**Slums as Constellations**

Based on a yearlong ethnographic study of local histories and everyday life in a Muslim dominated slum locality, this dissertation re-theorises slums as an urban constellation. A constellation, it posits, is a montage of anachronistic fragments that coexist in a common space without necessarily identifying with a totality or being homogeneous. Using this theoretical frame, my research shows the ways in which slum residents put together a constellation of individual lives, spaces and objects in the form of slums. This constellation I argue is heterogeneous, contradictory and yet collaborative. In doing so, it responds to four processes that dictate the futures of slums and its residents in contemporary Mumbai: first, the vision statement ‘Mumbai is to be Slum Free’ that pronounces an end to the possibility that slums and the urban poor can help rethink urban life, urban habitats and urban planning; second, the neoliberal slum policies underlying this vision, which reify slums constellated by residents over years into ‘land’ through material and discursive violence; third, the alienation of slum residents from the physiognomic experience and control over one’s time and space in the pigeon-holed high rises; and fourth, the increasing segregation and abjection of Muslim communities in Mumbai’s slums through religion-based estrangement. Through an ethnographic study of ‘common spaces’, where people wait, gather, argue, fight, discuss, vent, strike deals and plan their environment, my research shows how these contradictory spaces and the practices through which they get constellated point towards possible ways of doing away with the ends and partitions imposed onto slums today. In doing so, I hope to point towards newer democratic possibilities and forms of urban politics that can help us remake cities.