INTERROGATING IDENTITY: A STUDY OF SIDDI AND HADRAMI DIASPORA IN HYDERABAD CITY, INDIA

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KHATIJA SANA KHADER

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS DIVISION
CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, ORGANIZATION AND DISARMAMENT
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI- 110067

2016 \

Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament
School of International Studies
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
New Delhi - 110067, India

Date: 20.07.2016

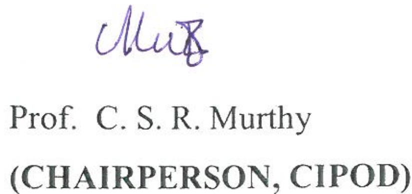
DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled "**Interrogating Identity: A Study of Siddi and Hadrami Diaspora in Hyderabad City, India**" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

Khatija Sana Khader

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.



Prof. C. S. R. Murthy

(CHAIRPERSON, CIPOD)

Prof. Jayati Srivastava

(SUPERVISOR)

Tel: (011) 26704349 Fax: (011) 26741586 Email: chair_cipod@mail.jnu.ac.in website: jnu.ac.in/sis/cipod

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study engages with two diasporic communities – Siddis and Hadramis – in the city of Hyderabad. It contributes towards a critical understanding of these two diasporic communities by focusing on genealogies of their migration within the Indian Ocean space. Moreover, by casting the Indian Ocean region within frames of migration and mobility, this research contends that a richer understanding of this region can be developed. This study has a threefold aim: firstly, it focuses on how Siddi and Hadrami identities have been produced from the early colonial period to contemporary times, located as these are in complex regional and global circuits of knowledge production. Secondly, by foregrounding itself in the Indian Ocean, which allows for a unique perspective on the history of this region that is not bound by rigid territorial divisions, this study engages with frames of mobility, assimilation and integration through which diasporas have interacted and defined themselves in this space. Thirdly, by tracing the genealogies of these diasporic identities, this study engages with conceptions of homeland, host society, and territorial and political imaginations of identity, theoretically. It is the contention of this study that modes and methods of representation, understood within the discursive power hierarchies that exist in the contemporary global order, can provide a dynamic and creative site for engagement with diasporic and racial identities.

This research intends to introduce to the reader the relationship between migration and the two communities under consideration in this study, in order to highlight the role of diasporic identities and mobility in constituting the Indian Ocean region. However, because colonial knowledge divided the landmass around the Indian Ocean into different regions, the ocean and the linkages between areas around it are not usually taken into consideration in modern explanations and analysis. Histories loose out to contingent needs where world is seen through the lens of clearly defined territorial states and areas. It is the intent of this study to address this gap, especially, within International Relations literature. That is, through histories of translocal and

transregional diasporic mobility this study intends to engage critically with concepts around identity construction like assimilation, integration, notions of beloging, ideas and affiliations regarding real or imagined homeland/s and relationship with host societies.

In an essay titled Imaginary Homelands, Salman Rushdie writes, "...its my present that is foreign, and that past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the midst of lost times" (Rushdie 1992: 9). This statement captures the essence of diaspora experience in contemporary times in which this research is located. However, diaspora of the longue durée in the Indian Ocean offer examples of existence where neat cartographies of home/host and past/present get blurred. Therefore, this study, while engaging with the histories of these communities, attempts at deciphering the meaning that belonging as a concept holds for communities like the Siddis and Hadramis in present day Hyderabad. It is the purported aim of this study to understand how these diasporic and racial identities have been negotiated through time and how the concept of 'homeland' has been imagined and relayed. By engaging with processes of assimilation and integration, this study looks into the possibilities of understanding the significance of migration to the (re)creation of identity. It treats identity as translocal and not necessarily restricted by spatial affiliations. This does not imply that spatial affiliations like nation-states are not primary identification for most individuals, but rather, it stresses that identity is and has been experienced in multiple ways that are not necessarily spatially restricting (Axel 2004). This is especially true for the traditional diasporic communities of the Indian Ocean which have created this oceanic space as a region.

Indian Ocean became a site where 'mobile cosmopolitans' like Arab and Gujarati traders as well as African slaves and soldiers moved within a conception of space that was not unitary and a representation of identity that was not localized even if territorially rooted. Amrith (2008) in the context of Philippines argues that some regions witnessed 'globalization' – a term not as old as the phenomenon it seeks to signify – in early centuries of this millennium. Thus, though the technological revolution that is taken as a

watershed in the understanding of globalization has facilitated a greater exchange of ideas and participation of diverse intellectuals, it was already deeply rooted in certain regions and cultures (Amrith 2008). Bose (2002) characterizes the India Ocean as an 'inter-regional area' rather than a 'system', therefore, locating it between the generality of a 'world system' and particularity of a region. For centuries, the Indian Ocean has connected, both economically and culturally, important ports of what we understand as Middle East, East Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia – these being artificial colonial distinctions, that have continued to persist through knowledge production in the postcolonial era. The world of oceans tied together complex networks of economic and cultural relationships, which nonetheless were characterized by flexible internal and external boundaries. The extent of the Ocean that we signify as Indian Ocean has also varied over time. The name itself is drawn from an Arabic navigation treatise *Al Bahr Al Hind* (Bose 2002; Miran 2012). Bose (2002) has shown that the interregional connections between areas around the Indian Ocean Rim continued and were in many cases utilized by the larger colonial enterprise to establish itself. Therefore, Overall, in the words of Das Gupta (1994) and Pearson (2003), after the initial violence, the Portuguese in the sixteenth century 'settled within the structure and were, in a way, swallowed by it.' Similarly, the English and the Dutch in the seventeenth century also worked to a certain extent within the established indigenous oceanic structures and routes.

Pearson (2003) suggests that like wind and currents, oceans knew no frontiers, however, from 1500-1800 the India Ocean came to include all areas between the Red Sea and the Straits of Malacca. To which Australia and Southern Africa were added by the twentieth century. Moreover, he sees considerable unity in weather patterns, especially monsoons and in ports, ships and sailors. Further, he adds to the list, the distribution of similar commodities, especially cotton, which majority of the inhabitants across the Indian Ocean wore, that came from production centres in Gujarat, Coromandel, and Bengal. There were also other commonalities like religious activities, especially the Muslim hajj, which was crucial to the working of a large and complex cultural and trade network in the pre-modern and early-

modern period. Similarly, James de Vere Allen (1993) argues for three layers of unity: racial, influenced by patterns of migration, cultural pertaining to India, and religious primarily referring to Islam. In contrast, K. N. Chaudhuri (1985), with the primary objective of reading the unity and disunity and the continuity and discontinuity of the Indian Ocean, offers a structural explanation. For Chaudhuri (1985) the ocean blend into Asia, which for him comprises of four civilizations: Islamic, Sanskritic Indian, Chinese, and Southeast Asian.

Further, mobility of diaspora as a frame can itself provide important tools, which allow for a deeper understanding of international politics. For the purpose of this research, this approach becomes urgent in contemporary times because many Hadramis and Siddis have migrated to the Gulf as labour while their families stay behind in Hyderabad. Here the composite of Hadrami identity as 'Hadrami', 'Indian', 'Arab' or 'Muslim' plays out in complex ways. Similarly, Siddi identity as 'African', 'Arab', 'Indian' or 'Muslim' works itself in complicated ways (Manger 2010). Moreover, by looking at groups which migrated to the Indian Subcontinent – a non-western location – this research explores alternatives frames of identity negotiation. That is, by recognising Siddis and Hadramis as historically constituted diasporic communities in the Indian Ocean region, this study interrogates identity as traslocal. This study also engages with the intergroup dynamics between the Siddis and Hadramis in Hyderabad city.

In an era of mass human migration and proliferation of new technologies of representation, this study intends to understand how ideas frame identities. It is the contention of this study that modes and methods of representation, understood within the discursive power hierarchies that exist in the contemporary global order, can provide a dynamic and creative site for engagement with diasporic and racial identities. Importantly, this study locates its interrogation of identity at the site of the ordinary or the everyday. Such sites are habituated by all who jointly participate in the creation of new contexts and in the removal of old contexts. Thus, the everyday becomes the

site where the boundaries get blurred. It also becomes a site where subjectivities interact with the contemporary world (Das et al 2000).

Conceptualising Diaspora

The word 'diaspora' derives from the Greek word *Speiro* (to sow) and the preposition *Dia* (over). In ancient Greece it was used to refer to Human migration or colonization. (Cohen 1999; Sheffer 2003) Sheffer (1986, 2003) in line with Safran (1991) and Reis (2004) argues that the term diaspora since antiquity has been used to refer to two ethno national groups, namely Greeks and Jews, who established themselves outside their homelands as a result of both voluntary and forced migration. He writes, "Among those who are aware of the origin of the term, it is widely believed that the term first appeared in the Greek translation of the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, with reference to the situation of the Jewish people – "Thou shalt be a diaspora in all kingdoms of the earth" (Deut. 28, 25). Yet the term had also been used by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War* (II, 27) to describe the dispersal of the Aeginetans" (Sheffer 2003: 9). Moreover, till 1970's most dictionaries also described the word 'diaspora' as the Jewish population living outside Israel. These scholars' emphasis catastrophic origins and forced nature of migration as a core of diaspora formation. For example, Reis (2004) drawing on Safran's (1991) work defines Diaspora as

> 1. Dispersal from an original "centre"... 2. Retention of a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland... 3. The belief that they are not – and perhaps never can be – fully accepted in their host societies... 4. The idealization of the putative ancestral home and the thought of returning... 5. The belief that all members should be committed to the maintenance or restoration of the original homeland... 6. A strong ethnic group consciousness... (Reis, 2004: 43).

Similarly, taking the afore mentioned approach, Sheffer (1986) defines diaspora as "ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands" (Sheffer 1986: 3). Further, Sheffer (2003) identifies main approaches that have been employed to understand diasporas. Firstly, there are the 'primodialists' or 'essentialists' who emphasize physical, cultural or historical markers to explain the persistence of

ethnic diasporas. Secondly, there are the 'instrumentalists' who see group identification to diaspora identities as strategies serving some form of rational interest. Thirdly, there are 'constructionists' like Benedict Anderson (1991) whose thesis of 'Imaginary Communities' and Hobsbawm (1990) whose analysis of nationalism has been borrowed by many to explain the persistence of ethnic identities in diasporas. Lastly, there is the those who believe that adherence to ethnic identity has less to do with primordial factor and more to do with inter-subjectivity. Such theorists generally trace migration and diaspora formation as a historical process (Sheffer 2003).

Cohen (1999) offers various categories to locate the problematique of diasporas. In context of this study, he places displacement due to colonization or due to slave trade under the category 'victim diaspora', which also includes identities like the Armenians, the Palestinians and the Jews. He places Arab emigration under the category of 'trade diaspora' which includes groups like Chinese in Southeast Asia or Lebanese in Latin America. Moreover, diasporic groups usually settle outside their natural or imagined homelands – a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom, and folklore. This idea of an imagined or real homeland usually lays claim on the self-definition of these communities and the individuals in them. These claims vary in their influence depending on the context, members adherence to a diasporic identity, an acknowledgement of a past migratory history and a sense of co-ethnicity with individuals of similar backgrounds (Cohen 1999).

However, today, the term 'diaspora' is used more inclusively. The drawback of such an exercise has been that the term is usually used either in an undertheorized or an untheorized manner. Therefore, the casual usage of the term 'diaspora' has resulted in a lack of conceptual clarity and consistency in its definition. However, as scholars have pointed out, this may not necessarily be a futile endeavour and that departure from the traditional definition is both urgent and necessarily (Cohen 1999; Varadaraja 2010; Mirzai et al 2009; Jayasuriya and Angenot 2008). Therefore, the idea of diaspora has come to represent varied meanings in different studies.

A more contemporary understanding of the term is captured cogently in the following sentence,

> for people to belong to a particular ethnic group, they should ascribe themselves as such and others must also see them as such. An ethnic group shares a common genealogy or ancestry and has perceived common cultural, linguistic and religious practices" (Jayasuriya and Angenot 2008: 8).

For Axel (2004) diaspora is a semantic category that refers to a group of people who locate their context or lack of a context in their apparent places of origin. Therefore, as a category, it is a link between the past and the present. For Menon (2006) this is a contested site with multiple genealogies. Varadarajan (2010) who also defines diasporas inclusively argues,

> the sense of belonging to a common homeland... is socially as well as politically constructed through the interactions among members of a community, through their being marked as different in their host societies, and through the institutionalization of their relationship with the homeland (Varadarajan 2010: 9).

Furthermore, Chekuri and Muppidi (2010) invert the general approach towards the concept of 'homeland' and argue that this phase where we understand identities by placing them within imaginatively and territorially discreet 'homelands' is an exceptional phase in the history of humanity. They argue that Hyderabad city offers an example of a space that participated in processes of globalisation and witnessed globalised identities, that is 'supply, reception, and circulation of diasporas,' in two distinct phases of human history – namely, the post fordist information economy and the pre-modern Indo-Islamic world.

Certain theoretical and conceptual problems emerge when referring to 'homeland' as a concept. In many cases it is never clear if there is a homeland or where the homeland/s are. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, because the word 'diaspora' is variously understood, it is not clear in most cases which groups qualify as diaspora. Therefore, the question arises that having stayed and adapted to their current homes, can Siddis be considered as diaspora? This has been a matter of contention in the West, where Trans-Atlantic slavery has been extensively studied. As most people of African origin identify themselves as part of the western world, their categorization as a diasporic group can create problems. However, these communities in the West like

those around the Indian Ocean are implicated in genealogies of slave trade, imperial conquest, colonialism, and the project of modernity. Therefore, as Gilroy (1993) argues, it is vital to stress that displacement due to slavery has created hybrid diasporic groups whose histories have been lost yet their ties are cemented by literature, music, a shared history of forced migration, political ideas, religious convictions and rituals, and life style patterns. These communities share a sense of history – not of their origins but of their beginnings in these new lands – that is distinct from national histories in which they are embedded. Moreover, they share a common culture of literature, music, food, political ideas, and religious belief and practices. It is here that the concept of ‘homeland’ and ‘host’ overlap to the point that both are equally important for self-identification (Warner-Lewis 2009; Dobronravin 2009; Edmondson 1986). Moreover, Zeleza (2010) argues that the hegemony of the Trans-Atlantic frame in the understanding of African diasporas has created problems for future scholarship. He argues that any student of African diaspora faces the critical challenge of confronting two problems: the frames of analysis that are employed and the histories that are mapped (Zeleza 2010). Contrary to this approach, Campbell (2008) has argued that the universalization of the victim diaspora trope for African involuntary migration limits the possibilities of understanding processes of identity formation in which this diaspora is embedded. He argues that local and historic context are more relevant to developing an understanding of African diaspora.

Further, there is the issue of reciprocity in relations between the homeland and the diaspora (Sheffer 1986, 2003; Cohen 1999; Reis 2004; Axel 2004). For example, the Hadramis in India continue to maintain familial, religious, cultural, and economic ties with Yemen and have on occasions even petitioned the Yemeni Embassy in India for help, yet, the reciprocity of the Yemeni state to this community has not been forthcoming. Manger (2010) also points out that when diaspora Hadramis visit Yemen, they are treated with ridicule and suspicion. This is especially true for Hadramis of mixed birth.

Walker (2013) in context of a ‘cosmopolitan space’ like the Indian Ocean, argues that both homeland and host society can mean ‘home’ to

varying degrees, as they are constituted and reconstituted through continuous circulation of individuals. He contends that

> "Home" is a category that extends from the physical through the social to the imaginary, underpinned by various beliefs and fears... [b]oth the beliefs and the fears are real, in the sense that they frame choices, provide parameters for behaviour and contribute to the construction of identities (Walker 2013: 448).

Ho (2002, 2004, 2006, 2007) tries to provide an answer for this predicament to which the contemporary focus of diaspora studies elides a clear answer – that is, an comprehensive understanding of diasporas like the Hadramis and Siddis in non-western spaces. To begin with, he differentiates between diaspora as a sociality – the traditional understanding with Jewish diaspora as a model, which understands diaspora as a homogeneous group that became mobile. And diaspora as a composite or what he calls the British model – in which a disparate set of people become mobile and then become homogenous, as was in the case of the British Empire where the British became a people as they became an empire. Ho (2004) argues that the Hadrami diaspora is a mix of both, the Jewish diaspora and the British diaspora, because it began as a homogenous group but ended as a composite. Arabs have always been seafaring societies, but even within them Hadramis have been the most visible. It is usually Hadrami men who travel and marry locally. Their children have a Creole identity of half Arab, half local, and fully Muslim. They usually form third communities inhabiting port towns, example, Javanese, Malay, Swahili, Malabari, Gujarati etc. Together with these Creole identities, a meta-identity was forged which connected these peoples along the Indian Ocean Rim. Similarly, Siddis form a composite identity where in spite of different origins they have a distinct understanding of their past and have retained cultural symbols, rituals, and habits which can be traced to East Africa (Basu 2002; Shroff 2012).

Traditionally diaspora identities have been resilient to changing contexts and circumstances. This has implications for a world connected in multiple ways across times and regions. Further, the trans-state networks created by ethnic diasporas consists of complex and interesting triadic relationships between the diasporic communities, their homelands, and their

host societies. The politics of these triadic relationships can also influence considerable control over societies other than those identified as homeland or host societies. Therefore, undertaking specific and detailed study of diasporic communities has serious implications for the present day international system, which usually defines its self by flattening the myriad identities and histories that exist within the borders of its states (Varadarajan 2010; Cohen 1999; Sheffer 2003, 1986).

Locating Diaspora

The purpose of this study is to engage with the histories of migration of the Siddi and the Hadrami community in Hyderabad. The Siddi community came to India mostly as slaves. Sources place them roughly in Nubia, Sudan, and Ethiopia, however, forced migration was an established practice by the early colonial period in the Saharan region, and it is speculated that some might have come from the Sahel region **(**Ingrams and Plankurst 2008; Jayasuriya 2008; Vernet 2009**).** Hadramis hail from the Red Sea region of Hadramawth, which is now part of The Republic of Yemen. Migration from Hadramawth was mostly voluntary and for the purposes of trade, religious activity or both. The Hadramis were instrumental in the spread of Islam along the Indian Ocean Rim and in weaving complex networks of kinship and economic relationships along its port cities (Ho 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007; Manger 2010).

This research engages with these two diasporic groups in the city of Hyderabad. Hyderabad is an important site for the study of these two groups because of two reasons. Firstly, it is a city located in the interior of Deccan and therefore, not on the Indian Ocean, and yet, it has been deeply implicated in Indian Oceans biosphere of economic, cultural, and religious activities. Secondly, as a part of Dar-al-Islam and as an important trading centre, Hyderabad has hosted a thriving cosmopolitan society since the early sixteenth century and therefore, can best be studied within the framework of mobility (Chekuri and Muppidi 2010). Thus, it forms a significant site for the study of cosmopolitan identities like the Siddis and the Hadramis.

Both Siddis and Hadramis established their presence in Hyderabad only under the Asaf Jahi Dynasty (1724-1948). Further, both these communities occupied relatively prestigious positions under the Asaf Jahis. The Siddis formed the imperial guard of the Nizam of Hyderabad, whereas, the Hadramis were given land grants for tax collection and were recruited as soldiers by both the Nizam, his nobility and the Rajas of Hyderabad (Sherwani 1981). Manger (2010) writes "[i]t seems certain, therefore, that prominent Hadrami families, such as Al Quaiti, Al Awlaqi and Al Kathiri, financed their involvement in Hadrami politics with their Hyderabad affairs, thus providing a direct link between the history of Hyderabad and the eventual emergence of two dominant sultanates in Hadramaut, the Quaiti and the Kathiri" (Manger 2010: 46).

As both the communities are predominantly Muslim and the ruling elite of Hyderabad city were also predominantly Muslim, the processes of integration and assimilation that these communities initiated or resisted have important bearing for understanding identity formation. Further, in post independent India both communities have faced extreme marginalization. Thus, the central idea behind this research is to engage with questions of identity as they were framed under the postcolonial Indian state.

Immigrant narratives are incomplete without their genealogy (Menon 2006). It is in this tension between the lived present and its history that this research will locate itself. Thus, this research would seek to locate the two communities under consideration in the interstices of the past and the present. This study intends to contribute towards a critical understanding of diasporic and racial identity located within an oceanic region – the Indian Ocean – that has seen histories of many communities intertwine. Through the study of Siddi and Hadrami diaspora in Hyderabad, this study proposes to engage with concepts like assimilation and integration in a non-western site by focusing on genealogies of migration and mobility in this region.

Local Cosmopolitans: Situating the Hadrami Diaspora in the Indian Ocean

Hadramawth is a wadi in South Yemen which is separated from the coast by a plateau. Though ports like Al Shihir have played an important role in commerce, the wadi has been inward looking, facing the great Arabian expanse. The scholars and warriors of wadi are subjects of legends and it occupies an important place in early Islamic history. Hadramawth

> has an importance quite disproportionate to the size or the position of the country, firstly because it was the fount of Islamic learning for so many lands and secondly because its peculiar, ancient, and still surviving institutions can by the comparative method, throw rays of light upon many of Islamic and Arabian history (Serjeant 1962: 239).

Arabs migrated to India, the East African coast, and Southeast Asia through pre-Islamic times. However, according to Le Guennec Coppens (1989)

> East African history suggests that certain periods were more auspicious than others for Hadrami emigration. There seem to have been at least two distinct periods (first from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, the second from the eighteenth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries) (Le Guennec Coppens 1989: 185).

The first phase of migration was dominated by the upper class groups, namely Sayyids, who trace their lineage to Prophet Mohammed and Masheikhs, who trace their genealogy to local elites and educated scholars. They travelled as religious teachers and traders.

Migration during the second phase, in addition to the Sayyids and the Masheikhs, included many poor people, who left to find employment in the plantation economies initiated by Omanis (to be later integrated into the colonial enterprise) on East African Coasts or to Southeast Asian cities. Therefore, the people who migrated represented a cross section of the society, from Alawi Sayyids to tribesmen to poor people. The activities people engaged in included trade, religious activity, and other jobs, including menial and clerical jobs. In the second phase of migration, most Hadramis were poor, but known for their thrift and hard work they soon prospered and were able to

establish themselves from Lamu to Singapore (Curtin 1984, 1985; Romero 1987; Le Guennec Coppens 1989; Manger 2010; Agius 2012).

Therefore, regional histories can shed a new light on the self-understanding of being a Muslim, both as an individual and as a collectivity. This aspect is usually overlooked in most studies that tend to focus on globalizing modernity as influencing Islam and propagating a global/radicalized Muslim identity at the loss of local identity registers. This focus on either local or global makes invisible the multidimensionality of Muslim identity that uses regional identifications in self-understanding (Ho 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007, Marsen 2008; Manger 2010).

Ho (2004) traces the relationship between Empire and Diaspora by presenting an important intervention in the analysis of contemporary world politics from the perspective of 'diaspora'. His work is based on extensive study of Hadrami diaspora in Southeast Asia and Western Indian Coast. He argues that today, European colonialism has been supplanted by American imperialism. Further, Ho (2002, 2004, 2006, 2007) contends that 'diaspora' as a category, especially the diasporas in the Indian Ocean, can offer a better understanding of contemporary identities and their politics. This he argues keeping in mind the past Portuguese, Dutch, English, and Spanish commitments in the Indian Ocean, the present American ones, and the war on terror - Osama Bin Laden as a member of the Hadrami diaspora in Saudi Arabia. Thus, the diaspora offer a novel way of understanding the power relations where the dualism of postcolonial theory fails because while the postcolonial assertion views power dualistically and is geographically parochial, colonialism was composite and imperial in its outlook. He traces the spread of a Pan-Islamic collective representation in the Indian Ocean space as a parallel to an equally universalistic colonial epistemology. Instance of clashes between the Empire and Hadrami diaspora are abound in the Indian Ocean rim, example, in Aceh in 1945 and in Malabar in 1921. Those, clashes were embedded not only in struggle over resources, but also, in a clash of two universal ideas which still continues into contemporary times (Ho 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007).

In his analysis of colonialism, Ho (2004) introduces the concept of ‘mobile cosmopolitans’ – people who lived as minorities, ‘trading communities’ or indentured labour, but whose existence depended on traversing the limits of empires. The biggest difference between the European and Arabic frames of understanding the ocean were that, the older system of trade that existed in the Indian Ocean did not belong to any state and the ocean was not seen as a unity. Thus, trans-regional spaces like the Indian Ocean were not shaped through a unitary imagination but through genealogical structures and religion. That is, the mobility of Hadrami Sayyids in specific and Muslims in general, was instrumental to the creation of Indian Ocean as a space. Therefore, Hadrami scholars, Muslim cosmopolitanism who traversed the ocean, can be understood through trans-regional forms of mobility and through constructive engagement with Muslim personal and collective self-understanding, which was structured around the trans-regional Indian Ocean world (Marsden 2008). So much so that Bang (2011, 2012) writes, “Migration as a coping strategy has ancient roots in South Arabia. The monsoon winds made for predictable travel to India, the Malay world and East Africa in times of trouble. To read the family tree of a Hadrami lineage is like reading a map of the Indian Ocean. From about the thirteenth century one will find the notes on each individual: he died in Java, he died in Pate, he died in Lamu, he died in Calicut” (Bang 2011: 96). Further, Mandal (2011) argues in line with Ho (2002, 2004) that the consciousness of being Hadrami in the diaspora arose only after the Hadramis left Hadramawth. Moreover, this consciousness has become more political since the various national movements gripped the Indian Ocean, erasing many marginal histories.

In the sixteenth century, the Portuguese introduced the garrison system, which Venice and Genoa had used in the Mediterranean. This was the introduction of a unitary Indian Ocean to global markets as state and trade started colluding. Martinez d’Alos-Moner writes

> [w]ithin a time span of less than ten years, the seamen of King Dom Manuel I captured key positions from which they came to dominate the trade that flowed across the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea: Kilwa, Sofala, and Cochin (1505), Goa (1510), Malacca (1511), and Hormuz (1515). A few years after these conquests, the

> Portuguese added to their possessions important positions in north west India: Damão (Daman, 1531), Salsette, Bombay (Mumbai), and Baçaim (Vasai, 1534), and Diu (1535) (Martinez d'Alos-Moner 2012: 2).

However, in spite of their military domination of the Indian Ocean and a fortress on the island Socotra, the Portuguese could not ever control the Red Sea. After the Arabs, the traffic on the Red Sea was controlled first by the Ottoman and then the British.

Migration out of Yemen and Hadramawth happened for many reasons, which include a demographics, famine, flood, internal wars etc. These migrants, mostly men, married locally and were able to in the course of time establish networks between the port cities that they inhabited. The children of these migrants were of Creole identity and continued to inhabit their motherlands. These children would on occasion travel back to Hadramawth for education, visiting family or religious homage, but, most returned back to their native towns (Bujra 1967a, 1967b; Frietag 1997; Manger 2010; Bang 2011, 2012).

They were instrumental in the coming up of nascent states like the Comoros islands or Zanzibar. In many places, where they did not form the royalty, they took over the political power through their economic success, as in the case of Lamu, Kano, Kilwa etc. on East African coast. Moreover, they influenced these places culturally, linguistically, in religious thought and practice, in food and in habits (Walker 2007). Thus, they were able to establish a network of commercial ports, trading routes, and entre points all along the Indian Ocean that persisted even after the Portuguese intervention right up to the colonization of the Indian Ocean in the eighteenth century (Martin 1974; Le Guennec Coppens 1989).

The influence of Islam and Arabic has been so great on the coastal people and their culture, that Swahili, which is markedly different from mainland Bantu, has been described in its essence as Arabic. Though Persian has had an older contact with Swahili, it is Arabic that contributed the most to the development of the language (Harris 1964). Similarly, Parkin (1989) and

Askew (1999) suggest that it is important to study the Arabic influences on the East African Coastline critically in contemporary politics. The divisions between Swahili and African, Arab and Swahili etc. have roots in colonial knowledge systems that tried to categorize and simplify the lived life through scientific methods on the East African Coastline (Parkin 1989; Askew 1999; Issa 2012).

In Hadramawth, society is stratified traditionally along the lines of Sada and non-Sada groups. Sada groups comprises of the Sayyids or descendants of Prophet Mohammed, who are the religious/*Ulema*, political and social elites. Whereas, non-Sada groups comprises of: the Masheikhs who have considerable status but are not equals of the Sada; the Qabail who are the tribal groups; Da'fa who are traders and market labour; and the Akhdam who are the servants (Bujra 1967a, 1967b; Le Guennec Coppens 1989; Knysh, 1999, 2001; Manger 2010). Knysh (1999) in a critical essay on Hadrami historiography shows that the earliest recorded sources in Hadrami history, which were usually hagiographic works, were written by Sada group members and present a subjective, thus favourable analysis of the group. This is especially relevant for texts on religious and political history that talk about the spread of the Sufi brotherhood *Tariqa-Alawiya*.

In the recent past, conflicts in the Hadrami society have usually been galvanized along the lines of Sada and non-Sada. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a conflict referred to as Alawi-Irshadi conflict broke out amongst the Hadrami diaspora in Indonesia and Singapore (Bujra 1967a, 1967b; Mobini-Kesheh 1996; Alatas 1999; Manger 2010). This conflict soon spread across different Hadrami communities with a significant impact on politics in Yemen. Similarly, after the Second World War, during the Yemeni Revolution, two camps came into conflict with each other, these were pro and anti Republican camps, with one advocating change and the other upholding the status quo. In both these conflicts that happened at the time of major social change in the Yemeni society the conflicting groups comprised of Sada as defenders of status quo and non-Sada as advocates of change (Bujra 1967a, 1967b; Mobini-Kesheh 1996; Alatas 1999; Knysh 1999, 2001; Manger 2010).

In Yemen, Sada domination is maintained through marriage whereby, "... the Arab social strata hierarchy is based on: the principle of marital conformity with a tendency towards *hypergamy* (the brides given within the same strata or above, whereas the grooms marry social equals or below); a system of declared /manipulated genealogies; the specific distribution of social and economic functions" (Rodionov 2006: 182).

In the diasporic context also, marital conformity is maintained, especially, for women. Curtin (1984, 1985) in her anthropological study of marriage patterns in Lamu, Kenya argues that marriages were features of maintaining class divisions, where the elite Afro-Arabs (mostly Omani ruling class) married only into the leadership of the island or within their community. Similarly, Hadrami women in Lamu tend to marry within their class and always within their community (Curtin 1984, 1985; Romero 1987). Manger (2010) has shown similar marriage patterns in Hadramis in Singapore. Further, he points out that the Alawi-Irshadi conflict that started in Indonesia and Singapore was over the possibility of marriage between a Sada woman and a non-Sayyid man (Manger 2010; de Jonge 2012). Moreover, to maintain control over property, marriages within family are encouraged.

Trade and religious networks that were established by the Arabs along the Indian Ocean rim have been studied in great detail, especially, as these have also been the vehicles of proselytizing. Alatas (1999) writes, "[t]he *tariqah al-'alawiyyah* is the path of the *Sadat Bani 'alawiyyah*. The *Sadah al-'alawiyyah* (sing, *sayyid*), of the Shafi'i *madhab* (school of jurisprudence), originate from Hadramawth, Yemen and played a major role in the Islamization of East Africa, Southern India and Indonesian Archipelago" (Alatas 1999: 323). *Tariqah al-'alawiyyah* it has been claimed has played a major role in this, by providing networks for Hadrami and Hijazi Sayyids to travel, preach, and on many occasions establish religious schools (Mobini-Kesheh 1996; Alatas 1999; Manger 2010; Burja 1967a, 1967b; Ho 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007**;** Swaleh 2013). However, Swaleh (2013) in his detailed study of Kizingitini village in Kenya has shown how the Sayyid dominated Sufi brotherhood of *Tariqah al-'alawiyyah* was restricted to elite groups along

the East African coastline, alienating many in the masses. It was Wahabi preachers and schools that then stepped in to do the work of proselytizing, employing unique and creative pedagogic methods. Thus, reverberations of Sada and non-Sada groups can be traced through the history of people, ports and cities along the Indian Ocean rim.

Vigorous Hadrami migration starting nineteenth century was a result of the wide ranging transformation of the political economy of the Red Sea following the introduction of steamship navigation in the 1830s and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 (Dubois 2002; Miran 2012; Mobini-Kesheh 1996). Hadramis' adopted various strategies of survival in different locations. In addition to religious activities, Hadramis were traders. As Miran (2012) writes,

> Hadrami entrepreneurs settled in most Red Sea and Gulf of Aden ports and played a dominant role in weaving together different kinds of business, labour, and transportation networks to create a dynamic space of exchange and interaction. They operated within the regional, interregional, and translocal networks of the southern Red Sea zone and within a wider diasporic system linking Hadramis throughout the Indian Ocean area (Miran 2012: 131).

Hadramis being part of a trans-regional system within which they travelled and migrated regularly, adopted different strategies for assimilation and identification. In Eritrea, they came as religious scholars and exerted their authority by converting their capital into political power, that is, by heading public offices and by participating in municipal, commercial and religious boards. Moreover, here they did not form communal associations like those that are characteristic of Hadrami communities in South and Southeast Asia. For example, in Southeast Asia, Hadramis organized around communal – Arab (not including Malay Muslims) – associations that handled Wakf properties, education, business, religious activities, and travel (Manger 2010). However, like elsewhere, the Hadrami community was deeply implicated in the Hajj travels, that is, they organized and facilitated pilgrimage to Mecca (Miran 2012; Kifleyesus 2012). Further, management of Wakf has been an important feature of Hadrami communities, this being especially true of the Sada groups, as it allows control of community and family property. For example, in Eritrea, Wakf "served as one of several ways to acquire symbolic

capital in the processes of integration into Massawa's structures of governance and the development of political authority and power" (Miran 2012: 146).

Recoveries: The Siddi Diaspora around the Indian Ocean

There are around 250,000 people of African descent living in India and Pakistan. In India they are present in Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Daman and Diu. They are usually referred to by two ethnonyms, namely Siddi signifying that they worked as bodyguards for the ruling class Sayyids and Habshi signifying that they hail from Habash or Ethiopia (Leonard, 2003). However, some settlements use their tribe names like Shemali or Somali of Jampur, Kafara of Diu who are most probably from Mozambique or South Africa, and Saheli of Daman who might be from Kenya-Tanzanian coast. They speak local languages of the regions where they have settled. Siddis of Sachin, Jafarabad, Radhanpur, Aurangabad, and Hyderabad are royal Siddis who unlike the other settlements intermarry with upper caste Muslims (Lodhi, 1992). According to a 2003 documentary by filmmaker Beheroze Shroff and ethnomusicologist Nazir Jairazbhoy and Amy Catlin- Jairazbhoy, Siddis have retained their musical and dance traditions from East Africa. Moreover, this knowledge of instruments and rituals is passed on over the generations through oral traditions. Similarly, Basu's (2002) pioneering anthropological study provides an emphasis on memory and reinvented identities by focusing on contemporary Siddi communities of Gujarat and the rituals around the *dargah* of Bava Gor in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

Africa and Asia have been connected through trade since at least two millenniums. People migrated both as slaves and voluntarily through trade for centuries. However, slavery in the Indian Ocean and use of Black African slaves has been recorded in history since the Roman times. Ethiopians used to dominate the trade routes of the Indian Ocean before the Arabs. Under Arabs the Indian Ocean transformed into a complex network of trade and kinship, linking the whole Indian Ocean system from the Red Sea to Malaysia (Jayasuriya 2008; Machado 2008; Manger 2012). Therefore, Shroff (2012) writes, "[a] long history of trade, commerce, and travel connects the African

continent and India. Even though Africans have been travelling to India as traders, merchants, soldiers, domestic servants, and slaves from various parts of Africa via different routes, their migrations have not been chronologically systematic, linear, or continuous" (Shroff 2010: 315).

Research on slavery in the Indian Ocean has been difficult amongst other reasons because of language barriers. The languages used include not just Arabic but also Swahili, Hausa, Malinke, Bantu, Amharic, Persian, Urdu, Sinhalese, Tamil, Chinese, Portuguese, French etc. Further, access to documentation and the representation of slavery under Islam in European literature requires specialized training and careful analysis (Jayasuriya 2008; Mirzai et al 2009). This problem is compounded by the fact that in most societies there are very little documented accounts that refer to slavery (Mirzai et al 2009). Moreover, in absence of first person accounts, recovering enslaved voices can become an even more challenging task for any research that claims to focus of former slave communities. Toledano (2007, 2009) in his study of Ottoman-African slaves contends that it is possible to recover their experiences and to 'interpret them within a satisfactory sociocultural framework'. This can be done by paying attention to actions of slaves, references to which are abound in primary sources. By locating these actions in the larger political, social, and cultural context derived from other studies, one can ascribe intent and motivation to actions and through them reconstruct part of the narrative of history.

Africans themselves, especially Swahili people, were deeply implicated in early slave trade along with the Arabs, before it took on a scalar proportion under colonialism. (Vernet 2009) Scholarship on slavery and Islam contends that slave trade was not at the scale that was witnessed under the colonial maritime empires, however, it existed and was an acceptable institution. Moreover, it was as exploitative and oppressive as Trans-Atlantic slave trade (Toledano 2009; Kravets 2009; Mirzai 2009; Vernet 2009). However, ivory, gold and cotton remained the main commodities that were traded in these waters. Gold, ivory, cotton or cloth were more lucrative goods

to trade in and were usually used as currency for purchasing slaves (Pinto 2008; Vernet 2009).

Nevertheless, the nineteenth century saw a steady rise of African slave labour coming to India. Portuguese and Gujarati merchants monopolized this business around that time. Slaves as domestic help or personal guards were symbols of prestige in colonial India, although, in most cases they did not exercise much freedom of choice. Moreover, female slave labour from Africa was usually sold into prostitution (Machado 2008; Pinto 2008). As most slaves were mixed and sold like property into indentured labour, they could never find enough kinsmen to preserve their cultures and language (Yimene 2012).

By the end of eighteenth century, slave trade was well established between Mozambique (which opened up as a major slave market after the anti-slavery British embargo in the Atlantic Ocean in 1806 because the demand for slaves in Brazil was still high) and Portuguese Indian Territories of Goa, Daman, and Diu. From these ports slaves were further sold to other ports under the Portuguese, to the British tea plantations in Ceylon, to American Slavers, to the French Territories like Pondicherry or redirected inland to Kathiawar and Kutch, because Dui fell in that system of commerce which was centred on Kathiawar. Many Gujarati Businessmen had established themselves in Mozambique early eighteenth century onwards. These merchants were initially involved in indirect slavery as they dealt in Gujarati cloth which was sold in exchange for slaves, but then they slowly entered the slave market as direct owners and sellers of slaves and held a monopoly in South Asia. Examples are Laxmichand Motichand, Shobhachand Sowchand, and Amirchand Meghaji. Khoja and Bohri businessmen started becoming active in Madagascar mid nineteenth century onwards but were integrated into Dutch and Arab trade routes instead of the Portuguese, French, and British trade routes (Machado 2008).

Most Africans who came to India as slaves converted to Islam and were given Muslim names, which enabled their assimilation (Basu 2002; Shroff 2012). But evidence also exists to the contrary, which is that most

Africans came to the Indian Subcontinent as practicing Muslims. Islam formed a common bond of identity (Yimene 2012; Basu 2002; Shroff 2012). One of the better known African slaves in the Deccan include, “Malik Ambar, the habshi commander of the Nizam Shahi army and then effective ruler of the Ahmadnagar kingdom from 1607 until his death in 1626” (Michell and Johar 2012: 70). Or the rulers of the naval fortress on Janjira Islands, off the coast of Mumbai, which they ruled undefeated for over three centuries (Shroff 2012).

In the case of Hyderabad, the neighbourhood African Cavalry Guards is a site that links most people of African descent to a common past. Moreover, it functions as a site where complex kinship bonds have been developed between people of African descent – both Muslims and Christians – and some people of Yemeni descent (Yimene 2012).

Last two sections intends to present the translocal or transregional characteristics of the Siddi and the Hadrami diaspora around the Indian Ocean, by locating them within frames migration, kinship, trade, and Islam. Further, though there are generalizations that can be drawn about the structure of Siddi and Hadrami communities, it should be evident from their histories that these are highly adaptive groups which cannot be essentialised.

Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study

Definition

In this study migration and diasporic groups are treated as historically constituted, with genealogies that intersect with other groups and as embedded in various contexts. (Menon 2006) That is, no two diasporic groups can be treated as the same and that contestations should be allowed within these groups. It is important to stress these points because in contemporary times labour migration from the subcontinent to the Gulf countries has been understood as something recent, that is, within the broad framework of neoliberal globalization and not as something that has a historical precedent.

Historically, most diasporic groups around the Indian Ocean rim have long and chequered encounters with globalisation that converged and diverged at various points and therefore, cannot be conclusively cast under overarching umbrella explanations. For the purpose of this study, globalisation is understood as a historic phenomenon which was carried out through trade, war, empire building, and human migrations throughout history (Hopkins 2002; Bayly 2003; Barkawi 2006; Pieterse 2009; Appadurai 2003).

Many contemporary scholars include any group residing outside their imagined or real homeland as a diaspora group, that is, they define this category inclusively (Sheffer 1986, 2003; Cohen 1999; Reis 2004; Axel 2004). However, for those scholars for whom definitional clarity is a concern, the Jewish diaspora is still taken as a standard for analysis. For the purpose of this research diaspora is understood as an inclusive category and thus, treated as such. Therefore, 'diaspora' is defined as any group that ascribes to itself an identity different from the rest and is viewed as such by others. Moreover, 'diaspora' is understood as a group of people who move to a host society but maintains a distinct identity through religious, social or cultural practices and beliefs and who share a sense of similar pasts. Here the study agrees with scholars like Varadarajan (2010) and Cohen (1999) who have argued for departing from the old model of understanding diaspora as a concept which take the Jewish diaspora as the ideal. Older studies are entrenched in understanding the roots of diaspora as forced migration and catastrophic origins, which according to this study, limit the understanding of both diaspora experience in various societies and those groups which can be understood as diaspora. For example, of the groups that are studied in this research, one migrated voluntarily, while the other was forced into slavery. However, the experiences and migration histories of both the groups have been intertwined with the Nizams of Hyderabad and post-independent India. Both groups in this study enjoyed a degree of autonomy and prestige under the Asaf Jahis, which has been denied to them in modern India. Thus, it is problematic to essentialise Siddis as only 'victims' or as a group whose origins are located in a catastrophic beginning and subsequent forced migration. Similarly, though Hadramis travelled as soldiers to Hyderabad, they too suffer extreme

marginalization in modern India. But, both the groups have contributed to the making and the fabric of the society that they have inhabited and it would be fallacious to deny them their agency. For the purpose of this study, ideas of race and racism are understood as social and political constructions, which are context specific. Further, knowledge production, that is the role of intellectuals and activists, as been treated as central to contemporary ideas of Africa and African identity.

For the purpose of this study, *the frame of mobility* will be used as a primary factor in understanding diasporas. Further, the term 'diasporic' refers to all the constitutive features of a diasporas social, cultural and political formation and the real and imagined boundaries that are maintained by these diasporic groups, which are of discursively, political and social contingent. These boundaries do not pertain to the physical or geographical limits but to psychological, social, and cultural lines along which identities are constantly defined and struggles waged.

Rationale

Theorisations on Race and diaspora in the context of South Asia are inadequate and it is this lacunae that this research intends to address. The rationale behind this study is to engage with racial, religious and diasporic histories; to understand how diasporic identity – Indian, Arab, African, Black African and Muslim – is framed, realised, experienced, and enacted, and to specifically develop an understanding of identity in a non-western and non-statist mobility frame. This is done by making different modes of mobility the fulcrum on which identity in the Indian Ocean region is constructed, This research is broadly anchored in diaspora studies, race studies and in the Indian Ocean region, therefore, it engages with the past and situated practices of the present from a perspective that is not rooted in rigid territorial divisions. The concept we understand as diaspora inherently complicates the picture of a world neatly cut into territorial states. Moreover, diasporic identities provide a productive site for engagement with the processes of identity formation and tactical deployment of collective practices.

Historians like Harris (1971), Alpers (1972) and Sadiq Ali (1996), concern themselves with answering as well as posing questions for future research, in face of both limited research done on African dispersal through Asia and absences of documentation and narratives.[1] This study focuses on two such concerns: the attitudes that the African diaspora faced and methods of assimilation or acculturation deployed by the receiving populations (themselves migrant elites many times); and how as race been conceptualised in an Asian context and how has this conceptualisation evolved through time. The presence of 'self-contained communities of African descent' in western and southern Asia, like the Siddis in India, make apparent that further research is needed in understanding the histories of migration of these communities and the reasons why

> black people have remained in separate, isolated communities means that they have not been in the mainstream of the history of the countries in which they reside. Although those separate communities were not developed by deliberate legal machinery, as it occurred in some Western countries, the attitude and actions of many Asians and Afro-Asians has been influenced by the latter's general isolation from the dominant community (Harris 1972: xii).[2]

This does not in any way imply that Afro-Asian communities have not contributed towards the history or culture of new homes. However, it compels, with certain urgency, that the absences regarding the African migration in the literature about the histories and societies of the Western Indian Ocean world be addressed.

Further, this research focuses on Siddis and Hadramis in Hyderabad because the histories of migration of both these communities are intertwined. Hyderabad a landlocked city has been entrenched in the Indian Ocean

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[1] Slave trade from East Africa was small scale and dispersed in nature as black African slaves were mostly meant for conspicuous consumption and not to fuel early capitalist plantation economies. The small and dispersed nature of Indian Ocean slave trade along with the British efforts to suppress it in the nineteenth century, have led to scarcity of recorded sources that could indicate in greater detail both stories about points of origins, as well as, histories of new beginnings. However, as East African slave trade continued into the twentieth century, peoples personal narratives and family or community oral histories can prove important in the research on African diaspora in Asia (Harris 1971: xiv).

[2] Separate and isolated ccommunities of African descent are present in parts Turkey, Gulf Region, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and India.

networks of trade and migration. It is the intent of this study to knit together these themes – Siddi and Hadrami communities, the Indian Ocean and Hyderabad – to develop a deeper understanding of histories/present processes of migration and identity construction.

This research is certain that its disciplinary location in international politics can provide it with an original perspective. A study of diaspora in context of international politics can provide insights into strategies of political organization, social behaviours, lobbying in international organizations, mobilizing resources in 'home' countries via representation to embassies, trade, or property ownership and throw light on regional, religious and cultural linkages. It can allow new perspectives to the study of identity, marking a departure from territorial dimensions (notions of authenticity and rootedness drawing on nationalist historiographies), which remains the central concern in mainstream international relations theorisation. Further, as this research is implicated in the Indian Ocean Arena, it will engage with its regional histories from a perspective that is not rooted in rigid territorial divisions – which have their basis not in 'reality', but in knowledge production.

Scope

This study limits itself to the study of the Siddi and the Hadrami community in the city of Hyderabad. It locates Hyderabad, a landlocked site, within the networks of mobility that the Indian Ocean from the early colonial period to the post independence period. It restricts itself to ethnographic fieldwork in the Siddi neighbourhood of African Cavalry Guard or AC Guard. Similarly, it restricts itself to the Hadrami neighbourhood called Barkas (a colloquial adaptation of the English word Barracks). It explore the inter-community dynamics of this area to understand the modes of integration and to engage with local histories. This study excavates trajectories of how the Siddi and the Hadrami community have negotiated their social, economic, and cultural space in Hyderabad, their idea of home and dynamics of their identity

Research Questions

The study is anchored around addressing the following research questions:

1) Can diasporas be defined? If yes, is their identity essentialised or constructed?
2) Who can be called a diaspora?
3) Do all diasporas have similar features or are these context specific?
4) Are diasporas stable or are these hybrid formations? And is the nature of different diaspora context specific?
5) Has the nature of diaspora changed over time?
6) Can postcolonial sites offer new insights into diasporic identity formation?
7) Looking at the Siddi and the Hadrami community, what is the history of racialised constructions and racism in Hyderabad, with specific reference to colonialism and the coming of modernity?
8) What is the role of knowledge production in the entrenchment of the trans-Atlantic tropes of slavery and ideas of victim diaspora at the loss of a richer Indian Ocean historiography of mobility in the Indian Ocean?
9) Do we borrow frames from the trans-Atlantic paradigm to understand African diaspora and race?
10) Can the cosmopolitan diaspora of the Indian Ocean, situated as these are in the mobility framework, offer new insights into processes of identity formation, different notions of assimilation and integration?
11) What are the contributions that diaspora make to their homelands and host countries? What are the diasporas relations with their host societies and homelands?
12) How are racial, diasporic and religious identities affecting political choices and affiliations?
13) Can a diasporic view of international politics provide new frames / reimagine for understanding concepts like homeland, host society, and belonging?

Hypothesis

1) The situated pasts and embodied presents of *translocal mobile cosmopolitans* of the Indian Ocean allow for (re)imagination of reified/essentialised and nation-state centric conceptions of homeland and host society.
2) Diasporas in the Indian Ocean have defined themselves through hybrid frames of assimilation and integration which problematize notions of belonging inherent in processes of modernity and territorially bound notions of identities.
3) Indian Ocean was a site that had witnessed many forms of slavery, voluntary migrations and processes of identity negotiations, whereas, colonisation of the Indian Ocean introduced limited stereotypes regarding Muslims, Arabs, and black Africans.
4) Ideas of Africa and Siddi identity in postcolonial India – social, legal and political – are rooted in knowledge production.

Methodology

If one was to walk through the older neighbourhoods of Hyderabad, one realises that its military history has been written on its cartography spatially, leaving imprints like street names, A Battery, B Battery, First Lancers Road, Barkas (Barracks), African Cavalry Guards (A C Guards), Maisram (named after Monsieur Ramon, a French soldier stationed in Hyderabad) and the tomb of Major Maidus Taylor (a British soldier in the Asaf Jahi Forces).[3] Lancers were the cavalry component of Hyderabad's military. Hyderabad had cavalry which was initially horse cavalry, but in 1940s it was turned into armoured cars. These armoured cars were given to First Hyderabad Lancers, Second Hyderabad Lancers, however, Third Golconda Lancers, which were stationed in Golconda, had horses. The Lancers had Batteries. First Hyderabad Lancers were used in the Middle East

[3] Based on an interview conducted with Lieutenant General Zaki at his residence in Mehdipatnam on 10.10.2014.

and Second Hyderabad Lancers were used in Cyprus during WWII. Further, the British in NWFP also employed the Lancers for internal security duty. There was a Cavalry Training Centre in Asif Nagar Lines, where initially only the First Hyderabad Lancers used to be stationed and where today the Indian Army is stationed in the Mehdipatnam Garrison. The Second Hyderabad Lancers was stationed at Mohammadia Lines, near Golconda, which was later converted to an Infantry Training Centre.

Hyderabad's infantry included First Hyderabad Infantry, Second Hyderabad Infantry, Third Hyderabad Infantry that was stationed in Ibrahim Bagh Lines which was an artillery centre (another artillery centre was inside the walls of Golconda fort) and Fourth Golconda Infantry which was garrisoned at Golconda. Second Hyderabad Infantry, was initially raised by the Rajas of Wanaparthy, consisted of irregulars meant for private protection. It consisted of many Arabs, especially from Hadramawth. The Rajas of Wananparthy are also one of the first to have used African cavalry. Wanaparthy is in Mehboobnagar.[4] Third Hyderabad Infantry was employed in railway protection from Chennai and Kakinada to Vishakapatnam. In 1941 and 1942 Fifth Hyderabad Infantry was raised with two companies that were Afridi-Pathans. Fifth Hyderabad Infantry and Sixth Hyderabad Infantry were stationed in Chandrayangutta, which is a CRPF Cantonment today. Chandrayangutta and adjoining Barkas (Barracks for Arab soldiers and guards) are the two sites where I conducted fieldwork with Hyderabadi Hadramis.

Seventh Hyderabad Infantry was stationed at Golconda.[5] There was also an artillery centre in Golconda. However, Hyderabad did not have an

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[4] This militia was integrated into Hyderabad Forces as the Second Hyderabad Infantry (Lt. Gen. Zaki's father Brigadier Ali Ahmed was commissioned in the Second Hyderabad Infantry on 17.07.1927) and it was later integrated into the Indian Army. Today it is known as the 22nd Maratha Light Infantry. Many of the Second Hyderabad Infantry officers were integrated into the Indian Army. Based on an interview conducted with Lt. Gen Zaki's at his residence in Mehdipatnam on 10.10.2014.

[5] Seventh Hyderabad Infantry was raised by my maternal grandfather Brigadier Ali Ahmed, who was an officer under the Asaf Jahi State. Based on an interview conducted with Lt. Gen Zaki's at his residence in Mehdipatnam on 10.10.2014.

artillery regiment, instead, it had two Batteries. Though, in the past there used to be three batteries per regiment, later Hyderabad's military had only two artillery Batteries and four instead of six guns. This was because they were only meant for internal security purposes. Today people live and walk on streets whose names are reminiscent of the era when these infantry units and batteries existed.

Hyderabad Rifle Brigade was raised in 1945-1946; Ninth Hyderabad Rifles, Tenth Hyderabad Rifles and Eleventh Hyderabad Rifles that was the infantry component.[6] The city of Hyderabad was central to how the military was structured/located. The area near Mahavir Hospital, that is A C Guards, was Hyderabad Training School where young officer cadets were trained. Vijaynagar Colony and Shantinagar Colony functioned as playing fields for the officers and training grounds for the troops. Further, Andhra Pradesh State Film, Television & Theatre Development Corporation office in A C Guards was their gymnasium. Nafees Manzil, a private deodi of Khader Beg, was the house of the Commander-in-Chief. Also, General El Edroos's private house is located in Masab Tank area. Institute for Development & Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), an associate of the Central University of Hyderabad was where the British Brigadier General Staff (BGS) of the Hyderabad Army stayed. There was always a brigadier as the Chief of Staff from the British Indian Army, who would oversee military affairs. There was also Army Headquarters that looked after what was happening in the state. Further, family accommodations and barracks were provided by the Nizam's State near where different regiments and companies were stationed. For example, the African Cavalry Guards were quarters constructed by the Nizam.

[6] This was commanded by my maternal grandfather Brigadier Ali Ahmed, who was an officer under the Asaf Jahi State. Eleventh Hyderabad Lancers was used by the Nizam against the Telangana Rebellion (1946-1951). Further, there was an Infantry training centre in Mohammadia Lines, which was later, commanded by Brigadier Ali Ahmed. Hyderabad's military had three sectors: the Southern Sector, The Northern Sector and the Eastern Sector. My grandfather was the commander of the Southern Sector – Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur. After the fall, units were spread out to all over the dominions. For example, one unit was sent to Aurangabad and another to Mominabad (now Ambajogai). Based on an interview conducted with Lt. Gen Zaki's at his residence in Mehdipatnam on 10.10.2014.

The above description of the city intends to present to the reader the multiple sites in Hyderabad where this research was conducted: Barkas, King Kothi and African Cavalry Guards neighbourhoods. The Asaf Jahi rulers established Barkas for Arab soldiers and mercenaries in the nineteenth century. Similarly, in the twentieth century, after the Police Action in 1948, the then Nizam Osman Ali 'adopted' some Arab Hyderabadi families (referred to as *Khanazad*), as most were rendered unemployed after the annexation of Hyderabad. These families were provided with food from the royal kitchens everyday and their expenses, education and marriages were also taken care of. Further, the Nizam provided housing for them next to his palace called King Kothi, therefore, this neighbourhood is also called King Kothi.

Similarly, in the nineteenth century the Nizam established the African Cavalry Guards for their ceremonial Royal Body Guards, which comprised of black Africans or Siddis. A focus on these sites as fields of enquiry is crucial to understanding strategies that individuals and communities evolve and is central to understanding how identities are self-articulated, viewed by 'others' and framed as a response to 'others'. In addition to helping understand how in the continuous process of identity formation, boundaries are made, 'culture' or 'everyday' as a site of research also help elucidate on the various meanings/subjectivities that we create to make sense our contexts, which are always dynamic and makes apparent hierarchies of domination and strategies of subversion. Ethnographic method has been chosen as a tool because documentation is sparse, for both these communities, such that "[t]he "cameras" of our historical exploration will be placed, as much as possible, in the hands of the enslaved, rather than in those of the slavers, where they have rested in most standard documentary accounts..." (Taledano 2007: 8).

I also conducted interviews with Deccani informants who were connected with the erstwhile Nizam's State, local AIMIM politicians, GHMC representatives, NGO workers, functionaries at local educational facilities, local Siddi and Hadrami community leaders and other members of the community. In addition to ethnographic work done in Hyderabad and Gujarat, interviews were also conducted in Hyderabad, New York City and Washington D.C. In New York City, I interviewed Dr. Diouf, Director of the

Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery and a Curator at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of The New York Public Library. Dr. Diouf had curated a digital and an on site exhibition, which travelled to many cities around the world, on the Africans in India. In Washington D. C. I met and got primary sources from Dr. Robbins, who is a private archivist of Indian Princely States. Further, I was also part of organising a philological workshop with Gujarat Siddis on *Jikris* sung in the honour of their patron saint Bava Gor, in Ahmedabad. Moreover, I have got primary material like photographs from Muhammed Safiullah, Honorary Managing Trustee, The Deccan Heritage Trust. I have also relied on email correspondences with the Sultan Ghalib Al Qua'iti of Mukalla, Hadramwth, who stays in Saudi Arabia on exile. Further, this research makes use of secondary literature available in the form of books, journal articles, newspaper pieces and films.

Ethnographic method has been chosen as a tool because documentation for both these communities is sparse. Ethnographic writing is an act of crossing and translation. This research had to engage with the idea of culture and identity, as diasporic, and with it the inherent assumptions of coherence, rootedness and authenticity. The acts of boundary making and remaking, inside and outside, have to be understood as central to the idea of culture and identity construction. Thus, this research looks at the local and the regional, transregional and the global as historically intertwined and relational (Clifford 1997). *This research understands the local as the translocal*. Biologically determined notions of 'culture' were challenged in postwar social sciences and developed into the idea that 'cultures' were social constructions, systems of symbolically inscribed meanings or simiotic systems (Sassure 2008; Merton 2008; Lipset 2008; Barthes 2008; Sahlin 2008; Goffman 2008; Geetz 2008). This idea enabled social scientists to study cultures (in cases, compare and contast) as individuated, holistic systems with their systems of meanings. These also enabled social science to (conveniently) imagine an ethnographically bound subject and draw generalisations.

Today, ethnographic fieldwork has come disrupt this idea of a bounded subject or culture as a coherent system of meanings (Turner 2008; Foucault 2008; Bourdieu 2008). That is, an enthnography which is without ethnos. These disruptions have been the result of scholarship which focuses on international political economy and roots trajectories and contingent constructions of identification and subvesions within fields of capitalist development and the logic of late capitalism (Appadurai 2003; Gupta and Ferguson 2001). Further, theorists like Clifford (1997, 2002) who have argued that cultures are necessarily fragmented and the boundedness of a culture or the subject in ethnographic writing can also be understood as fiction, that is neither true or false. Today, this critique of representation has become central the the exercise of ethnographic writing, where the concept of culture or individual subjects are understood as 'made', through narrative devices rather than taken as 'natural' or emperical entities (Clifford 1997, 2002; Gupta and Ferguson 2001). Further, Clifford (2002) writes "[t]his feeling of lost authenticity, of "modernity" ruining some essence or source, is not a new one… The ethnographic modernist searches for the universal in the local, the whole in the part" (Clifford 2002: 4). *The idea of mobility is central to the conceptualisation of this research project.* Clifford (1997) terms mobility and travel as a necessary human condition, he calls is 'dwelling-in-travel'. Thus, routes then become as significant as roots, that is roots do not preceed routes or "a view of human location as constituted by displacement as by stasis" (Clifford 1997: 2). Further, on the concept of culture

> …travel emerged as an increasingly complex range of experiences: practices of crossing and interaction that troubled the localism of many common assumptions about culture. In these assumptions authentic social existence is, or should be, centered in circumscribed places… [however] Cultural centers, discrete regions and territories, do not exists prior to contacts, but are sustained through them, appropriating and discplining the restless movement of people and things (Clifford 1997: 3).

The idea of a boundededness of subject or the rootedness of culture was also ruptured where in my ethnographic fieldwork in Hyderabad in 2014 and 2015. It became evident that these diasporic communities could not be understood within the dichotomy of local or a deterritorialised cosmopolitan imaginary, dominant in the academic making of contemporary diasporas. For example, scholars like Frietag (2009) and Ho (2002, 2004, 2006, 2007) have

used the idea of *translocal* to signify that the Hadrami diaspora has to be necessarily understood as both local and cosmopolitan. However, much of ethnographic writing understands culture as territorially rooted or spacialized, that is, the implicit assumption that "[t]he idea that "a culture" is naturally the property of a spacially localized people and that the way to study this such a culture is to go "there" ("among so-and-so") has long been part of the unremarked common sense of anthropological practice" (Gupta and Ferguson 2001: 3). Contrary to such practices of narrativisation, Clifford (2002) writes,

> [a] modern ethnography of conjunctures, constantly moving *between* cultures, does not like its western alter ego "anthropology" aspire to survey the full range of human diversity or development. It is perpetually displaced, both regionally focused and broadly comparitive, a form both of dwelling and of travel in a world where the two experiences are less and less distinct (Clifford 2002: 9).

It has also become apparent in works of theorists like Appadurai (2003) – with mass migrations and cultural flows in the decolonised world of late capitalism, which he terms as ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes and ideoscapes – that cultures is a deterritorialised entity, where processes and practices of place making and identity formation have to be understood as discursively, historically, socially and politically contingent constructions and not as naturally occuying givens.

Therefore, drawing on Appadurai (2003), Clifford (1997, 2002) and Gupta and Ferguson (2001) this research does not treat the spacial imagination of local, locality or community as natural, rooted or authentic (and by extension regional, transregional or global as external, oppresive and unauthentic) and the idea of non or supra-local identities like diaspora, refugees or migrant workers as extensions of these spacial imaginaries. As the case of Barkas indicates, the idea of place making is contingent on the larger flows of symbols, capital, commodities and workers within the Indian Ocean. Further, Hadramis in Hyderabad challenge the idea of authentic, sycretic (which assumes authenticity) or rootedness as a diaspora that is *muwallid* (foreign), but those who belong to an originary homeland are also dignified as *wilayti* (foreign). It fractures neat spacial compartments that much of contemporary Diaspora Studies takes for granted: homeland and host society dichotomy. Comfortable in a state of non-belonging, which in the study is

called *informed accomodation*, they are both local and cosmopolitan at the same time. Neat compartments of space or imposed narrations of identity do not capture them.

In most ethnographic writing, similar the the idea of culture, the idea of identity, had been treated as: biological, essentialised and rooted; or as a matter of instrumental rational choice by a sovereign subject, where the implication of making this choice is *seen as* nonessential. However, today, most ethnographic writing is self-reflexive as a practice of representation and a narrative device. Clifford (2002) writes

> …ethnographic texts are ochestrations of multivocal exchanges occuring in politically charged situations. The subjectivities produced in these often unequal exchanges – whether of "natives" or visiting participant-observers – are constructed domainsof truth, serious fiction. Once this is recognized, diverse inventive possibilities for postcolonial ethnographic representation emerge… (Clifford 2002: 10).

Further, the ethnographer also locates herself within fields of power and privilege: who has the authority to speak, thus define, a groups boundaries; the role of the participant-observer in producing cultural information, understood as knowledge production. Processes of identity construction are linked to the idea of constant redifination of the boundaries, such that, margins and borders become sites where productive encounters and translations take place. These sites are employed while conceptualising the idea of diaspora to highlight its nonabsolutist or noncoherent form. Diaspora challenge and disrupt nationalist narratives and (re)focus on displacement and multiple attachments. For example, the idea of *Mobilty Paradox* as discussed in the chapter on Hadramis, looks at how travelling across oceans is aspirational, preferable and convienient, all at the same time, due centuries of established networks and comfort with the idea of movement. Most youth from the Hyderabadi *Chaush* communities – both Siddi and Hadrami – prefer to work in the Gulf than benefit or demand greter access into the profitable IT private sector that Hyderabad houses. From a gendered perspective, *Mobility Paradox* translates into women in the Hyderabadi Hadrami community who have walked the streets of Jeddah and shopped in Dubai malls, but never been to their neighborhood markets.

Identity is also inherently linked to the idea of resistance, as "[t]he roots of tradition are cut and retied, collective symbols appropriated for external influences… If the victims of progress and empire are weak, they are seldom passive" (Clifford 2002: 15-16). Processes of exclusion and othering are central to understanding the idea of resistance and how these are continuously redeployed in the framing and reframing of identities.

Further, this research argues that processes of legitimation tactically deployed towards practices of authentication enable one to understand how difference is discursively and historically contingent. For example, by situating the Siddis in Hyderabad in structures of power and inequality, this research locates the sovereign subject construction of their 'self' identity and the othering of Siddis from other parts in India with the idea of strategies of negotiation and assessment. The demand of non-Hyderabad Siddis for a Schedule Tribe (ST) status and the absence (in most cases a negative view) of the demand for ST status in Hyderabad Siddis is a case in point. The Siddis in Hyderabad rally around AIMIM and a larger pan-Muslim identity.

Ethnographic practices and narrations are not produced by academicians alone. Travellers (since the invention of colonial travelogues), missionaries, government officials, journalists, and the thriving private development sector produces ethnographic narratives aimed at rooting and explaining differences in cultures and identities. Representation of marginalised cultures (understood as collectives that difine their difference strategically vi-a-vis larger power systems: global, national or otherwise) usually romanticises difference and come close to exoticising people within "[a] restrictive "art-culture system" [that] has come to control the authenticity, value and circulation of artifacts and data" (Clifford 2002: 13). The exoticisation of Siddis as black bodies and their representation as an exotic foreign tradition bound within an equally "exotic India" is evident in most writings on them. The idea of an authentic or pure African culture is evoked in these writings to explain practices that can only be understood as discursively constituted and historically specific. Moreover, these cultural representations

of Siddis, specifically their music and occult practices, have been tactically deployed by them to negotiate livelihood options within a market that exploits and consumes the margins for profit. For example, the Daff and Marfa musicians from the Siddi and Hadrami community compete over the same market, claiming ‘originary ownership’ over these instruments. These ahistoric represenations have also been used by Gujarat Siddis and other activists to “authenticate” their ST status in public discourse as dispossed African tribes bound and rooted in another homeland.

These constructions are not just tactical deployments, but also, lenses through which ‘others’ cognise diversity: Siddis and Hadramis. Moreover, these lenses also inform the self perception of these communities. This research explores these ideas by depending on an ecceltic mix of academic literature, which includes works of anthropologists, historians, cultural theorists and scholars of race studies.

Chapterisation

The study is organised into six chapters including an introduction (chapter I) and conclusion (chapter VI). Chapter II titled, *Siddis and Hadramis: An Historical Overview*, engages with the histories of both the Siddis and the Hadramis in Hyderabad city. Further it elaborates on the connections historic linkages and interactions between these two communities, in reference to migration into the Deccan, specifically Hyderabad.

Chapter III on *Diaspora: Interrogating Notions of Belonging*, draws on the fieldwork in Hyderabad, and provides the theoretical frameworks that is used to understand processes of identity formation, notions of integration and assimilation and the idea of a ‘diasporic’ self, in the context of Indian Ocean migration/mobility. It looks at Hyderabad as a translocal site and Hadramis as local cosmopolitans who challenges notions of authenticity and syncretic. Their liminal presence is political and sociocultural a generative hybrid space. The productive hybridity that continuously defines their identity is discussed by proposing two concepts: Informed Accommodation and Mobility Paradox.

The chapter on *Race and Representation* (chapter IV), delineates the history of race and racism in modern thought and locates the Siddis within the field of discursive power, namely the knowledge produced about them. Drawing on fieldwork in Hyderabad and Gujarat, this chapter outlines a framework to better understand the construction of an authentic African identity. It further elaborates on how ideas of genetics are employed by the Siddis and the "others" while positioning the community socially and politically. Similarly, focusing on music and dance, this chapter also elaborates on the exotic representational practices and narrativisation of Siddi identity. These narrative devices have not only come to inform the popular imagination of Siddis in India, but have also informed the self description of this community, which uses these to reconstruct an authentic or pure cultural past and present. It also uses these tools of authentication to legitimise its negotiation with the state for social security: as Muslims in the case of Hyderabad and as ST in the case of Gujarat.

Chapter V focuses on *Accommodation and Difference: Understanding Religious and Political Identities in the Siddi and Hadrami Communities* in a comparative perpective. Drawing on fieldwork in Hyderabad, this chapter develops a conceptual framework to understand the role of religion, notions and practices of religiosity and the rise of AIMIM as a 'Muslim' voice within the Siddi and the Hadrami community.

The concluding chapter (Chapter VI**),** revisits the arguments of the previous chapters to present a comprehensive understanding of the problematiques under consideration. Further, this chapter details the implications this study has for the field of International Relations by developing an alternative understanding on identity and regional histories.

CHAPTER II
A HISTORY OF SIDDIS AND HADRAMIS MIGRATION TO THE DECCAN

For the purpose of this research, this chapter shall be focusing primarily on the Western Indian Ocean sector of the Indian Ocean. However, it is important to note that Africans came to India both voluntarily and involuntarily through centuries. This section will focus on slave trade from the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the East African Coast, because Siddis in reference to India trace their origins here and their movement to Asia is part of the Western Indian Ocean history. Though many Afrocentric scholars emphasise the 'ancient and foundational' connections between Africa and Asia, Alpers (2004a, 2004b) notes that "for the most part the meaningful presence of Africans in India probably dates from the rise of Islam, which gave new life to the commercial and cultural linkages across the Northwest Indian Ocean, in particular" (Alpers 2004b: 27).

Siddis: Histories of Involuntary Migration

Africans have migrated voluntarily and in voluntarily to other parts of the world for centuries. The primary focus of most scholarship on slavery has been on the Atlantic world, because the involuntary migration of black Africans in the Asian context was characterised by their incorporation into the local societies. Islam that dominated Western, Southern and Southeastern Asia also allowed for greater social mobility, especially in regard to slaves. The Periplus a greek navigational guidebook to the Indian Ocean mentions trade activity, specifically Arab traders (Alpers 1972; Chauhan 1995; Eaton 2005, 2006; Harris 1971; Plankhurst 2003; Sadiq Ali 1996).[7] There is a general disagreement regarding the timeline of when the export of persons from south of the Horn of Africa began. Colonial historians like Coupland (1938) argue that the trade of slaves from the East African coast was continuous and only

[7] There is evidence documenting "the arrival of a Chinese fleet in Mogadishu, the Chinese trade with East Africa included supplies of slaves" (Harris 1972: 5).

increased as Arabs settled and started trading more and more inland, reaching its highest volume in the nineteenth century. Similarly, Gervase Mathew (1963) has argued that slave trade from the southern region was constant between first century A.D. and fifteenth century, supplying for example slave-soldiers to Mesopotamia or to the Kingdoms on the western coast of India and the Deccan.[8] It is important to locate these histories within the wider context of the Indian Ocean. For example, the history of Gujarat Siddis suggests links with the Persian Gulf and Arabia, that is the Islamic world, whereas the history of Uttara Kannada Siddis suggests a direct embeddedness in the Portuguese colonial empire in India and East Africa (Alpers 2004b).

In the Islamic lands slaves were present as soldiers, sailors, domestics, urban workers and highly valued eunuchs (Alpers 1972; Chauhan 1995; Eaton 2005, 2006; Harris 1971; Plankhurst 2003; Sadiq Ali 1996). For example, "African military slaves in the Hadramaut, in modern Yemen, for example, were still an important component of the local political scene as late as the 1930." (Alper 2004b: 29). However, subsequently in the eighteenth century as the Indian Ocean got drawn into the capitalist world economy following 'industrial revolution in Europe and American', the nature and demand for slave underwent a significant change. This 'shift in the economic and political history' of the Indian Ocean is linked to the establishment of British hegemony over the Indian Ocean following Britain's victory over Napoleon and its success in entrenching its commercial superiority over the other

[8] Scholars also acknowledge that slave trade from Eastern Africa was small in volume until it escalated in the nineteenth century when the "principal Asian demands were for workers on the date plantations in Basra, Bandar Abbas, Minab, and along the Batinah coast and in the pearl-diving industry in Bahrein and Lingeh on the Persian Gulf; Slave-soldiers in various parts of Arabia, Persia, and India; dock workers and dhow crews in much of the Arab-controlled Indian Ocean; and concubines and domestic servants in Muslim communities throughout Asia" (Harris 1972: 5). Harris has also argued that in addition to the Omani Arabs, the Arab inhabitants of Ras Assir or 'the cape of slaves' on the Somali coast, after converting to Islam had become principal slave dealers to the Muslim East, thus, "it appears that the establishment of Muslim Arab trading centres along the northern coast was accompanied by a great expansion of the slave commerce in the ports of Suakin, Dhalak, Zeila, Berbera, Mogadishu, Merca, Brava, Massawa, and Tajura" (Harris 1972: 5). However, Freeman-Grenville (1963) has argued that it was after the Omani Arabs started intervening in the affairs of East Africa and establishing plantations seventeenth century onwards, that a increase in slave trade was witnessed, with it reaching its peak in the nineteenth century. He bases his hypothesis on the 'descriptions of revenue' which rarely mention slaves and never as exports (Harris 1972).

colonial forces present in the Indian Ocean way before it. Moreover, the rise of the Busaidi dynasty in Oman which with the help of Indian merchants made Zanzibar the centre of its commercial activities. The British occupation of Aden in 1839 transformed the region by establishing colonial presence on a major thoroughfare of the Western Indian Ocean sector and the creation of the Suez Canal in 1869 linking British strategic and commercial interests to British India, contributed towards the political and economic changes that the Indian Ocean (Alpers 1972; Chauhan 1995; Harris 1971; Plankhurst 2003; Sadiq Ali 1996).[9] There was an increased demand for slave labour: firstly,

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[9] Though, Oman controlled access to the Gulf of Persia through which many Africans passed, it was only in the 1784, that is, late eighteenth century that Oman was able to establish political, commercial, naval and strategic supremacy on the East African coast. After Ibn Ahmad consolidated his control over both Oman and Zanzibar in 1806, Zanzibar developed as the main port for Omani commercial activities that included slave trade, with an estimate of 6000 – 10000 slaves being exported to Muscat, India and the Mascarene Islands, as reported by British Capitan T. Smee in 1811, who had sailed to the East African coast on the orders of the Bombay government (Harris 1972). Further, earlier French Captain P. Dallons in Zanzibar reported in 1804 that the Governor of Kilwa was paying annual dues to Zanzibar in exchange of slaves (Harris 1972). Moreover, Omani rule led to their greater involvement in the commerce and agriculture of the East African coast. Cloves and coconuts, along with products like gum and oil seeds which were in demand in Europe, were introduced as plantation crops, both being labour intensive with cloves yielding two crops a year and coconuts yielding four crops a year. This created local demand for cheap labour from the plantation owners. Slaves were made to carry ivory and other products from the interior and then the products they carried were sold on the coast. The shifting of the capital from Muscat to Zanzibar in 1940 marked an important turn in the history of the Western Indian Ocean sector, where East Africa after the defeat of the powerful Mazrui dynasty of Mombasa, came directly under the control "of a sovereign who had established commercial and diplomatic relations with major Western powers. These powers had important stakes in the regions commerce, particularly the slave trade. Commercial treaties had been negotiated with the United States in 1833, Britain in 1839, and France in 1844" (Harris 1972: 7). Though slave trade was done consistently, two periods marked a substantial increase in scale, the first being the period between 1642 to 1648 when the Dutch lost Portuguese forts of Angola and the Gold Coast (Southern Ghana). As this restricted the sale of slaves to Brazil, Portuguese Mozambique became an important source of supply of slaves till 1948, when the Portuguese recaptured the West African forts. The second period was in the nineteenth century, which began with the abolition of slave trade in the Atlantic Ocean by Britain and the US in 1807. Abolition was extended to the Indian Ocean starting 1873, however, because of the demand for more slave labour, the Sultan was in a position to 'protect and promote' his interests in clove and slave trade and because there were limited naval resources in the hand of the British Empire to cruise the Indian Ocean to check slavery, it continued to thrive in the nineteenth century. The establishment of plantation economies in the Indian Ocean, on the Mascarene Islands – Reunion and Mauritius, by the French also led to an enormous jump in the demand for cheap slave labour. Starting 1735, Bertrand Franch Mahe de la Bourdonnais, the governor general of the Mascarenes "encouraged the development of sugar and coffee plantations on the Island and sought to increase the supply of African labor. Together with his friend Nicolau Tolentino D'Almeida, governor of Mozambique, the French governor general set in motion a relationship on which vigorous trade of Africans was developed" (Harris 1972: 8). Although the Portuguese had been supplying the French, African slaves from Mozambique, Madagascar and Mombasa, the demand for slave labour escalated in mid nineteenth century, following the French revolution of 1848, which abolished slavery in all French colonies. Thus, the demand for slave labour in the Mascarene was partly addressed by importing Indian labour from the French Indian

urban development in the major ports of the Arabian peninsula created a demand for labour. Secondly, where local supply of the labour would have sufficed, now colonial plantation style economies and expanded 'date plantations' saw major importation of slaves from 'Northeast and Eastern Africa. Thirdly, intensification of production in pearl industry in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf also contributed towards demand for labour. Thus, "[a]s consequence, there are significant modern African descended populations throughout the region…" (Alper 2004b: 30).

Indian Ocean historiography is replete with essentialist and ahistorical understanding of the past because it borrows heavily from 'the Atlantic paradigm' assuming: 'one-directional' trade of slaves; tropes of victimhood which 'emphasise African slave turned heroes' and assumptions of male slaves dominating the slave trade[10], such that,

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territories of Pondicherry and Karaikal. This supply was inadequate compared to the demand and "the British denied French permission to recruit in British India. Thus the French resorted to the engage system, in which Africans were purchased to work in the Reunion for five years… Christopher Rigby, British Consul at Zanzibar… informed his foreign office that Frenchmen in East Africa brought Africans, took them to a judge and received papers nominally freeing them, and shipped them to Reunion" (Harris 1972: 9). People enslaved on the East African coast belonged to the 'immediate hinterland of the entire eastern coast' as the "coast was a base for interior raids.

[10] Thus, there have been a series of studies on African slave elites from the medieval times or borrowing emphasis from the Atlantic model where "dominantly male slaves were shipped to the Americas; and on identifiably African communities, example, pearl divers in Bahrain and Kuwait and African origin communities Iran, Pakistan and India (Campbell 2008). However, under the influence of Islam, strong integrationist forces existed in the Indian Ocean world with regard to slaves and "under most Islamic slave regimes, the number of manumitted slaves was considerable", where "[t]he *sharia* taught that manumission of slave converts was meritorious, slaves could redeem themselves, and children resulting from the sexual union of slave masters and concubines inherited a non-slave status, as did a concubine mother upon the death of her owner" (Campbell 2008: 43). Though the sexual relations between slave women and owners do not preclude violence, yet, most of the male and female slaves integrated into the hierarchies of the household, tribe or society. For example, in many Muslim societies and European territories in the Indian Ocean, slave soldiers married locally and assimilated. Thus, the Nizam of Hyderabad "encouraged his African soldiers to marry Arab girls..." (Campbell 2008: 35; Harris 1971). As wealthy Muslim men had many concubines, offspring's from these liaisons usually integrated into and became a part of the local elites, with many important poets, jurists, theologicians and some monarchs being notably of mixed or complete slave descent in the Muslim societies around the Indian Ocean. Therefore, the 'non-essentialist' perspective deviates from the Atlantic model by stressing that Indian Ocean slave trade started centuries before and remained active into the last century, where "trades, sources, markets, routes, and slave functions varied considerably. Overall, Black Africans probably formed a minority of slaves traded. Moreover, slaves in the IOW [Indian Ocean World] were heavily affected by forces of assimilation and integration that had repercussions for the identity of slaves and their descendents and thus, on the viability of the concept of an African diaspora" (Campbell 2008: 20-21). 'Acculturation' or 'adoption' of the slave owners culture, customs,

dominantly male slaves were shipped to the Americas; and on identifiably African communities, example, pearl divers in Bahrain and Kuwait and African origin communities Iran, Pakistan and India….By contrast, most slaves traded in the IOW were female, notably girls and young women, who generally commanded higher prices than male and older female slaves. The exceptions were eunuchs ("male made female"), who were universally highly priced, and boys in China... (Campbell 2008: 25).

Further, there is no evident African victim diaspora in the Indian Ocean paradigm as 'slave' was not a race specific category, and did not mean African or Black African. African and Swahili traders themselves, were heavily invested in the capture and sale of slaves and filial affinities to the cartographic imagination of 'Africa' or racialized imagination of a 'Black Africa' are understandings deeply rooted in colonial structures of knowledge production. Slaves' status as hereditary, legally exclusionary and identity specific, though a constant feature of the Atlantic world were entrenched in only a few 'large complex' Indian Ocean societies, where the 'essence' of these hierarchies was not 'occupational' or drawn from racist attitudes but based on notions of ritual purity and pollution which are still maintained in societies like India and China. Furthermore, in the Indian Ocean world, most people enslaved came from the domestic contexts and thus the distinction of slaves as 'outsiders' does not apply to most of the enslaved. Slaves were spread throughout the Indian Ocean world, mostly in small numbers with the exception of colonial plantations. They came from different cultural and linguistic groups and cannot be classified as a cohesive group (Campbell 2008).

In the context of South Asia, the presence of African is not a simple story of enslavement and exploitation. Rather, the contributions of Africans and their presence cannot be neglected in the writing of South Asian history. South Asia saw centuries of African slave elites rule or exert control over a non-African population, so much so that

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language and religion, as many slaves were employed in 'sensitive positions' or in intimate quarters like the household, court, army, administration and commerce, also contributed towards their assimilation into the local contexts. Acceptance of dominant belief systems was seen as a pre-requisite "for slaves employed in sensitive posts... Equally crucial was the conversion of imported child brides and concubines into the local belief and value systems... Today, most Asians of African descent adhere to local religious beliefs, from Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity to ancestor worship" (Campbell 2008: 36; Chauhan 1995; Ali 1996).

> Nowhere, however, did African slaves or ex-slaves hold power for as long as they did in the Indian subcontinent... The history of African elites in India extends from the time of the fourteenth century Arab traveller, Ibn Battuta, who reported that an African named Badr was the governor of Alapur, north of Delhi, up to 1948 when the African Monarchs of Janjira and Sachin consented to merge their kingdoms into independent India (Baptiste, Mcleod and Robbins, 2006: 13).

African elites rose as 'power brokers in the Deccan polities', especially in Ahmadnagar and Bijapur. Further, these slave elites captured and came to exercise political control over the coastal fortress of Janjira, under the suzerainty of the Ahmadnagar Sultanate. The rise of slave groups as rulers and administrative and military elites has been a well-documented phenomenon in the Islamic world. Thus, the rise of African slave groups to administrative and military power in South Asia was not a 'unique event' (Alpers 1972; Chauhan 1995; Eaton 2005, 2006; Harris 1971; Plankhurst 2003; Sadiq Ali 1996). The era of the Mamluks of Egypt is contemporaneous to the rise of the Africans slave elites on the western Indian coast who 'controlled much of the sea lanes' on the western coast of India. Subsequently, the Siddi of Janjira assumed independent control over the fortress and started playing an independent role. However, in spite of similarities, there were considerable differences in the trajectories these groups adopted. While the Mamluk power declined with the rise of the Ottomans, the Siddis

> utilized the power vacuum following the decline of their suzerains, the Mughals, to forge new ties with the British and restructure their own place and maintain control over janjira in late eighteenth- and nineteenth- century South Asia as an independent monarchy (Oka and Kusimba 2008: 223).

Further, the rise of the Janjira Siddis has to be understood as 'a result of African military specialization in naval matters' and as 'a subset of the African slave oligarchy and their power struggles' in the hinterland politics of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur.[11]

In the case of Hyderabad, African presence has been noted from the time of the Qutab Shahi dynasty which had Habshi soldiers in their army and Habshi guards guarding their bastions, an example of this being the Habshi

[11] The slave elites were able to sustain and access 'power, knowledge, wealth' under the patronage of their masters by cementing the 'power of the entrenched elites' and by creating 'a group of trusted lieutenants'. Maintained as 'corporate oligarchies rather than hereditary network systems', these groups "were built as summarizing ethnic categories and maintained through marital alliances and fictive kinship groups" (Oka and Kusimba 2008: 222).

kamaan (arch) in the Golconda Fort where Habshis used to be stationed.[12] A contingent of Habshi female guards called *gardan* was also a part of the Qutab Shahi security (El Edroos 1994). Migration of Siddis under the Asaf Jahis continued, where the Siddis not only were part of the police forces and soldiers in the army, but also formed the Nizam's Royal Body Guards and the Prince's Royal Bodyguards. They were also employed as domestics and their movement into Hyderabad is intrinsically linked to the movement of Arab Hadramis. The demand of military slaves in South Asia, their rise as power brokers in the shifting political alliances and their role in the Deccani-Afaqi conflict is also reflected in the history of the Hyderabad region, where African eunuchs were present at the Qutab Shahi courts "as is possible suggested by a drawing from Golconda, which has a large African population in the 17th century. Finally, the Asafiya dynasty of Hyderabad, which was established in 1724, maintained a royal guard of African slave soldiers who also entertained their masters with African song and dance (Khalidi 1988: 11-14; Sadiq Ali 1996: 193-201).[13] Indeed, descendants of the Nizam's bodyguard still live in the city. Under the Asaf Jahis, Africans kept migrating to Hyderabad to work as soldiers, guards and domestics. Many a times these movements were complex which involved people moving back and forth between different areas of the Indian Ocean world. Further, as these were taking place during the

[12] 'Geographical place names' have also been explored in studies to understand the presence of various African communities, thus, "localities of *Siddipet* (African market) and *Habshi Guda* (African village) indicate the presence of early African communities in Hyderabad (Harris 1971: 114), while Africans recruited into the Nizam of Hyderabad's African Cavalry Guard lived in the *Siddi Risala* ("African Regiment") quaters..." (Campbell 2008: 19).

[13] The history of Deccan sultanates in many ways can be defined as the history of resistance to Mughal imperial expansion down into the Deccan: that is, the instability caused by both internal power politics and external contingencies and interferences. The conquest of Deccan started with Mughal emperor Akbar and continued with Jahangir, Shahjahan who defeated and integrated the Ahmednagar in 1636 and Aurangzeb who consolidated Deccan into the Mughal Empire with the eventual defeat of Bijapur in 1686 and Golconda in 1687. The Mughal Emperors administratively and militarily controlled the Deccan through their viceroy, who resided in the city of Aurangabad.[13] As discussed in the last chapter, Qamar ud-Din Khan had served as a viceroy for the Mughals in the Deccan and had successfully defended the Mughal Empire against the rising Maratha power, earning him the title Nizam ul-Mulk, which means 'administrator of the country'. In 1724, he was bestowed with the title Asaf Jah, which "means "an Asaph in dignity," Asaph being the name of the prime minister of King Solomon" (Khalidi 2006: 245). Nizam ul-Mulk established his own dynasty as a weakened Mughal Empire started disintegrating. Thus, most of Deccan came to be divided between Nizam ul-Mulk and the Marathas. In 1763 the then Nizam Salabat Jang relocated the Capital of the Asaf Jahi dominions to the city of Hyderabad, the seat of power of the Golconda kingdom and the Qutab Shahi dynasty, which over time became synonymous with the Asaf Jahi Dominions.

anti-abolitionist movement, these were characterised by different regimes of migration. For example, Arab Hadramis who were deeply involved in the movement of Africans in Hyderabad would often disguise them as their wives or relatives to get through the customs authorities on the Port of Bombay, which was under the British colonial jurisdiction. Similarly, the elites going on the Hajj pilgrimage would return with African slaves purchased in the Arabian Gulf, posing them as their relatives (Khalidi 2006a, 2006b).

Contemporary Articulations of Identity in Gujarat and Karnataka Siddis

Siddis of Gujarat

Wink (1990) has pointed out that based on Greek geographer Pliny's account of the Indian Ocean, written around 77 AD, Barygaza or Bharuch in Gujarat was considered an Ethiopian town, suggesting established trade routes. Further, excavation at Rojdi in central Gujarat have found evidence of Millets (2500-2300 BC) and Sorghum (2000 BC) originating in Africa (Kenoyer and Bhan 2004). Africans in the medieval times were not necessarily of low status, that is race and racism as understood in a postcolonial context cannot be used to understand the African presence in the subcontinent prior to that, without indulging in conscious anachronisms. However, African migration to the subcontinent during colonial era, with the rise of the Portuguese, French and British empires consecutively, witnessed a redefinition of slavery and the construction of 'race' associated with racist attitudes, philosophical, ecclesiastical and scientific justifications, legal and normative codes and everyday social negotiations that underpin the modern understanding of the term racism.

It is to the later diaspora that most present day Siddis trace their lineage, thus, "[t]he African elite, 'the noble Habshi (or Sidi) merged with the Muslim elite... Contemporary Sidi communities can be traced to a later period of slave trade continued by European colonist, Arab and Gujarati merchants, some of the latter were settled on the Swahili coast and actively resisted the abolition of slavery until 1936" (Shroff 2011: 70, 2004; Alpers 1972; Chauhan

1995; Eaton 2005, 2006; Harris 1971; Plankhurst 2003; Sadiq Ali 1996). With the anti-abolitionist movement in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century in Britain and the subsequent treaties it signed with its allies and with other colonial powers, the British colonial authorities implemented legal and military measures to stop or prevent slave trade. They policed the waters globally to intercept ships and boat carrying slaves. Most freed slaves had no memory of where they came from geographically, due to long middle passages during which they were sold repeatedly to new masters, further, most had lost touch with their kinsmen or had been displaced at an early age (Alpers 1972; Chauhan 1995; Eaton 2005, 2006; Harris 1971; Plankhurst 2003; Sadiq Ali 1996). In the Western Indian Ocean, some according to physiognomy were arbitrarily sent to wrong places to settle down or they were accordingly 'rehabilitated' by the British authorities by undergoing civilizing in different church missions around the western Indian Ocean rim or left to fend for themselves in the port towns around the rim. There were such mission on the western coast of India also, example, Bombay, Surat, Nanded. These freed men 'were transported en masse' to the port towns of Bombay or Surat by the British navy. The dargah of Gori Pir attracted Siddis from all over the western coast, they were usually freed people left to fend for themselves or slaves/domestics engaged unfree labour, who were escaping these conditions (Meier 2004; Basu 2004a, 2004b). The shrine became a 'place for freedom'.

Contemporary academic works on Siddis in Gujarat have attempted to understand their contemporary political and socio-cultural existence by focusing on their everyday negotiations in the realm of religion and culture. Religiosity in the everyday is a site of 'alternative constructions of boundaries' and derives its meanings from multiple 'symbolic systems', such that, these systems of symbolic meaning do not adhere to Hindu nationalist, Islamic reformist or bureaucratic taxonomies. Further, ritual actions provide a symbolic language through which cultures get reproduced. Thus, a focus on Siddi religiosity, Bava Gor and the rituals associated with his shrine, which act as the foci for the Siddi community in Gujarat, are vital points of entry and analysis (Basu 2004b). Ahmad (2004), writes that on his first visit to Gori Pir shrine, a prominent community member and qawwal at the Gori Pir shrine,

was curious to know what was so special about Siddis and why should scholars choose to focus on them, when they are no different from other Indians. Ahmad (2004) writes that though Siddis are similar to most Indians today,

> being one of the many groups whose ancestors came to this country and made it their home. However... I became conscious of a striking fact between the Sidis and the local people. The contrast was not only in terms of physical features... It was a contrast in terms of self-perceptions, worldviews and lifestyles (Ahmad 2004: xii).

Boundary making is central to how a group defines 'self' and 'other'. However, scholars working in non-western context have argued that shared beliefs and practices, hybrid and multiple processes of identity formation or liminality explain everyday interactions – socio-religious, socio-cultural, occupational, culinary or sartorial – and perceptions – self and other – better than reified concepts that seek to elucidate 'a reality' (Assayag 2004: 42; Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Gottschalk 2004; Ibrahim 2011; Jairath and Kidwai 2011; Khan 2004; Mayaram 2004; Robinson 2003; Shroff 2004, 2011; Sikand 2004).

As a racial and religious minority, such self-definitions successfully creates boundaries that set the Siddis apart from other groups, bestowing them as it were with special powers, and allows them to negotiate contemporary socio-economic and political contexts. These boundaries that the Siddis actively (re)create through their pantheon of saints also enables a construction of a homogonous 'caste' like identity and allows them to 'fit' into Hindu caste hierarchies in Gujarat. However, these boundaries of homogeneity transform into frontiers of heterogeneity at the shrines of Bava Gor, which the Siddis share/perform with other communities. These frontiers also emphasis the fact that, though these African communities have completely assimilated in to the larger society as far as food, language or sartorial practices go, yet, they maintain a distinct group identity based on race and a common ancestry with Bava Gor (Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Shroff 2004, 2011; Meier 2004).

Bhattacharya (1970) notes that Gujarat Siddis, though mostly followers of Hannafi Sunni Islam with the exception of a few Christian Siddis, are

'hinduised' to a great extent, especially in naming, marriage and maternity practices. They neither fast for Ramadan, pray regularly nor read the Quran, further, Islamic festivals do not hold much meaning for them. He further notes that they tend to follow clan names or *attak* much like the Hindus, which include, Mori, Makwani, Mazgum and Parmer among others (Bhattacharya 1970). He also points out that these clan names might not have been drawn from the Hindus, as most Siddis it is speculated converted to Islam or were already a Muslim by the time they reached the Indian shores.[14] After landing here, many – certainly not all – went into the service of Muslim nobility, thus, for Bhattacharya (1970) clan names, as well as Siddi dhammal dance, performed at the Shrine of Bava Gor, indicate features retained from an African past. Similarly, Siddi mendicants' song (perform the *Jikr* in the praise of Bava Gor) and dance (referred to as goma or dhammal), and their instruments retain distinct African elements (Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Shroff 2004, 2011).

Importantly, it is not Islam but the cult of Bava Gor and Bava Nagarchi Pir that bind the Gujarati Siddi community together and give it a necessary definition. Bava Gor, the patron saint of Gujarat Siddis, was from either Nubia or Abyssinia as local mythologies suggest and accordingly, was responsible for thwarting evil spirits in Gujarat.[15] He is also credited by historians to have

[14] Clan names like Makwani reflect tribe names from East Africa.

[15] Bava Gor settled in north Gujarat, near the town of Rajpipla, on Gori Pir Hill. He established a workshop in Rajpipla and one at Limbodara which is nearer to Gori Pir Hill. Initially, Baruch served as the main market and port for trade in agate beads to the Persian Gulf, Red Sea and East African ports. However, when the port of Baruch silted, Khambhat developed as the main port in that region. Thus, the workshop shifted from Limbodara to Khambhat somewhere in the fourteenth century and mention of the existence of Agate bead making workshops in Khambhat in 1500 AD, was noted by several European travellers (Janaki 1980; Kenoyer and Bhan 2004). However, here they faced competition from other business communities that were already established in this area. Siddi communities mushroomed around this hill and other workshop or trading sites. It is important to note that only Siddis near the Gori Pir Hill and Khambhat are still involved in agate mining and fighting for the right to mine agate (Kenoyer and Bhan 2004; Shroff 2004; Miers 2004; Basu 2004). Further, Limbodara continued to be an important craft centre and agate nodules were being processed there till 1850s. The workshop debris now litters the site at Limbodara as trade is not practiced there anymore. Further, though no Siddis live in Limbodara anymore, they come there to bury their dead and pay respects to their ancestors who are buried in a large Muslim graveyard near a ruined mosque, both standing as testimonies to Muslim presence in Limbodara (Kenoyer and Bhan 2004). According to one narrative of oral histories around the Bava Gor, he arrived in Gujarat with his twelve brothers. He is said to have hailed from

Ethiopia – which would have included a larger land mass than the current nation-state of Ethiopia. He moved and stayed in Mecca for some years before moving to the Makran coast near Karachi. Makran still has a large African origin population dating back from seventeenth century pearl diving/mining trade. According to this narrative, he moved around as a fakir and bead trader for couple of years and stayed in eleven different localities. Siddi communities in these localities still hold an annual Urs in his honour in these places. He is also said to have stayed at the shrine of Mungo Pir, near modern day Karachi, where till today Siddis gather on the Urs of Mungo Pir. Bava Gor after some years of wandering as a fakir decided to settle down in Nadod, northern Gujarat. Nadod is now known as the town of Rajpipla. It is here that he established his agate mining and bead-making workshop, before expanding it further to other important centres of trade like Limbodara and the port of Khambhat. Some of his siblings assisted him in establishing the bead trade which included trade with Arabia, East Africa and South East Asia. Further, one of his brothers, Bava Savan, who was not a Siddi, has his tomb located in Khambhat (Kenoyer and Bhan 2004). In another narrative, Mai Misra and Bava Habash, both siblings of Bava Gor came looking for him after twelve years and settled with him on the hill that houses his shrine today. Shrines dedicated to Mai Misra – whose cult is as important as Bava Gor due to her special powers – and to Bava Habash are located on the same hill alongside Bava Gor's Shrine (Kenoyer and Bhan 2004). In a more popular narrative, documented in the Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, Native States 1877, Bava Gor came to Gujarat from Mecca on Prophet Mohammad's instructions. According to this narrative Bava Gor is said to have arrived during the time of Prophet Mohammad, a century before the arrival of Arabs and their conquest of Sindh and Gujarat. Though there seems to be very less evidence supporting this historical claim, it is nonetheless important to note that the link of trust or friendship between Bava Gor and Mecca and Bava Gor and Mohammad in these oral narratives highlight strategies of legitimization and 'authenticization' of Bava Gor's authority as a pious Muslim figure (Kenoyer and Bhan 2004). Further, according to this narrative, there was a temple on top of the hill that presently houses the shrine of Bava Gor. The deity of this temple was a female goddess, Makhan Devi (Butter Goddess), who is said to have lived on this hill. Her lamp, fed by fifty pounds of butter, was continuously burning and its light was visible all the way through in Mecca. Mohammad had asked Gori Pir or Bava Gor to go investigate that light. When Bava Gor reached this hill, Makhan Devi sank into the ground. However, her long braid was left sticking out. Bava Gor a man was unable to destroy a powerful female goddess and had to call upon his sister Mai Misra to help. After she defeated the goddess, Bava Gor established himself on that hill. Remnants of a 'fairly substantial temple complex' are present on the Gori Pir Hill with carving styles which suggesting that these date back to 1100 AD and "[s]ince the tomb of Gori Pir is not built on top of the earlier temple and no mosque has ever been constructed using the ruined temples, it would suggest that perhaps the temples were still in use or only recently abandoned when his tomb was established on the hill" (Kenoyer and Bhan 2004: 53-54). That this temple complex dating from 78-399 AD to around 1100-1300 AD was functional on top of the Gori Pir Hill, it is likely that a community of miners, craftsmen, foreign and local traders, mercenaries and African slaves were already present at the site. However, as the political control shifted from Hindu and Jain rulers to the Khalaji and Tughaluq sultans from north India in 1298 AD, it can also be speculated that more Muslim traders and craftsmen moved to this area and established their own workshops and trading contacts, as "[m]ost scholars agree that Gori Pir arrived in the region sometime during the 15th century when the region around Gori Pir emerged as a major center for agate trade" (Gazetteer of India, Gujarat State: Kheda District (1977) cited in Kenoyer and Bhan 2004: 55). It is in this context of changing political landscapes that Bava Gor exploited a competitive market and established trade with hitherto untapped ports of Arabia and Africa. Bava Gor is credited with not only establishing a bead manufacture and trade in Gujarat, but also, with introducing and innovating in agate mining and bead manufacturing techniques, unknown to this area till that point. His ability to successfully break into an established industry and establish himself was due to his ability to develop new, more efficient techniques for processing raw materials, for producing new styles of beads and in finding markets that were not being exploited by earlier merchants... It is not unlikely that one of the most important contributions of Gori Pir was in developing a more precise method for determining which agate should be heated and how much to heat them. This may be why some agates were referred to as bavagor... Prayer beads and pendants made from this type of carnelian were in

established a flourishing agate bead production industry and an international agate bead trade in the region (Bhattacharya 1970; Kanoyer and Bhan 2004). The earliest record referring to Bava Gor is found in the writings of medieval historian Ad-Dabir who mentions Mahmud Khalji (1436-69), the founder of the Khilji dynasty, undertaking a pilgrimage to the shrine of an Abyssinian saint Gori Pir during a military campaign in South Gujarat. British colonial officers while attempting to locate agate mines in the early nineteenth century also mention the presence of a negroid African population in the area around the Gori Pir shrine (Basu 2004). His shrine is located in Ratanpur, an erstwhile princely state ruled by the Hindu kings of the Gohil Rajput lineage, where "the shrine and its Sidi custodians held a royal grant (inam) to collect a share of harvest from five villages" (Basu 2004: 63; Shroff 2011). Further, Kenoyer and Bhan (2004) also point out that Africans of different ethnic groups accompanied Arab armies into Gujarat, such that,

> [a]ccording to early Arab geographers and later historians, two different groups of Africans can be identified, the ahabish (singular Habshi) who were from Abyssinia or Ethiopia, and the zunuj (singular zanj) who were from eastern or central Africa (Kenoyer and Bhan 2004: 43-44).

great demand in the Islamic world and were among the major products of the workshop in Limbodara (Kenoyer and Bhan 2004: 55-56). They further point out that though red carnelian was being produced during the Harappan civilization in 2500 BC and was popularly used during the Buddhist period, Bava Gor's contribution and ingenuity lies in the mass production of red carnelian beads at a scale not known before. The Siddis continued to flourish as agate traders and miners under the Mughals when they expanded their trade reach to include Southeast Asia as well. Thus, from mining and selecting agate of certain colour and quality, as the new international markets demanded to producing beads from it using new methods and at a larger scale to tapping into unexplored markets, the Siddis have contributed both to the innovation, development and spread of agate bead industry in western India (Kenoyer and Bhan 2004). Contrary to another narrative, Bava Gor was an Abyssinian military leader, Sufi mystic and a merchant who came to Gujarat to subdue evil spirits, assisted by his brother Bava Habash and more importantly by his sister, Mai Misra, whose female powers were indispensible and central to the final victory of Bava Gor over the evil spirits embodied as female divination. (Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004; Kenoyer and Bhan 2004; Meier 2004; Shroff 2004, 2011) Shroff (2011) writes "[t]his genealogy, while indirectly referencing the military and royal Sidis of the past, more importantly links Sidis to the Sufi mystic Bava Gor who subjugate the powers of evil-doers... Sidi oral tradition clearly emphasises the role of Mai Misra as the one who eventually subdued the evil that was embodied in a woman Makkhan Devi." (Shroff 2011: 71) Further, according to another narrative, "he was a prosperous business man who came from Kano, Nigeria via Sudan and Mecca to Gujarat to develop a local economy based on the mining, processing and trade of semi-precious stones" (Meier 2004: 88; Lodhi 1992).

Similarly, according to oral history, Bava Nagarchi Pir settled in Jambur in the 1300s and his "is perhaps the finest looking shrine of the Sidis. Having a large dome and colourful tiles both outside and inside." (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004: 193) Some contend that he was a drummer in the army of Mohammad Gaznavi and like Bava Gor is said to possess special powers (Bhattacharya 1970). While some claim that he was Bava Gor's brother and a drummer in Mohammad Gaznavi's army – his name means a nagara player (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004). It is these saints and the rituals and ceremonies like their *Urs* that hold more meaning for the Siddi community in Gujarat than do puritanical notions of Sunni Islam.

Siddis in Gujarat and Karnataka are referred to variously as Habshis, Siddis, Kuffri, Badshah, Shamal and Landa (last two are specific to Karnataka) (Camara 2004). The Siddi identity draws its meaning and essence from its membership to the Siddi *Jamaat* (Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004; Meier 2004; Shroff 2004, 2011). Evident in the religious practices of the Gujarati Siddis is the practice of worship of female divinity. The cult of Bava Gor places premium on the powers of his sister Mai Misra, whose powers and blessings are appealed to by numerous followers and devotees of the saint. Most of Mai Misra's devotees are women seeking her blessings for various problems. Though at most Muslim shrines, the *mujavar* or caretaker is a man, "[i]n the case of Sidis, the women are mujavars at many Bava Gor memorial shrines and chillas" (Shroff 2011: 76). Thus, at these shrines, Mai Misra is honoured along with Bava Gor. These figures at once become central to how a group creates and negotiate itself as unique on an everyday level and resist its complete assimilation into both the universalising norms of Islamic reform and the States bureaucratic classifications (Ibrahim 2011).

As Siddi networks developed over centuries of migration and took the shape of a collectivity or *Jamaat*, these came to include both Siddi faqirs and 'ordinary Siddis' (Basu 2004b). Within Muslims 'social reality', everyday interactions are framed by considerations pivoted on questions of birth, *Jamaat*, wealth differentials and 'ritual hierarchies' (Basu 2004b; Ibrahim

2011; Mayaram 2004). 'Within the idiom of Sufi orders', Bava Gor and his siblings Mai Misra and Bava Habash are considered to be 'the founders of Sidi lineage' in Gujarat (Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Meier 2004: 88). Therefore, imagined 'spiritual and historic kinship ties unite' the Siddis of Gujarat together. At the annual *Urs* or death anniversary of Bava Gor organised by the Siddi faqirs and attended by members of the Siddi *Jamaat* and followers from other communities, the pantheon of 'ancestor-saint are commemorated' by enactment of mythologies around them - their journeys, stories and power.[16] These enactments affirm a bond between the dead and the living (Basu 2004b). The goma or dammal dance in veneration of their saints, specifically Bava Gor, 'invoke the presence of the Sidi ancestors' and are 'integral to the sacred trance/possession rituals' (Shroff 2004). The word goma derives from the word ngoma in Swahili and Bantu languages of East and Central Africa, referring to a wide range of 'secular, therapeutic and religious celebrations and performances.' The 'mystical joy' and 'therapeutic energy' that characterises these performance is believed to be embodied by the Siddis of Gujarat who "consider goma dancing a gift they received from their African saintly ancestors and their performances make their continued presence essential to the economic and symbolic transactions taking place at the shrine of the Gori Pir" (Meier 2004: 90).

This special bond with Bava Gor as heirs of his baraka provide Siddis with a means to address their economic deprivation through 'fakir nu kam' or 'the work of faqirs',

[16] Siddis in Gujarat have defined for themselves a distinct 'sense of community' or Jamaat based on their identity as spiritual healers or faqirs, which they derive from the 'spiritual legacy' that they claim from their patron saint Bava Gor. As "they joined the existing fakir order of the Sidi. Initiation into the fakir order seems to have contributed to the formation of a distinct Sidi community (jamat)" (Basu 2004a: 63). Though there exists no historical record of Bava Gor's life or journey to India, yet, in rich oral traditions that the Siddis of Gujarat have constructed a whole mythology around him "in order to reinvent an identity that will enable them to erase the memories of slavery and link them to different genealogy" (Shroff 2011:70). Further, the legend of Bava Gor has enabled the Siddis to craft a 'social and historical identity' and "this legend reconstructs the Sidi concept of 'home', their origin in Africa and their sense of 'belonging' and purpose in their adopted home" (Shroff 2004: 171). The saint not only symbolises the transfer of agate bead industry from Hindus to Muslims, his legend also constructs him as a military leader reminiscent of aristocratic medieval Habshis, a pious Sufi saint who subdued evil forces and a basis for imagining kinship ties between diverse set of African Gujaratis (Meiers 2004).

through these practices, a Sidi habitus is inscribed in the body, The Sidi body defined by black skin and curly hair is at the same time taken as a sign of those supernatural powers that have been inherited from the ancestors and enable the living to act as intermediaries between the saint and the non-Sidi believers" (Basu 2004b: 238).

Further, ritualised begging in the name of Bava Gor is seen as a privilege and does not have a stigma attached to it (Basu 2004b). For the Siddi faqirs and the custodians of the shrine of Bava Gor, most of their clients belong to the margins of the society, both lower caste and class. Basu (2004b) refers to the shrine of Bava Gor as 'cosmopolitan centre of lower classes'. The Siddi *Jamaat* itself, as has been noted, falls on the margins of the Sunni Muslim and Sufi Muslim hierarchies in South Asia. Caste hierarchies within Islam and Sufi orders of South Asia have treated the Siddis and the cult of Bava Gor as low caste or status (Meier 2004; Basu 2004a, 2004b; Shroff 2004, 2011; Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004). As a place of worship of the lower classes, it was removed from political power centres and from dominant religious norms." (Basu 2004: 82) It thus became a site where a Siddi subculture emerged due acculturation, 'accommodation of difference in a common symbolic language' and 'a space controlled by Sidi ritual agents or faqirs' that allowed for strategies of group identification, solidarity and resistance from below (Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Shroff 2004, 2011).[17] It acted as a space where

[17] For example, in the case of Gujarati Siddis, "[c]ontrary to the general belief that the terms Hindu and Muslim denote descriptive or analytical categories, membership and belonging cut across religious boundaries. The different cultural forms are not watertight compartments; they are products of dynamic processes and mutual adjustments..." (Assayag 2004: 42). Hence, 'overlapping stories of Muslim saints and Hindu goddesses', especially in studies on shared sacred sites in India, have made similar assertions (Assayag 2004; Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Gottschalk 2004; Khan 2004; Mayaram 2004; Robinson 2003; Shroff 2004, 2011; Sikand 2004). At shrines and other such shared spaces, it is not religious affiliation which is important but the 'need for divine assistance' (Assayag 2004: 42; Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Gottschalk 2004; Khan 2004; Mayaram 2004; Shroff 2004, 2011; Sikand 2004). However, sometimes the powers of these female divinities have been used as negative parameters to articulate the positive aspects of one's beliefs and pantheon (Robinson 2003). Further, in spite of shared spaces and practices, communities retain their separate identities, so that for "caste Hindus and Muslims visiting places of worship belonging to the other community, acculturation is 'dissociative by differentiation'" (Assayag 2004: 44). For example, Siddis in Gujarat, draw their identity/lineage from Hazrat Bilal, the faithful companion of Prophet Mohammad or from their pantheon of African ancestor-saints, thus, deeply rooting them with a larger Muslim community and the specific Sufi hierarchies of South Asia respectively and definitely grounding them in their black racial African identity (Basu 2004b). The ritual agents or Siddi faqirs at the shrines of Siddi ancestor-saints in Gujarat accommodate different practices of the many followers who come there to venerate the saints as "tolerance according to Sidi notions consists in respecting other people's ways of doing things. The most basic difference between the Hindu and Muslim followers consists in the treatment of blessed substances that are distributed to the supplicants by the Sidi faqirs stationed at the tomb... On the level of personal experience and motives, however, distinctions of religious backgrounds disappear" (Basu 2004b: 244). Sufis have been an important force behind the spread of Islam

"hierarchical relationships of status and dominance were reversed" (Basu 2004b: 239). While the boundaries as far as religious practices go are heterogeneous and permeable, yet, most Siddis are endogamous, however marriages with other Muslim groups are also common. The norm of endogamy could be understood as a marriage preference, while marriages outside the community could be seen as 'an initiative to assimilate' (Shroff 2011).

The cult of Bava Gor was characterised by a 'uniquely creolised cultural production' which mixed Hindu, Sufi, Bhil and African elements such that, "[t]he personal characteristics attributed to the Sidi saints are marked by a polyvalence which allows for the accommodation of different religious conceptions held by a heterogeneous cult following" (Basu 2004a: 67).[18]

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in South Asia, "[u]sing local motifs and idioms, Sufis were able to exercise powerful appeal, making numerous converts to a form of Islam heavily coloured by local influences... Consecutively, the traditions that developed around the figures of many of these Sufis came to be shared by Hindus and Muslims alike, although this did not rule out differences in the ways in which they were seen and regarded by Hindus and Muslims... The cults of Muslim saints are particularly popular amongst 'low' caste Hindus in rural areas..." (Sikand 2004: 168-169). There is however, a trend towards religious reformism in most religions in postcolonial South Asia. Thus, increasingly shrines or shared spaces in India have come under pressure to adhere to one religion and to normative structures of practice within it. Lower caste associations have also been written with new narratives and mythologies connecting the saints, gods and goddesses of the obviously marginalised to those of the dominant upper castes. Along with the changing political-scape, economic factors - histories are 'suitably amended' to recreate shared spaces into places of pilgrimage which attract the devout and donations – which seem to have contributed towards this homogenisation of thought and practice (Sikand 2004). Further, the 'composite culture' of the shrine visitation need not mean giving up of Muslim or Hindu identity, that is, these 'integrated forms of acculturation' do not preclude a strong identification with a religious group or differentiation and communal antagonism with another (Assayag 2004: 42; Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Gottschalk 2004; Ibrahim 2011; Jairath and Kidwai 2011; Khan 2004; Mayaram 2004; Robinson 2003; Shroff 2004, 2011; Sikand 2004).

[18] Followers come to the shrine for various reasons which include curing illness, impotence, child birth, spirit possession/exorcism and justice/judgements by ritual ordeals called bedi or iron rings (Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Shroff 2004, 2011). Describing the ritual actions at the shrines of Siddi saints and indeed, the body and being of the Siddi faqir, as liminal, Basu (2004b) contends that while moral and existential disruptiveness can cause chaos in everyday, chaos as ritual actions or possession dances can be experienced as 'a temporary release' during the 'structured acts' of the liminal phases of ritualised action, that is, "oscillation between chaos and order are salient features of ritualised action." This become apparent in bedi rituals, where the Siddi faqirs manage the liminal experiences of the followers, as 'external authorities' over other State or religious institutions (Basu 2004b). Ritual actions make apparent not only fractures in perceived homogenous religious identities through accommodation of differences and existence of contingent situational identities, but also, 'lay bare' liminal forces, which make, break and 're-structure' boundaries (Basu 2004b). Shroff (2011) points out that Bava Gor is regarded as the kulpir or 'ancestral saint', similar to kuldevta or kulguru in Hindu families, by the Siddis. She believes that through this mythology which links the Siddis to Bava Gor and Mai Misra, both of who subjugated evil powers,

Further, the shrine provided a 'material base for subsistence' to a wandering order of Siddi faqirs, called a Sufi *Tariqqa* and to the Siddis who live around the shrine and manage it as a community, as other Siddis live all over Gujarat. [19] However, with a progressive change in the management of the dargah over the last three decades, characterised by 'particularisation of rights' over it, many in the Siddi *Jamaat* tried to reassert their 'privileged customary rights' by moving the court. The increased state intervention in the last few decades has transformed the site of the shrine of the Siddi saint Bava Gor from a "site of resistance and autonomy of people placed at the bottom of Gujarati society into an Islamic site" (Basu 2004a: 61). Till the 1980,s the dargah attracted many followers, especially the marginalised, which included low Hindu castes, Bhils, Muslims from various *Jamaats* and Parsis. (Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Shroff 2004, 2011) However, since the 1990s, this 'plural clientele' has been slowly replaced by an exceedingly homogeneous Muslim following.[20] These efforts to establish a clearer boundary between 'followers

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Siddis in Gujarat have been able to draw legitimacy and "reinvent their role as fakirs. Through their legend of Bava Gor, Siddis devised a brotherhood of fakirs or spiritual healers based on 'fictive kinship ties' that gave them a source of livelihood and "empowered them from rootless, displaced slaves to subjects located within a history, with a defined sense of purpose. As fakirs embodying the spiritual legacy of Bava Gor, Sidis racial difference becomes a marker signifying spiritual power; thus curly hair and other distinctive physical characteristics as perceived as signs of inherited special powers... The brotherhood of fakirs that was primarily established to set up newly defined boundaries of Sidis as a Jamaat..." (Shroff 2011: 71). Further, their healing practices are inclusive of the 'outsider', reasserting permeable frontiers of identity. For example, Siddi fakirs participate in the annual Kumbh Mela in Junagarh and the Shrines of Bava Gor throughout the regions have a multiethnic and multi-religious clientele, further Shroff (2011) shares from her field interviews with two Siddi itinerant Siddi fakir musicians a snippet in which "[i]n Hindu villages, Malangbhai caters to his clientele by singing Meera Bhajans... and in Muslim villages he sings qawali. Malangbhai explained that it is customary for farmers in these villages to invite Sidi fakir to partake of harvested crops in the name of Bava Gor..." (Shroff 2011: 73).

[19] As Siddis live all over Gujarat, those Siddis who live around the shrine function as its custodians and "[a]s a brotherhood of fakirs, Sidis organised a democratic system of job rotation and distribution at the shrine of Bava Gor… by rotation, each Sidi family could take turns and offer ritual service to devotees, in order to earn a livelihood" (Shroff 2011: 73; Basu 2004a, 2004b).

[20] However, taking a contrary view, Mcloed (2008) argues that what is considered as unique syncretism of the Siddi culture is common to most Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities of the subcontinent. Further, it argues against defining 'diaspora' as a concept restrictively. This perspective emphasises, articulation of identity and its realisation is necessarily hinged on 'membership to an imagined community'. However, if a community considers itself to have a distinct identity then it should be considered a community. This wide conceptualisation of community has parallels the definition of 'diaspora' adopted in this research. While "[s]cholars, activists, and some Sidis are trying to build just an imagined community in the minds of all Indians of African origin... At the moment, however, there is no African-Indian

on religious grounds' have been met by resistance at local level by the Siddis, who have defined the dargah more inclusively and 'as common ritual property' (Basu 2004a; Basu 2004b).[21]

These transformations in the management of the shrine not only translated in changes in regulating the political economy around the shrine, but also, in interference with acceptability and performance of certain rituals. Spatial transformation has also been a part of this process. Further, as many followers belong to the 'upwardly mobile stratum of Muslim lower middle class' both urban and rural, Basu (2004a) claims that the spatial development of the shrine is an extension of the 'religious aspirations' of the Trust members and these new followers. Thus, commercial pilgrimage tours are available from all major cities of Gujarat to the shrine and its outer appearance has changed to reflect the attitudes of new patrons for whom Bava Gor is a Muslim not Siddi saint. The renovations at the shrine also include facilities

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diasporic community, as the great majority of Sidis lack the sense of shared identity, much less the knowledge that their ancestors came from Africa" (Mcleod 2008: 254). The royal families of Janjira and Sachin act as apt examples to demonstrate this inclusive definition of 'community'. Both groups ascribe to themselves a distinct African Indian diasporic identity 'rooted' in their African past, thus, they should be "considered an African-Indian diasporic community... At the same time, their integration into the princely India and upper-class Muslim communities make them in one sense Indians who happen to be of African decent... and also a constituent of the cosmopolitan Indian Ocean cultural world which produced them in the first place" (Mcleod 2008: 269). The marriage patterns of the Janjira royal family 'reflect the history and political structure of the estate'. As the Siddi Sardars of Janjira consolidated power and 'became a community' with a common "religion, language, their African ancestry, and their elite status in their new Indian homeland, the Sidi Sardars of Janjira became a closed group" (Mcleod 2008: 257). The members of the family married endogamously within the coterie of Janjira's Siddi Sardars till late nineteenth century and then conforming to the trends within other Muslim elites they started marrying 'other' Muslim elites. Similarly, the Sachin family (a lineage that represents a split in the Janjira family in the eighteenth century) since its inception has married both with the Janjira family and 'outside' with other Muslim groups. Mcleod (2008) notes that both the families "shared in the growing consciousness that Indian princely families, of whatever background, formed another distinct community" (Mcleod 2008: 268). However, post 1948, the Janjira family have married 'a range of princely, industrial or professional, and rural noble families. This pattern is observed in other princely families as well" (Mcleod 2008: 268). On the other hand, the Sachin family has continued to 'maintain traditional marriage practices'.

[21] As Basu (2004a) points out, the most fascinating aspect of the court proceedings is that Siddis fighting the authority of the new Trust emphasise that though they are part of the larger Muslim community, they "refused to identify with a position which aims at the exclusion of Sidi practices..." (Basu 2004a: 73). On the contrary, the new Trust challenged this claim of Siddis' customary right over the Gori Pir shrine by rooting the legitimacy of its two non-Siddi trustees in the long history of their communities visitation and veneration of the saint, thus, claiming the same rights as Siddis by virtue of being Gori Pir's followers, moreover, a claim based in the universality of Islamic faith (Basu 2004a).

and conveniences for an urban and modern clientele. Thus, these 'modernizing and Islamising efforts' have rendered the cult of a Siddi Sufi saint as an 'Islamic saint' which have got objectified in the size, grandeur and popularity, of the tombs of the three sibling saints buried in the area. Even, Mai Misra whose power and intervention is central to the oral histories and myths around Bava Gor cannot compete with this new centrality in popular discourse and spatial representation attributed to Bava Gor (Basu 2004a).

The 'symbolic, religious and social' marginalization of Siddis all over India is reflected in the absence of political representation and economic dispossession, as

> members of the Sidi communities continue to struggle for economic and social empowerment and scholars who have studied socio-economic status note Sidis today live in both urban slums and rural underdeveloped areas. Thus as a marginalized group living within contemporary India their situation is embedded within the political mechanisms of the nation-state (Meier 2004: 89)

Siddis lack education, stable employment and suffer from multiple deprivations and poverty in Gujarat. Further, usually they do not own any means of production or land for cultivation. Mostly, they are self-employed or employed in various informal sectors like domestic work or local handicraft production and engage in 'wage hunting and gathering' (Basu 2004b).

Ahmedabad: Knowledge Production and Performing Identity

The 'questions of cultural representation' and identity in contemporary Siddi community in India are both self-conscious and constructed (Shroff 2004). The promotion of Gujarati, Kannad and Hyderabadi Siddis as 'exotic' African dancers and musicians has to be understood within 'contemporary social and political contexts.' The government of India and the culture market has promoted and consumed them as 'exotic' tribals and as 'African dancers' in front of state dignitaries like Nelson Mandela or in Republic day parades since the 1980s or in various folkloric festivals (Shroff 2004; Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004). As Siddi cultural production becomes popularised within a secular audience, these performances are also understood as

> symbols of the diversity of India and as 'survivals' of Africaness. Thus, these performances have become the focal point for the various agendas seeking alternatively to situate Sidis in the nation-state of India, or to recast their 'diasporic' history as a compelling predecessor to transnational movements characterising the contemporary world (Meiers 2004: 91).

In case of Siddis of Gujarat, government publications have explained the inequalities facing the Siddis as their 'refusal to adopt modernity' by drawing on racist views that colonial ethnographies adopted, which privileged a Social Darwinism approach to the study of human society. Thus,

> according to this rhetoric, their integration into the mainstream Indian society has not occurred because their 'traditional' way of life does not encourage social advancement through education" and that "same stereotypes used to describe Bhils, the non-Indo-Aryan inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent, are used to describe Sidis (Meier 2004: 89).

The shrine of Bava Gor in Ratanpur, Gujarat, is considered the 'original' resting place of the saint. During *Jikr* sessions in Gujarat, Siddis congregate and eulogise the saint through songs for hours. *Jikris* consist of the sacred recitation – both celebratory and lamentations – without distinction as far as the mood and the musical delivery of these recitations go. The recitation of *Jikris* starts with a prayer – in honour of *Allah*, Prophet Mohammed, Hazrat Bilal and Bava Gor – called *Salvat*.[22] All Siddi *Jamaats* of Gujarat have their own variation of reciting the same *Salvat* and *Jikris* as these are oral tradition handed down through generations.[23] There are over 25 Siddi Jamaats in Gujarat today and over 152 Bava Gor Chillas or Memorial Shrines in the region.[24]

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[22] This section is based on data from a on Siddi *Jikrs* that was conducted over a span of two days in Ahmedabad in April 2015. Hazrat Bilal was Prophet Mohammed's contemporary and first muezzin in Islamic History. He hailed from Ethiopia, however, in Gujarati Siddi oral traditions he is said to be a Makau as many Siddis in Gujarat are of Makau descent. Makau are a tribe found in north Mozambique and were forced into slavery for centuries by the Portuguese, the Arabs, the Swahilis and other warring tribes. However, there is an alternative mythology around Hazrat Bilal which claims that he was an Ethiopian/Habshi or Nubian/Nobi. Hazrat Bilal feature in the *Salvat*, as well as *Jikrs*.

[23] During the workshop, Wasim Jamadar of the Bhuj Jamaat said that though *Jikris* are similar in all the Jamaats, however, there will be difference in *Lai* (rhythm) and *Boli* (dialect). Salaam Bhai claimed that at some point there were over seven hundred *Jikris*, however, most have been forgotten as these are oral traditions.

[24] According to Wasim Bhai during the workshop.

Though most of the *Jikris* are in Hindustani, during a philological workshop conducted in April 2015, we were able to identify words from Kuchhi, Gujarati, Swahili and Bantu Languages. There were certain words which could not be identified maybe due to phonological changes over time or maybe because they come from other language groups.[25] However, there are certain things that are worth mentioning here. Firstly, the theme of the ocean and the Sea in both the *Salvat* and *Jikris* are reoccurring. Secondly, the personification of Bava Gor or Siddis as tiger/lion could be a reference to Hazrat Ali. Thirdly, the theme of the jungle - Siddis have depended heavily on the resources of the forest and maybe that is the reason why Bava Gors is seen as a custodian (*raja*) of the forest.

Further, the concept of culture is neither homogenous nor fixed is best displayed by the impromptu improvised devotional adaptations on popular Bollywood tunes to express *mauj* (joy), when the Siddis congregate to recite *Jikris*.[26] *Jikri* recitations can be interspersed with these newer improvisations as witnessed during the 'opening ceremony' on the first day of the workshop. Siddi performances are just not restricted to live acts for an audience but also recordings which are distributed and sold. One of these initial efforts to record their performance (within its context) came from ethno-musicologist Nazir Jairazbhoy and Amy Catlin-Jairazbhoy in late 1990s. However, recorded dances consumed by unrooting these from their historic or religious significance for the Siddi community, also archives a certain ahistoric notion

[25] Certain words that were identified, for example, in Swahili *Matoto* means a 'Child' (both Male and Female), however, the Gujarati Siddis have indigenised the word such that *Matoto* means a 'Male Child', *Matoti* means a 'female child' and *Matota* is the collective plural. Another word was *Ugali* which means 'porridge' in East Africa and 'cooked rice' in Gujarati or *Morungo* which means God or specifically, the Great Soul in Swahili. Further, the phrase *ho yale* is used in many *Jikrs* which is a work cry used on the East African Coast by workers. Some words which could not be identified were dom, musale, Kabyta etc.

[26] Example,
Aye ho dariya Jhang Ke
Mare Vasila Banke
Mere sangh yuhin rehna
Mari Vasila Banke…
Rhyme and music was based on the popular Bollywood song *Aaye ho meri zindagi mein* from the film *Raja Hindustani* (1996). Wasim Bhai – on the *Musinda* drum - made up an on the spot adaptation of the Bollywood song *Tu Cheez Badi Hai Mast Mast* from the film *Mohra* (1994) to prove this point.

of the Africa and Africanity. Nonetheless, Catlin-Jairazbhoy (2004) observes that

> Sidis are now re-entering the global, transnational cultural economy through pathways of music and the sacred. This new avenue of commercial and intellectual interchange is challenging the foundations of Siddi ethnic identity, and may eventually weaken or strengthen their cultural moorings (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004: 178).

Though the efforts of intellectuals and journalist have brought the problems facing the Siddi community to the fore, yet, it is in the new 'awareness/es' instilled, that one finds the genesis of a new self - articulations of identity and consciousness. However, questions that focus on the theoretical probelmatique of discussing race and diaspora around the Indian Ocean remain unanswered: what race means conceptually around the Indian Ocean or in the subcontinent specifically; what forms has racism taken historically in this context; does the underlying assumption in most studies on Siddis, where African denotes 'black African', have any significance to the understanding of race in this context; and how much of the tropes of what African, slave or slavery mean have borrowed from the transatlantic framework? Further, the impact of commercialising the Siddi dance and performances needs to be understood as there has been resistance within the community that forebear questions regarding processes of identity making. These questions are addressed later in this thesis.

Siddis in Uttara Kannada District, Karnataka

The Siddis of Uttara Kannada have "retained and reworked aspects of their identities to articulate their religious and political action under the contemporary complex structures and symbols of state power" (Obeng 2008: 235).[27] Unlike Hyderabad and Gujarat Siddis, Siddis of Uttara Kannada belong to Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. The Muslims trace their 'origins' in India to the Bijapur/Janjira/Ahmadnagar sultanate, the Christians trace their roots to Goa, which was ruled by the Portuguese colonial authorities and the ancestors of Hindu Siddis were sold by the Arab merchants to Havik

[27] Karnataka Siddis were recognised as Schedule Tribes in June 2002.

Brahmins in exchange for local produce (Palakshappa (1976) cited in Obeng (2008): 233).[28] 45 per cent of Karnataka Siddis are Roman Catholic, 30 per cent are Sunni Muslim and 25 per cent are Hindu (Camara 2004).

Most Siddis of Uttara Kannada belong to the socio economically unprivileged section of the Indian society where nearly

> 80 percent of the African Indians are agricultural labourers or gatherers of areca nuts and honey. Some of them supplement their seasonal agricultural labor with hunting, tailoring and fishing. There are others who serve as domestics at Brahmin households and in convents in Karwar district... The different forms of labor control under local politicians and landholders have accentuated the level of poverty and lowered the social status of African Indians (Obeng 2008: 241).

Further, though on an average, half of the Siddis own a plot or land and cultivate paddy or rice, they do not hold the titles of the lands they have cultivated for over three decades and are termed as 'encroachers' by the authorities (Camara 2004; Obeng 2008). Thus, they can be evicted anytime. 'Another disempowering system' that further dispossesses Karnataka Siddis is 'debt bondage', whereby, "African Indians are forced to give their whole household or their children in debt bondage...Widespread debt bondage is practiced in impoverished drought-prone areas and among poverty-stricken people of Karnataka" (Obeng 2008: 241). Today, many Siddis, especially

[28] Africans are central to the development of medieval Islamicate Deccan and its politics. The Bahmani Sultanate and its subsequent successor Adilshahi, Nizamshahi, Qutubshahi, Imadshahi and Baridshahi Sultanates had and continued to actively recruit Africans with Arabs vessels facilitating most of this migration. Thus, African nobility, courtiers, eunuchs, soldiers, cavalrymen and domestic workers were a constant feature. Most Africans from the Islamicate Deccan married locally and integrated completely with the population with Islam being the common identity binding them. Africans were also important power brokers and the history of medieval Deccan, indeed that of medieval India, is incomplete without a reference to the role played by them. Further, the maritime history of the western Indian Ocean would be incomplete without a reference to the Siddi rulers of the impenetrable Janjira Islands. As colonialism got more entrenched - the emergence of colonialism coincides with the emergence of the Bahmani Sultanate in the sixteenth century - most migration from Africa continued to be in the form of slavery, however, now it acquired a racial dimension and majority of the migration moved further South. Most Africans in this period who landed on the Konkan coast were slaves from East Africa, specifically from Mozambique, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Malawi, Congo and to a lesser degree from Kenya as both Mozambique and the Western Coast of India were under the Portuguese Colonial Empire. The Portuguese exercised considerable influence over the Western Indian Ocean and were later in collusion with the Sultan of Zanzibar and the French Colonial Authorities, providing manpower for their island plantations like the Mascarene Islands. Thus, Goa, Daman and Diu consistently received black African slaves from the East African Coast till mid nineteenth century. It is to these Africans 'settlements' that Siddis in India trace their lineage "though not necessarily in the same places where they historically were formed. That is to say, through migration of ex-slaves and free persons of African origin within India and through import of Africans to other parts of India, new settlements emerged" (Camara 2004: 101; Drewal 2004; Obeng 2004, 2008).

those in their twenties have migrated to Goa and other urban centres for employment. They are employed in the informal sector as wage or contract labour, men in construction work and women as domestic help in Christian and Hindu households (Camara 2004). Siddis also practice folk medicine and ancestor worship, the latter practice also being prevalent in many African tribes and cultures (Obeng 2008). Therefore, Siddis in Karnataka face discrimination due to their low caste status, but also, because of their 'skin colour and physical appearance'.

Further, according to 'others', Siddis of Uttara Kannada speak a 'peculiar language which only they are able to understand'. It is popularly referred to as Siddi bhasha. However, most Siddis do not regard their language to be 'unique' or acknowledge the existence of Siddi bhasha. What has been understood as an unique Siddi bhasha is actually a more complex system of language use, such that, "[t]he language a Siddi regards as mother tongue depends on gender, age and religious affiliation" (Camara 2004: 107).[29] Various religious and secular groups and individuals in Karnataka have been working towards promoting Siddi culture, especially the Konkani language. The Indian government has also recognised Konkani as separate from Marathi. However, "it is important to show ways in which a particular practice has been transformed in different contexts" (Obeng 2004: 119). They also use various 'drums, dances and songs' that share similarities with Siddis of the western coast and with corresponding cultural elements of other Goan communities.

While these communities have 'voluntarily integrated' into the larger Indian society by adhering to one of three dominant religions of Deccan, though 'minimal' in practice, yet this acts a factor in impeding a unified Siddi identity (Drewal 2004; Obeng 2004, 2008). Further, religious conversions are

[29] Most Muslim males spoke in Urdu and Muslim women in both Marathi and Urdu, Marathi being a common language with widespread usage in northern Karnataka. Similarly, Hindu and Catholic Siddis regard Konkani as their mother tongue (Camara 2004; Drewal 2004; Obeng 2004). With modern school education and with greater interaction with other people of Karnataka, facilitated by the breaking of feudal bonds, most Siddis today speak Kannada. However, "though some are more proficient than others, but none regard it as their mother tongue or main language" (Camara 2004: 107). Thus, the relationship between the Hindus and the Catholics is more intimate due to linguistic similarities.

not the only survival strategies adopted by the Siddis. Scholars have contended that they consciously chose to live in isolated communities in the forests of Western Ghats as a self-preservation strategy (Camara 2004; Drewal 2004; Obeng 2004, 2008). For Camara (2004) as Siddis deal with a myriad of changes from loss of forests as livelihood to urban migration,

> [p]erhaps the major change that has taken place among the Siddis relates to the concept of Siddiance Zat, meaning the Siddi people. Prior to 1980s this concept did not exist among the Siddis; it was coined by them only after they began to regard themselves as one people... [this] is an ongoing process (Camara 2004: 113).[30]

Thus, the strategies adopted by Siddis in India are both complex and historically contingent.

(Trans)locating Hadramis in Deccani History

Before 1968, when the north and south Yemen were united under a communist regime, Hadramawth meant the states of ‘Qa‘aiti and Kathiri sultans.’ However, “[s]ince 1968 the term has been applied to the governorates of Shabwa and Haramawt of the new state of South Yemen” (Khalidi 1996: 52; Ho 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007; Manger 2010). Hadramawth underwent cultural and urban development due its densely populated and thriving port cities, its links with its émigré around the Indian Ocean and

[30] In the 1980s, two Catholic priests got involved with the Siddis and provided resources to them so that they could organise. With the help of some non-Siddi social workers, these priests were able to establish a ‘core group’. In 1984, the leadership from within the community founded an ‘activist cum welfare association’ christened as All Karnataka Siddi Development Association (AKSDA). This association waned in a few years. However, in 1990 the Siddi Development Project (SDP) was established with a new management comprising of educated Siddi men. SDP shifted its base to the small town of Yellapur and undertook a series of actions ranging from a rally, street plays and discussions with state functionaries. Their demands included “that the shop owners, bus conductors and teashop keepers should not discriminate against them, that landlords and employers should pay them fairly, that the government should hand over rights to the Siddis for land which they cultivate as squatters and finally, that the Siddis should be given status as a Schedule Tribe, which would ensure some state support” (Camara 2004: 109). Since then SDP has built Hostels for children, founded co-operative societies, women’s associations, basic education facilities, fair price shops, saving schemes, youth clubs and have provided bore wells, seeds and bricks for house construction (Camara 2004). They also have a ‘semi-professional’ cultural association called Siddi Sanskruti Mandd. Ideologically SDP propagates a vision to organise and unite Siddis across Karnataka and India. In 1996 the Project was informed by its sponsors that its foreign funding would be terminated gradually, following which in 1999, the funding agency ceased its sponsorship of the program. That year SDP reinvented itself as Siddi Development Society (SDS) and started applying for domestic funding. The SDP and the SDS are examples of secular organisation that are working for the unification of the Siddis, unlike, the Christian, Hindu and Islamic organisations that ‘attempt to keep them separately’ (Camara 2004).

its long history as an important centre of Islamic learning. Its educational center of Tarim was perhaps the most highly regarded in South Arabia, and the intellectual and religious life has been very developed in a number of sayyids, Sufis, and *ulama* whose influence extended overseas (Khalidi 1996, 2006: 41).

Sayyids exercised 'spiritual influence' over the tribal life of Hadramawt, such that, "certain sayyid families were hereditary religious arbiters for specific tribe... [also] often became *ulama* in port towns and sometimes even in the hinterland" (Khalidi 2006: 42; Ho 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007; Manger 2010). The term Sayyid means 'lord, master' and has been used for the descendants of Prophet Mohammad, though equality of social status is ordained by Islam, "[e]ven within the Prophets lifetime, equality within Arabs was not conceded by the older, well-entrenched groups," many Hadrami sayyids claim their descent "from Ali, through Ahmad ibn Isa al-Muhajir, who is said to have emigrated to Hadramawt from Basra in the tenth century" (Khalidi 2006: 42; Ho 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007; Manger 2010).

They came to exercise similar, if not more, influence over the different areas where Hadramis emigrated as diaspora both on the coast as well as hinterland. Sayyids from Hadramawt established schools of religious learning and *khanqahs* (hospices) around the Indian Ocean Rim and assumed multiple roles which included 'a Sufi, an *alim*, and even a merchant.' Hadrami diasporas movement 'was gradual, sporadic and small-scale', yet significant in terms of influence and proportion of the total number of immigrants. Further, Hadrami sayyids, especially the alawiya, maintained meticulous records of genealogy. Hadrami diaspora also maintained active links with their homeland through 'kinship alliances and visits' (Alatas 1997; Dale 1997; Ho 2006; Abdullah 2009; Gervase Clarence-Smith 2009).

From their earlier migration, "in India, we find domed graves and tombs of Hadrami sayyids in Delhi, Gujarat, Deccan, and Malabar" (Khalidi 1996, 1997, 2006: 42). In the Deccan, Hadrami *Sayyid* graves can be found in Ahmadabad, Bidar, Bijapur, Aurangabad and Hyderabad. Hadrami *Sayyids* propagated the Shafi'i *madhab* of Islam. For example, the Siddis of Hyderabad are Shafi'i Muslims (unlike elsewhere in India) as the Hadramis

were instrumental in their passage into Hyderabad and they have since maintained close contact with Hadrami Hyderabadis, both professionally and socio-culturally through music and marriage (Khalidi 1996, 1997, 2006). As a diaspora, Hadramis are concentrated in the littoral ports, towns and cities. They have had a long history of trade links and migration to the western coast of India. Hadrami community and its history in the state of Gujarat is one such noteworthy instance. Towns like Ahmedabad, Baroda, Baruch and Surat became the adopted homes of important Hadramis religious scholars and Sufis like the al-Aydarus family in Ahmedabad in the sixteenth century. The conquest of Gujarat by the Mughals did not affect this trend,

> [t]hey continued to be close to the new ruling dynasty as they were during the time of the Gujarat sultans... With the advent of the British colonialism in India and gradual decline of the Mughals, though the Hadrami Sayyids lost royal patrons; yet they retained high status within the Muslim community (Khalidi 1996, 2006: 47).

In the courts of Deccan sultanates of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar, Hadramis played important role as religious scholars, interpreting Islamic texts, doctrines and scripture and as intellectuals writing or translating scholarly works in different languages. Further, not all Hadrami Sayyids stayed permanently (Ho 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007; Manger 2010). In addition to religious scholarship, "South Arabian mercenaries and soldiers were found in the armies of Deccani and Gujarati sultans. Persian sources from medieval India speak vaguely of "Arab" soldiers in the army of Bahmani Empire and its successor sultanates (fourteenth-seventeenth centuries)," and though the ethnicity or tribal identities of many of these soldiers and mercenaries cannot be determined due to vague historical sources, "[a]ccording to 'Abdallah Muhammad b. 'Umar, a contemporary historian known as Haji al-Dabir, there were as many as 10,000 foreign mercenaries in the army of Sultan Bahadur Shah (reigned c. 1526-37), a good number of whom were Yafi'i and Mahri" (Khalidi 1996, 1997: 69).

The Malabar Coast formed the 'chief site of Indo-Arabian contacts' since pre-Islamic times. Exploiting the Monsoon winds, earlier Jewish and Christian Arab traders had settled in port towns of Calicut, Cochin and Quilon, where descendants of this diaspora still live. Muslim traders from the "Persian

Gulf, South Arabia and the Red Sea followed as Islam spread through the Near East, and by Early Modern period they constituted the predominant Near Eastern mercantile community in Kerela" (Khalidi 2006: 53; Dale 1997).[31]

[31] The presence of Hadrami Sayyid's in the region could be dated back to an intermediate date, documented in a genealogy that Sayyid A. Jifri of Calicut has in his possession. Further, with the arrival of 'two related Hadramis' of Sayyid lineage, in early eighteenth century, one can concretely place Hadramis Sayyid in presence in Kerala. Sayyid Hasan al-Jifri arrived in Calicut in early eighteenth century and from Calicut moved to Ponani where his name is associated with the Ponani Makhdum College before settling down in the village of Tirurangadi, south-southeast of Calicut (Dale 1997; Khalidi 2006). Around 1746 he was joined by his brother Sayyid Shaykh al-Jifri, who settled down in Calicut, though "[t]he circumstances of these men's migration is not known. They probably came as 'ulama' to serve the large Kerala Muslim community, among whom they enjoyed great religious prestige... This does not exclude the possibility that these men carried on trade, but sayyid sources emphasise their traditional religious status and role" (Dale 1997: 177). In Kerala, the sada was given the honorific title of tannal. These men were joined by the nephew and son-in-law of Sayyid Hasan al-Jifri and Sayyid 'Alawi b. Muhammad b. Sahl in 1766-1767. Dale (1997) contends that Sayyid 'Alawi b. Muhammad b. Sahl was probably given the charge of Tirurangadi mosque as Sayyid Alawi and his son Sayyid Fadl used the Tirurangadi mosque as a base for 'political and military activities and religiously-sanctioned social protest' (Dale 1997). Sayyid Fadl ibn Sahk Pukoya Tangal (1823-1901) is identified as Sayyid Fadl the Moplah in British records (Khalidi 2006). The al-Jifri lineage Sayyids exercised social and political control over the local Muslim society, in the nineteenth and twentieth century, as they provided a Muslim leadership in a place where Muslim rule never got effectively established (Dale 1997). Sayyid 'Alawi legitimised claims of rural Muslim agriculturalists to 'establish a kind of state in the rural hinterland' of Calicut during the transition from Hindu rule to the British rule. After his death, for nearly three decades, Sayyid Fadl continued this tradition 'legitimising Muslim challenge' to the established economic and social hierarchies of upper caste Hindu landowners and the British authority (Dale 1997). Sayyid Fadl sanctioned attacks by local men and youth which they carried out as jihad. The suicide attacks against British troops alarmed the British into exiling Sayyid Fadl as even "[t]he highest British officials in India rejected the idea of arresting him, fearing that this might spark a general Muslim uprising. A revolt did eventually occur in the Calicut region, but only when triggered by the political agitation of the combined Indian National Congress Party and the Khilafat protests of the Muslim League in 1920-1921" (Dale 1997: 179). Even in exile, Sayyid Fadl continued his controversial career first getting involved in a revolt against the Ottoman governor of Mecca for his 'European inspired anti-slave trade proclamations' in 1856, followed by declaring himself the Ottoman governor of Dhofar (he had been invited there to mediate between tribes), now in modern Oman, without the sanction of Ottoman authorities. He also unsuccessfully sought the Ottoman's help for returning to India or for gaining politically powerful positions in Yemen, at different times (Dale 1997; Khalidi 2006). Some descendants of Sayyid Fadl accompanied him on exile, such as, one great-grandson Mr. A. Z. A. al-Fadl who is a businessman in Paris. Others remained back in Kerala and 'prospered in commerce.' In Kerala, Sayyid A. Jifri of Calicut is the Managing Director of West India Steel Mills. The other important Sayyid family in Kerala is the Barami family of Calicut and Beypore. Descendants of timber merchants and ship builders, they trace their origins to al-Mukalla. Their workshops in Beypore shipyards are "the single most important site for the construction of dhows along with Southwest Indian coast. Even in the 1970s Arab ship owners from the timber-poor Persian Gulf states had ships built in Beypore, and then sailed them across the Arabian Sea to Gulf ports where they installed diesel engines. Given the importance of Beypore shipyards, the Barami family is likely to have commercial and kinship connections throughout the Indian Ocean" (Dale 1997: 181-182). Another Sayyid Abd al-Rahman BaFaqih Tangal was the president of the Kerala unit of Muslim League for nearly two decades, from 1956-1973. The Muslim League is an important party in Kerala having been part of 'all successive coalition governments formed in the state.' BaFaqih Tangal was succeeded by another Sayyid, P.M.S.A. Pukoya, after his death. His son Syed Sahib, educated at al-Azhar, Cairo, succeeded him after his death and was the chairman of the board of spinning mill in

Malabar coast formed an important trading centre as a 'collection point' for spices, aromatic woods, hardwoods and a 'distribution point' for cotton cloth that were supplied by the Indian traders who got it from weaving towns to the East. Kerala monarchs were predominantly Hindu, however, they "enthusiastically welcomed and, with enlightened self-interest, carefully protected Muslim merchants, for customs dues represented the bulk of these rulers' disposable income" (Dale 1997: 175). These kingdoms shared many similarities with the small port kingdoms found in Southeast Asia, such that,

> Malabar coast has a monsoon ecology and culture that resembles coastal Southeast Asia more than the South Asian heartland. Kerala Muslims also share Arabic-derived culture of most Southeast Asian Muslims, including the observance of Shafi'i *madhhab* and the presence of Hadrami migrants as *'ulama'* and merchants (Dale 1997: 175).

There was also a notable Hadrami presence in Delhi, which Khalidi (2006) terms as an 'exception to the rule' as most Hadrami migration was restricted to the coastal cities and connected hinterlands. This dates back to the 1560 when Haji hamida Bano Begum, wife of Emperor Humayun went for Hajj and

> [o]n the way back from the pilgrimage, she invited some 300 Hadrami Sayyids, sheikhs, and servants to accompany her back to India as royal guests. The Sayyids were invited for the purpose of reciting the Qur'an over the grave of the Begum's late husband Emperor Humayun. This was the inception of *Arab ki Saray*, the Arab palace or lodge in the Mughal Capital (Khalidi 2006: 44).[32]

Malappuram, indicating "[t]he deep involvement of the Malabar Sayyids is in consonant with similar roles played by their counterparts in such varied political environments as Malaysia, Indonesian and Somalia" (Khalidi 2006: 55; Dale 1997).

[32] I visited the *Arab ki Saray* in March 2015. The tour guide, who explained the history of the *Saray* to me, was from a self help group established under the auspices of Aga Khan Trust for Culture. The *saray* is a walled enclosure next to Humayun's tomb in Delhi. Currently, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative, Aga Khan Development Network, is restoring it. The grand gateway entry into the *Arab ki Saray* is being researched so that the unique dome covering the gateway is (re)built true to its original. A direct road joint the Purana Qilla to *Arab ki Saray* at this gateway on the one end, while on the other end of it were the banks of river Yamuna, which were used to transport building material and other supplies as well as connect this part of the city to the Red Fort. Emperor Humayun along with other Mughal notables is buried in this area because of the *dargah* or tomb of the Sufi saint Harzat Nizamuddin Auliya. It was considered auspicious to be buried near pious men. At the beginning of the twentieth century, "only a handful of houses were left in Arab ki Saray. Some houses were taken over by the British authorities for the Archaeological Survey of India to preserve the archway and other historical structures." (Khalidi 2006: 45) The tour guide, however, explained the absence of any such structure by saying that most Arabs who had accompanied Haji Hamida Bano Begum were artisans and stayed in temporary accommodation which have not stood the vagaries of time. Further, the *Arab ki Saray* complex has a mosque named after the chief architect of Humayuns Tomb and Isa Khans Tomb, Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, who was from Herat.

The *saray* housed the Hadramis who accompanied Haji Hamida Bano Begum, which included among the sayyids "Ba Faqih, Ba Hasan, Ba Taha, Jamal al-Layl, and Saqqaf. Among the *Mashayikh* were Ba Abbud and Ba Kathir; while the *Khuddam* comprised of Baqqan" (Khalidi 2006: 44). *Arab ki Saray* was the site of grand celebrations on the occasion of the *Mawlid*, Prophet Mohammad's birthday. It also produced intellectual notables like

> Altaf Fatima, an Urdu novelist and a descendant of the Delhi Hadramis... In fact another Delhi Hadrami Sayyid Ahmad Dihlawi (1846-1920) came to distinction as the great lexicographer of Urdu upon publication of *Farang e Asafiya*, his monumental dictionary (Khalidi 2006: 45).

The Hadramis in Delhi completely integrated into the local milieu through "intermarriages with Indian Muslims, emigration from the Saray, and the lack of fresh migrants from Hadramawt decreased the Hadrami numbers in Delhi" (Khalidi 2006: 45).

Hyderabad(i) and Arab(i): Locating the Passage in History

Similar to Delhi, Hyderabad did not attract many Hadrami *sada* in the medieval period, with the exception of "[o]ne recorded case is that of Ahmad ibn Abd Allah ibn Abd Allah, who lies buried in Masjid Quwwat al-Islam in Qazipura neighbourhood" (Khalidi 2006: 51). This underwent a transformation in the eighteenth century when Hyderabad started attracting Hadramis from inside and outside India as

> "[t]he eighteenth century was one of warfare and turbulence throughout India, as the Mughal Empire lost supremacy in the subcontinent. European trained forces and imported military technology helped to bring new men to power in the middle of the eighteenth century" (Khalidi 1997: 69, 2006).

Khalidi (1997, 2006) notes that as the Mughal Empire disintegrated, regional powers started establishing their own rule and "[m]ost of the new powers were military oligarchies dependent to a high degree on the support of soldiers and mercenaries who were ethnically foreign and locally unconnected or politically neutral" (Khalidi 1997: 69, 2006). Many rulers enlisted Arabs in their armies; this included Maharaja Bhavsinhji of Bhavnagar who had an estimated number of 3000 Arab and Siddi soldiers in his service. Further, some Arab soldiers gained enough power to establish their own principality, as in the case of an Arab *jam'dar* who was able to do so in Mangrol

(Kathiawar) in 1747, which lasted till the abolition of princely states with the independence of India. Arabs also manned, in considerable proportions, the Maratha armies under different commanders such as Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao, Nana Phadnis and the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur (Khalidi 1997, 2006). The Gaikwad Maharaja of Baroda in Gujarat "was an especially important employer of Arab soldiers, and Ja'far al-Kathiri, an Arab chief whose descendants revived a prosperous sultanate in the interior of Hadhramaut in early nineteenth century, began his career there" (Khalidi 1997: 70, 2006). The al-Kathiris later came to work for the Nizam of Hyderabad and financed their handlings in Hadhramaut with the capital they earned in Hyderabad. Moreover,

> Arab garrisons held the forts of Baroda, Barosad, Sankheda and other strongholds. They were amenable only to their paymasters - Mangal Parekh and Samal Bachar, the two *sahukars* (moneylenders), who supported the administration of any ruler who could pay them best. The Arab soldier was looked upon as a guarantee (*bhandari*) for any promise made by the government, which invested their leaders with unlimited powers to interfere in the day-to-day administration (Khalidi 2006: 63).

Arab soldiers were the highest paid mercenaries in the Maratha armies. Arab soldiers were seen as 'undisciplined', 'unacquainted with military evolution' and 'feared' by most rulers, natives and British, Major Burton, a British colonial officer in 1818 observed them as 'naturally brave' (Khalidi 1997, 2006). These observations seem to reflect colonial attitudes towards the Arabs, essentialising them as brave, barbaric and backward at the same time. Further, colonial knowledge production through census was used to construct certain peoples as martial races.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the British had defeated most of the local rulers and established their political and economic dominance, gaining "control of the revenues of South India and Bengal" (Khalidi 1997: 72, 2006). The only remaining power centre was the Marathas in the Deccan, who were defeated in the last Anglo-Maratha war in 1818 and

> [t]he Arabs constituted a small yet significant component of the Maratha forces, and on the defeat of their patrons, they were given the choice of remaining in India or repatriation. Some chose to return home, but the majority preferred to remain in India (Khalidi 1997: 72, 2006).

It was after the defeat of the Marathas that many Arabs came to seek fortunes in Hyderabad under the terms of surrender granted to the Arabs in 1817 in the battle of Nagpur. Consequently,

> "Wilayati [Hadhramaut born] Arabs were deported to Arabia, but half-caste Arabs became a problem for the British government. Upon these circumstances, the Nizam of Hyderabad offered an aman (refuge) to muwallad (native) Arabs, being Muslim brethren upon the consent of Muslim government" (Ansari (1971) cited in Khalidi 1997: 72, 2006).

In January 1818, these disbanded Arabs were taken to Hyderabad "under the supervision of Hamilton's *risala* (military unit)... Among the disbanded soldiers and mercenaries was 'Umar b. 'Awad al-Qu'ayti, the future founder of the Qu'ayti Sultanate in Hadhramaut" (Khalidi 1997: 72, 2006).

However, Khalidi (1997, 2006) also notes that a contingent of Arab guards escorted Arastu Jah on his journey from Poona to Hyderabad in 1797, some two decades before the fall of the Marathas. Therefore, Hyderabad came to host the largest concentration of Hadramis by the middle of the nineteenth century. Hadramis of Hyderabad were prominent as soldiers, mercenaries and scholars. For example, al-Sayyid al-Mujahid Abd al-Rahman ibn Mohammad al-Zahir held the post of a *Jamadar* in Nizam's Irregular Forces. Further, the commander-in-chief of Hyderabad's 'regular' or military units at the time of Operation Polo and the subsequent, surrender of Hyderabad forces to the Indian State in 1948 was Sayyid Ahmad Al Edrus (Khalidi 1997, 2006).

The Asaf Jahi dynasty was established in the wake of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire when "a high ranking Mughal *subadar* (governor), Asaf Jah Nizam I achieved independence and founded the kingdom of Hyderabad in the Deccan in the 1720s, which survived until Indian annexation in 1948" (Khalidi 1997: 73, 2006). He expanded and tried consolidating the Asaf Jahi power in the Deccan, but following his death, there was political instability. Political power in Hyderabad stabilized under the 'long reign (1762-1803)' of Nizam II as

> [b]etween 1765 and 1800 he concluded several treaties with the British authorities in Calcutta. One of these treaties, the treaty of Subsidiary Alliance signed in 1798, brought Hyderabad and its foreign affairs under the effective control of the British (Khalidi 1997: 73, 2006).

These treaties helped the Nizam secure 'internal and external' stability, however, it made possible the British intervention in the affairs of the state in the form of, for example, the positioning of a British Resident permanently in the State and the maintenance of an armed force under the control of British officers which was called the Hyderabad contingent, financed out of Hyderabads Treasury, a unnecessary fiscal expenditure in peace time. (Khalidi 1997, 2006) Following the reign of Nizam II, Hyderabad again witnessed political and economic instability characterised by

> frequent changes in the Nizam's *diwan* (chief minister) and a lack of settled revenue administration... The *diwan*, or his deputy the *peshkar*, was forced to rely increasingly on moneylenders. The latter gave loans to the state only on the security of districts assigned to them for the collection of revenue; the district being sold to the highest bidder. The insecurity of tenure added to the exploitation of the *ryot*, the peasant cultivators, as the assignee sought to recover his loan quickly (Khalidi 1997: 73-74, 2006).

These conditions favoured groups like Arabs who had started moving to Hyderabad in large numbers in order to seek fortune, such that the Nizam's irregular army, the *Nazm-i Jam'iyat* had 5000 Arab soldiers in 1849. Nizam's decentralised armed force was maintained by his nobles, who drew allowances from the state treasury for this purpose. Troops and commanders were of mixed origins like the Rohillas, Pathans, Sikhs and Arabs and Arab chiefs commanded units of troops from anywhere between 100 to 1,000 men. Individual Arabs were referred to as *chaush*, 'a Turkish term used for foot soldiers or palace guards' (Khalidi 1997, 2006). This nomenclature persists till today with most Hyderabadi Arabs being referred to as *Chaush*.

They also became moneylenders, using the manpower at their dispersal. Further, all influential figures and enterprises in Hyderabad had Arab guards, "for personal safety, collection of rent and debt, or for the security of treasuries" (Khalidi 1997: 75, 2006). Arab soldiers were feared by the British and native population alike, as "Arabs showed little respect for British power. Ever armed with a *janbiyya* (Arabian dagger) and matchlock, they gave the impression of invincibility to the local population" (Khalidi 1997: 75, 2006). As has been noted above in the cases of Sayyid Fadl of Malabar and that of Arab soldiers holding hostage Gaikwad kings over non-payment of salary, the British and local rulers were both cognisant of the power Arabs wielded and

there was a general consensus that they had to be controlled. Under the patronage of a Muslim ruler in Hyderabad, who encouraged different groups of Muslims to settle in the Deccan, "Hadrami Arabs were encouraged and rewarded with military posts and lucrative land grants. In this manner, many Arabs became enormously wealthy, acquiring rich agricultural lands and property" (Khalidi 1997: 75, 2006).

With such fortunes, influence and power, the Hadramis engaged in their own empire building schemes back home. The Al Qu'aiti, Al 'Awalaqi and Al Kathiri families from Hyderabad "provided money, soldiers, and leadership to found sultanates bearing their names in Hadhramaut, two of which lasted until 1967" (Khalidi 1997: 75, 2006). The British were wary of the Arab migration, especially to Hyderabad for they feared their increasing numbers would harm their empire building designs and sought to control it. Their home societies mirrored the pattern in the eighteenth century, such that "correspondence of the British Resident in Hyderabad with the Nizam's *diwan* and Calcutta officials is replete with references to the Arab "menace" in the Deccan" (Khalidi 1997: 75, 2006). Hyderabad authorities on being pressured by the British administration to restrict Arab immigration responded by indicating that Hyderabad being a landlocked state alone could not control Arab immigration as most Arabs came in through the port of Bombay under the British jurisdiction. Thus, various proclamations were issued and implemented which included restricted entry for foreign soldiers and a regime of passports.

Under the leadership of *diwan* Nawab Salar Jung (1853-1883) the Hyderabad state implemented many successful reforms and won

> the backing of the two most powerful groups in the state, the Arab *jam'dar*-s and the *sahakar*-s (the bankers). Upon becoming *diwan* in 1853, Salar Jang established a judicial court called *Qadat-i 'Urub* to try Arabs who had defied the normal courts of law... Salar Jang negotiated with the Arab *jam'dar*-s to enforce the court's decrees. He gradually paid off the Arab debts, real or fancied. Slowly but steadily the Arab mercenaries and soldiers were brought into control... Salar Jang employed the Qu'ayti *jam'dar*-s for security duties and revenue collection, and rewarded them with land grants, titles, and access to the British colonial authorities in Hyderabad, Bombay, and Aden (Khalidi 1997: 76-77, 2006).

Qadat-i 'Urub was abolished three decades after its creation and Arabs were made accountable to the regular legal system and courts. The Hadramis were

seen as an ally by the Nizam and his ruling elites as they did not try to compete with them. In 1857, when Hyderabad did not support the Mutiny, but chose to remain a British ally, "Salar Jang deployed Arab squads to protect the British Residency in Hyderabad after it was attacked by a mob in June 1857" (Khalidi 1997: 78, 2006). Had Hyderabad supported the Mutiny, the British feared that they would have lost control over the subcontinent, as indicated in a telegram written to the British Resident in Hyderabad by the Governor of Bombay, when the former returned from the installation ceremony of a new Nizam, as the his predecessor, Nazir al-Dawla had died while the Mutiny was on. (Khalidi 1997, 2006) For its support

> Hyderabad received back some of the territories it had ceded to the colonial power as an acknowledgement... The Qu'ayti *jamadar*-s were rewarded with permission to obtain arms and ammunition from the Government arsenal at Aden in 1866 by the Governor of Bombay, upon endorsement of the request by Salar Jang. The Arab *jamadar*-s attention was firmly focused on empire building schemes in their homelands. They probably realised that harming the colonial cause in India would be too risky, given the British presence in Aden since 1839. Reinforcing their own resolve to support the British was the pro-British policy of their immediate overlord, the Nizam (Khalidi 1997: 78, 2006).

The events of 1857 led to further integration of Arabs into Hyderbad's military and administration when the 'British-controlled Hyderabad contingent' was deployed in central India during the Mutiny, Salar Jang began raising an independent, disciplined, European-style and paid army called Hyderabad State Forces. Hyderabad State Forces employed many Arabs and was successful in controlling rioting during *muharram* in 1884 when the Qu'ayti chief created problems in Hyderabad during a procession. The British initially suspicious and unhappy with Hyderabad raising a rival army, came to accept the idea as this establishment was not meant as a challenge to their power (Khalidi 1997, 2006). The project of modernisation and the consolidation of a modern administrative order was successfully initiated under *diwan* Salar Jang. While most Hadramis were part of Nizams regular army and police service, those 'less educated and prone to indiscipline' became part of *Afwaj-i be-qa'ida* (Nizams Irregular Forces). After the Police Action in 1948,

> As a part of the Muslim community, the Hadramis suffered as a result of the Indian annexation. In late September 1948, 7000 Arabs neither born in Hyderabad nor married to a Hyderabadi were placed in camps, registered and deported to Aden. Those Arabs associated with the Majlis-i Ittihad al-Muslimin

fled to Karachi in Pakistan. Like other absentee landlords, the Arab chiefs lost lands and lucrative income as a result of land reforms in 1949. In early 1950, the Nizams Irregular Forces were disbanded, rendering a large number of Arabs unemployed (Khalidi 1997: 80-81, 2006).

Hyderabad was also home to well known Hadramis Arabic and Islamic scholars and *Sayyids* in this phase. For instance, Khalidi (1997, 2006) mentions some of these figures, such as, Sayyid Abu Bakr Shihab Alawi (1846-1922) who was known all over the Indian Ocean world from the Middle East to Indonesia. Habib Aidarus made several visits to India, before settling down "in the Nizam's capital during the reign of Mahbub Ali Khan. He quickly gained reputation for his strict adherence to sharia and established a school of Islamic studies in Nanded. He is credited with the authorship of 16 books. Habib Aidarus received a stipend of Rupees 200 monthly from the Nizam's State funds" (Khalidi 1997, 2006: 52). His descendents continue on the path of their 'ancestor's call', and an annual *urs* on the lines of "the sufi practices of other silsilas-Chishti, Qadiri, Naqshbandi, with minor and negligible differences" is celeberated. (Khalidi 1997, 2006: 52) Further, of "[t]hose *Sayyids* who did not belong to or founded a *sufi silsila* of their own include Madhij who was a scholar with Darat al-Maarif al Uthmaniyya, as well as Abu Abd Allah Habib Muhsin Khamur al-Alawi who left behind a manuscript on the lives of Hadrami Shaykhs in India" (Khalidi 1997, 2006: 52).

Khalidi (1997, 2006, 2008) has argued that migrating at a time when the movement of people, commodities and ideas was not controlled by the regimes of power put in place by the nation state, the Hadramis could achieve 'upward social mobility' by migrating. They did this firstly, by 'naturally' taking charge of the religious affairs because of their 'command over religious scholarship' and Arabic language. They interpreted Hadith and Qur'an and 'tended to enunciate' a proper Islam based on their reading of its texts and scripture. They drew their understanding from a method of Islamic mysticism called *tassawuf* and even today "their shrines have served as the natural foci of such devotional activities as the annual celebration of Prophet Mohammad's birthday (*mawlid*) as well as seasonal pilgrimages to the holy men buried in

there" (Khalidi 2006: 43). Secondly, Hadramis were able to experience social mobility through matrimonial alliances. They capitalised on the respect that was bestowed on them as Sayyids or descendents of Prophet Mohammad through marriage alliances with Muslim nobility. Khalidi (1996, 2006, 2008) adds that the fact that they were usually not accompanied by their wives, only made such alliances more attractive. In addition to the advantage of 'birth and ancestry' they benefited from social caste hierarchies and their concomitant 'notions of ritual purity' in India. Therefore, Hadramis, especially the Sayyids, negotiated their social positions advantageously in their adopted homes.

Conclusion

This chapter is an introduction to the complex histories of migration and movement of Siddis and Hadramis in the Indian Ocean, especially with reference to South Asia. The passage of these communities to the subcontinent dates back centuries. However, this study focuses on their migration between the eighteenth and the twentieth century. This chapter delineates for the reader the migration of Africans, both voluntary and involuntary, out of the East African coast and the migration of Africans into the Indian subcontinent. The processes and identity markers through which Siddis, specifically Gujarat and Karnataka Siddis, define themselves have been addressed to present to the reader a broader context in which Siddis in Hyderabad can be located. Further, this chapter present the political context – colonialism – in which Hadrami migration to Hyderabad started.

One of the primary intent of this chapter is to elaborate on the intertwined histories of these two communities. As becomes apparent, the rich histories of migration of the Siddi and the Hadrami diaspora are replete with connections that shed light on centuries of oceanic traffic facilitating exchange of ideas, spread of religions and trade. It is a contention of this chapter that the migration of these communities has to be firmly located in these sites to enable a comprehensive understanding of their contemporary.

CHAPTER III

HADRAMI DIASPORA: INTERROGATING NOTIONS OF BELONGING

In a semi biographical and autobiographical study of three generations of his Khoja Ismaili family, Lakha (2014) examines the larger trajectories of the Khojas as they migrated from Kutch and Gujarat to East Africa and then to the West, that is, their diasporic identity as they became a regional and then a global diaspora.[33] Arguing for a more inclusive definition of the concept diaspora, he emphasises that

> [i]f being diasporic means having a 'collective memory' of an 'original homeland' or considering 'their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home' and 'as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return, then the Kassim Lakha family or many of the Khojas from East Africa elude that definition (Lakha 2014: 136-137).

The Lakha family, an archetypical Khoja family, represents a 'continuing diasporic narrative' of 'double displacement', as it moved out of Gujarat to East Africa and then to other parts of the world. The Khoja diasporic experience highlights the importance of 'memory', 'kinship bonds' and 'a shared history of life in East Africa' (Lakha 2014). The case of the Khojas is more relevant to understanding traditional diasporic communities of the Indian Ocean. As has been discussed earlier, Hadramis form one such Indian Ocean community, that includes within it not only people residing in Hadramawth, but also, generations of diasporic populations all throughout the Indian Ocean. Both were trading communities (though Hadramis embodied various military or religious roles along with being successful businessmen) that also acted as collaborators with the colonial state in their respective diasporic locations because of financial interests. Similarly, memory, shared experiences and kinship bonds help further a deeper understanding of

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[33] Lakha 2014 writes that Khojas were, "converts from the Hindu Lohana caste, whose traditional occupation was trade. They were bestowed with the honorific title of Khwaja (in Persian 'lord'/'master') by Persian Islmaili missionary Pir Sadr al-Din (around the fifteenth century) who converted them to Ismaili faith" (Lakha 2014: 119). Central to understanding initial Khoja mobility in the Indian Ocean is the significance of 'trade, community and British colonial rule'. One of the first Indian groups to have culturally adapted to both modernization and westernization during the British rule (with clear directives from Aga Khan III and Aga Khan IV), the Khoja Ismailis along with other Indian merchants established 'commercial enterprises deep in the hinterland of Africa'. Their business ventures included among other things banking, retail, ivory trade, shipping and later industrial processing of cotton, coffee and lumber (Lakha 2014).

Hadramis than the restricted understanding of diaspora bound and limited by the concepts of 'homeland' and 'host society'. However, unlike the Khojas, the Hadramis were not endogamous, though marriages with cousins or finding eligible grooms back in Hadramawth has been an established practice. This allowed the Hadramis to develop patrilineal kinship bonds within their new adopted residences (what we understand as host societies), unlike many Gujarati trading groups.

The Hadrami presence in the Indian Ocean dates back to centuries. For diasporic Hadramis, the links with Hadramawth or the idea of it continue to be deeply entrenched. Hadramawth as a real geographic entity or a socio-political imaginary allows Hadrami diaspora to demarcate and construct boundaries of their identity. Yet, crass definitions of 'host society' and 'homeland' are too limited to capture or understand the meanings that Hadrami diaspora ascribes to its diasporic identity. For example, Hadrami migration reflects itself, even today, in the cultural influence of Malay language, food and clothes on the Hadrami community – both in Hadramawth, as well as, elsewhere. In nineteenth and the twentieth century this mass migration of Hadrami people also translated into economic effects (Ho 2006; Manger 2010; Lekon 2009; Brown 2009). Migration has also economic implications as

> the whole economy of Hadhramaut was dependent upon overseas remittance. Its own remittances were only enough to feed about a quarter of its inhabitants. A huge trade deficit was covered by the inflow of remittances from Southeast Asia and elsewhere. Even Hadhramaut's own production was indirectly dependent upon the remittances. Recipients of the latter bought local artisan products and lent money to peasants. However, labour migration also harmed local productivity by making labour more scarce and less expensive, and by financing imports that pushed aside local products… it also contributed to an unequal distribution of wealth because people, with recourse to overseas remittances, invested these remittances into buying up land. Furthermore, because the bulk of taxes was custom and transit dues, state finances depended to a large extent upon the inflow of imports that was made possible by labour remittances… Finally, there was the political influence of the Southeast Asian migration upon Hadhramaut. Some Hadhrami families were translocal actors with simultaneous involvement into affairs in Hadhramaut and in Southeast Asia (Lekon 2009: 90).

Pre-colonial Indian Ocean economy according to Frietag (2009) was oriented regionally, which changed with the coming of colonialism, which directed the regional economy of the Indian Ocean outwards, towards its metropoles. According to Freitag (2009) the success of Hadrami diaspora can

be accounted for by their regionalism. That is, while they participated in the regional economy of the Indian Ocean region, they always depended on local imperatives. Finding the concept of hybridity inadequate Frietag (2009) instead proposes the concept of translocal, by which she means,

> Consider… the Sada as well as the Yafi'is, were themselves migrants to Hadhramaut at different points in time… Consider further that the notion of translocal community encompasses the idea of varying horizons of actions – sometimes more within the confines of Southern Arabia or the Red Sea, at other times widening towards the East African shore and Southeast Asia. The perspective of translocality allows for the consideration of movement, for the establishment in new social (economic/political) environment (including the processes of creolisation) and for the famous interstices, the moments of liminality and transition, which are so central to the arguments of hybridity. However, it does not, as such, impose (yet?) the same political and cultural thrust, and might thus be better suited for a neutral, and at the same time, multi-faceted consideration of diasporic communities such as the Hadhramis (Freitag 2009: 32).

The complexity of Hadrami diasporic identity formation is captured by Abdullah (2009), in his discussion of the indigenisation of Hadrami diaspora in Malaysia. On the one hand, Hadrami men took local wives and "have been largely alienated from their Arab identity and culture indigenised their host society," while on the other hand, they have (especially the Sada) drawn boundaries to differentiate themselves from the local Malay population. This has led to social and political dilemmas in the present era of ethnic nationalism.

Further, under colonialism, in spite of the Pan-Islamic anti-colonial fears of the colonial regime vis-à-vis the Hadramis and the Pan-Islamic and anti-colonial orientation of Hadramis, they mostly arrived at some understanding with most of the colonial administrations under which they lived – Dutch and British, mostly. As successful merchants they acted as intermediaries for the colonial state, professing their loyalty politically and through participation in processes of 'modernisation'. For the purpose of this research, their strategies of boundary making/transcending boundaries have to be located in the more contemporary development of the nation state.[34]

[34] Lekon (2009) notes that "[b]y mid-1930s, 20-30% of the Hadhramis were estimated to live abroad. Most Hadhrami migrants went to Southeast Asia, mainly the Netherland East Indies and Singapore. Others migrated to India, East Africa and the Red Sea region" (Lekon 2009: 87). Even after the Japanese attack on the Pearl Harbour, Lekon (2009) notes that exchanges between Hadramawth and its diaspora carried on with a false continuity for more than a year. However, "[i]n the meanwhile, the Japanese occupied Singapore and the Netherland East

Further, the orientalist attitude that the colonial authorities adopted towards the Arabs, fuelled their own fear of a pan-Islamic solidarity or rebellion. This fear was successfully exploited by the Arabs in the diaspora to negotiate both social, political and financial gains, as well as, continuously (re)create the boundaries that defined them. For example, Kaptein (2009) discusses the biography of Sayyid Uthman, an Islamic scholar who became the Dutch agent for 'monitoring Islam' in the Netherlands East Indies. Sayyid Uthman hailed from the Hadrami Arab diaspora. Arabs were distrusted by the Dutch colonial authorities, who feared a pan-Islamic solidarity united under the Ottoman banner. Therefore,

> In the Netherlands East Indies Arabs were assigned the civil status of *'Vreemde Ooserlingen* (Foreign Orientals)… Arabs were obliged to live together in designated town quarters and to request a formal pass from authorities to travel outside their town of residence. This system greatly restricted movement, which was precisely the goal of colonial authorities who saw Arabs as potential adherents to Pan-Islamic ideology which aimed at uniting the world's Muslims under the banner of the

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Indies. Southeast Asia was cut off from its export markets and import sources. Due to its war economy and losses in shipping, Japan could not replace the Western powers as trade partner and made things worse by requisition of local production. The result was the collapse of Southeast Asia's external and intra-regional trade and high inflation" (Lekon 2009: 92). This restricted the emigration of people, in addition to a disruption of remittances. This period also coincided with a severe famine in Hadramawth 1943-44, exponentially increasing the hardships of the people in spite of the limited efforts by the British colonial administration. With Japan's defeat in World War II, Singapore again came under the aegis of British administration. However, remittances never resuscitated to the pre-war scale as in 1947, "rents on pre-war property in Singapore were frozen by government decree in that year. Because their wealth consisted mainly of real estate, the fortunes of Singapore Hadhramis and their remittances to Hadhramaut went into a long-term decline. The background of this kind of state regulation were the difficult living conditions for the bulk of the city's population, and the rise of ethnic nationalism among it" (Lekon 2009: 99; Brown 2009). The rise of ethnic nationalism in Singapore coincided with a period of modern welfare reforms and trade unions under the British patronage as the colony embarked on a path of internal self-governance. Similarly in the Netherland East Indies, the returning Dutch administration faced a nationalism movement between 1945-1949. In efforts to impose their currency on the nationalists, the Dutch restricted travellers from taking currency of more than Rs. 250 outside Java. This led to chocking of remittances to Hadramawth. With independence of Indonesia, the nationalist stabilised the economy by nationalizing industrialisation and nurturing indigenous capitalist at the expense of 'foreigners'. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the Indian Ocean region witnessed rise of modern nationalism and emigration out of Hadramawth suffered. Further, remittance from émigré also became impossible (Lekon 2009; Brown 2009). This era of ethnic nationalism marked the death of free movement of people, ideas, cultural goods and capital between Hadramawth and the Indian Ocean. Lekon (2009) notes that between 1948-1949, Hadramawth witnessed another famine in "western interior and the nomad areas around Shihr… there were also external developments contributing: grain imports from Yemen and the hinterland of Aden were no longer available due to the shortage there; remittances from and emigration possibilities to Southeast Asia and East Africa remained cut; and the annexation of Hyderabad by India closed another source of remittances and in addition, led to an inflow of destitute Hadhramis expelled from the former Princely State" (Lekon 2009: 102-103). In the twentieth century, following these developments and with its neighbouring areas witnessing oil boom, Hadramawth seized being a part of the Indian Ocean region and came to become a part of the economic life world of what we call the Middle East.

> Ottoman Sultan. Thus, Pan-Islamism was inherently anti-colonial. Moreover, the government also regarded Arabs as religious fanatics. The colonial administration's distrust of Arabs can be summed up in a single word: Arabophobia (Kaptein 2009: 34).

In the early 1880s, Dutch orientalist scholars like M.J. de Goeje and Snouck Hurgronje, prompted by an interest in Hadramawth took notice of Sayyid Uthman. Their interests coincided Dutch colonial interest and with Sayyid Uthman's interest, who was motivated by religion, that is, propagating his idea of the right understanding of Islam. Both parties saw the *Tarekat* (influential Nakshbandi Sufi order) as a rival. Using this, Sayyid Uthman won the patronage of the colonial authorities as their Advisor of Native Affairs in the Netherlands East Indies.

Another example of strategies of identity negotiation or boundary making, under the colonial regime, are in the sphere of sociability. By focussing on successful Hadrami business families like the al Kaf, al Saqqaf or Sultan Abu Bakr of Johar, Yahya (2009) points out that in colonial Singapore, the commercially successful Arab community (mostly Hadrami) maintained an intimate relationship with the British, as it was in its financial interest to have the British as allies after the Straits Settlement, such that

> [b]y leading a cosmopolitan lifestyle along with the colonial ruling elite, the Arab elite in Singapore blurred the line between the worldly coloniser and the colonised population supposedly contained within the colony (Yahya 2009: 61).

The British became their business allies and "recognised the influence of Hadhramis in Singapore over Hadhramaut, and made efforts to collaborate with them rather that supplant their authority" (Yahya 2009: 77).[35] Further, as

[35] As the British acquired Aden in 1939, Hadramawth fell under their limited influence. Further, "[t]he British recognised the Qu'ayti Sultan as the ruler of Hadhramaut. The British proceeded to tighten their hold over Aden in 1988, when a British protectorate was set up there… British started to intervene actively in Hadhramaut affairs for the first time in 1934" (Yahya 2009: 70-71). Lekon (2009) writes in reference to the Qu'yati and Kathiri Sultanates that, "[s]ince the treaties of 1882, 1888, and 1918, the two Hadhrami had been part of the British Empire. The Sultans agreed to conduct all their foreign relations through Britain. In return British promised their protection. At this stage, the British had no formal right to interfere in the Sultanates' internal affairs. This changed in 1937-1939, when the Qu'ayti Sultan and his Kathiri counterpart accepted the posting of a British Resident Advisor (henceforth RA) and agreed to follow his advice in all matters except those concerning religion. Under British supervision, but also due to indigenous political initiative, a long-drawn episodic transformation of the Hadhrami Sultanates into modern states started. By a combination of negotiations and aerial bombings, most tribes were brought to accept comprehensive truce…" (Lekon 2009: 87). Moreover, the Arab diaspora did not oppose the

the Arabs in Singapore were big property owners, they granted British favours in times of emergency, by putting up their estates and houses at British disposal. In addition to this, another political consideration behind inculcating Arabs as intermediaries was the colonial fear of pan-Islamism in Singapore's Muslim population.[36] The British treated Arabs as distinct from the Malays, treating them as important brokers in politics in Hadramawth and not the Malay Peninsula. This categorisation obfuscated the fact that most Hadramis were of mixed – Malay and Arab – descent, spoke Malay and were comfortable with the Malay culture. However, the diasporic Hadramis had to be understood as part of the larger Hadrami community and as a community involved in political, social and economic developments in Hadramawth. Therefore, the Arabs and the British were socially, financially and politically allied with one another in colonial Singapore (Yahya 2009).

Diasporic (Be)longings: **Hadramis in Hyderabad**

The Arab irregulars were a part of Nizam's *Nazm-e-Jamiat* and General El Edroos, a Hadrami, was the Commander-in-Chief of Hyderabad Forces when they surrendered to the Indian Forces in 1948. This section discusses the Hadrami Hyderabadis or *Chaush*, a Turkish term for guards, in Hyderabad. The Hadrami diaspora in the Indian Ocean challenges notions of authenticity. The intersectionality of the Indian Ocean as a productive hybrid space critiques not just the idea of the 'authentic,' but also of notion of syncretic, which assumes a pure or authentic core. These diaspora of the longue duree in the Indian ocean are generative liminalities, that offer a possibility of developing a better understanding of processes of identity formation – political, sociocultural or religious – from a historically informed

British intrigues in Hijaz or oppose King ibn Saud who had signed treaties with the British colonial government (Yahya 2009).

[36] Yahya (2009) notes that for these reasons, the Arab elites in Singapore took to English education, in spite of earlier taboos regarding pursuing studies in the West and the fear of subsequent inter-race marriages. Both commercial interests and access to the European society as equals were motivations. The British also saw English education as a way of altering mindsets, especially of the anti-British Arabs. Further, "[t]he British were quick to recognise that this formed a good opportunity to increase their propaganda and convince the Arabs that Great Britain – not Germany or Turkey – was the actual protector of Islam (Yahya 2009: 68).

location, that are not ailed by the limited scope of modern conceptualisations of identity – universal or relational, concrete or fluid. The Hadrami diaspora affirms that a lived 'everyday' is located in between a historically contingent universal and a contextualised local. What follows are observations drawn from fieldwork conducted in 2014 and 2015.

Barkas and Chandrayangutta have predominantly Arab residents.[37] Names of shops, hospitals and schools announce their claim on this space. Restaurants serving Mandi and Kabsa line all main streets. Men wearing ikat lungis and kurtas populate the ill maintained and congested streets – as pedestrians, hawkers, workers, shop owners or drivers (see pictures 1 and 2). And women in Abaya and Hijab, never alone and mostly with a male family member can be spotted in cars, on bikes or in autorickshaws. The houses I visited during my fieldtrip also had elements that are specific to Barkas. There are multiple doors that lead into a typical Hadrami house, with a main entrance gate that usually opens into an open and cemented common area skirted by fruit trees or staircases leading to the upper stories, if any. In the front, there are usually two doors. Men or outsiders are entertained in a separate room adjoining the house or a separate room within the house. This room is usually furnished with sofas and chairs. In addition to this room, there is usually another door that leads to a larger common *majlis* area, which is open to the rest of the house, where women and men of the household sit or eat food. This area has seating on the floor usually and may have a settee or a few chairs. There are other entrances into the house from the side or the back, for example, the door to the kitchen is from the back of the house. The women of the house, which does not include the women who work as domestic help, are never directly visible to the outsider.[38] Further, most Hadramis in Barkas

[37] Most Arabs came to Hyderabad to work as soldiers in Nizam's military, irregular forces or in private militias or *jamadars*/tax collectors, and most of the guards ensuring the security of treasuries, public offices and the important personages were Arab. According to Hussain bin Ali Binbrek, as most of these men were stationed in Maisram and it took time to commute to their duty stations, the Nizam built quarters for them in Barkas (colloquial spin on the word barracks). Interview conducted on 12.10.2015 at Hussain bin Ali Binbrek's home in Barkas.

[38] Hyderabadi Hadrami feminist activist Jameela sees this as a way of exerting control over women's bodies and as curbing their capacity to make decisions. Moreover, Hadramis are a socially conservative community. However, when Jameela was growing up, the *burqa* was not

are aware of the conflict in Yemen as many have close families in Hadramawth. They are in touch with these relatives, some of whom have visited Hyderabad, however, no aid has gone from Hyderabadi Hadramis to Hadramawth. Further, many viewed Saudi Arabia's intervention in terms of arms and 'humanitarian aid' positively. These perceptions reflect links and continuities of historic ties – religious and kinship – which Hadramawth has shared with Hijaz and Saudi Arabia

1. A busy street in Barkas Hyderabad. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

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so commonplace. She speaks of family gatherings as a child, which were like a fete because families were huge with many children. The women back then were not required to cover themselves or practice strict *purdah* within the family. However, today this has changed, and *purdah* is observed even inside the household today. Further, it is a strictly patrilineal group. Jameela also speaks of class-based fractures in the Hadrami community, in terms of cultural capital, where for her family education was more important than money or lineage as a requirement for marriage. Jameela has two sisters and all three passed the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) exam, which is equivalent to tenth grade – a novelty in the Hadrami community at that time. Her father was a famous painter and intellectual in Hyderabad, thereby transcending into a different 'class'. He was keen to find a Hadrami grooms for his daughters, but their mother resisted. Jameela's mother was the daughter of an Arabic professor, from the Assairi clan of Madina, who had studied in Dehradun and at Deoband. He moved to Hyderabad and wrote books including Arabic to Urdu dictionaries and books used by undergraduate students like the *Minaj-ul-Arabia*. Jameela and all of Jameela's sibling, sisters and brothers, are married to non-Hadramis. She speaks of her father having a cosmopolitan and diverse set of friends who would be entertained at home, though barring her, women from the family did not share this space. Jameela is a poet and was able to carve out a space for herself in an otherwise male dominated art/intellectual world. Further, while growing up she was surrounded by nudes and copies of sculptures of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain deities from Ajanta and Ellora Caves, thus, her family was not a typical middle class Hadrami family. Interestingly distinguishing Hadrami women from the non-Arab majority, Jameela and Waseem Fatima (I discuss her case in this section) says that Hadrami women are consciously assertive about needs and there have been instances where divorces have been demanded by women. Jameela's feminist stand has not been received well in the Old City, including within the Hadrami community, where her organisation Shaheen operates. Based on interactions with feminist activist Jameela Nishat in 2014 and 2015.

2. A residential Street in Barkas, Hyderabad. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

3. *Sarung* gifted to Ali bin Ahmad Awalagi by relatives from the Gulf. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

Men wear geometrically patterned wraps under kurtas. These wraps are available in shops in Barkas, Lad Bazaar and Shehran, and can range anywhere between Rs. 800 to Rs. 2000 (see pictures 24 and 25). These are popularly referred to as *Sarung* in Arabic, a word that has been directly borrowed from Southeast Asia. These are popular items that are brought as gifts by relatives or family when they visit Hyderabad from abroad (see picture 3). Movements that link places in the Indian Ocean through trade and migration are treated as normal in this community of translocal cosmopolitans. Most of my respondents knew that these *Sarungs* are produced in Java, Malaysia and Indonesia and are supplied to the Middle East from there, before they are sourced to the rest of the world. The Hyderabadi Arab community asserts its Arab identity, constructing boundaries, through different dressing patterns. Men wear *Sarungs* with distinct geometrical patterns (made in the power looms of Indonesia) that are imported from Saudi. These *Sarungs* are paired with a buttoned shirt or long *Kurta* and (in the last three decades) 'Arab-style' open male sandals (see pictures 9 – 15). Women also wear both

Jallebiya and *hijab* or *Salwar Kameez Dupatta* with *hijab* and *burqa* inside and outside their homes, respectively, as strict purdah is observed (see picture 16 and 17). The dress allows one to locate the Hadrami diaspora in the larger matrix of global capitalist production and supply chains.

Mobini-Kesheh (1996) points out that in Southeast Asia, especially, Indonesia, Hadramis were intermediaries in cloth business, especially, in the local *batik* industry. They were also moneylenders and property owners. Moreover, according to de Jonge (2012) Hadrami traders like Indian traders in Southeast Asia formed the intermediaries between the colonial administrators and indigenous populations. Indonesia a site inhabited by a strong Hadrami community, many of whom got into cloth production eighteenth century onwards, especially *batik*, that still remains the site from where the cloth is produced for consumption in Hadramawth and by other Hadrami diaspora in other parts of the world. It is however supplied from Saudi to the rest of the world. Similarly, the open 'Arab style' sandals have become very popular in the last three decades (see pictures 4 – 8). These are produced in Bangkok and then supplied from Dubai to Yemen and elsewhere in the Indian Ocean. Dubai (and to a smaller extent Saudi) becomes the wholesale monopoly for many specialised goods that one finds in the Indian Ocean Regions – which includes Bakhoor, oudh, jallebia and other cloth, cosmetics, electronics and appliances. These are brought by local dealers/businessmen, who operate through global contacts and supply to the local markets. The merchandise is sold in local markets all over Hyderabad. However, in Barkas, people prefer to buy commodities produced for and imported from the Middle East. That is, not just novelty items such as frankincense, olive oil, cloth for *jallebiya* and *hijab*, *Sarungs* or the sandals, but also products like iron ware, cosmetics and household items, which are produced and available locally for consumption. Therefore, there is an aspect of desire in wanting to consume these imported items made for Arabian markets (see pictures 18 – 23).

In the course of my fieldwork I met a non-Hadrami import and export businessman in his office in Masabtank.[39] He informed me that popular items imported from Dubai include clothes (hijab, abaya, jallebiya, mens' lungis), sandals, electronics, home appliances, perfumes, frankincense, cosmetics (restricted by Indian customs authority) and jewellery.[40] In men's *lungis,* the popular brands include Java, Bottle and Wadi More. In sandals the popular brands include Al Rabee, Al Raheeb, Al Rihab, Al Mutrash, Al Marathan and Aero Soft. Further, these Sandals are produced in Bangkok and exported to two giant dealers in Dubai: Zahaid Mohammad Rusool General Trading and Yususf Mohammad Rusool General Trading.

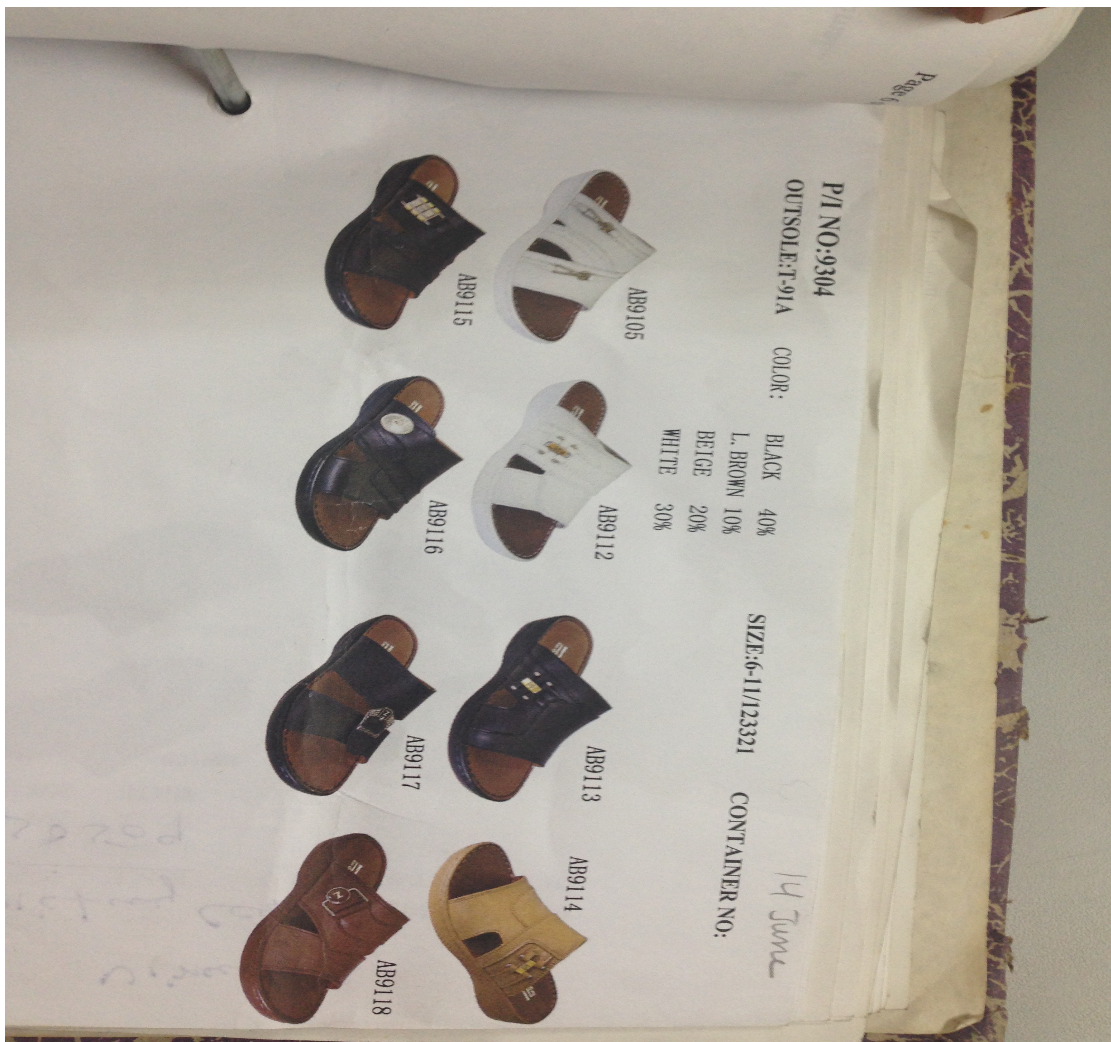
This businessman explained how the business works transnationally, where a businessman flies out in the morning and returns the same evening, usually with restricted goods like perfumes. This method is called 'pushing'. Items are carried in both the cabin and the check-in luggage. There is a "setting" with the customs officials to ensure smooth passage. In another method called 'line', Rs. 100000 is paid extra on top of duty per container. If the container has merchandise worth Rs. 40,00000 then an invoice for Rs. 10,00000 will be made (excise duty is paid on this amount) and the rest Rs. 30,00000 is transferred by *hundi*.[41] There are other established systems in

[39] The office was on the second floor of a building on the main road. A flight of dimly lit, dingy, narrow and unlevelled stairs led to his office, which was obviously not in use. It was sparsely populated with furniture and a layer of dust covered everything, although the windows in the office were shut. The existence of this office, very similar to the Basalama office in Barkas, seems to be a formality. The name of this informant has been held back in this research to protect his identity. This interview was conducted off the record. This import and export businessman goes to Dubai every month, Consignments get shipped out on a Monday as the weekend in UAE is Thursday and Friday. He said he arrives in Dubai on a Friday and works through the week to get the paperwork done and purchase merchandise. He then flies back when the consignments leave. This interview was conducted on 16.10.2015.

[40] Gold over 3 *tolas* has to declared for customs duty – in India 1 *tola* is 10 grams, whereas in the Gulf it is 11.6 grams. The importer also said that it's a common practice for people to melt the gold into *taviz* or amulate shape, coat it with silver and walk past the customs. Therefore, one would get 1.6 grams more of purer gold in the Indian market per *tola*, that has been brought into the Indian market at cheaper price. Further, he indicated that the government in 2005 had restricted import of rice. This interview was conducted on 16.10.2015.

[41] The dealers controlling *hundi* are contacted directly in Dubai. *Hundi* operates on a system of honour and people going back on their word face threats to their life and well-being. According to this informant, Dawood Ibrahim's D Company handles all *hawala* and *hundi* operations in India. This is now based off Dubai. Further, I was informed that both regional and national political parties and politicians are deeply implicated in benefitting from and

place to evade taxation. These include over-invoicing and under-invoicing. The ports in India which receive such merchandise include Tuticorin and Chennai in Tamilnadu, Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and Mumbai in Maharashtra. Merchandise is transported to Hyderabad in goods trains. In the trade of these imported items, one sees illegality intersecting with legality. Centuries of trade now controlled through national and international trade agreements, treaties and laws, has rendered the mobility of these items into the liminal zone between the legal and the illegal.



4. Styles of imported male sandals. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

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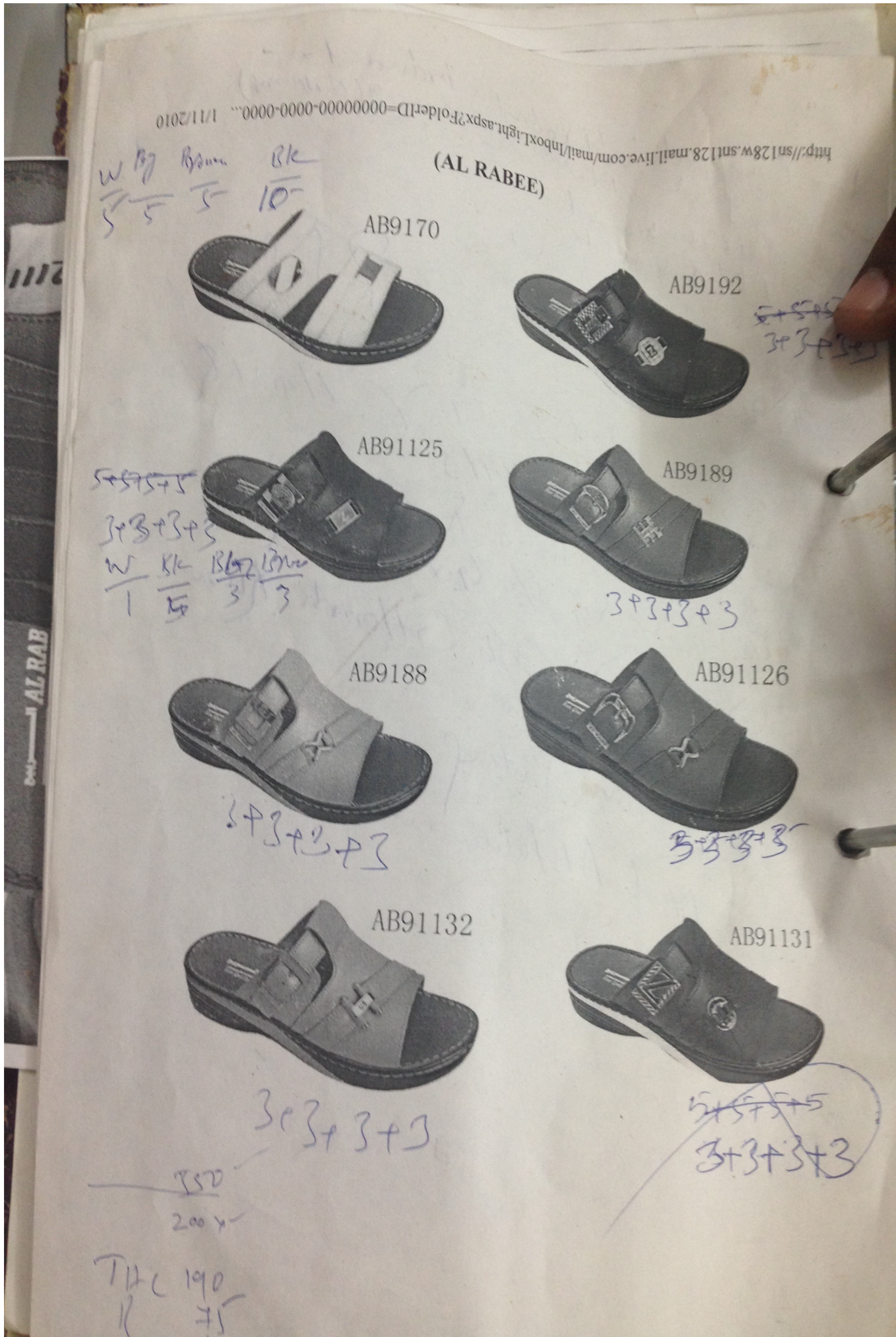
facilitating these operations. Further, *hundi* comes out to be a cheaper and more efficient way of transferring money, especially capital acquired off the books. Domestically the transfer rates are Rs. 400 to Rs. 500 per Rs. 100000 and international transfer rates are Rs. 5000 to Rs. 6000 per Rs. 100000. Dubai is the destination for both investment of illegal capital as well as routing of this capital to other safe havens. Therefore, *hundi* charges less than the bank, is a safe system even if illegal and fast delivery is ensured. This interview was conducted on 16.10.2015.



5. Styles of imported male sandals. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

6. Styles of imported male sandals. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

7. Styles of imported male sandals. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

8. Styles of imported male sandals. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

9. Packaged male *Sarung*, made in Indonesia and imported from Dubai. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

10. Packaged male *Sarung*, made in Indonesia and imported from Dubai. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

11. Packaged male *Sarung*, made in Indonesia and imported from Dubai. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

12. Packaged male *Sarung*, made in Indonesia and imported from Dubai. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

13. Packaged male *Sarung*, made in Indonesia and imported from Dubai. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

14. Packaged male *Sarung*, made in Indonesia and imported from Dubai. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

15. Male Sandals at a local shop in Barkas. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

16. Imported *Jallebiya* material for women in local shops in Barkas. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

17. Imported *Jallebiya* for women in local shop in Barkas. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

18. Imported merchandise stacked in a local shop, Nishi Cosmetics, in Barkas. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

19. A local shop in Barkas. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

20. A local shop in Barkas. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

21. Scene from a market street, deserted because of *Maghrib Salat*. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

22. Scene from a market street, deserted because of *Maghrib Salat*. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

23. Mosque in Barkas market area. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

24. *Sarung* and cloth shop in Laadbazar, Hyderabad. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

25. *Sarung* and cloth shop in Laadbazar, Hyderabad. Photo Courtesy: Khatija Khader

Like sartorial practices, another important feature through which the Hadrami community distinguishes itself in Hyderabad, is the vocation of *pehalwani* or wrestling. This interest is usually generationally inherited and many people who owned their own dairy farms, also had their own *akhada* or wrestling arena. In the era past, these *pehalwans* were religious men, who were respected in the community, as they were both a symbol of piety, as well as physical fitness. Today, many of these *pehalwans* are engaged in wrestling, but as there is no infrastructure or support from the government. Therefore, many have gotten into politics or in the booming real estate business. Barkas is replete with examples of award winning national and international level wrestlers, who eventually got into real estate businesses, as owners or as handymen, because of lack of support and jobs.[42] The culture of *pehalwani* in

[42] Speaking of communal tensions in Sultanshahi neighborhood of Hyderabad, where Jameela's NGO Shaheen is located, she spoke of the tension between the Arab *Chaush* and the Mahtar caste, which moved to Hyderabad from Haryana under the Asaf Jahs as

Hyderabad gets imbricated with politics and illegality partly because of lack of support for the sport and partly because the stature of a *pehalwan* in the community is that of a leader, traditionally. Thus, many *pehalwans* today are builders, however, as the real estate industry in India is not regulated, land grabbing is a prominent feature and the patronage of politicians is therefore necessary, for both. For example, Mansoor Awalgi who owns a construction business and cattle business, is also a local AIMIM corporator.

There are multiple histories transcribed into the landscape of Barkas. During my fieldwork the houses that I visited in Barkas, had at least one or more family members who spoke Arabic. However, when asked about the Hadrami community in Hyderabad losing touch with Arabic language and Hadrami customs or traditions, most Hadramis were not worried about this stressing that the newer generation was born in Hyderabad. What seems to remain important is maintaining a patrilineal Arab identity without ascribing any 'original' or 'authentic' status to any particular process or identity marker. Hadramis are conscious of both their Arab identity, as well as their Muslim identity, though the former seems to be a source of assertion or pride where as the latter a source of anxiety, especially the present geopolitical scenario. Further, the Hadramis feel no threat to their identity as Arabs, it is taken for granted that a (diasporic) Arab identity is a primary identification for the members of this community. They do not want to adopt or enact measures to hold on to a 'past' or to notions of 'real' traditions and values.[43]

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scavengers. This being an instance of boundary making with non-Muslims, she refers to the fact that availing new opportunities in independent India, Mahtars have done better than the local *Chaush*, however, the Chaush continue to see themselves as superior. The tensions get aggravated as both communities have *Pehalwans* – with Mahtar *Pehalwans* closely affiliated to BJP. Interestingly, Jameela refers to meat eating as a source of physical strength, elucidating that both communities are meat eating, where the Mahtars also consume pork, which gives them a distinct strength. Jameela Nishat in an interview conducted on 02.10.2015.

[43] Usually the older generation that is over sixty still speaks Arabic. Other reasons include worker migration to the Gulf countries from Hadrami families in Hyderabad, women who married Arab men or children of mixed parentage. For example, Hussain bin Ali Binbrek is an old man now. When I interviewed him, he was seated in on the floor of his room which also operated as the living room to meet guests in his small house. His father came from the Saut bil Ubaid, near the port city of Mukalla. He said the Binbrek's are a Masheikhs. He married a Hyderabadi woman and went back to Mukalla after a few years, taking his family with him. Hussain bin Ali Binbrek's mother did not like Mukalla, and returned back to Hyderabad with his two sisters. Also, at that time there was a famine affecting the area, which made it more difficult. Hussain bin Ali Binbrek, the son, remained behind with his father. After he grew a

The other respondents in Hyderabad reflected a similar irreverence towards adopting a revivalist or militant attitude towards preservation of identity. Centuries of mobility has enabled this diaspora to remain open towards hybridisation. This research argues that this is true for most diaspora of the longue duree in the Indian Ocean. These diaspora become a site of what this research argues as **informed accommodation**. Informed accommodation could be understood in comfort with a translocal identity which is a productive engagement between local contexts and larger universal ideas like religious identities. These are generative spaces that produce hybrid customs, practices (food, dress, religious or spiritual ideas) and language registers, which allow communities to retain their identities and draw on local specificities. That is, these diaspora exist without the outside pressure of assimilating or integrating, as is witnessed in much discourse around diaspora today. This discourse is rooted in the coming of nation-states based on one limited and unlinear historical narrative, denying the multiplicity of identities that make up any local context.

This research therefore proposes that the diaspora of the longue duree in the Indian Ocean should be seen as an apparent site that not only offers an alternative to these pressures on groups to assimilate, in the name of liberal multi-culturalism, it also offers an alternative framework to understand and reorient our study of identity. As the discussion below will indicate, for these diasporic groups, members born in homelands or *watan* are called *Wilayati* or foreign born and those born outside homeland (diasporic) are called

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bit older, he asked his father for his permission to join his mother in Hyderabad. The father said he had no problem. Thus, in 1962 Hussain bin Ali Binbrek travelled back to Hyderabad on a British passport as Hadramawth was directly administered by the British colonial authorities back then. Once in Hyderabad, his mother asked him not to return back to Mukalla and he agreed. Soon he was married. He married Mumtaz Al Zubaidi from Mahboobnagar, another Hadrami Masheikh family. Hussain bin Ali Binbrek said that there are Arab settlements in Mahboobnagar, Karimnagar and Nizamabad. He has eleven children – 5 daughters and 6 sons. Two of his daughters were married to "known people" from Yemen (although the marriage happened in Hyderabad) where they stayed for nearly 10 years after marriage. After which they returned to India with their husbands and children. He has two daughters in Jeddah, also. Hussain bin Ali Binbrek said that most families in Barkas do not know about their family histories and recognise their kin – *Zaat* (Here *Zaat* means lineage.). He said he has a *wasiqa* which states which area and which village he belongs to, he carried this along with his British passport when he came to Hyderabad in 1962. He also had his family tree or *shijra* with him as a documentary proof of his family's lineage. In an interview conducted on 12.10.2015.

Muwalladin or foreign born, denying the possibility of authentic or the stress to revive or retain core practices, customs, traditions or linguistic identities. Of course, these will differ from one diaspora to the another, for example, some are exogamous and some endogamous (like the Gujarati groups). However, all diasporic groups in the Indian Ocean have a rich past and the present of entering into matrimonial alliance that span the ocean. Therefore, broadly the study of Indian Ocean offers these alternative hybrids that provide a more productive framework for the study of identity. Ho (1997) notes the difficulty and hostility that muwalladin face on their return back to a Hadramawth as "strangers at home." He points out that in Hadramawth there is a popular saying:

> *"Thalatha la yajun bi-l-yadd:*
> *Al-kalb, al-khanzir wa-l-muwallah.*
> Three things do not come to the hand:
> The dog, the pig and the *muwallad"* (Ho 1997: 131).

He further notes that,

> In Arabic, the various usages of the term reflect encounters of Arabs with other peoples consequent upon the Islamic conquest. In Muslim Spain, the *muwalladun* (masc. pl.) were Spaniards who had embraced Islam. Often *muwallad* and *muwallada* (fem. Sing.) refer to foreign slaves born and raised among Arabs. The term also designates Arabs of mixed parentage…This is the sense in which the terms are used in Hadhramaut, referring to Hadhramis, usually non-Arab mothers or grandmothers, born in non-Arab countries (Ho 1997: 131).

Therefore, *muwalladin* ,

> The muwallad, however, has other things to worry about. He has neither the existential commitment nor the memories of the migrant. His starting point is not Hadhramaut, but Mombasa, Pontianak or Singapore. It is perhaps this fundamental difference in attitude towards movement which the saying we started with expresses: the muwallad does not come to the hand, and in this he is like the pig and the dog. For those who moralise movement, the erratic motions of the muwallad are looked at askane. Muwalladin often string together narratives of their experience in Hadhramaut in terms of their movement, as an itinerary. At the same time, however, these experiences are shaped by how others view those same movements (Ho 1997: 133-134).

Language then becomes, like dress, an important marker of identity. A strictly patrilineal group, the lingua franca of the Arabs who migrated to Hyderabad was Arabic. However, today, the use of Deccani Urdu is prevalent. For example, Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri, a *Khanazad* living in King Kothi neighbourhood speaks both Arabic and Deccani Urdu with equal comfort as

he has worked for UAE and Oman consulate for over four decades.[44] However, with his family he communicates in Urdu. When informed that most of the families in Barkas have at least one family member who speaks Arabic, yet Urdu is used at home, he said that this was because of massive Gulf migration from within the community since the 1970s.

Khanazad was an institution that came into existence after the Police Action in 1948, when

> the government of India entered into an agreement with the nizam to make payments to him and his dependents as partial compensation for the annexation of his properties by the government of India… However, in view of the uncertainty that faced his family, heirs and dependents, the nizam decided to liquidate part of his wealth and transform it into a series of trusts. He created altogether thirty-two trusts of which Khanazad Institute [was one]… In recognition of the faithful service of his soldiers, the nizam decided to help some young children from these families, both boys and girls, some of whom were Hadramis from Barkas. These were called Khanazads, meaning 'sons of the house," and were treated like adopted children. The parents of these boys and girls agreed to the arrangement and gave their consent in writing. The Khanazad Institute was established in 1952 by official declaration in the *Shiraz*, an official publication, and in *Nizam Gazette* notification (Manger 2010: 55).

Khanazads live in King Kothi, a neighbourhood that derives its name from and is next to the palace of the last Nizam, King Kothi. Manger (2010) further notes,

> The *khanazad* played a special role for the nizam, and were granted favors including accommodation, education in Persian, Arabic, and English, and lessons in royal etiquette. The nizam assumed personal responsibility for the *khanazad*. However, after the death of nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan on 24 February 1967, the *khanazad* became a symbol of an earlier era. Most importantly, the largesse they had depended on was also of the past. They had received a pocket money of Rs. 100 a month, while nizam covered all their day-to-day costs. Without the nizam's support, and with prices for basic goods rising, the *khanazads* were in trouble. They pleaded for more money, but the trustee of the *Khanazad* Institute refused. The *khanazad* formed an association to lobby for their interests (Manger 2010: 55).

The Khanazad Institute seized in 1980. The assets of the fund were distributed with the son of the Nizam, Prince Mukarram Jah getting forty per cent and the Khanazads dividing the rest among them. This came to around Rs. 35000 each (Manger 2010). Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri's office chamber had large framed portraits of the Sultan of Oman, Crown Prince of Dubai and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, as a metaphorical testimony to the centuries of

[44] Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri is Omani consulates' representative in Hyderabad. The interview was conducted in his office, which consisted of a large room partitioned into a visitors area and a spacious inner office. The frangrance of frankincense – Bakhoor and Luban – hung heavy in the air. He is a local *Majlis Bachhao Tehreek* (MBT), though earlier he worked with AIMIM. Interview conducted on 22.10.2015 in King Kothi.

links that Hadramis have facilitated in the Indian Ocean. Further, his office also had a large black and white framed portrait of the Seventh Nizam - Osman Ali with a child.[45] Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri informed me that he was the child in the photograph. He explained that Nizam Mir Osman Ali had established properties for the *Khanazad* around his royal palace called King Kothi. Today, the structures of these houses have been remodelled according to the needs and financial status of the families. Unlike the A C Guards (see Chapter IV), the Arab *Khanazad* families have the titles to these properties. However, the properties where they lived became a matter of legal dispute with the Government of India, such that,

> In January 1987, the Government of Andhra Pradesh issued an order to vacate the houses occupied by some khanazad on the ground that they did not have a legal basis for possession of the houses. This was true, as the nizam in his time had only permitted them to live in houses by an oral order or hiba. The khanazad took it to court and won a decision giving them legal possession of their houses (Manger 2010: 56).

As has been mentioned, the Nizam provided the *Khanazad* with housing, food from his palace kitchen, provided for their education and took care of marriages and even hajj expenses.[46] After the death of the Seventh Nizam in 1967, Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri did not have any gainful employment. As he was "Arab," he started working as a representative for the

[45] Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri explained that after the Police Action, most Arabs who were employed by the Nizam's State were deported back. Of those who stayed, most lost their livelihood. It was then that the Nizam initiated the *Khanazad* system. He adopted around six hundred young Arab boys, however today the numbers have increased as these boys went on to marry and have families. Interview conducted on 22.10.2015 in King Kothi. Similarly, according to AIMIM MLC Syed-ul-Hasan Jafri, most Arabs were settled in areas in and around Barkas, Uppugudda, Chandrayangutta and were employed in safeguarding treasuries – district or state – as well as they made up Nizam's irregular army, the *Nazm-e-Jamiat*. The extension of this was Arabs who were settled in the King Kothi area near the Seventh Nizam's palace. After the Police Action, most were deported back and those who stayed remained in utter poverty took to professions like selling fruits on handcarts, like figs or guavas that would grow in their courtyards. They lost their livelihoods and privileges as members of Nizam's regular and irregular forces, except for those who lived in the King Kothi area who were called *Khanazads* or the adopted children of Nizam. After the death of the Seventh Nizam, Mukarram Jah did not want to continue any of the legacies; he discontinued all privileges and returned them. The *Khanazads* enjoyed subsidised housing, education and were provided food from the palace kitchens. The interview was conducted in Jafri's house in Santosh Nagar on 04.10.2015.

[46] Till the Seventh Nizam's death, when his grandson Mukarram Jah had assumed his responsibilities, the *Nazm-e-Jamiat* performed ceremonially in the Chiran Palace. Built in 1940, Chiran Palace complex which was spread over 400 acres, was gifted to Mukarram Jah by his father Azam Jah in 1967 on his coronation. Today it houses a National Park among other buildings.

UAE embassy. He worked in this capacity for thirty-five years. After which he retired with a pension and his sons, Abdullah bin Awad and Khaleel bin Awad took over as representatives for the UAE embassy. Following his retirement, he was contacted by the Oman embassy a few years ago to represent them and for the last four years he is representing the Omani embassy. His job is to provide help to the Omani (previously Emirati) nationals who come to Hyderabad for business, visit, medical tourism and other purposes. When asked why they prefer to come to Hyderabad, instead of other cities, Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri suggested that the Arabs prefer to come to Hyderabad because the "culture" of Hyderabad is "polite" and conducive to their needs. They stay for a varied periods of time, depending on their needs, renting a range of facilities from hotels, apartments houses, cars, interpreters, caregivers, workers etc.

Similarly, in Ali bin Ahmad Awalagi's house, a man in his fifties, his grandfather spoke Arabic at home, however, his grandchildren and he communicated in Deccani Urdu, as all generations after his grandfather are *Muwalladin* or born outside the Arab homeland.[47] He also suggested that families would educate their younger generations in spoken Arabic if they had the "*Wasila,*" that is, means and the infrastructure in the shape of known persons who could teach Hadrami dialect or madrasas. Jameela talks of her childhood when Hadrami parents insisted that Arabic for the purposes of reading the Quran be taught by a Hadrami instructor so that the younger

[47] Not all Hyderabadi Arabs were *Khanazads*. Further, most of the *Khanazads* were from the Barkas Area, where most people were employed by the Nizam. Ali bin Ahmad Awalagi's family had been in the service of the Nizam for generations, however they were not *Khanazads* as they were not from Barkas, but rather from the "city." Ali bin Ahmad was a press artist who stayed near Charminar earlier, in a property that belonged to the Jamia Mosque. After Police Action, the ownership of his property became a matter of legal dispute and he had to move eventually. As a child he was interested in photographs, so his *Ustad* took him on as an apprentice to be a lithography artist. He said that he did not learn to handle an offset press as Hyderabad did not have many units, with Sevakasi and Chennai having hegemony over this print technology. Further, his grandfather's grandfather Abdullah bin Ali came from Yemen to Hyderabad. He was given the title of Mukhadam Jung and owned a *Deodi* in Kazipura, Hyderabad. Abdullah bin Ali married locally, never returned back to Hadramawth and is buried in Hyderabad. Ali bin Ahmad also informed that a graveyard named after his great-great-grandfather is located in the Misri Gunj neighbourhood and is called Abdullah bin Ali Ka Takiya. Today his family lives in poverty. Based on an interview with Wasim Fatima bint Ali's (Henceforth Wasim) father, Ali bin Ahmad Awalagi, in Sultanshahi area, on 05.10.2015.

members of the community became familiar with the Arabic pronunciations of that region.[48]

Further, as my fieldwork indicates, the centrality of Hyderabad's Hadrami diasporic identity hinges on referring to themselves as Arab or *Chaush* or by their *zaat* or lineage. *Chaush* is an ethnonym specific to Hyderabad that is used to refer for Arabs popularly (both self-ascriptively, as well as ascribed by the others), however, as the next chapter indicates it is also used self-ascriptively by the Siddis. It's a Turkish word which means 'Guards', indicating their professional location when they moved to Hyderabad. An important feature of the Hyderabadi Muslim society is that the Deccani Hanafis are referred to as "Hyderabadi" and the Hyderabadi Shafi'i Arabs are referred to as *Chaush*.[49] Therefore, there is a normalisation of the Deccani identity and there is an othering of the Arab identity, socio-culturally. Further, these inheritances, that is identity, are bequeathed through a

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[48] Feminist activist Jameela Nishat, poet and founder of Shaheen, is of Hadrami origins. Interview was conducted on 02.10.2015 at her residence.

[49] Hussain bin Ali Binbrek suggests that the larger Deccani population, the normalised majority, referred to the Arabs as *Chaush* because they were usually not educated. They were also employed in the Nizam's military, in his irregular forces, in militias and as guards of treasuries, public offices and powerful men. He and his son Abdul Rehman bin Hussain Binbreak also said, something that my other respondents like Habib Mohammad bin Abdullah have corroborated, is that there are differences between the Deccanis and the *Chaush*. The *Chaush* are more prone to acting on passion, a trait that Deccanis view as a sign of *Jahalat* or ignorance, lack of etiquettes or education or barbarity. *Jahalat* also means darkness and indicates how deeply the colonial racist tropes of the moor have become entrenched in society. However, the *Chaush* take pride in being temperamental, and view the Deccanis as obliging or a people which acts with *murawat*. This trait is seen as submissive and driven by selfish ulterior motives or *matlabi*. Both groups share a dialectical relationship where they do not interfere in each other's group identities to alter these, but view their own group as superior – that is, the Hadramis in Hyderabad have unequivocal *Faqr* or pride in their *Chaush* identity. This is an observation that this research would like to stress, as the need to alter to preserve an authentic – be it the idea of a national identity or the hegemony of the normalised majority – becomes stronger with the coming of modernity and the modern nation states, which politicises and naturalises certain tropes of identity which are neither rooted in history nor in cultural or socio-economic hierarchies. Other differences that Hussain and Abdul Rehaman Binbrek point out are the importance of purdah and maintenance of a *zanana* meaning 'pertaining to women' and a *mardana* 'pertaining to men', something the Deccanis are not stringent in observing. Moreover, marriages between Deccani Muslims (majority is Hanafi Sunni) men and *Chaush* women were uncharacteristic before, however, with time these have become acceptable within the community, especially, with the marginalization of the *Chaush* within the larger marginalisation of Hyderabadi Muslims in independent India. Abdul Rehman bin Hussain Binbrek is married to a Syed Deccani woman.

patrilineal system. Therefore, women who marry outside their groups become members of their husbands' groups.

What does it mean to be *Chaush*? In the context of **boundary making** within the Hadramis, there are many strategies that this community has adopted to define its identity vis-à-vis other Arabs and vis-à-vis the non-Arabs. An important characteristic of this diasporic community is that many Hyderabadi Hadramis still maintains active ties with Hadramawth with people visiting it to meet relatives, marriages or to visit the land to which they "belong", *watan*, if they get an opportunity.[50] What seems to be replete during the field interviews with Hadramis and non-Hadramis alike was a sense of biological essentialism along with cultural essentialism.[51]

The distinction between Hadramis and Yemenis is indistinct within the community, as is the distinction between the Chaush and Hyderabadi Arab.[52]

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[50] *Watan* here does not mean country, but the local geographies of origins, that is, the villages or cities to which clans now residing in Hyderabad belonged to. In my interviews in Barkas, the term *watan* was used to refer to Hadramawth. Hussain bin Ali Binbrek informed me that his paternal uncles and cousins had visited him in Hyderabad. Further, he said that whenever possible people from Hyderabad also visit Hadramawth. Most of my respondents agreed that this is especially true of the Hyderabadi Hadrami men or families who have migrated to the Gulf as workers since the 1970s. During my fieldwork, *ziarat* or pilgrimage to the shrines of known Syeds of Tarim and elsewhere in Hadramawth was not a concern for the Hyderabadi Hadrami diaspora. For them *ziarat* meant Hajj or visiting Mecca or Madina. Most visited Hadramawth for meeting family. However, not all my respondents were connected with Hadramawth. Ali bin Ahmad Awalagi (lives in the Sultanshahi area of Old City, not Barkas) said that what makes a *Chaush* a *Chaush* is that his or her father was Arab, thus generationally this community remains *Chaush* - that is patrilineal system. His family has no links with Hadramawth anymore. Jameela Nishat has had some family members visit Hadramawth but only because these men had migrated to the Gulf as workers. Jameela speaks of the sense of pride that *Chaush* take in their identity.

[51] Though, Jameela stressed that for her Hadrami identity has a cultural meaning where food – *Maraq* is a typical dish made in Hadrami houses and so is *Aseed*, a sweet served during *Bakr-al-Eid* – and Hadrami dances become central markers, yet, she also stressed that Hadramis are more "passionate" when compared to other Arabs or Yemenis. The idea of *Chaush* being of a certain way can be seen as both cultural or biological. The other Hadrami respondents also maintained that because non-Hadmramis view Arab Hadramis as *jahil* or "passionate" or "prone to anger," they prefer not to marry their daughters to Hyderabad Arabs. Further, another informant, Ms. Rubina, a non-Hadrami Corporator from AIMIM gave a biological sense of this 'other'. She spoke of outmigration to Australia in terms of *Chaush* working as drivers in Australia because they are good drivers, she emphasized, "Its very genetic" If you look at Gulf people there are excellent drivers, "it comes naturally to these", "natural" and "in built in their system".

[52] For example, many civil society organisations or newsletters that organise the Hadramis function as Yemeni organisations or newsletters. Jameela says that she cannot tell Yemenis

The idea of the Yemeni and the Indian nation-state makes the diasporic Hadrami identity more layered as in addition to being Hadrami and Hyderabadi, now the members of Hadrami diaspora in Hyderabad are also Yemeni and Indian. However, this has to be located within the homogenising narratives of the modern postcolonial nation-states that have witnessed the ideas of fixed borders and reified identities specific to these border bound entities. Further, the distinction between Arab and Hadrami identity is also blurred - Arab being a meta-identity which subsumes the Hadrami identity. However, when one probes more into how identification with Arab or Hadrami identity works, what one discovers is that, most Hadramis identify themselves based on the social stratification systems of Hadhramawth. To the question, "Are you Hadrami?" the answer is a "yes" and to the question, are you an "Arab," the answer is also a "yes". However, when asked more specifically about their identity, Hadrami Hyderabadis primarily associate themselves as *Chaush* and as Syed/Mashiekh/Qabail.[53] *Chaush* meant both *Walayati* (foreign born) as well as *Muwallad* (someone born in an non-Arab place, therefore also foreign born and usually of mixed parentage) Arabs.[54] In the case of Hadramis, classificatory nomenclature becomes a site that fractures

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apart from Hadramis based on names. Further, she is part of Yemeni newsletters. Similarly, Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri (King Kothi) and Hussain bin Ali Binbrek (Barkas) stressed that he is both Yemeni and Hadrami because Hadrami identity was part of a larger Yemeni meta-identity. He said that most Yemeni origin people in Barkas and King Kothi are Hadrami and that non-Hadrami Yemeni origin people are a minority. The notions of authenticity naturalised by history of nation-states comes out in the tensions between how the Hadrami diaspora refers to itself. For example, with reference to *Khanazads* who still reside in King Kothi, AIMIM MLC Jafri suggested that they do not like being called *Khanazads* anymore. Further, Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri, who is a *Khanazad* living in King Kothi, suggested that those Hadramis living in King Kothi refer to themselves as Hadrami, while those residing in the Old City refer to themselves as Yemeni. This contradicts my fieldwork in Old City, where all the Hadramis I interacted with referred to themselves either as *Chaush* or as Hadrami.

[53] Based on an interaction with Wasim Fatima binte Ali's (Henceforth Wasim) father, Ali bin Ahmad Awalagi, on 05.10.2015. When asked if he was Hadrami, he said "no," he is "Awalagi" – which is a Qabail name. He also explained, that he was a *Chaush* (for him this means any Hyderabadi Arab), but within the Arabs there were Syeds, Mashiekhs and Qabails – he said these were the *zaat* or *Qabeele* in which people were divided. However, when asked if these divisions were prominent markers of Arab identity, he insisted that this was not the case anymore and that there were Badris (Bedouin) in Hyderabad earlier, although no one identified themselves as Badri anymore. He also said that marriages across these stratifications were normal, including marrying "Hyderabadi *Awaam*" or people from Hyderabad, suggesting the Deccani Hanafi muslim population of Hyderabad.

[54] Hadrami children born in India are called *Mawlluwd-e-Hind*

the neat contemporary divisions of homeland and host society. Thus, people born in 'homeland' are referred to as foreign born by actually 'foreign' born Hadrami diaspora, whereas, people born of mixed parentage or in 'host societies' are called *Muwallad*, also suggesting foreign or non-native born.

The 'erratic movement' of the *muwalladin* captured by the metaphor of itinerary also gets reflected in the current trends of migrating to the Gulf within the Hadrami community in Hyderabad. Manger (2010) notes that,

> when the government abolished the *jagirdari* system in 1949 and dissolved the nizam's army, the bottom fell out of the Hadrami economy in Barkas and elsewhere in Hyderabad. Most people had no marketable skills or the financial resources to establish their own businesses. Many of the Hadramis ended up in the informal economy that developed in Hyderabad (Manger 2010: 52).

Most of the respondents said that though their forefathers worked for the state, most Hadramis today prefer to do their own business.[55] They said that owning independent businesses was a way of Hadrami life, however, as the Nizam paid them to come (mostly in times of economic crisis in Hadramawth) and offered them to work as soldiers, guards and tax collectors, many adapted themselves to working for the state. They further indicated that if government jobs were made available to them, many people might stay in Hyderabad instead of migrating to the Gulf. However, they also said that the community lacks education, in addition to the discrimination they face as Muslims in India, therefore, they find it difficult compete with those who have more social capital. Today, most youth (male) in Barkas who are *Khaabil* or competent, prefer to work in the private sector, if they are not migrating to the Gulf. Further, most of these men work in BPOs, in Hi-Tech City in Hyderabad or in customer service jobs – which are usually graveyard shifts.

Manger (2010) further notes there is a high degree of migration to the Gulf from within the Hyderabadi Hadramis. Similarly, all the households I visited had one or more members working in the Gulf. This is a trend that began in the 1970s. In an interview with Syed Amin-ul-Hasan Jafri, M.L.C.

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[55] Hussain bin Ali Binbrek and his son Abdul Rehman bin Hussain Binbrek in an interview conducted on 12.10.2015. Ali bin Ahmad Awalagi, in Sultanshahi area, in an interview conducted on 05.10.2015. Jameela Nishat in an interview conducted on 02.10.2015.

Telangana from AIMIM, stated that in the 1960s, Hyderabadi Arabs started migrating to the Gulf, which was undergoing an economic boom. Initial migration was to Bahrain, which witnessed the oil boom before others, followed by migration to Saudi Arabia.[56] Some also migrated to Aden in what was then South Yemen. Starting 1970s, migration to other Gulf countries like the Emirates, Oman, Kuwait and Qatar started. Initially those who migrated realised their Arab identity and also realised that better marriage opportunities for Hyderabadi Arab women existed here. This started the trend of 'Arab marriages'. This further facilitated formation of networks, where the women who married local Arabs, would help arrange for visas for relatives back in Hyderabad. Arab areas like Barkas, thus, witnessed an economic prosperity. However, soon other groups in and around Hyderabad were willing to participate in such matrimonial alliances or marriage market. The people who had facilitated these initial marriages also realised the business possibilities. This led political interventions from Non-Governmental Organisations and political parties. For example, Arabs wanting to marry in India were required to produce Non Objection Certificates from their governments. T*hus, Hyderabadi Hadramis set the trend of both Gulf migration, as well as, Arab marriages in and around Hyderabad*.[57]

[56] Jafri a native of Hyderabad studied Journalism at Osmania University. He is a forty-year veteran journalist who has covered Hyderabad for nearly four decades. He has worked with Telugu newspaper Enaadu, English newspaper Newstimes, as the Chief of Bureau at the English newspaper Deccan Chronicle and as the Consulting Editor at Etemaad, an Urdu daily brought out by the AIMIM, in addition to working for Rediff and Reuters. As a journalist he covered issues related to politics, political parties, elections, communal riots and finance and economic issues. In his interview he stressed that as a journalist his concern was with the "entire state" and that it is incidental that he did not concentrate on minority issues. In 2010 he was nominated by the AIMIM as a Member of the Legislative Council because AIMIM was entering the Council for the first time and wanted to field a candidate that had established intellectual credentials. He was elected in 2010 for a truncated term in a by-election from the Hyderabad Local Authorities Constituency to represent it and the following year he was elected again for a full term of six years. In 1979 he had written a series of articles on the issue of 'Arab marriages' in the Enaadu daily and the Times of India Group. He was one of the first journalists to bring this issue to the national limelight. The interview was conducted in Jafri's house in Santosh Nagar on 04.10.2015.

[57] Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri, who has been working as a representative for UAE and later Oman, in Hyderabad, for over four decades, agreed that Arab men travel to Hyderabad for the purpose of marriage among other things. However, he said that he has not been involved in or facilitated any marriage. Corroborating observations made in Barkas during my fieldwork, he said that the Arab men who came to Hyderabad to marry Hyderabadi women, in the 1970s married local women, who then accompanied them back and were treated as equals. However, he said that post-1990's there has been a "deterioration" in the "quality" of men, as well as *Meher*. Further, Awad bin Abdullah Al Amri also said that those who migrated earlier got better paying job, even as unskilled labour. Today, the jobs in Gulf do not offer similar

Likewise, Manger (2010) has also noted,

> Opportunities for employment, combined with a liberalization of passport policies by the Janta government in 1977, enabled mass migration from India… most migrant labourers… were employed in construction; others were mechanics, tailors, cooks, and drivers. There were some white-collar jobs for clerks, but fewer positions for professionals, like doctors and engineers… a majority of the Gulf migrants got jobs through friends and relatives. Many also found employment through agents in Hyderabad… (Manger 2010: 56)

There are in Barkas, Chandrayangutta and Baba Nagar area, Owaisi Schools of Excellence (OSE). These institutions also offer Adult Education programs and skill development programs for women, which allow many women to study at a later age. These classes are held simultaneously during the day. Further, in Phool Bagh next to Chandrayangutta and Barkas, there is the National Academy of Construction (NAC), established in 2010 that gives diplomas in civil supervisory work, painting, denting and welding. Women are also taught curtain making at NAC, which has about 180 women enrolled there. Before this centre was bulit, it was operating out of Owaisi Schools of Excellence, where it was given one floor – it trained 1200 people of which 1000 got placement, mostly in the Gulf countries. NAC has a placement cell.[58] According to Ms. Rubina, former co-opted Corporator from the AIMIM, for the Hadramis migrating to Gulf is easier than finding livelihood options in India.

A discussion on Gulf migration cannot be completed in the context of Hyderabad without gendering it. As exploitative as international migration to the Gulf proves to be for the immigrant worker, Hyderabad has witnessed even worst, exploitation and trafficking of women, using the institution of marriage. The story of of Wasim, an employee at Shaheen, an NGO which has been working with women in Old City since 2008, narrates the local and

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remunerations, for both skilled and unskilled workers. He also said that those women who married Hadramis (example cousins) and then moved to another Gulf country, were able to get citizenship in counties like UAE and Bahrain. This was because most of the tribes in these countries originate in Yemen. However, today citizenship in other Gulf States is harder to get for Yemeni individuals. He also indicated that the educated youth are also migrating to the West today.

[58] Based on interaction with Ms. Ayesha Rubina the office of Bharathi Vidyalaya, Humayun Nagar, Hyderabad on 14.08.2016.

cross-border operation of gendered networks and exploitation often through marriages and work.[59]

Before Wasim came to Shaheen, she used to work out of her home by doing embroidery called *Karchob* or *Kamdani*.[60] She would get orders from the local shops and supply to them. Wasim learnt this skill from her paternal grandfather, and has been taking orders locally since the age of eight, when her father fell ill and most of her sibling were married by then and had their own families and responsibilities. Her grandfather would similarly take orders from the local vendors and supply them with what they required. After her grandfather passed away, her paternal uncle took over the work and expanded. He employed eight to ten women. Wasim says that observing these women, she also learnt the ropes of business. She took over from her uncle, however, she could not manage it well like him and their business suffered a loss of a few lakhs. As this was a loss too big for her family to sustain, her father stopped the business. Thus, individual members in her family started taking orders personally from local vendors. She said that it was through this that the Shaheen activists contacted her.

Wasim was beaten up by her father, she was dark skinned and was married to a Gulf sheikh but abandoned. The system of dowry has also seeped into the Arab community in Hyderabad. The informants suggested that the motivations behind marriage with Arabs are more complex, that is there is more than a monetary value to these 'Arab marriages'. Marrying an Arab carries prestige, as Arabs are seen as the original/pure Muslims and therefore, superior to the natives. This attitude is prevalent amongst the Hyderabadi Arabs, which include the Hadramis. MLC A. H. Jafri suggested, that this

[59] The notions of time are different for people not disciplined by modern education and its impetus on efficiency and accuracy. Wasim in my interaction with her, including the interview conduced in Shaheen's Office on 14.10.2015, maintained that her "grandfather's grandfather migrated from Yemen" implying that her family migrated to Hyderabad long ago and not necessarily referring to an approximate time in history.

[60] Shaheen imparts various skills to the women who come there through regular classes and workshops, which enable them to earn a livelihood. These classes and workshops include basic literacy, as well as, skills like tailoring and embroidery.

legacy of marrying Arabs is more than a century long with those Arabs who migrated to Hyderabad during the time of the Sixth and the Seventh Nizam.

Wasim belongs to a Chaush family. She has eight brothers and six sisters. She has two brothers and three sisters in the Gulf, that is, UAE and Bahrain. She says that all her older sisters have married Arab men, who were relatives, for example first cousins and these women have migrated. She cites the instance of one of her elder sisters who married a man from UAE who was not a relative – *ghair logon mein hui*.[61] What is worth noting is that *ghair* translates as stranger or someone who is not related to you through marriage or kinship. For Hyderabadi Arabs, the idea of *ghair* does not restrict itself within the boundaries of the nation state, where individuals of various nationalities and races can be kin and those from native countries, like Deccani Muslims of Hyderabad, can be strangers. She said that this particular proposal for marriage came *achanak se* or unexpectedly when her maternal uncle got the Arab groom-to-be with him to their house. He 'liked' her sister and they were married. She also speaks of the strict *Purdah* that was observed in her house when she was younger. Things changed after she joined Shaheen as a social worker, however, her sisters even today have not visited the streets next to their houses.

Similarly, most women during the fieldwork in Barkas did not leave their homes, except for school or college, and almost never met guests who were not related to the family, even within the premises of their house. Wasim and Jameela being an exception, most of my respondents – men and women – said that women have to be accompanied by fathers or brothers or "responsible female friends" when they go to college or schools. Most had not visited the local markets or walked around their neighbourhood.

It is important to note that, contrary to the what has been witnessed in the past few decades, most of my informants agreed that the initial marriages

[61] UAE is synonymous with Dubai. Most people in Hyderabad refer to UAE as Dubai without knowing specifically in which emirate their relatives, sons, daughters, husbands or siblings live.

that happened were not motivated by the logic of profit.[62] These women were married, were given equal legal status in their new homes, had children of mixed parentage who took on a patrilineal Arab identity and continue to stay there. Further, Jameela agreed that starting 1970s there was a consistent flow of Yemeni nationals coming to Hyderabad for marriages. She stressed that many of these earlier marriages worked successful for these Hyderabadi women, and gives the example of two of her aunts who are married and settled in Yemen. She also however stressed that most young women married to Yemeni or Hadramis even in the 1970s were not usually first wives or were married to poorer or differently abled men, who could otherwise not find wives locally.

Does the Gulf capital translate into women's education? Jameela insists that all the groups residing in Old City, irrespective of their group identity do not educate women. She says that money has no relation to women's education, especially in the Old City, where most women receive education till grades tenth or twelfth.[63] Further, she says that Old City also lacks colleges and thus distance becomes a reason for keeping women from seeking education. Thus, mobility of women is severely restricted in the Old City.[64] However, Hadramis in Barkas agreed that most families who have the resources educate their children, especially with the influx of capital from

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[62] I had the opportunity to interact with two such women, who had married their cousins and moved to Saudi with their Hadhrami husbands. One was visiting Hyderabad for the marriage of her *muwallad* son, in early twenties, to a *muwallada* Hyderabadi Hadrami cousin. The other was visiting her family with her *muwalladin* children.

[63] There is a popular belief in the Old City that after a woman starts menstruating, each month that she menstruates unmarried accrues sin on her mother. Shaheen works with Sexual Reproductive Health and their research has shown that the aforementioned is a belief that has real repercussions for young women in Hyderabad.

[64] Jameela in her interview mentions an incident where a local *Pehalwan*'s son started stalking a teenage woman, a student of class IXth in Old City. One day he entered the school premises while following her. Her peers and teachers left her alone with her stalker when they realised this. The girl managed to run away from her stalker, but later that day, she was told by the Principal of the school that she should not return there. Therefore, her education came to an end. *Pehalwan*'s are central to politics in Hyderabad. These are local musclemen who have immerged as political leaders, especially, in the Old City. All political parties carve out their areas of influence through these *Pehalwans*, who belong to all religions and groups.

family members working in the Gulf.[65] They also said that those who can afford it opt for English medium private education. Today, women are also getting educated till the graduate level, though earlier only a few studied till the 10th grade.[66] However, most of these women will not work after finishing their degrees. Many of these women were already in the process of looking for grooms. Studying then becomes an incentive for finding better marriage prospects. Therefore, education is provided to women not to make them economically independent but to enable better marriage prospects.

During the fieldwork, it became apparent that the trend within the Hyderabadi Hadramis of migrating to the Gulf was a symptom of the lack of viable opportunities in Hyderabad. The Hadrami diaspora in Hyderabad has established networks that enable its members to seek jobs and sustain themselves in the Gulf. However, it is also a symptom of something more, a historically informed itch, so to speak. Migration is also desired, that is, the idea of mobility is normalised within the community. In many ways, it embodies this community and explains its practices. For example, there is a complete lack of political lobbying in the community demanding a fair share in government jobs or the private sector, in spite of the fact that Hyderabad has witnessed an IT boom, post-liberalisation. Further, this lack of articulation becomes urgent because the community does not lack political representation and is one of the biggest supporters of AIMIM in Hyderabad. Another example is the local *bazaars* that are stacked with goods from all over the India Ocean, when better quality or cheaper options are available locally (see picture----). This phenomenon is conceptualised in the study as the Mobility Paradox. The use of the term Paradox is important because mobility is understood as trans-local and not local. Importantly, this concept captures certain gendered practices in the everyday life of this community, particularly

[65] Abdul Rehman bin Hussain Binbrek speaks of a paternal Hyderabadi Hadrami cousin who studied Law (LLB) and migrated to Jeddah for work, though he does not work as a lawyer there. In an interview conducted on 12.10.2015.

[66] During my fieldwork I met couple of young women studying Bachelors of Commerce (B.Com.). Hussian bin Ali Binbrek's two granddaughters were in B.Com. and Tayyib bin Jabir's granddaughter was also studying B.Com. In an interview conducted on 12.10.2015.

women. Women in Barkas, are restricted inside their homes mostly, only to be accompanied outside with a male member of the household. Most women interviewed for this research had not been to the local markets in Barkas. However, many knew names of streets in Jeddah and Dubai and been shopping in Madina and the UAE. Further, though some of the female informants were home schooled, even those women who attended colleges in different parts of Hyderabad, experience restricted mobility, where they are under constant surveillance.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this chapter was to introduce to the trans-local Hadramis of Hyderabad. By situating this study in the embodied everyday, this chapter demonstrates that the Hadrami identity can only be understood in the framework of mobility. Further, as has been discussed, in a diasporic location, the native from Hadramawth is seen as *ghair* or stranger or as *wilayati* or foreigner, whereas, the diaspora refers to itself as *muwalladin* or person of non-Aran lineage. No one belongs. There is no authentic. Therefore, the study proposes the concept of informed accommodation to capture these negotiations of the diaspora in the long duree in the Indian Ocean region.

Although Hadrami identity is centred on a patrilineal Arab lineage, the meanings of this keeps changing according to context. It is proposed that Arab identity as an idea should be understood within the dominant truth constructions in the field of representation, which have a direct bearing on the idea of identity. Therefore, Chaush which has come to denote Arab in Hyderabad, becomes the only foci on which the identity of Hyderbadi Hadramis consistently hinges. There is also a sense of pride in this self-ascribed identity, where tropes of being impulsive, passionate or short-tempered have been internalised. The Hadramis assert these with pride, differentiating themselves from the submissive Deccani Muslims. Further, it is a contention of this study that the phenomenon of Arab marriages should be understood both as economics (questions of livelihood in a marginalised community), social (also informed by gender based exploitative practices) as

well as, that of normative prestige – because the community hinges on the Arab identity, seen as superior..

The community also does not display any anxiety about retaining any specific cultural artefact from its past. It is a translocal and hybrid formation, comfortable in clothes that have 'origins' from Southeast Asia, speaking multiple languages that bear testimony to its presence in multiple sites around the Indian Ocean and in its desire to be mobile in the Indian Ocean at all times. The idea of Bazaars carrying commodities from all over the Indian Ocean can also be understood as part of this genealogy of migration and trade. This study proposes the idea of mobility paradox in which it argues that travelling across the Indian Ocean should be understood in the field of longing and desire, as much as an economic imperative. Thus, borrowing from Ho, (!997, 2006) the metaphor of itinerary captures the practices of Hadramis around the Indian Ocean.

CHAPTER IV

SIDDIS: RACE AND REPRESENTATION

Hari Masjid, Safed Khane
Usme Baithe Siddi Diwane
~ A Hyderabadi Riddle[67]

Curtis IV (2014) notes that Bilal ibn Rabah or ibn Hamama's low social status pre-Islam and iconic high status post-Islam are at the genesis of many ethical lessons within Islam and that Bilal's example reminds us that, Africans have been an integral part of Islamic history and the spread of Islam, since its inception. Bilal was born into slavery to an Ethiopian mother, in Mecca and was Black. Though prejudice against people of darker skin colour might have existed, it is important to note that slavery in Seventh Century Mecca was 'multiracial', thus was not race specific, this being a recent phenomenon linked to the racist civilizational thought of European colonisers. According to chroniclers, Mohammad forbade differentiation between Arab and non-Arab and instructed that anyone, including a slave should be obeyed if so appointed to govern by the authority of the Qur'anic Scriptures (Curtis IV 2014). Bilal's history is important to this research because, his figure and his standing in Islamic history and what his position as a former slave represents to Islamic thought, are central to the self-definition of Black Muslim Africans and Black Muslim African diaspora all over the world. Bilal comes up as a figure whose authority is invoked by the Siddis all over India to authenticate a better position and change the status quo that marginalises them.

This chapter will probe the ideas of representation and race. Drawing on fieldwork in Hyderabad and Gujarat, this chapter will try to demonstrate 'Siddi' as a unified identity can only be understood as a product of knowledge

[67] A popular Hyderabadi Riddle describing a Custard Apple.
It translates as:
A green mosque, with white rooms
Sitting in those rooms are black mystics.

production generated by scholars, journalists, and the mass media industry.[68] Besides, the history and identity that is being attributed to Siddis, aspects which they have come to internalise, cannot be understood without paying attention to the exotic representations of 'Africa' and the mooring of a legible 'African'.

The map of Hyderabad city is a remnant of its military history. The State of Hyderabad was a part of British India and had trained its army on the British model, even though the army was not meant to fight. Hyderabad Army

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[68] In addition to fieldwork done in Hyderabad in 2014 and 2015, I was part of a workshop that Professor Abdulaziz Lodhi, Professor Emeritus of linguistics and Philology and an Indian Ocean Studies scholar, conducted on the 12th and 13th of April, 2015, in the village of Juna Koba, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, with Siddi community leaders and elders on documentation and translation of Siddi Sufi *Jikris*. *Jikri* (Zikr) denote 'remembrance, mentioning, telling' and "is normally used in Sufi circles to refer to 'the rhythmic repetition of God's name or a short phrase in his praise'... the names and attributes of prophet Mohammad and the Sufi mystics. But for the Siddis, it also refers to a body of songs retelling the praises and attributes of their special saints. Pronounced in Gujarati as *jikr*, there are said to be 125 of these songs that are known to each *nangasi*, or leader of musicians (also known as *nagarci*, meaning '*nagara* player')" (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004: 194). Longer *jikris* are sung during *baithi* (seated) *dhammal*, *baithi dhammal* can include the repertoire of shorter *jikris* as well, as was done at the Ahmedabad workshop, "with offerings of *loban* (from Arabic *luban*, frankincense [Platts 1911: 949) at the beginning to sanctify the act. Some *jikrs* also require the sharing of sacred drinks, *kavo*, one of sweetened milk and one of peppery spices" (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004: 194). At the workshop, each *jikri* session began with *loban*. Shorter *jikris* are sung and performed by dancers during *dhammal* dances, in highly 'energetic and rhythmic' what are called *Khari* (standing) *Dhammal*. There are also a womens repertoire of *jikris* dedicated to Mai Misra, which are performed "during propitiatory rituals along with the making of Mai Misra's *kichri*, a dish of rice and *dal*, to be then shared. These songs are not usually performed outside the actual ritual" (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004: 197). 'Etymologising' the word *dhammal* - as no one knows when it began - and in an attempt to 'enable a comparison' of how African 'musical practices and instruments' have been 'informed' by and have informed 'these symbolic representations of African Indianess', Catlin-Jairazbhoy (2004) suggests that the words might derive from *dharm* which means 'virtue' in Sanskrit or *dham* which means 'to blow a conch shell or other wind instruments'. She argues that the "possible roots suggest etymologising, and perhaps a longstanding tradition of associating virtue and sacred breath with *dhammal* in typically syncretic Hindu-Muslim Sufi fashion" (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004: 185). Further, with regard to the word *goma* which Siddis use interchangeably with the word *dhammal*, she suggests that "[i]t is possible that the term came into use among the Sidis fairly recently, perhaps through East African contacts, as earlier written accounts usually used *dhammal*. The same term is found in 19th century accounts of social dancing in slave centres. *Ngoma* is the Swahili name of an important drum-dance healing ritual in the South and Central Africa, including the coastal areas" (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004: 185; Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Shroff 2011). There are *Jikris* dedicated to Hazrat Bilal "thus, their music and dance, tied to the foundations of their Islamic roots, serves as a major conveyer of ethnic identity for the Sidis" (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004: 182). Siddis association with a common identity is based on bonds of kinship and Sufism, "within which they foster the gifts attributed to their Sufi saint and avowed ancestor the black African mystic Gori Pir: these include their curly hair, their joyful spirit, their leonine associations, and their music and dance... Siddis also trace their heritage to Hazrat Bilal, whom some Sidis believe to have been Gori Pir's brother" (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004: 181).

was meant for internal security of the princely state. Further, Hyderabad was a "Muslim State" and most serving soldiers were Muslim, for example, the two communities in this research. Identities of the communities under discussion in this research are not restricted within the borders of the Indian nation state, as both communities realise their multiple identities translocally as Hyderabadi, African, Black, Arab and Muslim. These identities are embedded within the Indian Ocean, its trade and mobility. Hyderabadi Hadrami are distinct from other places they migrated to because unlike the port towns where they went as Sayyids and traders, in Hyderabad, they come as soldiers and mercenaries. Similarly, Siddis in Hyderabad enjoyed more normative prestige than they did in most places in the subcontinent. In addition to their roles as riders, stable keepers and domestic help, they worked in Nizam's army, police forces and exclusively formed the Nizam's Royal Body Guards, the Siddi Risala. The Siddi Risala had two components, the Princes Body Guards and the Nizam's Body Guards, which was exclusively made of people from African descent. Regarding the different conceptions of race and racism which existed in Hyderabad, Siddis were seen by the 'other' Deccani's as an isolated community by their own choice and not because of structural racism in the Hyderabad State.[69]

The meanings immanent in race as a category in a non-western location do not preclude understandings borrowed from the western discourse. This chapter is an attempt at deciphering race in India conceptually and phenomenologically. Thus, the main attempt of this chapter will be to engage with the genealogy of race in the subcontinent, broadly. Situating race in discourse (power understood as discourse) enables one to understand the

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[69] During my fieldwork in Hyderabad, I contacted families who were neither Siddi nor Hadrami, to see how Siddis have been perceived and constructed in the eyes of the 'other'. I briefly draw on an interview conducted with Lt. Gen Zaki, regarding the military history of Hyderabad. I interviewed Lieutenant General Zaki, who is a Hannafi Deccani and whose family has resided in the city of Hyderabad for five generations. Further, his family had been associated with the Nizams State as military officers, a tradition the family continued serving as military elites under the Indian State. He pointed out that though the Siddis are integrated now, initially it was not so. Lt. Gen Zaki also accepts that socially the colour of their skin was seen as "inferior", however, he suggests that it was not considered a "bad thing" to be a black African in Hyderabad State as it happens in the "west". Interview conducted at Lt. Gen Zaki's residence in Mehdipatnam on 10.10.2014.

constituting perspectives that have determined a racialization of everyday since the colonial period.

This chapter is also an attempt to underscore the importance of studying race and racism, within the discipline of IR. Firstly, these concept should not be viewed as domestic categories as "“new” forms of power and cultural practices, including consciousness transcend the earlier forms embodied in the nation-state and the derivative inter-state system" (Natrajan and Greenough 2009: 4). Further, these new forms of power often reproduce the older structures, albeit sometimes using new languages. It is therefore important to understand the genealogy of concepts, where these come from and whose purpose these serve. Further, in a world witnessing high-speed neoliberal globalisation, people, goods, capital, and technology are not the only flows. Most important instances which undermine borders and sovereignty have been that of movements of the oppressed people forming transnational linkages and that of emancipatory thought, as has been witnessed in the postcolonial thought or negritude. Therefore, this chapter will focus on the ideas of race – for example, the interaction of race and caste, especially, to emphasise differences between the political discourse that governs Siddis in Hyderabad and Siddis in Gujarat.

Secondly, there is a need to engage with the concept of 'exotic', that is, how are margins produced and consumed – be these through the images of poor Indians of African origin or be these through the consumption of their cultural/religious dances and music. The development of exoticism from a "privileged mode of aesthetic perception" to a global mode of mass consumption is important to understanding the production of race and racism (Huggan 2001). Huggan (2001) argues that

> the exotic functions dialectically as a *symbolic system*, domesticating the foreign, the culturally different and the extraordinary… but to domesticate the exotic fully would neutralise its capacity to create surprises… Thus, while exoticism describes the systematic assimilation of cultural difference, ascribing familiar meanings and associations to unfamiliar things, it also denotes an expanded, if inevitably distorted, comprehension of diversity which effectively limits assimilation… (Huggan 2001: 13-14).

The production of exotic is something that the last section of this chapter looks at, with specific reference to Siddis in Gujarat. It is important to understand exotic representation as both, a political as well as an aesthetic deployment of perception. The production and consumption of Siddi Goma in Gujarat or the participation of Siddi Marfa and Daff performances in world music festivals is sometimes deemed more 'authentic' by those producing these representation and consuming them, mostly in metropolises of the world, than its history and sociocultural location would suggest (Deborah Root in Huggan 2001). Exotic consumption of the margin is,

> not just in the perception of cultural difference but in the sympathetic identification with supposedly marginal cultural groups. Yet, this urge to identify, as manifest in patterns of consumption, often comes at the expense of knowledge of cultures/cultural groups other than one's own (Huggan 2001: 17).

The above two points can be demonstrated by drawing on notes from a philological workshop conducted in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.[70] The representation of the Siddis in the media has tended to focus on their *Dhammal* and *Goma* performances. For example, a news story titled '75,000 Africans assimilate completely into Gujarati culture' on this workshop, instead of carrying photos of the group that was helping in documenting the *Jikris*, carried photos from some other time/event of Siddis with white painted faces in peacock feathers and blue animal skin print outfits (Tiwari 13.04.2015). Siddis are seen as an exotic presence who are 'discovered' every time someone publishes on them, just like 'Africa' discovered by the colonists. As exemplified in headlines like 'Africa's lost tribe, the Siddis face poverty in India' (The Economic Times 05.03.2008; 'African by origin, Indian by nationality and Gujarati by speech', Sheth, 02.11.2011; 'Uncovering India's Siddi Community' (Seervai 24.03.2013); 'Siddis: Little known Indians of East African descent' (First Post 20.09.2013).

[70] Workshop participants in addition to Professor Lodhi and Khatija Khader included Farida Al Mubrik from Bhavnagar, Hamida Abu Miyavan from Jamnagar, Siddi Salaam Jaffar Bhai and his grandson Sameer from Rajpipla, Akbar Mamdani Bhai from Jamnagar, Wasim Jamadar Bhai from Bhuj and Iqbal Bhai and Halima Ben from Ahmedabad. Workshop was conducted over a span of two days at the home of the founders of a nongovernmental organization called Jeevantirth in Juna Koba Village.

Primarily because of this, selling the 'African' body painted and morphed to reflect this exoticization has become an important market for the Siddis all over India.[71] However, as Gujarat Siddis have tended to get more attention in both national and international media, the self-identification with this ahistoric 'Africa' has developed and reified. The attention that the Siddi 'local model of Sufism' has got from scholars recently underscores "the interrelationship between scholarly knowledge production and its subject, in this case the experience of Sidi peoples, serves as a springboard to examine how local, national and international perspectives shape and inflect each other through global networks of cross-cultural exchange" (Meier 2004: 87). The 'politics and processes' that make meaningful, Siddi experiences and concerns to scholars of global African diaspora or to scholars looking for 'instances of contemporary African memory and identity in the Indian Ocean world', are also important in understanding the strategies to improve living conditions employed by Siddis as the interest of international scholars and local authorities grows. Arguing against the perspective that treats the local and the global as dichotomies, Meier (2004) instead looks at the interaction between the local and the global as mutually constitutive and dialectical where local cultures 'adapt, appropriate and rework' global phenomena and knowledge production, thereby reshaping it in the process.

Nationalist projects are imbricated in this mutually constitutive local and global, using it to gain legitimacy for its out authentication. At a national level, government officials have made a spectacle of Siddis in order to promote international diplomacy and reinforce an accommodating multicultural sense of national self. Thus,

> The Indian Council of World Affairs published an article in 1986 that urged that the 'policy towards these groups' should include the 'promotion of their cultural activity', which would lead to improving relations with African countries... 'Very few know that India has an African population and they are comfortably accommodated in national life...' In this context Sidi culture is adapted to serve a nationalist discourse, promoting 'local difference' as a valuable asset to the modern nation of India (Meier 2004: 92).

[71] Today, there are 7 to 8 *Dhammal* groups active in Gujarat. These groups compete in the same market which is by its nature is very restricted and there is hostility/competition between these groups. These groups are invited for national and international festivals where they earn limited sums of money. It is important to note that neither are such performances sustainable (as a professional engagement) nor a constant source of income.

Since the 1980s Siddi performance have been on the program of various national cultural and folk festivals, Republic Day parades and in front of state dignitaries especially if they are African or of African origin like Nelson Mandela. (Meier 2004; Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004) Barak Obama's electoral victory as the President of the USA, was welcomed by the Siddis. Further, on his recent visit to India in January 2015, US president Barak Obama could not meet with Siddis of Karnataka when they had expressed a public desire for his audience. Many local, regional and national newspapers carried this story expressing both the disappointment that Siddis had felt and disapproving of the State's failure to highlight this multicultural diversity of the Indian nation, as is evident in headlines like: 'Sweet Gift for Obama from Karnataka's Siddis' (The New Indian Express 13.01.2009); 'Siddis Elated at Swearing-in' (The New Indian Express 21.01.2009); 'Siddis to Fete Obamas One Year in Office' (The New Indian Express 29.11.2009); 'Siddis celebrate as Obama formally becomes US President' (The Times of India 21.01.2013); 'Uttara Kannada's Siddis Want to Meet Their Hero Obama' (The New Indian Express 09.12.2014); 'Letdown for Barack 'kin' - Karnataka tribe's request for meeting turned down' (The Telegraph 24.01.2015).[72]

[72] Probing Harris's (1971) thesis that African descendants have been a part of a long process of acculturation and racial integration, Drewal (2004) 'revisits' this issue "using art as index, to assess whether this is the case, or whether some sense of African-ness continues to be valued and expressed... Struggling to claim their land and space on the Indian land- and culture-scape, Siddis have adopted a variety of flexible strategies and tactics in order to assert their independence and agency. Agency refers to the ways and means used to turn aspirations into reality" (Drewal 2004: 141). This comes out in the Siddi songs and dances which are filled with 'complexities and ambiguities', where in order to make their performances intelligible and accessible to their audience, Siddis 'perform themselves for the other' (Drewal 2004). Arguing against maintaining a 'pure' or 'authentic' notion of culture, in this case, Siddi dance or music traditions, Drewal (2004) contends that it is imperative to bring to the fore 'forces and processes' which shape 'tradition for a specific purpose, to serve as a vehicle for Siddi agency.' Thus, mutations and evolutions in 'siddi dance and music' should be seen as survival strategies akin to conversion to dominant religions or settlements in isolated communities (Drewal 2004). In reference to promotion of Siddi identity through these cultural performances should be viewed as embedded in larger politics be it the global exotic culture markets which consume marginalised cultures or be it the agenda of promoting a multiethnic India or Konkani language (Camara 2004; Drewal 2004). The paternalistic attitude of most social and political activist or that of the Indian State render the Siddi agency as a 'semi-agency' or 'agency in training'. Yet according to Drewal (2004), "[p]erforming Siddi culture is fine, as long as it is not 'Siddi on Display' but Siddis who speak about and perform aspects of their history and culture for their own political purposes and empowerment in contemporary India" (Drewal 2004: 155-156).

The complex connection between globalisation – especially at a discursive level as knowledge production – and the local strategies adopted by the Siddis to both define their identity and device strategies to improve their current economic, social and educational deprivation, become evident in the realm of identity production and consumption.[73] The 'local and international knowledge production' around the Siddis enables one to engage with processes of identity production, at a national level as now Indians, at a trans-regional as African Indians, at an international level as Africans and at a local material level as a solidarity forged on a modern (re)construction of an African identity to address deprivations that draw from race, religion, caste and class. It delineates for a student who engages with the identity question that not only are identities in a flux, but also, the perceptions of others, knowledge production and realisation of identity are mutually constitutive and never constant, depending on larger contingencies and constrains of a specific era, for example, limited linear history of nation states which enables the conditions germane for a certain identity production and its legitimation. These reifications of history and culture for mass public consumption are not unique to the Siddis.

Thus, it is important for IR to reflect on how knowledge(s) are produced to aid the mass consumption of exotic merchandise from food, music, literature to autobiographies which are available in marketplaces.

Making 'Black' Legible

[73] Meier (2004) writes "configuration of their African identity focuses on 'authenticity' of their African heritage. In this role they are allowed to perform as entertainers for an audience not aware of the sacred significance of their performances or their role as religious specialists. Furthermore, in this context their performances promote an ahistoric image of Sidi culture, encapsulating their 'Africaness' without any real reference to their specific lives or histories, which are deeply embedded within local religious and cultural traditions" (Meier 2004: 92). Further, she writes of an instance where on an academic visit to meet Gujarat Siddis she was shown a photocopy of an engraving from a book that showed an Ethiopian or Sudanese musician holding a lyre similar to the one central to the rituals at the shrine of Bava Gor, this photocopy had been provided to the local Siddi hosts by a foreign scholar. She points out that this assumption on the part of her hosts that this will interest her and her team of foreign scholars demonstrates "how the interconnectedness of the 'globalised world' impacts the construction of African diasporic consciousness or awareness" (Meier 2004: 93). In another instance she writes about her hosts informing her that they have choreographed 'African dances and costumes' inspired from a performance of a West African Troupe that they attended in Mumbai.

Scholars of race have been pointing out that the scientific objectivity of western thought on race or its colour blindness (claims to objectivity) is actually rooted deep in Eurocentric philosophical thinking. Bernasconi (2001) notes that when colonialism and trans-Atlantic slavery started, these institutions though exploitative and racist, were not 'sustained by a scientific concept of race.' The concept of race made it possible to legitimise these practices and "by investing the concept of race with a scientific status, members of the academy certainly have in the past contributed to making racism more respectable…" (Bernasconi 2001: 11). Though Europeans had long been aware of different groups that existed, they had rationalised it with mythologies of monsters and magic. However, fifteenth century onwards, they were confronted with the 'reality' of these groups with movements of missionaries, traders and explorers returning with reports and 'exhibits'. Eze (1997) and Bernasconi (2001) argue that the initial European responses to this diversity of people were theological. These responses led to a conundrum of accounting for different people (difference underscored by colour of the skin) and their dispersion, from Adam and Eve in a short span of few thousand years, as a literal reading of Bible implied. Therefore, some argued for polygenesis.[74] The emergence of monogenesis was also a response to reconciling Biblical Creation with human diversity. The polygenesis and monogenesis position in the eighteenth century came to signify support and opposition to slavery, respectively. However, "without there being any necessary connection between one's position on the polygenesis-monogenesis dispute and one's position on slavery" (Bernasconi 2001: 21). Starting fifteenth century, the blackness of Africans became a subject of theoretical speculation and scientific inquiry and thus, the loci of knowledge production around which prejudices regarding Africans got entrenched.

[74] This approach was popular among the defenders of slavery, example, Edward Long, Henry Home, Lord Kames. However, Isaac La Payrere in 1655 (he was responding to Grotius) had tried to reconcile the Biblical Creation with the existence of prior chronologies of human history. Furthermore, philosopher Voltaire used polygenesis to counter the Biblical Creation. However, a proponent of the importance of Chinese and Indian civilizations, Voltaire put the Africans right above Oysters and Apes, in his hierarchical model (Bernasconi 2001; Eze 1997).

Francois Bernier in 1684 used the term ‘race’ in an anonymous essay where he identified four to five different types of people. At that juncture, however, the term ‘race’ was not defined in a precise way.[75] However, the emergence of a determinate concept of race have been attributed to Immanuel Kant, who has been argued to be one of the most important philosophers of raciology and racial theories. Kant lectured extensively on Anthropology and Physical Geography, which he treated as twin sciences. As the human was treated as both a physical and a moral agent, for Kant

> while anthropology studies the human or human reality as they are available to the *internal* sense, geography studies the same phenomenon as they are presented or available to the *external* sense (Eze 1997: 106).

Therefore, Kant studied race, racial classifications, skin colour, phenotypes etc. under Physical Geography, where,

> different races are also conceived as manifesting biological origins and distinct classes, geographically distributed. Taking skin colour as evidence of a “racial” class, Kant classified humans into: white (European, yellow (Asian), black (African) and red (American Indian) (Eze 1997: 115).

Kant’s philosophy should be understood in the context of its time.[76] His philosophical position was a counter to both the metaphysical dogamatic

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[75] The 1684 essay attributed to Bernier was titled “A new division of the earth, according to the different species or races of men who inhabit it”, indicating that species and races were seen as similar categories. Further, Bernasconi (2001) notes that “”Race” was only one of the many words used for this purpose. It was not accorded privilege and its application in this context does not seem to have stopped it from being used more often in other ways (Bernasconi 2001: 13; Eze 1997).

[76] For example, Kant has upheld the empirical and philosophical significance of race in a response to Herder in 1785 titled *Bestimmung de Begriffs einer Menschenrasse* and in an response to Georg Forster in 1786 titled *On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy*. Kant has been known to discuss ‘race’ and develop a theory of race in his most important works, including *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* and *Critique of Judgement* (Eze 1997). Kant drew closely from Carolus Linnaeus, who was the first natural scientist to include human beings into a system of formal classifications, divided homo sapiens into the four geographical regions of the world: homo Americanus, homo Europaeus, homo Asiaticus and homo Africanus. His descriptions included not only physical characteristics, but also, drew on the ‘medieval theory of the four humors’. He argued for a difference in both physical characteristics and in character.[76] Kant’s pseudo-scientific approach also acknowledged works of other natural historians like Buffon, from whom he took the defence of monogenesis. Buffon was a proponent of monogenesis, classifying races geographically using physical attributes as indicators. In his work the term race is used without theoretical consistency as his theorisations challenged Linnaeus’s classifications and instead, he argued against species-classes based on racial division, arguing that these taxonomies (species, race, class, genra) were artificially created, as only individuals existed in nature. Therefore, climate and environment were taken as determinants for differences

rationalists like Descarte, as well as the scepticism propagated by Hume's empiricism. Drawing on Jean-Jacque Rousseau's idea of *l'homme naturel* (state of nature), Kant in turn argued for a conception of human nature which was both historically contingent, as well as had a fixed essence, therefore grounded in laws that govern metaphysical and moral agency. Kant understood the essence of human nature as teleological, therefore, Kant according was a 'normative essentialist', who believed that

> human nature, unlike natural nature, is, in essence, a *moral* nature, so that what constitutes human nature *proper* is not, as the ancients may have believed, simply intelligence or reason, but moral reason – the capacity to posit oneself rationally as a moral agent (Eze 1997: 112).

Similar to Rousseau, Kant clearly differentiates between 'state of nature' and 'state of human nature', where the latter signified what humanity has attained. The 'state of human nature' for Kant offers 'radical autonomy' to the human society, which forms the 'essence of humanity', that is, this autonomy should be understood as individual freedom offering the possibility of self-improvement. In Kant's exposition non-European people lacked the moral character for self-development, such that,

> they lack character presumably because they lack adequate self-consciousness and rational will, for it is self-reflexivity (the "ego-concept") and the rational principled will which make the upbuilding of (moral) character possible through the

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between human species. For Buffon, the mark of separation between species lay in the ability of individuals to reproduce successfully across generations. Further, he was committed to the belief that difference within a species were determined by climate, geography and food – instead Kant rejected all evolutionary theories and proposed a teleological explanation as opposed to merely mechanical explanation arguing that "the seeds of all races were latent from the start in everyone, and the appropriate seed was actualised to serve a purpose that arose from the circumstances" (Bernasconi 2001: 23; Eze 1997). Unlike Buffon he believed that racial divisions were permanent and could not be undone with changes in circumstances like climate or food. Johan Friedrich Blumenbach is another natural scientist whose contributions have had a significant impact on the 'anthropological concept of race'. In his early career, in the first edition of his PhD thesis *De generis humani varietate nativa* in 1781, he drew on Linnaeus's terminology of *varietas*. However, later by the third edition of this book, which included years of research and revisions, he has started developing a theory of race, relying extensively on the terminology of *gens* and *gentilitius*. Blumenbach has acknowledged Kant for "setting out clearly the distinction between race and variety, where races are marked by hereditary characteristics that are unavoidable in the offspring, whereas the distinguishing marks of variety are not always transmitted" (Bernasconi 2001: 17). Similar to Kant, Blumenbach defended the use of colour as a way of differentiation within species and both were proponents of the theory of epigenesis. Blumenbach and the Gottingen School undertook empirical research based on physical distinctions like phrenology and physiognomy, and provided the parameters that came to dominate biological science in and outside Germany. Further, it was through these scientists that Kant's theory of race came to provide a theoretical framework at large (Bernasconi 2001; Eze 1997).

> (educational) process of development of goodness latent in/as human nature (Eze 1997: 115).

Therefore, going beyond causality (external, physical and climactic) Kant takes a psychological-moral position that colour-washes difference, in favour of a view that takes European as humanity itself. Further, in his racialised hierarchical treatment of human society based on skin colour, Kant also understands other skin colours as degeneration of the original white colour.

The discussion above is intended to present a context in which knowledge production has naturalised racialised hierarchies within human societies, in both the west and the non-west, based on taking the white European as the normal and on an ahistoric idea of human history. What is specifically important in discussing Kant is that he took racism of other scientist and philosophers and imbued it with a transcendental and normative permanence, where racial hierarchies became immanent and constitutive of human society. Kant also assumed the purposive nature of racial difference, an assumption on which he based his theory of permanence and seeds, arguing against assimilation of races or mixing of races as going against laws that are immanent in nature. Kant's theory of race has been influential in making race a permanent reality from which other generalisations guiding racism in the name of science can be extrapolated.

Similarly, West (2002) reflecting on the legitimacy enlightenment has lent to the idea of race as a concept, emphasises the idea of white supremacy – and referentially the inferiority of the people of colour – by decoding

> the way in which the very structure of modern discourse *at its inception* produced forms of rationality, scientificity, and objectivity as well as aesthetic and cultural ideas which require the constitution of the idea of white supremacy (West 2002: 90).

The normalisation of racial hierarchies in western discourse are manifest in 'controlling metaphors, notions, categories, and norms' the include and proscribe limited conceptions of 'knowledge, beauty, and character', moulding dominant conceptions of truth and knowledge and restricting the "intelligibility and legitimacy of black equality in beauty, culture, and

intellectual capacity" (West 2002: 91). The coming of modernity and scientific revolution in conjunction with colonialism, introduced the ideas of observation and evidence, two ideas around which modern knowledge production and truth claims have since been produced.[77] West (2002) classifies this as the 'first stage' of racism as this 'normative gaze' (the conception of race as a concept) has held natural history captive since. The second phase in the history of racism in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century which witnessed the formation of modern disciplines like anthropology, physiognomy, phrenology and craniometry. According to West (2002), the intersection of scientific revolution with Cartesian philosophy and the revival of metaphors of aesthetics of classical Greek antiquity during renaissance, provided the 'acceptable authority to white supremacy.'[78] In the nineteenth century, many anti-slavery liberals continued to consider the blackness of skin as a malady, and the liberal thrust even today has a limited approach which

> promotes the welfare of black people permissible within the structures of modern discourse: integration which *uplifts* black people, assimilation which *civilizes* black people, intermarriage which *ensures less negroid* features in the next generation (West 2002: 104).

Going beyond the reductionism of much literature on race, which focuses on the relationship between discursive and non-discursive structures of power, locating race and racism within the power grid of psychological, political, and economic interests of individuals, groups and the elite, West (2002) argues for a genealogical approach that treats powers structures as autonomous, enabling a nuanced entry into the cultural phenomenon of racism.

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[77] This is evident in the works of two early proponents of scientific revolution, Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes. Descartes's thought, especially, provided the 'controlling notions of modern discourse', namely, the primacy of the subject and the pre-eminence of representation. The modern methodological tools of hypothesis, fact, inference, validation, confirmation, and verification come from the ideas of observation and evidence. Both Bacon and Descartes regarded these modern methods of enquiry as paradigm defining, though Bacon was an inductive empiricist and Descartes a mathematical rationalist who followed a deductive approach (West 2002).

[78] Many early theoreticians of race were artists and writes, for example, Johann Kasper Lavater, the father of physiognomy "acknowledged that the art of painting was the mother of his new discipline." Pieter Camper, a painter by training was a Dutch anatomist and made aesthetics the pillar of his scientific enquiry, making famous the 'facial angle'.

The paradox of liberal thought is that while it emphasises sameness, it also underscores the importance of taxonomies of difference, across a defined border, understood as knowledge. David Theo Goldberg has pointed out this paradox: ‘race is irrelevant, but all is race,’ which is addressed in liberal thought by using a system of classifications which “impedes relativism by enclosing the entirety of difference within taxonomy organised by single logic” (Alcoff 2002: 13). Like the liberals, anti-Essentialist like Anthony Appiah (1996) have argued against the use of the term race. According to Appiah (1996) race as a referent can no longer be used as a legitimate biological indicator of human difference. Further, it neither corresponds to either a philosophical position, nor to a culturally or historically generative context. Similarly, the postmodern position treats race as ‘a contingent construction, the epiphenomenon of essentialist discourse’, only to be used as ‘strategic essentialism’, to assert and recover. These positions question the epistemological relevance as a concept or heuristic. These perspectives, especially multiculturalism in liberal thought, forward a thesis where difference is acknowledged, yet flattened, making it appear equal. However, Alcoff (2002) argues for a need for a critical approach to race where the salience of racial identity is acknowledged, especially as the visual registry of racial identities shapes social reality, sometimes undermining other markers like language and culture. Further, race as a visual artefact has produced a set ‘rational capacity, epistemic reliability, moral condition, and of course, aesthetic status,’ thus recognising the ontology behind racialised rationality and existence, that is, race as an ontological category, Alcoff (2002) writes

> And I am not putting this forward as a strategic essentialism: the claim that race is philosophically salient is not merely a strategic claim but a truth claim. There is a visual registry operating in social relations that is socially constructed, historically evolving and culturally variegated, but nonetheless powerfully determinant over individual experiences and choices (Alcoff 2002: 16).

Paul Gilroy (1993) in his iconic book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, puts forth a thesis for reconceptualising black identity to develop a more adequate conceptual frame for understanding cultural formations and situated practices of black diaspora, which he terms as

the 'black Atlantic.'[79] He signifies these identifiable cultural formations racially, as racial logic, understood as the historical experience of slavery functioning through the visible registers of skin colour and phenotype, has been the organising principle for these diasporic groups spread through multiple sites. These are sites where processes of identity formation are continuous, cannot be understood as 'pure' African 'roots', but only as inter-sectionalities or as hybrids. Thus, African diaspora is treated as mobile, mutable and internally heterogeneous. Gilroy (1993) also argues that enlightenment concepts are complicit in enlightenments violence, therefore, cannot be used to develop or produce a thorough critique of modernity. Instead, he advances 'the slave perspective' whereby he understands identity as a location in a social structure and relative to other locations and not as something inherent. He is not advancing an essentialised theory of the self, where a stable and ideal black self replaces the normalised white male, that is, he argues against replacing one universal with another. Rather, keeping racial identity at the centre of his argument, he produces a theory of self which is positional and accounts for race and culture in the hierarchies power in modernity. His conceptualisation is a potent critique of the modern nationalist discourses, which are based on stable, pure and homogenous conceptions of identity. For him hybridity and identity are not antinomies, further, he locates it within diasporic cultural formations of a black Atlantic. There is therefore a need to understand race as a visible and historically contingent formation, in addition to a metaphysical concept.

The above discussion on race as a concept intends to bring to the notice the importance of modern discourse, both scientific and philosophical, and the significance of the scientific methodology in producing structures of power that continue to be centred on race. These manifestations of racist attitudes towards black Africans are also evident in the 'non-west'. For example, in his study of Kamal Amrohi's film *Razia Sultan*, Singh contends that

[79] Gilroy (1993) uses the word 'black' not 'culture,' with it homogenising implications, in his reconceptualization of identity, as his formulation attempts at addressing the metaphysical critiques of the concept of identity as universalising and limited.

> cinematic (mis)representation... a caricature of a Western-style African slave and an emotionally weak , contemporary Indian woman,…'(mis)represent the past' by (re)constituting it through contemporary perceptions which 'dilute' our understanding of the present and 'mitigate' the development of a historiography free of '*inferiorized*, racialized and gendered' colonial biases (Singh 2008: 279).

The postcolonial subject internalises European colonial biases, binary logic/colonial dualisms and racialised assumptions at the cost of 'silencing or repressing powerful histories' and 'eliding parallel universalisms and competing cosmopolitanisms'. The construction of Jalal-ud-din Yakut as a 'lowly Abyssinian slave' and the ahistoric reconstruction of the history of African diaspora in India has "managed to trivialise and eroticize its contributions to Indian social and cultural lives (Singh 2008: 275). Totalizing, euro-centric, essentialised depictions of the non-western cultures, constructed on the basis of biological racism, mark their inherent inferiority (Ashcroft, Griffith, and Tiffin 1995 quoted in Singh 2008: 276). 'Otherness' does not have its genesis in medieval Europe, which inherited many tropes of 'barbarians' and 'outsiders' from the Greeks and the Romans, where

> otherness was merely "re-configured" by medieval and early modern Europeans at a time when "Christianity became the prism through which all knowledge of the world was refracted" (Loomba (1998) quoted in Singh 2008: 279).

In the beginning it was Islam that functioned as a 'binary opposite' and as a 'threat' to Christianity. It is here that the 'religious otherness' gets supplanted by more 'obvious, racial markers' between the Europeans and the Muslims, such that the

> term "Moors" at first referred to Arab Muslims, and although not all Muslims were dark skinned (and travelogues as well as literary texts abound with references to white Moors) over time, Moors came overwhelmingly to be associated with blackness... (Loomba (1998) quoted in Singh 2008: 280).

Significantly, even if notions of 'otherness' were getting racialised in medieval and early modern Europe, yet, it

> did not develop a biological understanding of race... Pre-modern religious blackness was socially constructed while early modern and modern racial blackness is constructed as biological... Pre-modern and early modern notions of blackness suggest one could convert to Christianity and remove this blackness to an extent... Thus it is only in the modern period that racialization of skin color defined in biological terms of blackness - "what is outside reflects what is inside"-that racial difference became essentialized and biologized (Singh 2008: 280-281).

This has a bearing for this study because at the heart of racism is 'othering' based on essentialised understanding of earlier Islamic world and later the 'biologized' colonial subjects. Both communities who are the subject of this study represent the racialised other, negation of which is not only central to the European selfhood, but also, to the modern sensibilities of postcolonial subjectivities, evident in the eroticization of the black body, it's ahistoric representation and its packaging as a subaltern cultural entity for uninformed public consumption.

Hyderabad: Recovering the Absence

According to the UNESCO[80] *"there is great genetic diversity within all human populations. Pure races – in the sense of genetically homogeneous populations – do not exist in the human species* (UNESCO 1964)."

Yet, as the discussion in the prior section has demonstrated, science (mostly pseudo-science) and philosophy has had much to do with normalising the idea of racism, by legitimising the naturalisation of hierarchies within humans, based on visual appearance. What is important to note here is that colonial ideas of an over-determined racial hierarchy, continued to propagate through the twentieth and the twenty-first century with eugenics and evolutionary biology and population genetics, respectively. Eugenics has provided much of the logic and vocabulary in which difference, specifically based on race is articulated. Therefore, what phrenology, craniometry and ideas of polygeny and social Darwinism did for the nineteenth century, genetic arguments have done for the twentieth and twenty-first century (Yudell 2014; Jablonski 2012). In the twentieth century, scientific arguments forwarded by W.E.B. Du Bois and Franz Boas illustrated that race concept was a social (not a scientific) construction and that scientific research is constrained by the social context in which the research takes place.

[80] Point III in the Report titled Proposals on the Biological Aspects of Race, signed in Moscow, August 1964, by specialists working on revising the 1950 and 1951 UNESCO statement on race. The 1964 document also used the word 'racism' for the first time. Subsequently, in 1967 another document 'statement on race and racial prejudice' built on the earlier statements of 1950, 1951 and 1964, addressing many (not all) of the previous inadequacies and was signed by a group of specialists in Paris in September 1967.

Indeed, Yudell (2014) points out that though the canonical narrative in biological science hides its past (the entrenchment of the race concept in modern eugenics) it cannot hide the fact that these arguments continue to survive, albeit in different forms. Modern population genetics and evolutionary biology root the race concept in human genetic variation, thus, restricting yet allowing for eugenic conceptions of racial difference. As evolutionary biologists and population geneticists challenged typological and eugenic descriptions in the past century, it should not be seen as the triumph of liberal sciences over bigoted ignorance. Instead, these are methodological "struggles to find meaning for the concept within taxonomic nomenclature and the evolutionary synthesis, and, second, a struggle to find alternative ways to explain human genetic diversity" (Yudell 2014: 9). However, these methodological innovations within science allowed for the continued propagation of the logic an over-determined race concept. The academic debates between eugenicists, geneticists, evolutionary biologists and anthropologists had formative influences on scientific understanding of difference and race within the academy as well general population. Appiah (1996) calls this entrenched diffusion of scientific ideas in the population at large as "semantic deference" where due to the disproportionate importance associated with scientific objectivity, people started using scientific terminology without knowing its exact meaning, as these were seen as expert forte. Thus, race should be understood as a historical, sociocultural and political category contingent on the processes that define its context.[81] This section then drawing on the discussion above, details ideas of race and racism drawn from fieldwork conducted in Hyderabad.

[81] Race as a concept is fraught with taxonomical irregularities. Firstly, geneticists have shown that the genetic difference between the people residing in one geographic are is as diverse as the genetic difference between the people residing in different geographic areas. The UNESCO 1964 document on biological aspects of race states "Differences between individuals within a race or within a population are often greater than the average difference between races or populations." Secondly, race as a concept lacks statistical rigour of quantifying the exact attributes specific to a 'race' or the difference is attributes between given "races", making it impossible to categorise people according to 'race'. Thirdly, its discriplively indistinct. Lastly, due to these difficulties in the conceptual category of race, any study which categorises individual into racial groups, emperically – inspite of scientic rigour or sophistication – will be based on the subjective judgement of the researcher (Fleming 2001).

An interesting site that documents the presence of Africans in the Deccan are the paintings. Palpable African presence can be noticed in paintings, between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries that depict African administrators, noblemen, eunuchs, concubines and palace slaves. Alderman (2006) notes that

> two names predominate in the identifiable depictions of Africans in the art of Deccani Sultanates: Malik Ambar of Ahmadnagar and Ikhlas Khan of Bijapur... Remarkable depictions of other Africans in the Deccan exist, such as an African Eunuch from Golconda, one of the finest portraits in Deccani art (Alderman 2006: 107).

Zebrowski (1983) in his study of Deccani paintings discusses nine paintings associated with Malik Ambar. Eight of these nine paintings, which Zebrowski associates with the Ahmadnagar kingdom, depict African subjects.[82] Further, Robbins and Mcloed (2006) write,

> sometimes, Indian artists used particular techniques to show that their subjects are African. Mughal paintings of the sixteenth century, and pictures from Kutch almost 200 years later, depict African nobles and retainers wearing distinctive domed hats, generally with brims in contrasting colors... On the other hand, none of the prominent Africans in paintings from the Deccani courts of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur wear such hats (Robbins and Mcleod 2006: 256).[83]

The idea of equating skin colour to mean Africa or generalising all black figures in the paintings to depict the famous Malik Ambar are some of the issues that one has to contend with as a problem of representation. Besides, identifying African subjects in Deccani art on the basis of skin colour poses another problem. For example, Robbins and Mcloed (2006) write,

> The Kenneth and Joyce Robbins Collection includes the Bhavnagar State Historical Picture Series with reproduction of old wall paintings from Bhavnagar in Gujarat. Many of them are clearly not Africans, but again not all have been identified (Robbins and Mcleod 2006: 254).[84]

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[82] Zabrowski Quoted by Alderman (2006), Paintings of Africans in the Deccan, in Kenneth X. Robbins and John McLeod eds. African Elite in India: Habshi Amarat. New Jersey: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd.

[83] For more discussions on specific paintings from Mughal, Rajput, Pahari and Deccani schools, with reproduction of those paintings, refer to, Robbins and Mcleod (2006), ‘Appendix: Identifying Africans in India’, in Kenneth X. Robbins and John McLeod eds. *African Elite in India: Habshi Amarat*. New Jersey: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd.

[84] Robbins and Mcleod (2006) also specify other problems in identifying members of African elite. Firstly, many a times historians can only speculate on the origins of an important medieval figure, as in the case of the Sharqi Dynasty of Jaunpur, which is said to have been established by an African eunuch Malik Sarwar (some claim that Sarwar was not African), who rose to power in the court of Delhi sultans, where he was the keeper of jewels, then the wazir of the sultanate, following his appointment as the governor of Jaunpur in 1394 (though

Drawing on the work of Art Historian, Karl Khandalavala, Robbins and Mcleod 2006, elaborates that even if the subject of a painting is clearly African,

> it may be difficult to identify him. Africans who appear in seventeenth-century portraits were formerly automatically identified as Malik Ambar, even though they are clearly different individuals... there were many other prominent Africans in Ahmadnagar who may have been depicted in the paintings[85] (Karl Khandalavala quoted Robbins and Mcleod 2006: 256).

Not all Africans were slave elites, especially most Siddis living in contemporary India trace their roots to migrations in the last two hundred year under colonialism, when the idea of elite slavery – possible due to the political contingencies created by the spread of Islamic rule – was jaded. The question of Siddi identity is a complex one and is reflected in the many terms used for them in various studies African Indian or African Asians (Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b ; Camara 2004: 101; Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2004; Drewal 2004; Kenoyer and Bhan 2004; Mcleod 2004; Meier 2004; Obeng 2004, 2008; Shroff 2004, 2011), 'Asians of African descent' (Alpers 1972, 2004; Campbell 2008), or Afrasians (Oka and Kusimba 2008).

Most of the distinct Siddi settlements that exits today, or most Siddis interviewed during the course of fieldwork in Hyderabad and Gujarat, trace their lineage to roughly to late nineteenth or early twentieth century. As has been discussed in Chapter II, the history of African migration to India dates back to thousands of years. This research argues that Africans who migrated to

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he never declared independence, Sarwar became the de facto ruler of Jaunpur after Taimurs' invasion of North India in 1398). Similarly, he was succeeded by his adopted son Mubarak Shah, originally called 'Qaranful' (clove), a common African slave name. However, some claim that Mubarak Shah was of Afghan ancestry and was related to the Delhi Sultan Kizr Khan Sayyid. He in turn was succeeded by his brother Shams ud-Din Ibrahim Shah, whose line continued till the end of the Sharqi Dynasty, thus, making the questions of the identity of Malik Sarwar and Mubarak Shah a concern for any student of Indian Ocean slave trade or African/Afro-Asian Diaspora in India. Secondly, not every individual with the title Sidi may be of African black ancestry, as "[t]he memoires of sixteenth century emperor Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, mention nobles Sidi Qara and Sidi Beg Taghayi, who (like Babur himself) were Turco-Mongols by origin. It has been suggested that at least some Sidis are descendents from the Arab and Berber populations of North Africa (who also use the term Sidi)" (Robbins and Mcleod 2006: 254).

[85] For more details see, 'Appendix: Identifying Africans in India' (Robbins and Mcloed 2006).

the subcontinent earlier found it easy to marry and assimilate into the local milieu. However, the production and subsequent development of the concept of race as a biological category to differentiate the 'naturally' superior from the 'naturally' inferior got entrenched with the coming of colonialism. Thus, starting late nineteenth century, distinct African settlements mushroom in Gujarat, Diu, Goa, Hyderabad and later Karnataka.

Interactions with Siddis with during the fieldwork in the African Cavalry Guards (A. C. Guards) neighbourhood of Hyderabad, suggests that their ancestors were from Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia and Tanzania.[86] Siddis in Hyderabad are Shafi'i Muslims who follow Arabic naming patterns, where the first name is followed by 'bin' or 'son of' for men and 'bint' or 'daughter of' for women, which in turn is followed by the first name of the father. Siddis in Hyderabad are a patrilineal community.

Further, though stereotypes of Siddis having 'African' physiognomy and phenotype are accepted 'facts', yet, during the fieldwork most people had nothing distinctly "African" about them. Importantly, Siddis in Hyderabad are famous for three activities: Music, Hockey and *Pehalwani* (wrestling).[87] Further, A C Guards had a strong hockey team, which won and participated in Hockey tournaments in Andhra Pradesh; however, it could not be sustained

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[86] There are two curious facts about these mythologies of origins. Firstly, most of the countries named by Hyderabadi respondents are different from those that the Gujarati respondents mentioned, namely Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania. Siddis in Gujarat use various clan names *Janjibari* (Zanzibari), *Myawa* (Yao Tribe from North Mozambique), *Makuana* (Maku Tribe from Mozambique), and *Dindo* (Ngino). Some Jikrs have references to places also, for example:
Allah yallah Zanjira, Zanjira, allah yallah Boghdadi Zanjira
Or
Bolo Ratani ke Mombasa
Bolo Haji ke Mombasa

Secondly, in an interview conducted with Khalid bin Almas on 03.09.2014, he states that these claims might not be factually true and that there is no way of knowing whose ancestry lies where geographically.

[87] A senior reporter at the newspaper Siasat Daily corroborated this and said that she was a State level hockey player in school and her coach was a Hyderabadi Siddi. Based on interaction with Ms. Ratna Chotrani, Senior Reporter, Siasat Daily at the Siasat Daily office on 3.9.2014

due to lack of resources and infrastructure.[88] Next to Maulana Azad Memorial High School in A C Guards, stands the office of Mohammadan Sporting Club – associated with Hyderabad Sporting Club – which seemed to be in a state of disuse.[89] These three themes are the basis of discussion on race in the following paragraphs.

The main arteries of A C Guards are lined with commercial properties like Marfa and Daff band shops, in addition to, *Kirana* or the local grocery stores, butcher shops, mechanic shops and tea and snack shops. Like Hadramis, Siddis also wear Ikat pattern lungis on short or long kurtas (in summers, these are worn with vests while men relax in shop fronts or courtyards). The cloth for these are produced in the power looms of Indonesia and sourced to the world through retailers in Dubai and Saudi.[90] In addition to similar sartorial and naming practices and religious affiliations, in Hyderabad, both Siddis and Hadramis play the Marfa and the Daff drums. Music, specifically the Marfa and the Daff drum, in Hyderabad become a site for both communities to *legitimise their claims of authenticity*: Arab and African. These drums then become a site of contestation, as well as witness to and proof of complicated histories of migration. These drums are also a site of livelihood, thus, contestations here closely tie with questions of authenticity (identity) and livelihood (economics), imbricated as these are in the larger social power hierarchies.[91]

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[88] Khalid bin Almas, Caretaker Maulana Azad Memorial High School, told me about Abdullah bin Mahboob, an international level Hockey player who represented Andhra Pradesh Police and later India internationally. I met the son of Abdullah bin Mahboob, Suroor bin Abdullah who was an established wrestler/*pehalwan* and has competed in many competitions before. He owns his own construction business in A C Guards. Based on an informal interaction on 07.10.2014.

[89] Further, another activity attributed to Hyderabadi Siddis is *Pehalwani*. During the fieldwork, at least one small gymnasium geared towards body-building was spotted. Wrestlers from A C Guards regularly participate in Hind Kesari Wrestling competition. Informal interaction on 07.10.2014.

[90] Refer to chapter III

[91] For a detailed comparison of the Siddi and the Hadrami identity formation, refer to chapter V.

Unlike the Marfa and the Daff, the ones played by the Siddis in Gujarat can clearly be traced to the coastline of East Africa (Catlin-Jairazbhoy 2001). Music and dance are usually seen as sites where Siddis in India have retained 'African' elements. However, Hyderabad Siddis disrupt the production of these exoticised and essentialised ideas of Africa (which Gujarati Siddis employ for issues related to livelihood, political representation and as markers of identification) by claiming the hybridity of the legacy of their migration to the Deccan. Further, for the Siddis in Hyderabad music also becomes a reminder of their loss of privilege and a site imbued with nostalgia.[92]

Similarly, Obeng (2004) points out that cultural production can be seen as a site for assertion of a distinct identity, that is it can be seen as a site of 'possibilities and constrains' which includes both 'public representation' which is 'patronised by non-African Indians' and as 'self directed'. Further, like all communities, the Siddis are 'cultural architects' constantly engaged in 'reworking' and 'reconstructing' their cultural identity and "[a]s a distinct group of people, African Indians perform their self-representation for their own people and at other times for non-African Indians as well" (Obeng 2004: 116). The question of cultural production, representation and identity are at the root of 'questions of economics' and 'questions of livelihood' (Meier 2004; Basu 2004a, 2004b; Shroff 2004; Catlin-Jairazboy 2004). This is especially true for Siddis in Gujarat and Karnataka, as compared to Siddis of Hyderabad, where they have been promoted and produced by various cultural forces and the State as 'exotic African tribals' in India. They have used this 'visibility' to voice their concerns about their economic and social empowerment. Further, these two groups have been able to capitalise into the growing market of exotic cultural consumption more than Hyderabadi Siddis. However, this has also led to an ahistoric and unidimensional construction of Siddi identity as

[92] Afsar bin Mohsin, owner of a Marfa and Daff Band Shop in A. C. Guards informed that he used to accompany his uncle to parties and events of the Nizam and his nobility, where Siddis would play drums, dance and do fencing with swords, to entertain. They were offered money in trays in return. Based on interaction with Afsar bin Mohsin, both Marfa and Daff band players, on 3.9.2014.

faqirs and of pasts which reflects oriental imaginations of African culture, people and beliefs.[93]

Though the word *Chaush* is synonymous with 'Arab' in popular parlance in Hyderabad, Siddis also refer to themselves as *Chaush*. The Siddis like the Hadramis assert their *Chaush* identity with pride.[94] However, the stereotypes of black men as being physically strong and good at sports are prevalent, holding Siddis hostage.[95] For example, the sketch of Hamd Bin Abdullah Pehalwan (Siddi), which is on the packaging of Zinda Tilismath, a indigenous Hyderabadi over-the-counter miracle medicine manufactured at Karkhana Zinda Tilismath, Amberpet, Hyderabad. Karkhana Zinda Tilismath established in the 1920s by Hakim Mohammed Farooqi, manufactures other Unani medical products also, however, Zinda Tilismath remains their most popular product. Zinda Tilismath is synonymous with the Siddi *pehalwan*

[93] Further, Shroff (2004) writes, "Sidis themselves feel the urgency to move beyond thinking of themselves as only Africans, with strange, exotic pasts, especially since Bollywood drawing inspiration from its distant cousin Hollywood has also exploited these elements of African identity with feathers, skirts and the whole makeup thrown in as seen, for example, in the dances of blockbuster movies such as Mr. India." (Shroff 2004: 173) However, public performances by Karnataka Siddis for State officials or church events can also been seen as site which allow "the occasion to work out strategies for building up self and group confidence, as well as group identity. It is the case that they are numerically a minority who lack economic and technological facilities, yet their involvement fosters a strong sense of self-esteem, creativity and group solidarity... Thus, besides non-formal family settings during which African Indians are socialised, there are other formal and group contexts in which their cultural reworking and transmission of culture occurs." (Obeng 2004: 120).

[94] *Chaush* means Guard in Turkish. In the case of Hyderabad, the history of Siddi and Hadrami migration is intertwined. Hyderabadi Hadrami social activist Jameela Nishat says that not only were Hadramis instrumental in getting Siddis into Hyderabad, there have also been marriages between the communities. Jameela says that Hadramis and Siddis consider each other as equals, even today, and are "acceptable to each other". These occurrences of intermarriage were more prevalent the further one goes back into history. Jameela says that in the earlier generations, that is "in my grandpa's generation there was easy blending of these two" was acceptable. Her paternal grandmother was Siddi and she says that this inspired her father, an established Hyderabadi painter and intellectual, to draw the Siddi Pahalwan on the Zinda Tilismat packaging. As the system is patrilineal, the children of the Siddi women who married Arab men in Hyderabad claim an Arab identity. Jameela asserts in her interview that Siddis are not treated as "blacks" in the Old City because of these conjugal histories. Both these communities are also considered *Chaush*. Interview conducted on 02.10.2015.

[95] This is different for the Hadramis, who are both viewed as and embody the stereotype of an Arab *Chaush* as uncultured or "passionate". Chaush are considered to be *Jahil* or "backward"/"uncultured". Hyderabadi Hadrami social activist Jameela Nishat talks of her youth where her friends would refer to her as "archetype" in their conversations. Deccanis also do not prefer to marry into the Arabs/Chaush in general. So although Hadramis have married locally, adapted culturally, an inherently racist attitude exists towards them, which draws on colonial tropes about Muslims in general and Arabs in specific. Interview conducted on 02.10.2015.

represented on the packaging. Again, in popular discourse, media for example, has reported on the sketch of hamd bin Abdullah Pehalwan in an essentialised and radicalised way. For example a blogger Qasim Jaferry writes

> During the last 80 years there is no major change in its packing. The orange pack and the black Negro, the familiar trade mark, stands out. A Negro is considered a symbol of strength and his picture on the package means that the medicine offers strong protection. Macho Negros, locally known as Siddis, who formed the African Cavalry Guards of the Nizam, are believed to have inspired the company to go for the logo of Negro. And today it is as popular as the brand name.[96]

If you "wonder what the logo of a coloured man doing on the Zinda Tilismath pack", the answer partly lies in the fact that "the founder is believed to have been influenced by the Siddis, who were part of the African Cavalry Guard of the Nizam, in choosing the logo" (Hindu 15.05.2016). It is said that the Siddi Pehalwan was drawn as Siddis represented strength. There is a clear social understanding of strength and potency as something inherent or biological in certain races for both the Siddis, as well as the non-Siddis.

The racial identity of Siddis as black 'shadows' so to speak the gaze of the public at large. Further, that the relative impoverishment and an almost absence of political assertion, has led to people in Hyderabad using the word 'Negro' in everyday usage without realising the racist and colonial history of exploitation in which this term is embedded. There is also a normalisation of the term *Habshi* or *Siddi* as a widely accepted way of derogatorily referring to anyone who has dark skin, curly hair, large lips or nose or even is large in physical form. Such language is informed by racist constructs of physical beauty. Moreover, non-Siddis interchangeably refer to Siddis as both *Habshi* and *Siddi*. In the Indian context these two words are usually used as the vernacular equivalents of the word Negro, that is, if someone is talking about Siddis/Habshis and wants to switch to English, they tend to substitute the word 'Negro' uncritically for these two ethnonyms of African Indians.

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[96] http://www.qasim.net/zinda-tilismath/

Arguably, culture is a process defined by constant change, there is no such thing as pure or original culture or monoculture; life is essentially multicultural. Culture is a historically contingent site marked by constant flux of heterogeneity. It is this changing context of culture, as a site of interrogation, that makes public cultural practices, like dance performances in front of State dignitaries or representation of Siddis in sports, symbolically significant (Carrington & McDonald 2001; Fleming 2001; Lindsey 2001). The significance of the term multiculturalism in relation to difference, specifically racism, in popular discourse around the world, is unparalleled. Used both, as a tool to 'integrate' the difference or flatten the power hierarchies that characterise this difference, the presence of the concept of multiculturalism is immense in the world of sports and culture. Furthermore, multiculturalism can weaken anti-racism struggles, especially, as it shifts the attention to "the 'celebration of difference' sometimes has worrying parallels with the notions of absolute racial difference – whether cultural or biological – found in nineteenth century racial science and contemporary cultural racism" (Carrington & McDonald 2001: 4; Fleming 2001; Lindsey 2001). Such attitudes are evident in the Indian state showcasing the Siddis as cultural artefacts representing a 'multicultural' India or in promoting Siddi performances at national or international level.

Sports, like other cultural practices of symbolic importance, is both a site of stereotyping and discrimination, as well as resistance and struggle. 'Race' as a concept has been discredited in the last century through the untiring works of social scientists and scientists, however, bureaucrats, policy makers, sports scientists and commentators around the world frequently speak and promote 'racist' generalisations - based on correlations rather than causation – about black physicality. (Carrington & McDonald 2001; Fleming 2001; Lindsey 2001). It is important to note that the success of black athletes is often explained using genetic arguments, though similar arguments are never extended to white players. Significantly, "they reflect assumptions about the limited cognitive and psychological capacity of these racial groups whilst at the same time… acknowledging physical prowess and athletism" (Fleming 2001: 106). The invisibility of white as a phenotype or a racial category rests

on the assumption of treating 'whiteness' as a norm against which all categories are compared (Fleming 2001). Starting nineteenth century, when enlightenment and science were providing philosophical and scientific legitimacy to the idea of 'race,' studies were done to prove that black people had physique suited for sports.[97] These studies also explicitly stated a reciprocal relationship between intelligence and physicality.

In India and abroad, public and specialists usually

> read the lack of black social mobility outside sports as being a result of some cultural 'dysfunction'" or genetics, "as opposed to there being *real* barriers to progression in other areas such as education and employment. It is a classic way in which those discriminated against are then blamed for their own subordinate position, diverting attention away from structural inequalities, and towards the perceived moral inadequacies of the individuals themselves (Carrington & McDonald 2001: 10).

Race in sports in the west occupies the liminal space between 'race' and nation, for example, "the belief that blackness and Britishness are mutually exclusive categories is still firmly embedded within British psyche" (Carrington & McDonald 2001: 2; Fleming 2001). 'Coded racism' in contemporary sports around the world is based on cultural racism, which is imbricated with logic that has roots in biological racism. Similarly, in India, the notion that Africans are good at sports is crudely rooted in ideas of biological racism. However, unlike the west, an informed liberal discourse on 'race' and 'racism' has been as good as absent in public discourse. Similar to the west, the popular support for and understanding that Siddis or Africans are genetically strong or good at sports are rampant. While biological racism is well-defined and informs the perceptions about Siddis, what is different in India is that the contours of cultural racism against Siddis as mainstream athletes are not yet defined, due to their location on the margins of mainstream sporting.[98]

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[97] Colonial texts like J. M. Degerando (1800) *The Observation of Savage People*.

[98] Racism in sports in addition to biological determinism, has serious psychological, social and economic implications, Emma Lindsey, a black female pioneer sports commentator in the UK, reflects on the racists attitudes and assumptions that informs media, sports fraternity and the public, by using the example of Mohammad Ali and Frank Bruno. She writes that Ali by converting to Islam and opposing the Vietnam War – which he saw as a white man's war – unsettled all the tropes required of a 'good black role model.' However, Bruno was trumped as a 'good role model for blacks' by the media, which "is instructive in highlighting how black athletes still have to conform to very narrow definitions of what constitutes good behaviour in order to be accepted." (Lindsey 2001: 191) She further writes that these

Siddis population in India is an instance where important theorisations regarding the development of a conceptual framework comparing race and caste can be developed. There has been much debate over developing comparative conceptual frameworks regarding race and caste.[99] Unlike earlier scholarship, which was critical of developing a comparative framework between caste and race, recent scholarship that has proposed a comparative framework between caste and race, is critical in it approach towards the development of such a framework. Greenough and Natrajan (2009) have stressed the importance of the "Durban turn" by arguing for including caste within the 'social construction' framework already operational and established in race studies, which enables one to understand how race is produced, reproduced and realised and how race and racism are challenged and transformed.[100] They also see importance in comparisons with other 'principles of social differentiation' like gender, class, ethnicity etc.

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objectifications of black athletes has an economic profitability to it as it panders to existing common sense, therefore, highlighting the links between business and sports. She also talks about the difficulty of women athletes (grunting and sweating) to get media and public acceptance, where 'good looks' more than professional success, sometimes determine economically profitable product endorsements. To demonstrate the racist and sexist attitudes in media, she gives the example of Venus Williams and Serena Williams, where Media was obsessed with Venus's 'otherness', her "braid-and beads hairstyle, her shimmering silver lycra outfits, her odd name, her musculature," not crediting her for her success. Similarly, the success of Serena Williams in her defeat of Martina Hingis was attributed to Hingis being tired from a match with Venus on the previous day. In India the contours of social and cultural racism in sports (although violent incidents of racism against Africans in India are frequent and deplorably have acceptance in public) are yet to become defined, as Siddis are still not participating in mainstream sport.

[99] Scholars like Lloyd Warner and Gunnar Myrdal have used the idea of caste to explain racial relations in the US. Both treat race as a cultural phenomenon and not a biological fact. For more, refer to Gunnar Myrdal (1944). *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem in Modern Democracy*. New York: Harpers and Bros. & William Llyod Warner (1936). "American Caste and Class". *American Journal of Sociology* 42(2): 234-237. Further, Berreman (1967) proposes a broad comparative framework that is based on the idea of stratification; De Vos (1967) argues for a loose comparative framework that builds on the idea of pollution; Leach (1967) has argued for considering the Indian Caste System as a phenomenon of the social structure, so that generalisations can be drawn from it; and Dumont (1967) who sees caste as a phenomenon specific to India's cultural history, emphatically argues for another broad structural approach focused on rediscovering hierarchy as an concept and applying this concept to the principle of 'that which encompasses and that which is encompassed.'[99] Dumont (1967) explains, "in every society one aspect of social life receives a primary value stress and simultaneously is made to encompass all others and express them as far as it can" (Dumont 1967: 33).

[100] The United Nations-sponsored World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance at Durban in 2001.

Further, there has been a move towards critical caste theory, which draws on critical race theory centring an "understanding of caste within the larger goal of transforming the relationship among caste, casteism, inequality and power" (Nataraj and Greenough 2009: 10; Beteille 2003). Scholars agree on the need of an emancipatory project which finds intellectual positions and a political base from which new categories can be established, for stress on recoveries (not absences) and for an critical engagement with national and transnational processes. Such categories for an comparative framework could be 'stigmatisation' or 'discriminated minorities' and the focus of these studies would be to understand race from an anti-racist position or caste from an anti-casteist position thus recovering or producing knowledge that voices these discriminated and stigmatised groups (Berreman 2009; Dominguez 2009; Tartakov 2009; Thorat 2009; Guru 2009; Babu 2009; Geetha 2009; Mevorach 2009; Reddy 2009; Nataraj 2009; Visweswaran 2009; Omvedt 2009; Darity Jr. 2009; Ilaiah 2009; Sanders 2009). Thus, the challenge that the critical caste theory undertakes is to navigate both the universalism which claims that 'experiences and structures of oppression are the same everywhere' and the particularism of the view that treats caste and race as incomparable. It is important to underscore once again that the critical approach to race and caste sees these categories as social construction – read not biological – and aims at understanding processes that naturalise power hierarchies and processes of oppression. Both categories, socially constructed, assign fixed 'essence' or natural qualities to certain people/groups, 'naturalising anatomy and fetishizing blood/descent' (Nataraj and Greenough 2009). Caste and race discrimination is descent-based or rather is inherited socio-culturally, these are social structures that are produced, reproduce and maintained generationally (that is processes of naturalisation, normalisation and representation) through structures and processes of dispossession. Most importantly, the new scholarship locates itself and the earlier scholarship on race and caste in truth production and processes of power (Berreman 2009; Beteille 2003; Dominguez 2009; Tartakov 2009; Thorat 2009; Guru 2009; Babu 2009; Geetha 2009; Mevorach 2009; Reddy 2009; Nataraj 2009; Visweswaran 2009; Omvedt 2009; Darity Jr. 2009; Ilaiah 2009; Sanders 2009).

This has particular relevance to the current study, which tries to understand race as a category that get produced and concretised in fixed tropes in the works of journalists, academics and filmmakers. This study argues that Siddis are perceived as and also self-ascribe to themselves certain truths that have been produced in the knowledge industries of contemporary times. And if we were to excavate a bit deeper, the alarming reality is that the logic of this industry draws on the idea of race as a biological fact. What is evident in most works on Siddis is that, firstly, black and Africa are treated as synonymous. Secondly, skin colour is seen as reason enough to uncritically place them all as 'victims' and slaves with similar histories. Whereas, it is clear that the movement of black Africans to Hyderabad is linked with the history of migration of Hadramis to Hyderabad, this history being distinct from the histories of Siddi people in other parts of India. Their passage to India was characterised by journey through the Arabian Gulf many times, as is evident in their naming patterns, use of drums similar to the Hadramis, adherence to Shafi'i maddhab of Islam and use of Arabic in the earlier generation as lingua franca.

Migration to the Gulf since 1970s has happened across age groups. Further, most Siddis maintained that A C Guards has faired better economically because of the remittances from the Gulf over the past few decades. Remittances have facilitated better education and many Siddi boys are employed in Hi-Tech city's call centres today. Most women in A C Guards are receiving education till Degree College, though most don't work, especially after marriage. Marriages after finishing school, vocational degree or undergraduate degree are a normal feature of Hyderabadi society.

Further, what is interesting about the Siddis is that they are also seen as 'tribals'/'natives' by most Indians. The demand for ST status has been on the agenda of Siddis in Gujarat and Karnataka for years now, demanding better

access to education, jobs and opportunities. [101] Further, it is important to note that these self-ascriptions are new developments, and should be located in the

[101] Siddis of Saurashtra have been given the Schedule Tribe status, whereas, the rest fall under Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. Siddis from Amreli, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Rajkot and Surendranagar in Gujarat, Siddis from Daman and Dui, Siddis of Goa and Siddis of Uttar Kannada District have been listed under the Schedule Tribes (ST) category by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. This listing can be found here, http://tribal.nic.in/WriteReadData/CMS/Documents/201306030201065184795StatewiseListofScheduledTribe.pdf. Gujarat Siddis who are not under Schedule Tribe (ST) category are listed as Other Backward Classes (OBC) category by the National Commission for Backward Classes, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India. This listing can be found here, http://www.ncbc.nic.in/User_Panel/GazetteResolution.aspx?Value=mPICjsL1aLuo5Ww%2fEcQPqeqoATXAB7p%2fuosQLCKrIQ44enatCwIwo0XL%2bdKdO2Zx. To complicate matters further, the Tribal Research and Training Institute, Tribal Development Department, Government of Gujarat, does not list Gujarat Siddis under the Schedule Tribe (ST) category but under Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) category. This listing can be found here, http://trti.gujarat.gov.in/siddi. As Bhattacharya (1970) points out that 1961 Census claimed that 3,645 Siddis resided in Gujarat. Further, of Saurashtra Siddis who have been given the Schedule Caste status, maximum number – around 66% – stays in Junagarh district, while rest are scattered all over Rajkot district. In Junagarh, they are concentrated in four villages: Jambur and Sirwan are inhabited only Siddis; and Moruka and Akolbadi are mixed villages. (Bhattacharya 1970) In this regard, the Gujarat Siddis have been petitioning the government authorities and creating pressure through the foreign researchers/academicians, social activists and media to get state-wide ST Status for all Siddis with Gujarat domicile. At the forefront of this have been the efforts of Farida Al-Mubrik, Chairperson, Siddi Goma Al-Mubrik Charitable Trust, Bhavnagar. This workshop was also used as a platform by Farida Ben to generate awareness about the dispossession of the Siddi community and create pressure. Times of India and DNA published about the workshop before it started (Siddis to meet, revive art of reciting Zikr, DNA Ahmedabad, 12.04.2015; 75,000 Africans assimilate completely into Gujarati culture, Times of India, 12.04.2015). DNA also covered the first day of the workshop and their Editor attended the inauguration ceremony. She was continuously communicating with local Gujarati and English print press and invited Gujarat Samaj, Divya Jyoti and DNA to cover the first day of the workshop. Further, she invited retired Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Mr. Vanzara as the guest of honour along with historian Professor Rizwan Kadri, social activist Kanji Patel and Shyam Parekh, Resident Editor DNA. The workshop started with speeches by Kadri in Gujarati, while Vanzara and Patel spoke in Hindi. Mr. Vanzara and Mr. Patel were sensitive to the fact that I do not understand Gujarati. I was the only non-Gujarati speaker in the group. Following which the Siddis present ‘performed’ a brief act of *Jikris* for the guests. The struggle of Gujarat Siddis to get Scheduled Tribe as an administrative category to address their dispossession has led to them being referred to as a tribal group. A google search on Siddis in Gujarat will show news and blog entries that call them a ‘tribe’ or ‘tribal’. Vanzara referred to them as a *Jatti* and as *Adivasis*. Central to his oration was the concept ‘roots’ – understood either as geographical or caste/kinship identity – and the need to not forget these ‘roots’. On the other hand, Patel referred to them as normadic and as *Adivasi*. He mourned that humanity had started as *Adivasi* – which he defined as not having the desire to possess – but most lost this identity along the way and spoke of the urgent need to forge a solidarity movement between all tribal groups on India. Like Vanzara, he stressed that *pehchan* or identity are important and instructed the Siddis audience to keep books on Siddi History in their houses, to ensure that Siddi children do not forget their identity. This point was relevant to the workshop to some extent as all Siddi participants had mourned the fact that many *Jikris* have been lost due to the disinterest of the younger generation or the need to monopolise by those who knew these *Jikris*. He also said that it was important that Swahili be revived and restored to its original status within the Gujarat Siddi community which has lost complete touch with the language. Vanzara’s and Patel’s address brought to fore certain problems regarding Siddi identity. Siddis identity cannot be understood as fixed either in time or geographic space. African migration into the subcontinent has been

larger practices of the State, which categorises us initially to make us legible, but the logic of these categories then becomes the basis of self-rationalisation for many groups. That is, these strategies that various groups are employing to negotiate the everyday and these have become part of self-actualisation of identity. Scholars and activists have had a major part in propagating not just concrete ideas of regarding Siddi identity, they have also allowed for greater collaboration and activism between Siddis located in various parts of India. However contrary to Siddis elsewhere in India, the Siddis in Hyderabad, interviewed during the fieldwork in the last two years have categorically denied a 'tribal' identity and do not have any organised political demand for a ST status.[102] As most are All India Majlis-e-Itihadul Muslameen supporters, no such concrete demand has either been mobilised by the AIMIM or by the Siddis vis-à-vis AIMIM or their elected representatives.

However, in light of the fact that the pan-Indian Siddi consciousness is the active work of academicians and journalist, who tend to simplify many centuries of distinct migratory patterns and local contexts toward the efforts of

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continuous till contemporary times. Further, ancestors of the present Gujarat Siddis neither came from one place in Africa nor belonged to a single linguistic group. Moreover, they were employed by different kingdoms which were later integrated into the Republic of India and then (re)carved into federal units on linguistic lines. Siddis are an example of how identity is fluid. To imagine their identity as fixed or as a *Jatti*/normadic *Adivasi* group would be fallacious. Further, these speeches also showed that even those who Gujarat Siddis petition for help regarding the Schedule Tribe status are not sure of basic statistical details like how many Siddis live in the state of Gujarat, how many Siddi households are there and the gender ratios, average educational/income standards or employment categories within this community. Furthermore, Wasim Bhai pointed out during the workshop, this unsystematic categorization of Gujarat Siddis into different administrative categories has also resulted in other difficulties. In addition to finding it difficult to procure OBC/ST certificates from the government, Siddis face difficulties either when two people of different categories marry or have children, or when a person from one area moves to another because of employment or marriage. However, it is not just non-Siddis who identify Gujarat Siddis as a tribal group or as a *Jatti*. The processes of identification is two way and Siddis today, exceeding are seeing themselves as one group. Further, over the years they have become aware of each other's presence and have forged kinship ties. Today, to some extent due to the recent knowledge production (academics. researchers, social activists and media) regarding them, Gujarat Siddis see themselves as a single coherent group. They are bound by a common identity of African ancestry, cultural and religious practices and by marriages. Like most communities in India, Siddis mostly marry within their community, though it did not seem like a compulsion/traditional or religious requirement to this researcher.The ahistoric construction of Africa and an African identity amongst the Gujarat Siddis can be used to develop a clearer understanding processes on racial construction among the Siddis of Gujarat.

[102] Based on series interactions with members of the Hyderabadi Siddi community in A. C. Guards during September and October 2014.

building a solidarity seems to complicate the question of whether Siddis can be called a diaspora or a single diasporic community, after all. The question that remains difficult to answer in the case of Siddis is that whether they see themselves as a diaspora, in addition, to seeing themselves as a distinct group. This research takes the view that a diasporic identity or consciousness need not be linked to nostalgic longing or association with a homeland or the need to go back.[103] It is the contention of this research that any community that has a distinct consciousness of its past, a broad cohesive group identity and claims to be a diasporic community, should be treated as such.[104] The case of Siddis in India is however, more complicated. Most Siddis have become aware of the presence of other Siddi communities in India through the TADIA Goa Conference in 2006 and the Rajpipla Conference in 2000, organised partly to introduce these communities, to foster solidarities for the benefit of political action to address social and economic dispossession and connect scholars and activists working with the Siddi communities for the benefit of richer academic discourse.[105] During the fieldwork, it was apparent that most Siddis in Hyderabad had not heard of Bava Gor, the patron saint of Siddis in Gujarat. Further, only Khalid bin Almas, who like his father, is a local community leader are the only ones who had heard of Bava Gor, because he participated in the Goa Conference of 2006. He had visited the Shrine of Bava Gor in Gujarat and its *chilla* in Mumbai. He said that he did not relate to the spiritual practices of the Gujarat Siddis, who were different from Hyderabad Siddis.[106] The need to build a consciousness, in spite of the 'group's own self-perception', by 'asserting' membership of a global African victim diaspora, has been criticised by Campbell (2008) as 'askane' and 'historically

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[103] This can also hold true for diaspora of the long duree like the Parsis, who have distinct practices and beliefs which the community believes comes from their Iranian past, however, they do not have any intension of returning or actively interfering in the development of their former 'homeland'.

[104] Based on interviews done in A C Guards where questions on African identity were answered with a relative comfort between an African past and an Hyderabadi identity in the present.

[105] In an interaction with Khalid bin Almas in the A C Guards, who pointed out that he had met Siddis from the other regions in India for the first time in Goa.

[106] Based on series interactions with Khalid bin Almas, the caretaker of the Maulana Azad Memorial High School, at the High School during September and October 2014.

misleading'. The logical extension of this approach is evident in government attitudes towards the Siddis, with Schedule Tribe (ST) being assigned to some Siddis based on their distinct African identity or the Sports Authority in India initiating a special program in 1987 'to recruit and train Sidis for international competitions' because of their natural or genetic prowess in sports or the promotion of Siddi musical and dance performances in caricatured African costumes at the Republic Day parade or in front of State dignitaries like Nelson Mandela. Taking a contrary position, Campbell (2008) argues that "pressure upon local authorities to recognise such communities as an integral part of a local society composed of mosaic of people of different origins appears to offer the best path to the empowerment and community relations" (Campbell 2008: 41).

Conclusion

Scholars have pointed out that in spite of the East African slave trade predating the Atlantic slave trade by centuries, research on it is limited. Harris (1972) lists specific reasons for this lacuna. Firstly, unlike the industrial scale at which slave trade proceeded in the Atlantic, slave trade in the Indian Ocean was at a smaller scale with other commodities proving more profitable than slaves most of the time. Only towards the sixteenth century did the Indian Ocean, specifically the western sector, start feeding the mercantile behemoths of the Atlantic. Secondly, as has been discussed the journey or middle passage into slavery for most persons started way before they reached the ports, that is, they were sold and resold many times before they reached the commercial ports of exchange were spread across the Indian Ocean, from where they moved inland to various places. Even then, with the exception of earlier elite military slavery and later plantation slavery, as most families owned one or two slaves, who were integrated into the domestic sphere and could be (re)sold or contracted out if the need arose. Thus, Indian Ocean slavery was characterised by small brokers, was more dispersed and was on a more personal basis. This led to scattered if any recordkeeping.

Thirdly, after the British colonised the Indian Ocean, most who engaged in the slave trade kept away from keeping records. Interestingly, most of the records on which the contemporary history of African slavery in the Western Indian Ocean relies can be attributed to the three C's of Colonialism – namely, Commerce, Christianity and Civilizing – which were the reasons that justified slavery in the Atlantic for centuries.[107] However, records from Greek, Arab and European travellers and adventurers are also important sources of information regarding African presence in Asia. Moreover, recorded histories written during the medieval times in imperial courts of Asia and Africa and records of Indian and Arab merchant communities spread over the Indian Ocean have also been vital sources of information which historians have used to (re)construct the history of slavery in the Indian Ocean. Fourthly, many Africans in Asia adopted Islam or were already Muslim. Further, because of the long passage that signifies slavery, where people were captured, kidnapped, sold, or resold many times and over years, there was a loss of language registers, due to both the journey as well as lack of contact with kinsmen. For many Africans, thus, Arabic and other local languages became their lingua franca. Their acculturation and gradual integration into the native societies makes their identification mostly impossible in the Asian context.

Most importantly, especially in relation to this research, are the oral histories and narratives of those local communities that have not integrated into the dominant mainstream context. As slave trade continued well into the twentieth century in India, the Afro-Indian communities of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana can recount family and community narratives about their experiences as they migrated – voluntarily and involuntarily – from Africa and their reception in their host societies. It is a contention of this research that these oral histories should be utilised in understanding the concept race and racial prejudice in context of India or Asia at large.

[107] These include records of the British East India Company, narratives of freed African's recorded by missionaries and imperial officers and reports made by the missionaries and others who investigated slave trade in the Indian Ocean

Therefore, this chapter has attempted to uncode what it means to be an African today. Being 'African' is intrinsically linked to oriental and exotic notions of race and Africanity. Steene (2008) talks about the use of snakes by dancers in *dance indu* performances, a practice not found in India. Thus, dancing with real snakes could be understood as "an exoticisation of Indian dance - the dancer being presented as an exotic "other." The imagination of an exotic other brings us to the concept of orientalism... The image of the feminine exotic is also found in Bollywood films: not men but women are wearing traditional dress and are perceived on a transnational level as being associated with "Indianess" and also with exotic otherness. *Dance indou* is all about orientalizing oneself in the guise of an imagine, mysterious other" (Steene 2008: 138). Similarly, this chapter has tried to discuss that the processes of identity formulation among the Siddis leads them to orientalise themselves - 'forms of auto- or self-exoticism' completed only in conjunction with a audience to whom the 'African' then becomes legible - to popular and ahistoric tropes of what it means to be black or African. From their *dhammal* dance performances to their belief that they are 'natural' at sports, all reflect these tropes. These productions are a mix of knowledge, fantasy and imagination (Steene 2008).

As the scholarship on Siddis, mostly focusing on Gujarat and Karnataka indicates, religion, caste, linguistics and economic deprivation figure in heavily in these academic enterprises. However, the focus on Race is usually implicitly addressed by references to 'Africa' or to the exotic reproduction and consumption of the Siddi ritual practices in the 'culture market'. Or much like the assumptions borrowed from colonial anthropology, it focuses on the low caste status or 'tribal' status of Siddis, when talking of their racial specificities, taking for granted that dark means low. However, as other chapters in this thesis have tried to indicate, the relationship between race and status were not so colour bound till the medieval times.

CHAPTER V
ACCOMODATION AND CONTESTATION: UNDERSTANDING RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES IN THE SIDDI AND THE HADRAMI COMMUNITIES

This chapter focuses on processes of religious identity construction by locating these in Hyderabad's local politics. This chapter obfuscates the strict division that is usually practiced by the popular dichotomous imaginations that treat the international separate from the domestic. As the last two chapters have stressed, this research treats identity as translocal, fracturing the artificial disciplinary divide between the local, the domestic and the international. Identities are realised on multiple planes, which are interconnected and co-constitutive.

Drawing on a frame which treats identity as context dependant and mutable, this chapter will try to discern 'continuities and discontinuities', firstly, between the identification of different Muslim groups which are the focus of this study. Therefore, boundary making or how Siddi and Hadrami identity gets constituted in complex ways on an everyday basis will be discussed. Both groups are predominantly Muslim, racially different, socio-economically dispossessed, with different and overlapping historical origins and trajectories, and occupy different social, political and cultural positions in society both in relation to other Muslim groups. It is necessary not only to critically reflect on acts of classification, that is the fixation with boundaries/borders/boundary-making in studies on identities, but also on categories purportedly transgressed by what we understand as syncretism, liminality or hybridity. Drawing on the Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic*, Gottschalk (2004) argues that the routes religious groups travel are as important as the roots they establish in a place. Routes are journeys through time and space that a group takes from a 'place of origin', thus, the destination(s) are outside, foreign or peripheral to a 'core'. Religions undergo transformations based on both the context – the spatial and temporal distance from the place of origin – and influence that new localities exert on them as they settle in. Thus, he cautions that while employing concepts like syncretic

or hybrid, secular scholars should take into account the normative underpinnings – negative and positive – of such categorisations: for it is critical to ask hybrid-to-what or what 'core' notions are mutated, adjusted, adapted, twisted or degraded in the liminal and the synctretic. The uncritical use of the category of syncretic and hybrid in understanding religious imitates the logic of a pure 'core' or 'point of origin/genesis'. Thus, he proposes what has been described as syncretic Islam or what has been often been understood as a liminal Muslim identity – that is, the local registers of South Asian Islam – are better served when seen as 'enrooted Indian Muslims' identities, as original as the rest (Gottschalk 2004).[108] That is, a more "three dimensional map that encompasses the multiple identities and diverse layers of individual self-expressions and interpersonal relationships (Gottschalk 2004: 17). This study will thus try to understand how boundaries get (re)constituted everyday on the basis of religion for both the Siddi and the Hadrami communities – their inner life of and their public existence – which includes the ceremonial and the ritual.

[108] Gottschalk (2004) critiques the way Islam has been studied in secular social sciences employing an evolutionary framework. He elaborates on the classificatory practices of western natural sciences – the evolution from morphological classificatory practices (based on physical features) to phylogenetic classificatory practices (evolutionary) – which he argues have influenced the classificatory practices of social sciences, especially on the issue of 'origins'. Thus, he writes that confronted with a range of practices, beliefs, ideologies and material products associated with divinity, "Western scholars organised these categories both historically and geographically, associating each religion with the places of dominance and seeking to trace each back to its place of origin... no matter how transnational the traditions may be" (Gottschalk 2004: 9). For example, he notes that scholarship often treats the Middle East as 'the natural context for Islam', whereas, most Muslims live outside the Middle East – in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Indonesia being home to majority of the Muslims in the world. (Gottschalk 2004) This classificatory practice based on a genetic or evolutionary logic run the danger of conforming to the ideas that nationalists employ to construct 'notions of naturalness', Gottschalk (2004) writes "the nation relies on an exclusionary self-definition to distinguish and valorise itself, it defines a boundary of qualities that differentiate members from foreigners... Secular scholars have too often acquiesced to the conflation of religions to nations..." (Gottschalk 2004: 12). Further, liminality as a theoretical concept 'refers to being between two states' or 'threshold' and it has become "a convenient shorthand to indicate a third space that does not presuppose binarism... It might even suggest ways in which binary identities are contested, however, unconsciously" (Mayaram 2004: 25). Liminal identities have been viewed as "mixed, impure, even heretic and most certainly confused and a source of contamination" by ruling cultures, hegemonic discourses and established institutions, religious and State. This capacity to 'creolise' represents a 'political location' in relations to religion and State and is a site of contestation as well as possibilities. Thus, liminal identities are essentially an anthropology of the present. (Mayaram 2004) In contrast, syncretic usually assumes "the purity of the self and the impurity of the 'other', that is syncretic is somehow 'out there' in popular, folk or otherwise low-brow cultural practice," thus, by casting syncretic as liminal one emphasises the idea of an 'original pure situation'. (Mayaram 2004: 30)

Secondly, it compares the negotiations that animate the everyday of Siddis vis-à-vis the other local non-Muslim groups. Thirdly, a comparison between Siddis of Gujarat and Siddis of Hyderabad will be highlighted to emphasise that boundaries and frontiers of identities are not only defined by the fissures within a community, but also, with respect to the larger regional context. Further, high caste and low caste boundaries are drawn differently depending on their position in society at a given time and place. This chapter will try understanding the connection between Islam, caste and region in context of South Asia. Thus, Siddis in Gujarat, in addition to demarcating their identity as a low caste group with respect to other Muslim groups in the region, define themselves in relation to tribal Bhils or the larger regional Hindu practices prevalent in that area. As studies have shown, ritualised practices deemed increasingly 'non-Islamic' by doctrinal Islam have been defended by the Siddi community as a mark of their distinctiveness other Muslim groups and have been used to ensure access to resources. Robinson (2003) in her study of the 'communal and community identity' within different Christians groups – caste, class, region or ecclesiastical ordering – and between Christian identity vis-à-vis the local Hindu popular beliefs writes that the position "of a group in a particular socio-cultural and material matrix is germane to understanding how boundaries are drawn and how groups thus differently located relate themselves..." (Robinson 2003: 287). Further, how a state defines and labels at a particular group is important to understanding group identity, for example, the Indian constitution in Article 29 and 30 elaborates on the politico-legal category of 'minority community.' At the level of 'socio-political reality' of political association and imaginings this categorisation would make sense, however, from the

> level of sustained social action and interaction, lifestyle, customs or more, a different picture emerges. The 'communities' show themselves as fractured, if not, indeed, sequestered entities, each with a different history and social trajectory... Though there is greater sense of association between separate groups today due to their formation into larger bodies, distinctness marks the level of everyday living (Robinson 2003: 288).

Studies on 'identity questions' for Muslims in India primarily focuses on two key themes, namely, the increased Islamising or homogenisation of various Muslim communities and their increased ghettoisation, exclusion and

marginalisation. Scholars who analyse Muslim lives in the everyday, while embedding these in the larger political paradigm, have stressed the multidimensionality/fluidity of identity and have highlighted the importance of context (Assayag 2004: 42; Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Gottschalk 2004; Ibrahim 2011; Jairath and Kidwai 2011; Khan 2004; Mayaram 2004; Robinson 2003; Shroff 2004, 2011; Sikand 2004). The boundaries of identity are fluid, thus, these sites can be both generative as well as contested. This is specifically relevant to the emergence of political and social associations based on identity in postcolonial India. These associations – local, regional and pan-India - based on identity operate and manoeuvre in a difficult maze of political and social realities. *All India Majlis Ittehadul-Muslimeen* or AIMIM (Formerly, *Majlis Ittehadul-Muslimeen* or MIM), a political party that claims to represent Muslim interest and has its headquarters *Dar-ul-Islam* in Hyderabad, has popular base amongst both the Siddis and Hadramis of Hyderabad. As this chapter will discuss, the processes of normalisation of identity need not always be accomodative, these can also become sites of violent contestations.

Further, central to the exercise of understanding identity and its manifestations is an engagement with the self-definition and self-articulation of identity within a group. One concept which hold currency while engaging with processes of identity construction is that of 'frontiers' as opposed to that of 'boundaries' or 'borders' because

> 'Boundaries' constitute lines of separation and highlight the exclusivity of space they enclose, whereas 'frontiers' are interfaces between spaces, across which interaction – positive and negative – constantly takes place... 'Communities' which encounter 'other' in a particular historical context simultaneously attempt to reach out and adapt to various others as well as create exclusive spaces within which they retain their distinctiveness (Jairath and Kidwai 2011: 56).

The 'shift of interest' from boundaries to frontiers also inverts the colonial "conception of the frontier as a space that to be mastered and conquered by an imperial/racial project" (Mayaram 2004: 25; Anzaldua 1987). A focus away from 'boundaries and closures' towards 'a vast terrain of cultural and religious interactions' populated by both competition and coexistence is urgent, as these 'cultural encounters' clearly demonstrate dual or triple affiliations expressed consciously or implicitly, through 'varied registers' and overlaps in histories

of different identities (Mayaram 2004). Thus, in studies on identity in a postcolonial world, frontiers emphasis 'a zone of intricate cultural interaction' and 'destabilises' grand narratives of self and the other or those identifications created and imposed by the State (Jairath and Kidwai 2011).

Moving Beyond 'Compartments': Formation of Siddi and Hadrami Identity

The Siddis and the Hadramis are ghettoised in the 'older part of the city' and the 'Old City' in Hyderabad, respectively. Both the Siddi and the Hadrami communities in Hyderabad migrated there starting primarily in the eighteenth century. These communities maintain memories of a past that are distinct from the popular or the official narratives. Both worked for the Nizam's State, with the Hadramis occupying positions from the top most ranks to irregular soldiers. Further, the Siddi African Cavalry Guards as the imperial ceremonial guards of the Nizam were symbolically significant to the prestige of the Nizam's Princely State. The Siddis and Hadramis in Hyderabad were in the service of the Nizam and lost their livelihood and normative privileges – if any – under the Indian state.[109] As a group they are distinct because of their African, Arab and theological lineage from the mainstream, socio-politically and economically fractured as that is. Though, they are essentialised as Muslims at once in the larger meta-narrative of the Indian State, it is important to stress how the existence of these identities obfuscates these homogenising meta-narratives through interaction, adaptation, contestation, and change. *Both the communities discussed in this work can be seen as inhabiting this liminal space.*

Siddis and Hadramis both identify themselves as *Chaush*. It is the Turkish word for guards and seems to represent a hybrid third space with

[109] Initially, according to some of my informants in A C Guards, some of the Siddis who were in the Nizam's regular forces were absorbed into the Indian Army and went on to participate in the 1962, 1965 and 1970 wars and in the annexation of Goa. These veterans could not be traced during the fieldwork in 2014 though the informants mentioned that some were still around.

which both Siddis and Hadramis identify themselves. Manger (2010) notes that

> Given their military skills, the Hadramis easily found employment outside the army, as guards at palaces, post offices, public gardens, railway stations and banks. It should be mentioned here that groups of people of African descent also belong to this story. They are the so-called Siddi, descendants of African slaves who lived in many Indian cities, including Hyderabad, where they are called *Chaush*, a term for an unit in nizam's army. Many "Hadramis" stress that the Chaush are not from their group. They contend that those of African descent have taken advantage of the privileged status granted to the Arabs, and obtained by claiming Arab status and by changing their original names into Arabic ones. In this way they also obtained houses in Barkas, and, accordingly to some, such "false Arabs" make up a significant part of the Barkas population (Manger 2010).

However, this study contends otherwise. All of the Hadrami respondents in Barkas insisted that Siddis are Arabs only and think of them as brothers. It is the intent of this study to show that Siddis and Hadramis complicate the idea of true and false, because of their intertwined histories. Though strategies of adopting names, dressing patterns or musical instruments could be seen as part of strategies of survival. This research argues that there is a need to understand identity beyond instrumentality. Both these communities share histories of migration and this study locates their similarities in this frame of mobility.

Khalid bin Almas, who is the present caretaker of Maulana Azad Memorial High School in A C Guards and is the son of Abdullah bin Almas, the former caretaker of Maulana Azad School Memorial High School, points out that Africans came to Hyderabad through slave trade. He also suggested that Arab influences were strong in African who migrated as Arabs were already integrated into the African society.[110] Though this could be part of the explanation as to the similarities between Hyderabadi Siddis and Hyderabadi Hadramis, another explanation is that Hadhramawth had a considerable presence of African slaves and many probably accompanied Hadramis to Hyderabad. For example, Meulen and Wissmann (1964) in their 1932 historic memoir of travel through Hadramawth as Dutch colonial officials mention slave soldiers numerous times, like

[110] Over a series of interactions in October 2014.

> We saw in Makalla negro soldiers and Arab soldiers from the Yafi' tribe in the hinterland of Aden. The negroes are slaves. Their numbers are decreasing in modern times of anti-slavery action. The Kathiri sultans have slave soldiers too, but we saw only a few in their territory (Meulen and Wissmann 1964: 19).

They further go on to document that,

> In order to give pleasure to the family we take some more photographs of grown-ups and children. The household slaves and their jet-black children are with us in the madjlis; they serve round coffee and tea and many sweets, and talk with us, but nevertheless remain modestly in the background. One can see from the many negro types in the streets and plantation that there are great many slaves in Wadi Do'an. They are employed to work on land or as domestic servants (Meulen and Wissmann 1964: 69).

Similarly, they note the presence of slaves

> Guides of the el-'Attas clan have offered themselves to take us to el-Meshhed, the first place in the domain of the Al Kathir, which is, however, actually under the supervision of the el-'Attas family. Our caravan is divided, as Von Wissmann, with a couple of young sayyids, the Yafi'i soldiers, one of our *'abid* (slave soldiers), and a whole band of street-arabs set out to ascent Djebel Hadjaren… (Meulen and Wissmann 1964: 82).

Few other examples from Meulen's travelogue include the following observations: We have a hundred and sixty rupees to pay for four camels, two donkeys, two slave soldiers…" (Meulen and Wissmann 1964: 36); "When we could not succeed in inducing our thoroughly satiated Bedouins to move, we went ahead with our negro soldiers" (Meulen and Wissmann 1964: 38).; "Even among the very rich and the Sultans, the big earthenware cups are passed from guest to guest. One sees the soldiers and slaves drink out of them too" (Meulen and Wissmann 1964: 44).; "Von Wissmann used the opportunity to climb the steep precipice leading up to the plateau, in company with one of the slave soldiers" (Meulen and Wissmann 1964: 46).; "The slave and the Bedouin consider the Do'an date as really good; the imported one, from Basra, they regard as inferior" (Meulen and Wissmann 1964: 74).

The Siddi community is Hyderabad has kept alive its understanding of its past through oral narratives, passed on generationally. The vagaries of context that go behind the construction of these memories and narratives are reflected in the lack of the 'victim' trope among the Hyderabad Siddis. The idea of involuntary or forced migration to the subcontinent as part of the idea of slavery is absent in the narratives. The idea that dominates is the assertion

of a Muslim identity. Thus, most informants in this study spoke of commonalities between them and the Arabs in Hyderabad, never referring to their complicity or involvement in their involuntary movement and slavery.

The histories of migration of both these groups are tied to each other. Hadramis were instrumental in facilitating the migration of Siddis into Hyderabad. Both groups' share/d linguistic, sartorial, cultural (naming patterns), religious, as well as, musical practices.[111] As both are not endogamous groups, there has also been a history of marriages between them. For instance, during my fieldwork I met women who were visiting their families in A C Guards but lived in various *Chaush* neighbourhoods in the Old City. There are overlaps in the neighbourhoods as places we settle into and as places of work. For instance, Bin Siddique is a Hadrami trader who owns and runs a rice export business out of A C Guards.[112] Further, in addition to naming patterns and the adherence to the Shafi'I *madhhab*, Arabic was also a language that both communities used for everyday purposes, however, its use started dwindling in the twentieth century, from the time of the Nizam, with Deccani seeping in and went on to become the lingua franca of the community.

These histories of migration have continued to shape the contemporary. Most people from A C Guards have migrated to Bahrain and Qatar in the Gulf. The initial immigration started in the 1970s and many initial migrants joined Bahrain's Police Force. Many of those men, have now retired and returned. However, their children and grand children remain behind in the Gulf, tapping into better economic opportunities. Each household in Barkas has had at least a family member who has migrated to the Gulf.[113] All my

[111] Refer to Chapter III and IV.

[112] *Chaush* neighbourhoods in Hyderabad include A C Guards (Siddis), King Kothi, Shalibanda, Humayun Nagar, Salala, Shaheen Nagar and Chandrayangutta. Based on interaction on 07.10.2014.

[113] For example, Abdul Rehman bin Hussain Binbrek worked in the Saudi Arabia for six years as a Claims Advisor in the medical department of an insurance company. He came back to take care of his parents, but still has siblings in the Gulf who send money for the maintenance. Currently he is unemployed. Based on interview conducted at the Binbrek residence in Barkas on 12.10.2015

respondents said that procedurally, applying for passports in Hyderabad is fairly easy,. Further, though it is not a common practice, some people employ the services of 'agents' in India to help them with bureaucratic procedures, for a fee. When asked how people find jobs in the gulf, the respondents suggested that most people go on employment visas sponsored by the employer, usually a private company. Most people find out about available jobs through their relatives in the Gulf. However, the system of paying a *Kafeel* or an agent in the Gulf is also a feature, especially for those who migrate to Saudi Arabia. These *Kafeels* help immigrants procure permits or *iqamas*, for a fee. The respondents suggested that if during the course of one's stay in Saudi Arabia, one finds a better job then one can pay the *Kafeel* and get out of the contract with him, so that one can 'transfer' one's visa to a new employer. Many youth from Barkas who migrate to the Gulf work in the construction industry; therefore, diplomas in plumbing, masonry etc. are popular among the youth.[114] Most of the Siddis and Hadramis who have stayed/are staying in the Gulf are bilingual.

Further, between both of these communities, the ideas of authenticity and livelihood get entangled in complex ways. Both communities play the Marfa and Daff drums. It is claimed that these drums are Arab and African at the same time. These drums differ from the drums that Siddis in other parts of India play. Further, the technique of playing the drums differs considerably as well, where the Hyderabadi Daff drums are held at a tilt, as it hangs from a support around their neck, and the musician plays the skin on both the sides of the Daff. Earlier earthen pots called *ghadas* were also played, however, these have been replaced by steel pots today, which feature in the repertoire of instruments that Marfa and Daff bands play. Marfa drums are small circular drums held in the palm of one's hand (these are smaller than the Daff drum), while the skin is beaten with a stick held in the other hand. In rainy season, the skin retains moisture and therefore, is usually heated before performances to

[114] AIMIM has a flagship program called the National Academy of Construction located in Phoolbagh, close to Barkas, which trains men in civil supervisory work, painting, welding, electrical work, plumbing. In this institute, women are trained in curtain making. Based on Interaction with Ms. Ayesha Rubina the office of Bharathi Vidyalaya, Humayun Nagar, Hyderabad on 14.08.2016.

produce a louder sound. Both the Siddi and the Hadrami compete for the same market, selling their music as an authentic marker of their community. I was informed that these bands perform at all local festivals, including, church celebrations, Hindu festivals, marriage ceremonies of all communities and political events. In September 2014, during my fieldwork there, most of these bands had been booked for Ganesh Chaturti festival.[115]

Another site where authenticity as a notion and questions of livelihood intersect is wrestling. Both the groups have a tradition of *Pehalwani.* Siddi and Hadrami *Pehalwan* regularly participate in the Andhra Kesari wrestling competition. In addition, *Pehalwans* have also come to act as local political leaders or musclemen – in many have been case elected as corporators or MLAs – under the patronage of different political parties operating in Hyderabad. I will discuss the case of AIMIM, as majority of both the communities this study focuses on, are AIMIM voters. Most *Pehalwans* are from families that have their own Akhadas and generationally have engaged in it as a profession. They are locally respected and in the current scenario have translated this into political patronage. Today they are deeply involved in crime and corruption, especially in extortion, rapes and land grabbing/real estate development.[116] Most *Pehalwans* carve out their areas of influence in

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[115] Based on interaction with Khalid bin Abdul Raheem (who had worked in Muscat for two years and had a sister married to an Omani and living in Oman) and Afsar bin Mohsin, both Marfa and Daff band players, on 3.9.2014.

[116] AIMIM's MLC Syed Amin-ul-Hasan Jafri spoke of the involvement of Hyderabadi Arabs in real estate development all over Hyderabad. That is, they are not restricted to Old City areas like Chandrayangutta. Rather, they are invested in the development of new suburbs and neighbourhoods like Balanagar, Shaheen Nagar or Toli Chowki, The Arab *pehalwans* in Hyderabad have been notorious for land grabbing since the 1970s. For example, an attempt on the life of Akbaruddin Owaisi in 2011 in Chandrayangutta area was perpetrated by a Hadrami *Pehalwan* over land. The interview was conducted in Jafri's house in Santosh Nagar on 04.10.2015. Akbaruddin Owaisi tried to grab a family graveyard belonging to Mohammed *Pehalwan* (other informants in Barkas told me that Mohammed Pehalwan had bought the land from a man who had actually encroached that land for years from its rightful owner and it was the rightful owner who had initially approached the local AIMIM corporator Awalgi for intervention) and on one occasion assaulted him. That is when Mohammed *Pehalwan* asked his son to get him Akabaruddin Owaisi's hand as a way of reinstating their family and community honour. This young man was shot dead by AIMIM's Hadrami MLA Balala's musclemen. Jameela says that the video of the incident, recorded by AIMIM followers clearly shows that the young boy was trying to cut Akbaruddin Owaisi's hand and had neither tried to kill him nor sedate him. Based on fieldwork conducted in 2015.
Hyderabadi Hadrami feminist activist Jameela Nishat says that AIMIM has been trying to carve out absolute control over real estate in areas where it has influence with the help of local

Old City under the patronage of various parties and act as their representatives. Jameela Nishat, a Hadrami feminist activist and the founder of a women's organisation called Shaheen in the Old City, takes the example of Sultanshahi area, where her NGO Shaheen is based. She says that Shaheen covers a population of 67,000 in twenty slums in that area, where the roads are so narrow usually that even auto rickshaws cannot enter. She also says that usually the biggest house in each locality will belong to the local *Pehalwan*. Further, *Pehalwans* from the same political party usually do not function as rivals. A case in point is the much publicized attack on the life Akbaruddin Owaisi by a Hadrami *Pehalwan* (Times of India 01.05.2011; Times of India 20.04.2012).[117]

Reinforced Compartments: The Case of AIMIM

The AIMIM complex called *Darrusalam* in Aghapura, Hyderabad, is a 4.5 acre complex, which houses the AIMIM party office, office of *Etemaad* Urdu daily and Deccan Engineering College.[118] The party office, to the immediate left of the main entrance, is an older building with high ceiling, big rooms and a spacious veranda that is covered with ornamental lattice made out of wrought iron. This veranda is lined with seats and is usually crowded with constituents and plaintiffs waiting to meet their elected representatives from

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Pehlwans or musclemen. Interview was conducted on 02.10.2015 at her residence. Today, Hyderabadi Arabs are heavily invested in mapping plots and selling them, construction and developing properties. Both the Gulf money and the high returns on land prices due to the real estate boom have facilitated this.

[117] Feminist activist Jameela Nishat of Hadrami origins, founder of Shaheen, an NGO that works with women talked about the 'Snake Gang', which in 2014 became notorious for molesting, abducting and raping women in Barkas area by scaring them with snakes. Their modus operandi has been to de-venom the snakes and use these to scare people. Jameela says that the Snake Gang is also connected with real estate profiteering. This gang is based of Shaheen Nagar, which is similar to Barkas in special organisation. Further, there is huge green space within this area. Shaheen does its work with women in the Old City area by providing shelter, but changes the neighborhoods of women so that the local *Pehalwans* or families do not heckle them. Earlier Shaheen faced hostility from the conservative social setup of the Old City, including women in the Old City, however, as they expanded their leveraging power has increased. Jameela said in her interview that she would stand and fight it out by announcing that she was also a *Chaush* and could handle any attack on her organisation. Interview was conducted on 02.10.2015 at her residence.

[118] Based on an interaction with Ms. Ayesha Rubina at Darrusalam, Aghapura, Hyderabad on 15.08.2015. Ms. Rubina is a social entrepreneur, educationist who specialize in special education and a co-opted member (AIMIM) of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). In February 2016 she won the GHMC Corporator's seat from Ahmad Nagar.

Corporators to Members of Parliament/State Assembly. Facing the main entrance of *Darrusalam* complex, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) – the ruling party of the newly formed state of Telangana – has a two floor TRS-brand-of-pink coloured flex. Printed on it is an equally-sized Telangana Chief Minister Kalvakuntla Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) smiling and waving his hands into the *Darrusalam* complex, along with smaller photographs of other leaders. Though no one commented on any aspect of power dynamics that are represented in the metaphor of an imposing complex and an equally imposing flex, the interaction at the AIMIM office only suggested the undercurrent of power transition that Hyderabad is witnessing after the formation of Telangana. This section briefly charts out the history the rise of AIMIM brand of politics in Hyderabad by rooting it in its historical context. Both groups under consideration in this study are supporters of the AIMIM, thus, AIMIM is central to understanding their persuasions and political positions. This section will detail the rise of AIMIM and evaluate its politics by looking at its practices in the field of education. This section draws on interviews conducted with AIMIM elected members and is limited to the older neighbourhoods of the City, in its observations.

The history of identity based politics reflects the larger trends in Indian politics and history and is vital to understanding what religion and religious idioms have come to mean over time. Hyderabad, has witnessed communal tensions since early 1930s due to various factors which included the attitude of the Nizam and the failure of his administration to realise the political imperatives of his times, a potent peoples movement against the landed feudal order and the rise of Indian National Congress in conjunction with and as an ally of Hindu right-wing organisations like the RSS, Hindu Mahasabha or Arya Samaj. Hyderabad – the largest Muslim state of colonial India in addition to being the richest state in the world – remained unsure about joining the Indian Union after 1947. This led to New Delhi ordering a military intervention in the state which it termed as Operation Polo or Police Action in 1948. In the aftermath of Operation Polo,

> [o]n one hand, the Muslim elite was decapitated there more than elsewhere, the direct heirs of the old order being attracted to Pakistan or unable to stay in office. On the other hand, Hyderabad remained a Muslim stronghold in India – a symbol even – as

> evident from the resilience of a Muslim political party, the MIM, in the city, something that is not to be found anywhere else, except in Kerala (Rao and Thaha 2012: 189).

Hyderabad was a staunch British ally being the first state to sign the Subsidiary Alliance with the British, 'drastically curtailing its sovereignty' and in order to prove his loyalty, the Nizam also censored the Indian National Congress. Further, the Nizam put his patronage behind and 'supported the creation' of AIMIM (then MIM) in 1927, as a counter to the rise of the Congress Party and its Hindu right allies within his territories.[119] The AIMIM itself politically conservative, was responsible for escalation of communal tensions within the boundaries of Hyderabad State soon after its creation (Rao and Thaha 2012).

As Hyderabad had a strong British presence by the end of the eighteenth century, it introduced liberal and modern reforms and ideas in its administration. Most notable in these efforts were figures like Salar Jung I (1853-1883) and Sir Akbar Hydari (1905-1941). These 'reform' were not restricted to the administration of the state alone and were incorporated in the improvement of public life through the establishment of a public healthcare system, Osmania University and a 'vibrant' press. Further, liberal reforms undertaken by upper-class women like Begum Sughra Humayun Mirza, were also introduced to change age old social practices related to women and gendered institutions (Moid 2012).

Faced with serious political crisis and under-representation in all spheres of public and economic life, in independent India, Hyderabadi Muslims, needed a leadership which could address and deliver on their

[119] Rao and Thaha (2012) note that as in Bhopal, the Congress party recruited "Hindu activists who had been the first to mobilise politically on behalf of their religious rights against the Nizam's pro-Muslim policies. In 1938, the congressmen and Hindu nationalists launched a satyagraha against the underrepresentation of Hindus in the armed forces and the bureaucracy. The satyagraha, which was launched by a congressman, Swami Ramananda Tirtha, in conjunction with the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha brought no results" (Rao and Thaha 2012). The year 1938 also marks the first recorded communal riot in Hyderabad city over a 'small piece of disputed land' between a temple and a mosque.

security, educational backwardness and chronic unemployment.[120] The abolition of *jagirdari* system and the Religious Affairs Department, the disbanding of the Nizam's forces, the creation of the state of Andhra Pradesh with bureaucrats from outside, among other reasons left much of the urban population faced with exceedingly limited resources and economic opportunities. Further, the Congress run state undertook no plans to rehabilitate this population and 'actively barred' their access to new economic opportunities. The small modern educated Muslim middle class in the Hyderabad State had became exceedingly 'disoriented and dejected', as they lost their 'social networks and connections' – except those who were associated with the nationalist movement – in the new socio-political setup of post Independence India (Moid 2011; Rao and Thaha 2012). They withdrew from public life and social responsibilities, as they saw markers of their identity change in character, namely, Osmania University losing its 'Urdu base' and the Communist Party and secular progressive politics becoming redundant or criminal in the new political and economic order (Moid 2011). The only Muslim groups that retained any modicum of influence, prestige and legitimacy were the 'religious and Sufi circles'. It is this 'conservative and traditional' group with deep roots in Hyderabadi society, which emerged as the new political leadership in Hyderabad (Moid 2011). Thus, post

[120] Hyderabad's demographics also changed, especially in the Old City where "disturbances in the form of immigration and emigration caused social chaos and disrupted the existing class structure of the city..." (Moid 2011: 222-223). There was also an outmigration of Muslims with the 'means and network' to move from the Old City. This was especially true for the upper classes who migrated to Pakistan, UK and the US. For example, the percentage of Shias in Hyderabad, who had held high positions in the Nizam's administration, fell from 22% to 4% in 1981 (Rao and Thaha 2012). This outmigration in the 1940s-1950s led to 'distress sales' "and, therefore, lowering of the property prices in the Old City. Hindus, attracted by the opportunities that the new capital offered, took advantage of these developments and invested in these properties. Thus, the proportions of Hindus... increased from 21% o 40%. These immigrants were mainly from the business communities from North India" (Rao and Thaha 2012: 197). In the wake of reoccurring communal violence of the 1980s and 1990s, an influx of uprooted Muslim 'plebeians' from rural areas moved into what now became 'Old City' for reasons of 'security and livelihood'. For the same reason, the Old City saw an out-migration among many communities including the Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians. For example, Barkas a locality in Chandrayangutta which is dominated by Muslims of Arab descent from Hadramawth and Yemen has been a communally sensitive area, however, because of communal rioting and terrorist attacks many Hindus have moved out and Barkas does not witness violence at the same frequency anymore (Rao and Thaha 2012). Thus, the Old City became a working class Muslim ghetto, such that "these people from rural and Police Action-affected areas had no relation with the upper class of Hyderabad. The City's cultural ethos was of no value to them... The relationship between the upper classes and the lower classes had broken down completely" (Moid 2011: 223).

independent Hyderabad saw the rise of AIMIM, with a strong base in Old City.[121] The rise of AIMIM should be understood in the context of larger

[121] The rise of MIM was neither evident nor predictable in the decade after independence as it had lost much of its legitimacy with its traditional base and any association with it was considered dangerous (Rao and Thaha 2012; Moid 2011). In a context of social and economic difficulties and cultural marginalization, with a hostile Congress government in the newly integrated Hyderabad and a moderate Congress government in centre and in a context that saw the rise and entrenchment of right wing Hindu organizations, Hyderabadi Muslims turned to different leadership. Maulana Azad encouraged Muslims to join the Congress and Mohammed Islmail of the Muslim League encouraged Muslims to join the League. Those who were attracted to progressive politics and had developed ties with the Communist Party saw their political options limited by a ban and repression on the Party's activities (Moid 2011). In this context, Syed Khaleelullah Hussaini, a teacher at a local school started a group called Bazme Ahbab which transformed into a democratic peoples organisation called Tameer-e-Millat. This group worked within the constitution and used the 'rights and justice framework'. It developed programs related to self dependence, education, women's education and empowerment and addressed concerns about security of the community. Between 1949-1957, Tameer-e-Millat consolidated its base and "provided the vocabulary, concepts and method along with an organisation with substantial networks" (Moid 2011: 233). In 1957 Kasim Rizvi was released from jail and asked to leave for Pakistan within 48 hours. Rizvi had inherited AIMIM leadership from Bahadur Yar Jung after his death in 1944. Known for his 'extreme positions, emotional rhetoric and theatrical tactics', he gained many followers. MIM had already seen a rapid rise under the leadership of Bahadur Yar Jung, but now it entered a new era. However, to some Rizvi's positions were a 'natural culmination of Bahadur Yar Jung's vision', while to some Rizvi and his leadership of AIMIM and the Razakar Movement were a 'distortion' of that vision (Moid 2011). After his release, Rizvi met former MIM activists and passed on the presidency to Abdul Waned Owaisi, a famous lawyer and Islamic scholar who had also been jailed for a brief time – 10 months or so – after the agitation "[H]owever, until the 1960s', the Majlis remained a marginal player in Hyderabad politics. It could not win more than one Assembly seat, although every election saw a rise in its vote share" (Rao and Thaha 2012: 193). In the 1960s, various religious groups like the Tablighi Jamaat and Jamaat-e-Islami became active in public arena, with a focus on community reform and reforming the faith. Starting 1960s' AIMIM also grew stronger and emerged a city based political party with a wide vote share. In 1969 the AIMIM won back its party headquarters, *Dar-us-Salaam* – a sprawling 4.5 acre compound in the heart of the New City, after a protracted court battled (Rao and Thaha 2012). Abdul Waned Owaisi's son Salahuddin Owaisi took over the presidentship of MIM in 1976 after his death and in 1979 Hyderabad witnessed a bloody communal riot, during which AIMIM emerged as a strong defender of Muslim life and property (Moid 2011). Subsequently Salahuddin Owaisi won a parliamentary seat consistently from 1984 to 2004, when his son Asadudin Owaisi succeeded him and continued that trend. MIM has also performed well in State Legislature and Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections since the 1980s. It has supported Hindu candidates in Municipal and State Assembly, including three Hindu mayors in Hyderabad - K. Prakash Rao, A. Satyanarayana and Alampalli Pochaiah. Now rechristened *All India Majlis e Ittehadul Muslameen* or AIMIM, it emerged as a state level party in 2009 and was recognised as such by the Election Commission of India in 2014 when it contested 20 seats for Telangana State Assembly and won 7. It also holds two seats from Aurangabad District in Maharashtra in the Maharashtra State Assembly and Municipal seats in Nanded and Aurangabad District, and is projecting itself as the voice of Muslims and Dalits in Maharashtra. The AIMIM has won Chandrayangutta Legislative Assembly and Municipal seats repeatedly and its current Legislative Assembly elect is Akbaruddin Owaisi, who is the brother of AIMIM president and Lok Sabha Member from Hyderabad, Asadudin Owaisi. Zahed Ali Khan, the editor of *Siyasat*, a respected and popular newspaper amongst middle class educated Muslims, ran against Asasudin Owaisi in 2009 but lost. *Siyasat* run Trust has implemented many development, educational and vocational initiatives, but has been unable to translate its progressive followers into votes (Rao and Thaha 2012).

political scenario that prevailed nationally and internationally in the decades of 1970-1990s (Moid 2011). AIMIM is viewed as a party that has addressed the underrepresentation of Muslims in politics, in spite of allegations of corruption and nepotism, and has majority of Muslim vote share in the constituencies where it contests in Hyderabad city. Today, Hyderabad's Old City is in a 'state of decadence' and

> offers a classic case of 'urban deprivation' and more specifically of 'multiple deprivation', a notion which refers not only to a lack of infrastructure and facilities but also to poor education and training, low income, poor diet and hygienic conditions... In the Old City, 91% of the government schools are in rented buildings and the number of playgrounds and Anganwadi centres government sponsored child care and mother care centres is proportionately much lower than in the New City although in terms of population the New City population is only 6% higher (Rao and Thaha 2012: 201).

On the question of access and the lack of quality public higher education in Hyderabad, as social justice is central to AIMIM's political position captured in their slogan *Jai Bhim Jai MIM*, AIMIM's MLC Jafri points out that constituent colleges of Osmania University are few and though there are government degree colleges, these have low standards as far as quality of education goes.[122] Therefore, these are not attractive options to many to those who can afford better education.[123] Further, there is one Degree College for Women at Hussaini Alam in the Old City, an Urdu medium institution, which remains in demand, as it is the only option for women who study in Urdu medium schools. According to Jafri, earlier Muslims in Hyderabad did not have much access to higher education. This changed in the mid-1990s when Hyderabad witnessed mass scale privatisation of higher

[122] The website for AIMIM's new agenda regarding Dalits and Muslims (at http://www.jbjm.in/p/about.html), elaborates the political and social implications and meaning of the slogan 'Jai Bhim Jai Mim'. The interview was conducted in Jafri's house in Santosh Nagar on 04.10.2015.

[123] He also reiterated that "accessibly has been there" using the example of the widespread occurrences of communal violence in Hyderabad in the 1970s and the 1980s, when curfew would be imposed in the Old City area. Curfew south of river Musi, that is the Old City area, would mean that attendance in schools north of river Musi would fall drastically. This was because students would travel from the Old City to the new parts of Hyderabad for schools and colleges. He also says as the demand for Government Schools is coming down and with most Government Schools not having the required strength to keep them functioning with public funds, the government has no other options but to shut it down. The interview was conducted in Jafri's house in Santosh Nagar on 04.10.2015.

education.[124] There emerged a whole economy of private colleges, especially professional engineering and medical colleges. Jafri points out that this has become a trite feature of Hyderabad society. Today, finding doctors or engineers among young people in Hyderabad, both men and women, is commonplace. Similarly, 'donation seats' funded with Gulf remittance, the primitive accumulation of the feudal upper castes or the lumpen capitalists, are also a common feature. Playing on the aspirations of a burgeoning middle class, this industry has established itself as profitable. Most of these degrees do not hold any value or amount to equivalent employment. Though many of these institutes have been derecognised under the second term of the UPA government by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, yet, their proliferation in the last three decades is a benchmark. Capital directed from ancestral feudal assets (where usually caste hierarchies and feudal hierarchies become inseparable), as well as investments from politicians, have fuelled this economy and kept it outside the purview of regulation. Another feature has been private minority institutions, offering professional degrees, which have come up in the last three decades. Although Jafri agrees that most of these engineering graduates will not join the upper brass of the IT sector, rather, most join the BPO sector, he stresses that students from established minority institutes like Muffakham Jah College of Engineering and Technology or Deccan College of Engineering and Technology (owned by the AIMIM Trust) perform better and get employed locally, as well as, outside India.

Most public schools in the Old City being housed in private buildings without basic amenities, playgrounds, midday meals or security measures.[125]

[124] For more on education policy refer to Kamat S. G. (2011), "Neoliberal Globalisation and Education Policy in India", *Handbook on Globalisation and Higher Education*, 2011 (R. King, S. Marginson, R. Naid: 273-285).

[125] Rao and Thaha (2012) write that "on the one hand, by encroaching land allotted for government schools, leaders seal the possibility of construction of permanent buildings for government schools. On the other hand, they prevent or stop private owners from getting their premises vacated. The vexed owners eventually sell their property to the leaders at the rates decided by the leaders" (Rao and Thaha 2012: 206). On the question of privatization of educational building in the Old City area, AIMIM's MLC Jafri said that these schools were functioning in private buildings and that when the property owners claimed these buildings back, the government had to vacate and shift schools somewhere else. During the time of the Nizam, public institutions were made on government lands. These were allocated large tracts of land and infrastructures like building. He gives the example of Chanchalguda Government

Even on the question of access to public schools, Jafri mentions that since, most of these public schools were Urdu medium or State Board, parents do not prefer to send their children there.[126] This is especially true for Urdu medium boys schools, most of which have been shut down due to inadequate attendance. He acknowledges that Hyderabad has many unrecognized English medium schools and parents prefer to send their children, especially the male child, to the neighborhood, even if, unrecognized English medium school than to a public Urdu medium school (Dayashankar 2015). He understands this as supply-demand problem, where there is no demand for Telugu, Urdu or English medium state-run schools. Even the poor send their male child to private English schools. However, due to lack of resources most women from lower and lower-middle class families are sent to study in the public Urdu medium schools. Jafri points out that many of these public institutions are only functioning due to high female student attendance. He speaks of Telangana Government's decision to shut down public schools with low attendance (Deccan Chronical 17.09.2014; Hindu 28.09.2014). This controversial decision still remains a matter of public debate (Deccan Chronicle 06.052016). During the fieldwork, the relative absence of demands for restoring a dismantled public education system and a general comfort with privatization of education was visibly stark.

On the lack of public education, public programs for social awareness and sensitization programs regarding gendered spaces and practices, AIMIM's

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School (which became Chanchalguda Junior College), Nizam College, Osmania University (was approximately 2000 acre), Goshmahal School and Nampally Girls School, which had their own land. This land was later reused by the State Government to build public office complexes there. After the Nizams era, when the government started building schools, they located these in the government buildings. He also seemed critical of the local social activists who have been speaking out against these widespread allegations of corruption, where only properties in which the local *Pehalwans* (who are involved in land grabbing and real estate development) were interested were vacated and then the owners were pressurized into selling/settling these for development. He says that these activists have a limited point of view, "frogs in the well" having "half knowledge" and that such a thing would be true for any property in Hyderabad, not just public school buildings. Therefore, in the interview he did not deny the allegations of corruption or high handedness but presented these as normal. The interview was conducted in Jafri's house in Santosh Nagar on 04.10.2015.

[126] Jafri noted that earlier women did not study, but today, women are getting education – depending on class, parents send their daughters to English or Urdu medium school. The interview was conducted in Jafri's house in Santosh Nagar on 04.10.2015.

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Corporator Ms. Rubina suggested that AIMIM does not interfere in the "realm" of culture as this would alienate their vote bank, especially in a politically and socially conservative community like the Hyderabadi Arabs.[127] She is also the Managing Director of OSE Group of Schools managed by AIMIM Trust Fund. She seemed to be the one handling education related deals for the party leadership who is heavily invested in private schools, degree and professional colleges. Although she holds an MA from Osmania, has also enrolled herself in MSW at Osmania. Her educational and career profile gives her a special legitimacy and power within the local party structure. She is herself a successful educational entrepreneur– Managing Trustee of the Greens Special School, Managing Director of Genesis High School, founder of Bharathi Vidyalaya (teacher training) and Managing Director (Honorary) OSE Group of Schools, among many other things. On the day I met her at Darussalam, she had come to meet with a Tech Mahindra Representative. Tech Mahindra along with some unnamed "individuals" wanted to invest in Educational Training Centres, as philanthropy.[128] Though the preliminary details of the deal seemed settled, Ms. Rubina asked him a few, what seemed like routine questions regarding the budget. Further, the Tech Mahindra Representative wanted to set up a facility in OSE Charminar, however, she said that with "Akbaruddins school" one has to be more careful as these projects are financed by "MIM Trust Fund" and usually did not take funding from outside.[129] She also spoke of a collaboration that the City of Hyderabad had started with the City of Brisbane, Australia, which would facilitate job creation, as well as, mobility of

[127] As a co-opted Corporator, Ms. Rubina initiated the first ward development plan in Barkas area of Old City, planned a park for differently abled people and undertook livelihood-training programs for both men and women: She organized two job-fares in the Old City which placed 1400 youth in employment and initiated vocational training programs for women like beauty parlor training, curtain making and cooking. Based on interaction with Ms. Ayesha Rubina the office of Bharathi Vidyalaya, Humayun Nagar, Hyderabad on 14.08.2016.

[128] Based on Interaction with Ms. Ayesha Rubina at Darussalam Office, Aghapura, Hyderabad on 15.08.2016.

[129] At this point the Tech Mahindra Representative suggested that Tech Mahindra's name could be dropped and the money could be funnelled through other individuals involved. Based on the interaction with Ms. Ayesha Rubina at Darussalam Office, Aghapura, Hyderabad on 15.08.2016.

knowledge workers.[130] Ms. Rubina claimed that she had facilitated this as a representative of the Mayor.[131]

Somewhere AIMIM functions as a political party that is vociferous about Muslims politically and also as a corporation deeply entrenched in real estate and education business. It understands its constituents and their cultural specificities, and without challenging it out rightly, mixes the logic of electoral success and profit to draw different communities like the Barkas *Chaush* in. Therefore, it works within the logic of parliamentary politics and neo liberal development exploiting these for its and its allies benefit. In Hyderabad, the inflow of capital from the Gulf has allowed Muslim communities like the Siddis and the Hadramis to invest and aspire through the channels that AIMIM creates.

Fracturing the Idea of Authentic: The Case of Siddis in Hyderabad

The ethnographic work in the African Cavalry Guards (A C Guards) makes apparent that the Siddi communities in India cannot be treated as a coherent category, and like many other identities, the Siddi identity is also multilayered and fractured. Siddis in different parts of India have different histories of migration – temporally, points of origins, middle passages and

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[130] This information is corroborated by on the Brisbane City Council (website, www.brisbane.qld.gov.au), under section titled 'Brisbane's Sister City – Hyderabad'. Sister City Agreements for exchange of knowledge, trade etc. are very open kind of agreements – for business, knowledge but also cultural and students' exchange though nothing has happened in the latter two. Once the agreement was signed, some events were organized. Before her term ended some 30 businessmen from Brisbane along with Brisbane's Mayor came to Hyderabad and 150 businessmen from Hyderabad participated but the City Council never followed up on it. According to Ayesha Rubina, it would have been nice if there was a department for Sister Cities in the GHMC but the commissioner does not see the benefit in it. But the Mayor (Majid Hussain) has been interested. She is not in council but she is invited to attend as she has been instrumental in negotiating it from Hyderabad side. The council was dissolved and new elections were to be held in Jan 2016. Based on Interaction with Ms. Ayesha Rubina at the office of Bharathi Vidyalaya, Humayun Nagar, Hyderabad on 14.08.2016.

[131] Interestingly, she said that Bharathi Vidyalaya has signed an exclusive deal with an institute in Brisbane to collaborate. Based on Interaction with Ms. Ayesha Rubina at the office of Bharathi Vidyalaya, Humayun Nagar, Hyderabad on 14.08.2016.

places of settling; their religious, cultural and social realities vary, though economically and educationally most Siddis are dispossessed and their degree of integration into local cultures also vary, depending most probably, on how recent the last set of migrations into that area or community were. Thus, the Siddi community in Hyderabad is distinct from those in Gujarat and Karnataka. This research therefore argues that unproblematised notions of authenticity or ideas of Africanity that we take for granted, have real world implications for the Siddis of India. On the one hand, it allows for strategies of a larger 'pan-Indian' solidarity for cultural development and preservation and creates conditions for mobilisation to address deprivation, On the other hand, it obfuscates histories and differences, while emphasising similarities – both real and imagined. The previous chapter on race discusses how certain ahistoric ideas of Africa have become normalised and how self-identification with notions of blackness, slavery and Africanity are performed differently by Siddis in different parts of India. This section describes the neighbourhood of A C Guards and the everyday processes that constitute Muslim identity among the Siddis by focusing on an annual Church event in the neighbourhood.

A C Guards falls under the Nampally Assembly Constituency, one of the 15 assembly constituencies in Hyderabad, after the Delimitation Commission of India, 2002. It covers a vast area, which includes, Nampally, Masab Tank, Asif Nagar, Saifabad, Mallepally and parts of Chintal Basti and Gudimalkapur. Further, it falls under Secundrabad Lok Sabha Constituency after the Delimitation Commission of India, 2002. Bandaru Dattatreya from BJP is the MP from Secundrabad since 2014 to present. The neighbourhood of A C Guards is a small locality located between Masab Tank and Lakdi Ka Pul in Hyderabad. The main road that provides an entry into this neighbourhood is called by two names. It is called the A C Guards Road for the traffic that moves towards Lakdi ka Pul, that is, on the side of A C Guards neighbourhood and the same road is called Saifabad Road, for the returning traffic towards Masab Tank. This latter side of the main road called Saifabad Road, houses many public offices like the Income Tax Office, Prasar Bharati and All India Radio and an iconic public auditorium called Ravindra Bharati, along with

private properties, especially newly constructed gated apartment complexes, for the upper middle classes.

On the side of the A C Guards Road, just before one enters the 'ghettoised' older A C Guards quarters, is the Mahaveer Hospital on the left side and Masjid Ahmadia on the right. Masjid Ahmadia is a Sunni Hannafi mosque, the *Madhhab* of most Deccani Muslims.[132] Next to the Masjid Ahmadia are a series of public buildings, namely, Public Works Department office, Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation Ltd., United News of India, Press Trust of India and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) office. Turning left from the CBI office on Alamgir Masjid Street, one finds on the right hand side the Office of Insurance Ombudsman and next to it the building of a school, called 'The School' – which offers education from nursery to class X. Across from The School, there is a Sub-Regional Centre of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) in the neighbourhood.[133] Another school ahead is Rahmania Ideal High School, a co-ed school with 400 local students of mixed backgrounds, which has classes from nursery to class XII. It is a single building without playgrounds or other extracurricular outdoor facilities. This school is associated with Masjid-e-Rahmania, and was build by an endowment from Ahmed bin Ali bin Sadiq. All the mosques in A C Guards are Sunni mosques; interactions with people there suggested that Hannafi and Shafi'i differences did not seem to matter in attendance.

The road in front of Rahmania Ideal High School overlooks a bare dusty piece of ground separated from it by a low unlevelled wall, painted with garish advertisements of local businesses. A board hangs on one side of the ground marking it as Sanjay Gandhi Playground. The side of the playground

[132] Throughout the fieldwork in Hyderabad conducted during the last two years, it has been noticed that the Sunni men pray in any Sunni mosque irrespective of the *Madhhab* (school of thought) or *fiqh* (schools of jurisprudence).

[133] The facilities of this office are used mostly by the Muslim students of this area, both Siddi and non-Siddi. The staff there explained that this was because MANNU is an Urdu university, reflecting the reification of language into communal compartments. The office deals with admission to the Undergraduate as well as Postgraduate courses. Based on interaction with MANUU staff on 05.09.2015.

that is separated from the older quarters of A C Guards has about thirty slum like semi-permanent houses inhabited by Siddi families.[134] These and the neighbourhood around this school and playground is called Bishtipada; a colloquial spin on the Persian word *Bahishti* which means 'heavenly.' In South Asia Bhishti is a lower caste group who were employed as water carriers in public areas and for watering plants and trees in public or private gardens or during construction work. They would dispense water from a goat leather bag called *mashq* fastened to their shoulder by a strap. Bishtipada would have at sometime been a colony of the Bhishti people, however, today many Siddis also live there. The small locality of Bishtipada, also due to its current demographics, has become part of the older quarters of A C Guards, which are across the street from it. As one crosses the small and unmaintained road towards these quarters, one comes to the gates of Holy Mary High School and Maulana Azad Memorial High School, which mark the beginning of the old quarters.

[134] During one of the field visits to Bishtipada, while taking notes sitting on the broken wall of the playground, I attracted a group of teenage Siddi boys. They were curious to read what I was writing. This was the general attitude of the people in A C Guards, who thought I was working for the Census Department or the Police. Some were also suspicious, given the general widespread fear, especially, within young Muslim men in Hyderabad, who encounter regular cases of arrests in the city under special laws that circumvent regular due process, for 'Islamic Fundamentalism'. On this particular day, while I was trying to answer the questions of this group of young boys, I met Bilquis and Arshia, both residents of the slum at the end of the playgroud. Arshia was a primary school student at the Majidia Government School beyond A C Guards and Bilquis was an elderly Siddi woman who worked at the school. They escorted me to their house (one of the thirty odd semi-permanent houses) so that I could write uninterrupted. Here I met many Siddi women, as most men were out for afternoon *Dhuhr/Zuhr* prayers. A very old Siddi man there corroborated that Bishtipada was a locality that housed Bhishti caste group, which drew water from wells and supplied it to the city in leather bags. Based on interactions on 05.09.2014. During my fieldwork, I interacted with some Siddi women, though getting interviews was nearly impossible. They revealed that if parents can afford it, they educate their daughters and depending on resources, do not shy away from English medium education. However, though some Siddi women work, most tend to marry after the completion of their education, and not work. For example, one of the women I interacted with, one was a married woman leaving alone for Dubai for a working class job she never described. Siddis are also not endogamous. For example, another woman, Farheen (interacted with her on 05.09.2014), was born and brought up in A C Guards, but she was married to a Deccani Qureshi man and had lived in the Old City. She had recently moved back to A C Guards with her children. Though *Chaush* or Siddi women and men marry non-Siddis, I did not encounter any matrimonial alliance, which was not within Islam. Other neighbourhoods where Siddi women have been married and now live include Salala and Shaheenagar in the Old City.

Encountering these buildings in a congested neighbourhood, located on one of the busiest roads of Hyderabad, one enters the historic neighbourhood of A C Guards. In the afternoon, most shops in A C Guards are shut for *Namaz* and siesta. A C Guards has a Siddi population of approximately 4327.[135] Royal stables were converted around the 1840s as housing for the Nizams Body Guards by Asaf Jah IV, comprising only of African slaves, who had moved into these by 1860s.[136] However, today the Nizams Trust does not carry out any public works in this neighbourhood, for example, pensions – pensioners draw on GOI – for the old or endowments for religious or educational institutions.

Further, after the Police Action in 1948, the lands titles of properties in Saifabad Lines (A C Guards is part of Saifabad Lines), Band Lines, Mohammadi Lines, Masab Lines and Banjari Darwaza were under legal process with the Government of India for ownership rights. Further, a news story stated that

> "We have taken into consideration various issues, including the GOMs No 166 dated 16/02/2008, which stated that white ration cards holders have to pay 0.25 paise per square yard and pink card holders Re one per sq yard, market value fixed on 31/12/2003, depreciation at three per cent (20 years between 1983-2002), 60% rent for 1983, 25% surcharge for prime land and an advance of Rs 20,000, which we have already collected. Calculating all these, we have prepared the memos to get the final amount to be paid by the occupant/applicant," sources in the Hyderabad collectorate said (Times of India 05.12.2014).[137]

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[135] During the fieldwork, most Siddis referred to themselves as *Chaush*.

[136] According to one of the informants, Mr. Sajjad Shahid, a founding member of the Centre for Deccan Studies (an interdisciplinary and biannual journal), the African Cavalry was spread over A C Guards, A Battery, B Battery, Third Battalion, First Lancers, Second Lancers (which fought as Imperial Lancers in World War II). Phone interaction on 12.09.2014.

[137] Khalid bin Almas, the caretaker of the Maulana Azad Memorial High School, said that with the help of local AIMIM MLA, Jaffar Hussain, the transfer of land titles has begun. The struggle for land titles has been going on since the establishment of the Republic of India, however, it was only in 2014 that some of these titles were regularised in favour of the people. Similarly Suroor bin Abdullah, who owns a construction business in A C Guards and is a known *pehalwan* with AIMIM patronage, said that it was due to legislator Asaduddin Owaisi that the land in A C Guards got regularised in 2011. Till then people were tenants on properties owned directly by the Government of India. Now at a 2003 rate of Rs. 4200 per square yard, people have been able to procure ownership of their homes. According to Mr. Suroor, all of A C Guards has been regularized now and for those who could not pay the requisite sum, notices of eviction were not served. Further, he said that before A C Guards was regularlised they did not pay municipal tax or rent, only PWD tax on Nizams rates (Rs. 4-Rs. 5) was paid by the residents of this neighborhood. Mr. Suroor, who holds influence locally in the Siddi community also said that in the 1950s A C Guards was rechristened as Collectors

These sites of contestation are vital in understanding the present alienation that the Siddi population feels and the political strategies – for example, AIMIM – that are adopted or created to negotiate these everyday struggles. The role of AIMIM as the primary medium for political expression also parallels with the consensus in the Siddi community vis-à-vis a lack of desire for ST status unlike in other states. Siddis in Hyderabad do not want a ST status and put premium on their Muslim identity, instead. This is in stark contrast to Siddis in Gujarat and Karnataka. This fact was also demonstrated during a visit to the Bhahujan Samaj Party (BSP) office in A C Guards. A few party workers in this understaffed office suggested that they were unaware of the demand for ST status by Siddis outside Hyderabad and that they did not see caste as a factor in the everyday lives of Hyderabadi Siddis. They asserted that no party program, specifically aimed at the Siddis, has been initiated. Also, their outlook reinforced that for Hyderabadi Siddis, their religious identity dominates their primary political existence, although, their racial identity is deeply rooted as in the Hyderabadi demographic fabric.

This older part A C Guards has many schools belonging to different religions. The Holy Mary High School and Maulana Azad Memorial High School are located next to each other, just where A C Guards begins. The Maulana Azad Memorial High School was established 50-60 years ago.[138] It follows the State Board and students learn Urdu or Hindi, English and Telugu. Arabic is taught in *deeni talim* classes. Those who have migrated to the gulf have the knowledge of spoken Arabic, however, most of the Siddis in Hyderabad have the knowledge of only classical Arabic for reading religious texts and do not know how to speak it.[139] This area also has many madrasas. A

Line or Non-Officers Line as new Hyderabad Government had transferred the land to the Collector Office. Based on interaction on 07.10.2014.

[138] Based on series of interactions with Khalid bin Almas, the caretaker of the Maulana Azad Memorial High School, at the High School during September and October 2014.

[139] For example, a man in his fifties while relaxing at Afsar bin Mohsin's local Marfa and Daff band shop reflected that he spoke Arabic as he used to work in Bahrain Police in the 1980s. His Hyderabadi children, who continue to stay there, speak Arabic as well. Based on interaction on 03.09.2014.

school from the time of the Princely State of Hyderabad, called 3rd Platoon School has become Faisal Salm Masjid, houses within its compound a madrasa. Similarly, the Jama Masjid, across the road from Mualana Azad Memorial High School, houses a madrasa.

The area around the old quarters of A C Guards has also been home to a large Christian population, which was part of the Nizams Marching Band. The area houses two missionary schools and one church made under Nizams endowments, the Shrine of Our Lady of Health Church. The Holy Mary High School (another school in the neighbourhood), according to the Siddi inhabitants of A C Guards was given by the Nizam on a 99 year lease to the Shrine of Our Lady of Health Church.[140] They also claime that the church, which has within its premises Roch Memorial High School, was itself a grant from the Nizam.[141] The prevalent local myth making about the Shrine of Our Lady of Health Church and Friar Roch Memorial High School in the Siddi community of A C Guards can be seen as a site of contestation and religious boundary-making, as it is held as truth within the community.

Admission to various schools is dependent on the class of the family, with the poorest sending their children to Faisal Salm School, followed by Maulana Azad Memorial High School and for those with some money and upwardly mobile aspirations, these families send their children to the Holy Mary High School or English medium schools outside A C Guards. According to the Siddi residents interviewed, the Siddis and the Christians, have lived together in A C Guards traditionally.[142] However, most of the older A C

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[140] However, these are biased misinformation held by the Siddi community as truth. For a detailed and referenced account refer to the website of the Shrine of Our Lady of Health Church states under the section titled 'Brief History of Shrine of Our Lady of Health'. See http://www.shrineofourladyofhealth.com.

[141] Further, according to the Siddi inhabitants I interacted with during the fieldwork, there is a popular narrative that the idol of Mother Mary inside the church wears a gold tiara, which was a gift from the Nizam to the church. However, the website of the Shrine of Our Lady of Health Church gives another account of this. See http://www.shrineofourladyofhealth.com.

[142] For example, the guard of the MANNU Sub-Regional Centre, Mr. Das, is a local Christian who belongs to the Roman Catholic congregation of the Shrine of Our Lady of Health Church. Mr. Das explained that his father was from Bangalore, however, he was born in A C Guards.

Guards Christian population has moved out of this neighbourhood in the past few decades in search of better economic opportunities or because of marriages. With the Siddis, on the other hand, there has been some outmigration for those who can afford it; yet, most Siddi families have continued to live in A C Guards.

The lives of Siddis in India are specific to their immediate surrounding and their specific histories. This is best demonstrated by the symbiotic and contested relationship Christians and Siddis share in A C Guards. The 8th of September every year marks the birthday of their Patron Saint of Shrine of Our Lady of Health Church and the Annual Church Feast.[143] On this day, the Church holds an open congregation for thousands of devotees that come to visit the Church on that day, from in and around Hyderabad.[144] The Mass is held during the morning and benediction is followed by a procession.[145] The procession cart carries the Church Choir Band, which is all boys, who play ‘western’ musical instruments like Drums, Guitar etc. Behind the procession truck, walks the clergy carrying the Cross and the State Police. Throngs of devotees follow them. The devotees are followed by another procession cart, which carries the statue of Our Lady of Health wearing a tiara/crown. The statue is placed under a canopy in the truck, which is also mounted/decorated with a similar tiara/crown. This latter procession cart plays loud music and has a member of clergy on board. The procession starts at the church and goes round the block, passing the Jama Masjid in A C Guards. In 2014 when I participated in the procession, the Jama Masjid called out the Friday Zuhr *azaan* at the very moment when the procession turned into its street. Neither did the procession stop for the *azaan* to be over, nor was the music lowered.

Interestingly, he spoke some Tamil – not Kannad – in addition to English, Telugu and Deccani. Based on interaction on 05.09.2014.

[143] The event starts on 29th of August every year with flag hoisting, followed by events at various churches in Secundrabad and Hyderabad and lead up to this annual celebration.

[144] One such devotee that I met was Susan Rose Lawrence, who had come all the way from Secundrabad. She was an Anglo Indian woman, who had been born and raised in Kazipet. Her father was a passenger train driver and she said that she had come to this event since her childhood annually, barring 10 years she spent in Michigan, USA. Based on interaction on 08.10.2014.

[145] In 2014, it started at around 4 pm.

Similarly, the mosque had not postponed the *azaan* that day. Most local Muslim and Hindu residents do not participate in the procession, but, the procession is witnessed from packed balconies and roofs of building that overlook the streets in which the procession takes. Many onlookers participate from these balconies by documenting the procession by shooting photographs and videos of this procession, mostly on mobile phones.

The relationship between both the Siddis and the Christians is marked by a certain symbiotism and contestation. The streets around the church and the block in front of the church, which the procession skirts, are lined with stalls selling everything from bangles, cheap plastic toys, cosmetics, food items – tea, *biryani*, snacks and devotional items – candles, flowers, coconuts. These stall are made in front of the houses, which rent these plots at prefixed rates. Most people selling at this annual fair are locals of all religions. Further, most of these vendors set up their shops at this annual fair every year.[146] Their stalls usually encroach on the narrow unmaintained road, which is a site of visual, olfactory, auditory and tactile congestion, from the multitude of shops and the many devotees that visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Health. Moreover, in addition to the shops that are set up, life in neighbourhood continues as normal, with shops shutting down for *namaz* or siesta and then resuming business again.

On the 08.10.2014, the Parish Priest, Reverend Friar N A Paul Raj, was busy supervising workers near the newly constructed displays on the far side of the left wall of the church. Here rows made of bamboos had been erected to control the crowds and ensure lines were maintained. In a later interview, Reverend Friar Raj told me that this church was established in this parish after the Nizam's 3rd Battalion commander gave the permission to start it and Reverend Friar Roch (1947-1974) was instrumental in the construction of the church and many of its associated institutions.[147] Further, after the

[146] On asking a few vendors how these spots were secured, it seems that either there are kinship or social ties with the families that own the houses on the peripheral wall of which these stalls are setup or these belong to the vendors themselves.

[147] Reverend Friar Raj discussed with me the long history of the biggest octagonal church in Asia, which is also available on the church's website. See http://www.shrineofourladyofhealth.com.

Police Action, the church applied for the ownership of the land in 1948, through available legal means, and won. A C Guards has a mixed demographics representing all religious communities, however, the area around the Church shows signs of relative affluence and has limited Muslim presence – both Deccanis and Siddis. These are also separate neighbourhoods that developed around the older A C Guards at different points. For example, the houses and shops around the church bear Hindu and Christian names, and tiles bearing Hindu deities are used as ornamentation outside some of these properties. The street to the right of the church has two newly constructed and bigger Siddi houses, but becomes Veer Nagar after these houses. This street is behind Bilal Mosque, which is a part of the old A C Guards. Further, as soon as it becomes Veer Nagar, it also becomes predominantly Telugu and Hindu, with names outside the houses either in Telugu or in English. Similarly, the street to the left of the church becomes Saifabad mid-way, as indicated self-consciously by the addresses on the gates of houses here.[148] What is curious about this street is that the properties in that half of the street bear Hindu names written in the Devnagari Script and tiles bearing male deities like Hanuman, unlike the norm in Hyderabad where names are usually written in English, Telugu or Urdu.

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[148] Shrine of out Lady of Health Church also designated its address as Saifabad (not A C Guards) when it was established. Now it is called the Khairatabad Church of Our Lady of Health., Khairatabad is the adjoining legislative constituency.

Preparations for the procession in the afternoon on 08.10.2014. Photo courtesy: Khatija Khader

Preparations for the procession. Photo courtesy: Khatija Khader

Preparations for the procession. Photo courtesy: Khatija Khader

Stalls selling offerings to the devotees. Most vendors are local inhabitants. Photo coutesy: Khatija Khader.

Stalls that line the streets of A C Guards during the procession. Most vendors are local inhabitants. Photo coutesy: Khatija Khader.

Devotees following the procession. Photo courtesy: Khatija Khader

Historically, Hyderabadi Siddis have shared their lived space with Christians in A C Guards and share a complex relationship, often informed by identity questions. They benefit from missionary schools and also benefit economically from the presence of an important Catholic Church in their midst. Though the relationship between these communities is not hostile, yet, it is characterised by differing oral histories, memories and rationalisations of the contemporary, which valorise one's group identity. Whereas, migration to the Gulf and the a new generation of educated Siddi youth are enabling Hyderabadi Siddis to participate and claim a stake in the neo-liberal economic boom, they still remain one of the most dispossessed groups in Hyderabad. This section attempts at describing the everyday negotiations of Hyderabadi Siddis. It gives a description of the neighbourhood to locate these daily transaction firmly within a place. Hyderabadi Siddis share a Deccani and a Muslim identity with other Hyderabadi Muslims. The Muslim identity plays a vital role in the political strategies that Siddis have adopted in Hyderabad. This is in sharp contrast to the 'African' identity that has been used as a fulcrum for political negotiation elsewhere in India. Further, one also sees the absence of the demand for ST status, in spite of relative dispossession. The popular rhetoric of AIMIM, with its premium of the Indian Muslim identity, may partly be responsible in shaping the articulation of the Hyderabadi Siddis.

Anthropology of everyday reveals identity should be viewed as a product of 'historical circumstances'. Thus, to understand the multiple histories and plurality of discourses which constitute Indian 'social fabric', one needs to engage with dynamic interactions, 'competitive syncretism', which have shaped and continue to shape the 'ever-changing context of postcolonial India' (Assayag 2004). Further, in the context of South Asia, identities and their political and socio-cultural meanings cannot be grasped if viewed as tight compartments. (Assayag 2004: 42; Basu 1998, 2004a, 2004b; Gottschalk 2004; Ibrahim 2011; Jairath and Kidwai 2011; Khan 2004; Mayaram 2004; Robinson 2003; Shroff 2004, 2011; Sikand 2004) What needs to be underscored is that neither have Christians and Muslims lived as consistent rivals nor in complete harmony in a mythical syncretic culture. At a time when India is witnessing entrenchment of a certain vein of politics which

emphasises ‘pure’ or ‘authentic’ imaginations of identity and mythologies of belonging, these perspectives highlight that lived life is characterised by blurred boundaries and everyday negotiations that are defined equally by historical imperatives as by local contingencies.

Conclusion

In this chapter, an attempt ahs been made to understand the identity paradox of the Siddis and Hadramis in Hyderabad by rooting them in the history of communalism and politics of nationalism that the Nizams dominions witnessed as they were merged into what became the Indian nation-state. This chapter’s focus on religious identity emphasises that in spite of the rise of communal violence and political conservatism in all religions of South Asia, in practice, identities enact themselves on the ‘threshold’ of liminality. Even though Muslims have been ghettoised through conscious or unconscious social engineering and experience political affiliations based on homogenising religious identity, liminality experienced as affiliations, solidarities and competition between various Muslim groups and between Muslim and non-Muslim groups in Hyderabad are a case in point of the complexity of identity formation.

The popularity and rise of AIMIM in Hyderabad should be understood in context of the History of the Princely State of Hyderabad. In spite of its inability to deliver, widespread corruption and nepotism, AIMIM projects itself as its success represents the aspirations of Muslims in the region for greater political representation. Its success is based on its ability to capitalise on the physical and discursive marginalisation of Muslims post Police Action in 1948. Notions of self-respect are as vital to understanding the rise of AIMIM as are reasons of political economy. The example of AIMIM shows that though in practice identities are liminal, yet, it would be naive to assume that they coexist in harmony. The political and socio-cultural possibilities that ‘liminality’ offers has to be understood both as a site of contestation as well as regeneration. Communities retain their identities and affiliations, even when in practice, culture and ‘reality’ are neither homogenous nor a mythical pure.

Further, most Hadrami Sayyids, who have been involved in and part of the Islamic knowledge system, trace their lineage to Prophet Mohammad and his family. Similarly, most Siddis invoke Hazrat Bilal as their historic progenitor. This shows that Muslim communities 'organise and perceive themselves as internal to Islam and not within 'Hindu ethos and social order'.

This chapter drawing on fieldwork draws a distinction between 'syncretism' and 'liminality'. The works of colonial anthropology while engaging with the complex lived reality of a multiethnic and multireligious South Asia termed practices and groups as 'syncretic'. The underlying assumption being that these forms were 'distorted' as compared to an 'authentic' or 'pure' system of spirituality, philosophy, ideology or practice. However, any work engaging with 'everydayness' or 'anthropology of the present' will show that all civilizations, religions and cultures are syncretic and context specific, for nothing can or has existed as 'pure' or 'original'. This binary assumption in the conceptual category 'syncretic' is problematised in favour of the category 'liminal' (Mayaram 2004; Khan 2004). Liminality offers a site where possibilities - political, spiritual and socio-cultural - can be forged and it also offers a site of contestations where groups compete over the same space and resources, rewriting histories into the present continuously.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

This research began by posing certain questions with the intent to situate identity in the embodied practices of everyday life. Broadly these questions focused on the four interspersed themes that have been taken up by this research: Diaspora, Identity, Race and Religion. These questions inquired whether it is possible to define diaspora conceptually and if it is a historically and geographically contingent category. Treating diaspora as generative hybrid sites of inquiry, this research attempts to understand diasporic identity formations in a non-western location. Further, this research inquired into the ideas of racialised identity constructions in the context of Hyderabad. It sought to answer questions about how ideas of racism evolved in Hyderabad and how race as a modern philosophical category has come to inform how we cognise and rationalise human diversity, especially, skin colour. This study sought to understand the role of knowledge production in the entrenchment of the trans-Atlantic tropes of slavery at the loss of a richer Indian Ocean historiography of mobility in the Indian Ocean. Importantly, this research posits mobility as normal, that is, it underlines the possibilities that enable an understanding of identity as fluid, context specific and a historically, socially and politically contingent heuristic. It questions the assumptions of authenticity, originality or a coherent core, which studies on identity construction assume as given. Rather, it opens up questions regarding different ideas of assimilation and integration that have prevailed in the non-west and offers new frames/(re)imaginations for understanding concepts like homeland, host society, and notions of belonging. Lastly, this research intends to look into how racial, diasporic and religious identities affect political affiliations.

Chapter one of this research introduces the context or the main themes in which the two diasporic communities – Hadramis and Siddis – discussed in this study are embedded. The second chapter of this thesis looks at the histories of migration of the Hadramis and the Siddis to Hyderabad. It elaborates on the rich history of Hadrami migrations throughout the Indian Ocean region and on the significance of this diaspora in knitting this region

together through kinship and religious and political networks. The links of Hadrami Arabs to the ruling and political elites of the Asaf Jahi dynasty are elaborated. Further, Hadrami and Siddi migrations in the Indian Ocean since the nineteenth century are also analysed, rooting these firmly in the history and events rendered possible due to colonialism. Further, chapter gives a brief overview of Deccan history through the historical narrative of African migration, specifically during the establishment of Islamicate sultanates. Besides, the contemporary conditions and histories of the present day Indian Africans or Siddis is introduced to give a complete picture of the various contexts in which Siddis in India are located.

This research was conducted at multiple sites in Hyderabad: Barkas, King Kothi and African Cavalry Guards neighbourhoods. Most Hyderabadi Hadramis live in the Hyderabadi neighbourhood of Barkas (a colloquial spin on the word Barracks) that was established by Raja Wanaparthy and the Nizam of Hyderabad to provide residence to Arab soldiers and guards. King Kothi is a neighbourhood next to the Seventh Nizam's palace, where Hyderabadi Arabs 'adopted' by him after Operation Polo in 1948 live. These Hyderabadi Arabs are called *Khanazad* and the Nizam provided for all their basic needs from education, everyday food (that was cooked and supplied from the royal kitchens), marriage expenses to housing. Similarly, Siddis in Hyderabad are concentrated in the Hyderabadi neighbourhood called African Cavalry Guards (A C Guards) which were royal stables (re)designed to provide housing for the Siddi Royal Body Guards of the Nizam – a ceremonial battalion. Details of the histories of these two communities and their migration to Hyderabad is discussed in chapter two.

Chapter three draws on the fieldwork in Barkas and King Kothi, along with other interviews and resources, to develop a framework for the study of diaspora. It focuses specifically on the Hadrami diaspora as a translocal formation and locates it within the context of historical Indian Ocean mobility. It argues that Hadrami diaspora provides a site for productive engagement with the notions of identity construction, which assume the salience of a authentic or rooted core. Rather, it argues that Hadramis diaspora allows one

to see that processes of boundary making and identity construction are necessarily contingent on their context. That is, mobility should be understood as immanent to the processes of identity construction.

This study proposed four hypothesis in the beginning. Firstly, it argued that the situated pasts and embodied presents of *translocal mobile cosmopolitans* of the Indian Ocean allow for (re)imagination of reified/essentialised and nation-state centric conceptions of homeland and host society. As a qualitative study, this research defends this hypothesis. Chapter three complicates the idea of homeland and host society, by arguing that the concept of foreigner within the Hadrami diasporic population is understood and realised more fluidly than contemporary reified national imaginaries would allow us to fathom. The diasporic population see themselves as *muwalladin* or foreign-born. However, those Hadramis who migrate from the 'original homeland', Hadramawth, are inscribed as *wilayati* or foreigner. Walker (2008) in his study mentions the strategies of identification and negotiation adopted by the East African born Hadramis when they visit their 'homelands', and terms it as the idea of partial belonging as cosmopolitanism. The *muwalladin* never belong. However, the 'native' also becomes a *wilayti* or foreigner in the act of migration. Thus, the assumptions of authenticity and rootedness in the idea of a native foreigner and a foreign-born native, in a diasporic setting become fluid. The framework of mobility is at the heart of this analysis, which argues for understanding identities as dialogic.

Chapter three proposes a concept which is termed as Mobility Paradox. Looking at the Gulf migration as a site of inquiry, the study argues that migrating to the Gulf is preferable to working in Hyderabad by most Hadramis, not only because it offers better economic opportunities, but also, because there is an aspirational aspect to it fuelled by a long history of migrating across the Indian Ocean that has been 'normalised' in the self narrative of this group. There is a relative ease with the idea of moving within the Indian Ocean area – Gulf or the newer migration trends among Hyderabadi Hadramis accessing places like Australia. This is a paradox because during the fieldwork it became apparent that moving out of the Old City into the newer

parts of the town did not capture the imagination of the people, the way migrating across the Indian Ocean does. It is also important to acknowledge that the Hadrami diaspora faces many disadvantages as a marginalised Muslim group with limited education within the community. Therefore, given the high demand for labour in the Gulf markets and the established networks that this community has, it is easier to transcend the disadvantages it faces at 'home' by migrating. Mobility Paradox also has a gendered dimension. During fieldwork in Barkas, most Hadrami women – young and old – who had not been to their local markets, however, knew street names and malls in Dubai and Jeddah.

The second hypothesis that this study defends argues that diasporas in the Indian Ocean have defined themselves through hybrid frames of assimilation and integration which problematizes notions of belonging inherent in processes of modernity and territorially bound notions of identities. The intent of this study was to understand how identity is realised and experienced in everyday lived life, individually and as a group. The cases under consideration have allowed the development of an exploratory research frame which engaged with aspects of identity usually unaddressed in the context of South Asia: diasporic and racial in order to understand how diasporic, racial and religious can be theorised and understood in a non-western space. The two groups discussed in this study – the Hadramis and the Siddis – share more than migratory histories. These groups are inscribed with the same ethnonyms of the 'other' Hyderabadis. They are called *Chaush*, a Turkish term which means guards, designating the occupation of the Hadramis and the Siddis under the Nizams State – both worked as guards and soldiers. Further, they belong to the same *madhhab* of Islam, as both groups as Shafi'i Hannafis. Both groups use Arab naming patterns, share sartorial customs, musical traditions, and in the past Arabic was the lingua franca of both the groups. Both are known for a tradition of *pehalwani* or wrestling in the community. Chapter five of this research discusses this liminal space that the Siddi and the Hadrami diaspora inhabit. It problematizes the notions of authenticity and discusses how questions of livelihood get imbricated in the need to package this authenticity for an audience, which consumes it.

It engages with the Muslim identity among the Siddi and Hadrami communities in Hyderabad and analyses their association with AIMIM in Hyderabad. It elaborates on an understanding of identity that is both accommodative and contested. It does so by elaborating on the accommodations between Hadramis and Siddis in Hyderabad. In addition to this, it explores the contestations that Siddis in Hyderabad negotiate vis-à-vis the Christian community that inhabits in A C Guards along with them. It forays into these contestations by focusing in detail on the annual celebrations at the local Our Lady of Health church. Similarly, chapter three proposes the concept of Informed Accommodation, which taking diaspora as a site of inquiry argues that multiple frames and modes of accommodation have traditionally existed in the Indian Ocean, which are neither borrow from nor are restricted by the, limited debates around multiculturalism and assimilation in the west.

The third hypothesis that this study defends in that the Indian Ocean was a site that had witnessed many forms of slavery, voluntary migrations and processes of identity negotiations, whereas, colonisation of the Indian Ocean introduced limited stereotypes regarding Muslims, Arabs, and black Africans. Chapter four develops the concept of race as it appeared in western philosophical thought during the period of enlightenment. It argues that with the coming of colonialism these frames of cognition got transposed in the colonies. Thus, the present pockets of visible Siddi population in Gujarat and Hyderabad can be historically traced to the early modern periods when essentialised stereotypes based on skin colour became more prevalent in the Indian Ocean. It argues that in popular understanding, the stereotypes assigned to Siddis and their self-realisation of identity are deeply embedded in racist genetic thinking. It looks at the depiction of Siddis as a cultural artefact, used by government officials and promoted by the market, as a testimony to diversity. It also analyses entrenched racism behind the assumptions of strength and sports prowess, with which 'others' and Siddis themselves view their 'essence'.

Another hypothesis that this research defends is that ideas of Africa and Siddi identity in postcolonial India – social, legal and political – are rooted in knowledge production. Chapter four takes on the task of understanding how race and racism have been understood in the Indian Ocean region, specifically South Asia. This chapter deals with the idea of Africa, its representation in popular culture and academic writing and the conflation of Black, exotic and Africa, in contemporary times. Fieldwork done in Hyderabad and in Gujarat has been used for the purpose of this analysis. The questions of caste, lower status and skin colour and a racialised imagination of Africa are discussed and analysed. It engages with race as a social and a biological construction in the context of South Asia, cognisant of its history of slavery and social mobility which before colonialism was not race specific. Further, the significance of knowledge production in the framing and enactment of identities, in self-perception and in how 'others' perceive a group are underscored. Knowledge productions effects on processes of identification, and many times the reification of possibilities and histories due to it, cannot be emphasised enough in any study that intends to understand identity construction.

To reiterate, the main arguments of this research are that Indian Ocean offers a site that belies *the logic of origins or notions of authenticity*, as well as, the *syncretic*. It is a liminal space, where *liminality* – understood as a *productive hybridity* – offers a site where possibilities - political, economic, spiritual and socio-cultural - can be forged and it also offers a site for contestations where groups compete over the same space and resources, rewriting histories into the present continuously. The Indian Ocean is also a *generative hybrid space* where contingent everyday ideas – local, trans-local and universal – co-constitute the situtatedness of everyday practice and memory. Thus, what this study call as *informed accommodation* can be witnessed in the maintenance of language registers, food practices, marriage practices and sartorial practices in diasporic communities around the Indian Ocean. This research argues that there exists a *mobility paradox*, where access to places across the Indian Ocean is sometimes easier, some times closed and sometimes desired for social mobility. With reference to Siddis, this research

looks critically at *the role of knowledge production* in the identification with, performance of and framing of an African identity and indigeneity, by both the Siddis and the non-Siddis, in India. It argues that the notions of blackness, Africa and racism in a non-western location like the Indian Ocean region borrow from *orientalist frames*, by tracing the changes and continuities in these ideas. Lastly, it argues that *Islam* is central to understanding the negotiations and contestations that underscore the framing of the *political identities* of the Siddi and the Hadrami communities in Hyderabad.

This study intends to address multiple gaps in International Relations literature. International Relations tends to look at the world as territorially defined national units in contrast to an abstract international system. Understanding diasporic, racial or religious identity of the people who have made the international a place, indeed made it possible, remains absent or on the margins in International Relations literature. Further, unless directly concerned with policies of states or international organisations, remittances or terrorism, most studies in International Relations relegate the task of studying processes of migration to 'other' disciplines. It is the intent of this study to address these lacunas. The International for the purpose of this study is a less defined entity, characterised by linkages that are not just interstate and transnational, but also translocal and liminal. By rooting this study in mobility as a framework, this study emphasises that notions of coherent, rooted and authentic ideas of culture are actually historically contingent constructions. It further complicates the neatness of the international by arguing that the oceans form a historically generative site for the study of processes that have led to the political, social and economic developments that form the contemporary.

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