

THE SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF A
SOUTH INDIAN CITY
- COIMBATORE

by

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ABSTRACT

The spatial organization of a traditional Indian city clearly reflected certain central social values. At the heart of India's oldest cities lay all the administrative, commercial and ritually significant spaces, as well as the residences of certain high ranking castes. At the peripheries were the residences of the lower castes and beyond the city limits altogether were the untouchable settlements. The question raised by this thesis is whether the physical layout of a modern industrial city reflects these traditional social values, or perhaps, new ones. Has the introduction of modern business and industry in Coimbatore brought about a clear-cut deliniation of commercial and residential space? Has it likewise necessitated the separation of administrative and ritual areas?

This analysis of the spatial organization of the modern, industrial Coimbatore concludes that the original spatial layout of this South Indian city has not been totally replaced by a new one. Instead, this vast urban complex has simply incorporated certain modern areas within its growing limits. Coimbatore city, then provides a blend of old and new principles in its physical layout. This blend can be seen as a result of a slow historical process, in which the city grew by small accretions. The new areas added by its nineteenth century colonial residents became structured according to foreign principles, while some of the city's older areas remained relatively unchanged.

The data on which this analysis rests include information on the caste identity of every household on every street for major areas of the city as of 1972, street maps of the city from 1871, 1939 and 1974 bearing locale names that help identify the social identity of particular areas, and also maps of the locations of telephones and important businesses

(also for 1972). Copies of all maps are provided with the thesis and could be used in making a further longitudinal study of the city's social characteristics in the future.

In sum, the combined responses of the city of Coimbatore to various external forces over time, some social, some military, and some economic, best explain the blend of traditional and modern elements in its spatial layout today.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the relationship between spatial organization and social values in the city of Coimbatore, in south India. The findings of this study reassert the significance of a traditional social institution such as the caste system in the organization of urban space. Further, the above conclusion allows us to integrate the study of the city with earlier anthropological studies of both the village and the region. Finally, it suggests that there is a syncretism of the traditional and the modern elements in the spatial order of an Indian city.

The name Coimbatore originates from the term 'Kovan-Puthur' by which the earliest settlement was known. Like many other similar terms, it had been modified for the convenience of the colonial officers. But even after Independence, the city continued to be referred to as Coimbatore and not as Kovan-Puthur.

Coimbatore, one of the leading centres for the cotton textile industry in India, is also the administrative centre for the district of Coimbatore and one of the core cities of Tamil Nadu. According to the 1971 census of India, Coimbatore had a population of 353,469 (Census of India 1971, Paper I of 1971 - Supplement 146).

As Bose (1969) rightly notes, [Coimbatore like] "most Indian cities, although the handiwork of the colonial government, have been peopled by Indians who bring to these urban centres their traditional institutions" (quoted from Berry 1969: 467). To conclude, therefore, that the organization of space in an industrial city tells us something concrete about the

traditional social structure is not fallacious or far-fetched. On the contrary, it is certainly clear from the mapping of the household distribution in Coimbatore that traditional spatial patterns have not been replaced by Western spatial patterns, but that the former have been juxtaposed with the latter.

Source Material

The above conclusions are based on an analysis of an unusual set of caste data for the city of Coimbatore collected by Brenda Beck from the National Malaria Office in 1972. In order to study the spatial patterns inherent in the 1972 data, a detailed current map of the city was obtained from Mr. K. Sundaram, who personally spent a lot of his time in the city perfecting his original sketches. Mr. Sundaram's private map is probably the only detailed map of the city in existence today.¹ Our special thanks are due to both Mr. Sundaram and to Mr. G. Krishnamoorthy, the subdivisional officer of the National Malaria Board at Coimbatore who, by their kindly help, have made this thesis possible.

The Coimbatore sub-division of the National Malaria Board, like any other Public Health unit in India, relies heavily upon the collection of door-to-door information by local level workers. The local level workers employed by the Board go around the city every eleven days and record details of deaths and cases of fever and epidemics like cholera and typhoid. There were 36 such workers employed at Coimbatore in 1972. Each of them was provided with a little register in which they were to note the number and date of their visits, the street, the head of each household, and

¹There have been other maps of the city compiled for tourist purposes, but none represent the layout of all the streets in the city.

certain sociologically important information such as family size, age structure, and the relationship of each resident individual to the household head.

In addition, Beck found that these workers had been noting the caste identity of about 90 percent of the households visited as a private means of helping them to remember the individuals they met. This information, of course, is not officially required by the government; indeed, the official collection of data relating to the caste of individuals is greatly discouraged. But such knowledge has proved to be very helpful to individual workers in identifying families they must meet on their daily rounds.

In 1972, Beck asked each of these workers to transfer the information they had collected in the area under their jurisdiction on to large recording sheets, with the permission of Mr. Krishnamoorthy, the office head.

The only problem that such data posed was the fact that the areas from which the information comes do not exactly coincide with the administrative areas of the city as described by other government sources. As a result, there was a mine of extra caste information on the satellite municipality of Singanallur, but little data on some more central areas such as Race Course Road. It was also very difficult to separate off the unnecessary data pertaining to the unmapped Singanallur sector of the city.

Since the only way to circumvent such difficulties was by mapping the available information on the identifiable streets of the map provided by Mr. Sundaram, a decision had to be taken to largely ignore those parts of the data obtained from the Malaria Office that could not be mapped. Out of the total number of 95,228 households that were described by the Malaria

workers this left 54,902 that could be spatially located. We decided that this would provide an adequate basis on which to proceed with the study. The 54,902 households thus selected will, from now on, be referred to as the sample data from 1972.

This sample, however, did represent both central as well as peripheral sectors of Coimbatore city. It also included all the early extensions of Coimbatore such as R.S. Puram, Devangapet, and North Coimbatore.

For analytic purposes, the city was divided into the following areas (See Map 1).

- I. the old core
- II. the old periphery
- III. the new core
- IV. the older suburb (R.S. Puram)
- V. the older suburb (Devangapet)
- VI. the industrial sector of North Coimbatore
- VII. the new suburbs of North Coimbatore
- VIII. the new peripheries (west side extensions of the old core).

Throughout this thesis, this sectoral sub-classification will be adhered to.

But neither the map of 1972 nor the spatial location of castes on the map gives us any understanding of the historical growth of the city.

The diachronic aspect of this thesis is provided by

- (a) an 1871 map of the city (obtained from the India Office Library in London),
- (b) the Manual of the Coimbatore district (1898),
- (c) the Imperial Gazetteer (1908),
- (d) a journal article entitled "The Growth of Modern Coimbatore" by R. Chettiar (1939) in which a map of the city is also provided.

- (e) The Kongu Country by M. Arokiasamy (1956),
- (f) The Coimbatore District Gazetteer (1966),
- (g) Castes and Tribes of Southern India by Edgar Thurston (1909),

and finally,

- (h) Peasant Society in Konku by B.E.F. Beck (1972).

In order to acquaint the reader with the above sources, a brief introduction is essential.

The Manual of the Coimbatore District (1898), and the Imperial Gazetteer (1908) are valuable, detailed sources of information about the various districts, compiled by the colonial officers in the last decades of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century.

In the years following Independence much of the above material was outdated and inadequate. Since the importance of such material was felt, the Records Office in each of the states was given the responsibility of alterations and additions. The Coimbatore District Gazetteer (1966) is an updated, revised version of the earlier records.

The history of the Kongu Desa, recorded by M. Arokiasamy (1956), gives us an insight into the growth of the city until the coming of the British. A further article by R. Chettiar (1939) on the growth of Modern Coimbatore gives us a bird's eye view of the historical and geographical factors that affected the growth of the city in the Colonial Era.

Finally, Edgar Thurston's (1909) monumental work on the ethnography of South India is a comprehensive collection of data on the castes and tribes. In conjunction with the detailed ethnographic information of the Konku region recorded by B.E.F. Beck (1972), the above information has proved invaluable to our understanding of the social organization of the city.

With this as sufficient background, we will launch into our study of the spatial layout of Coimbatore city. In the next chapter we will deal briefly with the history of urbanization in India, and then examine a few models that are useful to our theoretical approach.

In the third chapter we will trace the history of the growth of the city until the present time.

This historical base will make our analysis of the 1972 data in the fourth chapter more significant and meaningful.

Finally, in the fifth chapter we will summarize our conclusions, and offer a few generalizations.

Chapter 2

TOWARDS A MODEL FOR THE CITY OF COIMBATORE

Urbanization in India is not a recent phenomena. It has its roots in the distant past. The earliest urban centres known to have existed are Harappa and Mohenjadaro (V. Smith 1958: 28). Unfortunately, little is known of the social and economic organization of these cities because the few written records that have survived have not yet been deciphered. However, archaeological excavations at the first site reveal certain important spatial patterns.

The most distinctive feature of the city of Harappa is what remains of a citadel made of baked clay and mud. This fortress is quite imposing in size and extent. Inside the citadel towards the centre archaeologists have found a large bath, by the side of which were buildings for the use of religious leaders. Closer to the entrance of the citadel was a granary, where grain was stored. Well beyond the walls of the citadel lie the workmen's quarters (V. Smith 1958: 29).

What is striking about this geometrical spatial pattern is its close resemblance to other Indian towns known from a later period. As early as 300 B.C. Kautilya, a brilliant minister in the court of Chandragupta Maurya, wrote a treatise on statecraft. In this work he instructed the king on the ideal spatial layout of a city.

According to Kautilya, a royal city was to be built on a square or rectangular grid and to have streets running in both north-south and east-west directions. In the centre of such a city was to be located the king's palace, a temple and/or a tank. Radiating from this nodal point were to be special streets allotted for the different castes according to their rank.

The burial ground for the high caste people was situated in the south side of the city, while the burial ground for other castes could be situated in the north or the east. Even beyond the burial ground was a place where the Heretics and Chandalas (untouchables) had to live (Dutt 1905: 151).

By and large, ancient cities such as Madurai, Kanauj, Pataliputra, and Pukar were examples of these spatial principles stipulated in Kautilya's Arthasashttras. Consider, for instance, the following graphic description of the city of Puhar in the Silapadikaram:

"At the centre of the city were the wide royal street, the street of temple cars, the bazaar and the main street where rich merchants had their mansions with high towers. There was a street for priests, one for doctors, one for astrologers, and one for peasants. In a wide passage, lived the craftsmen who pierce gems and pearls for the jewellers. In another quarter lived the coachmen, bards, dancers, astronomers, clowns, prostitutes, florists, betel sellers, servants and acrobats" (A. Danielou 1965: 19).

The social history of the Indian people clearly indicates that such patterns of spatial differentiation were not just a feature of cities of the earlier period, but were commonly perpetuated by Islamic rulers of a later time (Ahmed & Spate 1950). What was remarkable about the moghul cities was that although Islamic style and taste greatly coloured their spatial character, moghul additions did not ravage or simply replace the older, traditional forms. Indeed, it was the policy of a few rulers like Akbar to actively preserve a city's original format. Thus, the famous cities of Agra and Delhi have to this day retained some aspects of their traditional spatial layout (Ahmed & Spate 1950).

With the advent of European traders, however, the major coastal cities expressing some features of western urban spatial organization began to make an appearance in India. European trading posts usually grew around fishing villages. At the time of these foreigners' arrival the great cities

of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras were only small settlements. As in the Moslem era, the early period of colonial rule did not witness the destruction of traditional spatial forms. In fact, colonial settlers tended to simply extend or build around the places that they conquered, and new principles of spatial organization were applied only to these marginal areas.

As a result, it is still possible to distinguish, in most colonial cities, the old city nucleus from newer British additions. What was characteristic of these new areas was their spatial organization in terms of economic criteria rather than with regard to local ethnic or religious factors. In British planning of such new urban areas the administrative and financial units were to be located at the centre; the surrounding zones then became residential and recreational areas (Smailes 1969).

Thus, even after 150 years of European influence, Indian cities did not completely lose their traditional spatial forms: the old and the new were merely juxtaposed.

Since it is the purpose of this study to analyze the spatial structure of a post-colonial Indian city, the following sections will examine various models that may be useful in formulating our approach.

MODELS USEFUL IN THE STUDY OF URBAN CENTRES

In traditional anthropological work on the spatial organization of human settlements in India the unit of analysis has been the single village. It has been argued that within such a small territory it is possible to understand the intricacy of the traditional caste system (with the exception of such factors as migration (Marriott 1955: 171)). But such studies have now raised at least as many questions as they once succeeded in answering. For a start, researchers have repeatedly asked how does one deal with

those aspects of organization that link a village to other social loci that clearly lie beyond its bounds? And secondly, it is problematic whether a village study can adequately depict the patterns and social composition characteristic of a region as a whole. Thirdly, it is difficult to study the basic lines of economic and political dominance when one only looks at village phenomena. As Singer (1972) notes, in some respects and under certain conditions, the village (is) an organized unity with which a villager identified; but the numerous extensions of a village embedded it inextricably in a wider society and culture (1972: 258). More recent work has thus begun to focus on more extended spatial areas, and on the understanding of social processes as may only emerge clearly at higher levels of territorial organization.

The Village Model

Village studies since the 1950's (Gough 1960, Srinivas 1955, Cohn 1955, Marriott 1955, Mencher 1972, and Beck 1972), to mention just a few, have, however, documented the existence of certain basic spatial forms that pervade local level organization. It has been found, for example, that castes higher up in the social scale tend to occupy the central and more prestigious areas of a village, while lower castes and untouchables occupy the more peripheral and non-prestigious space. Furthermore, since ritual purity and social importance correlate well with high caste status, they easily become an attribute of that central space itself. Ritual neutrality similarly becomes characteristic of the semi-peripheral spaces where commercial enterprises are located. And ritual pollution, finally, becomes a quality of the extreme periphery of the village site, the place where the untouchables live.

In Beck's (1972) study of the Olappalayam settlement, such spatial expressions of social hierarchy involve yet one further dimension, which she has termed the Right/Left caste contrast (see Map 2). Here the economically powerful 'right castes,' who are not necessarily ritually very pure, are found in the middle of the settlement; while the 'left groups' who are more particular about ritual matters, but economically less powerful, can be found in a single northern section close to the ritually pure Brahmin quarters. The various touchable service castes (such as the potters, barbers, and washermen) are further separated spatially from all three of the above groups. They reside well to the south. Another area, the commercial strip surrounding the main settlement, has a large number of shops and a few houses belonging to various commercial castes. Still further outside the settlement itself, quite by themselves, are the hamlets of various untouchable groups. Having looked at the spatial organization of a village, let us now extend this analysis one step further to the city.

The City Model

An increasing complexity is necessarily introduced when settlements become very large. Such complexity is greatest of all when we deal with a city. Although city and town layouts in India are based on similar principles as those which govern village organization, the city is not just a mere spatial extension of a village unit. In addition to being a sub-system within a region, a city is also a 'hinge centre' (Cohn & Marriott 1958) that links up a local tradition to a greater tradition. Several studies hypothesizing the city as a sub-system within a region have been conducted. In Singh's (1969) study of Bangalore he argues that "every city, whether big or small, forms the nucleus of its region from which it draws raw materials

and/or supplies the necessities" (1969: 82). In a similar vein, Janaki and Sayed (1962) (Quoted by Ginsberg 1969: 414) have documented the importance of caste and religion to the town of Padra. All these studies have shown that cities and towns are linked to other cities and towns in the region by complex networks of social and economic relations based on caste kinship or occupation. Further, cities also serve as focal points which first experience the impact of outside forces. They, as Hoselitz remarks, "exhibit a spirit different from that of the countryside. They are the crucial places in under-developed countries in which the adaptation to new ways, new technologies, new consumption and production patterns, and new social institutions is achieved" (1969: 23). Because of this constant pressure to accommodate, the demarcation of such strictly segregated social areas within a city is more problematic. Hazlehurst's (1970) study of Puranapur attempts to grapple with this problem. In the following map (Map 3) Hazlehurst has abstracted some of the main principles of his analysis.

The centre of Puranapur is divided into ritually pure and ritually neutral sections. On the boundaries of this core are found the ritually polluting areas. Distinct from these two areas are the sectors where the lower castes and untouchables live. These latter sectors are also separated on the basis of social rank. Close to the untouchable settlements are the burial ground and the slaughter house. Each of these nesting tiers of social space, in turn, reflects the corporate or collective status of the residents associated with it.

While Hazlehurst provides a useful model that can be applied to Coimbatore city, his analysis does have certain limitations for our use. His is a fairly simplified and abstract picture; it does not, for instance, take into account the fact that cities can have more than one centre.

Puranapur, in spite of being an administrative unit of the British since the mid 19th century, does not seem to be in reality two cities--the old and the new adjacent to each other. This is particularly true of colonial cities. When there is more than one centre in a city, demarcation of social areas along the lines suggested by Hazlehurst becomes problematic. Also, his model does not provide for drawing a distinction between spaces occupied by dominant castes who may or may not be ritually pure, and the ritually pure who may not be dominant. Without this added distinction we will be hard pressed to analyze a distinctly south Indian city like Coimbatore.

The importance of such a distinction will become much clearer when we extend our unit of analysis still further to include the entire region.

The Regional Model

The village, town, and city are sub-systems of a larger regional system and thus may be expected to reflect, in miniature, certain larger spatial and social structures. In order to test this idea that there may be a correspondence in spatial layout, an analysis of the social organization of the region becomes essential.

For our purposes, the region of Konku, in which the city of Coimbatore is situated, will be treated as a model. The Konku region does not coincide with the administrative division of the Coimbatore district. However, as Beck (1972: 57) notes, the two geographical entities approximate each other quite closely.

The rural areas of Konku are marked by a large number of settlements or villages which depend on agricultural activities for their maintenance. The dominant caste in rural areas is therefore a land-owning caste, the Kavuntars. This caste owns 30 percent of the land. This position of

economic supremacy also gives that caste great social importance and allows it to dominate many local level activities.

The Kavuntars have for allies a group of castes that are occupationally dependent on them. Such castes were traditionally lumped together as belonging to the 'right division' of society. Groups who are not economically dependent, and who vied for equal status with members of the right bloc, constituted a separate category symbolically labelled as "left castes."

Left division castes often try to emulate Brahmin manners and customs, but right division castes differ markedly from the Brahmins in their value emphases. Many references to these two divisions can be found in the accounts of the 19th century travellers, though by now this bifurcation of social groups has become almost a mute issue. Certain other castes such as the Brahmins and the Pillai belonged to neither division but remained neutral and served as a symbolic head for the whole.

Just as in the village, the social organization of the Konku region exhibits a certain spatial patterning. The Kavuntars, who are the dominant caste, and head of the right bloc, are found in nearly every major settlement. Members of this caste are especially densely settled in the ecologically defined centre of the region, which is also their socially defined territory. The left division castes, on the other hand, have a tendency to be found in large numbers close to the region's commercial centres. Immigrant groups and less powerful land-owning castes are found most heavily concentrated around the region's boundaries (Beck 1974). It remains to be seen how far the city of Coimbatore fits into this larger regional structure.

From the above discussion some general conclusions can be drawn on the nature of spatial organization, be it the village, city, or region.

Salient Features of the Supplementary Model

Some of the core contrasts that have emerged in relation to the use of space in the above studies are:

- (a) central areas/peripheral areas,
- (b) pure areas/polluting areas,
- (c) old core of the city/new core of the city,
- (d) areas associated with social dominance/areas not associated with dominance (Right/Left),
- (e) commercial areas/residential areas.

In addition to the above principles one further dimension was found essential in providing a dynamic framework for the study of the spatial structure of the city, i.e., the temporal one. Without the time factor the study of urban centres becomes intractable. An historical perspective to the study of Coimbatore city will highlight some of the morphological additions or omissions that have coloured its growth. As Hall (1968) has indicated, time and space are complimentary dimensions. We will see this come true in our study of Coimbatore city.

In the course of applying these principles to Coimbatore city, a number of questions have been raised. Is there more than one centre in the city? Do each of these centres reflect particular social values? Or more specifically, which castes occupy these centres and which of them live at its peripheries? Are these centrally located castes ritually pure? If not do they economically dominate city life? Can such areas be described in terms of the presence of Right and Left division castes as is true for the region as a whole? Since these concepts can assume several shades of meaning we will deal with each of them separately so as to be sure of what each means in the context of our study.

Central areas/peripheral areas. In the ancient towns or cities of India religious, political, and administrative edifices occupied central space. Areas of economic activity were only secondary, and adjacent to these domestic institutions. Furthermore, the centre of the city was characterized by a few broad streets (or Vidhi-Raja Vidhi) that made access to these central spaces easier, unlike the surrounding narrow winding streets.

In Coimbatore the original nucleus had its sacred centre, and in close proximity a commercial centre had its small beginnings. But with colonial rule, a new centre around which the city developed was introduced. Thus, historically speaking, Coimbatore has at least two distinct centres. They will be referred to as the old core and the new core of the city. In each of these centres a hierarchy of space can be discerned and each of these spaces given a particular social value.

Pure areas/polluting areas. The difference between centre/periphery is closely related to another contrast, that between purity and pollution. Most previous studies¹ in South Asia have suggested that spatial separation is commonly made to express concepts of social hierarchy. In the context of this study we will use pure/impure to define the qualitative differences assigned to residential areas where Brahmins and untouchables are found.

Areas associated with dominance/areas not associated (Right/Left). A dominant caste, once established, tends to expand its domain. This may be as Beck (1974) points out, an ecologically defined territory, or a socially defined territory (1974: 5). But power need not always be an attribute of Brahmins or of other ritually pure castes, as we noted earlier. In the

¹Particularly see Dumont in *Homo Hierarchicus* (1969).

case of Kongu, and perhaps of several other agriculturally based regions, power has come to rest in the hands of a numerically strong landowning community, yet not one that is ritually supreme. In this context, then, dominance is used to mean the same thing as it does in the region as a whole.

" . . . to mean near monopoly of management rights in local resources (usually agricultural land) and considerable strength vis-à-vis an otherwise fragmented society" (Beck 1972).

The dominance by a single caste of an entire region finds spatial expression in the occupation of its centre by an economically powerful, managerially oriented group. However, since agriculturally based power is not particularly important in an urban context, it is not clear that dominance will take the same form in urban areas. In this study, then, only the spatial separation of right and left castes is discussed. Urban power does not appear to be so caste specific.

Commercial/Residential. This contrast relates to our earlier discussion of the occupation of central space and its use for commercial as opposed to residential or ritual purposes. In India it is difficult to differentiate commercial from residential use of land. Even the predominantly commercial streets have a large number of residences on them. Perhaps what could be contrasted is the more or less purely resident areas against the mixed residential and commercial functions. The first pattern is the colonial one (a suburban trend) while the second is indigenous to the sub-continent from an early period.

Finally, since the time dimension is important to complete the study of an Indian city's spatial organization just as it is for a village or a region, we must next discuss the historical factors that have shaped Coimbatore's growth. The next chapter will therefore deal with the early history of this city.

Chapter 3

HISTORY OF THE GROWTH OF THE CITY

"If we would lay a new foundation for urban life, we must understand the historic nature of the city, and distinguish between its original functions; those that have emerged from it and those which may still be called forth."

-- Lewis Mumford

The word city in Tamil has several synonyms. They are, according to the Dravidian Etymological Dictionary, Nakar (235), Pattinam (300), Padi (272), Pari (274), Poral (300), Vity (369), and Ur (57) (Burrow and Emeneau 1961). Of particular significance to this study is the word 'ur' because as we shall see, the word Coimbatore is actually the union of two other words--Kovan + Puthur. The prefix 'Puthu' in Tamil means 'new.' So taken together, (Puthu + Ur) would make 'Puthur' which means 'new town.' Thus, Kovan Puthur refers to the 'new town of Kovan' or simply, 'Kovan's town.'

Ramachandra Chettiar (1936: 102) relates a very interesting anecdote regarding the origin of the name of the city. "The Boluvampetty valley" when he writes:

" . . . from which the river Noyal rises and flows eastwards, was a thick forest clad tract about a 1000 years ago. On the northern bank of that river in a forest village, an Irula chief named Kovan lived. About the beginning of the 9th century a Siva chariya¹ with the help of his friend the Chera chief, travelled through these parts. Both being highly enthusiastic about religion and civilization, the jungle was cut down; three temples were built, and a small fort and Petta constructed. In memory of the Irula chief, the place was known as Kovan Puthur" (Chettiar 1936: 102).

From such small beginnings the modern city of Coimbatore grew.

¹Devotee of Lord Siva.

THE EARLY PERIOD: 1300-1759

Cooley's (1898) theory of transportation and Sjoberg's (1960) theory of political power seem applicable to the early growth of Coimbatore. Situated at 11° N. and $76^{\circ}58'$ E. on the left bank of the river Noyal and commanding the approach to the palghat gap, Coimbatore has from early times been a city of some strategic importance and military fame (Imperial Gazetteer 1908: 371). The earliest mention of the city in inscriptional records stems from a period when it was ruled by the Chera kings who, as we saw earlier, had established a settlement there. One other record in particular suggests that Coimbatore was originally the settlement of Virakerallanallur, named after the Chera king Virakerala (Arokiasamy 1956: 194, 253). However, we not only lack evidence to support either hypothesis, but we also do not know how Coimbatore ranked with respect to the other strongholds of the Chera Empire. During the next few centuries we do not even have records of the growth of the city, although we do know that the Kongu-desa in which Coimbatore is situated passed under the sway of various Indian powers such as the Rattas; the Gangas; the Cholas; the rulers of Vijayanagar; the Nayakas; and finally the Rajas of Mysore. With the exception of being an important city under the latter, Coimbatore apparently did not play a vital role in the empires of this period.

THE MOSLEM PERIOD: 1759-1799

According to R. Chettiar (1939) Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, who were the Rajas of Mysore, are said to have occupied the town on and off, and one building, now a hostel for girls of the secondary school, is said to have been the residence of the governors from Mysore and is pointed out

to be that which Tippu occupied when he visited the town (1939: 102). In addition, Coimbatore was also considered to be one of the most formidable forts held by the Moslems during the period of their rule. It was besieged thrice during the Mysore Wars in 1768, 1783, and 1790 respectively until finally, in 1799, it became an acquisition of the British (Chettiar 1939: 102).

When Coimbatore passed into the hands of the British there was a remarkable alteration in the role the city played. Coimbatore, which was originally a military stronghold, was transformed into an administrative centre. Lewandoski (1975: 341-361) also offers a similar explanation in her study of the growth of Madras city.

Coimbatore, with its mild climate and rainfall, became one of the most desirable stations in the Madras Presidency. A measure of its convenience can be gleaned from the following excerpt from the Imperial Gazetteer (1908: 372) which reads: "Situated at 1300 feet above the sea, in a picturesque position at the mouth of the Bolampetty valley, with the masses of the Nilgris and Annamalais rising into view on either side, its light rainfall of 22 inches and its moderate mean temperature, Coimbatore is at once healthy and pleasant."

When Coimbatore became an administrative centre a number of changes were initiated. In the next few sections we will discuss some of the salient features of colonial rule that had a direct impact on the growth of the city.

THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19th CENTURY

The Colonial period in many ways marked the beginnings of a revitalization process. In 1805 Coimbatore was made the headquarters of the

district, when the two earlier districts with headquarters at Bhavani and Dharapuram were amalgamated into the single district of Coimbatore (Chettiar 1939: 102).

It became the headquarters of the District Munsifs' court in 1855 (Coimbatore Gazeteer 1966: 486), and in 1860 the locale of the police department as well (Manual of the Coimbatore District 1898: 248). But it was not until the introduction of the regulation system of government, in 1860, that Coimbatore became a municipality. As Beals (1955) notes:

"Before 1860, administrators had regarded themselves as caretakers and avoided altering local customs. After 1860, however, they sought to make sweeping changes. These changes included a continued expansion of the authority of the state government at the expense of the local authority; expansion and improvement of transport and communication; development of manufacturing; trading and diffusion of the European system of education and welfare" (1955: 79-80).

THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19th CENTURY

A regular municipality was established in Coimbatore in 1865 after the passing of the Madras Towns' Improvement Act X (Coimbatore Gazeteer 1966: 469). This Act, as documented in the above gazeteer, primarily originated with the intention of the government to make the inhabitants bear as much as possible the charges of maintaining a police force in towns. Subsequently, however, the funds raised were not only applicable to the expenses of the police, but also to the construction, repairing and cleaning of drains, the making and repairing of roads, the keeping of roads, streets and tanks clean, and doing such things as may be necessary for the preservation of the public health (Coimbatore Gazeteer 1966: 469). The municipality derived its income from a tax on houses and buildings, a tax on carriages and animals, fees for registration of carts, fees for licensing slaughter

houses, carstands and offensive trades, fines and contributions from the government (Coimbatore Gazeteer 1966: 470). It spent a major portion of its income on the police and the rest on roads, wells and sanitation. The construction of the central jail sanctioned by the government in 1862 in the north eastern section of the city, with 175 acres of land attached to it, was also completed in 1868 (Manual of the Coimbatore District 1898: 252).

In 1871 there was a slight alteration in the duties of the municipality, with the passing of the Towns Improvement Act III. Now the municipality had no longer to contribute to police charges, but instead had four new additional charges, namely those for hospitals and dispensaries, those for schools, those for birth and death registration, and those for vaccination (Coimbatore Gazeteer 1966: 471).

The city, in the meantime, had also become the seat of a strong missionary movement and contained the cathedral of the Bishop of the French Société des Missions Étrangères, as well as centres for the Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Missions, which were also working in the district. These missions further took an active part in educating the natives and set up several schools and colleges. The chief educational institutions were Saint Michael's College and Coimbatore College. The former was begun in 1860 by the French Mission and subsequently, in 1891, affiliated to the Madras University (Manual of the Coimbatore District 1898: 126). The latter was established in 1852 by Mr. E.B. Thomas, the then collector of the district (Manual of the Coimbatore District 1898: 125).

These foreign structures were very prominent on the traditional landscape and Coimbatore, like other colonial cities, began to express this duality. The Map of 1871 highlights some of these opposing features quite well. In the following sections, therefore, we will take a look at them (see Map 4).

What is most striking about this map is the clear separation of the Pre-Industrial and the new colonial areas of the city. And each of these areas of the map display distinctive characteristics. In sum, while the spatial organization of the original nucleus of the city is based on criteria such as caste and religion, the spatial organization of the colonial settlement was based on economic and administrative criteria.

The Original Nucleus

What were the different castes and communities in the city in 1871 and how were they distributed? A careful perusal of street names suggests the presence of a number of castes and religious groups at this time in the old core of the city and in its new peripheries. These groups are listed and classified in Table I. The classification is based on the assumption that streets acquired the caste-names of the dominant castes living on them.

The categories used in the classification were borrowed from Beck (1972), with modifications and additions wherever necessary. Thus, for instance, while Beck classified service castes as belonging to either the Left or Right division, it was not possible to do so with the data on service castes and untouchables in the city. Castes identified as belonging to districts outside Kongu were classified as belonging to outside regions. People identified as non-Hindu were classified as "outside religions." Streets that were named after the predominant trade were also classified. Finally, streets that were named after the King or the Colonial Officer were also identified. They will be referred to as 'Political Streets' in column (9) of Table I.

TABLE I: Classification of Street Names of the Map of 1871 on the Basis of
Caste, Community, Commercial and Political Identity

(1) Neutral	(2) Left	(3) Right	(4) Service	(5) Untouchable	(6) Immigrants	(7) Outside Religions	(8) Commercial	(9) Political
Telugu Brahmin (Priests)	V. Mudaliar Street (Profession- als)	M. Nanjappa Gounder Street K. Gounder Street R. Gounder Street (Agricultur- al land- lords)	Idayar Street (Milkmen) Ottaisekar Street (Oil mill workers) Vannan Street (Washermen) Potters Lane Oil Mongers Street	Chakkilayar huts Paracheri	Oppara Street (Salt manufac- turers) Oppanagara Street (Telugu trad- ers + agri- culturalists) Odde Street (Construction workers who speak Telugu from Orissa) Okkilier Street (Canarese cul- tivation) Torayar Street (Canarese fishermen) Lingappa Cetti Street Komutti Cetti Street (Telugu trad- ers)	Moslem Lane Pattunoolkaran Ismael Rawther Lane (Moslem Christian Lane	Big Bazaar Street Fish Market	Raja Street Sheristadar Street Sullivan Street

This classification produces several broad patterns. These have been mapped in condensed fashion (see Map 5) in order to add clarity to the discussion which follows.

Central Areas/Peripheral Areas

One striking feature of the original settlement is the organization of central space. As the map indicates, the centre of the original nucleus housed a few temples, the administrative units such as the Talug Cutacheri,¹ the Chavadi,² and the King's Palace. Radiating from this centre were the separate streets for the different castes. And on the peripheries were found the areas inhabited by the lower castes and the untouchables.

One other feature of most Indian cities was a tendency for there to be a certain spatial segregation based on religious criteria. This is also illustrated clearly by the Map of 1871 where we find that Moslems and Christians located in specific residential areas. Christianity, having arrived on the Indian scene later than Islam (with the exception of Saint Thomas and the Syrian Christian Missionaries), was relegated to the outermost periphery of social space. Moslems, on the other hand, were accommodated within the original site. In spite of being located in the main settlement, Moslems by no means occupied central space. Instead, they were pushed outwards towards the peripheries, closer to the semi-commercial and polluting areas. Thus the mosques were situated near the Fish Bazaar, the slaughter house, and the fort. This finding, incidentally, fits well with

¹The central government of the Raja of Mysore was organized more or less like a secretariat containing the various departments of which 18 cutacheris are seen in the official records of the time (Arokiasamy 1956: 391).

²Subdivisions within the department (Arokiasamy 1956: 396).

Fox's (1969) view of Moslems occupying a lower status in the last century than do many of the lower castes in society today.

In contrast, the central space of the British settlement was predominantly office (commercial) space, and that in turn was surrounded by religious, recreational and residential spaces respectively. This is not surprising since land uses in the industrial cities of the West were qualitatively different from those of the pre-industrial world.

Pure/Polluting

In terms of areas that are 'pure or polluting' there seems to be little ambiguity. According to our earlier definition, areas occupied by Brahmins will be considered pure and areas occupied by untouchables polluting. And these polluting areas can be further subdivided. Note that the shoemaker (Chakkilayar - the lowest ranking group among the untouchables) is found in the most inauspicious and non-prestigious space in the south which is also associated with death (near the slaughter-house), while the Paraiyar (drummers - a slightly higher-ranking group) are found in the eastern peripheries close to the fish market. This whole scheme of "outside settlements" fits in with the rules stipulated in the Arthasastras where the untouchables were expected to live beyond the city or village boundaries altogether. (See Map 6).

What is perhaps most distinct about the British settlement areas was their demarcation of peripheral space by toll gates and their use of peripheral space in the north and south for burial purposes. Further, they improved the old peripheral (polluting) settlements adjacent to their site by constructing latrines.

Commercial/Residential

If residential segregation on the basis of caste was a crucial trait of the city of Coimbatore in 1871, another equally important element was the relative lack of such segregation with respect to land uses for economic purposes. Although we have no direct information regarding the commercial organization of the city in 1871, by identifying two streets named after the commercial establishments of the streets (Big Bazaar Street and Fish Market Street) we do have some measure of its commercial importance. Also, by looking at the nature of its commercial establishments today and at the density of population (both of these will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter), we can say that segregation of residential and commercial land was not the order of the day. (See Map 7).

Right/Left Caste

The location of castes belong to the Right/Left and neutral divisions can also be identified on the map. The Higher Right, the Higher Left, and the Brahmins all have very prominent positions in the core of the city, although the former two are more widely spread than the latter. On the other hand, in the British core there is a conspicuous absence of caste names on the different streets.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, some general observations on the use of space in Coimbatore city in 1871 can be made. First, central space in the original nucleus is associated with ritual purity, as well as ritual neutrality. As a result, central space is predominantly occupied by the higher Left, Right, and neutral castes.

Peripheral space, on the other hand, is polluting and non-prestigious space, occupied by the untouchables. Finally, commercial space is not clearly differentiated from residential space.

The spatial organization of the colonial settlement was based on Western models. Underlying these specific principles, therefore, were certain new social values. Within the next 30 years a great many additions and alterations were made to Coimbatore and the city began to take on a new look.

In 1884 the Madras Municipalities Act IV was passed, which for the first time introduced the term 'municipality' in the title and adopted the new terms 'council' and 'councillors' instead of 'commission' and 'commissioners' employed in the earlier acts. By this Act, 75 percent of the councillors were to be elected by the taxpayers. Coimbatore came to have 20 councillors of whom 15 were elected and 5 were nominated (Coimbatore Gazetteer 1966: 4).

Owing to the recurrence of plagues in the district, the municipality began to pay attention to public health problems. One more hospital was founded in 1888 and funded by the municipality (Manual of the Coimbatore District 1898: 108). Further, in 1892, a depot for the production of animal lymph was opened at Coimbatore under the immediate control of the District medical and sanitary officer, and between 1888-1893 alone a total of 7822 males and females were vaccinated (Manual of the Coimbatore District 1898: 113, 115).

In the process of such active institutional and spatial growth, transport and communication systems were improved. There were now four major state highways and one national highway, all of which converged on the city. The town which had only 27 miles and 1 furlong of road in 1866,

had 35 miles and 1 furlong of road by the turn of the century (Chettiar 1939: 105).

Further, in 1873, a railway line connecting Coimbatore with other urban centres in the district as well as the surrounding regions was installed. But it was not until 1939 that Coimbatore became a junction of the South Indian Railway (Chettiar 1939: 10).

Improvement of transport and communication had opened up Coimbatore to the population of the surrounding villages who sought employment in the city. By the turn of the century there was already a steam cotton press, a cotton spinning mill, a tannery, two steam coffee curing works, and a steam factory. They were all owned by the British. In addition there was a distillery and sugar factory owned by the Indians (Imperial Gazetteer 1908: 373). According to the Manual of the Coimbatore District (1898: 167) there were 4,169 landholders, 1,821 agricultural labourers, 4,100 other labourers, 10,826 traders, 5,954 weavers, 4,834 other artisans and 14,769 classified as 'others' employed in the city. Although there were a large number of traders, artisans, labourers and weavers, Coimbatore was not yet an industrial centre. The textile industry, for which Coimbatore has become well known, had hardly begun although experimental attempts at increasing the output and production of cloth had been made by the British as early as 1842. Dr. Dwight, who established the experimental farm at Coimbatore, demonstrated that American cotton would grow very well in the region. This was not the only farm in operation at that time in India. Perhaps it could be said, however, that it was the only farm that was an utter failure. The peasants were not willing to grow American cotton, and more than that, they refused to use the cotton gin that was part of the experimental programme. They had several reasons for doing so:

- (a) Indigenous cotton could not be cleaned by the American cotton gin.
- (b) And secondly, it was not practical to grow American cotton because it could not be cleaned by the indigenous gin.

Although there were other reasons also cited (Leacock and Mandlebaum 1955: 334-351) for the failure of the British in controlling the cotton industry, the real impetus to the development of this industry was indigenous. It could be said, however, that the British had laid the foundations upon which the cotton textile industry flourished.

THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

At the turn of the century there were only two municipalities in the district, of which Coimbatore was the largest. Between 1915-1920, however, four new municipalities were constituted. In 1920 the Madras District Municipalities Act V was passed for repealing the Act of 1884 and for increasing the elected proportion of the members of the municipal council, as well as the resources and powers of the municipalities. In that year also an Inspector of the municipal council was appointed to supervise the workings of the municipalities. Any municipal council had to have 16 members in municipalities with a population not exceeding 20,000; 20 in those between 20,000 and 30,000; 24 in those between 30,000 and 40,000; 28 in those between 40,000 and 50,000; 32 in those between 50,000 and 100,000; and 36 in those exceeding 100,000 (Coimbatore Gazetteer 1960: 475). Coimbatore had a total of 32 councillors, of which 75 percent were elected by the ratepayers and the others nominated by the government (Coimbatore Gazetteer 1966: 475).

The District Municipalities Act of 1920 was further modified in 1930 by Act X. This Act did away with the nominations and insisted that all councillors be elected. The government was authorized to secure ultimate control over electrical undertakings managed by the municipal councils and to appoint electrical engineers. The changes that were made in the local administration was increasingly giving the municipality more autonomy to guide its affairs.

In the first three decades of the 20th century, a number of town extensions were made. Since the population had considerably increased, the authorities had to take drastic measures for the mitigation of insani-tation and congestion. By 1929 nine town extensions were made by which the outlying portions of the villages of Krishnarayapuram, Souripalayam, Puliakulam, and Ramanathapuram were added to the town (Chettiar 1939: 103). In 1866 the areas of the town was 4.2 square miles and housed a population of 24,241. By 1931, the population had increased to 95,198 and the area of the town had also increased to 7.5 square miles. According to R. Chettiar (1939: 103), by 1939 the population was over 100,000 and the area of the town incorporated 12 square miles.

That Coimbatore was rapidly growing can be further adjudged by the gradual increase in the number of houses and the tax paid on them. The number of houses rose from 2,000 in 1800 to 9,283 in 1915, and finally to 13,742 in 1939 (Chettiar 1939: 104). Likewise, the property tax that was of the order of Rs 56,884 in 1920, rose to Rs 106,423 in 1931 and finally to Rs 282,785 in 1937 (Chettiar 1939: 104).

By 1939, the municipality ran 18 elementary schools (with a total of 5,205 pupils) to which were also attached weaving schools. A deaf and dumb school, likewise, was managed by the council.

In addition, there were also the agricultural college and forest college, which virtually constituted two independent colonies adjoining the city. Industrial educational institutions such as Saint Joseph's and P.S.G., training schools, private schools of commerce, convents and orphanages also dotted the urban scene.

The period commencing from the turn of the 20th century had witnessed rapid changes that were affecting the socio-economic and political structure.

The Swadeshi¹ Movement

With the turn of the century the growing antagonism against the British had erupted in the form of an Indian National Movement. Although this movement had important Indian leaders like Gandhi, it also received a certain impetus from the activities of a minority of Europeans like Mrs. Annie Besant and Wedderburn. The latter had, earlier in his career, been a much respected collector at Coimbatore. His name is still perpetuated by a street named after him in that city (Chettiar 1939: 103).

Mrs. Besant had her stronghold in Madras, where she founded the Theosophical College and conducted a number of "Home Rule Meetings." Coimbatore soon came into the picture, too, because Mrs. Besant made it her home. As early as 1917, a Home Rule Conference was organized in Coimbatore and had for its strong supporters a number of Brahmin lawyers in the district (Coimbatore Gazeteer 1966: 113). A number of demonstrations and meetings ensued, and soon the whole district felt the impact of this new political activity. Soon the Home Rule Movement was enveloped

¹'Swadeshi' was the term used by Mahatma Gandhi to refer to the struggle for Independence.

into a larger movement called the Non-Cooperation Movement. This was largely due to the efforts of one man--Gandhi, who in 1920 visited districts in the south, of which Coimbatore was one. His visit only caused these sentiments to multiply.

While all southern districts joined in this common cause, the seeds of divisive influences were already being sown. What emerged from this internal strife was the justice party headed by Mr. E.V. Ramasami Naicker and drawing a large number of supporters from the ranks and file. The cause they valiantly strove for was the liberation of the lower castes from the influence of the Brahmins. This anti-Brahmin feeling took the form of a number of agitations and counter-agitations.

In spite of this growing internal division, it was not until the beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement that these agitations took a violent course. In January, 1932 one of the processions taken out by the Desa Bandu League of Tirupur was dispersed by a great deal of violence. The leader, Sri O.K.S.R. Kumarasami Mudaliar, popularly known as Tiruppur Kumaran, or Thiaygi Kumaran, was fatally wounded (Coimbatore Gazeteer 1966: 122). His memory has been perpetuated in not only a street named after him, but also a central market in the heart of the original city nucleus (Thiaygi Kumaran Street, Thiaygi Kumaran Market).

Also, as a response to the Civil Disobedience Movement, a number of hartals and strikes were staged by the millworkers. In September, 1937 there were two strikes in mills near Coimbatore. In October a series of strikes began in the Sarada Mills, Coimbatore, and spread to eight other textile mills in the city. In February, 1939 a more serious strike began in the Saroja Mills, Coimbatore. In July of the same year five textile mills in Coimbatore and one in Tirupur struck. In 1939 there was a strike

in the Kaleeswara Mills at Coimbatore that spread to other units (Coimbatore Gazetteer 1966: 130). These strikes were organized by the leaders of the various political parties to achieve their ends. Thus, a few leaders like Mr. E.V.R. Naicker even wanted to make Coimbatore a stronghold for the Dravidians.

These agitations did not cease even after the achievement of Independence. Political rivalries continued to make this city important as a seat of political power. Being an industrial city it soon became an easy target for the communist party, and leaders such as Mohan Kumaramangalam and Aruna Asaf Ali held meetings in the city. Further, in 1960, the communist nominee was chosen as the mayor of Coimbatore.

But before we enter into a discussion of the growth of the city in the post independence years we should pause and look at the map of 1939 in order to understand the spatial extensions and industrial locations of the city at that point in time (see Map 8).

Although this map does not express the details of the spatial layout of the different castes in the city, as the map of 1871 does, it still indicates the location of most of the important industries and institutions in the city. Also, it indicates the directions and extent to which the city had grown.

According to the map of 1939 there were 5 cotton mills and 5 other ginning factories within the boundaries of the city. A number of offices and institutions established since the turn of the century also find a place on the map.

POST-INDEPENDENCE YEARS

The years following Independence were years of planned change. In

1956 the Coimbatore municipality had 36 councillors. It levied a property tax, a professions tax, a tax on vehicles and animals, a tax on carts, and also derived an income from surcharge on stamp duty, entertainment tax, motor vehicles tax, and government grants under several heads (Coimbatore Gazetteer 1966: 478). It maintained $83\frac{1}{2}$ miles of road, lit partly by electricity and partly by kerosene. It maintained 32 elementary schools with an average strength of 15,777 pupils as well as 5 high schools, 4 middle schools, one deaf and dumb school, one hostel, one library, and 24 reading rooms. It ran 5 maternity and child welfare centres, 1 infectious diseases hospital, 9 dispensaries, treating 527,522 outpatients. It had a first-class health officer, one assistant health officer, 2 selection grade sanitary inspectors and 20 sanitary inspectors. It had 5 daily markets, 2 cart stands, and 2 slaughter houses (Coimbatore Gazetteer 1966: 478).

Under the five year plans, the cotton industry had also received a fillip from the government. By 1960 there were altogether 36 textile mills within a radius of 7 miles from the heart of the town. The most important of these are tabulated as follows with respect to the number of looms, spindles, and financial layout. (See Table II).

The first seven are within the municipal boundaries, but the other 7 are on the outskirts of the city. This process of decentralization has had several advantages as well as disadvantages. While it reduced the problem of commuting and overcrowding in the city, it also gave rise to a number of slums around the factories.

This historical sketch of the growth of the city has brought us into the last phase of the 60's. At this point, therefore, we will have to terminate our narration, for want of more detailed information, and look at some finer points of the spatial structure of Coimbatore. In the

TABLE II: Classification of Textile Mills in Coimbatore With
Respect to the Number of Looms, Number of
Spindles, and Financial Layout

Mills	No. of Looms	No. of Spindles	Financial Layout (Rs)
1. Lakshmi	200	59,988	10,000,000
2. Srivenkateswara	268	47,444	5,000,000
3. C.S. & W. Mills	407	72,832	2,500,000
4. Sivananda	not mentioned	18,816	2,500,000
5. Pankaja Mill	"	30,790	2,500,000
6. Cambodia	"	38,110	2,500,000
7. Janardhana	"	23,784	2,500,000

8. Kothari Mills - Singanallur	300	43,000	10,000,000
9. Vasantha Mills - Peela Madu	290	44,424	3,000,000
10. Coimbatore Cotton Mills - Madhukarai	-	30,829	2,500,000
11. Radhakrishna Mills - Tiruppur	300	51,664	3,000,000
12. Dhanalakshmi Mills - Tiruppur	201	34,708	2,500,000
13. Coimbatore Pioneer Mills - Singanallur	-	24,466	2,500,000
14. Premier Mills - Udumalpet	-	20,736	2,500,000

(Coimbatore Gazeteer 1966: 322-323)

next chapter, therefore, we will see how the spatial organization of Coimbatore city reflects overarching social values that is so much a part of traditional as well as modern Indian society.

Chapter 4

THE ANATOMY OF COIMBATORE CITY

In the last chapter we discussed how Coimbatore grew from a small settlement into a large industrial centre through a slow process of accretion. The historical data allowed us to divide the city into

- I. an old core (the earliest main settlement),
- II. an old periphery (the outlying areas of the earliest settlement),
- III. the British core (the settlement area identified with Colonial rule),
- IV. an older suburb I (i.e., R.S. Puram),
- V. an older suburb II (i.e., Devangapet),
- VI. the industrial sector of North Coimbatore,
- VII. the new suburbs of North Coimbatore, and
- VIII. the new periphery (west side extensions of the old core).

In this chapter the available caste data of the city in 1972, the data on the spatial location of commercial concerns, as well as data pertaining to the location of business and residential telephones will throw more light on the socio-economic and ritual status of each of the above geographical sub-divisions. We will therefore be in a position to delineate areas of religio-ritual importance, such as the Devangapet sector (Brahmin enclave) which is mainly a residential area. Areas of secular importance such as R.S. Puram, an adjacent, older, non-Brahmin suburb that combines commercial with residential land uses can also be identified. Further, it will allow us to distinguish traditional core areas of the city such as Selvapuram, that combines both religio-ritual and secular concerns. In striking contrast, are the peripheral industrial sectors of

North Coimbatore, which has the least religio-ritual and class significance, as well as the adjacent cosmopolitan and newer suburbs of North Coimbatore. These distinct analytic categories do not approximate the administrative divisions through which the people perceive space in Coimbatore city. We have made a clear distinction between the old core and the old periphery in the 1972 map, for instance, while they are together referred to as Selvapuram sector in our original data. These various sectors make Coimbatore a 'mosaic of social worlds.' Three decades ago Wirth succinctly summarized the fundamental assumptions of ecological studies, noting that:

" . . . diverse population elements (within the city) . . . tend to get segregated from one another in the degree to which their requirements and modes of life are incompatible with one another while persons of homogeneous status and needs unwittingly drift into consciously select, or are forced by circumstances into the same area. The different parts of the city thus acquire specialized functions " (Wirth 1938: 56).

Now, while the history of Coimbatore can help to explain why certain social worlds should be located where they are within the municipal boundaries, only a more detailed examination of the people who live there can help illuminate the nature of these diverse social worlds that co-exist within the city.

For this purpose the various caste populations in each of these sectors have been computed and combined in such a way as to enable a broad comparison of the 'caste-composition' of these various sectors. To do this, each caste represented in the 1972 sample was classified (in keeping with the regional classification) as belonging to one of the following categories: (a) neutral, (b) left, (c) right, (d) service, (e) immigrant groups, (f) non-Hindu, (g) untouchables. In the regional classification,

the service castes and untouchables were classified as belonging to either the Left or Right division. Immigrant groups and non-Hindus are treated as distinct categories with respect to their numerical strength in the cities. Immigrant groups or castes in the city were further subdivided on the basis of numerical strength into North Indians and South Indians. Since the spatial patterning of a few South Indian castes was crucial to our understanding of the spatial layout of the city, they were given more importance than the others. They are the Naidus, Boyars, and the Malayalis. They are referred to as Immigrant Group I. The rest are referred to as other South Indian Immigrants II and North Indians. The unequal representation of these various caste categories in the several parts of the city described above forms the backbone of the following analysis.

Since the purpose of this study is to analyze the extent to which the spatial dimensions of a city reflect overarching social values, we must devote a preliminary section to a discussion of the numerical representation of these various castes in the Kongu region as a whole.¹ For this purpose, census caste data for the years 1901, 1911, and 1921 (after 1921 census data collection excluded caste identity) have been collected from the District Census Manuals, and an average for the three years computed (see Appendix I for caste details of each year).

Although census data do not always prove to be accurate when examined in detail, they will still serve our purpose when used in aggregate form. We will simply use the overall pattern of proportionate representation at the regional level to highlight some of the salient features of the traditional population (see Table III).

¹The Kongu region as Beck (1972) points out, is not quite the same as Coimbatore district, but the figures for the latter area represent the closest possible approximation under the circumstances.

TABLE III: The Caste Composition of the Kongu Region, Coimbatore City,
and the Sample City Population

Castes (1)	Kongu ¹ Region % (2)	Coimbatore ² City % (3)	Sample City ³ Population % (4)
<u>Neutral</u>			
Brahmin	1.95	6.2	9.46
Pillai	--	4.42	4.82
	<u>1.95</u>	<u>10.62</u>	<u>14.28</u>
<u>Left</u>			
Asari	2.92	4.08	5.88
Cettiyyar	2.85	11.86	14.30
Mudaliar	3.76	3.28	3.56
Naicker	0.48	2.70	2.71
	<u>10.01</u>	<u>21.92</u>	<u>26.45</u>
<u>Right</u>			
Kavuntar	36.98	9.62	8.21
Nadar	4.19	1.07	1.42
Tevar	0.14	3.02	0.78
	<u>41.31</u>	<u>13.71</u>	<u>10.41</u>
<u>Service</u>			
Udaiyar	1.28	0.59	0.59
Vannan	1.54	1.46	1.75
Navithar	1.64	0.91	0.92
Pandaram	2.15	0.12	0.01
	<u>6.61</u>	<u>3.08</u>	<u>3.27</u>
<u>Immigrant I</u>			
Naidu	1.57	7.43	4.34
Boyar	0.09	2.46	2.01
Malayali	0.12	8.41	8.62
	<u>1.78</u>	<u>18.30</u>	<u>14.97</u>
<u>Immigrant II</u>			
Okkilier	2.84	0.58	1.00
Gowder	--	1.93	1.72
Reddi	3.35	0.24	0.38
Arumthathiar	--	1.02	1.56
Panikar	--	--	--
Edayar	--	1.60	1.65
Servai	0.01	0.01	0.01
Achangar	--	--	--
Sivier	--	0.15	0.25
Kollar	--	0.03	--
Vaniyar	0.58	--	--
Ganga	0.01	0.01	0
Pachakerar	--	0.01	0
Maratiyar	--	0.05	0.09
Vilayar	--	0.04	0
Pannady	--	0.11	0
Anglo-Indian	--	0.20	0.04
Devanga	2.65	0	0
Konar	0.85	0	0
	<u>10.29</u>	<u>5.984</u>	<u>6.70</u>

TABLE III: Continued

Castes (1)	Kongu ¹ Region % (2)	Coimbatore ² City % (3)	Sample City ³ Population % (4)
Gurkha	--	0	0
Punjabi	--	0.071	0.06
Marwadi	--	0.03	0.06
Sait	0.21	0.62	1.07
	<u>0.21</u>	<u>0.721</u>	<u>1.19</u>
Outside Religions			
Moslem	0.39	7.50	11.15
Christian	0.45	3.67	4.20
	<u>0.84</u>	<u>11.17</u>	<u>15.35</u>
Untouchables (Castes)			
Pallar	1.84	4.79	2.52
Valluvan	0.22	0.08	0.14
Holeya	0.21	0	0
Adidravida	--	--	--
Paraiyan	3.99	0.53	0
Chakkilayar	11.04	2.57	1.59
	<u>17.30</u>	<u>7.99</u>	<u>4.25</u>
(Tribes)	17.66	8.31	4.56
Solaga	0.17	0	0
Kadan	--	0	0
Dommara	0.02	0	0
Malasar	0.07	0	0
Mudugan	0.07	0	0
Kallar	0.03	0	0
Kurumban	0	0.13	0.22
Koraver	0	0.19	0.09
	<u>0.36</u>	<u>0.32</u>	<u>0.31</u>
Unknown	0	6.06	2.62
	100%	100%	100%

Source:

¹The caste composition of the Kongu region in column (2) is the arithmetic average of the available caste data in the census manuals for the years 1901, 1911, and 1921.

²⁺³The caste composition of the city and sample was computed from the data obtained from the National Malaria Office at Coimbatore.

Column (2) of Table III summarizes the strength of particular castes in the region in the early decades of this century. There is no reason to believe that these proportions have changed much in rural areas since that time (Beck 1972). A number of important features emerge from this tabulation.

First of all, it illustrates several important differences in proportional representation for the Right and Left caste groups respectively. For instance, it is evident that in rural areas the Right division is roughly twice the size of the Left (including the Chakkilayars). These groups comprise roughly about 41 percent of the regional population, while the Left division constitutes only 10 percent. Of this 41 percent, furthermore, more than two-thirds is accounted for by the presence of a dominant agricultural group locally known as the Kavuntars.

Unlike either of the above castes, the neutral castes (i.e., Brahmins and Pillais) are numerically a very small group constituting less than 2 percent of the total.

The service castes in the region (i.e., the cooks (Pandaram), potters (Utaiyar), washermen (Vannar), and barbers (Navithar) constitute almost 7 percent of the regional population.

Of the remaining population of castes about 21 percent can be classified as recent immigrants to Kongu from elsewhere. They comprise a large number of castes and sub-castes that have come from all over India. However, the greatest numbers have been from regions that surround the Kongu (i.e., Andhra, Kerala), and from other districts of Tamil Nadu.

Another category, not mentioned above, which constitutes a small proportion, are the tribals. They account for another .36 percent.

The Christian and Moslem community in the region as a whole is not very large (i.e., roughly 1 percent). In contrast to the two former groups,

the untouchables are a large group constituting a full 17 percent of the whole.

By comparing these figures to those for the city in 1972 (column 3), some interesting observations can be made. First of all, it is evident that the neutral castes alone constitute almost 11 percent of the total number of households in Coimbatore city. The Right division castes, by contrast, contribute only 14 percent of the urban households while the Left division castes are now the largest category (22 percent). Note that whereas the Right division castes outnumbered the Left two to one in the region, the Left outnumber the Right by roughly the same proportion in the city (if we include Chakkilayars).

Owing to a lack of information on the Right and Left caste affiliation of the various service castes in our sample, they have been treated as a distinct category. This group forms 3 percent of all the households in Coimbatore as contrasted to 6 percent in Kongu region.

We can conveniently divide the castes and communities in Coimbatore that come from outside regions into two categories: those who have come from the north of India and the others who have come from elsewhere in south India. Although the number of North Indians in the city are negligible (1 percent) they still are an interesting subset because their presence helps to explain certain nuances in the spatial organization of the city. Of the latter category three groups are strikingly numerous: the Naidus and Boyar (merchant castes from Andhra Pradesh) and the Malayalis (a linguistic community from Kerala). They alone contribute to 18 percent of the household population of Coimbatore, as against their 2 percent in the Kongu region. The other castes in this category amount to approximately 6 percent.

The Scheduled tribes in Coimbatore are few and are found only in the peripheral sector.

Amongst the non-Hindu groups the Moslems have a particular importance. They constitute about 8 percent of the households in Coimbatore, while the Christians account for another 4 percent. In contrast to their proportion in the region (1 percent), together they contribute to 12 percent of Coimbatore's household population.

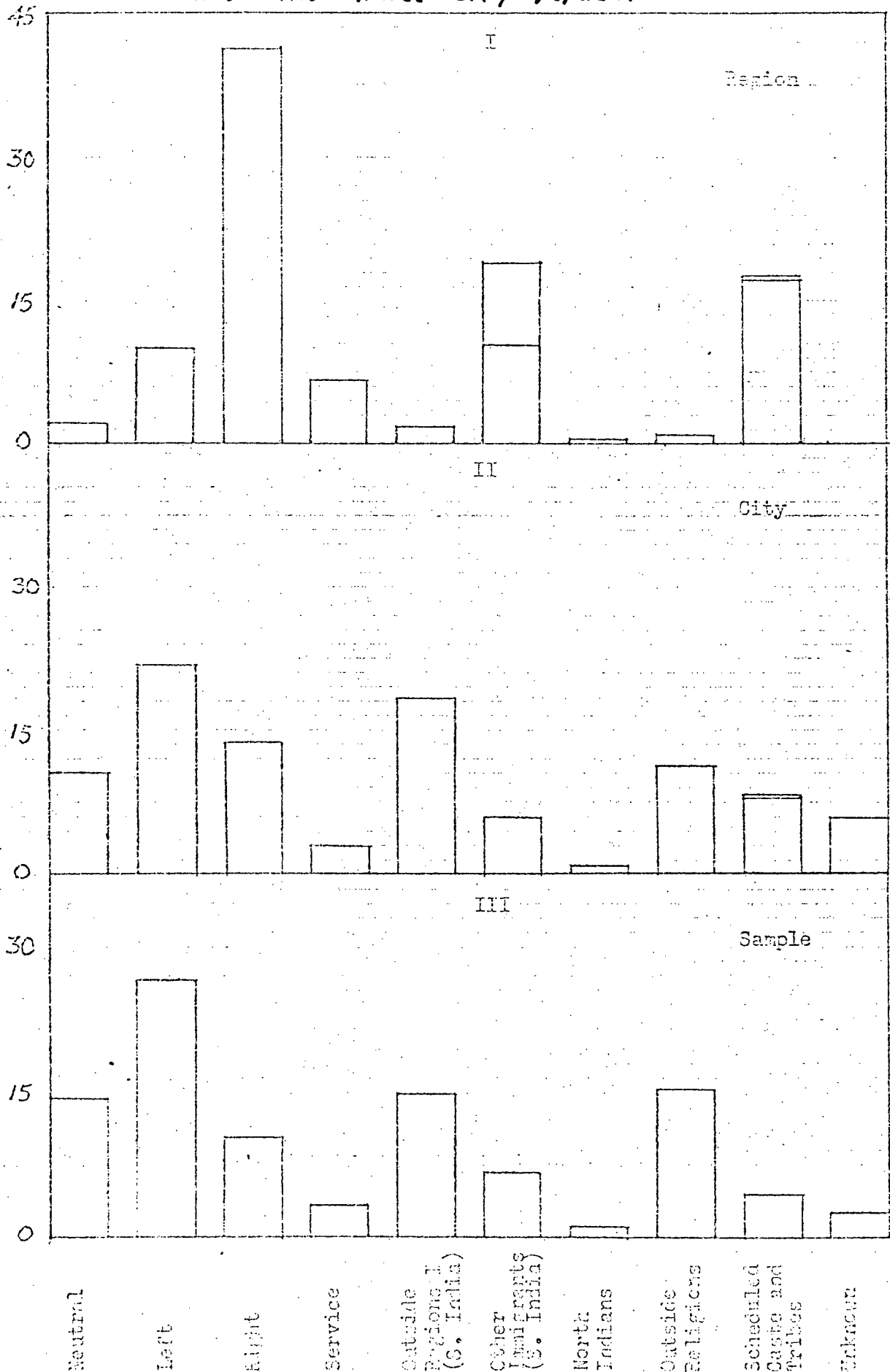
Finally, there are the 'untouchables' who are under-represented in the urban setting as compared to the region (18 percent). Since most are manual labourers there is more work for them in the countryside than in the city. They contribute to 8 percent of our urban residents.

The following bar diagrams (see Figure 1) summarize the contrasts between the caste population of Kongu and Coimbatore city. Further, this comparison points up one important underlying principle: the pull the city has on those who have specialized marketable skills such as weavers and traders. Thus, castes who do not have a significant position in the region (i.e., the non-agricultural castes) now assume a dominant role in the city.

This contrast is even more clearly illustrated by our sample population (Figure 1). Thus, Left division castes, neutral castes, and a selected number of castes and communities from outside regions dominate the significant sectors of the city in contrast to those who belong to the Right division. The details of the sample population will be dealt with in a later section that deals with the spatial distribution of these various castes.

Having compared the caste population of the region with that of the city, we will now turn our attention to some general aspects of

FIGURE 1
THE CASTE COMPOSITION OF THE KONKANI REGION, COIMBATORE CITY.
AND THE SAMPLE CITY POPULATION.



Coimbatore's resident population, as described in social, demographic, and economic terms.

First of all, we will discuss the general density of population in Coimbatore. A rough measure¹ of this was computed and mapped in order to pinpoint the areas of high and of low concentration. Map 9 indicates that the large population centres in the city are located in its old core and along its old periphery. As one moves out from this centre one can notice an appreciable decrease in population density. Also, one can observe a corresponding increase in the straight grid patterning, the total length, and even the sheer numbers of streets as one moves out. Such physical variation is not unique to Coimbatore alone, but true of other Indian cities as well (Berry 1969, Rowe 1973, Smailes 1966). Just as a practised observer can examine a map of modern Coimbatore and distinguish the original site from the town extensions solely on the basis of street patterns, so the same observer can make a similar judgement for other cities such as Agra, Delhi, and Madras as well.

In addition to these clear variations in layout, however, one must know something about the social character of the city's different areas. Map 10 serves this purpose very well. Apart from the 'Industrial sector' of North Coimbatore, each of the other sectors can be seen to house a specific group of castes within its boundaries.² Patterns of caste segregation, therefore, are not unique to the older areas of the city but to

¹
$$\frac{\text{total number of households}}{\text{length of street}} \longrightarrow \text{density of population}$$

²If a caste constituted 75 percent or more of the number of households on a street, it was considered to be dominant. Streets with castes of relatively smaller numbers therefore had a greater amount of mix.

the newly developing ones as well. Map 11 is a more composite representation of all single caste concentrations (i.e., 75 percent or more) on given streets within the city limits. It is pretty obvious, as in the earlier map, that the old core and the old periphery have the largest concentrations.

Further, a separate mapping of the location of residential and business telephones in the city gives us an independent measure of high and low status areas in economic terms. Map 12¹, for instance, demonstrates the spatial distribution of residential telephones within the city's municipal boundaries. What is conspicuous about this map is the fewer number of telephones located near the city's peripheries. Residential telephones are concentrated mainly along a few main streets (probably belonging to families who live at the rear of their businesses) and in the older suburbs (both Devangapet and R.S. Puram) which we shall see later on are mainly occupied by high caste families. It does appear, therefore, that there exists a certain amount of spatial congruence between caste and status though the existing data does not allow us to explore this relationship in any great detail.

A second map (Map 13) shows the spatial layout of business telephones² in Coimbatore city. Of greatest interest is the fact that the very same streets of the old core are represented when it comes to business telephones, as was the case with residential ones. This suggests that there is little specialization of land uses for commercial purposes in this central "core." Where we do find residential phones without business

¹ $\frac{\text{No. of residential telephones}}{\text{No. of households}}$ = concentration of residential telephones

² $\frac{\text{No. of business telephones}}{\text{Length of street}}$ = concentration of business telephones

phones is in the older suburban areas. Furthermore, only a very few streets in the new industrial area and along the main access routes leading to it exhibit the western pattern of business telephones being spatially separated from residential ones.

In an attempt to identify elite business areas we also examined one further economic variable, i.e., the size of business advertisements in the telephone directory. This time a rough estimate of the wealth of a firm was made from taking into consideration the size of its directory advertisement. Map 11¹ demonstrates the distribution of these presumably large and important firms. As expected, the major arterial route that connects Coimbatore to other urban centres outside the region (Trichy Road) is found to have the largest number of these firms. The next highest concentration is an older suburban area called R.S. Puram, followed closely by the industrial sector of North Coimbatore, and one other business street in the old core. We shall thus assume that the most prestigious firms are housed in these areas in the city.

Having looked at some of the general patterns of population distribution we will now examine more closely the residential layout of some of the larger groups in this industrial city.

THE NEUTRAL CASTES

A few words are necessary to introduce the concept of 'neutrality' as it will be used in the following discussion. In Kongu two caste groups,

¹A 4 point scale was constructed and the scores were allotted proportionate to the size of the advertisement on each street. Then the scores were aggregated for each street and the results mapped.

Brahmin¹ and Pillais,² enjoy a very high occupational and ritual status. The former often serve as temple priests, and the latter as village accountants. Both stand at the top of the social ladder where they occupy a prestigious niche that the Right and Left castes find equally difficult to challenge. Such castes, in turn, play on their special position and do not often engage in status disputes. They thus serve as a sort of 'head' for an otherwise (at least traditionally) bifurcate social body. It is these groups who are here labelled as 'neutral.'

The Brahmins

While the ritual status of the Brahmin is rarely questioned, the economic position of some of the members of this group in rural areas is actually quite low. This is especially true in areas where most of the agricultural land is owned by non-Brahmins. To increase their economic and social standing, therefore, this traditionally scholarly and priestly group has long looked to urban areas for employment. It is not surprising, then, to find large numbers of Brahmins in Coimbatore city.³ Other traditionally neutral castes have followed their lead. Approximately 9 percent of all the households in our sample are Brahmin by caste, and the largest concentrations of these are to be found either in the old core or in well-established but newer extensions of the city (see Map 15). Even today,

¹For many centuries in India, Brahmins have been accorded the highest ritual status.

²The Pillais are a South Indian caste of accountants who enjoy considerable power and prestige as village accountants.

³For other examples see Singer's (1920) study of Madras city, or Berry's (1969) study of Calcutta.

there is a strong tendency for elite groups to be found in the inner belts of the city. In these traditionally central areas of Coimbatore residential, commercial, and administrative functions have always been combined. Specialization of land uses as is found in western cities has therefore occurred only a new 'core' locales established by the British. In expanding, the Brahmin community have not relocated in these specialized British sectors intended for commerce (Trichy Road), administration (court collector's office area), or pleasure (Race Course Road). They chose instead the older suburbs of Coimbatore city, which are mixed residential, religious, and commercial locales. In parts of these sectors Brahmin households almost completely dominate the scene. Furthermore, there has been little change over the years in the number and location of streets on which Brahmins have lived (compare 1871 map with that of 1974 map). A sharp and persistent segregation of these Brahmin residential locales from the major untouchable settlements of Coimbatore is also quite evident. These 'Pure' and 'Polluting' spaces are well separated by buffering neutral zones. Probably for similar reasons the Brahmins have not located their houses along the 'exposed' arterial routes of the city. Instead, they seem to have always preferred more 'sheltered' and 'less accessible' streets for their homes. Further still, the Brahmins of Coimbatore do not reside in close proximity to the Right division castes of their city (described below). It is interesting to note that they are only moderately segregated, with an index of segregation of .33.¹ However, it is not unusual for

¹ Index of Segregation (see Appendix II at the back of the thesis) is calculated:

$$\frac{ID}{1 - \frac{\sum X_{a1}}{\sum X_{n1}}} = \frac{\sum X_{a1}}{\sum X_{n1}} = \frac{\text{total number of the subgroup in the city}}{\text{the total population of the city}}$$

"A Methodological Analysis of Segregation Indices" by O.T. Duncan and B. Duncan, ASR 20: 210-17, 1955.

members of the Neutral castes (who are more concerned than Brahmins with ritual matters) to be found living close by to the Left division castes.

The Pillais (see Map 16)

The only other caste in our sample known to have traditionally held themselves aloof from Kongu society as a whole are the Pillais (Beck 1972). In Kongu today there are very few Pillais. Most members of this group are village accountants (about 1 percent) and a large number of them have found their way to the city of Coimbatore. They constitute roughly 5 percent of our sample. Like Brahmins, a major cluster of Pillais are to be found in the old core of the city. However, this group also has substantial representation in the more peripheral and more polluting areas of the city. The segregation index for the Pillais is moderately low (.25). This leads one to speculate that various lower caste groups may have adopted the 'Pillai' title, who do not have the social connections or the means to enable them to adopt the former's exclusive living standards. It is also possible (although not so likely) that a number of traditional Pillai families have been forced by circumstances to move to less desirable areas. Thus, we find that the Pillais are distributed both in the better residential and the polluting areas of the city. In this they are distinguished from their counterparts, the Brahmins, who live only in the better areas.

THE LEFT DIVISION OF CASTES

By reason of their highly marketable business skills, the professional or trader castes of India are over-represented in all the urban areas of the subcontinent (Hazlehurst 1967, Fox 1969 and 1973). The Left division castes (who are not untouchable), like the Right divisions show a

certain tendency towards spatial contiguity in their residential choices. Furthermore, they exhibit a clear preference for locales that are close to those of the ritually pure Brahmins.

In Kongu, the Left division groups include the artisans (Asaris), the merchants (Cettiars), the weavers (Mutaliars), and the earth diggers (Naicker). These groups constitute only 11 percent of the total regional population, but close to 26 percent of the households in our city sample. We have already noted that this is more than twice the Right castes' representation, an interesting reversal of the rural pattern where the Right castes well outnumber those of the Left. In this section we will discuss in detail only those "touchable" castes who are easily identified (Beck 1972) as belonging to the Left division. These are the Asaris, Cettiars, Mutaliars, and Naickers respectively.

The Asaris

This particular Left division group constitutes 6 percent of our city sample, and has a remarkable tendency to cluster residentially. Asaris are found mostly in the old core and the old periphery.¹ A few of them are found very thinly spread in the Brahmin enclave of Devangapet and the industrial sector of North Coimbatore. They have settled in well established commercial areas, although actually they are spread thinly over the city as a whole. They have a segregation index of .34. In the old core the artisans' residences are often contiguous with Brahmin residences. Even in an urban setting, therefore, they seem to associate themselves with this ritually pure group (see Map 17).

¹ Same pattern in a village like Olappalayam.

The Cettiyars

The Cettiyars constitute the largest of all Coimbatore's urban groups, accounting for 14 percent of the total number of households in our sample. (See Map 18).

What is striking about their spatial spread is their near monopoly of the main arterial routes of the city. They also show a large concentration in the city's older core areas. While the Asaris remain clustered here even today, showing little spread into the newer urban extensions, the Cettiyars have clearly moved from this original core along the various axial routes following, it would seem, the path of their business interests (Maps of 1872 and 1972). They also have a low segregation index (.25). Thus, within the Left division specific patterns of residence seem to vary with the type of commercial activity undertaken.¹

The Cettiyars appear to make little distinction between their commercial and residential spaces. Often they live in the back of the shops that they own.² However, there does appear to be a trend among the richer Cettiyars to move into the better residential sections of Coimbatore.

The Mutaliars

The Mutaliars are referred to as mercenaries of the Chola army. Later many of them appear to have settled in Kongu, and to have taken to weaving and to business (Beck 1972: 32). Besides being warriors and weavers, some Mutaliars used to perform important temple services. One affiliated group, for example, used to supply the Deva-dasis, or temple dancers,

¹Note, for instance, the percentage of Cettiyar houses in the Brahmin locales.

²Evident on personal observation.

and their male counterparts, the dancing masters and temple musicians (Beck 1972: 47, n).

In Coimbatore they constitute about 3.5 percent of our sample population (see Map 19).

Again, like other castes in the group, a few Mutaliars tend to cluster near the old core. Comparison of the map of 1871 and 1972 would show how little change there is in this group's residential habits in over 100 years. Being professionals, Mutaliars generally reside near or among other ritually high status groups. A few can even be found living in predominantly Brahmin areas as well. In spite of being few in numbers, they are found in general to be spatially closer to the households of the Cettiars and Asaris, i.e., the other Left division castes, than to those of the Right division. Of the Left division castes, they are the least segregated (.16).

The Naickers

Members of this caste are generally known as well-diggers or earth movers. They have a rather low status; lower, for example, than the Natars of the Right division (Beck 1972: 5). In the city they probably do a lot of generalized manual labour. They constitute about 3 percent of our sample (see Map 20). Large clusters are to be found in the original settlement site, both in the inauspicious southern sections as well as in the more ritually neutral sections of the city.

This variation in locale is perhaps due to variations in status of the various subdivisions of the Naicker caste. Beck notes that the Totti¹

¹Totti refers to "sweepers" and washroom cleaners.

Naicker, for example, are a group that bears the title Naicker but who are labelled untouchables (Chakkilayar or Matari) by others. The wide range of residential locales for Naickers may thus be due to similar factors as were mentioned for the Pillais. That is, certain low status groups adopt high status names without attaining the associated living standard.

It is clear, however, that the Naickers are not found in the 'better' residential areas of the city. Many of them can be seen to be clustered near the various commercial streets. In addition, they tend towards a spatial identification with other Left division groups. Thus, Cettiayar or Chakkilayar (Left division castes) residential areas are to be found near several Naicker clusters. Of the Left division castes they are the most segregated (.39).

From the foregoing discussion, a single overarching pattern seems to emerge: the Left division castes are to be mainly found in the older areas of the city though they extend outwards along the communication networks and commercial routes, just as they tend to form fan-like networks within the region as a whole. The only other fairly substantial nucleus of touchable Left castes can be seen to be located in the peripheral and industrialized sector of North Coimbatore, where many members of these castes are no doubt employed.

THE RIGHT DIVISION OF CASTES

The castes of the Right division, as we have noted earlier, are the economically dominant castes of the region. They tend to be centrally located, both in villages and in the region as a whole. In Coimbatore city, however, this pattern does not hold good. Instead, here the central areas (old core and old suburbs) are mostly dominated by the ritually

neutral and ritually pure castes. Right castes living in the core live in small enclaves of their own. Furthermore, the Right castes constitute only 10.4 percent of our city sample as against roughly 40 percent of the households in the region as a whole.

In the following discussion only those castes whose Right division status is certain (Beck 1972) have been included. These are (1) the Kavuntars, who are the agricultural landlords of the Kongu region; (2) the toddy-tappers, popularly known as the Natar; and (3) the Tevars, who have varied occupations but who take pride in their reputation for military prowess.

The Kavuntars

The Kavuntars constitute 8 percent of our sample population. The largest concentration of Kavuntars is in the old core and the old periphery of Coimbatore city, a carry-over, perhaps, from a time when Coimbatore had a village type of spatial organization (see Map 21). Given the number of Kavuntars in the city, many of them seem to occupy rather inauspicious and limited sections of the urban whole. In the old core the Kavuntar residences are not always spatially contiguous with Brahmin residences. But one can find a few Kavuntars on or close to streets where Brahmins live. Further, the Kavuntars neither gravitate to the well defined commercial streets nor to the administrative areas. They do not seem to choose to live in mixed residential and commercial areas the way many Left castes do. They are also relatively low on the segregation scale (.24).

The Natars

The Natars form a small minority (1.4 percent) in Coimbatore.

From the mapping of our household data (see Map 22) it is clear that the Natars and Kavuntars congregate in the same general areas of the

city. There is also one substantial Natar concentration in the industrial sector of North Coimbatore.

Perhaps what is important in identifying the Natars' status is their conspicuous absence from any of the Brahmin enclaves of the city, unlike a few Kavuntars. As Hardgrave (1969: 22) notes, unlike the Parayan untouchables, the Natars had access to the streets of the agraharam (Brahmin ward or village). Yet they do share with untouchables the tradition of keeping their spatial distance from Brahmin residential locales. Like Kavuntars, too, the Natars are generally not found living along the main arterial or business routes within the city.

In terms of residential location, therefore, the urban Natars, like their rural counterparts, are found to be closely associated with their Kavuntar patrons and allies. They are a very highly segregated caste group in Coimbatore city (.54).

The Tevars

The term 'Tevar' is nearly synonymous with the term 'Maravar,' which is the name of one of the earliest and fiercest of southern tribal groups (Thurston 1909: vol. 5, 48). The Tevar are generally of low, yet touchable status. Hardgrave (1969: 23) notes that Tevars are in general not very different in status from the Natars (see Map 23).

What is crucial to our understanding of Tevar spatial organization is the recognition of their close alliance to the Natars and Kavuntars. It is thus not surprising that we find them located in clusters near these two other Right division groups. Their residential space can be said to be similarly 'neutral,' well away from the clearly pure or polluting areas. In spite of employment in urban centres, the Tevars are neither a professional nor a commercial caste. As a result they, too, are not found to live

along the main commercial streets of the city. If anything, the Tevars are even more closely allied to the Kavuntars, spatially speaking, than are the Natars. The Tevars, unlike the Natars, are not so highly segregated (.28).

In spite of a few difficulties, it does thus seem possible to trace a specific residential pattern for the Right division castes in Coimbatore city. The existence of some kind of common identity or sense of interdependence appears to be a strong factor in the contiguous spatial placement of these groups within the city.

THE SERVICE CASTES

Members of these groups perform specific services for higher ranking castes. Together they constitute only 3 percent of our sample. The castes that we will deal with under this heading are (a) the washermen (Vannar), and (b) the barbers (Navithar).

The Vannar

The washermen constitute 1.75 percent of our sample population. Washermen in South India are quite low in social status. Unlike other castes, they rarely cluster spatially in particular villages. Usually only one or two such families will serve each small settlement. In Coimbatore city, however, the washermen do tend to live in a few well defined areas and to service their clientele from certain nodal points (see Map 24). Their segregation index is .27.

The Navithar

The barbers are also a relatively small group in Coimbatore, fewer in number than the washermen even, constituting less than 1 percent of the

households in our sample.

Like the washermen, however, the barbers are also found on certain streets (see Map 25). A substantial concentration on certain commercial streets is particularly visible. They have a segregation index of .32.

Both barbers and washermen are indispensable to city life. Yet they can only travel limited distances in their daily work, since they travel mainly by foot. For these reasons, it would seem, small clusters of these impure groups are to be found in several centrally located areas of the city.

OUTSIDE REGIONS

Apart from the castes already discussed, all of whom are well represented in the population of the Kongu region as a whole, there are other communities that have made their way to Coimbatore from more distant places. Together these 'foreigners' form quite a substantial bloc of the urban population, constituting 22 percent of our sample. Broadly speaking, we can divide these people from elsewhere into two categories: (a) North Indian, and (b) South Indian.

The former are very few (i.e., about 1 percent of the sample city's household population). They can be further subdivided into three groups: (a) people from the Punjab (Punjabi), (b) people from Gujerat (Sait), and (c) people from Rajasthan (Marwadi). Of these, apart from the Saites, who are diffused, the other two groups cluster in the middle class residential sector of R.S. Puram and Devangapet.

The South Indian castes and communities are greater in numbers. Of special significance to Coimbatore city are the Naidus and the Boyars (castes who are traders from Andhra Pradesh), the Malayalis (people from

Kerala), the Okkiliers (Canarese cultivators), and the Reddis (agricultural caste from Andhra Pradesh).

The Okkiliers are a striking example of a segregated caste: all the Okkiliers are found in the old periphery of Coimbatore. The Reddis, who are an agricultural group from Andhra Pradesh, are better represented in the rural districts than in urban centres like Coimbatore.

The Naidus

The Naidus, who are traders from Andhra Pradesh, are not well represented in the region although they are substantially represented in Coimbatore city (see Map 26). In our sample they contribute roughly 4 per cent. The Naidus resemble the Cettiars in their residential distribution. Thus, the heaviest concentration of Naidus are found in the commercial heart of the old city and in the industrial sector of North Coimbatore.

In terms of their social standing, the Naidus are 'outsiders,' although they are clearly not of low status. Because of their business interests they have been traditionally located in the ritually neutral areas of the city, although their extreme wealth is buying them entry into the Pure or Brahmin areas such as along Race Course Road. They are a highly westernized group who seem to have managed a certain spatial expression of their values through their choice of old British residential space. They are fairly segregated (.32).

The Boyar

The Boyar are supposed to be a subsection of the Naidus and a trading caste by profession (Thurston 1909: vol. 5, 138). They contribute to 2 percent of our sample population. In the city, however, many of them

are forced to be manual labourers.¹ In accordance with their low prestige occupation, some Boyars can be found in the old periphery and the less prestigious sections of the industrial section of North Coimbatore (see Map 27). Others are found in the better and older suburb of R.S. Puram. Almost no Boyars are to be found in Brahmin locales. They are not so highly segregated (.22).

The Malayalis

The Malayalis constitute a large category in our sample, nearly 9 percent.

It is very difficult to identify the very varied professions of migrant Malayalis. It is, indeed, even problematic to say that they are resident in any particular area of the city at all. They are to be found both in commercial and residential sections of Coimbatore (see Map 28). This wide distribution accords well with the Malayalis rather flexible attitudes towards occupations and towards pollution in general. Immigrant Malayalis are almost always westernized in their tastes and many of them are Christians. They are the least segregated of all the castes and communities (like the Mutaliars) (.16).

From the foregoing discussion it appears that strong ethnic or communal ties do not characterize the spatial organization of most of these South Indian "immigrant" groups, with the exception of the Okkiliers. Interestingly, however, the North Indians are much more likely to form small spatial enclaves. Perhaps the language barrier, much stronger for them than for South Indians, is a partial factor in this. The Southern immigrant

¹Beck (1972) shows this to be true in rural areas as well.

communities are more or less evenly and thinly spread throughout the city and do not seem to have clear nodal points for caste aggregation. They seem to behave spatially towards other castes, including the Brahmins and Pillais, in a neutral way.

NON-HINDU

This classification applies to two substantial religious communities both in the region and in the city--the Moslems and the Christians. Historically the Moslem inroads on South India came first. In Kongu the Moslems constitute 3 percent of the population, 11 percent of Coimbatore city population, and approximately 15 percent of our sample population.

Of all three major religious communities in Madras state (Hindu, Moslem, and Christian), the Moslems are proportionately the most concentrated in urban areas. William Francis is said to have noted this phenomena in the 1901 census as follows: "Mossalmans, who are largely traders, show the greatest preference for town life (of the three religious communities). In some of the sea-port towns, the Mossalmans, who are generally tabbais, actually outnumber the Hindus." (Quoted from Mines 1973: 37). It is apparent, therefore, that a relatively high degree of urbanization has characterized the Moslems of Madras even before the beginning of the 20th century.

The Moslems (see Map 29)

This urban concentration is well borne out by our data. Large numbers of Moslems (7.5 percent) are found within the municipal limits. In our sample the Moslems alone contribute roughly 11 percent. From the mapping of our data it was further evident that not only are they found in

large numbers within the city boundaries, but within the boundaries of the old city as well. Although the Moslems lie outside the pale of Hindu society, they are still not treated as untouchables in a spatial sense. It is not surprising, however, that we find their conspicuous absence in the 'pure-residential' areas of the city. An additional factor which affirms their tendency to aggregate in commercial locations is that the second largest concentration of Moslems in the city is found in the satellite nucleus of North Coimbatore. Furthermore, they are highly segregated (.38).

The Christians

The Christian population, both in the region and in the city, is not very large. Only 4 percent of the household population of our sample is Christian.

From the mapping of our data (see Map 30), it is clear that their main aggregations lie outside the old core, and most of the older suburbs as well. Large sections of Christians are to be found adjacent to the British site, around the main churches of Coimbatore, and also in the industrial sector of North Coimbatore.

Many low caste groups were converted to Christianity in the 19th century by missionaries. Since these converts still live on the boundaries of the city's space, however, it is difficult to say whether these new Indian Christians managed to escape their previously polluting status by conversion. They are also very highly segregated (.47).

Both Moslems and Christians appear to be separated from the important Hindu castes in spatial terms. Of the two, Moslems seem to have stronger nodal ties while the Christians seem to be relegated largely to the peripheral areas. Those Christians found interspersed with other groups in better residential areas are very likely higher caste converts including

Christian Malayalis. While Moslems are residents of already well established commercial sectors, such high-caste Christians can be found in every sector of Coimbatore city.

THE UNTOUCHABLES

India's untouchables have become a very difficult group to obtain information on ever since the turn of the 20th century. This is because of the hesitancy, first of the British and later of contemporary Indians, to officially label any group by this derogatory term. However, the stigma of untouchability still exists despite its abolition by the Indian constitution. To escape or avoid the issue various euphemistic substitutes such as 'Harijan' (a term popularized by Gandhi, meaning children of God), and 'Adi-Dravida' (earliest inhabitants of India (Dravidians) popularized by the D.M.K. Party) have been tried. None have fully succeeded in masking the persistence of wide-spread traditional attitudes. The lingering contradiction makes for profound embarrassment on the part of many educated persons who prefer to deny the existence of untouchability by not labelling it. We will not dwell on the problem here, but merely state that in Coimbatore the 'untouchables' are still a highly stigmatized group. This point comes across clearly on our city map. The so-called 'Harijans' live largely by themselves on the outskirts of the city proper, or in crowded slums along various public access routes, where they have become 'squatters' on municipal land. This isolation is a legacy of the past. It may be viewed as the physical expression of more subtle social barriers, based on the higher castes' desire to avoid these groups' polluting presence.

In Coimbatore today, these communities constitute a total of about 8 percent of the city's total household population. Probably another

smaller percentage are classified in our data as 'Christians.' However, we have only roughly 5 percent who are clearly identified as untouchables in our sample.

Chakkilayaris, or the shoemakers, are numerically the largest of the ex-untouchable groups in our sample (as well as in the city and the region). Other castes that fall under this category are the Pallars (agricultural labourers) (Thurston 1909: vol. 5, 473), Valluvar (priests of the above) (Thurston 1909: vol. 7, 303), and Paraiyar (drum beaters) (Thurston 1909: vol. 6, 77). In our sample we have no Paraiyar, although we have certain scheduled tribes who can be classified as untouchable. They are the Koravar (gypsy tribe especially found in Coimbatore) (Thurston 1909: vol. 3, 441), and the Kurumba (Aboriginal tribes of the Nilgris) (Thurston 1909: vol. 4, 158) respectively.

As a result of their social status, the untouchables have clearly been excluded from the good residential areas of Coimbatore. Their homes are mainly found in the peripheral areas. Such settlements are clearly stigmatized and referred to as Cheris in local speech. However, we do find some untouchable settlements located right in the heart of the city as well. In part this is because the urban area has grown by stages. What used to be a peripheral areas is so no longer. As time passed, the older untouchable settlements have been enveloped within the city's growing boundaries. The location of the untouchable settlement of 1871, for example, remains unchanged today. For this reason such older untouchable enclaves can be used as useful markers of core-periphery areas of the past. In addition, one can now find untouchable settlements along the city's railroad tracks. Here undesirable public land has been made available for squatter settlements. Such proximity to the railroad tracks has always been a symbol of

low status, not only in the East but also in the West. These areas that untouchables locate in soon become defined as 'Polluting' spaces that must remain spatially isolated from the larger whole. Furthermore, it is important to note that the 'untouchables' have spatially and socially subdivided themselves. Just as in the rural areas, in Coimbatore we do not find different groups of untouchables living next to one another. The Chakkilayars, for instance, reside solely in the south, while the Valluvars have a special niche on the west side of Coimbatore city, while the Pallars are to be found mainly along the railroad tracks and on the peripheries of industrial North Coimbatore. Wherever they are found, they not only seem to be spatially cordoned off from each other, but from 'socially significant space' within the urban environment generally. They are a very highly segregated group (.51).

INDEX OF SEGREGATION

In order to summarize the index of segregation for all the above castes, a graph illustrating the extent of segregation of all the castes was drawn (see Figure 2).

INDEX OF DISSIMILARITY

As Timms (1965) notes, the most useful instruments yet devised for the quantitative description of geographical patterns are the Index of Dissimilarity and the various measures derived from it (1965: 240). By calculating this index, we can assess the relative standing of each caste with all other castes. This index is calculated from data giving for both castes the percentage of the total living in each areal unit. The index of dissimilarity is then one-half the sum of the absolute differences between the two caste populations taken area by area.

Figure 2

68.

Index of Segregation of castes
in Coimbatore City.

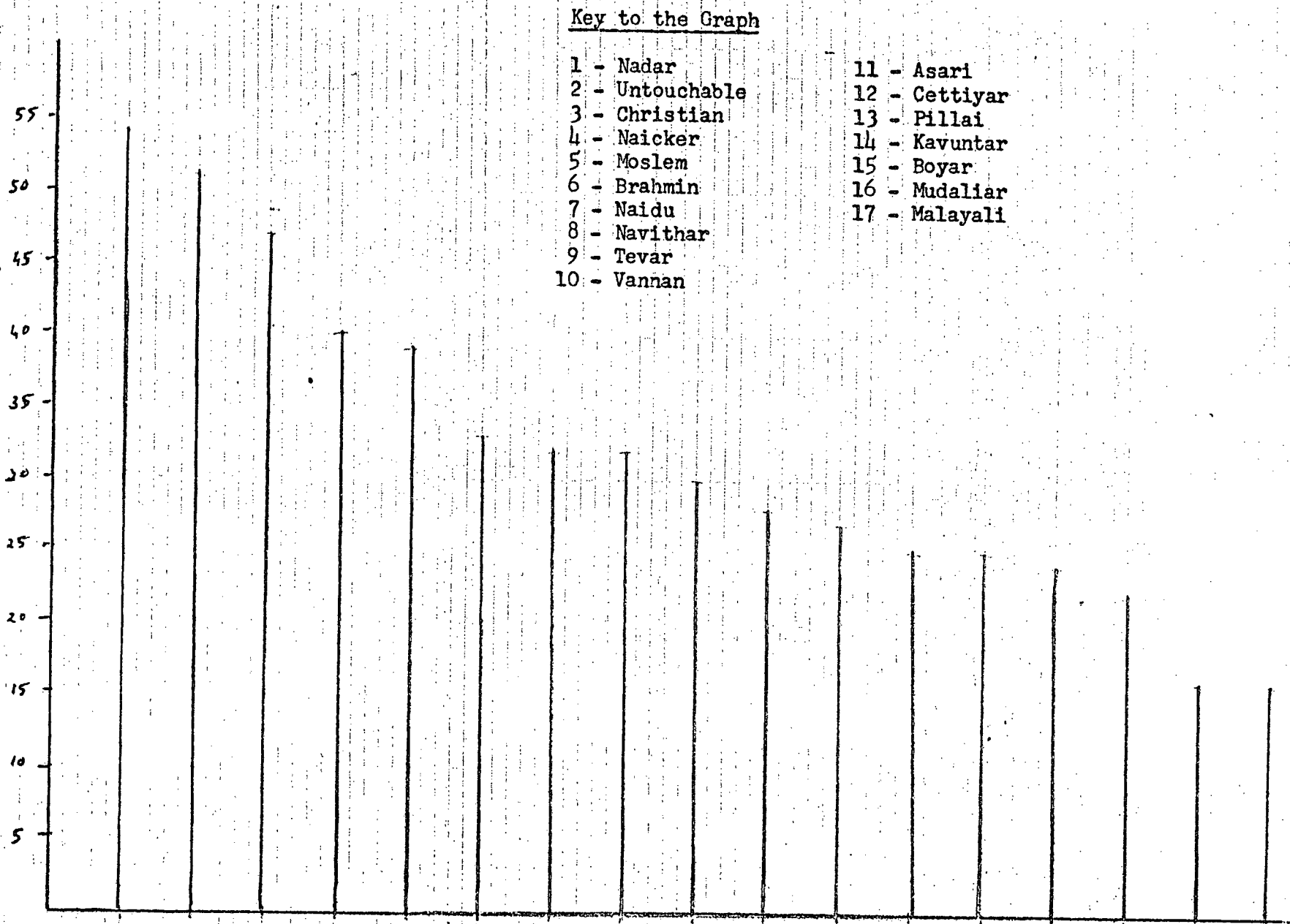


TABLE IV: The Index of Segregation of Castes in Coimbatore City

Neutral Castes	Brahmin	.33
	Pillai	.25
Right Division Castes	Kavuntar	.24
	Nadar	.54
	Tevar	.28
Service Castes	Udaiyar	--
	Vannan	.27
	Navithar	.32
	Pandaram	--
Left Division Castes	Asari	.30
	Cettiyar	.25
	Mudaliar	.16
	Naicker	.39
Immigrants	Naidu	.32
	Boyar	.22
	Malayali	.16
Outside Religions	Moslem	.38
	Christian	.47
Untouchables	Pallar	.51
	Valluvar	
	Holeya	
	Paraiyan	
	Chakkilayar	

The following table sets out the index of dissimilarity for all the above castes. On a 1-100 scale the higher scores indicate greater dissimilarity.

Castes that had a score of 60 and above were treated as highly dissimilar and those below 20 were treated as least dissimilar.

The Brahmins and untouchables were the most dissimilar. The Left division castes in general were also dissimilar to the untouchables and other non-Hindu communities. The castes that were least dissimilar were the Brahmins and Chettiars; Chettiars and Kavuntars; Pillais and Naidus; and finally, Naidus and Christians. Therefore, a few of the higher Left division castes, neutral castes, higher Right division castes, immigrant castes, and non-Hindus had the index of least dissimilarity.

TABLE V: Index of Dissimilarity Between Castes
in Coimbatore City

	Pillai	Kavuntar	Nadar	Tevan	Vannar	Navithar	Asari	Chettiar	Mutaliyar	Naicker	Naidu	Boyar	Malayali	Moslem	Christian	Untouchable
Brahmin	33	24	49	45	42	36	45	18	30	59	34	47	25	62	40	73
Pillai		39	34	49	45	40	49	62	42	64	13	29	31	48	33	53
Kavuntar			68	38	45	48	26	19	50	51	39	42	22	40	47	55
Nadar				67	57	65	62	76	70	82	65	51	61	57	79	28
Tevan					30	49	29	36	19	24	54	32	63	20	71	50
Vannar						29	35	37	27	39	46	22	33	26	62	39
Navithar							59	31	35	52	45	42	34	48	59	53
Asari								38	34	52	52	34	43	35	64	44
Chettiar									23	48	67	41	21	54	51	64
Mutaliyar										30	45	31	24	36	53	53
Naicker											63	49	46	25	55	63
Naidu												27	26	52	19	59
Boyar													26	35	43	37
Malayali														47	30	53
Moslem															64	37
Christian																70

On a 1-100 scale the higher scores indicate greater dissimilarity.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus far we have seen how land space in the city has been used for economic purposes as well as social purposes. Thus, we have seen how in some areas like the old core there is hardly a distinction between residential and commercial space. These areas are also areas of religious as well as secular importance. The older, middle class suburb of Devangapet, on the other hand, is mainly residential and has religious importance as compared to the adjacent middle class suburb of R.S. Puram that has secular importance and combines residential and commercial land uses.

The industrial sector of North Coimbatore has the largest number of factories, around which live members of nearly every caste. It is a lower class area as well. In contrast, the new suburbs on the west side of it are gradually emerging as an elitist area. Finally, the old periphery and the new peripheries still remain as the undesirable locales of the lower castes in Coimbatore.

We have also seen how the various castes have carved out little niches for themselves in each of the above sectors, depending on their socio-economic status. Thus, in the old core, the largest number of castes are the Left division castes, and the old periphery is peopled by the immigrants, non-Hindu communities, and untouchables.

In the new core the immigrants and neutral castes appear to dominate. As we move away from the original settlement we encounter a large number of Left division castes, immigrant groups, neutral castes, service castes, as well as a small section of untouchables in the secular suburb of R.S. Puram, while we find a large Brahmin enclave surrounded by Right

division castes and immigrant castes in the more tradition-bound suburb of Devangapet.

The greatest degree of caste mix is encountered in the industrial sector, while selected numbers of caste groups are to be found in the new suburbs. In the west side extensions of the city (known as the new periphery) the lower caste groups and untouchables predominate.

Further, the index of segregation and index of dissimilarity were calculated for all the castes. Some castes were found to be more segregated than others. The index of dissimilarity allowed us to assess the social standing of each caste with respect to all other castes.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

"The sense in which spatial arrangements reflect social values and social structure may be thought fanciful for some societies, but in Hindu life it is elegantly manifest in ideology and in physical reality."

-- William L. Rowe (1973: 242)

This research has addressed itself to one basic question--Does the spatial organization of an Indian city reflect certain overarching social values held to be important by the culture at large? More specifically, we have asked whether the spatial organization of the different castes in Coimbatore city is concurrent either with the traditional organization of space in a village or with the observed patterning of space in the region in which it lies.

From the foregoing discussion it has become evident that Coimbatore, in fact, represents a curious compromise between patterns found at the level of the individual village and of the region as a whole. Just as caste was primary to the analysis of the village of Olappalayam and of the region of Kongu, 'Caste' is crucial to our understanding of the nature of the core city of Coimbatore. The findings of this study of the city integrate well with earlier anthropological studies of both village and region. In the following sections we will recapitulate some of these findings to illustrate how the city fits into the framework of these macro and micro social systems that surround it.

In analyzing the stages of growth of Coimbatore it was seen that the origins of this urban centre date from as far back as the rule of the Chera Kings (9th century). Further, it was also seen that descriptions of

the early spatial organization of this particular city do not differ markedly from the spatial form of an Ideal Indian City as envisaged by the brilliant Kautilya of Chandra Gupte Maurya. Coimbatore, in its earlier period, gave spatial expression to certain traditional concepts of social order. In the centre of its original site stood the king's palace and a few major temples. Radiating from this centre were the residential spaces of the different castes, graded according to their social rank. And beyond the main settlement were the spaces allotted for the untouchable castes. In this way, the hierarchy of spaces radiating outward from the centre of the city was at first fully congruent to a traditionally accepted hierarchy of social statuses.

During the next few centuries, as the meagre documentary evidence has shown, little by way of innovation in this basic layout was attempted. Successive rulers merely extended the city's original format. However, with the arrival of the British in India, some new ideas were at last introduced. British concepts of the city layout did leave their mark on the city's landscape. This process was gradual and not revolutionary in its approach. Soon the city began to take on a new look. It now represented the attempted merger of two contradictory principles--one old and the other new to the Indian scene.

In the course of time, inter-and intra-regional mobility, hastened by the improvements in communication and the introduction of a new technological order, caused the city to expand in all possible directions. In the process it engulfed and over-ran its earlier peripheries. The small town of Coimbatore soon burgeoned forth into the large industrial complex that we know today.

These various stages of the city's growth are evident from its

complex spatial format as it can be seen today. As Hinduism is said to engulf and accommodate all that tries to challenge it, so the city of Coimbatore has incorporated the spatial concepts brought by the British without abandoning its earlier patterning in any radical way. Thus the new British core was built around the old core and the old periphery. This British influence skirted the city's older suburbs, R.S. Puram and Devangapet, but made its presence felt again in the peripheral sectors of Industrial Coimbatore and in the construction of the newer outlying suburbs to the north. At the same time, however, there was also an expansion to the west side of the original site of the city enabling it to form a new western periphery. This last expansion is of particular interest since it has followed more traditional principles. This new periphery again tends to accommodate the lower and more "polluting" newcomers.

These temporal and spatial sequences do not, by themselves, provide a framework for understanding each area's special social character. It was an analysis of the caste composition of these various sectors that brought to light this last relationship; the important linkage existing between the spatial and social dimensions of urban life.

The questions that were formulated to express these relationships were: (a) Which castes occupy the centre of the city, and which of them live at its peripheries?

(b) Are these centrally located castes ritually pure? If not, do they economically dominate city life?

(c) Can such areas be described in terms of Right and Left Division caste presence as is true for the region as a whole?

We will now attempt to answer these three questions by summarizing our observations in the various sectors. We will look at the caste

composition of each of these sectors in turn. Further, our order of the analysis will coincide with the temporal emergence of the various sectors.¹

Old Core and Old Periphery

An examination of all the castes in these two sectors brings to light some striking contrasts. The representation of the different castes in both these areas approximates what we know to be the traditional rural pattern.

Since the old core was the centre of the original settlement it housed a large percentage of the socially higher and economically important castes of the region's rural areas (see Appendix III).

However, an important point to note is that while the Right division castes are most numerous in the centrally located village settlements of Kongu, it is the Left division castes who are numerous in the city (44 percent). The neutral castes follow with 21 percent and Right division castes constitute only 17 percent of the sample population.

While the above castes are poorly represented (with the exception of the Left division castes with 32 percent) in the old periphery, the immigrant group (with an aggregate of 21 percent), service castes (3 percent), non-Hindu or outside religions (25 percent - Moslems alone consisting of 24 percent), and untouchables (7 percent) have a fairly high representation.

In the original settlement, therefore, the Left division castes were numerically the strongest.

¹See Appendix III.

The New Core

Since the new core (civil lines) of Coimbatore is not well represented in our sample, the distribution of the various castes here is not very reliable. However, it is clear that those few immigrant groups who are both highly westernized and wealthy have sought entry into this area (22 percent). Interestingly enough, there is also an equally high percentage of neutral castes (22 percent) in the new core. Further, a large enclave of untouchables (25 percent) has been wedged between the old periphery and this 'new core.' One might speak of it as defining a clear boundary between the two radically different parts of the city's whole.

Older Suburbs (R.S. Puram and Devangapet)

The better residential areas of the city are the older suburbs. These form a substantial central belt to the north of the old core area.

In both areas the Brahmins have carved a niche for themselves along with their neutral affiliates, the Pillai (R.S. Puram = 20 percent; Devangapet = 18 percent). However, there are certain interesting differences to be noted between these two sectors as well. While R.S. Puram had only 4 percent of the Right division castes, it had 8 percent of the service castes and 7 percent of untouchables. Devangapet, on the other hand, had 13 percent of the Right division castes, only 2 percent of the service castes, and a negligible number of untouchables (less than 2 percent). Hence, while R.S. Puram represents a typically middle class secular area, Devangapet is a more restricted middle class area and exemplifies a stronger emphasis on religio-ritual purity.

Further, if the significant difference between the original settlement and the older suburbs lies in the fact that while immigrant groups and

non-Hindu communities (like Christians and Moslems) are peripheral to the old core, they are well represented in the central belt of Devangapet and R.S. Puram. Finally, the agriculturally important castes of the region are best represented in all these sectors.

As we move outward, from R.S. Puram and Devangapet, we encounter the peripheral sectors of North Coimbatore. The northeast end of this sector is characterized by a number of small firms as well as by larger industrial installations. Further, this is the only sector that houses all the different castes of the city. It is consequently the area to have the least religio-ritual significance. Being peripheral, and housing a number of industrial units, it is also a comparatively undesirable living quarter for the richer and "purer" residents of the city. The immigrant castes, as the table indicates, constitute by far the largest group (27 percent in aggregate). The Moslems and Christians closely follow them with an aggregate of 20 percent. There is also a 14 percent representation of neutral castes as well as 14 percent of the Left division castes. Finally, 4 percent of the sectoral population is made up of untouchables.

The new suburb which lies to the west of North Coimbatore represents a striking contrast to the former. Although it, too, is spatially peripheral, this area is symbolic of an emergent or non-indigenous spatial pattern. It is a fairly high class area, occupied by westernized and wealthy members of the "purer" castes (30 percent), but also accommodating Moslems and Christians (14 percent), immigrant groups (28 percent), and a few Right (9 percent) and Left division castes (16 percent) as well. Conspicuously absent here are the service and untouchable castes, in other words, those of little economic means. While ritual purity is not an important variable for entry into this area, sifting and selecting of residents here occurs solely through the manipulation of economic criteria.

Here we see a true "class" as opposed to a "caste" principle at work.

The new peripheries, which are additions to the city on its west side (close to the old core), best represent the other side of this new trend. In this sector, a large number of Moslems, Christians, Right division castes and untouchable castes are spatially contiguous. Here the representation of the pure castes such as the Brahmins, as well as of the professional and trading castes such as the Cettiarys is negligible (see Appendix III, column 8). The most conspicuous groups in this sector are the Moslems and Christians (21 percent) and the untouchables (24 percent). The Right division castes follow with a total of 16 percent (13 percent of which is constituted by the Nadars alone), followed by the neutral castes (12 percent) (of which the Pillai constitute 10 percent). The immigrant groups constitute 10 percent and the Left division another 10 percent. In terms of spatial patterning, this area represents the emergence of a "low class" as opposed to a "low caste" suburb.

In analyzing the spatial organization of the various castes in the city, then, two important patterns have been seen to emerge. They are:

- (1) the traditional Indian urban pattern (which combines elements of traditional village and regional structure),
- (2) the modern Western urban pattern.

Rather than being arranged stably, as on a continuum, however, these two types are fairly independent. The old core and periphery and its later extensions best approximate this region's traditional rural structure. The largest aggregations of the agriculturally important castes are to be found within these sectors.

In these areas we find what I shall term a traditional urban pattern of life. By traditional, I mean that the type of economic activity

(essentially consisting of small, localized, non-mechanized enterprises) a resident pursues continues to be closely linked to the type of relationship he is enmeshed in and the type of values he holds. Here residential and business areas are not well separated just as the economic, social and religious spheres of life in general are not extensively segmented.

A modern Western pattern of life, by contrast, typifies the more European areas of the city. Here economic enterprise is spatially separated from residential activity. In the peripheral sectors of North (new suburb) Coimbatore entry appears to be based solely on earning capacity and the resultant life styles of neighboring families to be highly variant in the home and carefully segmented off from life at work.

Neither pattern is invariant or stagnant. Each of these is the end product of consistent directional changes that have occurred over the years.

The one pattern is an adaptation of a traditional order extant in the region at large, while the other is the product of external and modern forces that are affecting the city at present. Both these blend, in varying proportions, to form the modern industrial Coimbatore of today.

A number of questions have been raised by this research, although they have not yet been answered. Areal differentiation affected by macro-social processes answers only part of the questions. The effect of individual activities or micro-social processes, within this spatial framework, still remains to be explored.

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APPENDIX I

Caste Data For the Kongu Region in 1901, 1911, and 1921

	1901 ¹		1911 ²		1921 ³		
Castes	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Average
<u>Neutral</u>							
Brahmin	3,111	1.73	36,820	2.11	39,414	2.00	1.95
Pillai	0	--	1,741,667	--	1,969,188	--	--
							1.95
<u>Left</u>							
Asari	50,377	2.84	55,195	3.16	54,847	2.78	2.92
Cettiayar	45,258	2.55	64,448	3.70	45,650	2.31	2.85
Mudaliar	63,553	3.57	61,227	3.51	83,000	4.21	3.76
Naicker	--	--	--	--	28,505	1.44	0.48
							10.01
<u>Right</u>							
Kavuntar	690,155	38.96	639,557	36.72	694,906	35.28	36.98
Nadar	79,416	4.48	76,907	4.41	72,923	3.70	4.19
Tevan	2,605	0.16	3,105	0.17	2,148	0.10	0.14
							41.31
<u>Service</u>							
Udaiyar	20,470	1.28	22,090	1.26	25,625	1.30	1.28
Vannan	28,752	1.62	29,731	1.70	26,707	1.31	1.54
Navithar	27,396	1.71	29,511	1.69	30,485	1.54	1.64
Pandaram	40,099	2.26	39,594	2.27	38,344	1.94	2.15
							6.61
<u>Immigrants (a)</u>							
Naidu	24,402	1.37	33,348	1.91	28,344	1.43	1.57
Boyar	--	--	--	--	5,711	0.29	0.09
Malayali	1,826	0.10	--	--	5,623	0.28	0.12
							1.78
<u>Immigrants (b)</u>							
Okkilier	53,139	3.00	53,878	3.09	48,228	2.44	2.84
Gowder	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Reddi	64,018	3.61	59,364	3.40	60,090	3.05	3.35
Arumthathiar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Panikar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Edayar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Servai	698	0.03	--	--	--	--	0.01
Achandar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sivier	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Kollar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

APPENDIX I - Continued

	1901 ¹		1911 ²		1921 ³		
Castes	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Average
<u>Immigrants (b)</u>							
Vaniyar	8,597	0.48	12,833	0.73	10,887	0.59	0.58
Ganga	751	0.04	--	--	--	--	0.01
Pachakerar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Maratiyar	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Vilayen	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Pannady	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Anglo-Indian	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Devanga	48,640	2.74	43,911	2.52	53,105	2.69	2.65
Konar	14,887	0.84	16,951	0.97	14,811	0.75	0.85
							10.29
<u>N. Indian</u>							
Gurkha	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Singh	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Marwadi	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Sait	--	--	--	--	12,562	0.63	.21
							10.50
<u>Immigrants (c)</u>							
Uppilayar	39,521	2.23	24,488	1.40	3,477	0.17	1.26
Odde	--	--	--	--	72,817	3.69	1.23
Jangam	1,267	0.07	27,998	1.49	23,312	1.18	0.91
Dasari	195	0.01	--	--	--	--	0.01
Bestha	110	--	--	--	4,988	0.25	0.08
Batrazu	582	0.03	--	--	--	--	0.01
Vedans	998	0.06	12,119	0.69	--	--	0.24
Vettuvans	49,407	2.78	20,666	1.18	34,499	1.75	1.90
Sudarman	331	0.01	--	--	--	--	0.01
Valaiyan	16,798	0.94	19,188	1.10	13,975	0.77	0.93
Sembadavan	2,908	0.16	2,759	0.15	4,490	0.22	0.17
Nattaman	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Muppan	363	0.02	--	--	--	--	0.00
Agamuddian	23,729	1.33	28,650	1.64	26,408	1.34	1.43
Ambalakaran	6,733	0.38	3,567	0.20	--	--	0.19
Dasi	95	--	--	--	--	--	--
Golla	--	--	3,873	0.22	10,367	0.52	0.24
Telaga	--	--	--	--	5,560	0.28	0.09
Janappan	--	--	11,301	0.64	--	--	0.21
							8.89
<u>Outside Religion</u>							
Moslem	--	--	--	--	23,286	1.19	0.39
Christian	--	--	--	--	27,003	1.37	0.45
							0.84

APPENDIX I - Continued

	1901 ¹		1911 ²		1921 ³		
Castes	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Average
Scheduled Castes							
Pallar	61,181	2.32	36,631	2.10	28,910	1.46	1.84
Valluvar	3,730	0.31	4,628	0.26	4,187	0.21	0.22
Holeya	--	--	--	--	12,718	0.64	0.21
Addraida	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Paraiyan	76,239	4.30	68,969	3.95	73,665	3.74	3.99
Chakkilayar	197,469	11.14	198,380	11.39	209,017	10.61	11.04
Koraver	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
							17.30
Scheduled Tribes							
Solaga	5,460	0.30	--	--	4,571	0.23	0.17
Kadan	144	--	--	--	--	--	--
Dombara	1,142	0.06	--	--	--	--	0.02
Malasar	4,102	0.23	--	--	--	--	0.07
Mudugan	510	0.02	--	--	4,023	0.20	0.07
Kallar	1,861	0.10	--	--	--	--	0.03
	1,593,025	100	1,741,667	100	1,969,188	100	100

¹Census of India 1901: Vol. XV-A (Madras), Table XIII, Part 2, pages 158-194. Imperial Tables by W. Francis, I.C.S. (Madras: Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, 1902).

²Census of India 1911: Vol. XII (Madras), Table XIII, Part 2, pages 115-123. Imperial and Provincial Tables by J. Molony, I.C.S. (Madras: Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, 1912).

³Census of India 1921: Vol. XIII (Madras), Table XV, Part 2, pages 118-126. Imperial and Provincial Tables by G.T. Boag. (Madras: Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, 1922).

APPENDIX II

1. Index of Segregation

When the index of dissimilarity between one caste and all other castes is combined, it is referred to as an index of segregation. When calculating the index of segregation, the areal unit under consideration is crucial to the outcome. When the unit is larger, the index is lower. The formula used in the calculation of this index is as follows:

$$I_s = I_D \frac{1 - \frac{\sum X_{a1}}{\sum X_{n1}}}{\sum X_{n1}}$$

$\sum X_{a1}$ = total number of a caste in the city.

$\sum X_{n1}$ = the total population of the city.

2. Index of Dissimilarity

To compute this index one calculates for each caste the percentage of all the caste members residing in each areal unit. The index of dissimilarity between two castes is then one-half the sum of the absolute values of the differences between the respective distributions taken area by area.

	(1) Proportion of Brahmins	(2) Proportion of area total to the city total	(3) Difference between (1) and (2)
Area I	.21	.12	.09
Area II	.05	.23	.18
Area III	.28	.17	.11
			.38

$$I_D = \frac{.38}{2} = .19$$

Further, in the calculation of this index the algebraic sign is not taken into consideration.

APPENDIX III

Representation of the Number and Percentage of Each of the Castes in the
Separate Sectors of Coimbatore City in 1972

	(1) Old Core		(2) Old Periphery		(3) New Core		(4) R.S. Puram		(5) Devangapet		(6) Industrial North		(7) New Suburbs		(8) New Periphery	
Castes	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Neutral</u>																
Brahmin	1097	16.26	268	2.09	24	14.11	1479	15.82	1126	12.98	734	6.93	377	20.19	47	1.99
Pillai	336	4.98	162	1.26	14	8.23	355	3.79	416	4.79	715	6.75	192	10.28	230	9.76
		<u>21.24</u>		<u>3.35</u>		<u>22.34</u>		<u>19.61</u>		<u>17.77</u>		<u>13.68</u>		<u>30.47</u>		<u>11.75</u>
<u>Left</u>																
Asari	1131	16.77	928	7.24	3	1.76	274	2.93	64	0.73	589	5.56	61	3.26	91	3.86
Cettiyar	1604	23.78	1569	12.25	11	6.47	1849	19.78	1806	20.80	502	4.74	234	12.53	139	5.89
Mudaliar	225	3.33	665	5.19	7	4.11	471	5.03	296	3.41	286	2.70	0	0	5	0.21
Naicker	1	0.01	961	7.05	0	0	223	2.23	173	1.99	132	1.24	0	0	0	0
		<u>43.89</u>		<u>32.18</u>		<u>12.34</u>		<u>30.12</u>		<u>26.93</u>		<u>14.24</u>		<u>15.79</u>		<u>9.96</u>
<u>Right</u>																
Kavuntar	1101	16.32	978	7.63	12	7.05	312	3.33	1123	12.09	719	6.79	170	9.00	47	1.99
Nadar	41	0.60	148	1.15	0	0	64	0.68	9	0.01	194	1.83	0	0	312	13.24
Tevar	56	0.83	204	1.59	2	1.17	70	0.74	18	0.02	61	0.57	0	0	10	0.42
		<u>17.45</u>		<u>8.07</u>		<u>8.22</u>		<u>4.35</u>		<u>13.02</u>		<u>9.19</u>		<u>9.00</u>		<u>15.65</u>
<u>Service Castes</u>																
Udaiyar	7	0.10	11	0.08	0	0	278	2.97	1	0.01	27	0.25	0	0	0	0
Vannan	6	0.08	303	2.36	2	1.17	276	2.95	63	0.72	188	1.77	16	0.85	56	2.37
Navithar	21	0.31	69	0.53	2	1.17	187	2.00	89	1.02	37	0.34	0	0	52	2.20
Pandaram	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.03	6	0.06	0	0	0	0	0	0
		<u>0.48</u>		<u>2.97</u>		<u>2.34</u>		<u>7.95</u>		<u>1.81</u>		<u>2.36</u>		<u>0.85</u>		<u>4.57</u>
<u>Immigrants I (S. Indians)</u>																
Naidu	165	2.44	112	0.87	20	11.76	290	3.10	456	5.25	910	8.59	212	11.35	111	4.71
Boyar	61	0.90	268	2.09	0	0	224	2.39	33	0.38	379	3.58	29	1.55	56	2.37
Malayali	355	5.26	823	6.42	17	10.00	952	10.18	1122	12.93	1122	10.60	204	10.92	70	2.97
		<u>8.60</u>		<u>9.38</u>		<u>21.76</u>		<u>15.67</u>		<u>18.56</u>		<u>22.77</u>		<u>23.62</u>		<u>10.05</u>

APPENDIX III - Continued

	(1) Old Core		(2) Old Periphery		(3) New Core		(4) R.S. Puram		(5) Devangapet		(6) Industrial North		(7) New Suburbs		(8) New Periphery	
Castes	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Immigrants II</u> <u>(S. Indians)</u>																
Okkilier	0	0	552	4.30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gowder	2	0.01	226	1.76	0	0	416	4.45	28	0.32	321	3.03	0	0	0	0
Reddi	0	0	7	0.05	0	0	2	0.02	16	0.18	185	1.74	0	0	0	0
Arumthathiar	0	0	0	0	0	0	103	1.10	85	0.98	629	5.94	41	2.19	0	0
Panikar	2	0.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Edayar	4	0.05	442	3.45	0	0	0	0	433	4.99	30	0.28	0	0	0	0
Servai	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.05	4	0.04	0	0	0	0	0	0
Achanar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sivier	0	0	138	1.07	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kollar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vaniyar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ganga	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pachakeran	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maratiyar	0	0	50	0.39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vilayar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pannwady	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anglo-Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	1.23	0	0
		<u>0.06</u>		<u>11.02</u>		<u>0</u>		<u>5.62</u>		<u>6.61</u>		<u>10.99</u>		<u>3.42</u>		<u>0</u>
<u>(N. Indians)</u>																
Punjabi (Singh)	19	0.28	0	0	0	0	2	0.02	16	0.18	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marwadi	39	0.50	0	0	0	0	1	0.01	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sait	0	0	115	0.89	0	0	181	1.93	269	3.10	0	0	26	1.39	0	0
		<u>0.78</u>		<u>0.89</u>		<u>0</u>		<u>1.96</u>		<u>3.28</u>		<u>0</u>		<u>1.39</u>		<u>0</u>
<u>Outside Religion</u>																
Moslem	159	2.35	3149	24.58	50	2.94	461	4.93	298	3.43	973	9.19	110	5.89	486	20.62
Christian	55	0.81	63	0.49	0	0	261	2.79	626	7.21	1128	10.65	157	8.40	10	0.42
		<u>3.16</u>		<u>25.07</u>		<u>2.94</u>		<u>7.72</u>		<u>10.64</u>		<u>19.84</u>		<u>14.29</u>		<u>21.04</u>

APPENDIX III - Continued

	(1) Old Core		(2) Old Periphery		(3) New Core		(4) R.S. Puram		(5) Devangapet		(6) Industrial North		(7) New Suburbs		(8) New Periphery	
Castes	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Scheduled Castes</u>																
Pallar	42	0.62	302	0.23	43	25.20	0	0	0	0	305	2.80	15	0.80	436	18.50
Valluvar	3	0.04	0	0	0	0	77	0.82	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Paraiyan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chakkhayn	7	0.10	587	4.58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	140	5.94
		<u>0.76</u>		<u>4.81</u>		<u>25.20</u>		<u>0.82</u>		<u>0</u>		<u>2.80</u>		<u>0.80</u>		<u>24.44</u>
Devendrar	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	83	0.78	0	0	0	0
Koravar	15	0.22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	0.36	0	0	0	0
Kurumbar	0	0	34	0.26	0	0	0	0	0	0	90	0.85	0	0	0	0
		<u>0.22</u>		<u>0.26</u>		<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>		<u>1.89</u>		<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
<u>Unknown</u>																
	195	2.89	243	1.89	8	4.7	535	5.72	140	1.61	205	1.93	0	0	58	2.46
		<u>100.00%</u>		<u>100.00%</u>		<u>100.00%</u>		<u>100.00%</u>		<u>100.00%</u>		<u>100.00%</u>		<u>100.00%</u>		<u>100.00%</u>

Source: The caste composition of each sector was computed from the original data collected from the National Malaria Office in Coimbatore.

GLOSSARY

Ācāri (Asari)

A caste whose traditional occupation is considered to be that of a craftsman who works with gold, brass, iron, stone, and wood. The two subcastes described in this account are the CoLi and the Konku Acari. Both are considered to be members of the left division.

Brahman

A caste whose traditional occupation is considered to be scholarship and the priesthood. The members of this group enjoy an elevated ritual status in the Konku region. Except where otherwise specified, the persons described in this account are members of the Aiyar sub-caste. They are considered to be above the right-left division.

cēri (cheri)

An untouchable settlement or living area.

CeTTiyār (chettiar)

A caste whose traditional occupation is considered to be business. Except where otherwise specified, the persons described in this account are members of the KomuTTi sub-caste. They are considered to be members of the left division.

Chavadi

Public building in a village.

Cutcheri

Assembly.

KavuNTar (Gounder)

A caste whose traditional occupation is considered to be farming. This group controls most of the cultivable land in Konku today. Except where otherwise stated, the persons described in this account are members of the Konku (or VeLaIar) sub-caste. They are considered to be leaders of the right division.

Koṅku (Kongu)

A large cultural and historical region, comprising most of the north-west corner of the present Tamilnadu (Madras) State.

Kovan Puthur

The name by which the earliest settlement of Coimbatore was known.

Kuravar

A caste that is classified as "untouchable" and whose traditional occupation is considered to be basketmaking. The subcaste discussed in this account is known as KuTai. Its members are said to belong to the left division.

Mātāri (Madari)

A caste that is classified as "untouchable" and whose traditional occupation is considered to be leatherworking. The caste is known elsewhere as Cakkiliyan. Several sub-castes are discussed in this account. They are all said to belong to the left division.

Mutaliyār (Mudaliar)

A caste whose traditional occupation is considered to be weaving, military service, and business. Except where otherwise stated, the persons described in this account are members of the Kaikkolar sub-caste. They are considered to be members of the left division, but their position appears to be ambivalent as, in practice, they exhibit some characteristics that are typical of the left and others that are typical of the right.

Nakar, Pattinam, Padi, Pari, Poral, Vity, Ur
Synonyms for the word city.

Nātār (Nadar)

A caste whose traditional occupation is considered to be that of palmyra-palm climbers (toddy-tappers). Except where otherwise specified, the persons described in this account are members of the Marameri sub-caste. They are considered to be members of the right division.

Nāvitar (Navidar)

A caste whose traditional occupation is considered to be that of barber. The two subcastes discussed in this account are the Konku and the PaNTiya. The first are considered to be members of the right division, and the second members of the left.

Nāyakkar (Naicker)

A caste whose traditional occupation is considered to be well-digging, stone excavation, and road-building. Except where otherwise specified, the persons described in this account are members of the VaTuka sub-caste. They are considered to be members of the left division.

Paraiyar

A caste that is classified as "untouchable" and whose traditional occupation is considered to be drumming. The sub-caste discussed in this account is known as Konku. Its members are said to belong to the right division.

Petta

Market place near a town.

Pillai

A caste whose traditional occupation in the Konku area is considered to be accountancy. Except where otherwise specified, the persons described in this account are members of the KaruNikar sub-caste. They are considered to be above the right-left division.

Puthu

New.

Ur

Village or settlement.

UTaiyār (Udaiyar)

A caste whose traditional occupation is considered to be that of potter and house-builder. Except where otherwise specified, the persons described in this account are members of the Konku sub-caste. They are considered to be members of the right division.

VaNNār

A caste whose traditional occupation is considered to be that of washerman. The two subcastes discussed in this account are the Konku and the VaTuka. The first are considered to be members of the right and the second members of the left division.

Vidhi

Street.

A Note on the Limitations of this Thesis

A thesis such as this, that deals with spatial organization, has many strong as well as weak points. Its greatest strength lies in its sensitivity to the variety of physical form and patterns and, to some extent, the uniqueness of a colonial city such as Coimbatore. Further, it lays considerable emphasis on a historical approach. It also takes the individual household as its unit of study.

From the analysis it was concluded that the spatial organization of Coimbatore City best represents a curious compromise of the traditional village and regional patterns in conjunction with emerging western spatial patterns.

However, while the above conclusions illustrate the way space defines and separates the urban landscape into distinct areas of status equivalence (e.g., economic, residentially pure and polluting) (Hazlehurst 1971: 190), it throws little light on the social processes that link together the urban landscape. It is actually these social processes that necessitate spatial distinction and separation. It is hoped that other studies of a related nature will overcome these shortcomings and take into consideration both space and social processes.