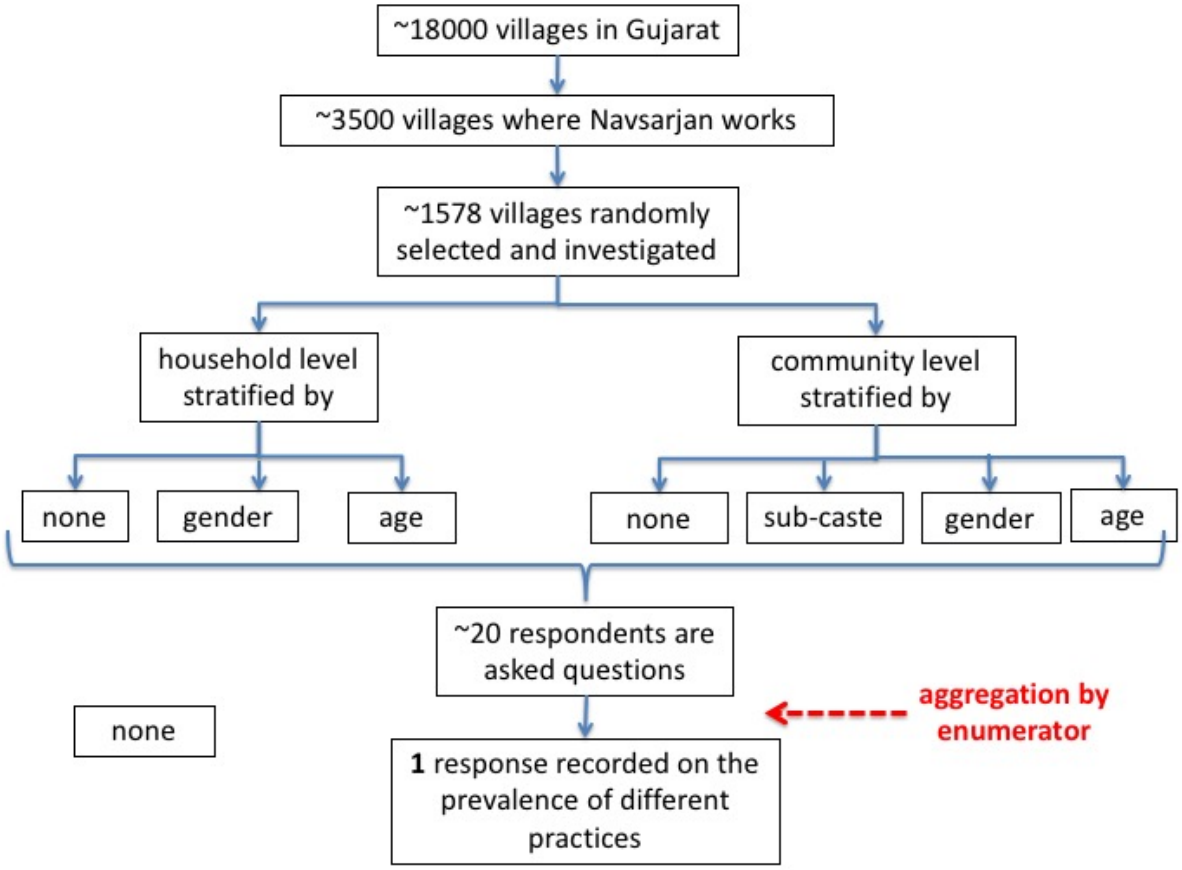
i. Untouchability practiced – NA, Yes, No
ii. Most practicing caste – Brahmin, Baniya, Kshatriya, Patel/Patidar, Kshatriya (OBC), Patel (OBC), Bharwad/Rabari, Vaghri, Barber/Potter, Christian/Muslim
iii. Not practiced by caste – Brahmin, Baniya, Kshatriya, Patel/Patidar, Kshatriya (OBC), Patel (OBC), Bharwad/Rabari, Vaghri, Barber/Potter, Christian/Muslim
iv. Most practiced with sub-caste – Vankar, Rohit, Senma, Valmiki, Nadiya, Turi, Garo-Brahmin, Nat, Tirgar, Christian

Looking at (i), it needs to be clarified "who" exactly answers the questions and how the responses are recorded. Figure 4.2 illustrates the data collection process. There are

[6] As of December 2016, the Ministry of Home Affairs cancelled Navsarjan's FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) license. What this means is that NGO cannot accept any funding from donors outside India. Given that more than 90% of their funding came from abroad, Navsarjan had to lay off all its employees and shut down. Navsarjan was one of the thousands of NGO's whose FCRA license was cancelled. The Government did as it believed that resources coming from abroad were being used to engage in anti-national and anti-development activities in India) http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/fcra-licence-cancelled-ngo-navsarjan-lays-off-all-staffers-4440969//)

about 18,000 villages in Gujarat. Navsarjan works in about 3500 of the 18,000 villages[7]. 1578 were randomly selected out of these 3500 villages. Each one of these 1578 villages were administered the survey. The enumerators selected and trained to conduct this survey worked with Navsarjan and as such had a good rapport with the Dalit population of every village. Having a good rapport is important to elicit truthful responses about sensitive questions such as caste discrimination (Fujii 2012).

Figure 4.2: Data collection process



[7] There are two ways that Navsarjan got involved in a village. It either got involved because of a reported atrocity on a Dalit and then the NGO was sought after for legal aid. And second, is expansion. If it is already working in a village, it may decide to start work in neighboring villages.

Once the 1578 villages were selected, they were randomly stratified such that in some villages the survey was conducted at the household level and in others it was conducted at the community level. Furthermore within the household level, surveys were stratified by gender and age. And at the community level, stratification took place along sub-caste, gender and age[8]. There were some villages where no stratification was done. Once information about the respondents was recorded, they were asked about the prevalence of the different forms of untouchability. *One response was recorded*. The recorded response – NA, Yes or No - reflected the response of the majority. From the responses we know whether a certain form of untouchability exists in the village, the most likely perpetrator, the least likely perpetrator, and the most likely victim.

4.3.2 Disaggregating the Untouchability Experience Across Dalit groups

When asked about specific forms of untouchability, information about which non-Dalit caste practices it the most and with which Dalit caste was also collected. All perpetrators and victims, especially when studying caste, cannot be lumped into one large category of The Perpetrator and The Victim. Distinguishing between perpetrators and victims is very important. This point is often missed when we discuss “higher castes”, “upper castes”, and “lower castes”. There are many reasons for this. The first one being there are just too many sub-castes and to make conversation possible we need broad labels. Even though labels make discussion possible, a more serious issue is the lack of studies examining different sub-castes and their relationships amongst themselves and with other “higher-castes”. There is one study that has been extremely helpful in justifying my decision to examine discrimination experienced by one Dalit sub-

[8] A personal experience will throw light on why this was necessary. I was visiting a village in summer 2013. An activist from Navsarjan took me to one of the villages where she had been working. I asked to be left in the village for the day and I would return the next day. I stayed with a Dalit family: husband, wife and 2 sons. The sons were away in school. Late afternoon, we were sitting outside, drinking tea and chatting. I remembered that while entering the village, I saw a temple in the central square. As the family I was staying with seemed relatively prosperous and also the husband had a government job, I asked whether they were allowed to enter the temple. The husband said yes. In fact, he went on to say that there was no untouchability in the village. I left it there as I did not quite know how to probe this. In the evening, the wife offered to take me around the village. As soon as we stepped out of the house, she said that her husband had lied. They (Dalits) are not allowed to enter the temple and untouchability exists in the village. Now whose story does one believe? The husband according to whom there is no untouchability or the wife according to whom untouchability is real and exists. Depending on who one chooses to talk to, the “truth” looks different. Stratification was done in order to capture this complication. Perhaps, men are more likely to give socially desirable responses as compared to women and/or women feel more secure with other women to give honest responses. Stratification was done to ensure possible variation in responses which could arise due to gender (male or female), age, (young or old) or sub-caste (low or high ranked).

caste – Valmiki. In her unpublished dissertation, Shalini Randeria[9] (1992) closely examines the relationship between different Dalit sub-castes in a few villages in Gujarat. She observes that the experience of caste varies by sub-caste. Vankars experience less oppression and humiliation as compared to the lowest sub-caste of Valmikis.

What the varying discrimination experienced by Dalit sub-castes also shows is that the higher castes distinguish between Dalits – i.e., a Vankar will not be treated like a Valmiki, even though both are Dalits. In the context of the village, the specific group identity is more salient than a broad Dalit identity which subsumes all differences. From the survey, there are 7 different sub-castes. While Garo Brahmins (priestly Dalit caste) report the least amount of discrimination, Valmiki (sweepers, scavengers, cleaners) experience the maximum. Table 4.1 shows the summary statistics for the number of distinct forms of reported discrimination experienced by each group[10]. We observe that the average number of practices reportedly experienced by Vankars are about 4 and by Valmikis is about 36, which is 9 times that of Vankars.

To construct these measures, I code each of the forms of untouchability as 1 or 0 if it is reported or not in the village. I then look at the reported Dalit group that is most likely to experience that particular form of discrimination[11]. I count the number of distinct or unique practices reportedly experienced by each Dalit sub-caste. The maximum number of distinct practices that can be experienced are 98.

[9] Achyut Yagnik gave me a copy of Shalini Randeria's dissertation as it is not publicly available.

[10] I exclude *Nat* because the mean and standard deviation are negligible.

[11] Again this measure gets only at prevalence and not pervasiveness that is the count does not distinguish between whether 50% of the respondents say "Valmikis are not allowed into the temple" vs. 100% say the same.

Table 4.1: Number of distinct practices by different Dalit sub-castes

Name of Dalit jati	*Minimum*	*Maximum*	*Mean*	*Standard deviation*
Garo Brahmin	0	45	0.13	1.88
Nadiya	0	87	1.66	8.27
Vankar	0	77	3.89	10.63
Senma	0	95	3.95	12.32
Rohit	0	79	10.52	17.14
Valmiki	0	87	35.89	22.79

The statistics in Table 4.1 treat all forms of untouchability as equivalent or interchangeable i.e., discrimination in school is treated the same as discrimination at the village, which is treated the same as discrimination in the panchayat (government) office. In other words, the statistics are insensitive to the site (space)[12] of discrimination. Let us take a look again at these statistics but this time with attention to the space of discrimination. Table 4.2 shows the spatial variation in the experience of discrimination of each Dalit group at 5 distinct sites but which get subsumed in the aggregated statistics in Table 4.1. What Table 4.2 shows is the % of villages where the particular group experiences discrimination at the specified site. For instance, in 20.4% of the villages, Valmikis are being reported to face discrimination at the village well. In about 66% of the villages they are not allowed to enter the temple. Garo-Brahmins experience the least discrimination as compared to the Valmikis across the 5 sites. They do not experience any discrimination at the village well. In about 31% of the villages, they report not being allowed to enter the temple.

Table 4.2: Percentage of villages where Dalit sub-castes report experiencing discrimination in particular spaces

Practice (and site of discrimination)	*Garo-Brahmin*	*Nadiya*	*Senma*	*Vankar*	*Rohit*	*Valmiki*
Village wells (wells)	0	.57	2.9	2.5	5.8	20.4
Touching vegetables in the shop (shops)	0	.95	2.8	1.5	6.2	24.9
Gramsabha participation (panchayat)	.06	2.02	2.7	3.2	9.4	33.1
Mid-day meal (schools)	.19	1.7	3.6	4.4	10	36.3
Temple entry (temples)	.31	3.4	8.6	7.9	24	66.3

[12] I use site and space interchangeably.

Given the variation in the experience of discrimination as shown through Tables 4.1 and 4.2, I have shown that any data on untouchability needs to seriously consider two aspects of the phenomena. The first is that the experience of untouchability varies as per the Dalit group in question. Valmikis report experiencing more discrimination as compared to Vankars (Tables 4.1 and 4.2). And second, the form of untouchability observed varies by space (Table 4.2) (i.e., Valmikis reportedly experience less discrimination at the village well than in the temple).

Focusing on the experience of Valmikis across all the spatial sites I will now go over three possible ways of measuring untouchability and will conclude with choosing what I think to be the most valid measure.

4.4.0 Operationalization

The observations from here on will focus on discrimination reportedly experienced by the Valmikis. The Navsarjan study collected information on 98 forms (Table 4.4) of untouchability across 1578 villages. The dataset is a large matrix with 1578 rows and 98 columns. How does one analyze variation in a large ([1578][98]) matrix? There are a three ways of doing this.

4.4.1 Count/proportions
4.4.2 Scales
4.4.3 Network Based Measure

4.4.1 Count/proportions

We know the forms of discrimination that are reported to exist in a village and that there is a maximum of 98 (Table 4.4). One could add them up and either use this total count or a proportion based on it as a measure for untouchability. For instance we could find that there is a village where 50 of the 98 forms have been reported. The proportion of forms of untouchability that exist are 0.51 (50/98=0.51). This could be done for all the villages in the sample (1578) and depending on the distribution, a choice could be made as to which statistical model would best represent the distribution.

I first created a straightforward and very simple measure of untouchability. This measure however falls shorts because of two simplifications. First, is that of *interchangeability*. When we count and create a sum or proportion of untouchability practices, the practices become indistinguishable. What does this mean? By way of example, it means that not being allowed to wear fancy clothes or goggles is the same as not being allowed to enter the temple which is the same as not being allowed to marry outside one's caste. This does not constitute an accurate representation of the experience of untouchability

One variable that can be used to empirically distinguish between different forms of untouchability is how violators are punished. Wearing goggles would invite verbal

abuse, entering the temple would lead to beating, and inter-caste marriage would result in excommunication or death. These are three different violations with three different consequences. Wearing goggles invites less punishment than entering a temple, which invites less punishment than marriage outside one's caste. Thus the punishment is evidence that some constitute smaller violations and others larger. While all are meant to reinforce the status quo, which is the domination over the lower castes, the unfolding of the punishment dimension shows us that they serve different goals. Calling out people on how they dress in public causes embarrassment and humiliation, beating people for entering the temple causes physical hurt, and excommunication results in isolation. These experiences are not just confined to the individual violator, instead their public nature sends a message to the entire community of the consequences of breaking social norms. These varying punishments target the body, mind, and soul of the individual, and the community of which the individual is a member. They instill fear which makes people alien in their own skins and they spend most of their time constantly trying to conform with expected behaviors: don't wear what you want, don't pray to who you want, and don't fall in love with anyone outside your caste. Thus, lumping or conflating these violations into a count or proportion disregards a very fundamental aspect of how untouchability operates on a daily basis: different behaviors have different goals.

The second is that of *independence* where each form of discrimination is seen in isolation of other practices. For instance, if Dalit students are seated separately in a classroom, then it would be expected that they would be seated separately during lunchtime or vice-versa. One would expect a high correlation between sitting separately in the classroom and sitting separately during lunch. The relationship between practices does not make it into the count which weights every form equally. One could say that because of the high correlation between such practices, it would suffice in counting just one of them instead of all of them. We could do this but then it would mean treating the forms as *interchangeable* i.e., sitting separately while learning and sitting separately while eating are the same. But once again, they are simply *not* the same. They have different effects. Sitting separately while learning exposes one to partial treatment by

the teacher who is expected to pay more attention to non-Dalits than Dalits. This would result in unequal learning opportunities. On the other hand sitting separately while eating prevents any possibility of inter-caste friendships.

I am not against simplifications (in this case *interchangeability* and *independence*) per se. Simplifications are useful as they help in breaking down complex phenomena like untouchability into more manageable units. However given that there have been advances made in creating measures which take into consideration linkages between different forms of human rights abuses/violations to human dignity may be related (Macwan et al. 2010; Fariss and Schnakenberg 2014), we are in a position to build more precise measures, which will be discussed in the next two sections.

4.4.2 Scales

The problem with counts/proportions are the simplifications which treat different forms of untouchability as *interchangeable* and *independent*. One way of not doing so is by building a scale which is what was done in the Navsarjan study. The idea behind scaling is to collapse the responses and find an order. The procedures used to collapse and create an identifiable order varies based on the conception of the phenomena that needs to be quantified. The Navsarjan researchers used a cumulative scaling technique called the Mokken scaling technique. What this method does is it collapses and arranges responses in order of “hardness”. There are two assumptions. The first is that the different forms of discrimination are manifestations of a *single* latent concept called “untouchability”. And second is that these can be hierarchically ordered.

If the practices are arranged from the least prevalent to the most prevalent, then given that a less prevalent practice is found, means that the probability of finding a more prevalent practice is high. While I agree that we need to account for linkages between different practices, there is a problem in assuming that they are manifestations of a single latent variable. Work done by scholars on the dynamics of power make a compelling case for treating associated concepts such as oppression and discrimination as multidimensional (Gaventa 1982; Davenport 1995). Discrimination is not just about

denying or restricting access to resources. As demonstrated by Gaventa in his study of apparent powerlessness in a coal valley of Appalachia, while the miners and their families were completely dependent on the mine owners for everything - housing, food, water, electricity, rations - there were other elements at play which secured their obedience. He writes about the "mobilization of bias" i.e., preventing issues considered to be important to the miners from being discussed and addressed and an ideological control over signs and symbols around the valley. These were not random and were designed in order to make the workers believe in their place in society[13] (Gaventa 1982).

4.4.3 Network Based Measures

The Jenga model of untouchability presented in Section 4.2.3 is an attempt to address the two simplifications underlying proportions and scales, *interchangeability* and *independence*. To implement the Jenga model, I apply and modify a measurement approach by Fariss and Schnakenberg (2014).

In brief, what the Jenga model of untouchability assumes is that untouchability practices are linked to each other. However some are more tightly linked or coupled or embedded as compared to others. For instance, in current day India, it may be easier to get Dalit children into the public primary school but difficult to ensure Dalit and non-Dalit children sit together. What this notion of a practice being "easier" or "harder" gets at is the level of *vulnerability*. Some practices cluster more tightly together and some less so. Those that are tightly linked to each other, are harder to influence and this *less vulnerable.* Other forms of discrimination are easier to influence and thus *more vulnerable.*

4.4.3.1 Measuring *Vulnerability*

In order to measure *vulnerability* I draw on a paper by Fariss and Schnakenberg (2014). In their paper, the authors call for researchers of human rights violations to pay more attention to possible linkages between different types of violations as compared to

[13] Scott (1990) challenges this idea of workers believing that they are where they are because they deserve it. Instead he argues the appearance of compliance and deference is feigned. The powerless cannot assert themselves in front of the powerful. Both the powerful and powerless have *public* and *hidden* scripts which are used to navigate daily interactions.

treating them either separately or as manifestations of the same underlying variable. Let us take for example two forms of violations that states are known to engage in - torture and disappearance - to understand the consequences of treating violations independent of each other. If one were interested solely in variation of torture and found the number of reported torture events to decrease over time, then it would be concluded that torture and hence repression was decreasing. While this is not incorrect, what is problematic is the assumption that torture is an *independent* form of repression i.e., not connected with other repressive behaviors. What if it were to be found that even though torture was indeed decreasing, reported political disappearances increased during the same time? This is evidence that forms of repression are linked to each other and a decrease in one could lead to an increase in another (Fariss and Schnakenberg 2014).

The second issue the authors point out is treating different forms of repression as manifestation of a single latent variable called "repression". If there is a single latent variable, then it means that there are no differences between torture and disappearances i.e., they are *interchangeable*, and both are intended to induce the same effect. This again is not true as torture is intended to extract information while disappearances are meant to eliminate political challengers. Thus they are not *interchangeable* or "substitutes" (Fariss and Schnakenberg 2014).

The authors present a measure of mutual dependence between human rights violations. They use a network variable which they call *proximity* that is defined as:

$$\phi_{i,j,t} = P(i = 1 \mid j = 1) - P(i = 1 \mid j = 0) \qquad (1)$$

What (1) does is calculate the change in probability of observing the violation of right i given that j goes from not being violated to being violated. In order to build a *vulnerability* measure, (1) needs to be slightly modified. What the *vulnerability* measure should capture is how strongly (or weakly) are human rights violations or in my case untouchability practices linked to each other. In other words how does the presence of one discriminatory behavior affect the presence of another discriminatory behavior? Or

what is the conditional probability of observing one form of untouchability such as separate pots for water for Dalits in school, given the existence of another form such as constrained access to the public village well? Formally, *vulnerability* is the joint probability of two forms of discriminatory behaviors existing simultaneously and is defined as,

$$\phi_{i,j} = P(i = 1 \mid j = 1) \qquad (2)$$

ϕ will be a number between $[0,1]$. If this number is small (closer to 0), it would indicate that i is *weakly coupled* with j and *easier to remove* and thus *more vulnerable*. And if the value is high (closer to 1), then it would indicate that i is *strongly coupled* with j and *difficult to remove* and thus *less vulnerable*.

Applying (2), we get a 98X98 *vulnerability* matrix. This matrix shows us the joint probabilities of every possible pair of untouchability practices. The diagonal elements are set to 0 as a practice cannot be coupled to itself. The form of the matrix is as follows:

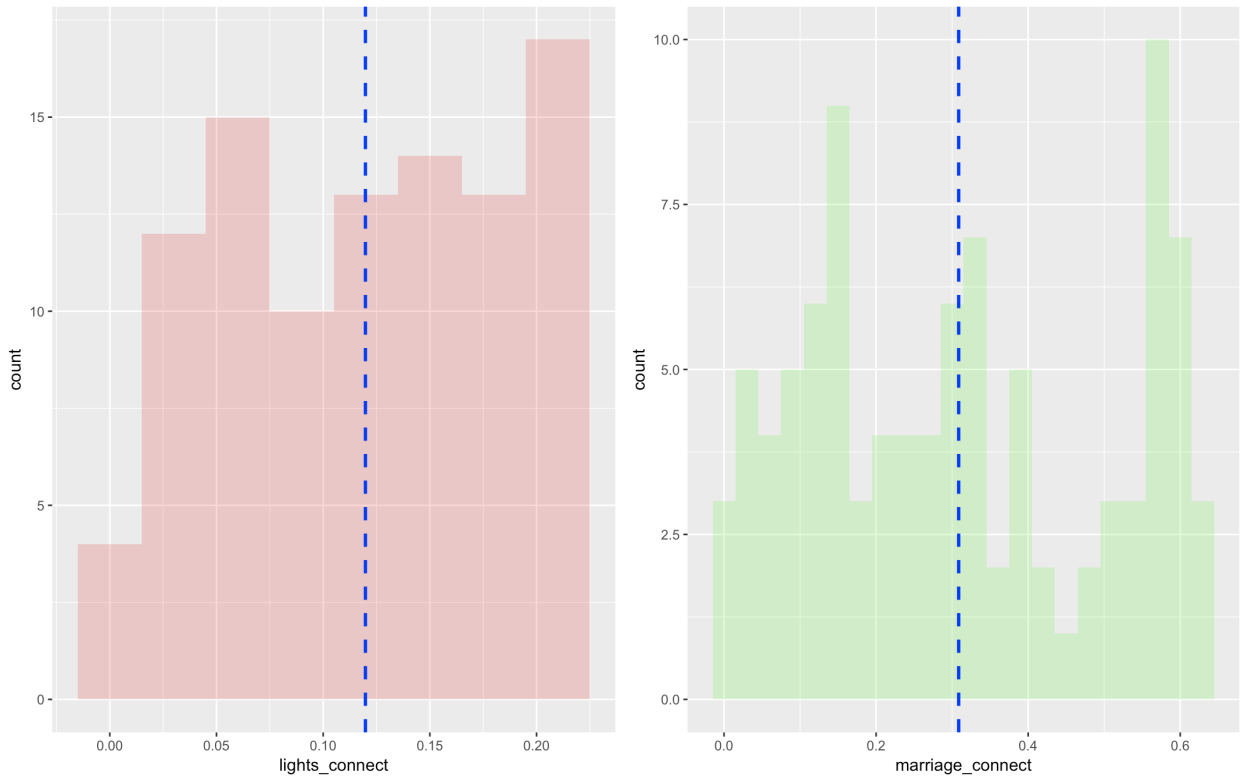
$$\begin{matrix} \phi_{1,1} & \phi_{1,2} & \dots & \phi_{1,98} \\ \phi_{2,1} & \phi_{2,2} & \dots & \phi_{2,98} \\ \dots & \dots & \dots & \dots \\ \phi_{98,1} & \phi_{98,2} & \dots & \phi_{98,98} \end{matrix}$$

While it is not possible to show the entire 98X98 matrix, Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of the ϕ scores around two untouchability practices - discrimination with street lights (L) where Dalits report having poor access to electricity and prohibition on inter-caste marriage (M) where Dalits and non-Dalits are not allowed to marry. From the matrix, $\phi_{L,M} = 0.19$. This is on the lower side, which means that L and M are not strongly coupled. Thus it would be expected that perturbing either one of them would not have an effect on the other. The left panel of Figure 4.3 is the distribution of ϕ scores around

L. These scores are the *vulnerability scores* of L with every other form of discrimination (Table 4.4). The minimum value is 0, the maximum value is 0.22 and the mean value is 0.12 (dashed blue line). The right panel of Figure 4.3 is the distribution of ϕ scores around M. These scores are the *vulnerability scores* of M with every other possible form of discrimination (Table 4.4). The minimum value is 0, the maximum value is 0.62 and the mean value is 0.3 (dashed blue line). The mean of M is greater than that of L (0.3>0.12). This could be interpreted as M being *more tightly coupled* and thus *less vulnerable* to influence as compared to L.

Another noticeable difference between the two are the maximum ϕ scores. For L, the maximum value is 0.22 while for M, it is 0.62. This again reinforces the observation that M seems to be more *strongly coupled* with other forms of discrimination as compared to L. This observation is not surprising as marriage is more central to preserving caste identity than the distribution of electricity. The centrality of the ban on inter-caste marriage is evident when these bans are violated. Stories of excommunication and death are common when inter-caste marriages do take place. On the other hand, when Dalits get access to street lights non-Dalits may react by stealing the light bulbs, vandalizing electricity poles or delaying any maintenance issue.

Figure 4.3: Distribution of the *vulnerability scores* (ϕ) around two untouchability practices



So far we focused on the distribution of ϕ scores for two practices - distribution of electricity and inter-caste marriage. What we observed was a variation in two metrics - the mean and maximum *vulnerability* (ϕ) scores with each practice. Now we move onto looking at *all* the practices. Figure 4.4 shows the mean ϕ scores for *all* the 98 forms of discrimination and plots them in an ascending order. Each dot - 98 in total - represents the mean ϕ value associated with each form of untouchability. The highest rank, 98, is for the highest mean ϕ value which is 0.34. The lowest rank, 1, is for the lowest ϕ value which is 0.006. The points are further color coded where red dots indicate forms of untouchability practiced in spaces where the state does not have (or have very limited) jurisdiction such as homes and the blue dots represent practices where the state has a clear jurisdiction such as public schools[14]. Figure 4.4 shows a high concentration of the red points (non-state spaces) with high mean ϕ scores and high ranks (top right corner).

[14] My classification of spaces can be found in Table 4.4.

The blue points (state spaces) are mostly concentrated at lower ranks i.e., they have low mean ϕ scores. The mean of the red dots is 0.21 (red solid line) is greater than the mean of the blue dots is 0.12 (blue solid line).

There are two important observations from Figure 4.4. The first is that caste behaviors in non-state spaces have a higher average *vulnerability score* (ϕ) than caste behaviors in state spaces (0.21>0.12). What this means is that forms of untouchability which lie in the "private" domain are more *strongly linked* to other forms of caste discrimination as compared to the behaviors in the "public" domain. These behaviors are more difficult to perturb because of their embeddedness with other behaviors i.e., they are more deeply entrenched or rooted. If we recall the Jenga model of untouchability, then these practices (red dots), could be seen as forming the base of the stack. And we know that it is more difficult to remove a Jenga block from the bottom without the entire stack collapsing.

Second, is the single blue dot in the upper right hand quadrant. This blue dot is discrimination experienced by Dalits at the cremation grounds. While cremation grounds are considered to be public property and thus accessible to all regardless of caste, cremation is a religious process. Lower caste members cannot be cremated on the same grounds as higher caste members. Given the deeply religious nature of cremation, the state just does not have enough jurisdiction to enforce equality in the last rites of the dead regardless of caste.

Figure 4.4: Mean *vulnerability* ϕ scores for *all* the 98 forms of discrimination

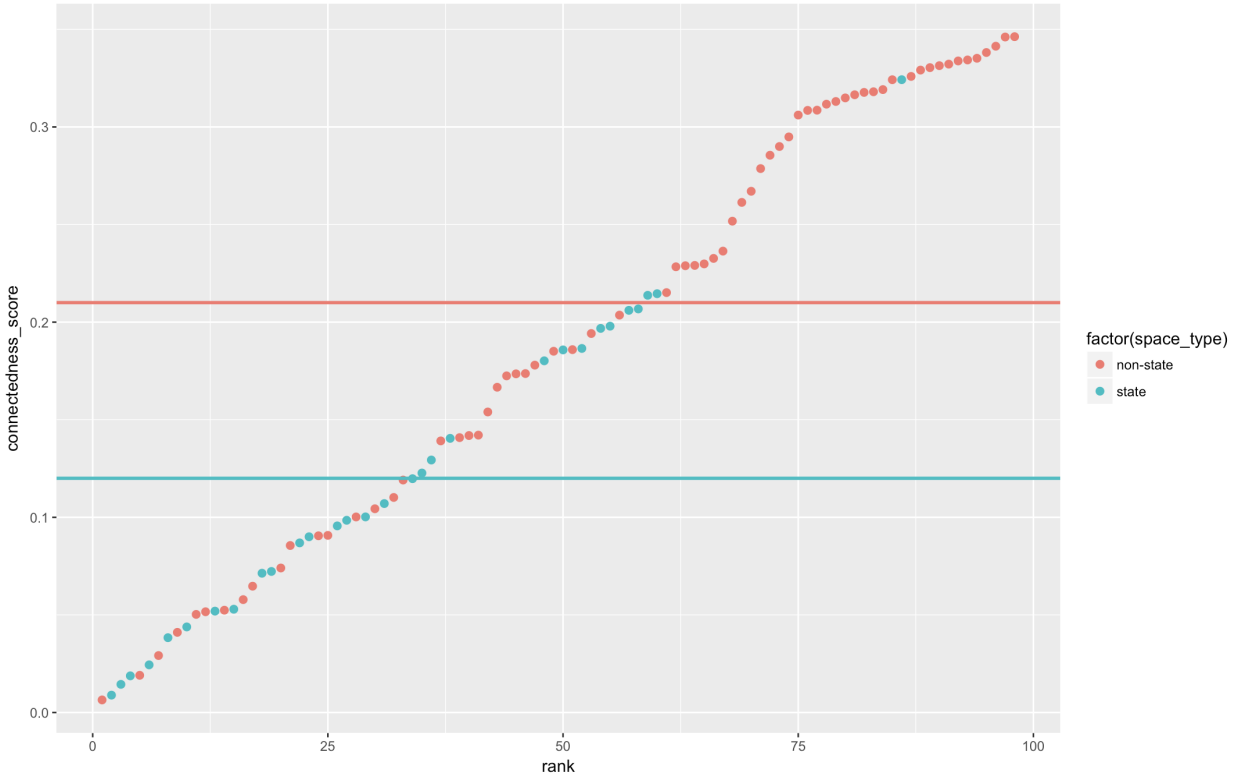
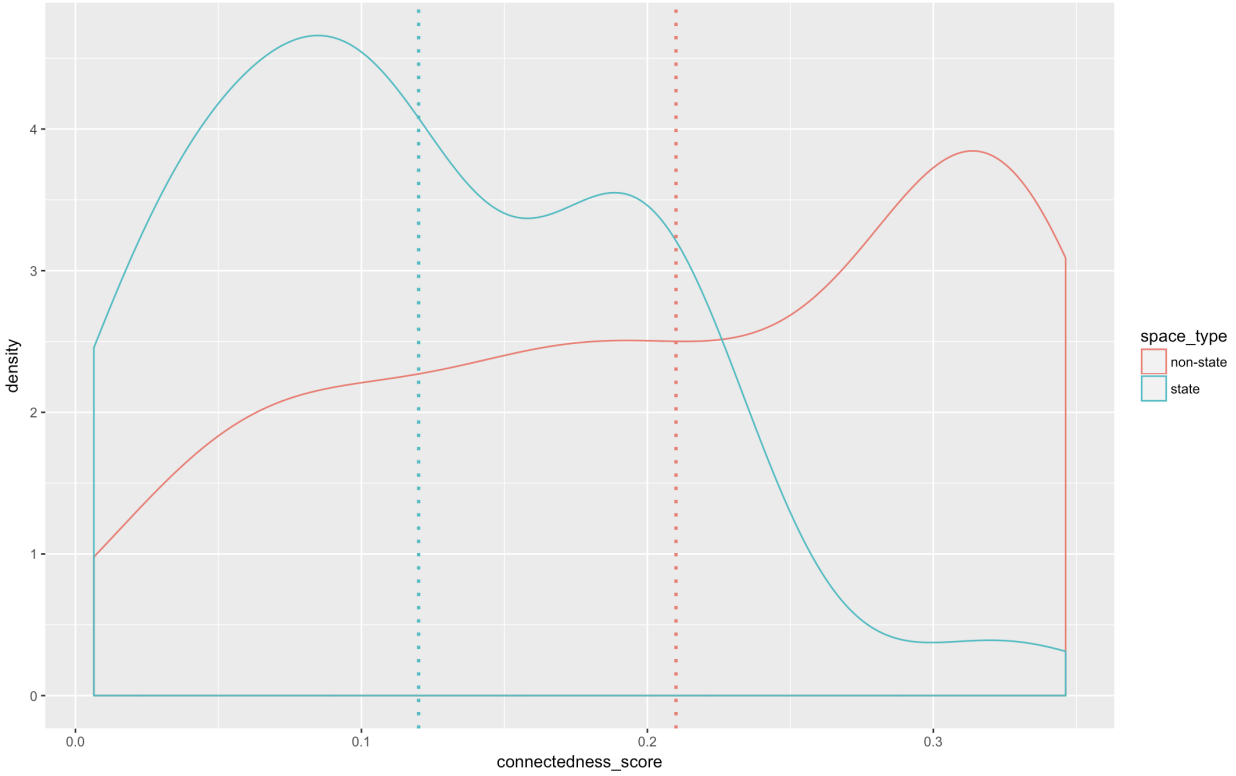


Figure 4.5 shows the distribution of the mean ϕ scores by space (state and non-state) type. Like Figure 4.3, Figure 4.5 marks the mean of the two distributions. We observe that at lower mean scores of ϕ which indicate *higher vulnerability,* behaviors in the state space (public) dominate while at higher mean scores of ϕ which indicate *lower vulnerability,* behaviors in the non-state space (private) dominate.

Figure 4.5: Distribution of the mean *vulnerability scores* (ϕ) disaggregated by space



4.4.3.2 Creating a Composite Connectedness Score

The last sub-section deals with creating a composite *vulnerability score* ($\phi_{S,i,v}$). This will be done by synthesizing the distribution of *vulnerability scores* (ϕ) around individual forms of untouchability (i) for each village (v). I use the formula employed by Fariss and Schnakenberg (2014) where the composite *vulnerability* score is:

$$\phi_{S,i,v} = \frac{\sum_j x_{j,v}\phi_{i,j}}{\sum_j \phi_{i,j}} \qquad (3)$$

Here, i, refers to the form of untouchability whose variability we are interested in. v is the village. j refers to the other practices i is linked to. x_j is 1 if the practice (j) is reported in the village and 0 otherwise. $\phi_{i,j}$is the *vulnerability* score between i and j. These scores stay constant across villages and are calculated using the 98X98 matrix.

Let us take an example to see how exactly (3) works. Using discrimination with the distribution of street lights as i in two villages (1 and 2), we see how it is connected to 4 other forms of caste discrimination in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Example implementing the composite *vulnerability* score $\phi_{S,i}$

v	i	j	$\phi_{i,j}$	$x_{j,v}$	$x_{j,v}\phi_{i,j}$
1	Street lights	Bus services	0.19	1	0.19
1	Street lights	Separate water pot in schools	0.08	0	0
1	Street lights	Manual scavenging	0.1	1	0.1
1	Street lights	Temple entry	0.19	1	0.19
			$\sum_j \phi_{i,j}$**= 0.56**		$\sum_j x_{j,1}\phi_{i,j}$**= 0.48**
2	Street lights	Bus services	0.19	0	0
2	Street lights	Separate water pot in schools	0.08	0	0
2	Street lights	Manual scavenging	0.1	0	0
2	Street lights	Temple entry	0.19	1	0.19
			$\sum_j \phi_{i,j}$**= 0.56**		$\sum_j x_{j,2}\phi_{i,j}$**=0.19**

From Table 4.3, we can calculate the composite *vulnerability* score for village 1 as:

$$\phi_{S,i,1} = \frac{\sum_j x_{j,v}\phi_{i,j}}{\sum_j \phi_{i,j}} = \frac{0.48}{0.56} = 0.85 \qquad (4)$$

And for village 2 as,

$$\phi_{S,i,2} = \frac{\sum_j x_{j,v}\phi_{i,j}}{\sum_j \phi_{i,j}} = \frac{0.19}{0.56} = 0.33 \qquad (5)$$

Around discrimination experienced with respect to the distribution of electricity (i), village 1 has a composite score ($\phi_{S,i,1}$) of 0.85 while for village 2 it is 0.33 ($\phi_{S,i,2}$). While the value of the denominator in $(4)$and (5) are identical (0.56), the numerators are different. This is because village 2 has fewer (¼) reported other forms of discrimination as compared to village 1 (¾). This is accounted for in the composite *vulnerability* score. For the purpose of interpretation, it could be said that in village 1, discrimination with

respect to electricity distribution, is *less vulnerable* to influence as it more deeply entrenched with other forms of discrimination as compared to village 2.

4.5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, in this Chapter I have done three things. First, I presented a way of modeling untouchability which takes into consideration that forms of discrimination are dependent and not interchangeable. Furthermore, this measure captures variation in the discrimination as manifested in *public* (state) and *private* (non-state) spaces (Figures 4.4 and 4.5).

Second, I introduced novel data on untouchability. Using this data I showed that serious attention needs to be paid to the varying experiences of different Dalit groups across different spaces. The experience of untouchability cannot be aggregated for all the group because of the huge variation (Tables 4.1 and 4.2). I decide to focus on Valmikis as they experience the maximum discrimination.

And lastly, I implemented my model of untouchability by modifying a measurement model presented by Fariss and Schnakenberg (2014). I refer to this measure as a *vulnerability score*. High scores around particular practices indicate that the practice is deeply embedded and thus harder to influence (*less vulnerable)*. While lower scores indicate that the practice is not deeply embedded and thus *vulnerable* to influence. These scores will be used as dependent variables for regression analyses in the next chapter.

4.6.0 Appendix B - 98 forms of untouchability

Table 4.4: The 98 forms of untouchability with their associated short names, brief descriptions and prevalence rates for Valmikis

Practice_number	Practice_shortname	Practice_description	Practice_prevalence_rate (%)	Space_type
1	U1_water_Val	Dalits must use their hands to drink water at the public pub	16	non-state
2	U2_water_Val	Non-Dalit women will not allow Dalit women to access the well directly. Instead the latter must wait for the former	26	non-state
3	U3_water_Val	Separate water pots exist for Dalit and non-Dalits in the panchayat office	38	state
4	U4_water_Val	Separate water pots exist for Dalit and non-Dalits students in school	24	state
5	U5_water_Val	Dalit women who attempt to use the only water source located in the non-Dalit area may encounter violence	50	non-state
6	U1_foodbev_Val	Dalits must use separate cups in the tea stalls	74	non-state
7	U2_foodbev_Val	For community meals, Dalits must bring plates from home and eat last	14	non-state
8	U3_foodbev_Val	Dalits will not be employed as a cook for the mid-day meal in the primary school	66	state
9	U4_foodbev_Val	Food for Dalit laborers is cooked separately	75	non-state
10	U5_foodbev_Val	Non-Dalit beggars will not accept food from Dalits	57	non-state
11	U6_foodbev_Val	Dalits must use separate cups in the liquor pub	39	non-state
12	U7_foodbev_Val	Dalit children are seated separately during the government provided mid-day meal	37	state
13	U8_foodbev_Val	Dalits will not enter a non-Dalit shop	19	non-state
14	U9_foodbev_Val	Dalits must use separate glasses in the soda pub	82	non-state
15	U10_foodbe	In non-Dalit houses, a cup is left outside for Dalit use	41	non-state

	v_Val			
16	U11_foodbev_Val	During panchayat meetings, Dalits will either not be served tea or will be served in a different cup	79	state
17	U12_foodbev_Val	Dalits who work as scavengers are given food in exchange for work instead of money	80	non-state
18	U1_rel_Val	Non-Dalits will not visit the temple in Dalit areas	55	non-state
19	U2_rel_Val	During religious discourse, Dalits must sit separately	76	non-state
20	U3_rel_Val	Non-Dalits will not visit the chief goddess temple in Dalit areas	78	non-state
21	U4_rel_Val	Religious offerings i.e., Prasad is thrown into the hands of Dalits	77	non-state
22	U5_rel_Val	Non-Dalit religious leaders will never conduct ceremonies for Dalits	80	non-state
23	U6_rel_Val	A religious guru carrying out a satsang may enter a Dalit home but will not accept food or drink	73	non-state
24	U7_rel_Val	Dalit religious leaders will never be asked to conduct ceremonies of non-Dalits	76	non-state
25	U8_rel_Val	Dalits are not allowed to enter the temple	73	non-state
26	U9_rel_Val	During the inauguration of a temple, Dalits must sit separately and also bring their own plates	79	non-state
27	U10_rel_Val	Religious articles that are used to conduct ceremonies such as utensils, wood, cloth are segregated	78	non-state
28	U1_casjob_Val	Dalits must collect the cloth covering the dead body prior to cremation	80	non-state
29	U2_casjob_Val	Dalits are responsible for placing grass on the roof of every house during solar eclipse	35	non-state
30	U3_casjob_Val	Dalits must harvest and supply toothbrushes	12	non-state
31	U4_casjob_Val	Dalits must play the drum (dhol) at events organized by upper castes	48	non-state
32	U5_casjob_Val	Dalits must remove the carcasses of dead animals	66	non-state
33	U6_casjob_Val	Dalits are expected to make indhoni. Indhoni is an article which is placed on the head and used as a support to carry the water pot	31	non-state
34	U7_casjob_Val	Dalits are required to deliver bad news	63	non-state

35	U8_casjob_Val	Dalits are expected to make public announcements	78	non-state
36	U9_casjob_Val	Dalits must collect and dispose human feces collected from households	46	non-state
37	U10_casjob_Val	Dalits are expected to make garlands and hang them around the village during religious occasions	67	non-state
38	U1_touch_Val	If a Dalit touches a non-Dalit by accident, the latter is considered to be defiled	34	non-state
39	U2_touch_Val	A non-Dalit will not share a bidi with a Dalit	30	non-state
40	U3_touch_Val	Dalit teachers cannot touch non-Dalit students	5	state
41	U4_touch_Val	Dalit women cannot react to eve-teasing	26	non-state
42	U5_touch_Val	Dalits will not enter a non-Dalit house	83	non-state
43	U6_touch_Val	Dalits and non-Dalits will not shake hands	53	non-state
44	U7_touch_Val	Dalits will not sit on a cot or a chair in a non-Dalit house	80	non-state
45	U8_touch_Val	A non-Dalit will not share a smoke with a Dalit	81	non-state
46	U9_touch_Val	A non-Dalit will not take snuff from a Dalit	72	non-state
47	U10_touch_Val	Water used by a Dalit to for the purpose of washing or bathing must not touch non-Dalit	36	non-state
48	U11_touch_Val	A non-Dalit shop owner must purify money from a Dalit before accepting it	4	non-state
49	U12_touch_Val	Non-Dalits sprinkle water on themselves before entering their homes to purify any accidental touch with a Dalit	42	non-state
50	U13_touch_Val	Dalits cannot touch the food of non-Dalits	81	non-state
51	U14_touch_Val	Dalits cannot touch vegetables in the shop	31	non-state
52	U15_touch_Val	Dalits will not touch water pots or utensils used by non-Dalits	83	non-state

53	U1_pubfac_Val	Cremation grounds are segregated	79	state
54	U2_pubfac_Val	Dalits enter the bus last and need to give their seat to non-Dalits	7	state
55	U3_pubfac_Val	If the talati is a Dalit, he has to sit on the floor	2	state
56	U4_pubfac_Val	If the sarpanch is a Dalit, he has to sit on the floor	4	state
57	U5_pubfac_Val	Dalit midwives will not provide non-Dalits their services	32	state
58	U6_pubfac_Val	Dalit postman cannot enter a non-Dalit street	11	state
59	U7_pubfac_Val	Dalit teachers have separate cups for drinking water in school	10	state
60	U8_pubfac_Val	Dalits do not have access to the public grazing land	36	state
61	U9_pubfac_Val	Dalits will be seated separately and will be allowed to speak last during the gramsabha meetings	34	state
62	U10_pubfac_Val	Dalits cannot use the dharamshala (rest houses for pilgrims)	20	state
63	U11_pubfac_Val	Non-Dalit midwives will not provide Dalits their services	46	state
64	U12_pubfac_Val	Dalits need to stand in a separate line to buy milk from the dairy	25	state
65	U13_pubfac_Val	Dalits cannot serve on the management committee of the co-operative society	16	state
66	U14_pubfac_Val	Dalits cannot enter the panchayat office	40	state
67	U15_pubfac_Val	Non-Dalit postman cannot enter a Dalit street	14	state
68	U16_pubfac_Val	Doctors in the primary health center will not touch Dalits	3	state
69	U17_pubfac_Val	Public bathing areas are segregated	8	state
70	U18_pubfac_Val	Dalits must wait for non-Dalits to finish their purchasing before their turn arrives to shop at the ration shop	16	state

71	U19_pubfac_Val	Dalits cannot sit in the public square	41	state
72	U20_pubfac_Val	Dalit and non-Dalits children do not sit together in school	17	state
73	U21_pubfac_Val	Dalits need to step aside while walking on the road if a non-Dalit is approaching	22	state
74	U22_pubfac_Val	Washing ghats are segregated	15	state
75	U1_socsanc_Val	Dalits are forced to sit on the floor during panchayat meetings	36	state
76	U2_socsanc_Val	Dalits must refer to non-Dalit males as Bapu and females as Baa	53	non-state
77	U3_socsanc_Val	Dalits cannot drive or ride through non-Dalits areas in the village	11	non-state
78	U4_socsanc_Val	Dalits cannot hire houses in non-Dalit neighborhoods	80	non-state
79	U5_socsanc_Val	Dalits are not allowed to tuck in their shirts, wear ornaments or sunglasses. They cannot emulate the dressing style of non-Dalits	18	non-state
80	U6_socsanc_Val	Inter-caste marriage between Dalits and non-Dalits is not allowed	75	non-state
81	U7_socsanc_Val	Dalit men are required to shave their heads at the death of a non-Dalit as a demonstration of grief	1	non-state
82	U8_socsanc_Val	Dalits cannot hire a band to play at their weddings	15	non-state
83	U9_socsanc_Val	Dalits are not allowed to participate in the navratri garba	70	non-state
84	U10_socsanc_Val	Dalit funeral processions cannot enter the city from the main street	45	non-state
85	U11_socsanc_Val	Dalits are not allowed to walk through the village with their friends and family prior to the wedding (phuleku). They can do so only within their own neighborhood	55	non-state
86	U12_socsanc_Val	Dalit grooms are not allowed to sit on a horse during wedding processions	42	non-state
87	U13_socsanc_Val	A new Dalit bride must touch the feet of all non-Dalit women	49	non-state

88	U14_socsanc_Val	Dalit must vacate the bus seats for non-Dalits	10	non-state
89	U1_pvtsec_Val	Barber's services are refused to Dalits	58	non-state
90	U2_pvtsec_Val	A non-Dalit will not shop at a Dalit store	13	non-state
91	U3_pvtsec_Val	There are a fewer taps in Dalit areas or there is no water in the taps	24	non-state
92	U4_pvtsec_Val	Non-Dalits will not employ Dalits to perform household services such as cooking and cleaning	15	non-state
93	U5_pvtsec_Val	Dalits cannot hire utensils during weddings	74	non-state
94	U6_pvtsec_Val	Potter's services are refused to Dalits	42	non-state
95	U7_pvtsec_Val	Private transport services such as autos, vans and buses are refused to Dalits	9	non-state
96	U8_pvtsec_Val	Private doctors will not touch Dalits during examination	5	non-state
97	U9_pvtsec_Val	Very few lights on Dalit streets or if present then in a poor condition	29	state
98	U10_pvtsec_Val	Tailor's services are refused to Dalits	26	non-state

Chapter 5

Analyzing the Variation in Caste Discrimination Using a Regression Framework

5.1.0 Introduction

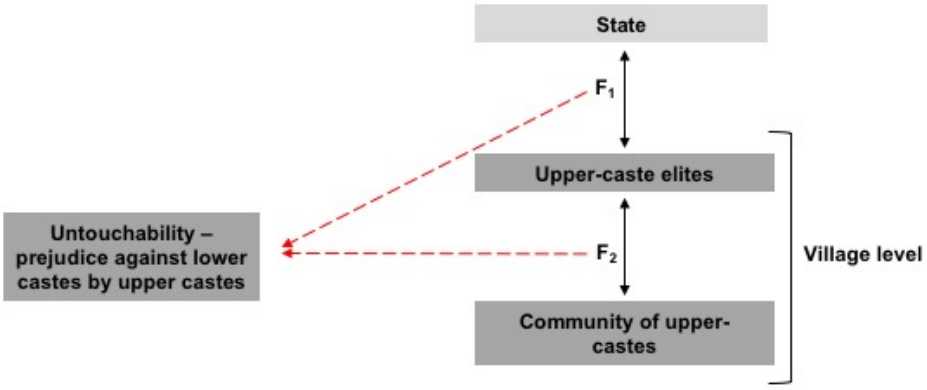
In this chapter I test claims which were presented in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I presented a concept of discrimination which accounts for dependencies among different manifestations of discrimination. This yields a measure which tells us whether a particular form of discrimination is deeply embedded in the village or not. That is, does it co-occur with other manifestations. If it does, then it is less *vulnerable* to influence and if not then it is more *vulnerable* to influence. It is this *vulnerability* of a particular form of discrimination that is modeled in this Chapter. I also argued in Chapter 2, that the *vulnerability* of a particular form of discrimination is a *joint production* of two forces - bargaining between the state and village-level upper caste elites (F_1 in Figure 5.1) and within caste negotiation (F_2 in Figure 5.1). Figure 5.1 illustrates the argument in brief.

I test the following re-worded claim (hypothesis 3) from Chapter 2 :

> A ***higher*** (***lower***) level of state-caste bargaining ***increases*** (***decreases***) the probability of discrimination of being ***more*** (***less***) vulnerable. This probability however depends on the degree of within-caste bargaining. ***Greater*** (***Lesser***) levels of within-caste bargaining ***increase*** (***decrease***) the probability of a practice being ***more*** (***less***) vulnerable.

The two concepts that are central to testing claim are discrimination and bargaining (both state-caste and within the caste). Their measurement will be elaborated in detail later in the Chapter.

Figure 5.1: Revisiting the Argument



The particular form of discrimination that I choose to focus on is discrimination with respect to electricity distribution. I find some support for my hypothesis. I find that greater within caste bargaining as measured by a larger proportion of “secular” named neighborhoods increases the probability of a village being classified as less discriminatory. This however is conditional on the state-caste bargaining. When the state invested resources earlier than later i.e., electrification closer to the formation of the state as compared to later, the probability of a village being classified as less discriminatory is higher.

The Chapter proceeds as follows. In order to test my hypotheses, I first, introduce an original village level dataset on caste-based discrimination and its covariates. This is followed by regression analyses of the cross-sectional data which provides some support for my claim. I then proceed to conduct a robustness check on these findings. This Chapter ends with a discussion of the statistical analyses.

5.2.0 Data and Research Design

In order to test my hypotheses a village level time series dataset would be ideal. But we know that quantitative measures on untouchability just do not exist (Dreze 2017). While a time series dataset is not possible, I have access to cross-sectional data on the dependent variable - untouchability - which comes from the Navsarjan study introduced in Chapter 3. The independent variables were assembled keeping in mind the time frame of the Navsarjan study (2005-08).

5.2.1 Untouchability

In Chapter 3, I introduced the Jenga model of untouchability. I used and modified the measurement paper by Fariss and Schnakenberg (2013) to implement this model and produce the composite *vulnerability* score for each village. What this score tells us is the average tightness or looseness of a behavior with other behaviors. If the score is high, it means the behavior is deeply embedded and difficult to "shake" or manipulate. On the other hand if the score is low, the behavior is loosely connected to other forms of discrimination and maybe easier to manipulate.

There are two aspects of this score that I think are germane to the conceptualization of untouchability. The first is that it takes seriously that discriminatory behaviors are dependent on each other. They do not exist in isolation of each other and this is an inherent characteristic of how discrimination and oppression operate (National Research Council 2004). The second, related to the first, is that as behaviors are dependent on each other, they are not interchangeable. Experiencing discrimination at the public well is not the same as segregated seating during meals at school. The differences between them in lie in the identity of those who experience the humiliation (women in the former and children in the latter) and the punishment in cases of violation (the former may lead to public beatings or paying fines or not allowing women to use the well at all while in the latter there may be reprimanding).

For the analyses that follow, I focus on one form of discrimination - *distribution of electricity* ($V_{lightdiscrim}$). I construct the *vulnerability* score which is the average of all the

joint probabilities i.e., probability of reporting discrimination with respect to electricity co-existing with the other 97 forms (Chapter 4, Appendix, Table 4.4). I focus on reported discrimination with respect to the distribution of electricity because of the availability of data sources that allow me to create measures of the primary independent variables around the distribution of electricity. And because variation in each form *could* be attributed to its own set of covariates.

Figure 5.2 shows the spatial distribution of the *vulnerability* score of discrimination experienced with respect to the distribution of electricity - referred to as $V_{lightdiscrim}$. There are three columns in Figure 5.2. The difference between the columns lies in the type of discriminatory behaviors which constitute the measure being displayed. In Chapter 3, I had made a case for thinking theoretically about classifying untouchability behaviors into distinct spaces - *public*/state and *private*/non-state. This was done because of the explicit reference to certain spaces (schools, buses, roads, hospitals) in the Constitution where caste based behaviors are illegal. Other spaces such as temples, family, neighborhoods and homes lie outside the jurisdiction of the state. I account for this variation in where the state has authority to intervene and where it does not by classifying behaviors accordingly (Chapter 4, Appendix, Table 4.4).

The first panel is the $V_{lightdiscrim-all}$ as a function of all the behaviors (both public and private). Here I calculate the extent to which discrimination with respect to electricity is connected with *all* the 97 manifestations of untouchability. The second panel is $V_{lightdiscrim-public}$ as a function of behaviors classified as *public*. This looks at the extent to which discrimination with respect to electricity is connected with *all* the *public* manifestations of untouchability. The last panel $V_{lightdiscrim-private}$ shows the score as a function of behaviors classified as *private* which is the extent to which discrimination with respect to electricity is connected with *all* the *private* manifestations of untouchability.

From Figure 5.2, panel 1, what is clear is that there is variation in $V_{lightdiscrim}$. Each point is a village. The green indicates low $V_{lightdiscrim}$ scores (less tight or more

vulnerable) and red indicates high $V_{lightdiscrim}$(more tight or less vulnerable). Panel 1 shows variation in $V_{lightdiscrim-all}$. However visually there seems to be more "orangish-red" i.e., discrimination with electricity seems to be a deeply embedded practice. But if we look at the other two panels a slightly different picture emerges. Panel 2 shows $V_{lightdiscrim-public}$ and panel 3 shows $V_{lightdiscrim-private}$. We observe variation when we model discrimination as a "public" behavior. The average value is lower (more green) in panel 2 than that of panel 3 where discrimination with respect to electricity is counted as a "private" behavior (more red).

Figure 5.3 shows statistics for each of the measures in Figure 5.2 - $V_{lightdiscrim-all}$,$V_{lightdiscrim-public}$and $V_{lightdiscrim-private}$. The mean value is plotted as the red dot. The mean value for $V_{lightdiscrim-private}$is higher than the mean value for $V_{lightdiscrim-public}$.

While electricity is a *public* issue insofar as it is generated, transmitted and distributed by the government, when it comes to the actual implementation at the village, we cannot be absolutely sure that its distribution is free from caste prejudice. If caste does indeed play a role, then electricity is both a *public* issue (state level) and a *private* issue (village level). Whether measuring $V_{lightdiscrim}$as a function of *all* the untouchability practices that exists in a village, or just the *public* forms or just *private* forms is not obvious. For instance, if it were argued that $V_{lightdiscrim}$is a *public* issue as the state is the sole authority, then we should not have seen any variance in panel 2 of figure 2. All villages should have or should not have discriminated against Dalits when it came to electricity distribution. That is, either they all obey state laws or do not. So villages would be either all green or all red. But we do not see this in any of the panels. What we see is variation whether we think of $V_{lightdiscrim}$as a *public* or a *private* form.

Figure 5.2: Spatial variation in $V_{lightdiscrim-all}$,$V_{lightdiscrim-public}$and $V_{lightdiscrim-private}$

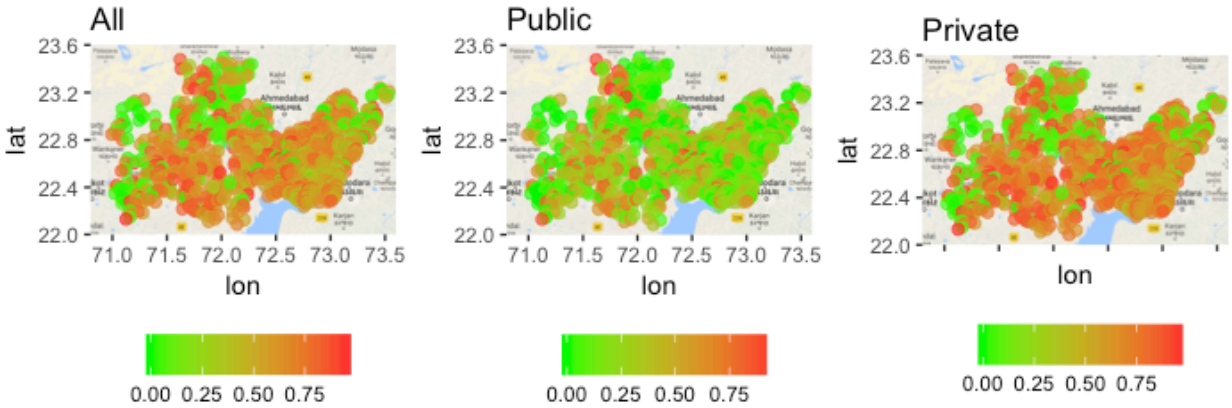
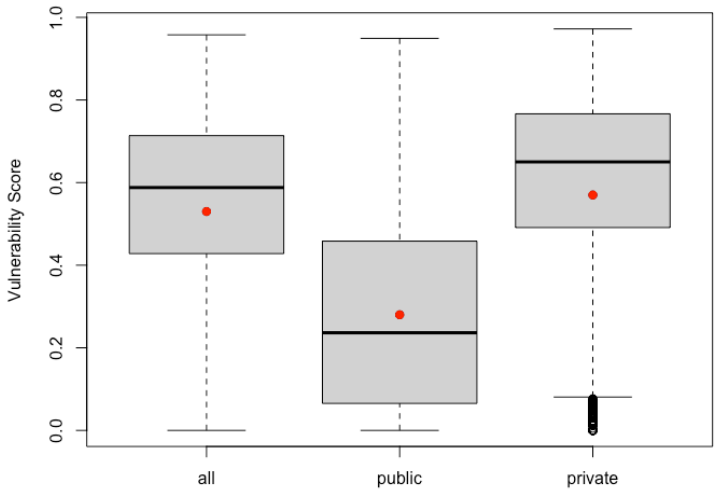


Figure 5.3: Boxplot with key statistics of $V_{lightdiscrim-all}$,$V_{lightdiscrim-public}$and $V_{lightdiscrim-private}$



5.2.2 Primary Independent Variables

In this Section I will describe the primary independent variables and the control variables that will be used in the regression analyses. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the concepts, operationalization and data source for each variable measured at the village level.

5.2.2.1 Bargaining Between State and Caste

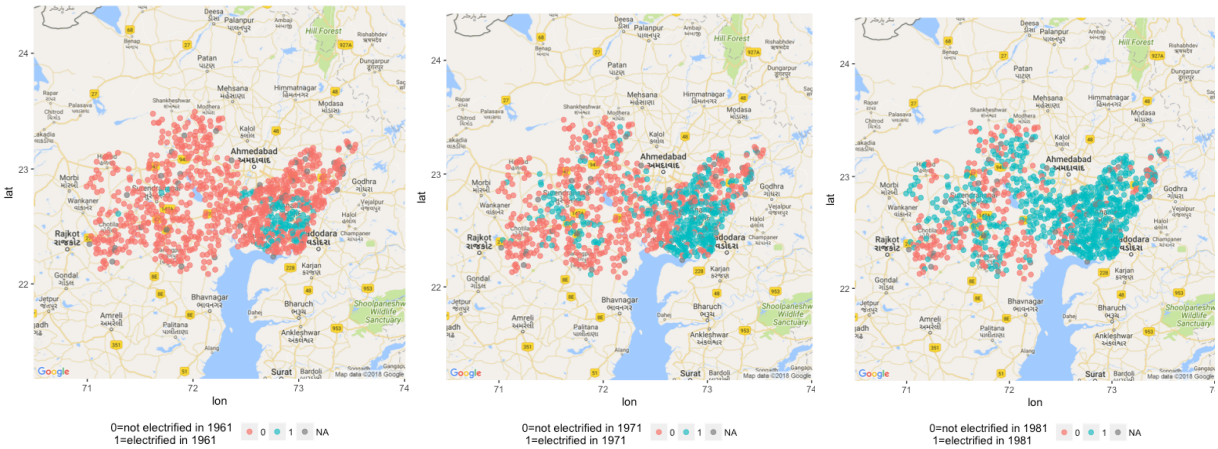
One way of observing the outcomes of bargaining between the caste and state is by looking at the variation in public goods. It is assumed that early distribution i.e., soon after independence when resources were scarce and reliable delivery of resources is

indicative of greater negotiations between the state and local caste elites or representatives. The literature on public goods distribution tends to focus on state-centric explanations to account for the perceived variation in services such as electricity, roads, education and healthcare. While political motivations are important, I have argued that they are not enough. For example, Bates (2008) shows that in newly independent nations, elites mobilized for the “fruits of independence”.

I quantify the bargaining between caste and state by observing varying dates of electrification. Using insights from the literature on public goods, we know that the distribution of scarce goods such as electricity can be influenced. Additionally, work on the formation of post-colonial states show that elites who participated in the independence movements demanded services from the state (Bates 2008). Thus I use dates of electrification of villages in Gujarat. The state was formed in 1960. Villages that were electrified in 1961 as compared to those first electrified in 1981 are expected to be more influential.

I used the 1961, 1971 and 1981 District Census Handbooks to which I found access at the Centre for Social Knowledge and Action (SETU) and Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR) in Ahmedabad. I stopped at 1981 because according to the 1991 and 2001 censuses, more than 90% of the villages in these four districts have been electrified. The village directory for each census year shows whether a village was electrified in the given census year or not. I manually coded 1 if the village was found to be electrified in a given year and 0 otherwise. Figure 5.4 show the villages electrified in 1961, 1971 and 1981 respectively across four districts - Ahmedabad, Anand, Kheda and Surendranagar.

Figure 5.4: Electrification across 1961, 1971 and 1981



5.2.2.2 Bargaining Within Caste

Village level quantitative indicators of the internal workings of any caste do not exist. We do not even have basic population measures of castes across India. While the caste population data was allegedly collected in 2011, it has not been made public. Now given the lack of caste measures, I used the literature to guide me in extracting caste measures from the resources that we do have.

In order to measure within caste bargaining, I use a very interesting feature of the operation of caste in daily lives. People belonging to the same caste or *jati* in the case of the village live together. Additionally the names of their areas are the same as their *jati* name. Thus changing the name of an area is not a random process which just happens. It is my contention that the process of switching neighborhood names from its *jati* name to a non-caste or "secular" name is an outcome of bargaining within the caste. Greater the proportion of neighborhoods with "secular" names implies more bargaining within castes. And smaller proportion of neighborhoods with "secular" names implies less bargaining within castes.

I extracted the proportion of neighborhoods with "secular" or non-caste sounding names by scraping the page source with the 2016[1] electoral rolls of the Gujarat State Election

[1] Even though the electoral rolls are from 2016, and the untouchability data comes from 2005-08, I don't think the names of neighborhoods change very frequently. Thus it would be safe to assume that neighborhood names in 2016 are identical to the neighborhood names in 2005-08

Commission (GSEC) website. From the html text in the page sources, I was able to write a Python script which extracted the polling station which is also the village name and the polling areas which are the neighborhoods in the village. Caste based residential segregation is a fact of village life. The electoral rolls are the clearest evidence of this residential segregation. Figure 5.5 shows a snapshot of the GSEC web page from which the page source was scraped for each assembly constituency.

Figure 5.5: Snapshot of GSEC website showing a polling station and polling areas

2 -Virochnnagar-1	Devipujakvas, Thakor Vas, Thakors Paru, Sutarki Vas, Makvana Street, Rabari Vas
3 -Virochnnagar-2	Barad Vas, Jadav Vas, Fakir Vas, Vaniya Vas, Malek Vas, Prajapati Vas, Timba Vas, Masjid Vas(Moti-Juni Masjid Ni Bajuma), Dela Vas, Bhat Vas, Ibrahims Delu, Masjid Vas(Ibrahim Na Delani Aaju-Bajuma), Valand Vas
4 -Virochnnagar-3	Makvana Vas, Bhut Vas, Kamji Vas, Senva Vas
5 -Virochnnagar-4	Barad Vas, Khabor Vas, Kamji Vas, School Vas
6 -Virochnnagar-5	Schedule Cast Vas, Dela Vas, Brahman Vas, Raval Vas, Mahadev Vas, Punja Paru, Indera Paru Tekra, Railway Station Quarters

From Figure 5.5, we see that there is a polling station or village with the name “Virochnnagar”. This perhaps is village with a large population and that is why there are 5 polling stations. Different areas of the village are assigned to different polling stations. We can see that “Makvana Vas” which is a Makvana (low caste) neighborhood is assigned to vote at polling stations #3. Similarly, the Thakor (upper caste) neighborhood is assigned to polling stations #3. Different areas are thus named by the caste that inhabits that area.

However, while caste based segregation seems to be a fact of village life in India, I find variation in the degree to which polling areas actually have a caste sounding name. Figure 5.6 shows this variation. There are some villages, where almost all neighborhoods have caste names (red dots) but then there are other villages (green villages) where this is not the case. What is observed in these villages are neighborhoods which do not have caste names.

Figure 5.6: Variation in neighborhoods with caste names

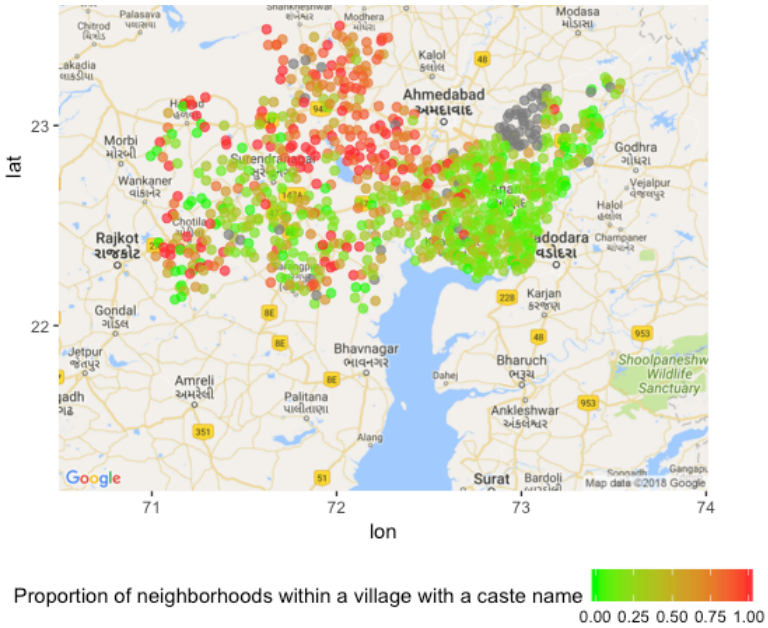


Table 5.1: Primary independent variables measured at the level of the village

Concept	***Operationalization***	***Data source***
Bargaining between the state and caste	*Electrification*	*1961, 1971 and 1981 District Census Handbooks*
Bargaining within the caste	*Proportion of neighborhoods with "secular" or non-caste names*	*2016 electoral rolls publicly available on the website of the Gujarat State Election Commission*

5.2.2.3 Control Variables

In addition to my primary independent variables, I also include the variables listed in Table 5.2, which have been argued to have an effect on variation in (reported) discrimination.

Table 5.2: Control variables

Concept	***Measure***	***Data source***
Colonial legacy	Coded as 1 if area administered by the British and 0 otherwise	Ajay Verghese public dataset
Activism	The number of non-violent forms of activism reported to have occured in the village	Navsarjan study
Literacy	Proportion literate	2001 Indian Census Village Directory
Dalit population	Proportion SC	2001 Indian Census Village Directory
Economic base of the village	Proportion agricultural laborers	2001 Indian Census Village Directory
Ruling party	Coded 1 if BJP came to power in 2002	Gujarat State Election Commission
Prior history of violence	Coded if there is reported violence against Dalits	Navsarjan study
Modernization	Distance to the nearest city	2001 Indian Census Village Directory
Poverty	Proportion of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families	2002 Gujarat Socio-Economic Survey[2]

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	***N***	***Minimum***	***Maximum***	***Mean***	***Standard deviation***
Secular neighborhoods	887	0	1	.56	.33
Colonial legacy	887	0	1	.72	.44
Activism	887	0	5.7	.44	.7
Literacy	887	.08	.79	.53	.11
Dalit population	887	0	.58	.09	.08
Economic base of the village	887	0	.39	.11	.06
Ruling party	887	0	1	.71	.45
Prior history of violence	887	0	1	.56	.33
Modernization	887	0	4.3	2.63	.71
Poverty	887	.004	.84	.12	.08

5.2.3 Estimation

There are three dependent variables - $V_{lightdiscrim-all}$, $V_{lightdiscrim-public}$ and $V_{lightdiscrim-private}$ - which range between 0 and 1. I create an ordinal measure from these variables such that there exist three distinct levels - 1, 2 and 3 - for each one

[2] I found a government website - http://ses2002.guj.nic.in/BPLNewList.php - which list the families who hold BPL cards in all villages in India. There are PDFs which have the same information but extraction from PDFs is not easy. Shammi Didla, a friend and a software engineer, wrote a script which scraped all the data and put it into a CSV format.

where level 1 contains the lowest values on each of the three scales, level 3 contains the highest values and level 2 contains the middle values. If a village is classified as level 1 it means it is highly vulnerable or that discrimination with respect to lights is weakly embedded. On the other hand if a village is classified as level 3, it means that it is less vulnerable or that discrimination with respect to lights is strongly embedded. Table 5.4 shows the three dependent variables - $V_{lightdiscrim-all}$,$V_{lightdiscrim-public}$and $V_{lightdiscrim-private}$- and the values on each which correspond to the 3 levels along with the number of observations in each level (% n).

Given the varying distributions of each variable (Figure 5.2), values which are classified as low for $V_{lightdiscrim-public}$are not the same as the values which get classified as 1 for $V_{lightdiscrim-private}$. These two variables have different distributions and I wanted to create an ordinal scale such that there are roughly the same proportion of observations at each level.

Table 5.4: Creating an ordinal dependent variable

	1 (high vulnerability/weakly embedded) (% n)	2 (% n)	3 (low vulnerability/tightly embedded) (% n)
$OV_{lightdiscrim-all}$	[0, 0.52) (35)	[0.52,0.68) (32)	[0.68,1] (35)
$OV_{lightdiscrim-public}$	[0, 0.1) (33)	[0.1,0.37) (33)	[0.37,1] (33)
$OV_{lightdiscrim-private}$	[0, 0.56) (31)	[0.56,0.72) (34)	[0.72,1] (33)

As I have created ordinal measures, I use the *ologit* routine in Stata 14 to estimate the probability that a village gets classified in either of the three levels.

To reiterate the central hypothesis along with the variables that will be used for testing is:

> A ***higher*** (***lower***) proportion of secular neighborhoods ***increases*** (***decreases***) the probability of discrimination (with respect to electricity) being ***more*** (***less***) vulnerable. This probability however depends on when the village was electrified. ***Early*** (***later***) electrification as compared to ***later*** (***early***) electrification ***increases*** (***decreases***) the probability of vulnerability.

5.3.0 Results

Table 5.5 presents the odds ratio for each of the 3 dependent variables - $V_{lightdiscrim-all}$,$V_{lightdiscrim-public}$and $V_{lightdiscrim-private}$ - and Figure 5.7 shows the coefficients from Table 5.5 in a format that is easier to understand. In Model 1, discrimination with respect to light is measured as a function of all other prevalent discriminatory forms for each village. In Model 2, discrimination is operationalized as a *public* form (orange) and in Model 3, it is operationalized a *private* form (red). The coefficients for Models 1, 2 and 3 and their corresponding 90% confidence intervals are plotted in green, orange and red respectively in Figure 5.7. The list of covariates is identical across all 3 models.

I find the interaction term - *Electrified 1961 * Proportion neighborhoods with non-caste names* - to be significant only in Model 3, when discrimination is operationalized as a *public* form, at the 0.1 level. What this term tells us the effect of the proportion of neighborhoods with secular or non-caste names on the probabilities of a village being less or more vulnerable to influence. This effect however is conditional on whether the village was first electrified in 1961 or later. The reference group is electrification in 1981. The interaction term is found to be significant at .1 level in model 3 where discrimination with the distribution of electricity is conceptualized as a “public” form. This interaction is further tested using the Wald test. What the Wald test does is test for whether two variables are equal to each other. In this case, to truly say that there is an interaction, we would need to test for whether the effect of secular caste neighborhoods is the same in 1961 and 1981. The p-value is 0.0789. Thus the null hypothesis can be rejected at the .1 level. This means that the effect of secular caste neighborhoods is different for 1961 and 1981.

As interpreting coefficients/log odds is not intuitive for interaction terms, the predicted probabilities are plotted. Specifically the predicted probabilities for $OV_{lightdiscrim-public}$= 1 and $OV_{lightdiscrim-public}$ = 3 are plotted. When we are plotting the probabilities for interaction terms we need to fix values for the other independent variables at meaningful values. This is necessary in order to get the marginal change in probability

of an outcome with a one unit change in the proportion of secular neighborhoods at different years of electrification. For Figure 5.8, the predicted probabilities are plotted for a village with the following values on the other independent variables - BJP party won in 2002, was administered by the British prior to independence, has a history of violence against Dalits, has been witness to 1 form of activism, is about 7km from the nearest town, has 12% residents living in poverty, 9% are SCs, 52% are literate and 11% are agricultural laborers.

The left panel in Figure 5.8 shows us predicted probabilities for outcome 1 for $\boldsymbol{OV}_{\boldsymbol{lightdiscrim-public}}$measure. Outcome 1 contains values of $\boldsymbol{OV}_{\boldsymbol{lightdiscrim-public}}$that indicate high vulnerability or weakly tied to other *public* forms of discriminatory behaviors. A one unit increase in the proportion of secular neighborhoods increases the probability of outcome 1, when the village has been electrified early i.e., in 1961.

Among the control variables, I find a history of violence to have a positive effect across the 3 models. A history of violence against Dalits increases the odds of outcome 3 - low vulnerability/strongly connected. Activism has a negative effect across the 3 models. Experiencing activism against untouchability increases the odds of outcomes 1 - high vulnerability/weakly connected.

Table 5.5: Odds ratios of the ordinal logistic regressions using 3 different measures of discrimination

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	$OV_{lightdiscrim-all}$	$OV_{lightdiscrim-private}$	$OV_{lightdiscrim-public}$
Main effects			
Electrified post-1981	1.045	1.084	0.872
	(0.10)	(0.17)	(-0.27)
Electrified 1961	1.055	1.186	1.143
	(0.06)	(0.20)	(0.41)
Electrified 1971	1.587	1.772	1.334
	(1.24)	(1.48)	(1.40)
Proportion neighborhoods with non-caste names	1.688	2.017	1.410
	(0.68)	(0.92)	(0.52)
Interaction effects			
Electrified post-1981 * Proportion neighborhoods with non-caste names	0.720	0.633	0.862
	(-0.51)	(-0.66)	(-0.22)
Electrified 1961 * Proportion neighborhoods with non-caste names	0.317	0.319	0.316+
	(-0.89)	(-0.92)	(-1.76)
Electrified 1971 * Proportion neighborhoods with non-caste names	0.538	0.507	0.776
	(-1.07)	(-1.10)	(-0.64)
Control variables			
History of violence against Dalits	1.815***	1.742***	1.879***
	(10.87)	(5.03)	(3.80)
Activism against untouchability	0.742*	0.775+	0.752+
	(-2.10)	(-1.70)	(-1.80)
BJP won in 2002	1.031	0.983	0.827
	(0.14)	(-0.10)	(-0.82)
British colonial legacy	0.956	1.055	0.888
	(-0.67)	(0.35)	(-0.80)
Distance to town (ln(kms))	1.118	1.142	0.990
	(1.26)	(1.61)	(-0.10)
Proportion poor	0.490	0.310+	1.101
	(-0.58)	(-1.73)	(0.07)
Proportion SC	1.497	2.385	1.135
	(0.33)	(0.75)	(0.07)
Proportion literate	0.676	0.700	1.218
	(-0.23)	(-0.19)	(0.11)
Proportion agricultural laborers	3.597	3.580	1.782
	(0.78)	(0.71)	(0.52)

Observations	887	887	887
Log L	-947.6	-949.0	-947.5
Exponentiated coefficients; t statistics in parentheses; clustered errors			
+ p<0.10 * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001			

Figure 5.7: Coefficients from the ordinal logistic regressions using 3 different measures of discrimination

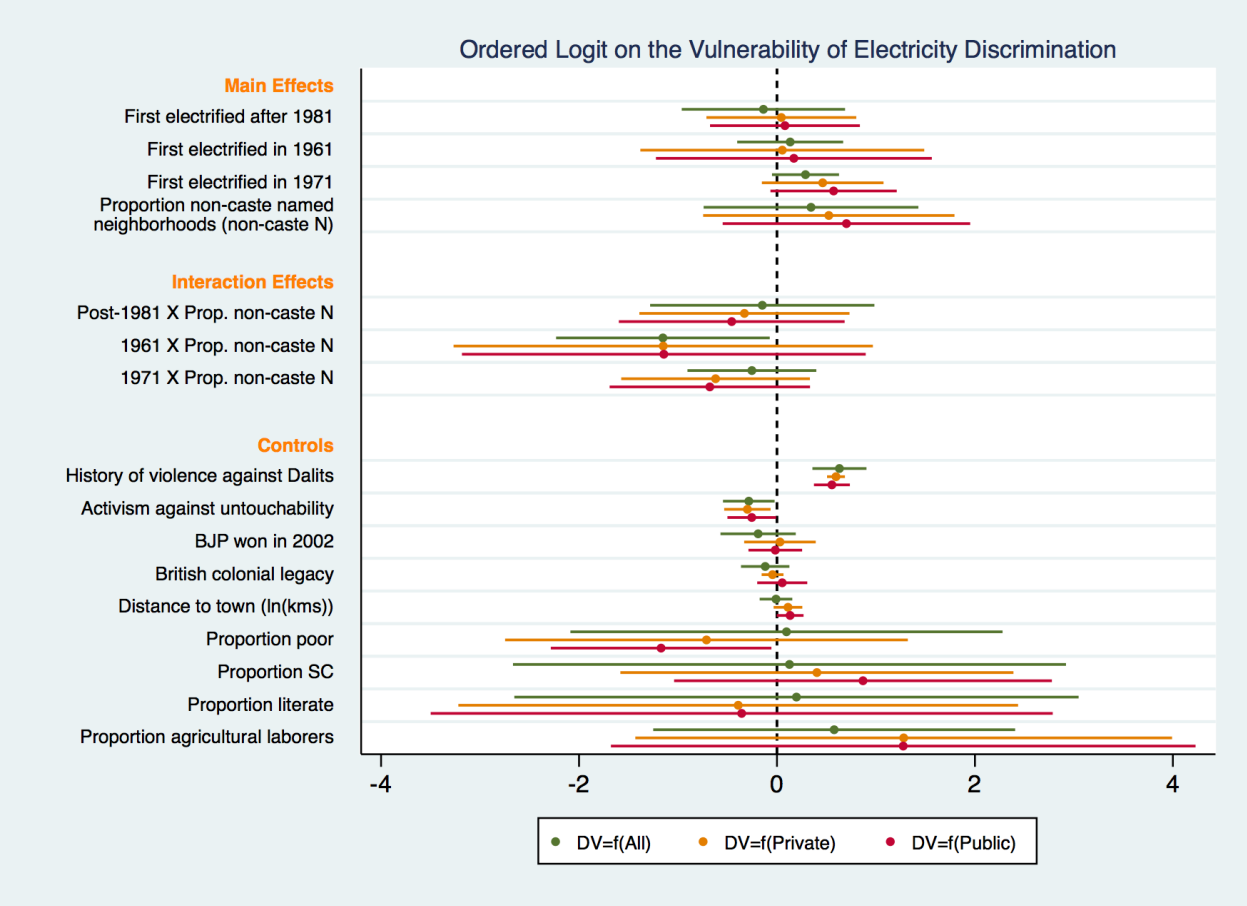
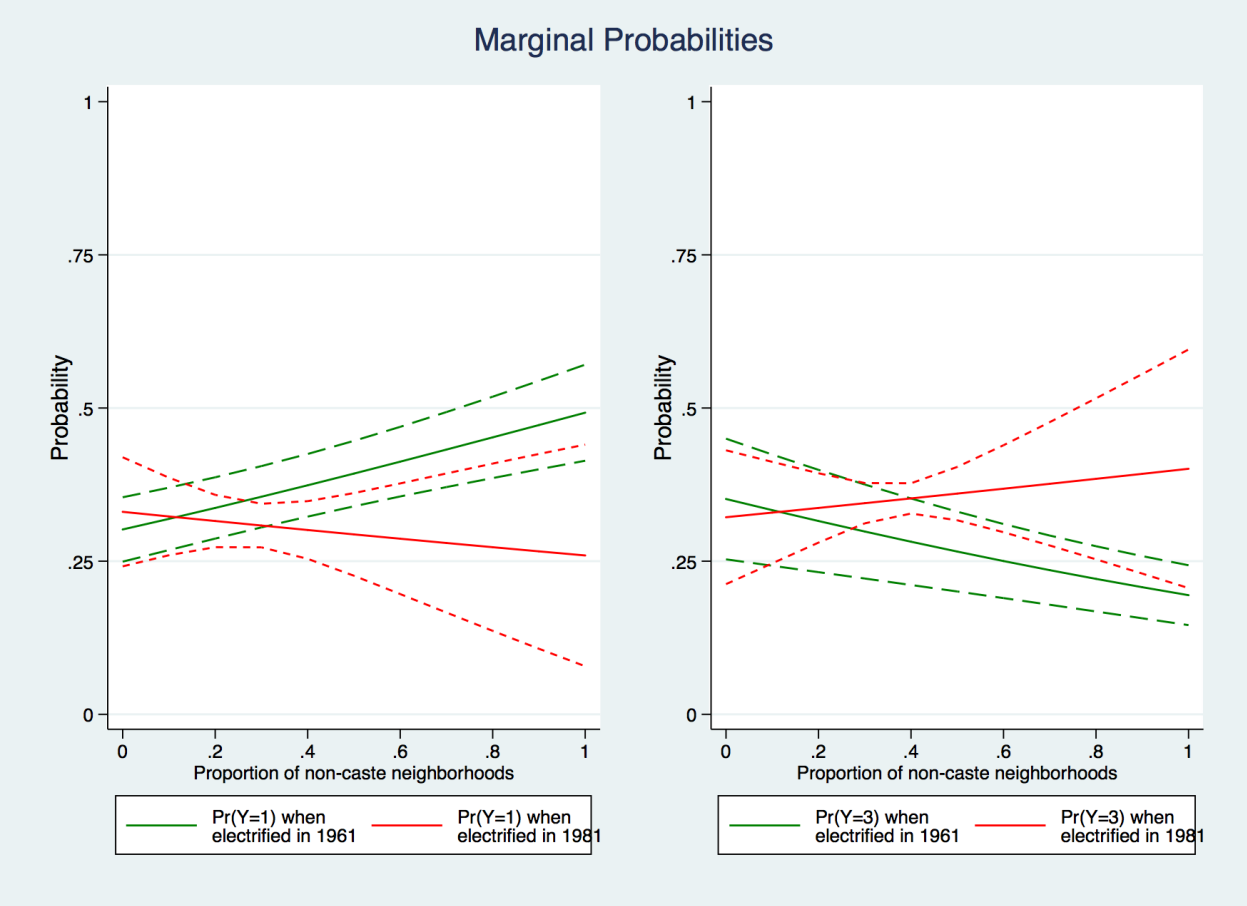


Figure 5.8: Marginal change in probabilities



5.4.0 Robustness Checks

I check the robustness of the model and the results. To briefly recap, the *vulnerability* scores are actually continuous. What I did was break up a continuous scale into discrete values where low scores correspond to small discrete values and large values to large discrete values (Table 5.4). I then proceeded to treat the discrete values *as if* they were truly ordered and therefore modeled it as an ordinal variables and used the *ologit* routine in Stata 14.

There is an assumption that is made when we treat a variable as an ordinal variable. The assumption is that of *parallel regression.* What this means is that there is just one model and just one coefficient which describes the relationship between different set of outcomes. If there is a variable X, then odds of being the lowest category as compared to the highest category is the same as the odds of being in the next second to lowest category as compared to the highest category. There is a possibility that assumption is incorrect. The *Brant test* helps test this proportional odds assumption. According to the test results, Model 3 (Table 5.5) violates the parallel regression assumption. The p-value is 0.07. What this means is that there is no one single coefficient that describes the relationship between different outcomes. Instead there are different coefficients for varying set of outcomes. The coefficient describing the relationship between outcome 1 and outcome 3 is not the same as the coefficient between outcome 1 and outcome 2.

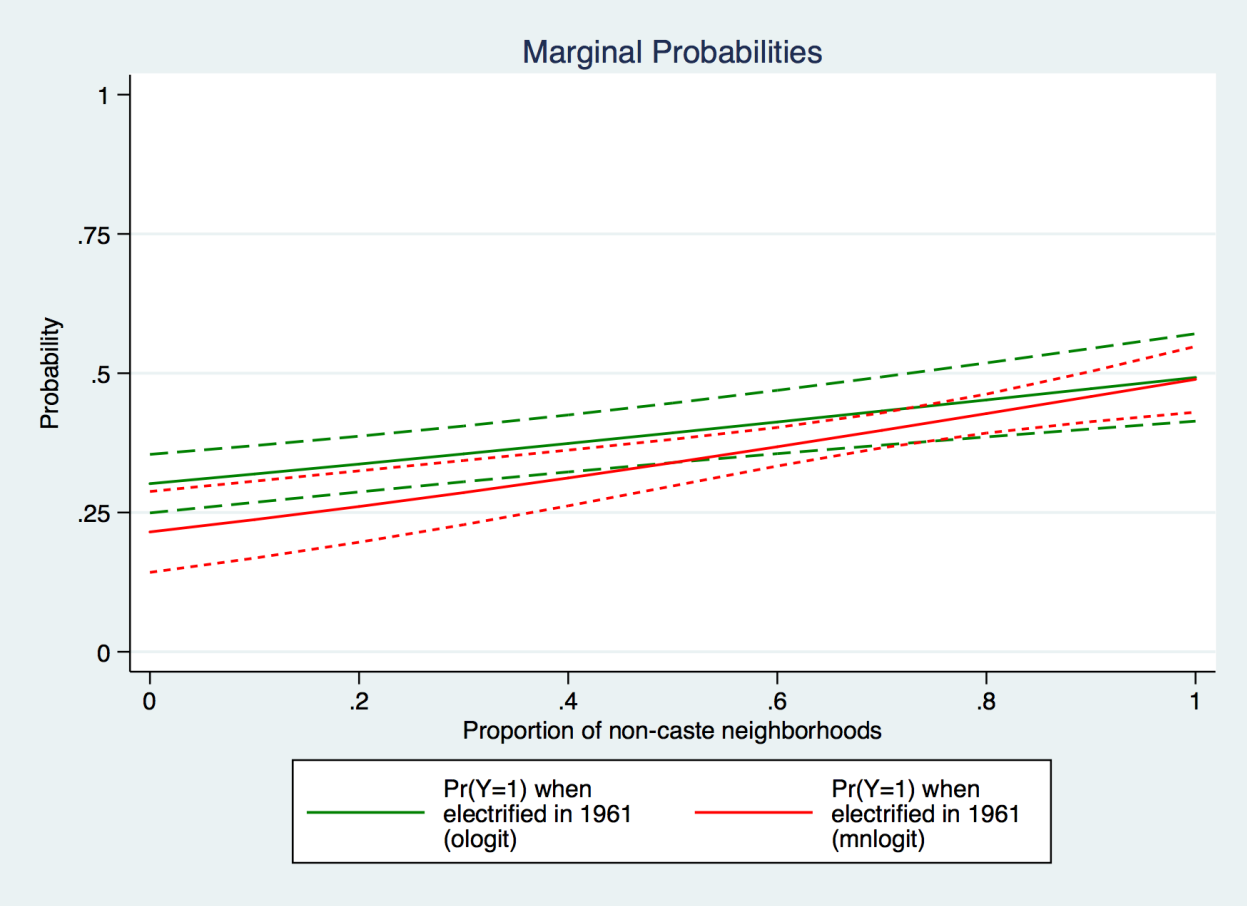
Given that the violation of the *parallel regression* assumption, I re-analyze Model 3 from Table 5.5 treating the outcomes as discrete but not ordered using the *mlogit* (multinomial regression) routine in Stata 14. The interaction term - electrified in 1961 * proportion of secular neighborhoods - which we found to be significant in the ordinal regression (Table 5.5, Model 3) continues to be significant. In fact, the term is now significant at the 95% level. The interpretation of the predicted probabilities, however is slightly different. They are plotted in Figure 5.9.

Before we interpret the predicted probabilities in Figure 5.9, it is important to clarify what exactly are we interpreting. First, we are looking at the predicted probabilities for

outcome 1 on the public discrimination variable. Outcome 1 contains low values of the vulnerability score. Second, the interaction term plotted is the effect of the proportion of secular neighborhoods when electrification happened in 1961. Third, for the green lines (*ologit*), it is the probability of outcome 1. So we see that as the proportion of secular neighborhoods increases, the probability of outcome 1 (low vulnerability) increases. This is as expected. And lastly, for the red lines (*mlogit*), it is the probability of outcome 1 relative to outcome 3. We observe that as the proportion of secular neighborhoods increases, the probability of outcome 1 (low vulnerability) as compared to outcome 3 (high vulnerability) increases.

As the results are comparable across ordinal and multinomial regressions, I choose to keep the former because of the relative ease of interpretation.

Figure 5.9: Comparing the Pr(outcome (1)) between *ologit* and *mlogit*



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5.5.0 Conclusion

This chapter tested the claim that untouchability can be understood as *jointly produced* by two forces - bargaining between the state and village-level elites and within caste bargaining. To do this I introduced a new village level dataset of covariates. I measured the interaction between state and village level elites by looking at rates of electrification and I measured within caste negotiation by counting the proportion of neighborhoods with “secular names”. I used the measure of untouchability as proposed in Chapter 3 - *vulnerability* of a particular form of discrimination - with a focus on discrimination with respect to electricity distribution. I then used an ordinal regression framework where I find some support for my claim. I find that higher levels of “secular” neighborhoods and earlier electrification increase the probability that a village will be classified as *more vulnerable.* What a higher vulnerability of a particular form of discrimination suggests is that it is not as deeply embedded or entangled and thus easier to influence.

5.6.0 Appendix C – Village-Level Dataset (extra variables)

5.6.1 Creating a Village-Level Dataset

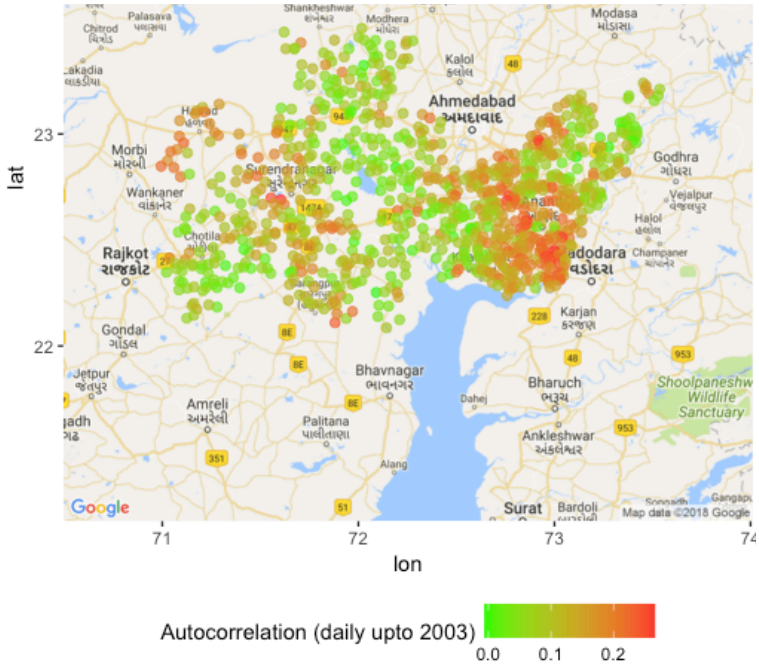
Here I describe how I created the variables which were not used in the regressions but could be helpful in exploring trends in the data. The scripts used to extract the data from various sources will be made available on GitHub.

5.6.1.1 Trend in the Electricity Supply

I used the daily satellite imagery that Brian Min[3] was able to get from NOAA-NASA. Images between 1994 and 2003 were used as the electricity sector was privatized after 2003. Once we have time-series data for every village, we need to come up with a summary measure. I am interested in a measure of the trend over time. A positive trend would indicate a more steady and reliable delivery of electricity while a negative trend would imply the reverse i.e., unsteady and unreliable. The measure that I use is the autocorrelation of the extracted values for every village. A positive autocorrelation would be interpreted as evidence of steady and reliable electricity supply while a negative autocorrelation would be interpreted as the opposite. Figure 5.10 shows the spatial distribution of the autocorrelation measure.

[3] http://india.nightlights.io/#/nation/2006/12

Figure 5.10: Reliability of electricity supply (red is high reliability and green is low reliability)

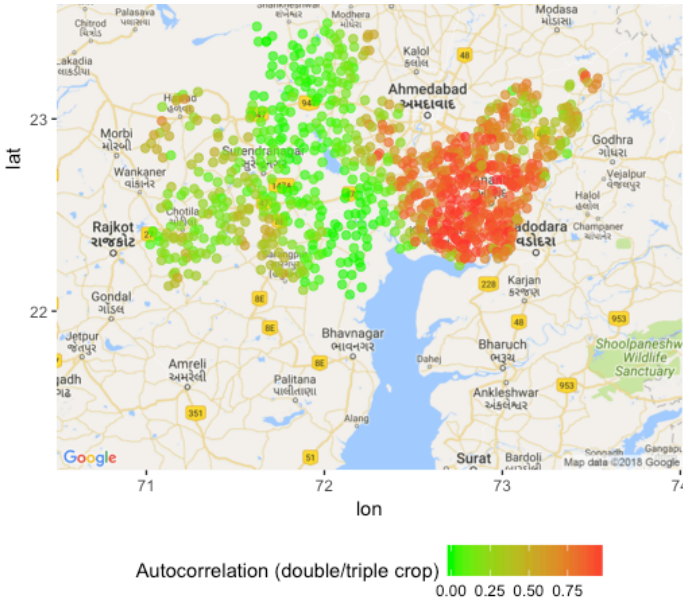


5.6.1.2 Trend in the Area under Double/Triple Crop

Similar to the idea behind the measure of the reliability of electricity supply, I develop a measure for the area sown under double/triple crops. Growing two or three crops through the year requires a steady supply of inputs such as water and electricity for irrigation and other inputs such as labor, seeds, fertilizers and machinery. In the case of Gujarat, the crops that come under this category are generally cash crops such as cotton and tobacco. A sustained increase in the area which is sown with such crops requires the reliable provision of services such as water and electricity from the state.

I was able to acquire annual satellite imagery from ISRO's Bhuvan portal beginning in 2005 and ending in 2012. These images classify different types of vegetation into 12 categories such as wasteland, forest land, urban build up, fallow, winter crop, summer crop and double/triple crop. I calculated the average proportion of land classified as "double/triple crop" across all the years. An autocorrelation measure is not meaningful here because there is not much variation in the proportion of land classified as double/triple crop. Figure 5.11 shows this variation.

Figure 5.11: Trend in the cultivation of the proportion of double/triple crop (red is a high average and green is a low average)



5.6.1.3 Numerical Strength of the Largest *jati*

I used the 2016 electoral rolls that are publicly available on the Gujarat State Election Commission's website. This data is however very difficult to work with. It is in a PDF format and it is in the Gujarat script. Raphael Susewind[4] however has downloaded all the PDFs and extracted the text using OCR. He has put his data into a SQL database which can be queried by users. The data is about 30GB and he shared it with me.

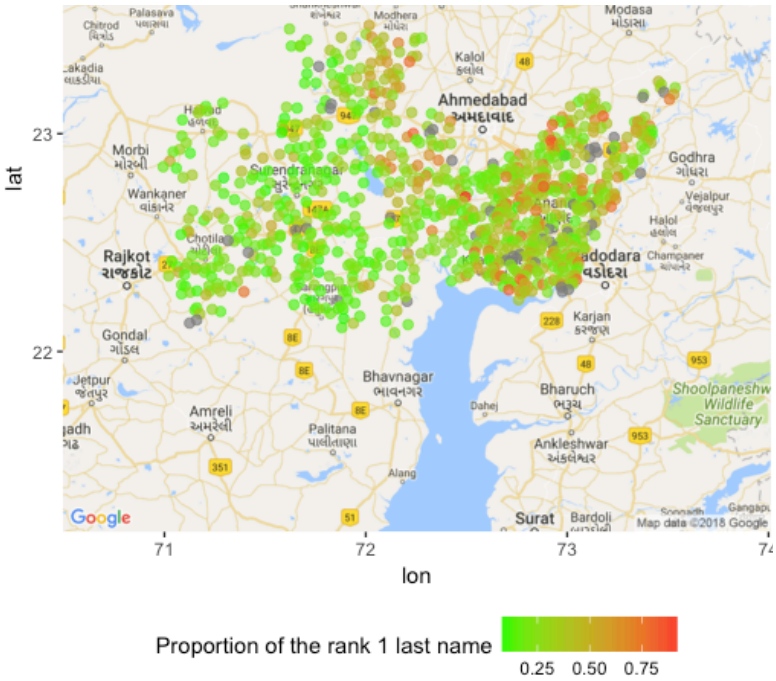
I wrote Python scripts that extract the data from the SQL database, put it in a CSV format and transliterated the Gujarati surnames to English. To this I added the polling station name which also happens to be the name of the village. In order to merge this to the larger data set, each village had to have the unique census code. As doing this manually for 18,000 villages would take a lot of time, I wrote a Python script which automated this process by matching village names in the two lists - electoral rolls and

[4] https://www.raphael-susewind.de/

village census directory[5]. When names matched, the village in the electoral roll was assigned a unique census code from the village census directory.

Once we have the names of all the electors by village, it is easy to assign ranks based on the proportion of each *jati* which is calculated by counting the number of individuals with the identical last name. Figure 5.12 shows this variation.

Figure 5.12: Proportion of the surname with a majority in a village



5.6.1.4 Distance to the nearest Swaminarayan Institution

There is not much scholarly work on the Swaminarayan movement in Gujarat. In 1986, when Makrand Mehta published an article in the *Arthat*, a publication based in the Centre of Social Studies, and edited by Ghanshyam Shah and Achyut Yagnik, followers of the sect harassed Mehta, Shah and Yagnik and sued them in the high court for the publication of an article which hurt religious sentiments[6]. While I have not been able to

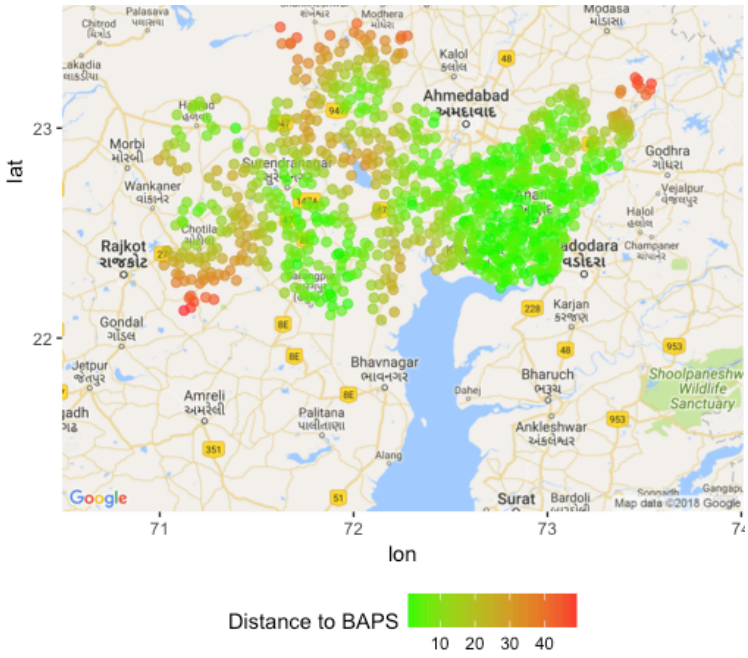
[5] Some villages can have identical matches. In order to get around this the matching was based on a combination of district name, sub-district name and finally the village name.

[6] https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/education/story/19880531-research-paper-on-swaminarayan-sect-triggers-off-controversy-797283-1988-05-31

find a copy of the article, I have spoken with Achyut Yagnik who brought to my notice the role that sects play in the transformation and preservation of caste based behavior.

The location of all the BAPS institutions are publicly available[7]. I scraped all the addresses and used Google Maps to geocode the exact locations i.e., longitude and latitude. With this information the distance between a village and all BAPS locations were calculated and the minimum distance was finally used. Figure 5.13 shows this variation.

Figure 5.13: Distance to the nearest BAPS temple



[7] http://www.baps.org/Global-Network/India.aspx

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1.0 Introduction

In this dissertation I have tried to account for why some villages exhibit higher levels of discrimination while others manifest lower higher levels? I endeavored to provide a framework for understanding variation in discrimination by using insights from the literatures on state-building, distribution of public goods and social movements. I tested the implications of the proposed theoretical framework on data from the western state of India, Gujarat.

In brief, I first provide some historical context around the issues of caste and untouchability. I show how prior to Independence, caste was privatized i.e., it remained outside the jurisdiction of the colonial state. Post-Independence, certain aspects of caste, namely untouchability, came under the purview of the state. Despite what seems like to be a clear mandate for the state to address untouchability, the issue is far from being addressed. I attributed this to the inherent ambiguity in the law which one, does not define untouchability and two, protects the freedom to practice the religion of one's choice (and consequently follow caste rules) but simultaneously makes illegal untouchability (which are caste rules grounded in religion). It is at this point that I argued that the state becomes embroiled in an intractable conflict over the place of caste in society. This ambiguity allows for a variation of interpretations of the law by the citizens of the country. While some interpretations are in the direction of transformation, others tilt towards preservation.

I then proceeded to argue that whether untouchability is preserved or transformed depends in the interpretation of the village-level upper-caste elites. Specifically, I contend that untouchability is *jointly produced* by two levels of interactions of the village-level upper-caste elites. One with the state and the second with their own caste communities in the village.

There are two types of analyses that I conducted to test my hypotheses. I did an exploratory content analysis of all the articles published in Gujarat on the topic of untouchability in the Times of India (1838-2009) to examine the narrative around caste and untouchability across time. And second, I used the Navsarjan study to create a valid measure of untouchability. I also put together a novel village-level dataset of covariates which would be used for the quantitative analysis.

In the next part of the Conclusion, I summarize the five chapters. This is followed by contributions made by the dissertation. And I end by identifying some shortcomings of this dissertation project and identify areas of future work.

6.2.0 Summarizing the Dissertation

In the Introduction, I laid out the puzzle driving this dissertation project - What happens when an order premised on the belief that some people are inherently more privileged than others confronts another that believes that all people are equal? Specifically, how does a hierarchical social order like the Indian caste system interface with a democratic political order? I use the case of Gujarat to study this question.

In the same chapter, I argue that existing perspectives do not provide adequate answers. I focus on the social movements literature and research on varying aspects of the political system. 4 features from the social movements literature are identified as having the potential to explain variation in caste discrimination - resources, multiplicity of strategies, elite solidarity and media presence. I show that the last two are absent or if present, they tend to be biased against lower castes. For instance, using examples from the Independence struggle, whose main “laboratory” was Gujarat, I show the polarization among elites (Congress elites) when it came to issues of caste and untouchability. While some like Gandhi did wish to address the issue, they did so within the framework of the social order. His solutions thus called for deep introspection and associating more closely with the “untouchables” following which there would be a change in the “hearts and minds” of the Hindus. Then there were other leaders like Sardar Patel and Nehru for whom caste and untouchability were social issues. The issue of the hour was political freedom and to that they dedicated all their energies. The last leader was Indulal Yagnik who advocated vociferously on the behalf of the tribals and untouchables, but he was a minority. Over time he was sidelined and in the end he quit the Congress to work full time on social reform. The nationalist elites sidelined the issues of caste and untouchability and their legacy continued to have an impact on Gujarati politics and society.

I then showed that evidence of sidelining minority issues using the example of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (Mehta 2010). This was a struggle which was rooted in tribals seeking rehabilitation because of the construction of the Narmada dam. However in the media it was depicted as a struggle between pro- and anti-development forces.

Development also became synonymous with nationalism. There has been much research on the topic of how Gujarati media has a strong anti-minority bias. Protests by tribals or in my case Dalits is often depicted in the media as anti-nationalist.

The lack of elite support and a media which has been suspected of an anti-minority bias, do not allow for the use of a social movement perspective. From this I move to work done on different features of the political system which could be used to explain variation in caste discrimination namely, political competition (e.g., Posner 2004), system of reservations (e.g., Chauchard 2014) and colonial legacies (e.g., Verghese 2016). For each one I list a few shortcomings. Without going into details of each, my central contention is that all of them view untouchability as a "political" problem to be solved. Those who root for political competition, believe that different castes will be forced to work with each for the purpose of winning elections. While alliances are not uncommon, we just do not know how political alliances affect social life i.e., the everyday lived experience of untouchability. Additionally, we do not know the length of the effects if there are any - do they last as long as the alliance lasts which is usually one term i.e., 5 years?

Then there are others who argue that reservations bring the "law" to the village. What this means is that when the position of the village head is reserved for a Dalit candidate, other people living in the village become familiar with laws which protect Dalits and thus become less likely to engage in untouchability. The assumption here is people will not engage discrimination because of fear of the law. While fear of the law is a fair assumption to make, the problem is that the law does *not* define untouchability per se. It only delineates the spaces where behaviors can be perceived as discriminatory.

And lastly those who root variation in discrimination to colonial legacies are sensitive to historical contexts but they overemphasize the role of history. Outcomes in the present become trapped in historical legacies. The subjects or citizens are assumed to be passive where history just happens to them. There is ample work which shows that this is debatable.

To address these issues I use insights from the work done on state-building and combine it with work from postcolonialism, distribution of public goods and social movements. I build a framework in Chapter 2 where the people have agency and their actions are not predetermined. In this framework, I emphasize the role of interpretation especially given the ambiguity in the laws surrounding untouchability.

The different parts of the argument along with the implication for each part are displayed in Figure 6.1. In *part 1*, I locate the problem of caste and untouchability in the history of the struggle for Independence. I used postcolonial scholarship (Chatterjee 1993, 1995) to show that making caste and consequently a *private* issue was important for building the idea of nation. Privatizing caste severely restricted the ability of the state to intervene in the issue of untouchability. This however was to change with Independence when lawmakers allowed the state to intervene in caste affairs, namely untouchability, as its presence was antithetical to the idea of a nation where everyone, at least, in the eyes of the law, would be considered a citizen with equal rights.

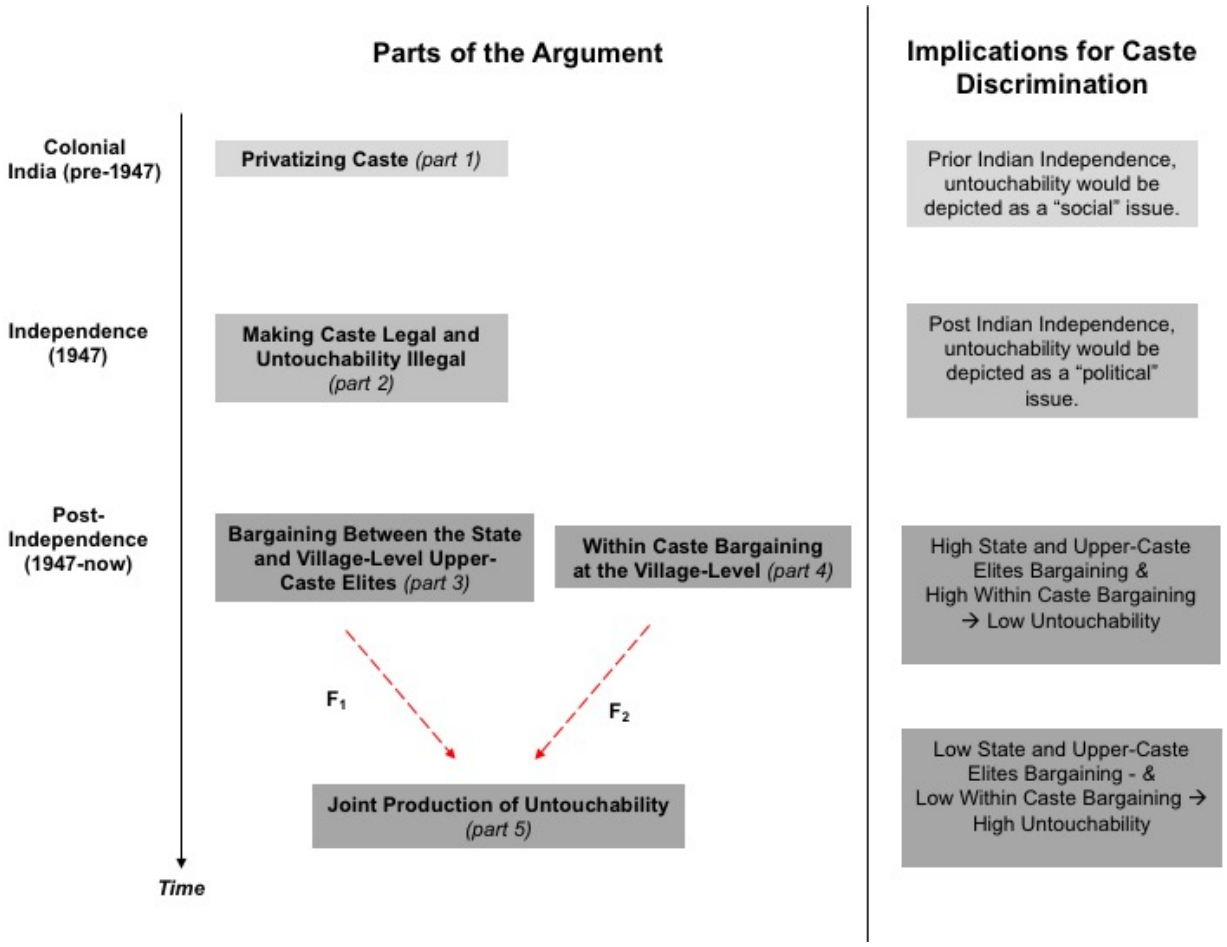
However, as I show in *part 2*, the manner in which this was done was ambiguous and thus leaving room for much interpretation. The most glaring ambiguity is that the lawmakers did not define untouchability. Instead they mentioned certain public spaces where behaviors can be argued to be discriminatory and thus punishable under the law. Both the efforts to private caste in colonial India and make certain parts of caste - untouchability in public spaces - come under the jurisdiction of the state in independent India led to opportunities which could be used to transform the social order or preserve it.

And lastly, in parts 3 and 4, I show that this ambiguity provided space for reinterpretation i.e., what constitutes caste and what is untouchability. Caste and untouchability could be redefined and reinterpreted to suit the current situations. I argued that as the state did undermine some of the power of village-level caste elites, they had to do something. They could either engage in transformation or preservation.

Using research on state-building, I show that one of the ways that village-level caste elites remain in power is by mobilizing and demanding benefits and services from the state. This however is not enough. As we know from the work on social movements, external support for a movement needs to be coupled with internal support i.e., support from one's own constituents (Lipsky 1968). The village-level caste elites need to make the changes (in this case a democratic political order) palatable to their own caste members in the village. And it is here that these elites use the ambiguity in the laws to redefine what constitutes "right" behavior. When the elites are successful in getting resources from the state and reinterpreting the role of caste in society, I expect a transformation in untouchability (i.e., less discrimination). And when elites are not so successful, I expect a preservation in untouchability practices (i.e., high discrimination).

The implications of each of the 4 parts is displayed in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Parts of the Argument along with their Implications



In the next chapter (Chapter 3), I tests the claims from part 1 and part 2 of my argument. I analyze the content of articles published in/around Gujarat by the Times of India using both automated manual coding and find that coverage on caste-based discrimination is relatively rare. I also find that the coverage is sensitive to search terms associated with the "untouchables". For instance, prior to Independence, the terms "Depressed Classes" and "Harijans" was more common. Post-independence, "Dalits" and "Scheduled Castes" became more common. I do find some support for my hypotheses. I find that in colonial India, untouchability was viewed as a "social" issue where untouchables are portrayed as helpless persons who need the benevolence of the state and the upper-castes. Post-Independence, however, there is a shift in the narrative. Untouchability is covered as a "political" issue in that the Dalits (former untouchables) are depicted as assertive.

In Chapter 4, I build a new measure of untouchability - *vulnerability score*. This score is for a particular form of untouchability and varies across villages. It tell us how *vulnerable* a particular form of untouchability is to influence. High *vulnerability scores* indicate that the practice is deeply embedded and thus less *vulnerable* change and low *vulnerability scores* indicate that the practice is easier to influence. In this chapter, I also provide evidence for variation in the experience of discrimination across Dalit groups. I choose to focus my quantitative analysis on Valmikis, who face the highest levels of discrimination in Gujarat.

In Chapter 5, which is my last empirical chapter, I use the *vulnerability score* as a dependent variable in my regression analysis, with a focus on discrimination with respect to electricity distribution. I find some support for my hypotheses. I find that high levels of bargaining with the state (as indicated by early electrification) and high levels of within caste bargaining at the village level (as indicated by the proportion of “secular” neighborhoods), are associated with low *vulnerability scores.*

6.3.0 Contributions of the Dissertation

6.3.1 Theoretical

Given the colonial history of the country, I have shown that it is necessary to understand the context which led Ambedkar to say:

> "On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man one vote and one vote one value. In our social and economic life, we shall by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of democracy which this Constituent Assembly has so laboriously built up."

I have tried to show that variation in untouchability can be viewed as a struggle over understanding the role of state in society and interpreting the laws of the democratic political state. What this does it neither privileges a state-centric explanation nor a society-centric explanation. Instead, the implications of the framework are that untouchability is *jointly produced* by a combination of both top-down and bottom-up processes. To do this I combine insights from the literatures on postcolonialism, state-building, distribution of public goods and social movements.

6.3.2 Measurement

Quantitative indicators of untouchability are rare (Dreze 2017). Chapter 4 is a modest attempt to address this lacuna. To begin the development of the model, I first demonstrated that the experience of untouchability is not uniform across all Dalit groups (Jodhka 2006). Some Dalits groups are better off as compared to others. While there are studies on the dynamics of single caste groups (e.g., Lobo (1995) on the Thakors of Gujarat), research on the variation in the experience of untouchability are hard to find. Using quantitative data across 1578 villages in Gujarat, I showed that the Valmikis report facing the highest levels of discrimination.

Focusing on the experience of Valmikis, I then made a case for treating multiple forms of discrimination as dependent and not interchangeable. In order to model

untouchability where the practices are not assumed to be independent and interchangeable, I proposed a Jenga model of untouchability. What this model does is allow us to think of how *vulnerable* a practice is to influence. The idea of *vulnerability* comes from the game of Jenga where the goal of the player is to take out blocks and putting them on top of the stack without the stack falling. The player tried to figure which is the most *vulnerable* block. Similarly, I build a model of untouchability where the *vulnerability* of each practice is calculated. Low values on this score indicate that the practice is not deeply embedded and thus easier to influence (e.g., buying vegetables in a shop). High values on this score indicate that the practice is deeply embedded and thus more difficult to influence (e.g., inter-caste marriage). Each form of untouchability in my dataset - 98 - has a *vulnerability score.* It is calculated in two steps. The first is finding the joint probabilities of all possible pairs of the untouchability practices. And then using that matrix to calculate a weighted score for each village.

Additionally, calculating a *vulnerability score* allows different forms of discrimination to have their own set of covariates. For instance, while it is plausible that an increasing supply of electricity will affect the distribution of electricity to Valmikis in the village, it is difficult to see how the same covariate - supply of electricity - will affect inter-caste marriage.

It can be anticipated that a measure like this would help activists figure out what and where to target. While advocating for Dalits to enter public temples is a big task, the issue is that this is a deeply embedded practice which is resistant to change i.e., *less vulnerable* to activism. Thus it would make more sense for activists to focus on *more vulnerable* or less deeply embedded practices which I found to be mainly associated with public spaces. These are the easiest to target and there is a high chance of success.

And it also would help activists and policymakers realize that all groups do not have the same requirements. For instance, it seems that while all Dalits are entitled to reservations, there are some who need it more than others i.e., Valmikis need it more

than the Vankars. Policies should reflect the varying experiences of Dalits instead of assuming one size fits all.

6.3.3 Content Analysis

Besides Wilkinson and Varshney's Hindu-Muslim riot dataset, newspapers are an underutilized source of information for studying social and political change in India[1]. We were able to acquire the entire Times of India archive since its inception in 1838 to 2005 through the University of Michigan's Hatcher Graduate Library. Given the long time frame, I was able to test hypotheses about how the issue of untouchability was covered pre and post Independence.

To do this I have written scripts in Python and R, which will be made public, to extract pieces of information from newspaper articles.

6.3.4 Quantitative Analysis

As mentioned in Section 6.3.2, quantitative indicators of untouchability are rare (Dreze 2017). I developed a measure and also collected data on covariates to create the first village-level dataset on caste discrimination. A regression framework was used to analyze variation in the created measure. All this data will be made publicly available.

[1] Rikhil Bhavnani has some event data using the Times of India, however it is not publicly available.

6.4.0 Identifiable Shortcomings and Future Research Agenda

What I have argued to be contributions to the study of untouchability, however, have their own shortcomings which will be discussed in this section along with ways of addressing them in the future.

6.4.1 Theoretical

Theoretically, there are two issues. First, village-level upper caste elites are central to my narrative of transformation or preservation of untouchability. Their incorporation into the political system and interpretation of the law are what I have argued to have observable implications for untouchability. This is especially the case in Gujarat where lower-caste mobilization has been minimal (as compared to other states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, UP and Bihar). However I do not have much evidence to support my assumptions about their alleged behaviors. I have used work done outside India to make assumptions about their behavior but it would be a useful endeavor to actually probe deeper. I would like to conduct interviews with village-level upper caste elites to understand their perceptions of the state and their role as caste elites in the village. The goal of these interviews would be to create a metric which could measure their "bargaining power".

And second, I have not dealt seriously with "religion". I have treated caste and untouchability as products of Hinduism without really delving into details of religiosity. Relatedly, I have used the word "secular", but both these words - "religion" and "secular" - are loaded and their role in untouchability needs to be taken more seriously.

6.4.2 Measurement

While I argued for treating *public* and *private* as distinct domains, there are postcolonial scholars who have argued that the division between the *public* and *private* is not rigid, in fact it is rather porous. What was at one time *public* could become *private* and vice-versa. This is seen in the work on feminist scholars such as Saba Mahmood who in her work on studying women in Islam finds that the division between the "religious" and "secular" are not as neat as believed to be (2004). She finds women clerics whose

interpretation of the religious texts promotes a discussion, debate and a healthy civic life. These are all ingredients for a well-functioning democracy. If it is to be believed that human beings, whether in Egypt or India, are meaning making creatures then separating the “spiritual” from the “material” or the “religious” from the “secular” is very problematic as it is just not possible. The public/private, material/spiritual or secular/religious are deeply entangled and I would like to devote more time and space to examine this entanglement.

6.4.3 Content Analysis

The goal of the content analysis was to test hypotheses about the narrative around untouchability both pre and post Independence. The argument implied that pre-Independence, untouchability would be a “social” issue while post-Independence, it would be more of a “political” issue. I did find some support for this by looking at the distribution of words around the topic of untouchability/untouchables. This support was however limited. The values of any of the correlations were not very large and did not go above 0.4 and indicate suggestive evidence.

There are two things that can be done - the first one in the short term and the other in long term. The first is to expand the area beyond Gujarat and cover all of India. It is plausible that as Gujarat has not experienced Dalit activism at scales such as those observed in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, the correlations are indeed weak. Including more states, could strengthen the correlations.

The second is to think of other sources of data. For instance, during the colonial times, each State published its own Gazettes which were reports of what was happening in the state, where was it happening and who was involved. This practice continued until a few decades post-independence. What is good about these Gazettes as compared to newspaper data is that these were for the state and not for advertisers and the public. Given that these Gazettes were published exclusively for the state, an analysis of how caste and untouchability were covered in the Gazettes could give us a glimpse of how the administration's perceives these issues.

6.4.4 Quantitative Analysis

I used data from the Navsarjan study to test hypotheses about the *joint production* of untouchability. The villages in the sample are drawn from a larger sample where Navsarjan engaged in advocacy work. While it may be possible to generalize the findings to Gujarat, it will be difficult to do so outside Gujarat. This is because every state in India has its own unique history and relationship with the government. In many aspects, Gujarat is an outlier. For instance, as compared to states like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, it has had a very weak Dalit movement. Also, no state or regional political party has been able to gain a stronghold in the state. The ruling party has oscillated between Congress and BJP. And lastly, over the past few decades, anti-minorities (primarily anti-Muslim) discrimination has been on the rise. Taken together the role of these factors on caste-discrimination need further investigation.

However given the importance of the issue, a similar study (perhaps on a smaller scale) needs to be done in a different state. There is a dearth of quantitative studies on the operations of caste on a daily basis - that is how does it continue to shape outcomes on a routine basis? During my review, most of the work that I came across dealt with "caste and politics". The political aspect of caste seems to have overshadowed the everyday lived experience of caste and untouchability. This is a serious issue as separating the political from the social presents a distorted view of the problem. The magnitude of the seriousness is witnessed frequently in Dalit protests which are almost always followed by anti-Dalit protests. There is a prevailing belief among non-Dalits[2], that reservations have ruined the country and the only way to move forward as a country is to remove reservations and special protections for Dalits, and let everyone play the field equally. This again, is based on a sliver of reality. We need more studies that bring together different aspects of the minority experience in India to see that discrimination is not just a "social" or "political" problem. Rather it is a national problem.

[2] An empirical study is required to test this.

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