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PREFACE

For some time now the Institute of Sociology (ISOZ) has been involved in studying Indian social structure, living and working conditions in slums. It builds on a partnership with the University of Mumbai, Dpt. of Sociology (and now also with the TATA Institute of Social Science (Mumbai), Dpt. of Social Science).

Teaching on these issues involves a distinctive feature: Excellent students are invited to participate in research work (so-called students' research training programmes, in German: "Lehrforschungen"). The whole process takes a period of one to two years. We start with getting background knowledge on India (phase 0), selecting a research topic, collecting and analyzing secondary material, developing the research design, working on research methodology and finally writing a research proposal (phase 1), doing field research in cooperation with lecturers and students of our partner university (phase 2), making data analysis and finally writing a research report (phase 3). The supervisor takes the function of moderator, leading the students through the entire process, giving them feedback on their interview techniques in the field and the writing processes.

Besides scientific aims this training program involves students getting into a very different culture, confront them with extreme poverty in developing countries, giving them a deeper insight into the life-world and biography of slum dwellers, work of NGOs and other organizations in the field, and challenge their personalities with regard to a potential working perspective in developing countries. Even if students make their personal experience that they could never do such a job, it helps them in personal growth.

In 2004/2005 a group of students made research on the life world in Mumbai slums (cf. Gruber et al. 2005). Some of their findings were the strong segregation of Mumbai population in slums according to religion, place of origin, or ethnicity. They also collected a lot of information on housing policy in Mumbai and communalism. In spring 2007 a new research group was formed. 11 students started working on social activism in Mumbai slums. The group took two different topics: one subgroup worked on communalism and anti-communalist movements, the other subgroup worked on grassroots organizations and NGOs working in the field of housing for the poor, slum upgrading, slum relocation and rights to slum dwellers.

Now the research report of the first group is available, so that their exciting and exhausting project comes to an end with this publication.

We are thankful to all our informants in the field, the Dpt. of Sociology at the University of Mumbai (Dr. Bhosale, Dr. Michael, Mr. Kamble and other colleagues) as well as Indian students who participated in field research and often functioned as interpreters in local languages. We also thank the financing institutions DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and Co-Financiers at the University of Magdeburg (Institute, Students' Council, Rector's Office).

Magdeburg, January 2009

Heiko Schrader

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1. INTRODUCTION

Ever since the emergence of India as an independent state, communal tendencies¹ have been evidently prevalent in different strata of Indian society. This is despite the existence of the secular Constitution of India, which stresses notions of equality and therefore outlines mechanisms to abolish any form of ethnic, political, and especially religious segregation, as encountered at the time of partition between India and Pakistan. While the divide between Hindus and Muslims takes up a predominant role in independent India, other religious minorities such as Christians, Buddhists, and Sikhs have also been involved in communal strife.

While communal riots are a phenomenon that has periodically occurred all over India (cf. Rajeshwari 2004), one of the main sites for communal riots has been Mumbai. Here, communal violence occurred sporadically from the 1960s, and intensified in the early 1990s with the Mumbai riots with hundreds of casualties. The protagonists that engage in communal violence have not remained constant: in the 1960s, violence involved Hindus and Tamils; in the 1990s, this shifted to large-scale violence between Hindus and Muslims. And in early 2008, for example, violence occurred between Hindus and North Indians. The legacy of communal tendencies in India, and the Mumbai riots in particular, have left people living in constant fear of renewal of violence and retaliation, fuelled by occasional attacks and communal graffiti – violence that could affect, it seems, every community.

This research has been prompted by the personal impression of the authors that after decades of communal tensions in India, communal tendencies still linger and could lead to further violence in the near future. While the academia dedicated numerous works on the phenomenon of communalism, works on practical strategies against communal tendencies are rare. As a result, our feeling was that groups working in this field have to showcase extreme creativity and organizational skills in order to devise appropriate strategies. The aim of this research is to compile anti-communal strategies of various organizations in the field of anti-communalism in order to give inspiration to these and other groups which already work in this field, or which are yet to be formed, and in order to raise awareness on an issue that is largely overlooked by international media.

Furthermore, this work aims at contributing to a debate which has often been marked by positivist statements that refer to a definite, measurable cause of a problem and therefore to “the one right approach” to solve it. We challenge such propositions and argue that such positivist statements do not contribute to solving the problem, but rather to solidify prejudice. In the belief that there does not exist “the one right” approach to fight communalism, but that strategies must be altered and tailored to specific contexts, we interviewed various organizations in the field of anti-communalism with regard to (1) their perceived causes of communalism, and (2) the strategies that they consider necessary to overcome the problem.

Thus, our main research questions were:

¹ Here broadly defined as attempts to bring about segregation between religious, ethnic, political groups etc., by inciting hatred and/or violence by instrumentalizing pre-existing tensions between the groups

- How do NGOs/CBOs define communalism and where do they see this concept's causes?
- According to their accounts about the nature and causes of communalism, what counter-strategies do NGOs/CBOs envisage to fight communal tendencies?

In order to present the results of the above mentioned research objective, this study proceeds as follows. First, in order to provide a context in which we conducted the research, a brief literature review will elaborate on general issues concerning communalism. This involves particularly a general profile of what is understood as 'communalism' in academic literature, an account of the nature of communalism with special reference to Mumbai, an overview over the mechanisms that are involved in instigating communal thinking and behaviour, and the mechanisms of instigating riots in the context of Mumbai. Also, in order to contextualize the work in which the subjects of this research are involved in, a special section will be dedicated to types of social movements. The third part of this paper will explicate the reasons for the research techniques that we chose to employ. In the fourth part, then, we present and discuss the findings of this study.

2. BACKGROUNDER: WORKING AGAINST COMMUNALISM

This section seeks to contextualize and frame the issue of 'communalism' in order to provide a sound basis for our presentation and discussion of research results as presented in the fourth chapter.

2.1 A General Profile of Communalism and Communal Riots

Communalism is a phenomenon that has contributed substantially to form and create the Indian state as it exists today. In varying forms, communal riots (as well as communal tendencies) in India have been documented at least since the Hindu-Muslim riot in Ahmedabad in 1714 (cf. Krishna 2005: 149), with frequent further incidents thereafter. While any analysis of the origins and causes of communalism is contentious², what is largely accepted by the academia as well as politicians and the wider public is that communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims have brought about the break-up of India into three different states, namely India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Apart from issues of territoriality, these communal forces have brought about massive changes on demographic and socio-economic levels, as over one million people are estimated to have died, and many millions displaced and robbed of economic and social security migrated (cf. Pandey 2001). The very emergence of the modern state of India was highly influenced by this partition, with the Indian Constitution containing key elements against discrimination of any sorts, i.e. articles

² Whereas most Indian academic writing on communalism blames the British for creating Indian society in categories such as Hindus (which were further divided by caste), Muslims, Christians, Sikhs etc, some writers argue that the divide between those groups goes back no further than the immediate years preceding the 1947 'Partition' that led to the emergence of Pakistan, and later Bangladesh, as separate entities from India (e.g. Pandey (2001: 16), who argues that "August 1947 was the date of establishment of two new nation-states, India and Pakistan. But it was also, as we have seen [...], the moment of the congealing of new identities, relations and histories, or of their being thrown into question once again").

against segregation along social, ethnic, racial, religious, and other groups, and for equality in all aspects of life³.

In reality, however, it is clear that the ideals as contained in the Indian Constitution have not materialized into a society that could be defined as just and which thrives on the equality of its citizens. Pandey, for example, argues that

“it was clear that the privileged and propertied classes were not going to be readily persuaded of the need to share the fruits of development; that the oppressed and downtrodden, but now enfranchised, were threatening more and more to take matters into their own hands and to meet upper-class violence with violence; in a word, that secularism, democracy, welfare and the right to continued rule (and re-election) were not so easily secured. One result of this was a new consolidation of a right-wing, religious-community based politics – which was in the eyes of many of India’s secular intellectuals not unlike the politics of the Pakistan movement of the 1940s” (Pandey 2001: 6).

Scholars argued that communalism emerges mainly in times of shortages, with one group trying to amass certain resources at the expense of another group (and in which ‘group’ is defined along social, ethnic, racial, and/or religious terms). And, in most cases, it is evident that one or more political groups aim at gaining election votes by blaming another ‘group’ for the lack of resources of the ‘group’ that they intend to represent. With shortage of resources and rampant inequality in Indian society, what can be suspected is a very high degree of latent communalism in everyday life. In this sense, it is only when communal tensions surface directly, i.e. in communal riots, that the problem of communalism gains attention at the local, national, and possibly (if rarely) international levels.

While communalism was initially thought to be largely off the political agenda between Indian independence and the mid-1960s, communal violence based on religion flared up in the 1980s, and resurfaced in frequent, if not regular, intervals until today (cf. Wilkinson 2005: 1). The impact of some of the riots was marked not only in terms of numbers of dead, but also with regard to increasing spatial segregation between groups. While riots were numerous from the mid-1960s, some riots stood out in terms of magnitude and impact. For example, the 1964 riot in Rourkela, Calcutta and Jamshedpur left about 2,000 dead (mostly Muslims) after severe Hindu-Muslim violence; in August 1980, up to 2,000 people died in Hindu-Muslim riots in Uttar Pradesh; in October 1984, anti-Sikh violence after the assassination of Indira Gandhi culminated in severe riots in Delhi and North India, officially causing 2,733 deaths (mostly Sikhs); in October 1989 riots in Bhagalpur, Bihar, left at least 896 people dead, most of whom again were Muslims; in three consecutive instances of Hindu-Muslim riots in Mumbai from December 1992 till January 1993, hundreds of people died, and, due to increased segregation between religious groups, settlement patterns radically changed; and in February 2002 more than 2000 people were killed in communal riots in Ahmedabad, Gujarat (cf. Rajeshwari 2004). Apart from these major riots, however, there were hundreds of instances of serious communal riots in recent Indian history (ibid). Thus, even though this research will focus solely on the context of communalism in Mumbai, it is important to bear in mind the impact that communalism has had on Indian society on the large scale.

³ Of specific relevance in this respect is Article 15 of the Constitution, titled “Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth” (cf. Government of India 2007).

2.2 Communalism in Mumbai

“The myth about Bombay is that its residents have no time to know one another, let alone fight one another, for they’re too busy making money” (Punwani:2003).

The 1984 Hindu-Muslim riots, the first major communal riots in the city since independence, contradicted this notion. Following that, the Mumbai riots of December 1992/January 1993 exceeded this dimension by far. This section aims at providing an account of the courses and political, economic and social changes in the city that were brought about by the riots.

While traditionally Mumbai was described as a cosmopolitan city, it became obvious in the two decades preceding the riots that the new suburbs developing in the northern part of the city were ethnically more segregated. Kalpana Sharma notes that “the pressures of urban living were felt most acutely in these new slum colonies where displaced families, either from central Mumbai or from other parts of the state or city, set up home. There was no time to build a community” (Sharma 1997).

Mumbai as the financial centre of India was and is an enormous pull-factor for Indians from all over the country that are looking to improve their lives. Most ended up on the streets or in slum settlements where quality of life was as precarious as it was in the rural areas. In such an environment, where basic amenities such as food, water, housing, work and medical care are only accessible for few, tensions between communities grew along the lines of caste, class and religious orientation. In this sense, Punwani states that “the riots proved that Bombay was a microcosm, but of urban India, where the two principal communities [note: Hindus and Muslims] lived in separate ghettos, with little intermingling, their myths and suspicions about each other intact, [became] easy prey to communal propaganda” (Punwani 2003: 242).

The communalization of politics, spurred by an increasing lack of resources, had been taking place in Mumbai throughout the 1980s and is often understood in connection to the emergence of the local right-wing Hindu-party Shiv Sena. During the first decades of its existence the Shiv Sena gathered followers through its ‘sons of the soil’ programmatic - in which the Shiv Sena claimed that Mumbai (and its resources) solely and rightfully belonged to the Marathis⁴ as they had inhabited the area long before migrants from other parts of India arrived in the prospering city. The followers of Shiv Sena regularly attacked South Indian establishments and harassed South Indian executives throughout the 1980s. In these years the Sena's political propaganda started to include strong anti-Muslim sentiments. Apart from the Shiv Sena, two other organizations have been identified as propagators of a communal worldview. They significantly contributed to polarization, mutual prejudice and finally the escalation of inter-community tensions in the city. A publication of the Mumbai Home Department in 1986 listed alongside the Shiv Sena party the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – a national, self-styled Hindu voluntary-corps and its offshoot - the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) as the main organizations fuelling communal tensions in Maharashtra.

In the early 1980s the RSS carried out a nationwide ‘Hindu- awakening’ campaign that polarized Hindus against their Muslim fellow citizens all over the country and

⁴ The Marathis are an ethnic group that lives in Maharashtra.

which finally culminated in the demolition of the Babri Masjid, a mosque in Ayodhya, that is believed to have been erected on the birthplace of an important Hindu deity.

With the decline of the textile- and leather industry in Mumbai, the organized sector began to disinvest and move its production units out of the city. Especially unemployed textile workers joined the campaign of the Shiv Sena, along with large shares of the overall working class movement. The masses of unemployed youth – of which the majority was Maharashtrian as other communities had a longer tradition of self-employment - joined the Shiv Sena and its 'sons of the soil' campaign. At first, even the Congress Party government supported the emergence of the Shiv Sena as a weapon against the strong workers' unions.

Alongside the changes in the political and the economic spheres, the increasing criminalisation in the city is seen as an important factor that contributed to the growing inter-community tensions. Smuggling became an almost accepted occupation amongst some communities, and by the mid-1980s the power of gangs was openly acknowledged and known criminals were nominated for political offices. In 1985 the Shiv Sena gained control over the Mumbai Municipal Corporation, and increased the number of its neighbourhood centres (shakas). By the time the riots broke out, the membership of the Sena surpassed the strength of the Mumbai police force of 300,000 (Sharma 1997).

The other protagonist in the communalization of social life, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, worked quietly through the late 1980s in Mumbai's slums and managed to bring across their Hindu-fundamentalist worldview through community-work including sports- cultural- and religious events carried out in neighbourhoods throughout the city. In this manner the three organizations managed to prepare the breeding ground for a right shift and a radicalization in parts of the Indian society that finally led to the Mumbai-riots of December 1992 and January 1993.

The events can be split into two phases, the first beginning in the night of the 6th December 1992 (within hours of the demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya), when Muslim youth took to the streets to demonstrate against the destruction. The clashes during that first phase were confined to a few areas and mainly consisted of attacks by the police on demonstrators and retaliation by the Muslims on police stations. The scene changed when the Shiv Sena called for a *bandh*⁵ to protest against arrests of followers that had been involved in the demolition of the Babri Masjid. They attacked mosques and Muslim establishments and even put up a notice announcing an award of 50,000 Rupees to anyone pointing out a Muslim home (Sharma 1997). Another way to mobilise the Hindu population was the organization of *maha-artis* – public prayers outside temples to oppose the Friday prayers and by those means to “recapture the streets for Hindus and end the policy of appeasement of the Muslim minority” (ibid). This campaign started by the end of December 1992 and spread to 33 temples throughout the city until the 6th of January 1993, when the second phase of the riots began. Public prayers had never been part of Hindu religious practices but were used for heightening the Hindu-identity of the masses. Not only Shiv Sena followers were brought to the streets, but large numbers of the general Hindu population, making a statement of 'militant oneness' of the Hindu-majority. Scholars assume that without the street prayers the middle class would not have participated

⁵ A strike initiated by political activists.

or tolerated violent undertakings. At the same time latent fears, fuelled by prejudice, were exploited by the Shiv Sena as rumours spread amongst the Hindu community about Muslim retaliation. There were stories about Pakistan's intelligence network Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) having financed shiploads of armaments that were now believed to be landed in Mumbai's ports in order to fight. Thus, deep-rooted prejudice about Muslims and their allegedly anti-national attitudes surfaced, resulting in black-and white pictures of "us" vs. "them" – this helped to overcome the inhibitions of much of the ordinary, non-fundamentalist Hindu population to use violence against Muslims. Similar mechanisms could be observed on the Muslim side.

The second phase was characterized by more and more incidents of arson. Mobs of mainly Hindus roamed about the city, armed with weapons and firebombs. The police that largely comprised of Hindus was backed by additional paramilitary and army cadres, did not stop the killings, but on the contrary stood by or became actively involved. The number of 227 deaths of December 1992 was more than doubled in January 1993. The official number of deaths was 557 of which 60-67 per cent were Muslims (Sharma 1997: 282).

In total, it is believed that the riots left about 900 persons dead. Furthermore, with latent conflict and prejudice between communities still lingering, the city landscape was changed significantly in terms of increasing segregation between communities. The consequences of the violence could be felt in every part of the city. Students lost an academic year as parents pulled them out of institutions in areas that were deemed 'unsafe'. Others lost their jobs because they had to move far away from their old workplaces into 'safe' areas. Many lost their homes and all their belongings and had to rebuild their lives from scratch.

The police's complicity with the Hindu mobs added to the already existing imbalance between Hindus and Muslims. After the 1984 riots the police commissioner of Mumbai at that time asked: 'who is ruling the city: the administration or the Shiv Sena? When orders were given clearly to use force and beat the Shiv Sainiks who are going around ordering shops to close, the local police failed to do so' (Punwani 2003: 240) The police not only gave a free hand to the rioters but participated in the violence and humiliation heaped upon Muslims in the cause of the riots. The Shrikrishna Commission was set up to investigate what had happened during the riots, especially with regard to the role afforded to the police. However, in the affidavits filed before the Commission, policemen named Muslims in general as 'fundamentalists' and failed to mention the presence of Hindu rioters in violent incidents (cf. Punwani 2003: 247). The loss of faith in police and administration added to the insecurity and anxiety of the Muslim population.

While riots like the ones described here did not recur at that scale, communal tendencies resurfaced in countless small-scale incidents. Prejudice against the respective 'other' still lingers. Under the Shiv Sena/BJP rule, Muslims were given plentiful indications that they must learn to live as a minority, with reduced rights compared to the majority. Examples amass, and include the Bill on Ban of Slaughter of Cow Progeny, the repeated declaration that a uniform civil code will be enacted in Maharashtra, or Bal Thackeray's threat to kill all Muslims after receiving an anonymous death threat over the phone from a Bangladeshi (cf. Punwani 2003: 251). In general, discrimination seems all-pervasive in everyday life: from the admission to a public swimming pool to a seat in the local train or bus, to admission to schools and

universities to housing and to work.

2.3 Causes and Mechanisms of Instigating Communalism

Since this study is based upon the constructivist notion that strategies of how to overcome communal tendencies and to prevent riots are inherently dependent upon the very protagonists' way in which the causes and effects of communalism are identified and defined, we felt it necessary to provide an overview over the most common ways in which the causes of communalism and mechanisms of instigation of the same have been framed by key scholars in this field. While this field of study has attracted a great deal of interest especially in India, due to space constraints, however, only the most common aspects of this debate will be recounted here.

With regard to reasons for the existence of communalism, Krishna (2005: 151) argues that the scholarly literature has treated this issue in "simplistic" terms, based on their respective interpretations of some of the predominant political theories in India. The first is based on the Leninist theory of Imperialism, and from this viewpoint communalism came into being due to 'divide-and-rule' policies of the British Empire (Krishna 2005: 151). Krishna follows up with Marxism as the second major theoretical tool, which blames "capitalism" and "economic exploitation" as the reasons for the existence of communalism. Bipan Chandra backs this approach when he identifies communalism as a by-product of the colonial character of the Indian economy, of colonial underdevelopment and the failure and incapacity of capitalism to develop neither the economy nor society. According to Chandra, colonialism had its greatest impact on the middle classes, which were in particular torn by fears and frustration. Due to the one-sided development of the Indian economy under colonial rule and growing influence of globalisation-processes, the middle classes found themselves increasingly placed in a constant threat to their existing class position, social status and value system. This growing pressure on the middle classes created an atmosphere of violence and brutality that, when fed with religious issues, led to communal riots. Chandra names the cow- or peepal-tree protection campaigns as catalysts; these, according to him, enforced the borders between the religious communities and were turned into life-and-death questions (cf. Chandra 1997: 34-54).

A third theory, which is not named by Krishna, argues that communalism exists due to 'ignorance' of respective 'others', especially their rights. Fourth, the 'power theory' of communalism sees the reasons for communal violence in clashes over which group controls the state (and therefore secures the rights of respective group). Fifth, and closely related to the previous theory, is another one arguing that communal violence is an inevitable - if unwelcome - side-effect of a thriving democracy in which all groups have the right to express their will and belief. And finally, sixth, are the 'communalist theories', in which respective groups argue that the respective 'other' groups seek to 'humiliate' them in order to deprive them of specific rights (all Krishna 2005: 151-152).

Richard G. Fox also names various approaches to explain communalism and notes that scholars mostly confine its existence to the Indian subcontinent. According to Fox, one approach sees the reason for communalism as an excrescence of Indian tradition, an atavism or primitivism which means that it's a matter of Indian culture like

the caste system (Fox 1996). Another argument Fox puts forward rests on a traditionalist view combined with the Leninist theory of Imperialism as mentioned above. According to him, primordial loyalties to sect and caste persisted through disenchantment and gained further power through manipulation by the British. Yet another approach sees communalism as pathology of nationalism, dating back to the struggle for independence. Following this rationale, the emphasising of Hindu values and lifestyle against British ones as the core principle of the movement constituted and enforced the base of religious segregation (ibid).

For Ashis Nandy, communalism is a pathology or 'disease of modernity' which developed in India under British rule due to some of the subcontinent's peculiarities. Fox goes a little further in his argumentation when he places the causes of communalism independent of the specific Indian context and equates it to sectarian trends all over the world. He calls it an "inherent infirmity or constitutional weakness (...), bound to come out sooner or later wherever modernity has disenchanting the world" (Ludden 2007: 236) According to him, this constitutional weakness shows its colours also in a new racism and cultural fundamentalism in the western world. In this sense he refers to Max Weber and his observation of processes of disenchantment brought into the western world by bureaucratic rationality and capitalist alienation. In dissociation to Weber he identifies the rise of new forms of enchanted identities in the context of the disenchanting world which he calls "hyperenchanted" (ibid: 237). These newly emerging identities are loyalties based on sect, tribe or race and are, according to Fox "more virulent and destructive because they ostensibly contradict modernity and yet function within it" (ibid: 238) In this process of disenchantment and following "hyperenchanted", local elites organize ethnic or sectarian communities in response to the incompetence of a bureaucratic state which fails to co-opt or repress sectarian communities. The reason why the outcome of these processes is much more violent and devastating in India than in most western countries lies in the inability of the Indian nation state to transform these religious communities into special interest groups lobbying for state benefits "to turn them into relatively harmless creatures, tamed by welfare states (ibid: 249).

While the identification of causes has been seen as important for anti-communal strategies, what found even more attention is the identification of mechanisms of how communalism is being instigated. The first issue put forward here is that of 'rewritten histories'. Mushirul Hasan, for example, argues that "the knowledge of history has been used, or perhaps misused, [...] to legitimize chauvinistic national identities, authoritarian regimes, and military dictatorships" (Hasan 2007: 226). Hasan examines the role of the BJP in 'rewriting history' by means of altering certain parts of history textbooks so that it accounts better for its specific right-wing political worldview (ibid). He continues with the argument stating that the BJP needed to first undo any perceived connection between 'Indianness' and the kind of secularism as put forward in Nehruvian visions. That way the 'Hindu' becomes Indian and vice versa – at the same time other beliefs are excluded from the idea of the nation. History is thus rewritten in favour of what were supposedly Hindu legends, such as the one about Shivaji – a medieval warrior of the Maharati caste who stood up against the Mughal dominance in the region of Maharashtra. Another instance of this method is the mobilization that is taking place around the symbolic character of Rama, the man-god. This character was used to create a homogenised, North-India-skewed, unitary religious system which denied and demonized the pantheist and syncretistic traditions of the Hindu-faith and at the same time demonized the minority faiths Islam

and Christianity (cf. Puniyani 2005: 12) These accounts are used to justify certain communal politics against anything that do not fit the picture (cf. Hasan 2007: 226).

In contrast to the creation of a golden history and tradition of Hindu religion that is believed to be peaceful and full of wisdom, religious minorities are branded with stereotypes of being violent, fanatic and loyal to other than the Indian nation state. Puniyani, for example, shows that “Hindutva propaganda specifically targets Muslim men, who are accused of marrying four times, having innumerable children as well as abducting and forcibly marrying Hindu girls all for the evil purpose of overtaking the Hindu population of India” (cf. Puniyani 2005: 179).

With regard to outreach, communal ideology is spread through the media, educational institutions and the bureaucracy by members of the organizations of the Hindu-nationalist family (e.g. VHP, RSS, and BJP). In this regard, decades of ideological work in the background provided fertile ground for the outbreak of communal violence which, in turn, gives electoral rewards to the perpetrators of communal violence. Fear of attacks from the minority community is spread amongst members of the majority community to legitimize violence until the desired results are achieved. And perpetrators turn heroes because they give protection against the attacks of ‘anti-nationals’. Scholars see this mechanism as the reason for Shiv-Sena’s election after the Mumbai 1992-93 riots or the election of Narendra Modi as chief minister in Gujarat after the anti-Muslim pogrom in 2002, although rumours persist that he was a key person that has orchestrated the violence (cf. Puniyani 2005: 12).

It can be observed that many of the prejudices and communal tendencies are developing in a self-sustainable way. A silent radicalization seems to take place in both Hindu and Muslim religious communities. The growing fundamentalism within the Muslim community is understood as a result of the long experienced every-day discrimination and a growing substantial insecurity following the riots. Puniyani argues that “this insecurity brings to fore the conservative and retrograde elements in society, and in turn makes the community more inward looking, insular and hostile to reforms and progress (Puniyani 2005: 13). This is then further exploited in an attempt to connect this backwardness to the respective religion. According to Puniyani, this is how communal ideologies slowly change a society from a liberal, multi-cultural one “to a series of hostile camps built around religious identities” (Puniyani 2005: 13).

2.4 Social Movements against Communalism

While communalism itself is spurred by social movements that identify along ethnic, racial, religious, or social status lines, there exists a substantial array of groups that have been formed in order to counter communal tendencies and their repercussions in society. As this work is concerned with such social movements, we found it necessary to specify how the term ‘social movement’ is defined, and what forms social movements can take.

The literature on social movements reflects a broad consensus on the assumption that social movements refer to sustained and intentional collective action –

regardless whether formally or informally organized.⁶ While there are social movements that justify their existence through what Rao calls “defensive” or “restorative” measures in order to keep a status quo, that is, to resist change, this research is solely concerned with those social movements that aim at bringing about at least some degree of change to issues that have been identified by respective social movements as undesirable (cf. Rao 1979: 2). Such change can be envisaged as constituting partial or total (revolutionary) change (ibid: 3). Rao argues that such orientations towards bringing about change are usually rooted in ideological terms: “A social movement is an organized attempt on the part of a section of society to bring about either partial or total change in society through collective mobilization based on an ideology” (ibi: 2). In this respect, what makes a social movement innovative and what distinguishes it from political parties and other institutionalized organizations is that the latter two are “routinized with an established institutional procedure or recruitment and commitment and a code of conduct and sanctions for punishing deviants” (ibid). Apart from ideological distinguishing features, social movements can be classified with regard to membership structure (i.e. membership based on language, religion, sex, studentship or worker status) and scope (i.e. local, national, regional, international, group-focused) (ibid: 3).

However, it is assumed here that, since communalism is a process that is driven by constructions of identity-based ‘facts’, social activism that aims at fighting communalism cannot do so by being ‘identity-based’ in any form whatsoever - this would only serve to reinforce intercommunity hatred and prejudice. As will be shown in the concluding part of this paper, however, most organizations interviewed drew their strategies explicitly from their respective identities, e.g. from Marxist viewpoints, or from ‘being a Muslim’. Since we aim to problematize such identity-driven strategies in this study, we decided to provide sketch outlines about the ways in which members of the various organizations represented themselves (identity), how they define communalism, and what are their respective approaches to counter communalism. In this way, we show that, due to identity-driven approaches, strategies (and presumably results) are inherently predetermined and therefore inflexible. At the same time, then, we criticize definitions of ‘social activism’ that serve to reinforce group identities that are, essentially, at the heart of the problem being investigated in this study.

3. METHODS OF INQUIRY

As we were mainly concerned with varieties of anti-communalism strategies, we made use of qualitative research techniques through which “the researcher should derive a more nuanced understanding of the meaning of social acts, as well as a greater appreciation of interacting and contextualized rationalities that impact on behaviour” (Hoggart et al. 2002: 202). Of course, apart from criticisms inherent to this approach, successful qualitative (or intensive) research depends a great deal on a research design concomitant and adapted to a precise and feasible research question. Considering our research objective, we found the in-depth qualitative research technique the most appropriate method of data gathering. On the one hand, this approach allows for comparison across cases as research results are to be

⁶ See also Magdeburg Research Group on Mumbai Slums 2009.

standardised and categorised to some degree. On the other hand, there is still sufficient scope for particularities that do not fit any categorisation; this especially means that issues could find their way into this research that we did not think about beforehand (cf. Valentine 1997: 111). Thus, according to this approach, we developed a list of guiding questions prior to conducting the interviews that were based upon our previous knowledge about the subject and the implications of our research questions as stated above. These naturally deviated to some degree, especially in terms of generality, from the results that we later categorized.

Much about the way in which we framed the entire research undertaking, and particularly in which we drew our guiding questions catalogue was based on key notions of social constructivist theory. While no full account about the implications about such a research approach can be given in this context, the key assumptions inherent to such an approach are that decisions of social beings (and collectives of social beings) are dependent upon their very own interpretations about the rules in their environment. This implies an inherently subjective and inter-subjective decision-making, since even if rules are fixed in written form (i.e. as laws), an individual may decide disregarding the rule because he or she expects advantages. In this sense, one could posit that strategy-decisions of NGOs/CBSs in anti-communalism are contingent upon the organization's (or more precisely, decision-makers within an organization's) interpretation of the rules that influence their course of work. While this is a too complex issue to be reliably investigated within the scope of this study (presumably any study), we have still identified a number of key issues that we deemed crucial factors directing decision-making under the perspective of strategic choices. The variables that we considered are: (1) the type, size, and core (ideological) rationale of NGO/CBO; (2) the organization's own definition of what constitutes communalism, and what are the causes of the same; (3) how they perceive communalism as being prevalent in their context of their work; (4) the kind of support (financially and otherwise) the groups get; (5) the relationship to political parties; and (6) the extent of networking/scope of reach.

The variables found in our guiding questions were deemed to provide for sufficient background in order to be able to pursue the goal of answering the second major research question, namely what anti-communal strategies various NGOs/CBOs devise. Since there is insufficient information on such strategies in the literature, questions on this issue were spontaneously framed in the interview situation, without any pre-defined guiding question.

As the main focus of this research was to present varieties of anti-communal strategies in various contexts, issues of generalization were marginal, and thus did not significantly affect our sampling procedure. Our main aim rather was to take into account as many different viewpoints as possible. Initial contacts could be made through our cooperation with the Department of Sociology at the University of Mumbai, at which Dr. Bhosale was of specific help; further contacts were made after browsing the internet for relevant NGOs/CBOs. Furthermore, we utilized the snowballing technique, meaning that at the end of each interview we asked interviewees to open up further contacts. Within the two weeks of the envisaged data collection period, we managed to conduct interviews with eight organizations.

While initially we planned on conducting the interviews with single representatives of organizations, this approach proved unfeasible. We usually found that, upon arrival,

there were a number of interviewees, so that the nature of the interviews sometimes changed into focus groups rather than in-depth interviews. While we were initially sceptical about the nature of results gained, results were deemed valid for six cases.

Upon completion, interviews were transcribed. This proved difficult at times, since in addition to the difficulty of transcribing group discussions, all localities boasted significant ambient noise, including but not limited to ventilators and cars. Consequently, the transcriptions show certain blanks. Since omissions concern less than one percent in all interviews, however, this was deemed tolerable. Put together, the interviews (each between 45 minutes and well over two hours in length), translated into a total of over 30 pages transcribed material.

For the purpose of analysis of this raw material, we made use of computer-based analysis of qualitative data. To this end we utilized MaxQda, a programme that assists the researcher mainly by providing a handy interface to assign specific codes to relevant chunks of text in the entire database (cf. Kuckartz 2007), so that the text assigned to the same code can easily be visualised. In order to assign codes we reviewed all transcribed material. While the main structure of the coding followed the categories used in our interview guideline, the final codes became significantly more comprehensive, especially as regards sub-codes. Since these codes provide for a logical analytical procedure, the presentation of results will be conducted largely according to the given patterns of codes.

4. FINDINGS

This chapter aims at presenting our major research results. It is divided into four main parts: First, since we believe that strategic choices are to at least some extent related to the individual organizations' background, details about interview partners will be disclosed; second, since we also believe that strategic choices are highly dependent upon the way in which problem areas are identified, the individual organizations' definitions of 'communalism' will be provided; closely related, a third part will present the findings about the individual organization's notions on the causes of communalism. While these three subsections pertain mainly to the first research question (*'How do NGOs/CBOs define communalism and where to they see this concept's causes'?*), this provides essential background information in order to understand the individual organizations' rationale for devising strategies against communalism. The fourth subsection will present the strategies that those NGOs/CBOs interviewed have outlined. In order not to jeopardize the organization's work, the data will be presented in anonymized form.

4.1 Details about Interview Partners

In total, we interviewed representatives of six NGOs/CBOs. Rather than providing a detailed profile of each organization, we categorised various fields of interest in order to be able to better highlight the differences and similarities in the organizational structures and working programmes as well as overall aims. In order to gain an extensive overview over available anti-communal strategies in the context of Mumbai,

we aimed at selecting a sample of organizations as diverse as possible, and correspondingly the background of interviewed groups/individuals differed substantially. In the following paragraph our interview partners shall briefly be compared according to the following criteria: (a) the broad type of organization, (b) year of establishment, (c) size, (d) composition of members, (e) sources of finance, (f) cooperation network with other NGOs/CBOs and/or political parties, (g) the target area, and finally (i) the target group.

4.1.1 Type of Organization

Of the six organizations interviewed, one was a student society at the University of Mumbai (Org.1), one was a CBO (Org.2), two were NGOs (Org.3 and Org.4), one was an individual activist (Org.5), and one was a Mohalla Committee (Org.6).

4.1.2 Abstract Organization Rationale

What all six organizations interviewed have in common is their leftist leaning in political terms. However, there are substantial differences with regard to background ideology and working practices. Organization #1, for example, was founded on the idea to “resist state oppression and state terrorism – basically [to] resist bourgeois class and mentality”. Further, the student society states that they “are against any ideology that follows caste, class, [and] religion. [...] We are against gender bias. We are against communalism. We want equality on education, health, housing. Let people avail the same resources” (Org.1). What these statements implicitly include, and what the group openly propagates, are belief systems based on the ideas of Marxism as explicated in the theoretical background part above. Therefore, this group can be categorized in the far left end of political ideology. Also organization 2 is very leftist, with much of their work based on the theory of feminism, including work programmes on empowerment of the underprivileged, and hence this organization believes that communalism and women’s issues cannot be separated: “When you work on women, you have to take communalism into it, and when you work on communalism, you have to take in the issue of women, and that’s one of our major contributions, to put these together” (Org.2). The sole representative of organization #5 works in a similar direction as organization #4. Organization #2, on the other hand, states as its main goal “to bring people together”, but prefers to stay in the background so that the change can come from people themselves. While all former organizations also have a focus on bringing about secularist thinking, this is the main goal of organization #3. Organization #6, the Mohalla Committee, seeks to uphold peace through dialogue.

4.1.3 Year of Establishment

Most interviewed organizations commenced their work immediately after the 1992/93 riots. In this sense, organization #3 was founded in 1993, which was also when the representative of organization #5 started his activities, and organization #6 was established. Organization #2 has worked with different objectives and emphasises since after the 1993 riots, but as a loose organization does not have a clear-cut

founding date. Organization #4 was founded in 1989, but with a different objective. The youngest organization is organization #1, the student society, which was founded in June 2007, three months before the interview.

4.1.4 Size

Judging from the results of this study, anti-communalist strategies do not seem to produce large organizations. While those organizations interviewed could not state definite membership figures due to fluctuations and differing degrees of involvement of individuals, all of them seemed to have between one and 50 members. The smallest organization clearly was that of organization #5 with only one person being the main initiator plus a few helpers. Organization #2 comprises 15 members on paper, however, those constantly active number eight to ten individuals. Organization #1, the newly founded student society at the University of Mumbai, comprises of 15 to 20 members. The largest organization interviewed was organization #4 with more than 40 members and associates.

4.1.5 Composition of members

In addition to size the composition of members – the homogeneous or heterogeneous structure according to distinguishing features such as religion, class, ethnicity or gender lines is important. As anti-communal strategies have the inherent goal of breaking with homogeneity and the propagation of corresponding values and goals, all organizations have had a more or less heterogeneous membership structure, without discrimination against others. However, as will be discussed at a later stage, some of the projects aimed directly at one target group, e.g. at educating Hindus about the nature of the Muslim belief system. Women were active in all groups interviewed.

4.1.6 Sources of Finance

Lack of finance is one of the major impediments to work in anti-communalism projects. The government dedicates little, if any, money to such projects, and organization #4 is the only organization interviewed which avails of some minor government resources mainly for issues on women's rights. All other organizations work on a voluntary basis, mostly unpaid, and finance mostly occurs by donations of outsiders, both private and institutional. Organization #5, for example, avails of donations from the Canadian Church, but mainly relies on support of what he called 'Hindu friends'. Organization #3 enjoys support of Bread for the World, Misereor, and other nongovernmental sources based mainly in Germany. Additionally, organization #3 founded a charitable fund. Organization #6, the Mohalla Committee, works largely on a voluntary basis, but has also founded a charitable Trust.

4.1.7 Cooperation Networks

Networking appeared to be a marginal issue in the work of those organizations interviewed, partly due to ideological reasons and/or because their work was too specialized and often limited to neighbourhood activities. Organization #4, in particular, made it explicit that “either we make films or [go to] court, we don’t have much time to network and all that” (Org.4). Other groups work in a rather isolated environment. Organization #2 limits its activities to the Jogeshwari slum. Cooperation with other groups working on communalism seems not to occur. However, organization #2 stated that “it would help us to sharpen our ideas” (Org.2), and would thus welcome cooperation in their field of work. On the other hand, the organization is linked to other third-sector organizations in India not necessarily limiting their scope to the aspect of communalism, and learns from them. Organization #3 is the most active organization of those interviewed, and described networking as one of the main focuses of their work: “if there are any other NGOs in this field, we will network with them, because that increases our respect. Otherwise, we cannot work throughout India” (Org.3). This outreach of organization #3 is substantiated with the statement of organization #1 at the University of Mumbai, which states that it cooperates with organization #3. As organization #6, the Mohalla Committee, focuses mainly on its own small area, networking is not on the agenda.

All organizations interviewed, apart from organization #1 and #5 being attracted by the Communist Party of India, viewed themselves as non-political, as they consider politics as being at the root of the problem of communalism. Networking with political parties is thus not envisaged.

4.1.8 Target Area

The proclaimed outreach of those organizations interviewed differs substantially. Organization #2 focuses solely on the neighbourhood of Jogeshwari, as does organization #5, while organization #4 does not limit its outreach to a single area in Mumbai, but has no all-Indian approach. Organization #3 claims to have a holistic approach with applicability all throughout India, in spite of the statement that they cannot work throughout the whole country. Organization #1 also has a holistic approach, but limits its activities to campus confines at the University of Mumbai. Organization #6 limits its activities to the “area of the part 23rd or 24th police station” (Org.6).

4.1.9 Target Group

The organizations investigated differ most with regard to their target groups. Organization #2 focuses on youth, since “somewhere along the line, we got the sense that it is very difficult for us to work with people who are older than us. They would not listen to us, their ideas have been formed and they would look upon us as children. Even though we know what age we are, but they still think we are children, and we won’t have any experience. So we realized that we needed to work with [youth], that is, people who are younger than us, because they are in an age that is

impressionable. Their minds are impressionable” (Org.2). Like organization #2, organization #5 focuses on empowering disadvantaged children. Organization #3 claims to have four key target groups being related to communalism and anti-communalism: “teachers, we train teachers. We all reach out for the police also; we also hold training camps for youth, as youth is the main vehicle for cultural propaganda. And also journalists, because whatever they write in newspapers can have a lot of impact on people’s minds. Newspapers are read by billions of people. You can correct the thinking of journalists, you can reach billions of people in that way” (Org.3). Organization #6 targets all inhabitants of the 23rd and 24th police station areas, and the main target group of organization #1, the student society, naturally is students at the campus but generally also includes everyone. Organization #4 is very active in women empowerment, but does not explicitly target any particular group.

4.2 Framing ‘Communalism’

Taken the assumptions of social constructivism, i.e. those assumptions that this work builds upon, social reality derives from different observations and/or viewpoints that are based on individual and/or shared experiences and/or opinions. In order to find out what position an individual and/or groups represent, especially in terms of activities that pertain to the attainment of goals, it is thus necessary to understand their perspective to the problem and its perceived root causes (as these are the issues that are being tackled through specific strategies in the present and the future). This in no way should mean that we, as researchers, consider any of these standpoints as being “real” or “facts” in any sense. However, we believe that representing the different standpoints and their implications, can lead to sharpening and refinement of present ideas and strategies.

Since there are numerous framings of communalism, and since such framing inevitably defines the focus of work of NGOs/CBOs engaged in anti-communal strategies, we deemed it important to ask the interviewees about how their organization actually frames communalism. In order to categorize these frames, the classification of communalism ‘frames’ as put forward by Krishna (see above) will broadly be used as reference points. In this sense, two of the categories suggested by Krishna were taken up by respondents: ‘intolerance against the other’ in general terms, and Marxist theory. However, especially within the first set of framing subtle nuances were made out among respondents.

The representative of organization #4 defined communalism in very general terms, “an intolerance of the other community. It’s a disregard. [...] It can be race, it can be anything. [...] It can be against low caste, it can be against another community, it can be against black people, it can be against Jews, it can be against anything” (Org.4). Thus, organization #4 views communalism as a more or less cognitive condition, in which individuals frame and define their existence in opposition to an ‘other’. According to organization #4, this form of identity formation results in prejudices and hatred against other groups that do not share specific properties of the own culture, religion, caste, or race. From this follows a black-and-white view: “If you are a Hindu, then you are vegetarian, you are cleaner, you are more civilized. These are the notions you get. And this is compared to Muslims. You are vulgar, you are violent, you are dirty” (Org.4).

The representative of organization #3 frames communalism in more restrictive terms. Although, like organization #4, he considers it as an 'intolerance against the 'other', he confines it to religious intolerance: "Communalism means conflict between religious communities, not caste communities" (Org.3). And, according to the representative of organization #3, religious conflict takes place mainly between "Hindus and Muslims". This, he argues, is due to demographic factors: "Christians are just 2% in India. Conflict is there, but it is not a major conflict. But with Muslims, this is a major conflict. Muslims are 14%, 140 million Muslims in India, a huge population" (Org.3). He also justifies this view in historical terms, in that he argues that, historically, the "fight has always been between Hindus and Muslims", while the issue of Christians has been one revolving around "conversion" (Org.3). Like organization #4 and #3, organization #6 views communalism as intolerance against the 'other', and, like organization #3, sees this intolerance mainly as taking place between Hindus and Muslims.

Organization #1 put forward the opinion that communalism must clearly be seen as the product of a "bourgeois society", and thus frames communalism in Marxist terms. In this sense, intolerance is viewed as striving from economic inequality and economic exploitation. From this results what was already stated in the section on this group's abstract organization's rationale, that what is to be addressed is "bourgeois class and mentality" (Org.1).

Organization #2 offered the most nuanced, situational and relativist framing of communalism, in that they view the entire issue as "very fragmented". Organization #2 justifies this stance by stating that "over the years our learning has been that communalism as an issue is very contextual, and it has different facets. You cannot really point your finger at one particular reason and say that this is the reason for this or that. As a part of our learning, we have realized that there are different strands and layers to the issue" (Org.2).

4.3 Perceived Causes of Communalism

While organization #2 was the only organization that framed communalism in 'complex' terms, the notion that communalism is an extremely complex phenomenon was also reflected in the responses of all of our interview partners with regard to the perceived causes of communalism. Thus, regarding this topic, we received a very broad spectrum of perceived reasons, mostly corresponding with the organizations' abstract rationales (see above), the differences of which influence the particular strategies. We want to outline the most striking answers given, which are related to the organizations' perceived causes of communalism.

4.3.1 British Divide-and-Rule Policy

While there were substantial differences in opinions about the causes of communalism, there was one issue which was brought up by every individual representative interviewed: the role of the British in constructing distinct identities below a national identity, which segregated society and thus created communal tensions. According to organization #4 the British "[...] divided India into quarters,

where the community is segregated into Hindus and Muslims, and the law was segregated into Hindus and Muslims, and then we had partition, the end of dividing the country” (Org.4). Similarly, organization #2 explicitly states that “it is a colonial narrative that was constructed. You know, when the British created a directorate, when the British wanted to divide people, that’s when the broader narrative of communalism started, which was Hindus against Muslims, because they were the major groups. So now, whenever you talk about communal harmony, it gets interpreted as something that has to do with Hindus and Muslims” (Org.2). Organization #6 also delegates major responsibility to the British, however the representative of this organization differentiates between the British as being the cause of communalism and the British being a factor aggravating an already existent, though latent, problem:

“The story of [...] communalism goes back to the decline of the Mughal Empire. Once the Mughal Empire started declining, and other powers like the Marathas and the Jats came up, a situation of conflict arose, because there was not a single political entity. And the whole situation became further complex when the British came in, particularly after 1757. [...] The British found it very easy to control this country by keeping the various groups divided. As it is, the Hindu society is divided among castes. Then you have the religious divisions. And they gave considerable encouragement to this divide to continue. And the final result was the division of the country, though the division of the country has not really founded the problem of communalism. [...] So the seed of communalism in India, especially Hindu-Muslim communalism, has a long history. It’s not something happened overnight.” (Org.6).

4.3.2 Lack of Economic Resources

Four of the six organizations interviewed saw the lack of economic resources, and/or the lack of equality in access to economic resources, as one of the main causes of communalism. Nevertheless, there are important differences in the argumentation. Organization #1, as a strongly leftist group, clearly saw capitalism and economic exploitation as one of the main reasons for communalism:

“The basic thing about communalism is that you are talking about economic issues. When Hindus fight Muslims and Muslims fight Hindus, what is the basis for this? What we think is that politicians and religious leaders make people fight in that they connect these economic issues with religious groups. Religious leaders say, look, they take something from you, stop them. This creates tremendous hatred. The same thing is done by Muslim and Hindu leaders. And why? Not religion. It’s an economic issues” (Org.1).

The sole representative of organization #5, also a stark supporter of the Communist Party of India, argues that “when capitalism grows, communalism grows. When people get minimum comforts of life, they will not fight. [...] No economic pressure, no communalism” (Org.5). Organization #2 similarly argues that “access to resources becomes the pivotal point around which people are recruited” (Org.2).

4.3 3 Lack of Education

Two of the organizations interviewed saw one root cause of communalism in the lack of education, but differ in their definitions of what the term ‘education’ means. Organization #2 views education “in totality”, thus not necessarily meaning “going to school or going to college”. They refer to issues such as: “what are the values, what

are the perceptions, what are your beliefs?”, and thus see education as coming from “awareness and exposure”:

“If you start living in such a settlement pattern, you will have minimum exposure to the ‘other’ – the so-called ‘other’, because it is already constructed. You do not know what the others eat or what they do. If you ask the people here they have gone to experience or celebrate festivals together. But now it doesn’t happen anymore. So people who are growing up now do not even know [...] what the others celebrate, or what is the philosophy behind it. So I’m living in my own way where I think whatever my community does is right, whatever my parents say is right, and my friends are my true friends, and nobody else can be my friend too. Similarly it works in the other community” (Org.2).

Thus, ‘education’ is viewed by organization #2 as the dismantling of stereotypes, the education of one community about living patterns of the other community. Organization #4 sees the educational system as being flawed and communal, and thus defines ‘education’ in the more traditional sense, i.e. going to school or college: “Even the textbooks are communal. Even the way it is taught in school is communal.” (Org.4).

4.3.4 Propaganda

As already argued above, political parties (and their respective mouthpieces in the popular media) make use of existing inequalities in the economic sectors and access to economic resources in order to secure voting blocs for their respective political party. Thus, this variable is a dependent one on those factors that have already been mentioned above. Nevertheless, since political parties are perceived to be at the forefront of instigating communalism, all those organizations interviewed delegated significant attention to this subject. In particular, organization #3 argued that “in a pluralist democracy, where people of different religions live, some politicians want to exploit identity issues in order to get their votes. So it is basically a political phenomenon and not a religious phenomenon. That religious feelings are exploited and religious identities are exploited for political purposes, that is the real ground of communalism”. Such statements are more explicitly explained by him arguing that “people have strong religious affiliation. So if somebody tells me that injustice is done to Muslims, Muslims do not have their fair treatment in that country, it will appeal to me and the party or the person who makes such a statement will then try to get my political support. That is how the religious feelings are exploited by politicians” (Org.3). Organization #2 summarizes such perceptions about the situation vividly: “but somehow all of it boiled down to politics and how it is used” (Org.2). Organization #4 considers politics as an arena for identifying problems, but blames politicians to ascribe specific problems such as economic inequality to certain groups, so that one group is pitted against the other, thus creating communal strife.

4.3.5 Capitalism

Although all groups interviewed were leftist, only one group in the far left corner explicitly considered the capitalist system as the main cause of communalism: organization #1, which claims to fight communalism and other issues concerning injustice which they view as an offspring of bourgeois thought and the capitalist

system.

4.3.6 Specific Communalism Context

The specific communalism context, that is, the way in which founders of NGOs/CBOs have experienced, and still experience, communalism, further adds to the meaning that is ascribed to communalism – and thus provides a further rationale for action.

Some groups, like organization #2 and #6, were formed against the backdrop of the 1992/1993 Mumbai riots, and now engage in work in order to alleviate the impact (e.g. segregation and alienation) that these riots have had, and to prevent new ones. Organization #2 describes the specific communalism context with the example of Jogeshwari, their focus area:

“This place where we are sitting [Jogeshwari] has had a history of communal tensions since many years. [...] Understanding it geographically, to understand the area geographically and demographically, what has happened is that there used to be a mixed pattern of living here. Segregation started gradually after clashes started happening. People felt insecure. [...] After the engineered riots of 1992/93 there was complete polarization. After that, what was formed were two distinct settlement patterns. So you find the Hindu-dominated areas at the periphery [...] When you pass the Police Chowky, which is in a strategic position, it’s a Muslim dominated area. So the insecurities are also very stark. If a person wants to move out from this area to the other, the person feels unsafe and vice versa” (Org.2).

The representative of organization #3 draws attention to another, more specific issue, namely the day-to-day problems that minorities (in particular Muslims) in Mumbai may experience:

“Minority people might not get employment easily, may not get bank loans, may not get admission to medical or other colleges, or may not get promotion in the offices, whereas someone belonging to the Hindu community might get it. [...] The police is very partial, anti-Muslim and pro-Hindu, so when the riots break out they will arrest Muslims, they will beat them up, they will torture them, they will make false cases against them.” (Org.3)

Even more specific is the account that organization #4 puts forward, which is in direct reference to the focus of the organization’s work. They draw attention to issues of women’s rights:

“There’s a lot of misconception that the Hindu community carries about Muslims, about Muslim women etc. [...] and they have a negative role of women’s role in Islam, that Muslim women have no rights. Even NGOs - everyone. So when a Muslim woman seeks help, the lawyers respond that they have no right, and that’s propaganda. And the whole communal violence is also built on that.” (Org.4)

For organization #1 the specific communalism context is, due to their Marxist orientation, not the core point of reference of their work; furthermore, they argued that students are not usually proactive drivers of communal viewpoints. Nevertheless, the problem materializes in their day to day activities in that they naturally encounter the problem.

4.4 Anti-Communalism Strategies

Based on the outlined backgrounds of the interviewed groups and their perceived causes of communalism, each group developed specific anti-communal strategies. Broadly speaking, all answers given pertain to 'education'. However, the ways in which organizations seek to educate, as well as the contents of education, differed substantially. For analytical clarity, we distinguish between education that is provided by organizations (top-down), and education that refers to mutual learning (interactive).

4.4.1 Countering Communalism through Education (Top-Down)

The sole representative of organization #5, who has experienced the poverty and deprivation of Muslims in Jogeshwari, consequently focuses on this part of the city with regard to his anti-communal strategy. Since he identified the lack of education as one of the main reasons for Muslims being segregated, his main strategy aims at educating the disadvantaged. In doing so, as a single activist with limited resources, he started from scratch:

"In this room I started teaching them. The parents of them were very low-paid people [...] Many students could come and ask questions. [...] I started, since drop-out rates were very high among Muslim girls and Muslim boys, they failed in their exams. [...] So what we decided, what was our idea? At least teach them at that level so that they do not fail in class. [...] If they pass the exam, they can climb the ladder. Secondary school, college, or university. 50 girls were taught up to graduation level and higher education starts in English" (Org.5).

In this sense, the representative of organization #5 also argues that it is education which will bring different communities together, and education that will lead to the more critical thinking that condemns communalism and will bring about communal harmony. Insofar, his approach combines the two aspects of teaching and interactive education.

"We teach Muslim and Hindu girls English language, because Muslims would go to Urdu language schools and Hindus to Hindi language schools. And if they go to college, it will be in English. [...] Now we have 400 students. [...] If we educate them, then they will contemplate about issues. During classes, they will have to interact. And then brotherhood is created, you know, we live in one country" (Org.5).

Organization #1 chose to provide education on three levels: cultural, political, and social. This is done in order to propagate a Marxist worldview, thus resisting 'bourgeois thought'. Communalism was identified by this group as stemming from a focus on capitalist ideology:

"Our goal is mainly to resist in the form of doing plays, stage plays, screening documentaries, and have discussions about these particular topics. And then organizing different cultural programmes. So first is the cultural basis, culture means we are screening films, we are doing plays; second is political stand-by, where we distribute pamphlets about issues, organize protest movements, and so on. And the third is social, where we are organizing tuition on communalism" (Org.1).

4.4.2 Countering Communalism through Education (Interactive)

Organization #2, an organization that also sees the lack of education as a main reason for communal tendencies to spread, like organization #5 and #4 focuses on educating youth. However, very different from the two previously mentioned organizations, organization #2 does not intend to do this in a hierarchical way, i.e. 'from teacher to student'. Instead, they see their role in facilitating an environment in which mutual learning can take place. In this sense, learning occurs within the organization as well as within and among communities. In order to learn about the issue of communalism, organization #2 engages actively in research on that issue:

"One [...] approach is through research and learning within the team. So this year we have been awarded a fellowship by another organization [...] in Bombay. This organization stands for partners in urban knowledge and research. We have taken up a research study to understand perceptions of youths about ghettoization. So we tried to understand it at three levels. One would be those people who have experienced communal riots directly, and what is the things they have come to – what do they think about ghettoization or living with their own communities or across communities in this settlement pattern. One would be those people who were born then, during the communal riots, but who have been too small to understand things; also engage with them directly. So they must have grown up listening to certain things. And for me, perceptions were seen; they must have seen what was going on around them. So what would they think about living together or living apart? And the third level would be people who were not born then, who had just listened to things, and how have they formed their perceptions? So this is something that we do. We call this segment Mohalla Hamara. Mohalla Hamara means 'our community'. So this is a segment where we wish to learn more about our own communities, because we believe that an organization itself is a continuous process of learning (Org.2).

Like for themselves in terms of 'organizational learning', organization #2 propagates a participative working environment for communities. The rationale behind this approach is that people should get educated by themselves, to learn about issues that affect them in a natural way. In this way, it is argued, people are able of 'empowering' themselves, and thus resist communal thinking:

"We realized that [...] they need to work on awareness. [...] So they started to instate plays, street plays etc, to create a gentle awareness about education, [...] about how people are infiltrated by political parties, how people should not give in to those forces. Instead, think on their own, think more in terms of peace and living together" (Org.2).

As participating methods for youths, organization #2 chose a range of 'interactive' activities, in which, as a rule, members of different communities must come together and interact:

"Then we used sports as a medium. So we organized an interschool sports event. Now, there were two levels of approaches with regard to school sports. One approach was to bring children from different ghettos together. So we had all those schools, we had Urdu schools, we had Marathi schools, we had English medium schools [...]. So we had kids coming from all three types of schools on a common platform, playing together, competing with each other, winning and losing. So that is one platform to deal with it" (Org.2).

In order to engage all other, older members of communities, meetings are being organized in which relevant issues are to be discussed. In this way, it is argued, prejudice can be overcome:

"We organized police public meetings. So the police of the local police station, along with their seniors, come together with people from the areas and discuss these issues. There have been heated debates as well, but there is no point in keeping it bottled up inside" (Org.2).

Organization #2 also seeks to enhance chances of youths to participate in society at large, and thus reduce tensions that may arise due to inequality of access to various resources. One such example is fighting unemployment through increasing employability:

"We work on issues of employability. We do not say employment because we do not want to be a job placement agency. We merely want to be a catalyst between the choices of young people and how to guide them and direct them" (Org.2).

To a lesser extent than organization #2, organization #6 puts one focus on interaction, although some top-down elements that seek to 'educate' can be located:

"They have projects dealing with education, they have projects dealing with a certain amount of problems of women, especially Muslim women, who have so many domestic problems, and they cannot speak to anyone. [...] There are also projects in which school drop-outs are helped. And there are projects like "Sports for Peace", and one very popular project is "Cricket for Peace". So these are the kinds of projects which keep happening in different Mohallas" (Org.6).

Organization #4 has also identified the lack of education as one of the causes of communalism, and views its organization as a facilitator for empowering people. However, by focusing mainly on women's rights issues, organization #4 follows a very different, specialized approach in thematic terms:

"We are working with students, make films, like with central medium schools and colleges; and there have been workshops on various issues. Also we have students learn about history, so they can understand the biases that are there in history and in anthropology" (Org.4).

This approach especially takes up the issue of 'rewritten histories' as elaborated upon in the theoretical part of this paper, and thus enables students to become aware of critical junctions in which history was instrumentalized by various parties in order to fit particular purposes. All activities that organization #4 engages in thus focus on participation, input and output.

"We do various things. But in the end of the day we have a very tangible output in terms of a workshop. And if we have a workshop, and if we have vigorous brainstorming sessions with various people, then all these things get collected in a production, in a book, that comes out nine months after the workshop. So everything we do, all the research undertaken are directed towards productive output. We produce documentary films, we have photo exhibitions, we have sound installations. We have various sorts of programmes" (Org.4).

5. FINAL REMARKS

In this study we aimed at challenging the often positivistic-driven approaches that the mainstream literature on social issues, including communalism, has focused on. We have argued that such positivist approaches do not contribute to solving social problems, but rather to solidify prejudice – or lead to erroneous and fixed positions generally. In the belief that there does not exist “the one right” approach to fight communalism, but that strategies must be altered and tailored to specific contexts, we have interviewed various organizations in the field of anti-communalism with regard to (1) their perceived causes of communalism, and (2) the strategies that they perceive as necessary to overcome the problem. In our endeavour we were, of course, naturally restricted by time and space constraints. Nevertheless, from the six in-depth interviews we were able to extract valuable information that allows us to draw certain conclusions.

It became clear that different organizations indeed *devised* different approaches that, as we anticipated, led to at times starkly differing approaches with regard to anti-communal strategies. This was on the one hand due to different identities that single and/or group actors devised to themselves (i.e. how different actors represented themselves); on the other hand the specific ideological, cultural, ethnic, religious, and, not least, historical background led to approaches that were concomitant with their respective ways in which identity was constructed. Organization #1, for example, representing itself as a Marxist group and fighting communalism as part of their general fight against bourgeoisie, devised approaches that seek to change the system at large – and thus attempts to change the mindset of mainly young people so that this world system can be overcome. This is a revolutionary approach, with its own terminology – and this is what influences the way in which this group seeks to fight communalism in a considerable way. Applying this approach to an inherently complex world that reacts hesitantly to social change, this group does follow their ideology within their own capabilities – in this case the founding of a theatre group. The representative of organization #5, as a single activist, saw the roots cause of communalism in the lack of education and the lack of interaction between communities. Consequently, within his own resources, he sought to give educational lessons to individuals of different communities that come to his house and interact. The representative of organization #3 perceived communal violence to stem from propaganda that is being distributed by radical Hindu elements that seeks to depict Muslims in a ‘wrong way’ and thus the creation of stereotypes. Hence, his approach is gathering groups of mainly Hindu community workers of different slums in Mumbai, and to abolish stereotypes by showing similarities between communities rather than highlighting differences.

In this sense organization #1, #3 and #5 have followed approaches that differed at times substantially. Yet, a common element of these approaches is that approaches are sourced from, and guided by, certain prepositions. In this sense, each group has picked certain elements out of an inherently complex social environment that they define as the ‘core of the problem’. Solutions that are proposed are directly related to this. While we acknowledge that all these groups have contributed significantly in terms of anti-communalism work, a core element of this work was to challenge the role of positivist thinking, that leads to the identification of definite causalities that

then lead to definite solutions – or vice versa. The set of problems that is brought about by such processes can probably best be explained by a metaphor: the search engine. One consults a search engine if one seeks to learn more about a given key word (problem). The word, which already is pre-determined, is typed into the relevant field. Upon submission, results are presented that are directly relevant and/or match the given word. However, what is yielded only rarely is 100% relevant to the specific needs that the person conducting the search has. On the one hand, what is yielded is already pre-determined by the very word that is typed in – alternatives are not shown because this would presuppose the submission of another search with another word that the person conducting the search may not be aware of. On the other hand, search engines are incapable of knowing what exactly it is that the search conductor wants – it's missing a plethora of factors that the person conducting the search has in mind (or not). Thus, while a search engine is indispensable to researching a topic, it is not a sufficient means to arrive at a solution to a complex problem. In the end, the search engine replicates what the person conducting the search already knows, and will present results that are in line with this type of thought. Similarly, by identifying one ideology that pre-determines the way in which key categories/factors are identified will yield outcomes that may not lead to flexible answers that are, we believe, critically needed for complex social problems. In this sense, we do not believe that there exists the *one* right answer, and therefore see the identification of causal relationships as problematic when these have practical implications. Rather, we believe that dealing with complex social problems such as communalism requires a flexible approach. This may be guided by certain ideological components as a rationale for action; however, these components must not, in any case, determine the way that the practical work is carried out. Of course, the identification of problems must be undertaken if one wants to devise solutions; but this should occur in an interactive, non-hierarchical way, with a focus on continuous learning. Such an approach will minimize pre-determined notions that may be practical in one context but maybe not another. Working in this way also opens up endless avenues for cooperation between all actors that are dealing with anti-communalism strategies or other social objectives. This in fact requires the readiness to amend and/or abolish definitions that lead to anti-communal strategies. If this were the case, anti-communal strategies could really be enacted *according to context*.

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