BEING AND BECOMING: SINDHIS IN ACCRA, GHANA

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores cosmopolitanism as an ever-changing set of aspirations that Sindhis in Accra strive for in their everyday lives. The links of Indian diasporas to their homeland, either real or imaginary, has been the central focus of scholars seeking to understand the everyday lives and aspirations of Indians living outside of the sub-continent. Sindhis, however, lack access to an original homeland because it was lost during the Partition of India in 1947. Rather than lamenting its loss or trying to (re)create an alternative one, my research participants invest in *becoming* Sindhi, which for them means *becoming* cosmopolitan. However, their view of cosmopolitanism, their strategies for achieving it, and the investments that they make in it, are all shaped by the context in which they actually live. Their cosmopolitanism is thus local and distinctive, even as it aspires to transcend the perceived limitations of a particular place. By demonstrating this, the thesis also shows how cosmopolitan aspirations play a role in framing success in the professional and personal lives of people in diaspora.

DEDICATION

To those who are no longer with us,

those who are still with us –

And those who are yet to come.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

At the start of the 21st century, there were approximately 20,000,000 people of South Asian origin living outside of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, with the majority in Africa, the Caribbean, and Oceania (Oonk, 2007, 9).[1] This study is about one such group: Sindhis who are now based in Accra, Ghana. Although Sindh was a small area in India, Sindhis outside of the sub-continent constitute a significant minority, accounting for nearly 15% of the global South Asian diaspora (Johnson et al, 2012, 12).

This thesis explores cosmopolitanism as an ever-changing set of aspirations that Sindhis in Accra strive for in their everyday lives. The links of Indian diasporas to their homeland, either real or imaginary, has been the central focus of scholars seeking to understand the everyday lives and aspirations of Indians living outside of the sub-continent. Sindhis, however, lack access to an original homeland because it was lost during the Partition of India in 1947. Rather than lamenting its loss or trying to (re)create an alternative one, I argue, my research participants invest in *becoming* Sindhi, which for them means *becoming* cosmopolitan. However, their view of cosmopolitanism, their strategies for achieving it, and the investments that they make in it, are all shaped by the context in which they actually live. Their cosmopolitanism is thus local and distinctive, even as it aspires to transcend the perceived limitations of a particular place. By demonstrating

[1] Oonk (2007, 24-25) notes that this number varies drastically up to 26,000,000 if it were to include Non Resident Indians (NRIs) and those of mixed heritage.

this, the thesis also shows how cosmopolitan aspirations play a role in framing success in the professional and personal lives of people in diaspora.

Indians in Africa and the centrality of homeland

Existing studies on Indians in Africa have focused overwhelmingly on East Africa and South Africa (Oonk, 2007; Hollingsworth, 1960; Harris, 2010; Ginwala, 1977; Padayachee et al, 1991; Mawdsley et al, 2011; Aiyar, 2015).[2] They have shown that an important characteristic of modern Indian diasporas in Africa (and elsewhere) is their meaningful connections to their homeland – whether real or imagined (Morris, 1956; Vahed et al, 2010; Nair, 2001).

For example, Morris showed how the overarching goal for Patidars in East Africa was to accumulate their wealth in East Africa to eventually take back to India (1956, 203). Through a focus on marriage patterns amongst Patidars, Morris also showed that this group regulated their lives in East Africa according to values prevalent in their home districts (ibid, 205). This meant that their lives were sanctioned closely by the opinions of Patidars living in India as 'every aeroplane flying to and from Bombay will be loaded with gossip and comment' (ibid). Similarly, Nair argues for Gujrati migrants in East Africa:

[2] The much longer history of South Asian migration to East Africa and South Africa, dating back to the arrival of the Portuguese at the end of the 15th century, may be one reason why these groups have not only received attention in academic literature, but have also been addressed in official government legislation much earlier than other South Asians overseas (Hollingsworth, 1960, 1). Indians in Ghana are yet to be recognised by the state. There is no option to tick anything more specific than 'Asian' in the Ghana census.

> homeland is never actually left behind but rather extended and attached to regions of social life that extend over space without alienation or stark separation…the homeland is not an imagined place of origin but rather a living land of family life (2001, 3).

Vahed et al (2010) found that, for generations of South African Indians, South Africa is 'home' and India their 'homeland'. For South African Indians, their everyday lives are embedded in South Africa and they have no wish to settle in India – but India represents their 'roots', with which they are able to (re)connect through religious knowledge and experiences, cricket, movies and music, and dance (ibid, 2010, 5). Although the examples above show that there are multiple ways in which Indian groups in Africa have connected with their homeland, the overarching point is that there is a distinct area in India which these groups can refer to as being their place of origin.

More recently, Bhat et al, who explore globalisation and transnational networks in the South African context, have taken into account that the relationship between 'motherland' and immigrant communities is not dyadic. They recognise that immigrant communities like South African Indians are dispersed in multiple localities, and form extensive transnational networks (Bhat et al, 2002, 16). However, the 'homeland' still plays a part in these transnational networks, especially for emigrants that Bhat et al call the 'New Diaspora' (ibid). Having migrated during the second half of the 20th century, members of the new diaspora continue to have a vibrant interaction with their places of origin and pay frequent visits to India (ibid).

Such studies address a broad question: what 'homeland' means for Indians in diaspora. Vahed et al's (2010) distinction – between South Africa as 'home' and India as 'homeland' – is a useful starting point for probing the case of Sindhis in Ghana. For my research participants, Ghana, or more specifically Accra, is 'home' and most people, especially men, have no plans to leave. Yet Sindh is not available for them to call upon as a 'homeland'. This example should alert us to the sheer diversity of historical experience in evidence in South Asia – a diversity reflected in its diasporas.

The term 'homeland' itself needs some unpacking. Some scholars treat the nation as 'homeland' (Al-Ali et al, 2002; Mohammad, 2007). Others treat the homeland as a much more specific connection to towns or cities of origin (Brah, 1996; Markovits, 2004; Blunt, 2013). For example, Markovits found that Gujrati migrants, whether they were Hindu, Muslim or Jain, had much more similar migration experiences than Gujrati Hindus had with Bhojpuri Hindus (2004, 6). For Sindhis, the notion of 'homeland' is understood at a provincial level – an attachment to a region before 'India', or conversely before Hyderabad or Khudabad.[3] This geographical specificity affects diasporan understandings of attachment. For Sindhis, however, this is overlaid by their distinct historical detachment from their place of origin.

Sindhis in Ghana, as elsewhere including contemporary India, lack access to a place they can call *their* homeland.[4] During the Partition of 1947, Sindh was subsumed in its entirety in Pakistan. Because Partition was organised along religious lines, all Hindus and Sikhs had to cross the border to the Indian side, and Muslims to the Pakistani side. Sindh was

[3] Two cities in Sindh.

[4] This will be explored in greater details in Chapter Two (Roots and Routes).

the only relevant region not to have any land that straddled the borders of India and Pakistan, so all Hindu Sindhis had to leave Sindh for parts of India that had different languages, cultures and forms of social organisation to their own. A connection with a homeland (real or imagined) is a defining characteristic of Indians in Africa – in their everyday lives, at important times such as marriages (Morris, 1956), or even to reconnect with 'roots' (Vahed 2010).

Map of post-Partition India showing boundaries between India and Pakistan in 1947

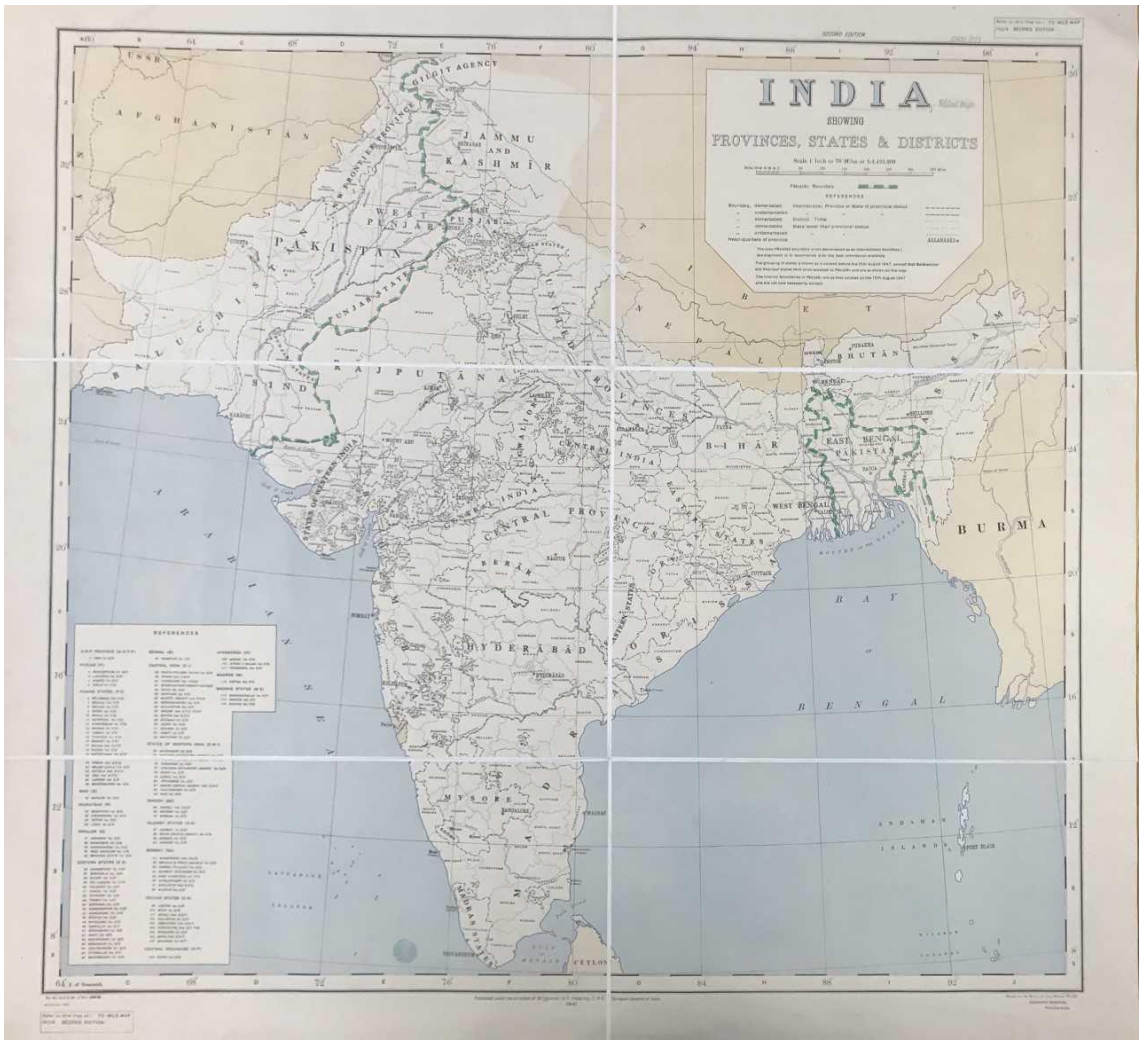


Image Source: Survey of India Offices (P.L.O), 1947[5]

[5] Available at the British Library, London, UK. Shelfmark: MAPS 52430-57

Diasporas and 'homeland'

The term 'diaspora', and its association with a 'homeland', requires some unpacking, in order to assess its relevance for an analysis of the lives of Sindhis in Ghana. A term historically used to refer to the exile of Jews from Judea, the term diaspora 'now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community' (Tölölyan, 1991, 4). Whilst recognising the broader use of the term, scholars have placed different levels of emphasis on the Jewish case (Safran, 1991; Clifford, 1994; Cohen, 1997).

Since the 1980s, as Brubaker points out, there has been a growing interest in and use of the term diaspora both in academic and non-academic writing (2005, 1). Along with this widening use of the term, scholars have de-emphasised the relationship between diasporas and their desire for homecoming (Clifford, 1994; Falzon, 2003). For example, Clifford challenges the binary relationship between diaspora populations and 'homeland' by using the example of the South Asian diaspora, of which Sindhis are a part (1994). Clifford writes that South Asian diasporas are, 'not so much orientated to roots in a specific place and a desire for return as around an ability to recreate a culture in diverse locations' (1994, 305). Instead, Clifford emphasises the transnational links between populations:

> They are deployed in transnational networks built from multiple attachments and they encode practices of accommodation with, as well as, resistance to, host

> countries and their norms… It involves dwelling, maintaining communities, having collective homes away from home (ibid, 307-308).

Approaches to diaspora have therefore shifted away from an exclusive focus on ties between migrant communities and their shared place of origin, to include the complex processes diaspora populations engage in to re(create) a sense of belonging among themselves across multiple borders. These processes are the central concern of this thesis – how people in diaspora create a sense of belonging through transnational linkages, what they prioritise, how they do it, and why this holds such significance for them. These processes among Sindhis are particularly interesting, because although scholars such as Clifford have expanded their analytical frameworks to include transnational relationships between groups of migrants, a shared homeland (or the idea of a shared homeland) is still important to many diaspora communities and to studies of diaspora. Sindhis, on the other hand, are a diaspora without a homeland. Thus they pose a challenge to a body of academic literature which approaches diaspora from the perspective of 'dwelling, maintaining communities, having collective homes away from home' (ibid).

Cohen (1997), for example, sought to offer a way forward from the Jewish prototype of diaspora, taking into account the heterogeneity of both Jewish and non-Jewish migration experiences, and transnational links between diaspora populations (1997, 21-22, 27). Cohen writes, 'it is necessary both to draw critically from the tradition and to be sensitive to the inevitable diluted changes and expansion of the meaning of the term diaspora as it comes to be more widely applied' (1997, 22). He offers some defining

characteristics of diasporas as: the dispersal from an original homeland to two or more countries that could be the result of a traumatic experience, as it was for Jews, or to search for work and business opportunities. Homeland is central, along with a collective (and often idealised) memory or myth of it. Cohen gives the example of dispersed Sikhs working to create an independent Sikh state of Khalistan, as an example of how a collective myth can manifest in a diaspora. Along with the idealised memory of homeland, there is also a myth of return – whether permanent or temporary. Cohen adds that this myth is 'grounded in a strong ethnic consciousness of migrants abroad, which may have prevented them from assimilating in the local society' (ibid). Lastly, there is a sense of unity between similar groups around the world as well as possible connections with events and groups in the homeland (ibid).

The persistence of homeland as a central focus in studies of diasporas is also evident in the work of Ryang (2009). Writing about the Korean diaspora in Japan, Ryang identified two seemingly opposing models of diaspora that are both based on the concept of home or homeland. The 'classical model' is exemplified by the Jewish diaspora and a strong sense of connection to home (or homeland), the loss of which is suffered collectively by the dispersed population (ibid, 2). This is very much the way diaspora was thought about before the 1980s. In contrast, what Ryang calls the 'cultural studies model' (the type of diaspora I discuss above through the work of Clifford and Cohen), is based upon an ongoing crisis of identity related to the loss of homeland (ibid, 3). The point here, as Ryang (2009) reminds us, is that the 'two models are not as far apart as they first might appear to be—they both reside on a conceptual base of home and homeland' (ibid, 3). This continued emphasis on homeland (real or imagined) throws into relief the

distinctiveness of Sindhis in Ghana (and elsewhere): as we have already established, *their* Sindh no longer exists.

Falzon brings us some way forward in finding alternative ways to think about Sindhis' connections (or lack of) with their homeland. He uses the example of Sindhis in Bombay[6] London and Malta to claim that rather than the notion of 'homeland', a 'cultural heart' may be more apt for thinking about how they (re)construct themselves in diaspora (2003, 663). For Falzon, Bombay has served as a nodal point for Sindhi marriages and business links since Partition. He emphasises that Bombay is not a substitute for their place of origin, but since Partition it has been reconstructed as a 'place where they [Sindhis] have the opportunity regularly to display their translocal identity as a style of life, qualities which the primordial homeland has all but lost' (ibid, 680). Although to some extent this is true for my research participants in Ghana, I journey away from the homeland focus to emphasise further the transnational flows and connections that play a much more central role in Sindhis' lives.

By providing an ethnographic window into the lives of the oldest ethnic group of Indians in Ghana,[7] this thesis aims to show how, in the absence of a homeland in India, Sindhis embark on a journey of *becoming* Sindhi in distinct ways that rely on creating and maintaining their place in both global and local networks of other Sindhis. This for Sindhis is intrinsically linked with realising cosmopolitan aspirations.

[6] Falzon's own spelling.

[7] This thesis is not broad-reaching account of all Indians groups in Ghana, or even Sindhis in Ghana. My research focuses on the capital of Accra, and touches only briefly on Sindhis in Ghana's second largest city, Kumasi.

Global Connections: cosmopolitanism

I was sensitised to the idea of cosmopolitan being used as a self-descriptive term amongst Sindhis through my MA dissertation research conducted in London. Some Sindhis would use it to describe other Sindhi individuals, others used it to describe themselves. Regardless of who was being described, it was very clear that this word held significance for them. After arriving in Accra, I found that the use of this self-descriptive term amongst Sindhis transcended geographical boundaries and that for my research participants, the term cosmopolitan held a central place for their self-understandings – they would regularly share with me that 'Sindhis are cosmopolitans settled in all four corners of the world.'[8]

Terms such as cosmopolitanism present researchers such as myself with a conundrum, because it is a term that people use to describe themselves but it is also a term that operates as an important analytical category. This is not something that is unique to my own research, but often found with key terms in social sciences, whereby terms are categories of analysis but also practice (Brubaker et al, 2000, 4).

This is a problem well worked through in recent literature on the middle classes in Africa (Lentz, 2016; Spronk, 2014). Taking a lead from Weber's emphasis on class status as based on prestige and cultural capital, Spronk explores how 'middle classness' is a

[8] This phrase is a colloquialism that not only my research participants would use, but other Indians would often say with regards to Sindhis. It is notable that Falzon's monograph is titled *Cosmopolitan Connections: The Sindhi Diaspora, 1860 – 2000* (2004). Falzon outlines three main features of cosmopolitanism for Sindhis: 'dispersal, interconnectivity, and adaptability' (2003, 670).

practice amongst young professionals in Nairobi, through: (1) access to education and the resulting salaried occupations, (2) consumption patterns and lifestyle choices, and (3) self-identification as a modern person (2014, 99). As I have found for Sindhis in Accra, Spronk recognises that young professionals' lifestyle choices 'display[s] a vibrant cosmopolitan consumer culture' in Nairobi since the 1900s. In the same way that cosmopolitanism is a central self-identifier for my Sindhi interlocutors, the self-perceptions of young professionals in Nairobi as '"modern'' or ''sophisticated'' are important for their pursuit of upward mobility, which directs them beyond the borders of Kenya' (ibid, 108). Similarly, as we will see throughout the thesis, for Sindhis, cosmopolitanism gives them a way of looking beyond Ghana for their social and business networks.

Lentz, writing about the middle class in Ghana, argues:

> Instead of thinking of classes as large social groups to which one and one's family belong (or not), it seems more useful to explore social dynamics in terms of 'doing being middle class', as bundles of discourses and performances that can, in specific situations or even over longer periods, be mobilized or demobilized, emphasized or de-emphasized (2016, 42).

This thesis will explore the lives of Sindhis in Accra through new instantiation of Lentz's question: how are they 'doing being cosmopolitan'?

The thesis identifies some discrepancies between how Sindhis in Accra describe themselves as cosmopolitans and how the term is interrogated by theorists of cosmopolitanism (Vertovec et al, 2002; Skrbis et al, 2004; Holton, 2002). For key

theorists of cosmopolitanism (Nussbaum, 1996; Giddens, 1999; Beck, 2002), at its heart lies the subordination of national or local social action to universal values and global openness at a political and ethical level – or as, Skrbis et al put it, 'cultural cross-pollination, hybridity and fluidity' (2007, 731). Hannerz conceives of cosmopolitanism as 'a perspective, a state of mind' (1990, 238). However, much like other studies of cosmopolitanism, Hannerz focuses on elite and Western groups of people who have choices in their cosmopolitan endeavours; they have the ability to enjoy cultural diversity in contrast to 'local' people who are not viewed as being interested in or concerned with cultural diversity (Hannerz 1990; Friedman, 1997). For Sindhis in Ghana, the significance is narrower. They are generally wealthier than the majority of their Ghanaian counterparts, and for them cosmopolitanism represents aspirations that are strategically thought out, including features that are dictated by other Sindhis in other parts of the world and are at times difficult to achieve. Cosmopolitanism becomes an organising ideal for whole families, as a way to *become* Sindhi in global networks. Cosmopolitanism is thus a means of establishing connections with, and remaining connected to, particular groups of other people around the world, even in the absence of a shared homeland to which any of them could return.

Until recently, studies have treated cosmopolitanism as sets of *choices* made by elite people overwhelmingly in the Western world (Szerszynski et al, 2002; Ley, 2004). However, cosmopolitanism is not always voluntary (Beck et al, 2006). According to Beck et al, rather than treating cosmopolitanism as a set of normative principles, talking of 'cosmopolitanization' might reflect lived realities better (ibid, 7). Beck et al stipulate:

> This distinction turns on the rejection of the claim that cosmopolitanism is a conscious and voluntary choice, and all too often the choice of an elite. The notion 'cosmopolitanization' is designed to draw attention to the fact that the emerging cosmopolitan of reality is also, and even primarily, a function of coerced choices or a side-effect of unconscious decisions. The choice to become or remain an 'alien' or a 'non-national' is not as a general rule a voluntary one but a response to acute need, political repression or a threat of starvation (ibid, 7-8).

Indeed, this is true for Sindhis, as it was not through their own choice that they lost access to their original homeland and were pushed into more permanent migration patterns. These migration patterns led to the central place of cosmopolitanism in their identities.[9] Moreover, after the independence of Ghana in 1957, the treatment of non-indigenous groups with regards to Ghanaian citizenship has made it difficult, and at times impossible, for non-indigenes to be granted full citizenship rights. This has had further implications for Sindhis' self-understandings of uprootedness and their ambivalent sense of belonging in Ghana.[10]

Beck's (2006) notion of 'cosmopolitanization' helps us to understand that Sindhis in Ghana did not enter the cosmopolitan project voluntarily, but this does not in itself explain the processes involved in *becoming* cosmopolitan or why these are so important for particular groups. To understand what comes after cosmopolitanization (Beck, 2006), it may be more helpful to think of cosmopolitanism as 'a strategic resource: as a

[9] I explore this further in Chapter Two (Roots and Routes).
[10] I explore this further in Chapter Three (Sindhi, Indian and Ghanaian).

set of imaginaries and practices that can be used to extend opportunities or consolidate power' (Jeffery et al, 2008, 420). The notion of everyday or ordinary cosmopolitanism (Lamont, 2000; Skrbis et al, 2004) orientates my exploration of how exactly Sindhis in Accra *become* cosmopolitan, and the importance they attach to achieving cosmopolitan aspirations in their professional and private lives.

Skrbis et al (2007) conducted a focus group study in Australia to explore aspects of 'everyday cosmopolitanism'. Their results showed that people conveyed cosmopolitan feelings by referring to things such as travel, cuisine and music. However, they were less likely to report what Skrbis et al refer to as the more difficult aspects of cosmopolitanism such as openness towards strangers or accepting human interest ahead of perceived national interests (ibid). Skrbis et al argue, then, that cosmopolitan is a strategy people employ to confront issues such as cultural diversity, the global, and otherness (ibid).

Kothari (2008) also focuses on 'strategic cosmopolitanism' in examining how Bangladeshi and Senegalese street traders produce forms of non-elite cosmopolitanism, as a result of which social networks are strengthened, livelihoods are sustained, and fluid diasporic identities are produced. Kothari's chapter is part of a collection of essays that highlight everyday forms of cosmopolitanism and focus on performances of cosmopolitanism through political and social projects for non-elite people (Jeffery et al, 2008). For example, Mohan explores the efforts of the Ghanaian state to obtain money from citizens who have migrated abroad by circulating ideas of 'multicultural patriotism' (2008). Institutional, financial and moral ties play a part in the everyday lives of Ghanaians living abroad, linking people to churches and hometown associations back in

Ghana (ibid). One of the main contributions of this collection of papers is to show how networks have the potential to 'operate at local, national, and global scales, and for their participants they entail an important sense of difference from some and solidarity with others' (Jeffery et al, 2008, 424). This latter point is particularly important for understanding the type of cosmopolitanism practised by Sindhis in Accra, which is very different from a cosmopolitanism based on universal values. Quite the opposite, Sindhis in Accra work to establish links with people around the world whom they see as being like them, reinforcing their own particular sense of cosmopolitan Sindhi identity which has social and economic advantages for them and establishes boundaries between them and the majority of Ghanaians among whom they live in Accra.

In keeping with Beck et al's (2006) notion of 'cosmopolitanization', the notion of 'strategic cosmopolitanism' also recognises that 'migrants' identities are not always located in a philosophical, moral, and ethical attitude towards cultural openness but instead adopted out of necessity' (Kothari, 2008, 514). For Sindhis in Accra, the necessity comes from the loss of their homeland. This study takes ideas of everyday and strategic forms of cosmopolitanism (Skrbis et al, 2004; Kothari, 2008) and uses them to explore how even relatively elite groups of migrants have to adopt strategies to ensure their success, which in turn fosters a sense of ethnic belonging.

For my research participants, the actual characteristics associated with cosmopolitanism can be flexible, and even contradictory. Few of my participants would use the word Ghanaian to describe themselves. However, as becomes increasingly clear throughout the thesis, this seemingly cosmopolitan group lead lives that are very much embedded

in their localities. I argue that ordinary cosmopolitanism, as set out by Skrbis et al (2004), allows us to explore the everyday ways in which people *in* a particular place establish and sustain valued transnational connections, and thereby become Sindhi.

Ghanaian cosmopolitanisms

As noted above, my research participants self-consciously identify as being cosmopolitan. Their own cosmopolitanism is partly established by them drawing contrasts between themselves and what they refer to as 'locals' – that is, black Ghanaians. As we will see later in the thesis, the term 'local' carries some negative connotations when Sindhis use it in Accra. The relationship between Sindhis and Ghanaians is largely characterised by an employer/employee structure – where Sindhis are the wealthy employees of 'locals', either in Sindhi businesses or as house helps, drivers, gardeners and nannies.[11] Sindhis perceive a gap between themselves, as wealthy, mobile people who choose cosmopolitanism, and 'local' Ghanaians whose experiences and ambitions are limited to 'their own culture', but this perception sits uneasily against the scholarly literature on Ghanaians and migration.

Firstly, Accra itself has been and continues to be a place characterised by in-migration and the mixing of ethnicities, cultures and races. Only the Ga people are indigenous to Accra, and there has been a long history of the Ga trading with and marrying Europeans, dating back to era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Ipsen, 2015). Ipsen's monograph follows the stories of six generations of Ga women married to Danish men and explores

[11] Of course, there are exceptions to this rule and there are more equal relationships between some Sindhis and Ghanaians – but these are much fewer in numbers.

how these families negotiated being mulatofoi (a Ga term used to describe mixed race individuals in Accra) at a time when the trading of human beings both enabled and contributed to a racial hierarchy (ibid, 2). Accra is also a coastal town, with a history of trading and mixing which is similar in some respects to that of Ouidah, as documented by Robin Law (2018). For example, the establishment of an English quarter called Ouidah (the indigenous name being Sogbadji), has been described as a 'cosmopolitan community' including Africans of many different origins, as well as families of Portuguese and Brazilian origin (ibid, 141-142). In more recent times, Oxford Street in Accra has been recognised as both a local and global space (Quayson, 2014). Furthermore, Parker (2000) describes how, in addition to Europeans and Brazilians, Accra also became a site of in-migration and mixing for people from elsewhere in Ghana (such as Akan-speakers), particularly once the British colonial administration shifted its capital from Cape Coast to Accra in the late 19th century. It is clear from these examples that Accra has a long cosmopolitan history, of which Sindhis are a part, although they do not foreground cosmopolitanism in their understandings of Accra.

Although the above literature shows that Accra is a cosmopolitan area, literature on non-African migrants to Ghana is relatively slim. Akyeampong (2006) and Malki (2013) have contributed some important insights into the formation and experiences of the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana. Both scholars emphasise the importance of indigeneity to Ghanaian definitions of citizenship - the notion of Lebanese as 'aliens' dates back to the colonial period, and both Akyeampong (2006) and Malkki (2013) emphasise how the idea of 'alienage' has been adapted and taken up by postcolonial governments. Sindhis in Ghana are comparable to the Lebanese to the extent that both groups are perceived

as relatively wealthy and mobile communities, who chose to be in Ghana, but could equally choose to settle elsewhere. Taking direction from these studies of Lebanese migration to Ghana, in Chapter Three (Sindhi, Indian and Ghanaian) I explore how Sindhis have made sense of their belonging in Accra.

The literature on the Lebanese diaspora in Ghana links to a much more developed body of literature that focuses on less wealthy minority communities in Ghana, particularly those formed by migrants from other West African countries in the 'Zongos' (or 'stranger quarters') of Ghana's towns (Skinner, 1979; Schildkrout, 1978; Pellow, 1991; Pontzen, 2016; Casentini, 2018). Schildkrout (1978) wrote on the Zongo in Kumasi, looking at how people from all over West Africa have found ways of living together and creating a Zongo identity based around shared Islamic faith and the Hausa language. Most recently, Casentini (2018) reveals how memories of migration are called upon by people in particular ways to produce a common group identity in Ghana. Casentini also points to this common group identity as being a strategy for migrant groups to place themselves in the contemporary political backdrop of Ghana (ibid). My research participants would probably consider themselves very different from the kinds of migrants in Zongos – not least because these migrants are mostly Muslims, and the living conditions in the Zongos are rather less luxurious than those enjoyed by many Sindhis.

And yet some productive comparisons can be made between these seemingly different groups. Like Sindhis, people of the Zongos were also affected by measures taken by various post-colonial Ghanaian governments to exclude 'strangers', i.e. non-indigenous peoples, from social, political and economic life in Ghana. The most notable political

measure was the Aliens Compliance Order that came into effect in 1969 (Kobo, 2010). Within the Order all non-autochthonous populations such as Sindhis, Lebanese and migrants from elsewhere in West Africa, were classed as 'aliens' who were excluded from the benefits of Ghanaian citizenship; all non-indigenous people required permits to stay and work in Ghana, which as we will see in subsequent chapters, has had a lasting effect on my research participants' sense of belonging in Ghana.

Finally, a look at Sindhi cosmopolitanism, especially Sindhi marriages, and their global networks of family and friends can be usefully contrasted with the literature on Ghanaians 'at home in the world' (Manuh, 2005). Much of the literature on Ghanaian migrants living and working abroad, similarly to the literature on Indians in Africa, emphasises the connection between Ghanaian migrants and their 'homeland', and more specifically their hometown. Although more recently there has been a growing focus on transnational Ghanaian families and the ways in which people maintain family connections across different countries and continents, Ghana as 'home' still plays a role in the lives of these people (Caarls et al, 2018; Coe, 2011). For example, Caarls et al (2018) found that families between living between Ghana, the Netherlands and the UK tend to reunite in Ghana rather than in the countries of residence. There is a strong focus on Ghanaian men and women working abroad to accumulate resources in order for them to return to Ghana as economically and socially successful individuals (Peil, 1995; Black et al, 2003; Owusu, 2003; Coe, 2011). The ways in which migrants place themselves as successful individuals at 'home' is largely through investing in their social relations, as expressed in lavish funerals (Black et al, 2003), by building a house in their

hometown (Owusu, 2003), and via remittances to relatives (Wong, 2006). These are all part of the markers of success vis-à-vis other Ghanaians, as recognised in Ghana.

Sindhis then, who do not have such markers of success linked to their homeland, develop a cosmopolitanism that is recognised amongst their global networks – and invest in realising these aspirations whilst living in Accra. But this is not entirely unique to Sindhis. Studies of popular culture point to various forms of cosmopolitanism among Ghanaians 'at home' in Accra, and identify some of the ways in which Ghanaians insert themselves into global flows, establish particular configurations and interpretations, and grow their social status, even without travelling. Shipley (2009) reminds us that the intermingling of African and African Diasporic popular aesthetics has been a feature of African urban life throughout the twentieth century: 'Popular social styles provide creative ways for youth to imagine themselves as part of a broader Black cosmopolitan world' (2009, 632). By giving due attention to how Sindhis also insert themselves into global flows in Accra, this thesis builds upon a growing literature on Accra as a cosmopolitan place.

Research questions

From this review of the literature on migration and diasporas, and on cosmopolitanism as a category of theory and practice, in Ghana and elsewhere around the world, I developed the following research questions: how do people in diaspora create a sense of belonging through transnational linkages, what do they prioritise, how do they do it, and why does this hold such significance for them. In the absence of a homeland, what connections shape Sindhis' everyday lives? How do Sindhis experience important

markers in their life spans such as marriages? These questions were intended to frame an ethnographic study, and did not therefore preclude the emergence of new avenues of enquiry during my fieldwork.

Methodology

This research project lent itself to ethnographic fieldwork for a number of reasons. As discussed above, cosmopolitanism is both a category of practice, something that Sindhis in London during my Masters research had talked about, and a category of analysis. Ethnography allowed me to understand cosmopolitanism as a category of practice for Sindhis in Ghana. As a close-knit and excusive group, during the extended period of time I spent in the field I was able to harness the strengths of participant observation to help me gain 'access to the conceptual world' in which Sindhis in Ghana live (Geertz, 1973, 24). As I embedded myself into the everyday lives of Sindhi in Ghana and built close relationships with individuals, I participated, as ethnographers do, in 'watching what happens, listening to what is said' as well as conducting formal and informal interviews and participating in people's daily lives (Hammersley et al, 2007, 3) . This thesis is based on thirteen months of ethnographic fieldwork carried out between 2014 and 2018. The main phase of fieldwork in Accra was between September 2014 and July 2015, as well as multiple trips after this time to meet my research participants in other parts of the world.

During my main phase of fieldwork, I spent a lot of time with Chandni – a research participant whom we meet later in the thesis. I assisted Chandni with baking cakes for her business and accompanied her family to events such as weddings and cocktail

parties, thus I developed my understading of the connections between family life and business which are strongly intertwined for Sindhis and I was able to experience this first hand. Particiants observation remained the strongest method for me to gain rich insights into lives of Sindhis over the years I conducted my fieldwork. I returned to Accra in September 2015 to present at a conference at the University of Ghana, Legon and stayed at Chandni's family home during this return trip.

I first arrived in Accra knowing only a young man called Sandeep. Although at the time he had been a friend for six years, as is the case for many anthropologists conducting fieldwork, he became my gatekeeper. As my gatekeeper, my initial observations of Sindhis in Accra were dependent on the exposure I had through him. During my first evening in Accra, Sandeep took me to meet some of his friends at a local bar. In hindsight, the scene encapsulated how close participant observation became central to my ethnographic enquiry. There were seven or eight unmarried boys at the table when I arrived.[12] They were coming and going as it was a weeknight, and they had work the following day. One of the boys had brought his girlfriend (now wife) along – the only other female present besides me. Sandeep had already mentioned that he had asked her to invite me to a girls' dinner the following evening, and she did. Partway through the evening Sandeep's phone rang – one of the boys who had left earlier was in a sticky situation. His car had broken down in Jamestown, described as a 'local' area – by this it became clear that it was an area where residents were largely black Ghanaians and it

[12] Throughout the thesis I use the term boys and girls respectively to describe unmarried individuals in their twenties, as this is how they described themselves and how they were described by other, older Sindhis.

was not seen as being particularly safe. The boy had called his Ghanaian mechanic to come and take his car, but Sandeep had to leave to pick up his friend, just in case he found himself in any danger whilst waiting. Departing, Sandeep asked one of his friends to drop me home at the end of the evening and to ensure I got home safely. Being picked up and dropped off by one of the boys for nights out became a regular feature of my life in Accra, as well as for other unmarried girls. This early incident during fieldwork brought to the forefront questions about how Sindhis perceived, interacted with, and maintained boundaries from the majority of Ghanaians among whom they lived. It also surfaced the heavily gendered nature of social space and the modes of interaction between young men, all themes which I explored further throughout my fieldwork. The very nature of my initial encounters and the questions that arose from them were guided by one of the key principles of ethnography whereby 'the ethnographer is concerned with understanding the world from the point of view of those studied,' (Palmer, 2001, 301). This allowed for questions to arise throughout my fieldwork that opened up lines of enquiry and provided important context for interviews, during which I was able to explore themes further, but also interpret peoples' behaviours and what they said in interviews vis-à-vis in non-interview settings.

I carried out semi-structured interviews with thirty key research participants. My interviews were conducted with both unmarried girls and boys,[13] and married men and women. They took place at my apartment, at their homes or offices, or in cafés and

[13] I use the term 'boys' and 'girls' to refer to my unmarried research participants who were predominantly in their twenties as these are the terms they used to describe themselves, as well as the term used by the wider Sindhi community.

restaurants. I would always give the research participant the choice of where they wanted the interview to take place as I wanted them to be comfortable in their chosen setting. Interviews lasted anywhere between one hour to three hours. All interviews were recorded on a dictaphone and stored on a password-protected laptop and external hard drive. For these interviews, formal consent was given by research participants through a form outlining my research and the option to withdraw at any time. Some participants would choose to use their real names, and others preferred pseudonyms.[14]

As part of my responsibility as a researcher, I have chosen to anonymise interviews even in some cases where individuals gave their full consent to use their real names. I also chose to leave some material out of the thesis, even though I had consent from interviewees to use it. This means that some themes, such as sexuality, are not discussed in this thesis, although what my interviewees shared with me about such themes have influenced my understanding of other themes that are explicitly addressed in the thesis. The decision to anonymise interviews, and to omit material were both made out of a concern that, in this relatively small and tight-knit community, individuals should not suffer negative consequences such as reputational damage or be subjected to gossip as a result of participating in my research.

Although the majority of my research participants spoke English, in order to enrich my participant observation I undertook Sindhi language training in Delhi, India, between March and May 2016. This had been planned as a four-month stint, but it was cut short when my tutor suffered a stroke. Instead, I returned to Accra between February 2017

[14] Please see appendix C for a blank copy of the consent form used.

and April 2017 to undertake Sindhi language training with one of my research participants. I lived with other research participants during this trip – a married couple who were pregnant with their first child. It was during this time that I became lead researcher for a documentary commissioned by the Indian Association of Ghana and the Indian High Commission of Accra, Ghana, which gave me access to a number of elderly Sindhi men whom I had been unable to interview during my previous fieldwork trips.[15] It was agreed with the group who commissioned the documentary that I would be able to use data from all documentary interviews in my thesis. In January 2018, I returned to Accra to stay once again with the same married couple and their four-month-old baby, for a period of three weeks, during which I concluded the fieldwork for this thesis.

Research challenges

Defining the length of fieldwork and 'the field' itself has been a difficult task, especially given the nature of my research project. 'The field' now includes online spaces, and these already render my research 'multi-sited' (Sluka et al, 2012, 2). After I left Accra in 2015, I kept in touch with individuals via social media platforms. WhatsApp especially played, and continues to play, an important role in my ability to keep in touch. Moreover, the Sindhis with whom I conducted research are a relatively wealthy urban population and travel frequently. Since beginning my fieldwork in 2014, I have met research participants in a range of settings on numerous occasions. During my language training trip to Delhi, I was met by a female research participant who stayed with me at

[15] The documentary was released by the H.E. Berinder Singh Yadav, the current High Commissioner of India in Ghana during India's 70th Republic Day celebrations in Accra and is due to be viewed by the Indian foreign ministry. It can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZvSzC7loCiE

my accommodation for a week during which we travelled around North India. I then met the same research participant again in Paris some months later whilst I was attending a workshop at EHESS (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales). I also met Chandni and her husband in Florence, Italy, for a week during July 2017. I have attended three Sindhi weddings, in equally diverse places: the first in Phuket, Thailand, in July 2015; the second in Tuscany, Italy, in July 2017; and most recently in December 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. During these weddings I met not only research participants from Accra, but also Sindhis from Mumbai, Toronto, New York, San Francisco, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. I have also spent time with individuals and families during their trips to London, as well as meeting new individuals connected to them.

All of these interactions with my research participants mean that in some ways I have never left 'the field'. For ethical reasons, I do not quote everyday conversations and exchanges now that my research participants consider me to have completed research, but these interactions provide me with valuable insights and context that continue to deepen my understanding of my research participants' lives.

Indeed, one of the biggest ethical considerations for this study was precisely the need to separate official 'data' from exchanges that were not considered part of my research, which I did by ensuring formal interviews were arranged for conversations I would be recording and quoting from directly in my writing. All of my research participants knew that I was a researcher of Sindhis in Accra, and I would often remind them that I collected data mainly through participant observation and interviews. Some would be conscious enough of my researcher position to say to me at times that they wanted to speak 'off

the record'. But as I increasingly became immersed in everyday life and my friendships with individuals became stronger, these interactions became harder to separate.

Unlike many other UK-based researchers who work in Africa, I was not in a position where there were substantial class inequalities between my research participants and me (Bolt, 2011, 44-45). The notion of 'studying up' as discussed by Laura Nader (1969) in her call to encourage anthropologists to research middle and upper ends of social power structures highlights that there are multiple ethical considerations and challenges around accessibility that researchers, such as myself, need to address in our own projects. Although these issues are not unique to studying up, I had to ensure I was explicitly thinking through these during my fieldwork, as other researchers have also reflected upon during their research (Guterson, 1997; Priyadharshini, 2003; Ortner, 2010). For Otner, during her study of Hollywood she found that 'participant observation deep "inside"' was impossible (2010, 218). Although Ortner was able to telephone interview an award winning producer named James Schamus, he said that Ortner could not spend time at company offices as there were 'confidential conversations, meetings, and deals that take place there everyday' (ibid). Although not for exactly the same reasons as Ortner, I had similar issues with access to homes of my research participants when all members of the family were present, as well as the offices of my research participants, as interactions within both of these spaces would be confidential and surrounded by a secrecy around private family matters. I can still recall a time, relatively late on in my fieldwork, where I had the opportunity to enter a research participant's family office. Everytime I had been to his home during my fieldwork I would always remain in the main house. The small door to the right of the house that accommodated

the office was not a space open to all, and it was usually where his father and grandfather would be during office hours. It took months before I was invited to enter, and even then my visit was short as they were discussing financials so I had to leave. By spending over twelve months in Accra, my multi-sited ethnography, that often found me in liminal spaces between what Ortner refers to as 'the inner world', and the outer world of 'the public' was key to help me build a fuller picture of an exclusive group of people in Ghana (2010, 221). Furthermore, Ortner (2010) calls upon Gusterson's (1997) concept of 'polymorphous engagement', that allows researchers to interact with research participants across various sites, and sometimes in virtual forms too – a form which helped to build my discussion of social media use in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

Although I could argue that I overcame accessibility issues relatively successfully through both spending a substantial amount of time in the field as well as ensuring I harnessed the strengths of conducting a multi-sited ethnography, this accessibility meant I was in spaces and situations where sensitive themes were being discussed, often with people who had become friends as well as research participants. I had to rely on my research participants remembering at any given time that I was a researcher, which was not always easy. Thus, sometimes information would be shared by individuals that I knew from my wider observations could not be quoted or discussed directly as a result of a particular encounter. Hence, although I describe social scenes, encounters and events in the thesis, quotes are taken from material that was acquired in contexts where the research agenda was explicit – during a more formal interview, or by specifically asking someone whether I could follow up with them on some questions that had arisen as a result of a more informal interaction.

I overcame such blurred lines between friendship and researcher by always being explicit if I wanted to follow a line of enquiry someone opened up during an informal conversation – usually through arranging an interview with them, or by asking them for permission to discuss their reflections anonymously. I also made my writing available to individuals in draft format, especially when I was writing about themes I knew they were particularly sensitive about. On one such occasion a research participant asked me to edit a section even though I did not mention their name, where they felt my discussion went too far and they may have been identified and viewed in a negative light by their family.

Reflections on positionality

During my main phase of fieldwork, I was unmarried. I have already alluded to the practical implications of being an unmarried Indian girl living in Accra alone. However, there were also social implications associated with this. I was often asked if I was in Accra to find a 'boy' (i.e. a husband), followed by (mostly married) women telling me that, as I liked Accra so much, I should settle down there. This consistent narrative about the difficulty of finding girls who liked Accra enough to move there has implications for boys in Ghana, as we will see in Chapter Five (Boys to Men: Negotiating Masculinities in Accra). Being an outsider and a young unmarried woman put me in a position where I was able to spend a lot of time with groups of boys in male-dominated spaces, such as Honeysuckle,[16] which allowed me to understand these implications at a much deeper level. This was not questioned, although some married women would make comments

[16] A pub which we will hear more about in Chapter Five (Boys to Men).

about how much time I spent with the boys. Nevertheless, these interactions enabled me to explore masculinities in a way I had not planned to before fieldwork.

Throughout my fieldwork, I was imbricated in the gendered forms of sociality that are produced and reproduced by Sindhis in Accra. My position as a young, unmarried, Indian woman facilitated my acceptance into some social spaces and interactions, and inhibited me in others. It was difficult for me to interview or occupy the same spaces as certain groups, such as middle-aged married men. I rarely found myself in the same settings as them, and thus could not build rapport or conduct participant observation. When I was with their children – who were my peer group – it was usually during evenings or weekends and we would be out of the house, and if I was at their homes during the day with their wives or daughters they would be at the office. Therefore, I had to rely largely upon formal interviews with older men to gain an understanding of their lives - although reflections shared by their wives and children sometimes helped me to interpret and contextualise the interview data.

Being a woman, it was easier for me to gain access to the same spaces women would occupy, and I was able to spend much more time with them. However, as we shall see later in the thesis, women did not always speak openly about their lives. They were careful about sharing information that might portray themselves, their family, or Sindhis more generally, in a negative light. The length of my fieldwork helped me to overcome some of these issues. Individuals gradually developed more confidence in my ability to treat their information with sensitivity – which I did either by anonymising them, or by omitting explicit discussions of the most controversial matters on which they spoke.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter Two (Roots and Routes) tells the story of Sindhi migration to Ghana through a series of life histories. It shows not only the heterogeneity of Sindhi migration to Ghana, but also how distinct migration practices before 1947 determined post-1947 experiences of Partition for my research participants. By comparing my research participants' experiences of Partition to those of Sindhis who remained in parts of India, I show how these pre-1947 movements were key in establishing a global Sindhi diaspora. In turn, this begins to reveal how cosmopolitanism became central to Sindhis' self-understandings.

Chapter Three (Sindhi, Indian and Ghanaian) shows how, as the earliest Indian arrivals in Ghana, Sindhis established themselves as the dominant cultural producers of Indianness in the country. It begins by looking at the Indian Association of Ghana, originally formed as a merchant's association for Indian men, and the role it plays today in the lives of a diverse Indian community. The chapter also introduces the importance of Sindhi women as cultural producers through a focus on the work of the Indian Women's Association. I argue that through their leading role in ethnic organisations like the Indian Association of Ghana, Sindhis have created and maintained what Indianness in Ghana looks like. I argue that women play a central role in this ethnic formation process. This takes us forward in the thesis by revealing the special place Sindhis occupy within the Indian diaspora in Ghana, and adds to our insight of their self-understandings in Ghana in relation to other Indians and indigenous Ghanaians.

Chapter Four (Tying Knots) explores how marriage is used as a tool by individuals and families to create and maintain their place within global Sindhi networks. It shows how much time, energy and resource is put into organising lavish weddings in order for Sindhis to build upon their cultural and social capital, which can have lasting effects for their personal and professional lives. I argue that Sindhi marriages are a way of building social and cultural capital through connections outside of Ghana, which can then be mobilised inside of Ghana and particularly inside of the Sindhi community. This chapter shows how Sindhi networks, and the cosmopolitan project that Sindhis make themselves a part of, are fundamentally dependent on one another.

Chapter Five (Boys to Men) explores Sindhi masculinities. I show how the return of unmarried boys to Accra after completing their higher education determines the models of masculinities available to them as they establish themselves as good businessmen, good sons and eligible bachelors in the Ghanaian capital. I focus on the hierarchies that unmarried Sindhi boys must navigate in order to make sense of themselves as men. I argue that unmarried Sindhi boys occupy subordinate positions in relation to older men and women. However, this subordination is temporary as the ways that they shape their masculinities based on available Sindhi, Ghanaian and global models have the potential to ensure their success in becoming Sindhi men in the long term.

Chapter Six (Women and Work) illustrates how Sindhi women negotiate their roles as wives, mothers and businesswomen. By exploring their experiences of entering the world of work, and the challenges women face during this period in their lives, I argue that Sindhi women time their entry into work carefully to ensure they maintain ideals of

respectability expected of Sindhi women. I also explore how unmarried Sindhi girls think about work in reference to both men and the older women around them. This chapter builds upon what we learned about Sindhi women in Ghana in previous chapters.

Chapter Seven (Social Media) embeds Sindhis in Ghana in a wider diasporan context, focussing on how this group asserts its place within hierarchies of global Sindhis, and in turn wider Indians. It approaches themes from earlier in the thesis, such as social and cultural capital, marriage, and experiences across generations through peoples' use of social media at a relatively recent tool that has only strengthened a sense of 'cosmopolitan Sindhyat', or *cosmopolitan Sindhiness,* an identity closely linked to Sindhis' consumption practices. As the final chapter, we come full circle from Chapter Two: from how migration patterns were key in establishing cosmopolitanism as a central aspiration of global Sindhis, to how social media is another tool to help in realising these aspirations and maintaining places within prestigious global Sindhi networks.

CHAPTER TWO

ROOTS AND ROUTES: THE EMERGENCE OF AN INDIAN COMMUNITY IN GHANA

Everyday Cosmopolitanism

In this chapter, I develop my introductory discussion of cosmopolitanism by applying this category of analysis to my primary research findings, particularly oral history interviews with early Sindhi migrants to Accra. My specific interest is in cosmopolitanism in the 'ordinary' sense, following Skrbis et al's conceptualisation of 'ordinary cosmopolitanism' as acts embedded in everyday routines in peoples' lives (2013, 102). Emphasising the emic significance of cosmopolitanism for my research participants, they would often refer to themselves and other Sindhis using words such as 'global' and 'cosmopolitan', speaking in great detail of how this displaced group of people, who were completely uprooted during the Partition of India in 1947, have built lives for themselves in all corners of the world. This chapter begins to explore Sindhis' self- understandings and aspirations in global networks through treating cosmopolitanism as an etic analytical category. To do this I explore what migration has looked like for Sindhis in Ghana, and identify the centrality of such migration practices in explaining some of the seemingly cosmopolitan characteristics of Sindhis. By focussing on everyday occurrences that have arisen through the different migration trajectories of individuals in Ghana, I develop an understanding of cosmopolitanism as embedded in the particularities of local contexts. By drawing upon these local contexts, I exemplify

aspects of 'ordinary cosmopolitanism' we were introduced to earlier – what it is, why it is important and its enactment in everyday lives. My concern is with the relationship between the idea of the wider 'global' ties and obligations to others as 'citizens of the world', and how these global flows are experienced and embodied in 'local' everyday, lived experiences which are contextualised and specific.

This brings us to question whether Sindhis can genuinely be viewed as cosmopolitans in this everyday sense. During my fieldwork, research participants generally expressed cosmopolitan views by referring to travel, cuisine and music rather than an openness to other cultures or strangers.[17] This then begs the question of how 'cosmopolitan' Sindhis in Ghana really are. In addressing this, the chapter introduces us to the individuals and families that we will learn about in depth throughout the thesis. Some of these families had individuals migrating to Ghana since the early 1900s, which as we will see below, had a significant impact on how families experienced events both in India and Ghana.

The existence of small trading networks from pre-1947 in Ghana was one of the key factors in determining migratory patterns in the aftermath of the 1947 Partition of India. This early migration, of which Peekay Mahtani and his contemporaries were a part, was crucial to establishing a Sindhi community in Ghana, which has now grown to include second-, third- and sometimes even fourth-generation descendants. By comparing migration experiences of individuals who migrated to Ghana and those who migrated to Gujarat, just across the new Pakistan-India border, it becomes clear that the latter experienced Partition as a complete rupture to their economic and social lives. In

[17] The lack of openness becomes increasingly clear when I explore the hierarchical structure of Indians in Ghana today that has been largely defined by established Sindhis.

contrast, Sindhis with pre-existing networks in Ghana experienced Partition as a push factor that catalysed and cemented existing migration trends. Moreover, after 1947, the simultaneous migration of Sindhis out of Sindh to urban centres in Hong Kong, Japan, the UK and Ghana paved the way for growing global networks of Sindhi families.[18] For these Sindhis, therefore, Partition was a moment in which there was a shift in *who* was migrating. Whereas once international migration was once dominated by men only (known as Sindhiworkis), entire families were now resettling in urban centres outside of Sindh. Although transnational trading networks existed amongst some Sindhis long before Partition (Falzon, 2004), the migration of women and children further embedded these networks, bringing with them fundamental changes. Sindhi migration to Ghana also highlights that pre-existing familial networks (both blood relatives and those related through marriage) resulted in different migration flows and occupational outcomes.

Following this specific trajectory enables us to understand how the notion of a *cosmopolitan Sindhiyyat*[19] has become a central feature and aspiration of the global Sindhi diaspora. It is important for us to note this simultaneous global migration of Sindhis across the world, as it is *within* these global post-Partition movements that we begin to understand the building of local identities, which are deeply embedded in the particularities of the migrants' destinations.

[18] There was also migration to Manila and Virgin Islands but the Sindhi community in Ghana are not closely connected with Sindhis in these areas.

[19] Thank you to Professor Michel Boivin, Zahir Bhalloo and Julien Levesque for organising a thought provoking workshop title 'The Vernacularisation of Muslim and Hindu Traditions: the case of Sindhiyyat' that took place on 31st May and 1st June 2016 at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris. The papers and feedback from this workshop helped me to develop my thoughts and analysis of using this term to refer to my research participants.

This chapter takes a chronological approach to the migration narratives of the elderly Sindhis whom I encountered during my fieldwork. It first provides the historical context of Sindhis in Ghana, delving into their pre-Partition history, which is key to help us understand the oral history narratives and the migration trajectories these narratives describe. Drawing upon these narratives, I will discuss from where and how my research participants came to Ghana - their roots and routes, as well as the reasons behind their individual migrations. Next, the chapter addresses the political coups in Ghana's history, and how they caused a number of Sindhi families in Ghana to leave and never return. Conversely, it also looks at the experiences of families who left and subsequently returned. Finally, the chapter addresses the different types of more recent Sindhi migration to Ghana, including those people (mostly female) who migrate to Ghana after marriage.[20]

Historical Context

Who are Sindhis?

Sindhis are people who hail from a province called Sindh.[21] Before the Partition of India in 1947, Sindh was the western-most province of India, bisected by the Indus River. From

[20] I have been unable to include all life histories collected throughout my fieldwork in this chapter. I have picked those that represent different types of migration, to further our understanding of Sindhi migration to Ghana in relation to the arguments I make in the chapter.

[21] The official spelling was changed from 'Sind' to 'Sindh' in Pakistan's Constitution (Eighteenth Amendment) Act, 2010. It was then approved by the provincial assembly in the Sindh Laws (Amendment) Bill 2012. The bill states: '*The 18th Amendment of the Constitution corrected the name of the Province of Sindh from "Sind" as the British Empire spelled it to "Sindh" to reflect more accurately the actual pronunciation of the word by the people of the Province. This Act shall bring all legal documents issued in the Province into conformity with the constitutional Amendment.'* (http://tribune.com.pk/story/506227/sind-not-sindh/) In direct quotations, I will use original spelling. Otherwise, I will use the official spelling of Sindh throughout this thesis.

the Arab invasion in 711, Sindh was ruled by a series of Muslim rulers. The last of the independent dynasties was the Talpur Mirs, who ruled from 1783-1843 (Markovits, 2000, 45). In 1843, the British conquered Sindh and annexed it to the Bombay Presidency (Bhattacharya, 1997). Sindh's population was made up of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.[22] Hindus were a minority population in terms of their numbers compared to Muslim Sindhis, and Hinduism was the minority faith in the province; by the time of annexation, only one fifth of the population was Hindu (Falzon, 2004). While this figure varied by locality (ibid, 4), in the weeks leading up to the Partition of India the Hindu and Sikh communities accounted for only 25 percent of Sindh's total population (Ansari, 2005, 53). Despite being a minority group in numbers, during the Talpur era, merchant Hindus from Karachi and Hyderabad were a 'crucial component of the ruling class…' and their commercial success granted them elite status (Markovits, 2000, 45). This study focuses solely on Sindhis who broadly follow Hinduism, and whose heritage lies in the merchants of Karachi and Hyderabad in Sindh. It also focuses largely on Sindhis who arrived in Ghana earlier than other Sindhis and Indians who were predominantly traders. As my research participants referred to themselves only as Sindhis – following common usage across the diaspora – I will also do so throughout this thesis.[23]

[22] There were other smaller religious groups living in Sindh. Indeed, even within Hinduism there are branches, such as Shaivism, Vaishism and Braham Kumaris. Hinduism is often used as an umbrella term to encompass other related faiths, such as Jainism.

[23] This is similar to Falzon's experience of conducting ethnographic research amongst Hindu Sindhis in London, Mumbai and Malta. His research participants used the word Sindhi to refer to themselves but being 'Hindu' was implied (2004, 6).

Religion and the social organisation of Sindhis in the pre-Partition period

The religion of Sindhis is categorically linked to their place of origin. I have stated above that this study is focused on Hindu Sindhis. However, the term Hindu does not adequately capture the fluidity of Sindhi religious beliefs and their hybridity between three significant religions: Hinduism, Sikhism and Sufi Islam.

According to Markovits, Hindu Sindhis are, 'Nanakpanthis, that is non-Khalsa or Sahajdari Sikhs, but their Nanakpanthi faith blended harmoniously with non-sectarian forms of both Saivaism and Vaisnavism' (2004, 48). This means that Hindu Sindhis follow the teachings of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru, and also practiced elements of Hinduism, through the veneration of Shiva and Vishnu, two Hindu gods. Although Markovits's description of the term Nanankpanthi reflects the religious practices of my research participants, none of my research participants ever referred to themselves as Nanakpanthis, or non-Khalsa Sikhs. This may be due to the dominant understandings of religions that apply specific boundaries between Hinduism, Sikhism and Sufi Islam, and the limitations this has caused for Sindhi religious beliefs.

Dominant understandings of religions in India and the boundaries between them were solidified during the colonial era. Essentialized definitions extend beyond religion to 'caste, ethnicity, region and race,' as seen through Jenkin's analysis of colonial portrayals (photographic collections as well as ethnographies) which 'classified, catagorized, and mapped the people under study' (2003, 1144). Jenkin's analysis fits within a wider post-colonial literature that places the production of rigid religious boundaries in India, and the tensions and violence it has led to between Hindus and Muslims, in the colonial era

(Chandra, 1984; Pandey, 1992; Bacchetta, 2000; Van der Veer, 2002). As Ramey points out, many of the definitions produced in the colonial period did not give ample consideration to the 'complexity of practices and community inter-relations' that existed (2007, 3). As Ramey points out in his chapter in which he uses Sindhi religious beliefs and practices as the empirical focus to argue the challenges and problems of religious boundaries, this is not a challenge distinct to Sindhis, but also for other groups in India (ibid). One such example is the work of Flueckiger (2006) who focuses on Amma's 'healing room' in Hyderabad, South India. Amma helps individuals from all religious backgrounds with physical, emotional or psychological issues, and her healing is rooted in the practice of vernacular Islam, in which the boundaries between Islam, Christianity and Hinduism are fluid (ibid).

Specifically in relation to Sindhis, Ramey notes that Hindu Sindhis defy traditional religious boundaries by "referring to a religious leader as a Hindu Sufi, and placing the Guru Granth Sahib underneath an Om in the centre of a religious institution," (2008, 2). The language Ramey refers to here is significant; 'Sufi' is a term linked to Islamic beliefs, so to use the term in parallel with 'Hindu' takes from two very distinct religions. Similarly, the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy scriptures being placed with the Om, takes from two distinct religions, Sikhism and Hinduism. This raises important questions about how this community had to negotiate their beliefs and practices and importantly, how they represented these beliefs and practices in their new settlements after 1947.

For example, when Hindu Sindhis migrated to India, their Hindu identification was questioned because non-Sindhis saw this community as Sikhs due to their veneration of

the Guru Granth Sahib (ibid). This emphasises that Hindu Sindhis had to defend their religious beliefs to people that in theory they had identified with on religious grounds during Partition. It highlights religious boundaries that have now become naturalised and thus described as traditional were once much more fluid. It also highlights that Hindu Sindhis in diaspora are aware that their beliefs do not lie within traditional boundaries. Ramey explains that several Hindu Sindhis in Lucknow[24] referred to themselves as, 'basically Hindu' (2008, 5). Although these individuals identify with Hinduism, they recognise a difference from the mainstream in their beliefs, a point that will be explored in greater detail later in this thesis when looking at other Indian ethnic groups in Ghana.

As Ramey puts it, "Many Sindhi Hindus specifically understand Hinduism as a broad category that encompasses varied elements. Sikh traditions are a subset within that broad Hindu category, and Sufism is an expression of devotion to the divine that extends beyond any religious boundary" (Ramey, 2008, 4).[25] How difficult did their religious beliefs make it for this diasporic community to relate to their new neighbours in India and beyond? Mukhi explains, "For those Sindhi Hindus who have migrated outside of India, as a minority within the minority Hindu immigrant community, they similarly have had to balance their connections to all Hindus with their distinctiveness as an ethno-religious community," (2000, 100-101).

[24] Lucknow is the capital city of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

[25] Since the early 20th century, Sikhs have argued that their religion is not a subgroup of Hinduism. This was enshrined legally since the 1920s through the establishment of the *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee* (SGPC) to control Gurudwaras in Punjab. Islam was also codified as a separate religion in law through the All India Muslim Personal Law (ibid).

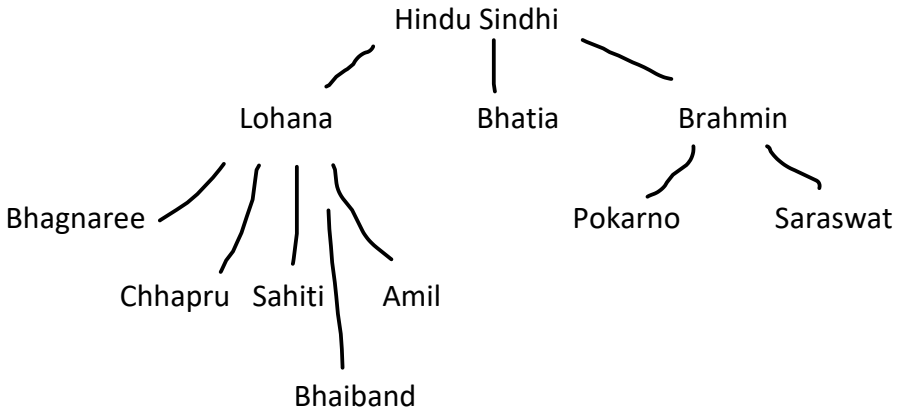
In the pre-Partition period, Sindhis aligned themselves along two major axes of social stratification (Falzon, 2004). The first was jati, the clans Sindhis belonged to based on birth; the second was region. These distinctions were not mutually exclusive and could overlap. A third additional axis was caste, an aggregation of jati groups as shown below.

Ansari states that Sindhis were dominated by 'one so-called caste, the Lohana, which was more or less considered to encompass the entire Hindu society of Sind' (2005, 20). However, the Hindu population was actually made up of three main castes – Lohanas, Bhatias and Brahmins. The various jatis (kinship groups) – smaller than castes – together formed the pre-Partition Hindu community in Sindh, and each had distinct occupations. Amils were clerical administrators and were the most prestigious group of Lohanas, but not the wealthiest. Bhaibands, also a Lohana jati, were the network of Sindhi traders who, although not educated, were the most successful economically and the most populous (ibid). Among the castes, Brahmins were the ritual specialists, for example, priests to the jatis within the Lohana caste; and the Bhatias were involved in long-distance trade in the Gulf region (although the Lohana jati of Bhaibands were also traders). Bhaibands and Bhatias were the first Sindhis to make business links outside of the sub-continent. The majority of my research participants, though not all, are Bhaibands.

Jati has lost its relevance in organising everyday exchanges between my research participants in Ghana. However, as an identity marker it can be foregrounded in some situations. For example, jati does not necessarily reflect occupation today, as was the case in Sindh. Although my research participants were aware of their own jati, elders

would mostly mention it to explain why their fathers had gone to Ghana in the early 1900s. After 1947, jatis other than Bhaibands and Bhatias have been able to engage in occupations such as trade and business. Some have experienced substantial economic success. As a result, sometimes marriages take place between people from different jatis that would not have occurred in pre-1947 Sindh or even soon after the Partition. However, some of my research participants did stress that traditional families still opt for marrying within the same jati, regardless of the economic positions of families from different jatis.

The diagram below presented by Falzon shows a breakdown of the Hindu Sindhi jatis (2004, 32).



The second distinction between Sindhis in Sindh was region. Sindh was divided into two regions, Lower Sindh, which included Karachi and Hyderabad, and Upper or Northern Sindh, in which Shikarpur was situated. Falzon notes that those from Lower Sindh would look down upon those from Upper Sindh, and the term used to describe Northerners (utradi) was offensive (2004). However, Falzon does not specify whether this was

exclusive to Hindus or whether it crossed religious boundaries and was a view shared by non-Hindus in Sindh. Jati and regionality were equally rigid distinctions by which Hindu Sindhi society of pre-Partition India was organised. For example, intermarriage did not take place between those of the same jati but from different areas: Hyderbadi Bhaibands did not marry Kudabadi Bhaibands (ibid).

The Partition of India: 1947

On 3rd June 1947 at 4pm, the then-Governor-General and Viceroy Lord Mountbatten announced the 3rd June Plan. Addressing the Indian nation over the radio, he stipulated that India would be free on 15th August 1947. This marked the end of the British Raj that had been ruling India since 1858. The same date also marked the Partition of India into two separate countries – India and Pakistan. A Partition organised along religious lines drew a border between Hindu/Sikh India and Muslim Pakistan. In the lead-up to and the months following the Partition, communities who associated themselves with Hinduism migrated across the newly formed borders of Pakistan into India. The same happened for Muslims crossing the border to start new lives in Pakistan. This meant that there were vast exchanges of people across these newly formed borders, largely characterised by bloodshed and violence (Talbot et al, 2009; Khan, 2017).[26] As noted above, unlike other regions, which overlapped both sides of the new border following

[26] To give an indication of just how large these exchanges of Hindu/Sikh and Muslims were, Bharadwaj et al write, 'In Indian Punjab, the number of Muslims in 1931 was around 3.5 million and this had been reduced to 0.2 million in 1951. In terms of percentages of populations we see a drop from 30 per cent in 1931 to 1.8 per cent in 1951. In Pakistani Punjab, the numbers are even more drastic - the percentage of Hindus/Sikhs in the population drops from 22 per cent to a mere 0.16 per cent. At the district level the numbers reveal the same movement, in a more dramatic fashion. Amritsar in India had more than half a million Muslims in 1931, and in 1951 only 4,000 Muslims remained. Gujrat district in Pakistani Punjab had over 130,000 Hindus/Sikhs, but after Partition only 100 remained in 1951. (2008, 46).

the Partition of India in August 1947, Sindh was wholly subsumed into the newly formed state of Pakistan.

For my research participants' families, an earlier pre-Partition migration of Sindhi men to Ghana enabled women and children to follow, often via Mumbai. Since pre-partition Sindh was annexed to the Mumbai Presidency, some of my research participants' families already had established businesses in Mumbai, so it made sense for women and children to migrate firstly to Mumbai before moving on to Ghana. The Census of India in 1951 reported that half of the 800,000 registered Sindhi speakers in post-partition India were concentrated in Mumbai of which "40 per cent were described as engaged in trading occupations" (Markovits, 2000, 278). However, as men found that they could build successful businesses in Ghana, it became one of many destinations Sindhi business families opted to settle in on a more permanent basis.

Arrival of Sindhis to the Gold Coast

The majority of my research participants had family members migrating to Ghana since the 1910s. However, it was approximately twenty years earlier, in 1890, that the first Sindhi, known as Bhai Bhoolchand, is said to have arrived in the Gold Coast (Indian Association of Ghana, 2010). It is possible that this man was part of a wave of migration out of Sindh after 1843, when many merchants left Hyderabad[27] in search of business opportunities elsewhere in the world – what Cohen terms a 'trade diaspora' (Cohen,

[27] Hyderabad is the second largest city in Sindh, located in the South of the province with the Indus River running to the west of the city.

1971). It is rumoured that he left the Gold Coast in the early 1900s in search of new business opportunities in other parts of Africa and the Middle East.

A social survey of Accra carried out by Ione Acquah notes the number of 'Indians' in Ghana some 16 years before the Partition in 1931 at 21, all of whom were male merchants (1958, 43). By 1948, the year following the Partition of India this number had risen to 98 Indians, including nine females, four of whom were under the age of one (ibid) which suggests that the Partition of India and the subsequent migration of Sindhi families out of Sindh was a contributing factor to this rise in numbers. After any hopes of returning to their homeland of Sindh were diminished, numbers continued to rise as Sindhi traders began to assess the possibility of Ghana becoming a more permanent settlement for them and their families.

The Indian Association of Ghana was founded as a progression of the Indian Merchants Association in West Africa which was established in 1937 as an active association for employers in Accra (ibid, 86-87). Although the term 'Indian' encompasses multiple ethnic groups, judging by the oral histories I collected, the vast majority of Indians (and perhaps even all Indians) in Accra during the first half of the twentieth century were of Sindhi origin. It was some eight years after this survey was undertaken that the first Sindhi family (as opposed to Sindhi male migrant) arrived in the Gold Coast. This was the Mahtani family. Later in this chapter, we will meet Peekay Mahtani, who was a young boy when he arrived in the Gold Coast in 1939.

Aside from a few families like the Mahtanis, 1947 did mark a shift in the migration patterns of Sindhis to the Gold Coast. This period saw women, young children and

unmarried adult men coming to join male family members for school or to work in small family businesses. Until the 1970s, Indians in Ghana continued to be predominantly Sindhis.

Since then, two waves of migration (one in the 1970s and the other since 2000) have resulted in a diversification of the Indian population in Ghana, to encompass Gujaratis, Punjabis, Bangaloreans, Maharashtrans, to name but a few. Many of these recent arrivals migrate to Ghana to work in managerial roles for existing Sindhi and Indian businesses. Although there are no official figures for Indians currently living in Ghana, in a fact sheet for Ghana, published by the High Commission of India based in Accra, the estimated number of Indians in Ghana was approximately 10,000 in 2018 (HCIACCRA, 2019). Sindhis make up a small minority of this number. Focusing on early Sindhi arrivers to Ghana, this chapter thus tells a story of an Indian settlement in West Africa.

Placing Sindhis in the African Indian diaspora

As noted in the opening of my introduction, Sindhis are a part of a diverse global Indian diaspora. As Jayaram (2011) notes in the introduction to an edited volume, 'Diversities in the Indian Diaspora', there are dimensions of diversity that characterise experiences of different groups of Indians located in fifty-seven countries, [28] and in some locations such as the UK, US, Malaysia and South Africa, the number of Indians exceeds a million (ibid, 1). The diverstities Jayaram points to include the period of initial migration, numbers of Indians in the diasporic community in any given place, economic power, as

[28] This number relates only to countries that have more than 5,000 Indians (Jayaram, 2011, 1).

well as political power (ibid, 5-6). This diversity is particularly prevelant amongst the 'Indians diaspora' in, and of, Africa.

A vast literature, both historical and contemporary exists on Indians in East and South Africa, some of which has been discussed in the introduction in relation to 'homeland'. In their introduction to a special issue of *Africa* titled, 'Print Cultures, Nationalisms and Publics of the Indian Ocean', Hofmeyr et al (2011) introduce the long standing history of Indian and African relationships through a focus on print cultures. As noted by Hofmeyr et al (ibid), print and visual culture is only one strand in the study of the Indian Ocean, but the series of articles that follow allow us to see the multiple layers of relationships through slavery, indentured labour and free movement that Indians and Africans have had throughout history. The articles in this special issue focus heavily on East and South Africa, which as I have noted earlier, is representative of literature of Indians in Africa more generally.

The arrival of Indians to East Africa dates back 'many centuries before Christ' (Don Nanjira, 1976, 3). Nanjira highlights the business skills of Indians in East Africa from this early period, which saw them become the 'masters of finance, the bankers, the money-lenders and money changers,' as well as supplying East Africa with raw materials and food (ibid). It was only in the 19th century, spearheaded by the British colonial government in India and East Africa, that more Indians arrived in East Africa as indentured labourers and to set up *dukkas* (small shops) (Don Nanjira, 1976; Aiyar, 2015). There was also the emergence of an Indian medical professional community during the colonial period in Kenya that still have descendents living in Kenya today

(Greenwood, 2015). Returning for a moment to my earlier discussion of Indians in Africa and 'homeland', scholars focussing on Indians in East Africa continue to move beyond the binary link between diaspora and 'homeland'. Aiyer's (2015) focus on Indians in Kenya explores the rise of a diasporic consciousness and how Indians in Kenya made multiple homelands for themselves throughout the colonial era, and their participation in the political landscape of colonial Kenya to independence. Nasar (2016) analyses the transnational experiences of East African Indians during their expulsion from East Africa, and their subsequent migration to Britain focussing on their cultural and political identity formulation and reformulation.

As noted in the introduction, South Africa has a long standing history of Indian migration, dating back to the 15th century (Hollingsworth, 1960, 1). In the 19th century, 'between 1860 and 1911 the Colony of Natal imported 152 184 Indians' as indentured labourers to work on sugar plantations (Harris, 2010, 147). Since, the number of Indians in South Africa has risen to over one million (Jayaram, 2011, 1). Over the years there has been a focus on the political, social and religious positions of Indians in South Africa, and the marginalisation and discrimination they have faced throughout different periods of history with a focus on the key role Gandhi played in shaping the experiences of this group (Swan, 1985; M du Toit, 1996; Brown et al, 1996). In the post-apartheid period, there has been a recognition of how South African Indians use culture to (re)create racial difference in reaction to social and economic marginalisation (Radhakrishnan, 2005, 264). Radhakrishnan's (ibid) emphasis on women's roles in this process finds comparisons with my own findings of women's roles in forging reactive ethnicities in the context of Sindhi migration to Ghana (Chapter Three). More recently, recognising

historical experiences in shaping more recent experiences for Indian South Africans, scholars have focused on the 'triple identities' of South African Indians migrating from South Africa to the global North (Singh, 2008), social life in Indian townships in the post-apartheid period (Blom Hansen, 2012), as well as revisiting the making of Indian identities in the colonial era through a focus on marriage (Sheikh, 2017).

Notably, the much longer historical migration, often in large numbers, to East and South Africa, in comparison to the relatively recent settlement of small numbers of Indians in West Africa, characterised largely by the establishment of trading networks and Indian private companies has made for a different experience of migration and settlement. As Vittorini et al point out, 'there is no comparable legacy of mistrust of Indians in West Africa' (2011, 215). However, as we will see in Chapter Three (Sindhi, Indian and Ghanaian), Indians in Ghana have faced discrimination under various political regimes in the post-colonial period. These relatively small and seemingly insignificant migrations of Indians to West Africa may also explain the limited academic enquiry of Indians in West Africa to date. Instead a much longer standing literature on the Lebanese in West Africa is available, some of which I will draw upon later to understand the historical contexts in which early Sindhi migration to West Africa took place and their subsequent experiences in the region (Winder, 1962; Khuri, 1965; Buomedoudha, 1990; Akyeampong, 2004, 2006; Arsan, 2014).

Oral histories

The analysis for this chapter is based directly upon oral histories, an approach popular amongst scholars of South Asian migration (Werbner, 1980; Hickey, 1996; Nasar, 2016; Nair, 2018).[29] For example, Werbner found through collecting oral histories of Pakistani men in Manchester that the post-war life story of a wealthy Pakistani Mancunian was savoured and used by Pakistani men of the same migrant generation. Although some men had less 'successful' life histories, they romanticised a common past, a time before they were joined by their families, 'where there were no rich and poor, high and low; a shared past when all men were brothers' (1980, 48). Nasar, who collected oral histories of East African Asians in Britain in addition to archival research, highlighted oral history as 'an ideal medium to shed light on "private histories" of the self.' (2016, 23-24). Nair (2018) explores specific sites of memory that stem from the story of one migrant family to Uganda. One particular migration history has become a part of the collective memory of Uganda's Indian community.

Oral histories are sometimes factually inaccurate as people draw upon memory to reconstruct their own versions of the past. Even so, these accounts not only enable researchers to explore lived histories and past experiences, but as they constantly evolve, they offer a unique resource and opportunity for accessing social and historical understandings (Thomson, 1999). As this chapter explores the lived experiences of people's migration paths, it accepts research participants' narratives as not only a way of negotiating their past, but also their present situations. That is, this chapter is not

[29] These examples are of scholars exploring South Asian migration using an oral history approach. Please see Thomson (1999) for a more general discussion of oral histories and migration.

concerned with how narratives and memory represent 'the truth' about past events, but to understand human experiences and memories of migration, and how these frame present-day ways of becoming cosmopolitan for Sindhis in Accra.

Life experiences, as we will see throughout this chapter and the thesis as a whole, are not neat or linear. Experiences of Partition in particular, as well as the multiple coups people lived through in Ghana, generate contradictory responses and emotions. Exploring such experiences through interviews that draw largely upon memory invite research participants to make sense out of their trajectories, to create their own narratives, and to present their stories of 'how I became what I am today' as journeys imbued with meaning. Older people, especially, chose to shape the telling of their histories as they may or may not want their children or grandchildren to see this process of meaning-making at work.

This is particularly relevant to some oral histories that are presented as part of this chapter, as interviews often took place in the presence of younger members of their families. For example, some research participants may have preferred their grandchildren and children to know only the version of themselves they chose to present. Or they may have wanted their story to be heard – as if it was a performance of their success. Indeed, some research participants specified that I should take note of particular parts of the interview and ensured I include those parts in my written version.

Peekay Mahtani

Peekay Mahtani is one of the few 'old-timer' Sindhis still resident in Accra. Peekay was born in Hyderabad, Sindh, when it was a part of British India. Peekay's narrative

highlights the importance of pre-1947 migrations of male traders, which paved the way to broader family migration in the aftermath of Partition.

As a young boy, Peekay and his family migrated to Karachi to join his older sister. There, he completed his primary education before leaving for Accra, where his father had resided since 1929. After multiple trips between Accra and India, Peekay's father decided to move his whole family with him at a time when the Indian presence in Ghana was made up of only a few male traders. In 1939, as an eight-year-old child, Peekay made his journey to Accra with his mother and four of his sisters. They travelled from Karachi to the Gold Coast on a series of ships. The first ship travelled from Karachi to Bombay and on to Marseilles, France, where they boarded an Accra-bound ship via Dakar. The journey took around three weeks, for which Peekay counts himself as lucky, as the same journey could take up to three months depending on ship availability between Marseilles and Accra. During their travels, Peekay and his family were not allowed to disembark the ship as they were not European. I had heard much about Peekay Mahtani during my fieldwork, but did not meet him in person until March 2016.[30] During his interview, Peekay emphasised the segregation from Europeans during his travels and he remembers himself being considered as 'coloured' - a term given to describe any non-Europeans. With a distinct tone of excitement in his voice as he remembered his childhood, Peekay recalled his first moments of arriving into Jamestown, Accra's oldest fishing port:

[30] This was during a period of time where I was Lead Researcher for a film documentary on Indian Migration to Ghana commissioned by the Indian Association of Ghana and The High Commission of India in Accra.

> 'It was Good Friday in 1939. It was recorded in some West African magazines… "The first Indian family to have arrived in Gold Coast."[31] They were very happy that my father brought his whole family, the first Indian family to arrive in the Gold Coast.
>
> There was no harbour then, so we had boats coming from the shore to the ship and we are lifted by cranes from the ship to the boat. The boat even has to stay a few hundred yards away, so we were carried on the shoulders by fishermen, actually carried on their shoulder. If it's a lady they brought a chair for the lady to sit in and four people carried it.'[32]

Peekay remembered his first impressions of indigenous Ghanaians as he reached the shore:

> The only thing I noticed was that they were Ghanaians, I mean, they were all natives. You can't see a foreigner. All were barefooted. Even when I attended school here, all my classmates were barefooted. It's only after Independence[33] you'd find students with sandals and shoes and all that. Before that when I attended school here, I was the only one with shoes. I was the first Indian to attend local school here, Bishops Boys School. My younger sister attended Methodist Girls School here.[34]

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[31] See Appendix A for a newspaper article from the *Daily Graphic* published in a special issue for India's Republic Day on 26th January 2018 that outlined the Mahtani family's migration to Ghana and featured an interview with Mahesh Mahtani, Peekay's son. The article also features an excerpt of the original article Peekay referred to in his interview, published in the magazine West Africa on 10th June 1939. The article in the *Daily Graphic* states that the Mahtani family arrived at Tema Port, which is incorrect.
[32] Interview with Peekay Mahtani held at the Pemasu Head Office in Accra in March 2017, in English.
[33] Here Peekay was referring to Ghana's Independence in 1957.
[34] Ibid.

Peekay was surrounded by indigenous Ghanaians growing up, and his close friends were all Ghanaian. He very quickly learned how to speak fluent Ga,[35] and Peekay told me multiple times during his interview that until today he speaks with his friends in Ga and not English. He mentioned that all his closest friends are Ghanaians and his nickname amongst them is still Wizard, a name attributed to him as a result of his intelligence at school. The small Indian community in Accra at the time Peekay arrived was entirely made up of Sindhis, often individuals who knew each other either personally or through family networks back in Sindh. These early migration patterns reflected attributes of traditional chain migration – information was shared by those who already migrated to Ghana, sponsorship was provided through jobs at existing Sindhi companies and there was often material support provided by earlier migrants already settled in Ghana to those migrating (Johnston et al, 2006, 1228). They would meet and play cards in each other's homes during evenings and weekends.

After about six months of residing in Accra, the Second World War broke out, and Peekay recalled being stuck in Accra as there was no access to transportation to leave. It was during this period that Pan American Airlines announced their first commercial flight between Accra and Johannesburg, which gave Peekay and his family an alternative route to travel to India. After taking a flight from Accra to Johannesburg, they travelled onwards to Durban by rail, and then from Durban to Bombay by sea. After some months, Peekay returned to Accra along with his family members. Although travel for Peekay and

[35] Whilst Twi is now commonly spoken in Accra, this is mostly a result of labour migration. The oldest settlements, which have now been absorbed into the metropolis (such as Osu and Jamestown) were Ga-speaking. See Parker (2000) for an in-depth history of the Ga region and the development of Accra through the late 19th and early 20th century.

his family was relatively frequent in comparison to his local counterparts, Accra became home for Peekay, and has been ever since. This period marked the emergence of the early Indian presence in Ghana, with a few Sindhi families even having children in Accra in the early 1940s. For example, Peekay's younger sister Sheila Khubchandani, to whom we will be introduced later in the chapter, was born in Accra in 1940 and still lives there today.

The Mahtani family's migration is one of many instances of movement across vast distances by Sindhis. Do individuals like Peekay, whose lives have been characterised by frequent travel from a young age, epitomise cosmopolitanism? As we saw in the introduction, in a broad sense, cosmopolitanism can be defined as a moral commitment to universal values (Nussbaum, 1994). For Appiah (2006), cosmopolitanism is based around two main things. First is the notion of obligation to others that go beyond familial ties or shared (national) citizenship. Second is that people value other peoples' practices and beliefs (ibid). To be cosmopolitan is to detach from national and local foundations (Beck et al, 2006), towards a culture which is seen as 'globally open, and inviting cultural cross-pollination, hybridity and fluidity' (Skrbis et al, 2007, 731). Although authors acknowledge that cosmopolitan culture and values are more easily spread through the increasingly porous borders and boundaries we associate with the globalisation process (Beck, 2002), there are many examples both on the African continent and elsewhere of movements grounded in claims to autochthony. These emphasise the importance of being 'of the soil', as a basis for exclusivist and ethnicised notions of citizenship

(Geschiere et al, 2006).[36] With migration being key in the globalisation process, we need to interrogate the relationship between globalisation and cosmopolitanism to develop our understanding of how migrants make sense of who they are. Does globalisation lead to cosmopolitanism? As Skrbis et al note, 'to see globalisation as a necessary and sufficient condition for the emergence of cosmopolitanism' is flawed – both historically and empirically (Skrbis, 2007, 731). If this is the case, we need to ask the following questions: are Sindhis cosmopolitan? If so, how do they 'do being cosmopolitan'? Additionally, and importantly for the thesis as a whole, why does cosmopolitanism play a central role in Sindhis' self understandings of them as a group?

Migration trajectories: Routes

Bhagwan Khubchandani was born in 1937 in Hyderabad, Sindh. He recalled very fond memories of his childhood, surrounded by family and friends in the city, often gathering together and eating sweets. He remembered Hyderabad as being a 'liveable and very happy place to be.' Born in to a Bhaiband (merchant) family, Bhagwan's father, Ramchand Khubchandani, had first travelled to Ghana, then known as the Gold Coast, in 1929 to work for his brother-in-law. It was in 1947 whilst Bhagwan's father was away in the Gold Coast that Bhagwan, his mother and his sisters were uprooted from their home in Hyderabad, which overnight became a part of newly formed Pakistan. Although not all Sindhi families fled across the border at the onset of Partition, Bhagwan's family left almost immediately.[37] He told me:

[36] We see the importance of such movements in Chapter Three (Sindhi, Indian and Ghanaian).
[37] Bhavnani notes that Hindus who left Sindh before the Karachi riots were those who had exercised a relatively greater freedom of choice, and in turn were able to liquidate their assets in Sindh in order to

> 'We felt threatened, very badly threatened. Not by the Muslim neighbours with whom we were bought up. The Muslims, the Punjabi Muslims from India, who were migrating to Pakistan were sometimes taking the houses forcibly. And the woman folks obviously got frightened and they left at the first sight.'[38]

This distinction between their Muslim neighbours and other Muslims who arrived after Partition is important for Sindhis who lived in Sindh during undivided India. Many of my research participants (and their descendants) insisted that Sindh during undivided times was their haven, a happy place where Hindu and Muslim Sindhis coexisted peacefully. However, the violence that characterised much of the new Muslim migration to Sindh was recalled as the causal factor for many, including Bhagwan's family, to leave their homes and never return. Therefore, the post-1947 Sindh that exists today does not represent *their* Sindh.

A disconnect between how people viewed pre and post Partition became clear in Bhagwan's recollection of his father's experience of returning to Hyderabad in the 1970s: 'he was very unhappy with his trip because his memories are of huge grounds, big places, it was really not that big. His dreams of yesteryear were completely shattered to see it.' Bhagwan recalled how his father felt when he returned from his trip; '[my father said] "I used to talk so affectionately about this place, it's a dump." So my father

build new lives in India (2014, 175). As will be seen below, this was also the case for those Sindhis who then moved on to Ghana.

[38] Interview with Bhagwan Khubchandani held at Kuku's Nest, an Indian restaurant located next to Melcom Head Office, North Industrial Area, Accra on 14th March 2015 in English. Present at the interview was his wife, two daughters, one son-in-law and one of his grand-daughters. Throughout the interview he addressed both myself and members of his family when recalling his life history.

told me, whatever memories you have, keep it, don't go and spoil it. So I've never had the need to go back, and I don't want to. I don't have the wish.'

This difference between pre and post Partition SIndh was further highlighted when other research participants emphasised that they were born in Sindh, which is a part of *undivided* India. This disparity between pre- and post-1947 Sindh is an important distinction in the memories of Sindhi migrants. It has resulted in a narrative characterised by a reluctance to return to Sindh amongst members of the migrant generation, who left either as small children or as young adults. Their lack of roots in Sindh helps to explain how a sense of cosmopolitanism became a central feature of the global Sindhi diaspora, which I will now explore in further detail.

A few years after leaving Hyderabad, Bhagwan recalled his father wanting him to join him in Ghana. By this time, Bhagwan's father had been in Ghana for over twenty years and was running a chain of retail stores with his brother under the brand name Glamour. Bhagwan told me, 'dad brought me here because he felt living with all the girls in India, there'll be no discipline.' Like other young Sindhi boys who travelled to Ghana to join male relatives at this time, Bhagwan found himself as a fourteen-year-old boy attending Bishops School in Accra for approximately two years, after which he spent another two and half years studying in the UK:

> I wasn't alone. My three cousins were with me. So we had company. They used to love coming to Ghana because we'd go to the shop and pick up anything for free, you know. I said I didn't want to go back to Ghana, so I stayed with an English family. So daddy wanted me to go for the education, but because I saw

> our operations here [in Ghana] in '51 when I was schooling, I felt, what little I knew was more than enough to take care of the type of business my father was doing.[39]

So at the age of sixteen, Bhagwan was given the option to return to Ghana, or to travel to Hong Kong, where his father had established a new office:

> Now I didn't know where Hong Kong was on the map of the world, I really truly did not know, but I opted for it. I know, it sounds difficult to believe, but I'm being very truthful about it. So I arrived in Hong Kong in '54. Beautiful place, I fell in love with it. I still am in love with it.[40]

By then, at the age of sixteen, Bhagwan had already migrated to four different parts of the world, but Hong Kong was not his final destination.

> I was in Hong Kong for three years and then my bosses decided there was a trade fair in Japan and I should visit there to get some idea what a trade fair looked like in Japan. We had an office there…While visiting [the] trade fair the Japan manager had a heart attack. So by default I became the manager. I was ill-equipped, I was only nineteen years old. I realised how ill-equipped I was. I took some night schools. I did accounting. I did correspondence, because I realised what a fool I was not having a degree. But then I did all of that. Japan fortunately

[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

> for me was a success story. In Hong Kong I was an assistant. In Japan I was a manager at the age of nineteen.[41]

Bhagwan told me he felt that the three years he spent in in Japan were probably the best of his life:

> I hadn't managed a single solitary person in my life, not even a messenger. Then all of a sudden, I didn't have a big staff, only five or six people – [a] part time accountant, our merchandiser, [a] documentation girl – without knowing a word of Japanese. So it became a challenge. I could see that if I don't learn Japanese I'll be a big, big failure. So day and night I used to learn Japanese. I would learn up to ten phrases my secretary would tell me and then I would try to communicate with him. Fortunately for me, language proficiency was excellent from day one, I didn't speak like an Indian, so language has treated me well and it was a fantastic trip…Then they brought me to Ghana. I had decided I'm not marrying until the age of at least twenty-seven or twenty-eight, which in those days was considered late. After being in Ghana for a year and a half all my cousins were all married. Those who were with me in England, they were all married, so I felt left out and very lonely. So I opted in '62 to get married.[42]

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

Bhagwan Khubchandani, 2017

Image Source: Melcom Group of Companies[43]

Bhagwan travelled to India in 1962, where he met his wife, Sheila Khubchandani. Sheila Khubchandani is elegance personified. At the time of our interview, she was aged seventy-four. She had beautifully blow dried hair, immaculate skin, and when I met her in her husband's office, she was wearing cream tailored trousers and a printed chiffon blouse. She was warm and friendly, very softly spoken, and told me she was a little

[43] Available: http://www.melcomgroup.com/leadership.php

nervous about our interview. I interviewed her whilst being accompanied by one of her granddaughters, before I sat down to interview her husband. Their daughter, who was working in her office next door during our interview, felt it was important that I had a chance to speak with Sheila alone, without her husband present, because she felt that Sheila might not be as open if Bhagwan were to accompany her.

Born as Indru Mahtani, in Accra in June 1940, Sheila is one of eight sisters and one brother – Peekay, whom we met earlier. Sheila's parents migrated to Ghana from Hyderabad in what she thinks was 1937, but could have been earlier. As we know from the article published in the *Daily Graphic*, and Peekay's account, Sheila emphasised that her mother was one of the first Sindhi women to migrate to Accra. Sheila does not have many memories of her time in Ghana as a child, as she left for Bombay[44] with her siblings at the age of seven or eight. 'Through a Sindhi family we went via Durban and we reached Karachi and then to Bombay.' Although Sheila's parents remained in Accra, she was accompanied by her elder siblings. Sheila completed her schooling at an international school in Bombay and returned to Accra in 1959 to stay with her brother for a short while.[45]

[44] My research participants would use the term Bombay, although the official spelling was changed to Mumbai in 1995 under the Shiv Sena rule. The word 'Bombay' was viewed as a legacy of British colonial rule and Mumbai was chosen to pay tribute to goddess Mumbadevi.

[45] Interestingly, Peekay gives the date of their family's migration as 1939. There are differences between Peekay's recollection of the Mahtani family's migration and Sheila's version. However, as I noted earlier in this chapter, I am not concerned with which version is factually correct. The differences between Peekay's and Sheila's narratives further emphasise that individuals within families remember their migration histories differently.

Once Sheila returned to Bombay, she met her husband, Bhagwan Khubchandani, in 1962. She recalled that she first encountered her husband through a mutual relative's insistence that she should meet Bhagwan, who was also in Bombay at the time:[46]

> So, my parents were looking for a guy for me, so we found out that this guy was around. My brother was in Ghana, and he wrote to my parents. I don't know how he communicated, but he said why not for my sister Indru. So this cousin of mine, Shaanta, she invited me and my sister: "Why don't you come to my house?" But we said "no it's Monday, we are fasting, we have to break our fast."[47] We were going for a movie. But she said after the movie, "come, come to my house!" We went, and then this guy comes after a while, just to see us. I was very shy, and my sister was the one who would reply to his questions. I just stood there like a dumbo! We were getting late, we went home and my mother was asking us, "so how was the boy?"[48]

Although Sheila was just as shy speaking with her mother about Bhagwan, Sheila's sister informed her mother that the boy was fair[49] and that he spoke with them for about fifteen or twenty minutes. Although Sheila remained quiet at the time, following their positive opinions of Bhagwan, Sheila and Bhagwan had their wedding ceremony a short

[46] In Bhagwan's narrative, he tells me that he travelled to India for the purpose of finding a wife, and Sheila was the first girl he was introduced to.
[47] In Hinduism, Monday is a day of fasting dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is known that unmarried girls fast on Mondays to help them in finding an ideal husband. Sheila may have been alluding to fate here, as it seems ironic that she met her future husband on the day she was fasting to ensure she would find one.
[48] Interview with Sheila Khubchandani held at Melcom Head Office in North Industrial Area, Accra on 14th March 2015 in English. We were accompanied by her granddaughter during the interview.
[49] Here Sheila's sister was referring to the colour of Bhagwan's skin.

time later in Pune (the second largest city in Maharashtra after Mumbai), in August 1962.

The newlyweds travelled from India to Japan for their honeymoon for two weeks, but as the manager of the Glamour factory was to go on holiday for a month, Bhagwan was expected to cover his duties. 'From one month it became six months, from six months to a year and two months.' At this time Sheila's father-in-law was also in Japan. Meanwhile, like many other Sindhi women who resided in India whilst their husbands migrated to Ghana and elsewhere for business, Sheila's mother-in-law lived in Pune. Sheila and Bhagwan arrived in Ghana in 1964. Sheila recalled meeting other young Sindhi women and girls in Accra: 'when we came in '59, my sister and me, we met quite a few Sindhi ladies, young girls. Shaanta was one of them, she was also here. We were like sisters.' Like other new brides in Accra who had (female) members of their family who had already married and settled in Ghana, Sheila also had her elder sister who was already settled in Ghana:

> We visited my elder sister who was in Kumasi. After she [Sheila's elder sister] got married they brought her to Kumasi; my brother-in-law was looking after [the] Kumasi shop. My other sister came to Accra; her husband was looking after the Accra shop.[50]

Sheila did not work after arriving in Accra, and she had their first child soon after their long 'honeymoon' in Japan. Her time was spent looking after their children, looking after their house and at the weekends meeting other young Sindhi families for picnics. Sheila

[50] Ibid.

told me that it was easy to make friends when she moved to Accra in 1964 because there were a lot of newly married girls and at the time Indians – largely Sindhis – were a 'small community. We had a group, you know, and every weekend we used to just get out of the house, pack up our food and take our kids and go. Nothing like what it is now, Accra was very dull and boring, but the friends, the people, made the place.'[51]

The coups of Ghana

The military coups that took place in the years 1966, 1972, 1979 and 1981 had a significant impact on the Sindhis residing in Ghana. Their businesses were some of the worst hit during looting, and as Sheila Khubchandani explained to me, some families were forced to leave Ghana.

Geetu Navani was born in Accra in 1967. Although Geetu would have experienced the coups of 1969 and 1972, she was too young to remember details and it was during the coup of 1979 that Geetu's family were seriously affected. Like many of her generation, she experienced the coup of 1979 as a child and Geetu's family left Ghana shortly after. Geetu and her parents never returned to reside to Ghana. Her older sister, however, married a Sindhi man based in Ghana in 1973 and now resides there. Geetu comes to Accra to visit her sister, and her interview was conducted during a visit to her nephew's wedding.

[51] Ibid.

As many of my research participants who experienced the coups told me, Sindhis were one of the first communities affected. The majority of Sindhi businesses were located in downtown Accra at the time, and families often lived above their factories or retail stores, making them easy and obvious targets of looting and robberies by armed soldiers, who were often under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Geetu recalled her experiences of the coup:

> Because of the coup we were compelled to leave…I was twelve and I remember ours was one of the first houses to be looted early in the morning. Reason being we were in that area where it wasn't predominantly a residential area, more of a place where all the departmental stores were, and we used to be on the top level in the penthouse and down[stairs] would be the departmental store and the office…My dad then just left his job and he never wanted to come back, and that's the time also when a lot of families – that's the time they left as well, never to return. We were in Bombay for a while, just for a year, then my dad looked at Singapore. My mum's sister lived there, so we went there, and that's when he started his business.[52]

Geetu's older sister, Neelu Khubchandani,[53] was born in Bombay in 1958, but spent her younger years being educated in Ghana. Neelu recalled the evening when soldiers came to their home:

[52] Interview with Geetu Navani held on 20/03/2015 at my apartment in Accra. Interview in English.
[53] Neelu Khubchandani is married to Bhagwan Khubchandni's first cousin Harry Khubchandani. Harry's father and Bhagwan's father are brothers.

> It was '79, I was here and I was with my parents. My brother and sister were young and there was a curfew time, I remember. And somehow the soldiers knew where we lived because they saw us speaking out of the window or something, so they came up the stairs. We were living in a two-level house. They came up the stairs and pointed the gun at my dad's head, and demanded the money from them. And in those days you know the money had a lot of value. So I remember my mum going to the room and getting a bundle, a wad of notes, I think it was one one cedi [single notes of one cedi], 100 cedis, which was a lot of money in those days. And then they took the booze and whatever they wanted and left. I was scared you know, we were only kids at that time. We were just hiding behind the doors so they wouldn't see us. But I could see them with the gun at my dad's head, my God.[54]

Those who stayed…

Although Geetu and Neelu's family left Accra as a result of the coups, not all families left. Some stayed and suffered the consequences of losing their livelihoods. One such example is Vinod Dhawan, who migrated to Ghana to join his brother in 1965, just a year before the first military coup unfolded.

Originally born into a Multani[55] family from Karachi, Sindh, Vinod Dhawan left Sindh at the time of Partition with his parents and siblings. He was only two years of age at the

[54] Interview between myself and Neelu Khubchandani held on 28/04/2015 at her residence in Accra. Interview conducted in English.

[55] A Multani is someone who originates from the city of Multan in Pakistan. Their religious affiliation can be with Hinduism, Sikhism or Islam. Although Vinod's parents had Hindu Multani roots, they were both born in Karachi, India. The significance of being Multani in Ghana at the time Vinod migrated will be raised later in this thesis.

time and therefore felt little connection to Sindh apart from through the memories of his father, who would tell him how it was a beautiful place, and Vinod himself hoped to visit one day. At the time of Partition, Vinod's family had a successful business in Karachi, with an office in Bombay:

> Lucky for us in Bombay we had a house because it was also our office. You know we were rich in Karachi, so Bombay was our next city. Like if you are in Accra, you have a Kumasi branch, and then you have a house there and everything. So in Bombay we didn't have the usual problem when we came that other people had. We stayed at our house – we had a full third floor and fourth floor in downtown Bombay.[56]

Although the Partition caused Vinod's parents to lose the half of their wealth that was based in Karachi, he told me that they were still able to live relatively comfortably due to his family's business ties in Bombay, which had not been affected by the Partition. He compared his family's journey from Sindh to that of other families who were not so fortunate. Vinod told me that for the poor or those who had lost everything during Partition, the Indian government gave out small plots of land for resettlement, primarily in Gujarat. Vinod, like others, distanced himself from this narrative as he did not see himself in the same plight as those who settled in Gujarat. Other Sindhis moved directly to cities like Hong Kong, where they had laid business foundations prior to the Partition, a narrative that Vinod expressed familiarity with through the experiences of friends and

[56] Interview with Vinod Dhawan held at his residence in Tesano, Accra on 10/02/2015. Interview conducted in English and Hindi.

relatives. Vinod spent his childhood in Bombay, and it was during his time at college that he first travelled to Ghana.

Vinod's brother had arrived in Accra on 6th March 1957,[57] to work for Ramchand Khubchandani as a manager for Glamour Stores.[58] By the mid-1960s, when Vinod's brother had established his own business, he felt it was time for him to return to India to get married. Vinod had originally taken leave from college in Bombay in 1965 and had travelled to Ghana for two months to cover his brother's workload during this time. Unlike earlier migrants, by the time Vinod and his brother travelled to Ghana, they did so by air via Lebanon. This reflects the growing connection between Ghana and other parts of the world, and how this made it easier for individuals to travel for both business and personal reasons. Vinod remembers Accra when he first arrived as being a beautiful place with a small population of Indians:

> There were many Sindhis, I would say there was about thirty or forty companies and then each company had two or three employees. So there were about 250 people of Indian origin. The bosses had wives who were also here, but they would only take on bachelors [as workers] starting at sixteen or seventeen years old because it was cheaper. They would pay them a fixed salary of 150 rupees a month [approximately 30 USD in 1960], which was good compared to what they were getting in Bombay. Let's say like me, if I had a job in Bombay at that time I

[57] This was Ghana's Independence Day. Vinod did not reflect upon this during his interview, so this may have just been a coincidence.
[58] Ramchand Khubchandani is Bhagwan Khubchandani's father – during this period he owned one of a few Sindhi businesses. Many men who now have their own businesses started off working for the likes of Ramchand Khubchandani.

> would be getting 150 rupees, because I was educated, but my brother paid me double. So these other boys they came, they were not educated, so they would get 75 rupees in Bombay. So they [Indian firms in Ghana] gave double when you go out. The company would pay for everything.[59]

When Vinod first arrived, he lived with his brother in Kokomlemle, which was considered the outskirts of Accra at that time, and he told me that the area in which he currently resides, Tesano, was in those days 'a jungle'; or as many Ghanaians would describe it, 'the bush'. Vinod was placed in his brother's garment factory and within two months, having learned a lot, he decided to stay on to work for his brother, who eventually offered him an opportunity to become a partner in his business. Vinod held a ten percent stake in the business for two years until 1967, after which he decided he was ready to embark on his own business venture.

[59] Ibid. Young men had to be incentivised to go to Ghana through wages higher than those available to them in Bombay.

Image source: Vinod Dhawan

Vinod Dhawan with his brother and sister-in-law, soon after they arrived in Accra after their marriage.

In 1969, Vinod had travelled to India to visit his family and, although it was not planned, he would return to Ghana as a married man:

> Within four years I had enough money so that I got married to my brother-in-law's sister's daughter. They told me that there is a beautiful girl in Agra, so we went there. In those days twenty-five was the right age to get married, and I was twenty-four and a half. But I didn't think it could happen, so in our case it just happened.[60]

Immediately after their wedding, Vinod and his new wife travelled to Lebanon for their honeymoon, and on to Accra, where they have both lived since. He too remembered Ghana's coups as significant turning points:

> The first coup happened in 1966, but at that time I didn't have much so I didn't have much to lose. Let's say I had 10,000 [dollars], I lost 9000 [dollars]. But that was nothing. They would come with guns, it was a robbery. Cash, cars, whatever you had in your house, and then what happened was in 1981 – that was my golden period, where I was minting money. I was importing everything and anything. I'm a…Kya bolte hai [what do they call it]…jack of all trades…I had not completed my full education, but I was a street-smart boy…In 1981 when the coup happened, my money in the market was over three million dollars, par ye army ne kya kiya, voh sabko lootliya [but what this army did, they stole/looted from everyone]. So then the army came and went away after six months, but by now the cedi's value had fallen.[61]

[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.

Although Vinod explains that he almost became bankrupt due to the effect of the coup on the economy, he was lucky that he had purchased property in Bombay, from which he was able to receive rental income. 'My wife said that you are not touching this money, so she took it and paid for all the education for my children in London and America. I started like a youngster again, and I was thirty-five at that time. From '81 to '85 I suffered, I could not buy even a shoe but I had one hundred shoes, I had so many shirts and so many things. So all that money which I had saved I put it into business.'[62]

Global Sindhis: refugees or migrants?

The Census of India in 1951 reported that half of the 800,000 registered Sindhi speakers were concentrated in Bombay of which "40 per cent were described as engaged in trading occupations" (Markovits, 2000, 278). From figures such as these, it is easy to assume that in the post-Partition period, Sindhis were predominantly settled in urban centres, such as Bombay. Although such a conclusion would reflect the lives of Sindhis who find themselves in Ghana today, Partition also left 400,000 Sindhis scattered across the subcontinent in refugee camps and living in poverty. The resulting ambiguity in classifying Sindhi migration is similar to what Datta (2016) found in his study of Kashmiri Pandit migrants in Porkhu Camp in Jammu. Often categorised as an elite group, Datta makes clear that this group defies easy classification. And, although they belong to a single Hindu caste, their customs differ from other Brahmins elsewhere in India. As Datta

[62] Ibid.

discusses, labels such as 'internally displaced persons' or 'refugee' suggest reduce their experiences to those of marginalisation and poverty (ibid).

As previously mentioned, my research participants would often refer to themselves and other Sindhis using words such as 'global' and 'cosmopolitan'. These self-descriptive words have been cemented by Post-Partition international migration, as well as the economic success associated with this migrant group. As Falzon found in his study of Sindhis in London, Malta and Mumbai, rather than comparing themselves to other Indian diaspora groups, his research participants would compare themselves to Jews, Armenians, Lebanese and Palestinian diasporas (2005). By comparing the experiences of my research participants – Sindhis who moved away from the subcontinent – to those of people who migrated across the border to newly formed India, and have settled there since, an important question arises: how have migration routes influenced self-understandings amongst Sindhis, especially those of my research participants who migrated to Ghana?

From the narratives above, it becomes clear that family roots are an important factor that influences experiences of migration amongst Sindhis. For global Sindhis, such as those in Ghana, their post-Partition migration has largely been dependent on existing family and business networks forged before 1947. For example, Bhagwan Khubchandani's father had been in Ghana since 1929, nearly twenty years before new borders were formed in India. In Bhagwan's case, his family were Bhaibands, which allowed for them to be involved in trading and business in the colonial era. Bhagwan's jati, therefore, laid the foundations for a less disruptive post-Partition migration.

Although not the earliest of Sindhis to arrive in the Gold Coast, the likes of Bhagwan's father are seen as being a part of pioneer Indian migrants to West Africa, much like the perception of Nanji Khalidas Mehta, who migrated to Uganda in 1901 and is the owner of the Mehta Group of businesses there (Nair, 2018). Ramchand Khubchandani first arrived in Africa knowing that they had a contact there, in both cases, a family member. This emphasises the importance of networks in facilitating migration both for those in search of economic opportunity (e.g. Ramchand Khubchandani and Nanji Khalidas Mehta) or those who migrate as a result of political or social upheaval (e.g. Bhagwan Khubchandani). It also shows how, even within the same families, individual reasons for migration differ depending on time and circumstances in both the place of origin and destination.

The pre-existing family ties to areas outside Sindh, such as Bombay or Ghana, were also important in determining where individuals and families would migrate after Partition. Vinod Dhawan's family were only able to migrate to Bombay because of the existing ties his family had to the City, and Vinod's subsequent migration to Ghana was dependent on his brother, who was already based in Ghana. Here we can see how the route Vinod's family took out of Sindh relied on pre-existing ties. Their familial and business networks caused individuals like Bhagwan and Vinod to experience Partition differently to many others – Partition for them was a catalyst for further migration, with the difference being *who* was migrating and *where* they were migrating to. Whereas once it was predominantly young male adults migrating out of Sindh, women and children were now migrating in large numbers – albeit under different circumstances to those young men who left Sindh pre-1947.

Sindh to Gujarat

Although there are no exact figures available for how many Sindhi Hindus migrated across the border of India and Pakistan between 1947 and 1948, approximate numbers report that anywhere between 156,677 to '12,00,000 to 14,00,000'[63] Sindhi refugees crossed the border into Gujarat, most of whom were Sindhi-speaking Hindus (Balasubrahmanyan, 2011, 463; Bhavnani, 2014, 169).

Nandita Bhavnani's (2014) monograph *The Making of Exile* captures the experiences of Sindhis who travelled across newly formed borders between 1947 and 1948. Although Sindhis had started to migrate across the new border in 1947, there was a huge influx of Sindhis arriving as refugees after the Karachi Riots in February 1948.[64] Partition caused what Bhavnani refers to as splintered families (2014, 191). Whereas boys and men were often obliged to stay in Sindh to safeguard the family property, women and children were sent to India (ibid). Although not all Sindhis were directly involved in these riots, the perceived fear led them to leave Sindh quickly. These Sindhis, who had left all their possessions and livelihoods in what was now Pakistan, were expected to put down roots in a foreign land. The government of India at the time housed these refugees in camps and provided them with free food, shelter and cash doles, which men found shameful (ibid).[65] Both Bhavnani (2014) and Balasubrahmanyan (2011) found that the individuals

[63] These numbers are written in the Indian numerical form as originally written by the authors. 12,00,000 is equivalent to 1,200,000 and 14,00,000 is equivalent to 1,400,000.
[64] These riots were orchestrated largely by Muslims who had crossed the Indian border into Pakistan, and began attacking Hindu Sindhis and looting property.
[65] Bhavnani (2014) notes that Dhulia, Magaon and Kalyan camp were possibly the largest camp for Sindhi Hindus in the post-Partition period.

that were interviewed by them moved on quickly from discussing their time in refugee camps, and focussed more on how quickly they were able to establish their businesses again in order to distance themselves from refugee camps. Kalyan camp was declared a township in 1949, named Ulhasnagar. Although many Sindhis have since migrated out of Ulhasnagar, many Sindhi Hindus who arrived at Kalyan camp have remained there since and made it their permanent home.

There are stark differences between the experiences of the Sindhis whom Bhavnani and Balasubrahmanyan studied, and those who I studied. Firstly, and possibly most notably, none of my research participants reported having lived in refugee camps on arrival in India. There may have been individuals that did experience extreme forms of poverty, but they chose not to share it with me during conversations about their lives.[66] Although most of my research participants were aware of their legal refugee status at the time, their pre-existing networks were key in allowing them to have immediate support from family members. Therefore, they did not see themselves as being dependent on the state or experiencing poverty. Secondly, whereas Partition splintered families (Bhavnani, 2014), Partition for my research participants reunited families. Partition precipitated a change from the sporadic, individual migration of men to the creation of a global Sindhi diaspora, of which my research participants are a part. This physical and symbolic distance between refugees in camps and those in urban centres (including my research participants in Ghana) is one of great importance. It signifies the disparities among experiences of Partition within a group of people with relatively similar

[66] Again, this could relate to my research participants wanting to present a version of themselves that portrayed success rather than poverty.

backgrounds. It also explains why leaving India and becoming a part of the global diaspora has become so powerfully identified with Sindhi success stories, even if this does not capture the experience of everyone in the diaspora.

The creation of a cosmopolitan Sindhi community in Ghana

As seen from the above narratives, pre-existing familial networks were paramount in determining Sindhi post-Partition migration to Ghana. Starting with a small number of men who engaged in trade in the pre-Partition period, and over time evolving to entire families adopting Ghana as their home, a new type of cosmopolitan Sindhi emerged as part of the global Sindhi diaspora. Transnational networks were no longer confined to trade and businesses (Chen and Chen, 1998; Ellis, 2000; Falzon, 2009). Rather, social networks in which women also played central roles now became a major factor in the emergence of a new type of Sindhis on a global scale as will be explored throughout this thesis.

To understand this phenomenon, I expand on Anderson's definition of the term cosmopolitanism. 'Cosmopolitanism endorses reflective distance from one's cultural affiliations, a broad understanding of other cultures and customs, and a belief in universal humanity,' (Anderson, 1998, 267). Anderson notes that cosmopolitanism 'typically manifests a complex tension between elitism and egalitarianism. It frequently advances itself as a specifically intellectual ideal, or depends on a mobility that is the luxury of social, economic, or cultural privilege' (Anderson, 2006, 73). The post-Partition Sindhi community in Ghana enjoyed what Anderson (ibid) refers to as the 'luxury of social, economic and cultural privilege,' as compared to their Sindhi counterparts in

refugee camps across Western India, and many of the indigenous people they came to live amongst in Ghana. Historically, cosmopolitans have been defined as 'a well-traveled character probably lacking in substance' (Hollinger, 1995, 89). But, for Sindhis, appreciating how a self-conscious lack of roots is a basis of reification (Khan, 1995; Vertovec, 1995) can help to explain how they have deliberately produced and reproduced particular cultural traits that for them embody cosmopolitan features to reformulate social interaction on a global scale. Some elements of cultural markers that do not fulfil this purpose are discarded. For her research on Muslims in Trinidad, Khan defines reification as:

> The process whereby any social group or community seizes upon particular practices or traits that they have defined as cultural, symbolically extracts them from the routine, habitual, or unconscious actions of daily life, and ideologically deploys them as various kinds of indexes or descriptive metaphors in establishing their identity (Khan, 103).

In other words, elements of culture that enable Sindhis in Ghana to be cosmopolitan, and thus establish and maintain networks with other cosmopolitan Sindhis around the world, are reified. In the same edited volume, Vertovec is concerned with the comparison between how Hinduism in Trinidad and Britain has been constructed through context-bound, public space-directed processes of reification (Vertovec, 1995, 149). Thus, Vertovec shows how migration patterns (who is migrating and where they are settling) have influenced and continue to influence which elements of peoples' ethnic identities have been essential to maintain in global diasporas. At this stage, what

is important is to emphasise the common sets of values created amongst migrants, who often have highly varied life trajectories. According to Vertovec (ibid), these values inform social relationships such as settlement patterns, marriage networks and religious congregations, which of course are not static in their nature, but change over time and are dependent on migration patterns.

For Sindhis in Ghana, some cultural markers are not as important as they once were. For example, in the pre-Partition period there were two main types of social stratification. The first strata was based on jati, the clans Sindhis belonged to based on birth, and the second strata was region-based. As we saw earlier in this chapter, Jati and regionality were key distinctions in Hindu Sindhi society of pre-Partition India. Intermarriage did not take place between those of the same jati but from different areas. For example, Hyderbadi Bhaibands did not marry Kudabadi Bhaibands (Falzon, 2004), illustrating the rigidness of these particular distinctions in Sindhi social interplay. In Ghana, however, these rigid rules seem to have slackened. For early migrants, marriage within these social strata was still prevalent. For example, although Sheila and Bhagwan's marriage took place over a decade after Partition, they were both Hyderabadi Bhaibands. Although the importance of one's region of origin *within* Sindh has decreased over time,[67] new types of social distinction, such as class and cities of settlement, have become central to marriage patterns and are shared across the global diaspora.

When Sindhis first began migrating to Ghana, family networks were integral to the process of migration. As we have seen through Bhagwan Khubchandani's narrative, it

[67] This is not the case for all Sindhis. For more traditional families, places of origin within Sindh still represent an important deciding factor in choosing marriage partners.

was his father Ramchand Khubchandani's brother-in-law who was the member of his network who became instrumental in Ramchand's migration decisions, and Ramchand himself would be essential in deciding his son's migration to Ghana. Bhagwan explained that the main reason his father decided that Bhagwan would join him in Ghana was the lack of discipline for a boy surrounded by only female members of his family. However, with Partition leading to the insertion of women into Sindhi society in Ghana, new cultural traits were being negotiated by these women and their children. As we will see below, the falling prevalence of the Sindhi language is one of the major manifestations of this change. During our interview, Bhagwan expressed deep disappointment for the fading use of Sindhi language:

> I love my language. I find a lot of sweetness in it that the others don't have. And I consider it a tragedy [that] you [would] want to discard your language. It is a shame, a real shame. That is what's happening, and I'm very unhappy about it.[68]

When I asked Bhagwan why he thought this was happening, his reply illustrated his belief in the responsibilities of women as the principle carriers of culture:

> To start with our language is called mother tongue. It is the mother who refuses to speak Sindhi. Thinking that by speaking English my children will become more proficient in English and they will not carry that typical Indian accent when they are speaking.[69]

[68] Interview between myself and Bhagwan Khubchandani held at Kuku's Nest, an Indian restaurant located next to Melcom Head Office, North Industrial Area, Accra on 14th March 2015 in English.
[69] Ibid.

The apparent conscious effort to distance themselves and their children from speaking the Sindhi language represents the distancing from one's own cultural affiliations that Anderson (1998) refers to. The use of English as their main language represents the desire to be international citizens. It should be noted here that Sindhi children in Ghana were not, and still are not, encouraged to learn Twi or other local Ghanaian languages.[70] English has become the main spoken language amongst Sindhis in Ghana.[71] Bhagwan's opinion that mothers refuse to speak Sindhi to their children also exemplifies the centrality of women in producing cosmopolitan traits. Here then, we see Vertovec's process of reification in action for Sindhis in Ghana. Some elements of Sindhi culture, such as the language which does not fit in with cosmopolitan ideals, have been discarded by migrants, which is something many of my research participants would tell me. Other traits, such as speaking English have become reified by migrants and become an identity marker for Sindhis. During my fieldwork, both men and women would emphasise the centrality of women in deciding what elements of culture are discarded and which are reified through every day acts.

Bringing gender in

Earlier studies of migration have focussed on international migrants being young and financially motivated men. As a result, women have been largely ignored in literature

[70] This will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Three, when exploring the notion of Indianness in Ghana.
[71] There are a minority of people that converse in Sindhi, but these were mostly people I met at Osu temple.

describing migration and experiences in diasporic situations (Houstoun et al, 1984, 908; Seller, 1975). The lack of documentation of female experiences can privilege masculine subjects as primary agents of diasporic formation, thus creating masculinist (and therefore misleading) narratives of communities as a whole. It is therefore important to explore intra-diasporic differences and asymmetries to understand how ideas about gender construct realities for both men and women over time and in different contexts. In the case of Sindhis, studies of the diaspora have focussed largely on a business community and therefore deal very little (or not at all) with those who are not directly involved with business – women and children (Haller, 2003; Falzon, 2004). Falzon (2004), for example, explores how the circulation of women and family visits are a part of connecting the Sindhi community across international borders, but his study is ultimately centred on trade and commerce.

In this thesis, however, I argue that the migration of women to Ghana (post 1947) has been extremely important in the rise of a cosmopolitan global community. As Bhagwan's concerns about language imply, women are indeed key actors in producing and realising cosmopolitan traits through the process of reification. When Sindhi women choose on an everyday basis to emphasise English and use it with their children, they are in effect jettisoning an emphasis on 'origin' and instead reifying the cosmopolitan nature of the contemporary Sindhi community in Ghana, which is conceived as part of a global Sindhi diaspora and thus must be English-speaking. Women who migrated to Ghana after marriage (such as Sheila), tell me that at one time there was a significant number of new brides in Accra. This created a community of women that would meet for lunches, weekend outings and to play cards. Some of these women still meet daily to play cards

together. The way in which they present themselves (hair, make up, jewellery, clothes and shoes) is important in representing their worldliness – their ability to indulge in international brands and expensive jewellery – which were and still are markers of status of their husbands and families as cosmopolitan Sindhis.[72] In order to further develop our understanding of reification, we must grasp the concept of the ideal Hindu woman, and women as culture carriers, as we have already established that women play a key role in this process.

Hindu ideals often influence popular beliefs in India, and can be internalised by those from other religious minorities (Srinivas, 1980) and thus nurture a broader nationally defined view of the 'ideal Indian woman.' Although the primary basis of this ideal was set through the didactic texts of the Hindus, such as the *Vedas, Bhagawad Geeta* and Hindu epics such as the *Mahabharata*, there are other examples of symbols that create a nationally defined Indian woman. One such example is the saree, an item of clothing worn by women in India that can 'transcend the myriad differences and tensions of wealth, class and religion,' (Banerjee et al, 2003, 236), showing how ideas and symbols can be adopted by women from different backgrounds to enable them to share the common feature of being Indian.

As a result, there are gender stereotypes and expected roles that women adhere to within their own homes and wider society. For instance, the greatest female virtues are 'fidelity, forgiveness, absence of guile, piety and truthfulness' (Mukherjee, 1983, 375). A woman should not be, 'untidy, slatternly, immodest, impatient, quarrelsome and

[72] This will be explored in more detail in the chapters that follow.

gluttonous. Those women are disliked who contradict their husbands and act rashly too' (ibid). Sekhon notes, 'in classical Hindu texts, there is a lot of emphasis on female behaviour and its control by males,' (Sekhon, 2000, 73). However, even within Brahmanic texts such as the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, there are versions of 'women's strengths and assertiveness in the face of challenges' (ibid, 74). Here, we can see two juxtaposed views of females – one highlighting the need for male control over females, and the other dwelling on female strength alone. What both of these views have in common is that draw attention to power in gender relations.

Sekhon describes a cultural ideal of Indian women: in all stages of a female's life, her identity is created by and linked to a male, be it her father and brothers in her maternal home or her husband and his male kin in her marital home (Sekhon, 2000, 72). Going back to the oldest Hindu scriptures, it has been suggested that, 'the Vedic woman was never more than a silent partner in the Vedic rituals' (Young, 1987, 62). According to the Vedic scriptures the presence of a woman in rituals was necessary for the purity of the family.

Although these examples show that throughout Indian (Hindu) history there have been specific ideals of female behaviour, do they hold relevance for my research participants' in Accra? We have to ask whether recent global changes, including the large-scale mobility of South Asian communities outside of the sub-continent, have had an impact on gendered norms amongst men and women.

Appadurai suggests that these gendered roles are not necessarily diminished as a result of such changes. He says:

> Because both work and leisure have lost none of their gendered qualities in this new global order but have acquired ever subtler fetishized representations, the honour of women becomes increasingly a surrogate for the embattled communities of males, while their women in reality have to negotiate increasingly harsh conditions of work … deterritorialized communities … may enjoy the fruits of … capital and technology, [but] have to play out the desires and fantasies of these new ethnoscapes, while striving to reproduce the family as microcosm of culture. (1996, 45)

Appadurai suggests here that people strive to reproduce particular cultural forms in order to structure their lives, in this case, to ensure they remain moral beings with social qualities wherever they may be based in the world. Culture then, is construed as something that can keep people morally rooted or grounded, even when they are physically mobile and living in a setting where their own culture is not dominant.

Moreover, cosmopolitanism has become a culture within itself, one which Sindhis in Ghana (and elsewhere) are constantly aspiring to create and be a part of. In some ways these Sindhis are global and cosmopolitan, but in other ways they are deeply invested in an ethnicised community, however physically dispersed it might be. One way in which they remain deeply invested is through the obligation to marry other Sindhis, or at the very least other Indians, as explored in Chapter Four (Tying Knots). The above also highlights the importance of female migration to Ghana, and how this brought about a rise in how families interacted and represent themselves as cosmopolitans to one

another.[73] It also determines the networks in which they are able to move within – what kitty party[74] they are a part of, what parties they are invited to, and how regularly they travel have all become markers of how cosmopolitan, or Sindhi, an individual is – in the eyes of other Sindhis, Indians and Ghanaians too.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown the centrality of pre-existing social networks in determining migration trajectories amongst the Sindhi community since 1947. From being a small trading network of men, and in a few instances, their young sons, the Partition of India led to this small network evolving into a fully-fledged global diaspora – with the insertion of women and children being central to this development. By following this specific trajectory of migration to Ghana through the narratives of individuals who have found themselves living in Ghana, we are able to understand how the notion of 'cosmopolitan Sindhiness' has arisen and become central to life both within Ghana and beyond. By identifying the stark differences between *this* migration route and that to Gujarat, the chapter has explained how Sindhis in Ghana (and other Sindhis who are a part of the global diaspora) were able to escape the persecution and poverty that Sindhis in India faced. This enables us to see how some in a group officially classified as refugees reacted to the crisis to create a truly global Sindhi community and to position themselves as success stories. This chapter has also shown that migration patterns in Ghana have led to the emergence of a cosmopolitan Sindhi that is a distinct group within the Sindhi

[73] Explored in greater detail in Chapter Four (Tying Knots).

[74] Kitty party is a term used by Indian women (and other South Asian women) to refer to a group of women who meet, usually during the afternoon, on a regular basis. The kitty, that is a pot of money into which each member puts in an agreed amount, is used to buy food, drink and activities for the group.

diaspora – made up of significant transnational networks that people aspire to be a part of.

CHAPTER THREE

SINDHI, INDIAN AND GHANAIAN: NEGOTIATING ETHNIC IDENTITIES IN ACCRA

This chapter explores how Sindhis in Ghana have negotiated their Indian identities since Ghana gained independence in 1957. It does this by outlining Ghana's treatment of non-indigenes under different political regimes, and the impact of this on Sindhis. It then moves on to exploring the special place Sindhis have in Ghana's broader Indian population. I highlight a distinction between 'old-timers' and 'new-timers', the former being those Sindhis who have roots in Ghana dating back to the early 1920s, and the latter being the more recent wave of Indians migrating to Ghana in much larger numbers. The tension between privilege and precariousness has shaped their group identities. Attention to socio-political context points to Sindhi-ness in Ghana as a form of 'reactive' ethnicity. As Rumbaut states, 'forging a reactive ethnicity in the face of perceived threats, persecution, discrimination and exclusion is not uncommon' (Rumbaut, 2008, 3). Drawing upon his own earlier works (Aleinikoff and Rumbaut, 1998; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006; Rumbaut, 2005), Rumbaut stipulates that reactive ethnicity is one mode of ethnic identity formation, and highlights the role of a hostile context of reception in accounting for the consolidation rather than the erosion of ethnicity (Rumbaut, 2008, 3). But reactive ethnicity on its own can only tell part of the story. The second half of this chapter shows how ethnicity and gender are mutually constitutive.

In other words, it explores how, in performing ideal womanhood, Sindhi women produce and reproduce Sindhi culture. It does so by exploring the roles of women, specifically older women, as cultural producers, focussing on the work of the Indian Women's Association (IWA). All of the above fit together to highlight generational differences in the ways in which Sindhis (and other Indians) in Ghana constantly negotiate their own identities, especially their propensity (or lack thereof) to identify as Ghanaian.

Ghana's politics of exclusion

Ghana's indigenous population is made up of a number of ethnic groups. These ethnic groups differ in their cultural, religious and linguistic traditions (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).[75] Nevertheless, they are all recognised as indigenous and 'of the soil'. Post-colonial citizenship laws have recognised Ghana's ethnic diversity and have granted equal citizenship rights to all autochthonous people (Citizenship Act 2000 (Act 591)). However, the legacy of the colonial concept of citizenship has led to what Akyeampong refers to as an 'essentializing of nations, presenting national populations as bound by history, culture, language, faith and even biology' (Akyeampong, 2006, 313). It is along these lines that newly independent Ghana shaped its citizenship laws. The post-Independence constitutions of Ghana (1957, 1969, 1979 and 1992) have each brought in a slightly different set of citizenship and nationality laws. Overall, the effect of these has been to emphasise birth to a Ghanaian, rather than residence in Ghana, as the core

[75] See http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/socio_demo.html for census data from 2010. These reports break down data through region, sex and age. For historical data related directly to ethnicities, see Harvey for a full explanation of ethnic groups present in Ghana (1966, 5).

criterion of citizenship.[76] For those who do not belong to indigenous ethnic groups, such as Sindhis, these laws have limited their access to gaining Ghanaian citizenship, and in some cases, have led to expulsions of non-indigenous populations at different points in history. These expulsions targeted Indians, Lebanese and black Africans from other countries – with one of the largest expulsions taking place in 1969 (Schildkraut, 1978; Brydon, 1985, 563; Kobo, 2010; Akyeampong, 2000, 2006; Casentini, 2018).

Sindhis in Ghana, specifically, 'old-timers', are a sub-set of an economically elite group[77] in Ghana that enjoys a lifestyle inaccessible to many other Indians and indigenous Ghanaians. The money they make through their businesses in Ghana gives them the luxury to travel, consume goods from around the world, and have very comfortable lives in Ghana with house helps and drivers being permanent fixtures in their homes. Some, if not most, also have properties in Central London and India. Without dismissing the fact that many of the 'old-timers', such as Bhagwan Khubchandani, lost their homes and assets that they left behind in Sindh when they departed post-1947, during my fieldwork, it was clear that this distinct group exercises power within their social environments in Ghana.

[76] The Citizenship Act, 2000 (Act 591) also provides an overview of the constitutions of 1969, 1979 and 1992. It is now largely accepted by theorists that nationalism is not an essentialised phenomenon but is characterised by diversity and fluidity (Smith 1996, 358; Miller, 1996, 406). The Ghanaian state in the Nkrumah period, which was right after Ghana gained independence in 1957, was particularly concerned with protecting Ghanaian values and encouraging national unity amongst its people.

[77] This group includes indigenous Ghanaians, Nigerians, Lebanese and few other Indians.

Being the oldest known Indian diaspora in Ghana, although now outnumbered by other Indians, Sindhis still exercise influence within the Indian community. This can be seen through the dominant positions they have held and continue to hold within the Indian Association of Ghana – something that is explored in greater detail in the second half of this chapter. It is also important to note that the more recent wave of migration amongst Indians has been a direct response to managerial positions opening up within large Sindhi and Indian businesses – predominantly owned by old-timers and their families. Thus there is an employer/employee relationship between many 'old-timers' and 'new-timers' that extends to wider families. For example, although Sheila Khubchandani does not run Melcom with her husband, their staff still see her as being 'Chairman's wife' and treat her as an extension of the position of Chairman.[78]

The majority of relationships between Sindhis and indigenous Ghanaians are also unequal. As stated above, Ghanaians are predominantly house helps for Sindhis, and therefore the relationship between them resembles the employer/employee relationship between 'old-timers' and 'new-timers'. However, not all relationships between Sindhis and Ghanaians are unequal. Some Sindhis have close relationships with indigenous Ghanaians who run successful businesses in Ghana, as well as indigenous Ghanaians who hold well-regarded and powerful positions within government. Some, such as Peekay Mahtani, have close friends from their time at school who are Ghanaian, but this is relatively rare – and during my fieldwork I found that 'old-timers' spent the

[78] This also is due to the strong connection between family and business, where even employed staff have regular interaction with wider family members.

majority of time socialising among themselves rather than with any indigenous Ghanaian friends they might say they had. It is clear that 'old-timer' Sindhis form a distinct elite in the social landscape of Ghana, amongst Indians and in wider Ghanaian society. However, as previously noted, 'old-timer' Sindhis have been viewed as non-indigenes and have faced persecution under different post-colonial political regimes in Ghana. As stated in the opening of this chapter, this tension between privilege and precariousness has shaped their group identities.

To further our understanding specifically of discrimination against Sindhis in Ghana, it helps to turn to the Lebanese diaspora in West Africa. The Lebanese diaspora have a much longer-standing history of migration to the region in comparison to Sindhis, so we can learn a lot about the Sindhi experience by exploring the discrimination Lebanese people experienced in Ghana in the post-independence era.[79] Persecution faced by such groups is not unique to Ghana, or even West Africa. Other Indian diasporas have also experienced expulsions during the post-colonial period, the largest being the expulsion of all Ugandan Asians under Idi Amin's regime (Jamal, 1976; Adams et al, 1979; Mamdani, 1993; Nasar, 2016). Knowing that non-indigenous groups were not always welcome in African countries, we need to ask whether citizenship laws have had lasting implications for perceptions of belonging amongst Sindhis in Ghana. How, moreover, do

[79] See Arsan (2014). Arsan's *Interlopers of Empire: The Lebanese Diaspora in Colonial French West Africa* gives an in-depth account of Lebanese migrant communities in colonial French West Africa. Although there is little mention of British colonies, such as Ghana, the long-standing history of Lebanese migration to West Africa is clear. Also see Akyeampong (2006) for his discussion of the Lebanese community in relation to Ghana's exclusionary laws of citizenship.

such laws impact popular perceptions of the 'other' for Sindhis, other Indians and indigenous Ghanaians?

My research participants recalled that during these moments of economic and political unrest, whole families migrated away from Ghana in order to save their families and businesses from the persecution they were facing for running foreign businesses. Some participants informed me that some successful businessmen were jailed under certain regimes, and others reported that some Indian shops were spared looting and vandalism only because Ghanaian staff presented themselves to soldiers as the owners. Akyeampong notes that during Rawlings's short rule in 1979, due to an alleged bounty placed on his head by Indians and Lebanese communities, 10 Indians and 36 Lebanese individuals were deported from Ghana as illegal aliens (2006, 317).[80]

Bharat Daswani's family story offers a useful starting point for understanding how the right connections enabled some people in Ghana to escape from exclusion. Bharat's grandfather's experience of migrating to Accra, in what he believes to have been the late 1960s, highlights the hardships that non-indigenes faced. His account also suggests how having personal ties with political elites sometimes paved the way for individual traders to access full citizenship rights in a country that discriminated against anyone who was not an indigene:

[80] The treatment of Indians in Ghana in the post-independence era can be explored by looking at the Lebanese experience due to the close visual similarity between Sindhis and Lebanese people (light skin complexions and dark features) and their shared propensity to engage in trade and commerce. Participants would tell me that historically (and now, although not as much) they are often mistaken for being Lebanese.

> We were quite poor. But my grandad was big fanatic of yoga. So he used to practice yoga all the time. Then he got one person who started to follow him who was in the military. And that person came to rule Ghana. His name was General Acheampong.[81]

General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong led the coup d'état against Dr Kofi Busia's Progress Party in January 1972. He became the military head of state of Ghana and ruled from 13th January 1972 to 5th July 1978. Acheampong came to power after the first two republics in Ghana during which foreigners had faced legal challenges to trading through import controls restricting the movement of their goods as well as the need to acquire licenses to engage in trade (Goldsworthy, 1973).

During the Busia Administration (1969-72), the Aliens' Compliance Order of 1969 was passed, which saw thousands of non-indigenes flee the country. So when Acheampong took over, there was a lingering air of hostility towards non-indigenes. Acheampong's relationship with Bharat's grandfather highlights both the difficulty of obtaining citizenship in the post-colonial period and the value of having Ghanaian citizenship at the time. General Acheampong offered to give Bharat's grandfather approximately 20 acres of land in Legon, a suburb situated about 12 kilometres north-east of the city centre. Instead, Bharat's grandfather asked for a Ghanaian passport. At a time when

[81] Interview between Bharat Daswani and myself at Bread and Wine Bar and Restaurant in Osu, Accra on 21/06/2015. Bread and Wine has closed permanently since this interview was conducted.

only those who were Ghanaian by birth to a Ghanaian mother or father were granted Ghanaian citizenship, this was of high value, especially for a Sindhi or any other foreigner:

> We were one of the first foreigners to get a Ghanaian passport….My grandad was not a businessman. What happened was that people used to come and pay him something small and say give me a quota, [be]cause at that time you needed a Ghanaian passport for quotas to import and he was the only one who had it…Unless you team[ed] up with a Ghanaian he was one of the only persons who could bring you goods.[82]

For those who were not fortunate enough to become Ghanaian citizens, there were often ways around acquiring licenses for importing their required goods. Yet, naturally, there were feelings of discontent amongst Sindhis who had travelled to Ghana to rebuild their lives with their families after Partition and were now facing serious challenges in importing goods. For some people who did not have business interests elsewhere to generate income but still had families to feed, their livelihoods were under threat, which led to feelings of frustration and sometimes resentment towards the Ghanaian state. Whilst a small minority of well-placed families, such as Bharat's, benefitted from the situation, these families often met with feelings of resentment from the many other families who were struggling.

[82] Interview between myself and Bharat Daswani conducted in English at Bread and Wine in Osu, Accra on 21/06/2015.

The initial hardships that Sindhis faced, due to tight government controls along with the practical obligations of residing in Ghana discussed below, have had a lasting impact on the feelings of belonging in Ghana. For example, most of my participants, even those born in Ghana, are Indian passport holders and have to renew their residence permits approximately every three years. The process itself is one that causes feelings of frustration, and further highlights how Ghana's political choice in the post-independence era not to provide universal rights for residents only causes Sindhis to feel like they belong less to Ghanaian society.[83]

On one occasion I accompanied a young Sindhi woman to the Ghana immigration service in order to renew her resident permit. Chandni had already filled out multiple forms and attended the immigration service twice before, having been told she needed other documentation to prove her need for Ghanaian residency. Whilst at the resident permit desk, which was situated in a small container behind the main immigration building, the processing officer asked her if she would marry his brother. He continued, 'But why do you want to stay in Ghana?' 'I live here with my family,' she replied. 'Oh but you are not Ghanaian – look at your skin, it is white,' he went on to say. 'I was born in Ghana, my family live here, I live here. I want to renew my permit.' 'Ah but sister, is your father black?' After more fleeting comments about how this young Sindhi woman could not possibly be Ghanaian even though she insisted that she was born in Ghana and studied

[83] Ghana is not unusual in this respect. The UK also narrowed its nationality laws in the second half of the 20th century– in principle these were quite expansive in the 1948 Nationality Act, but they narrowed considerably in the 1960s through the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, and again in 1980s under the Thatcher government. Many other African countries also have nationality laws that privilege descent over residence.

there, Chandni told the officer, 'My father is from Ghana. He is Indian.' 'Ahhh so sister, you are Indian.'

On our way home, Chandni let out her frustration: 'They don't even let you feel Ghanaian! We have to have residence permits and have to pay international fees – just because I have an Indian passport.' Chandni is not alone in her frustrations about the lack of recognition by indigenes of their plural identities. Such marginalisation has historical precedents. Most notably, the Ghanaian state's treatment of individual 'strangers' and small groups of non-indigenes in terms of citizenship rights has clearly influenced wider popular perceptions of what is means to be Ghanaian and what it means to belong (Whitaker, 2005).

Even for the few Sindhis who do hold Ghanaian passports, it is clear that a passport does not lead to acceptance by indigenes. Bharat Daswani holds a Ghanaian passport, as do his father and his grandfather. When I asked him whether indigenous Ghanaians view him as Sindhi or Ghanaian he replied:

> They're confused. They're confused. I speak a bit of local with them, broken English. Sometimes they tell me, "you're not Ghanaian". Then I tell them, "you're not Ghanaian". They look at me like, "why are you saying that?" So I say, "prove to me that you're Ghanaian". They're like, "ok I'll show you my passport". Also me, here's my passport.[84]

[84] Interview with Bharat Daswani conducted in English at Bread and Wine in Osu, Accra on 21/06/2015.

Speaking 'local' here refers to a pidgin English that is an amalgamation of English and Twi, as well as various sounds and tones that together are distinctly Ghanaian. What is important here is that, for Bharat, speaking in the vernacular with indigenous Ghanaians represents unity, and he is choosing to speak what is also his local language to assert his Ghanaian identity. When individuals choose to speak their local language, they express their attachment to the local identity affiliated with this language (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1995). Of course, indigenes may have other languages through which they express their Ghanaian identities, whereas Bharat is restricted to an urban amalgamation. Whilst Ghanaians may speak a particular form of English in particular contexts, most of them also speak another Ghanaian language fluently or as their mother-tongue – e.g. Twi, Fante, Ga, Ewe, Dagbani, Mampruli or Kassena. Bharat does not. Speaking pigeon English, rather than bridging the gap between Bharat and his indigenous Ghanaian counterparts, may actually further emphasises the difference between them, and confirm Bharat's 'otherness'.

Even once Bharat has ensured his interlocutors that he has a Ghanaian passport, there is still a lack of acceptance of him as Ghanaian: 'So they say you're from Liberia - I know that.' Even for those such as Bharat and his family who have full Ghanaian citizenship, they were and still continue to be considered strangers and are excluded from national politics, in a way that mirrors those Lebanese who had acquired citizenship in Cote d'Ivoire (Bierworth, 1999, 92-93). Although some Sindhi residents may be able to apply for naturalization, according to Akyeampong

the process has become increasingly tedious and 'since 1993 no non-Ghanaian has been granted Ghanaian citizenship by naturalization' (2006, 318).

More than ten years on from Akyeampong's article, several Sindhis have in fact been granted citizenship through naturalisation at the discretion of a Minister who works on behalf of the President of Ghana, who ultimately grants citizenship. The individuals who have chosen to apply have been motivated by their business interests.

Often those who have been resident in Ghana since independence or soon after have experienced hostility and instability in both economic and political life, so attempt to keep their business interests varied and maintain interests outside of Ghana in case there is a need to leave at any point. My younger participants often tell me that their parents and grandparents have invested in property and business elsewhere so that, if Ghana were again to see unrest, they would have easy access to another part of the world to move to quickly and safely.

Unlike Bharat's family, whose members hold full Ghanaian citizenship and therefore have the right to vote, many other people who have been granted residency do not have this right. Their lack of say in how the country is run is a further way in which non-indigenes are excluded from Ghanaian politics – something that the Lebanese community in Ghana experiences as well (Akyeampong, 2006). Furthermore, we see through Bharat's and Chandni's first-hand experiences that issues such as those outlined above have had long-lasting effects both politically and in terms of social perceptions of Indians in Ghana.

Against this backdrop, the likes of Bharat and Chandni have a higher propensity to associate with other Indian people, further solidifying their Indian identities.[85]

Often, political and social exclusion, of the kind that Indians in Ghana and the UK have experienced, heightens group consciousness of differences, hardens ethnic identity boundaries between "us" and "them," and promotes ethnic group solidarity (Brubaker, 2002). The forging of reactive ethnicities is not a new phenomenon in Britain. Although South Asians in Britain have not faced political exclusion in the same way non-indigenous populations in Ghana have, national identification amongst these communities is complex. And, although some view themselves as British on the basis of their legal status, they may not embrace a strong sense of British national identity. In Brah's monograph *Cartographies of Diaspora*, (1996), she explains how from the 1950s onwards, Asians in Britain were subjected to discrimination (Brah, 1996). For example, in 1959 a Sikh man was banned from wearing his turban at work (ibid, 24), but there were general negative stereotypes that white British people held about Asians in Britain. As Brah notes drawing upon her earlier work, the Asian was seen as someone who, '"smelled of curry", was "dirty", wore "funny clothes", lived "packed like sardines in a room", and practised "strange religions" (ibid, 22). Jaspal (2011) who writes about the construction and management of national and ethnic identities among British South Asians finds that such discrimination can lead to South Asians in Britain not embracing a

[85] I do not wish to downplay the role of Ghanaian culture in the lives of second and third generation Sindhis. The Sindhi youth have found ways to incorporate both their Indian and Ghanaian attachments. However, for the purpose of discussing the formation of a collective Indian identity through the role of institutions, what I am focussing on here is the lack of attachment to Ghana as a *political* space, similar to what Akyeampong found with the Lebanese community in Ghana (Akyeampong, 2006).

strong sense of British national identity, but also holding negative views of the white British majority (Jaspal, 2011, 45).

As outlined in the introduction of this chapter through the works of Rumbaut and colleagues (1998; 2005; 2006; 2008) reactive ethnicity can be created in hostile environments, and such environments can lead to the consolidation of ethnicities. But once created, reactive ethnicity also has to be asserted and maintained.

The second half of this chapter explores exactly this: how the Indian Association of Ghana and the Indian Women's Association have projected an Indian cultural identity, which is recognisable to the non-Indian majority. However, my analysis of the Associations, their events and activities reveals an internal hierarchy amongst Indians, in which the 'old timer' Sindhis play the most important roles. These organisations have predominantly been driven by Sindhis, and shaped by their attempts to navigate their presence in the country. Specifically, what follows explores the Indian Association of Ghana and the Indian Woman's Association of Ghana, illuminating how processes of maintaining a reactive ethnicity rely heavily on women.

The Indian Association of Ghana (IA)

Formed originally as the Indian Merchants Association in 1939, to address the growing need for community support for new Indian families, the Association was renamed the Indian Association of Ghana. This led to the transformation of the organisation from providing business support to Indian men, to an association which became the centre of religious, social and cultural activities for whole families. The Indian Association has been the main body for spearheading social and cultural activities for Sindhis as well as

other Indian communities in Ghana. As both the Sindhi community and later the wider Indian community grew in numbers and became more ethnically diverse, and as they faced the political exclusion outlined above, it became ever more important for Indians to appeal to a shared ethnic identity.

The IA, then, was also a way in which early Sindhi migrants began to carve out ways of representing themselves by means of a collective ethnicity. Such collective ethnicities are often shaped through the work of immigrant associations, which provide social and economic support for those who struggle with language and cultural barriers in their new environments, as research has shown for Asian immigrants in America (Basch et al, 1994; Kim, 1987; Portes et al, 1996). For Sindhis, especially women and children who were not engaged in 'productive' activities (i.e. those remunerated with money), the IA provided them with the opportunity to meet others confined to 'reproductive' activities and celebrate cultural and religious festivals whilst away from their extended families in India.

According to the Indian Association of Ghana's website:

> This was the first body created in the entire West African Region by Indian traders - Metharam Brothers, Bombay Bazaar, Lilaram Thanwardas, Mahtani Brothers, T. Chandiram, K. Chellaram, Hariram Brothers, Wassiamal Brothers, G. Motiram, Punjabi Brothers and D. P. Motwani. These were the founding members of what our Indian Association is today, and they elected Mr. K. W. Mahtani as their first President, and Mr. N. T. Daswani as their first Secretary. The Constitution and by-laws were carefully drafted years later by

Mr. P. K. Mahtani and Mr. Heman Dadlani (Indian Association of Ghana, 2010).

Most of these established leaders have become 'Indian ethnic leaders', representatives of the Indian community in Ghana, but more importantly they are also wealthy Sindhi men who are a part of established business families. Although historically, this can be explained by the fact that the majority of Indians in Ghana were of Sindhi origin, this does not explain the ongoing dominance of Sindhis in these positions as the Indian community has grown in both numbers and diversity. To put this diversity into perspective, there are now pockets of regional ethnic groups originating from parts of India that have their own regional associations that celebrate cultural and regional festivals. For example, the Tamil Association celebrates the harvest festival of Pongal every year. Over the years, as other South Asian communities such as Punjabis, Gujaratis, Sri Lankans and Bangladeshis have migrated to the region, the Indian Association of Ghana has not become a broader-based organisation. Instead, new institutions have formed to serve the differing needs of these new communities. The seven sub-ethnic groups that have formed in Ghana fall under the umbrella of the IA. Despite the presence of sub-ethnic groups, the IA and the affiliated Indian Women's Association, and the leaders of these groups still remains the main public representative body of Indians in Ghana.

The ongoing dominance of Sindhis in board positions of the IA can be explained by the self-selecting characteristics of such institutions. For example, Kurien's (2001) research on the Federation of Hindu Associations and the Federation of Hindu Associations in

Southern California shows that direct or indirect mechanisms are often put in place to restrict membership to those of similar backgrounds. For the case of Sindhis in Ghana, this reinforces a Sindhi elitism amongst Indians in Ghana. Below is a photograph from the ISCC Hall at Osu Temple in Accra. The board lists all past presidents of the IA. With the exception of William Pereira, all past presidents are Sindhi and from well-known business families. However, the dominance of Sindhis as Presidents is changing. Since my fieldwork, a new president of the Indian Association of Ghana has been elected. His name is Rajesh Thakkar and he comes from a Gujarati background. Rajesh runs successful businesses in Ghana and is based there with his wife and children.

Image source: Author

Model minority

Faced with the pressures of living in a West African state that gives few rights to non-indigenes,[86] Indian immigrants have, as in other Indian diasporas around the world, made an effort to create and locate themselves as a model minority (Bhattacharjee, 1992, 32; Dasgupta et al, 1996, 384). Stranger communities like the Indians in Ghana are often perceived as profit-seeking people, those who are only interested in using the resources available to them for their own economic gain. They are often seen as people who do not belong and have no cultural ties to their host culture or environment.

Even for indigenous Ghanaians, having a specific Ghanaian ethnicity is a key marker of being Ghanaian. This is exemplified by Bemile (2010), who argues that a call for a standardised national language[87] would be met with resistance in the northern regions of Ghana as well as the Volta region. Such allegiance to a local language shows that indigenous Ghanaians merge their ethnic identifications with national citizenship in order to be truly Ghanaian. That is, one cannot be Ghanaian without having an ethnic identity that belongs to Ghana, illustrated by Peil's discussions about the expulsions of other West African groups. Peil (1971) shows that other West Africans were treated in the same way that Lebanese aliens were treated; aliens had neither the citizenship nor the ethnic criteria to really belong in Ghana and they were actively discriminated against

[86] See Berry (2001; 2009) for a discussion of how land ownership has been reserved for citizens of Ghana and impacts debates over property, authority and belonging. Berry (2009) discusses historical cases of land ownership in Ghana in the context of other West African states. Lentz and Nugent (2000) also discuss how the exclusion of 'strangers' from acquiring land rights in Ghana has led to a tendency for migrants to protect their links back home, or in the case of Sindhis, aligning themselves with their Indian ethnicity and their transnational networks.

[87] Which for the case of Ghana would be a version of Twi, which is spoken by 44 percent of the population (Lentz et al, 2010).

and forced to migrate out of the country. Since 2002, there has been recognition by the state that people can have dual nationality and be loyal to both their place of origin and where they reside (Akyeampong, 2006). But people (both strangers and indigenous Ghanaians) are under pressure to perform their culture and sense of belonging to ensure they have a recognised ethnicity, even if it is a foreign one. For example, Cassiman (2008), in her research on national migration amongst Kasena people from the Upper East Region of Ghana, shows that these migrants have to be members of their hometown. This is not only through birth but also through the actions that they carry out as adults, in this case contributing to the development of their village through building houses and maintaining their village as home. Although these people spend a large majority of their time outside of the village, they are still recognised as being Kasena, not only to other Kasena people but to people they meet in the towns and cities to which they migrate. Although people may not be familiar with Kasena culture or language, to have an ethnicity – even it is a minority ethnicity and unfamiliar to other groups - is much better than having no ethnicity, and thus being seen as rootless', in the eyes of Ghanaians.

In the Sindhi case, the irony lies in the fact that the Indian identity that they have (re)created in Ghana is one based upon an imagined land, as their roots lie in a place that is no longer a part of India. Thus, ethnic formation becomes even more important for Sindhis, not only to represent themselves to wider Ghanaian society as 'rooted' peoples, but also to shape their self-perceptions of belonging. One such way that the Sindhi community has done this is by organising large events at auspicious times in the

Hindu or Indian calendar, such as the Desi Mela, which takes place yearly during the time of Diwali, as well as investing in charity projects which help indigenous Ghanaians.

If we think of ethnic groups as Ake suggests, as bearers of cultures rather than in terms of boundaries, exclusivity and conflict (1993, 9), we begin to understand that it is helpful for heterogeneous Indian ethnic groups to come together to create a homogenous Indian ethnicity that is recognised by Ghanaians. This is what the IA does successfully, enabling Ghanaians to view Indians generally within a model of ethnicity that they understand as being central to a proper identity.[88] Moreover, it is rare to find an indigenous Ghanaian who will recognise the existence of multiple Indian ethnic groups resident in Accra – these groups are subsumed into a category of 'Indian'. In this sense then, Indianness is a category in the same way that Asante is a category, making individuals recognisable to other people.

A similar phenomenon took place in East Africa whereby, in the colonial era, heterogeneous groups of Indians were grouped together as the 'Indian community' by colonial officers (Morris, 1956).[89] However, the case of Sindhis in Ghana differs for the

[88] See Ake (1993) for a discussion about the creation of political ethnicity in Africa. Ake draws upon notions of political ethnicity in Africa in the colonial and post-colonial periods and points out the importance for Africans of belonging to ethnic groups. In contrast to Western tradition, 'some African cultures tend to posit being as essentially and unavoidably communal. Persons have identity only because they are part of a community, their freedom lies in the concrete capabilities, privileges and immunities which arise from communal life. Integrity is embedded in one's location in a community and the ways in which one manages the entitlements and obligations of community membership. Privatization of being is precisely its degradation for it renders morality, integrity and even real self-consciousness impossible,' (1993, 10).

[89] 'For a busy administrative officer it was convenient to consider the Indians in his district to be a united group of people who lived and traded in gazetted townships. If they approached him through a local Indian Association representing all Indians, his work was made easier; and he invariably ignored, as far as he could, any suggestion that the Indian Community as such was disunited.' (Morris, 1956, 197).

following reason. As early migration to what was then the Gold Coast was dominated by Sindhis, being Indian and being Sindhi were often one and the same. Yet, over the years, as other ethnic groups from the sub-continent have also migrated to Ghana, these Sindhis have had to reflect on what they have claimed to be Indian identity in Ghana. Ethnic (re)formation through the establishment of organisations has to be considered as a process. This is influenced both by pre-migration cultural and religious factors (Clarke et al, 1990), and also by residential patterns in new environments (Chafetz et al, 2000), in particular the hostility experienced as a community over the years. Indeed, the new environment has been central to Sindhis' interactions with existing Ghanaian people and later migrants from the Indian subcontinent.

The role of women in the process of ethnic consolidation is paramount. Women are key in creating and maintaining the 'model minority' status of Indians in Ghana. As shown in other Indian immigrant contexts such as North America, women face pressure to preserve cultural identities and transmit ethnically defined values to their children (Dasgupta, 1998; Imman et al, 1999; Inman, 2006). Sindhi women in Ghana are no exception. According to Ortner (1974), this distinct role of cultural preservers that women play, also leads to their seclusion.[90] Ortner stipulates that 'women are seen "merely" as being closer to nature than men. That is, culture (still equated relatively unambiguously with men) recognizes that women are active participants in its special processes, but at the same time sees them as being more rooted in, or having more

[90] In the context of Sindhi women in Ghana, I do not use seclusion in the strict sense of the term, but the association of women with domesticity and the expectation that this is where they put most of their time and energy.

direct affinity with, nature' (ibid, 73). Although Ortner is careful not to oversimplify her point, what is important in understanding the seclusion of women is: 'Since it is always culture's project to subsume and transcend nature, if women were considered part of nature, then culture would find it "natural" to subordinate, not to say oppress, them.' (ibid). Thus the vast majority of women I met during my fieldwork told me they married and had children soon after. Returning to Ortner's ideas then, 'naturally', these women's roles became limited to the domestic sphere, leading to their seclusion. However, as the IWA will show us, Sindhi women have found ways to venture out into public spaces that resonate with their lives at home as wives and mothers, which is important in challenging their seclusion. According to Rosaldo:

> Women's status will be the lowest in those societies where there is a firm differentiation between domestic and public spheres of activity and where women are isolated from one another and placed under a single man's authority, in the home. Their position is raised when they can challenge those claims to authority, either by taking on men's roles or by establishing social ties, by creating a sense of rank, order and value in a world of their own (1974; 36).

Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989) specify the importance of women in being symbols of ethnicity, as a whole, and Indian women have long been a national symbol, protecting the honour of Indian society (Das, 1995a). Yuval Davis and Anthias outline five main areas in which women participate in the process, most importantly by reproducing the boundaries of ethnic/national groups, as well as being transmitters of its culture and

signifiers of ethnic differences, (1989, 7-9). For the case of women in Ghana, the establishment of the IWA by Sindhi women themselves, and the work the Association carries out, has given Indian women in Ghana a way in which to enter the public domain as well as create a dedicated space for women to come together and work towards a common goal. Through a focus on the Indian Women's Association (IWA) women find their way out of being secluded from public life.

The Indian women's Association (IWA)

The Indian Women's Association (IWA) was formed in 1982 and currently exists under the umbrella of the Indian Association of Ghana. It was officially registered as a charity in February 1988. The IWA began partly because the constitution of the IA did not allow women to be a part of the executive committee or advisory board. However, some women who were key figures in the establishment of Osu temple felt that they should have a say in the running and future of the temple. An individual who recalled the history of the formation of the IWA shared that it was after an argument regarding this between the executive committee of the IA and these women that they formed the IWA. Prior to the establishment of the IWA, three or four small women's groups existed but these were not officially registered charities and they were usually small groups of Sindhi friends around the same age who would come together to organise activities for children and adults at special times of the year. The exclusivity of these groups caused tension

in the expanding Indian community, and in response to possible tension the IWA seeks to include women of all sub-ethnic categories.

Today, the IWA is responsible for 'social and charitable service to the community' (Indian Association of Ghana, 2010). The IWA raises money through charity events, such as the Desi Mela, Diwali Ball and other events throughout the year, and donates its funds to chosen charities. The organising committee is made up of several women. During the earlier years of the Association, the women involved were mostly from a Sindhi background. It is worth noting that the current president of the IWA is of Punjabi origin, but she is a part of a well-established family in Ghana and runs a restaurant that is popular amongst old-timer Indians in Accra. She recalls being a member of the only Punjabi, non-business family when she first arrived in Ghana. The language she used to describe how Sindhi women,'welcomed' her into 'their' group is interesting as it highlights the dominance of Sindhi women in the IWA.

The Association is a registered charity and is approached by NGOs and individuals to support particular projects or villages. A news report for an online news publication, *Modern Ghana*, published in 2014, provides an example of its work – a partnership with Village by Village, an NGO working in the region. The IWA provided 48,000 Cedis to assist in the building of a crèche and a kindergarten in Abenta, a village located in the Eastern region (Quinn, 2014). Members of the committee usually travel to villages under consideration, to assess whether the funds could be put to good use and decide which projects to support on the basis of impact measured by the number of beneficiaries. The full donation in the case of Abenta is the equivalent to approximately £9000, gathered

at fundraising events. Mrs Cheema is quoted in the report as saying, '"children are our future so we have to give them help and education"' (ibid).

Image source: Quinn (2014). This is a photograph taken of some members of the IWA managing committee surrounded by villagers in Abenta. The president of the IWA, Mrs Cheema, is seen cutting the ribbon to mark the opening of the new crèche and kindergarten.

Image source: (Quinn, 2014). Here we can see the same IWA committee members standing outside the new building in Abenta, which has been named the I.W.A Kindergarten and Crèche.

In the same way that the IA publicly represents Indians in Ghana, the IWA is at one level a representation of Indian women, but in fact represents Indian society in Ghana as a whole. Its dedication to providing for society and working for charitable causes helps to create and maintain a particular image of Indian women in Ghana, which in turn strives to create a positive perception of the wider Indian community. As discussed in Chapter Two (Tying Knots) the ideal Indian woman embodies certain characteristics. Charity work is a way in which Indian women in Ghana are able to create and maintain the ideals of Indian womanhood and, more importantly, portray these ideals to others within the

Indian community as well as to others in Ghana. The active presence of the IWA creates and shapes the construction and representation of Indian culture in Ghana through their long-term and ongoing commitment to local causes. These women also ensure that the 'model minority' status of the Indian community in Ghana is actively maintained through their contribution to wider society. This resembles the efforts of other minorities such as the Lebanese community in West Africa who sponsor public projects to portray their dedication towards their host country (Akyeampong, 2000; Bierwirth, 1999; Boumedouha, 1990; Falola, 1990).

As has become clear, the 'Indian community' does not come into being automatically, but has been produced through individual and collective action. Thus, high-profile events, and occasions largely for Indians themselves, are crucial for reinforcing the notion of a single community. Through participant observation at Bala Vihar weekly meetings in Accra and the Desi Mela in 2014, I examine the ways in which Indians in Ghana experience 'Indianness' and culture and the key role of the IWA in doing this. Events such as the Desi Mela allow us to see the Indian community of Accra within a public space that has temporarily been claimed by Indians specifically for Indians.

An event that, from the outside, simply seems to represent all Indians, can be analysed more closely, to reveal what it means to be Indian in Ghana, and to what extent people harbour feelings of 'Indianness.' I explore this by comparing experiences of old-timer Indians, who are largely Sindhi, and what I call new-timer Indians – other Indians (including Sindhis) who have migrated to Ghana in more recent years. I argue that these two different groups experience 'Indianness' and being Indian in contrasting ways –

reflected in their involvement in the organisation, execution of Indian cultural events, and the distinct spaces they occupy during events. This reveals that an important version of Ghanaian Indian identity is publicly constructed, produced and transformed largely through the dominance of old-timers in pan-Indian associations in Ghana.

What becomes clear is not simply that old-timers define an outward-facing collective Indian culture, but that it is women in particular who play a central role in creating and transmitting it. For example, we will see that the marketing material for the Desi Mela publicises it as being organised by the Indian Association. Yet, during the organisation and execution of the event, it was hard to see where the Indian Association actually fitted into the organisational process. It was largely women from the IWA who were most closely involved with the practical steps of planning the event; the Indian Association simply oversaw the process. These women are integral to Indian society in Ghana; they are the producers, transmitters and representatives of this very public version of Indian culture. The work of the IWA is a way in which women can mobilise their roles in creating an Indian identity in Ghana. Indian women in diaspora may have an even more important role than women in India in ensuring that a localised version of Indian culture is created and maintained as they do not have the advantage of being on Indian soil. Therefore, recognising their place in diaspora, the women of the IWA take their role in organising events such as the Desi Mela seriously.

At the same time as the Desi Mela is a space for the Indian communities of Accra to perform a Ghanaian Indianness to outsiders, it also shapes understandings and dynamics of what it means to be Indian amongst the Indian community. The gender

dynamics, along with the old-timers' key role in preserving Indian culture, are further highlighted at the Cheti Chand celebrations through the spatial boundaries between old-timers and new timers, as well as the clear roles that old-timer women play in leading prayers and celebrations.

Bala Vihar

Bala Vihar is a children's group that meets weekly on a Saturday morning at Osu Temple. Run by old-timer Sindhi women, the group has been running since the first generation of Sindhi children who were born and raised in Ghana. Bala Vihar runs for an hour and consist of several short class periods, each focusing on a specific activity. Children learn *saloks* (chants) and *bhajans* (hymns), discuss Hindu philosophy and morality, and are told stories from the Hindu epics such as the Mahabharata. There are also activities such as card making and games that the children enjoy doing together. Each session ends with Bala Vihar teachers leading a collective Arti (deity worship) in which all children take part.

During my fieldwork I was recruited by a young Sindhi woman to help to teach these classes. Having attended as a young child, her mother had taught Bala Vihar and she remembers all Sindhi children in her generation attending every Saturday morning. These older women still teach Bala Vihar classes, although they are encouraging younger women to take over. Younger women have a propensity to leave the country once they are married, but the skills are transferable to their new places of residence. By running Bala Vihar classes as married women, they display not only their own good nature, but that of their mothers and women more generally in Ghana. The majority of Bala Vihar

teachers were also the women on the committee of the IWA, and the children from Bala Vihar were part of their production for the Desi Mela which portrayed stories from the Bhagawad Geeta.[91]

Bala Vihar represents the ongoing efforts of old-timer women to socialise children in Ghana into the Hindu faith and more widely for the on-going transmission of Indian culture. They help children to find collective identities to relate to in a community that is characterised by a variety of smaller Indian groups. Nevertheless, I was regularly told by the organisers that the commitment of parents to sending their children to Bala Vihar had decreased over the years. When I probed why, they claimed that part of the reason was that parents are now too busy to bring their children, but also because an increasing number of Indian families reside in Tema, mostly due to cheaper living options and closer proximity to work for the men in the family. Tema is located east of Accra and the commuting time is a minimum of 45 minutes to an hour (depending on traffic, which has become a serious problem). Although the great majority of new timers now reside in Tema, areas within Accra still remain as the main hubs for Indian cultural events, such as Bala Vihar.

Cultural classes for children are not a common phenomenon in India, but they have become more important in the diaspora. For example, Bala Vihar does not exist on the Indian sub-continent (Kurien, 1999, 653). In Ghana, it was created by Sindhi women as

[91] Chinmayananda defines the Bhagawad Geeta, which can be translated to the 'Divine Song of the Lord' as 'a hand-book of instructions as to how every human being can come to live the subtle philosophical principles of Vedanta in the actual work-a-day world' (2006, 2). In his foreword, Easwaran describes it as being a guidebook and map giving practical advice on how to live in a world of challenge and change (2007, 10).

a way to ensure that Indian culture is preserved for generations to come. Bala Vihar helps to create a sense of collective Indian identity for children in Ghana. Regardless of their regional backgrounds, these children are taught the same values through Hinduism. The planning of events such as Bala Vihar serves to reinforce the importance of old-timer women maintaining their positions as the producers and carriers of culture.

Within this process, maintaining friendly relationships amongst committee members themselves is important in order to present a united front to other members of the Indian community as well as outsiders. For example, during dance rehearsals for the Desi Mela, choreographers decided to place more confident dancers at the front of the stage. One of the main organisers of the event who is an old-timer pulled aside another dance instructor who was also from the old-timer community to tell them that a particular child needed to perform at the front of the stage because her mother was closely involved with the IWA and had done much work for the planning of the Mela. My counterpart reminded me that this is how Accra society worked: 'If the parents are involved with the planning, their kids are given preferential treatment.' This further highlights what I otherwise observed in Accra, and something that Bala Vihar sessions and the Desi Mela itself foreground: those in organising committees display allegiance to one another. In other words, the IWA fosters a sense of solidarity between the women involved in organising it. We will return to this later in the chapter when we focus on the IWA monthly meetings.

Different experiences in shared 'Indian' spaces: Desi Mela 2014

The Desi Mela 2014 was held at the Aviation Social Centre on the evening of Saturday 15th November. Each year the venue and structure of the event changes but its essence remains the same. The Mela brings together members of Ghana's Indian community, both old and new, and attracts indigenous Ghanaians to join in the cultural celebrations.[92] By comparing the spatial relations between old-timers and new timers, the Desi Mela provides a snapshot of the ways in which they experience being 'Indian' in Ghana.

Along with several young Sindhi women, I had been running dance rehearsals through my fieldwork in Accra. We had taught a group of children between the ages of five and fourteen from our Bala Vihar classes to perform at the Mela as part of a drama production centred on the story of Diwali. After weeks of rehearsals, it was time for the event to take place.

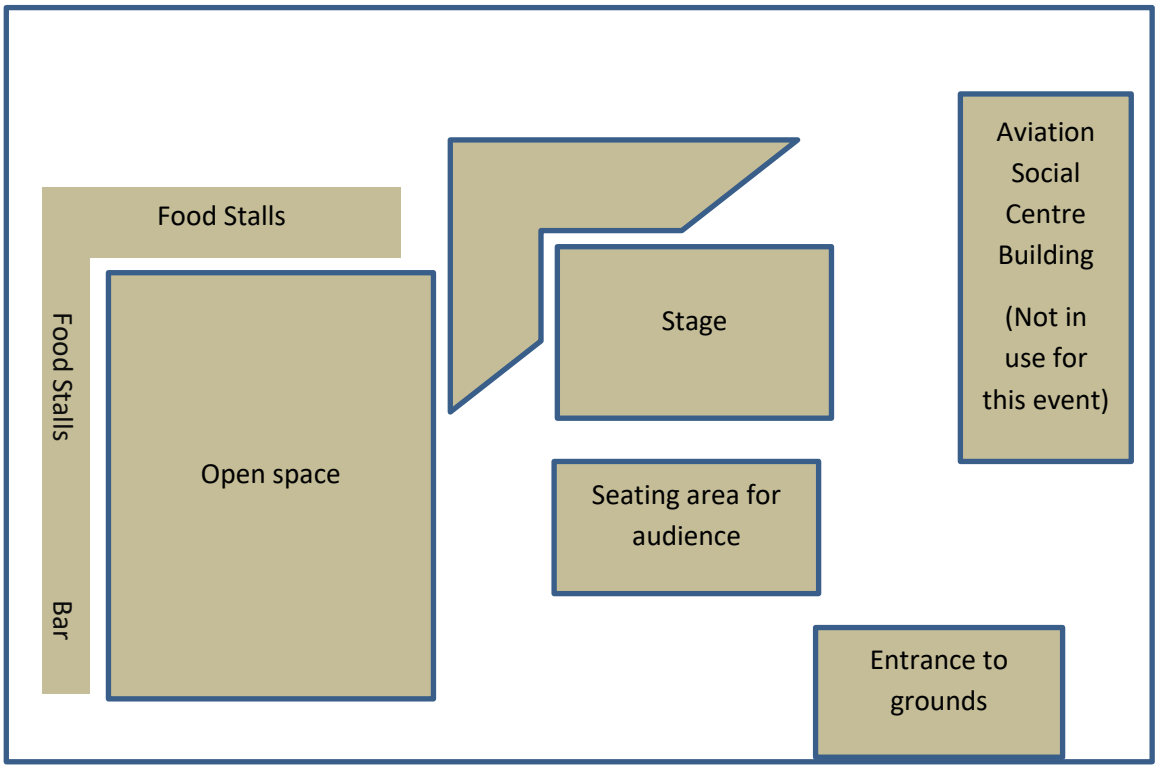
It was a hot and humid day in Accra, and we spent the whole afternoon at the Aviation Social Centre conducting dress rehearsals for our children. The grounds were vast and a large rectangular stage had been set up for the evening's performance. The programme for the evening's performances listed a plethora of acts: the combining of religious stories from the Bhagawad Geeta interpreted through children's theatre performances, as well as classical Indian and Bollywood dancing and singing. All of these

[92] The Ghanaians who attend are usually friends of members of the IA or IWA, or when an event is taking place in an open space the Ghanaians are usually passers-by who buy tickets to attend.

performances had been chosen by the IWA committee and they had been careful to ensure that the performances represented the variety of Indian communities present in Ghana.

Image source: (2014) Indiana IWA Facebook page

Diagram of set up of Desi Mela 2014



Old-timer Indians experience the Desi Mela largely through their organisational role. As mentioned above, the managing boards of both the IA and IWA are still dominated by old-timers, so each year their members decide on the type of event the Desi Mela will be. They make practical decisions about the venue, the performances, and the stalls that will exhibit their goods or sell food at the event. During the event in 2014, old-timer Sindhi families occupied clearly defined spaces within the Centre. Members of the IWA who were involved in the planning of the children's performances were largely backstage and on the stage introducing performances. Sindhi men were running the bar, serving drinks, from beers to whisky. The food stalls were dominated largely by Sindhi women and their Ghanaian staff. During the event, people behind the stalls mingled

mostly with one another and at the bar men enjoyed meeting their business acquaintances as well as family friends.

The new timers, however, largely occupied the open space during the Mela. Most families had travelled into Accra from Tema for the evening. The women were dressed in brightly coloured suits, sarees and kurta tops with leggings. They met their friends with children, many of whom attend Delhi Public School in Tema. Some had children performing on stage throughout the evening. The young men who resided in Ghana without their families used the Desi Mela as an opportunity to meet with others in similar situations, and enjoyed indulging in the variety of food items available for purchase. Did these people interact with the old-timers behind the food stalls and bar? During my time helping behind the bar, I witnessed a few Indian managers greet their bosses as they were being served their alcoholic beverages, but otherwise there was very little interaction between the two groups. There were clearly defined spatial boundaries.

Literature on performance can illuminate the more staged dimensions of sociality on this public occasion. A useful starting point is Drewal's explanation of performance as:

> the praxis of everyday social life; indeed, it is the practical application of embodied skill and knowledge to the task of taking action. Performance is thus a fundamental dimension of culture as well as the production of knowledge about culture. It might include anything from individual agents' negotiations of everyday life, to the stories people tell each other, popular entertainments,

> political oratory, guerrilla warfare, to bounded events such as theatre, ritual, festivals, parades, and more (1991, 1).

If we think of performance in this broad sense and as a fundamental dimension of culture, and think here of the new timers as 'audiences' and the old-timers as 'performers', we begin to understand that the relationship between old and new timers at the Desi Mela is not one-directional. By this I mean it is not simply that the old-timers are the producers of culture and the new timers are its consumers. We should think of this process as being a part of a cycle where, 'What is production is also reception; the act of reception is also production, quite literally rather than in the aesthetic and disembodied sense' (Barber, 1997, 358). As James (1997) pointed out in her study of Kiba dance performances in South Africa, performances are sites where both the performers and the audiences actively make themselves part of a collectivity. Applying these insights to the Desi Mela, we can see that the version of Indian culture performed on such occasions is not simply recreated by new timers, but is used to create new versions of Indianness in Ghana that are produced by individuals and sub-groups of Indians.

IWA General Meetings

Image source: (2017) IWA Facebook page

Open invitation circulated on Facebook for the IWA General Meeting for the month of March 2017

The Indian Women's Association celebrated 29 years of its official existence in Ghana on 28th February 2017. A General meeting to celebrate this occasion and Holi, the Indian festival of colours, took place on the first Wednesday of the month, 1st March 2017. The IWA's monthly General Meetings are held at the Indian Cultural Centre in Osu on the first Wednesday of the month. Each general meeting is dedicated to a different festival or event that falls within the month. For example, February's meeting usually follows a

Valentine's theme, October's meeting follows a Diwali theme, and December's meeting a Christmas theme. The room is decorated accordingly and women are encouraged to wear something that fits the theme of the month.

For the month of March, the room was decorated in colourful cloth hanging on the pillars around the room and tables were set with brightly coloured tablecloths and centrepieces. Women were wearing colourful kurtis and scarves, and some were wearing western trousers and tops, but still keeping with the theme of colourful clothing. I noticed members of the IWA committee pottering around the room getting refreshments ready for guests, and a table had been set up at the front of the room full of raffle prizes and a cake to celebrate the anniversary. The meeting began with a welcome speech by the President of the IWA, Mrs Surinder Kaur Cheema. By this point, all the women present, about thirty in total, had taken their seats at tables with their friends or family members and applauded when Mrs Cheema announced the anniversary of the IWA.

The President then went on to say that the work of the IWA was important to society because these women were taking time out of their lives in order to provide for the needy, and that the women present should encourage friends and younger women in the Indian community to attend the meetings and become involved with the IWA's work. At an earlier interview I conducted, Mrs Cheema added the importance of giving time to others: 'You can do something for the people who need it, needy people, so we have time, we're housewives so we should give some time to others also, not yourself

only. I believe in that.'[93] Mrs Cheema's speech was met with a round of applause from members and she then invited the women to gather around to cut a cake in celebration. After encouraging members to take part in a charity walk, which the IWA was organising in collaboration with five other women's associations in Ghana, the remainder of the General Meeting was used to play games, such as a Holi themed musical game, bingo, and a raffle draw. After these activities, women were invited to join in eating a lunch prepared by various members of the IWA. The spread was full of Indian street foods such as pani puri, pau bhaji and sweets. The room was alive with chatter, laughter and women speaking about upcoming events and the wellbeing of their families and friends.

What purpose do these monthly meetings serve? We have already seen that the work of the IWA is paramount in creating an Indian ethnic identity in Ghana, but I argue here that these monthly meetings have a special significance for women themselves. They are important in creating a support group, hence promoting solidarity. This solidarity is important for women whose roles have traditionally been confined to the private sphere and centred on the wellbeing of their families. As in other areas of the world, Indian women who migrated to Ghana to join their husbands often faced challenges of leaving parents, siblings and extended families behind. As Moghaddam et al find for Indian immigrant women in Montreal, Canada, women leave behind their support networks which puts them at greater risk of experiencing psychological distress (1990, 335). With the lack of familial social support networks in Ghana for migrant women, IWA meetings

[93] Interview with Mrs Cheema at the Indian Cultural Centre in Osu. Interview conducted in English. It is important to note that when Mrs Cheema uses the term 'others' here in the context of their work in Ghana she predominantly means indigenous Ghanaians who are viewed as less wealthy than themselves.

provide a space in which women can find and maintain new support networks away from their husbands or in-laws. However, the networks that these women become a part of are not entirely independent of their families. Being a part of a small, close-knit community, women engage in charity work in order to signal their virtue and to enhance the reputations of themselves and their families. Thus men are beneficiaries of these activities, and women are well aware of that.

Furthermore, most, if not all, of the women who are part of the IWA are married and know that their residence in Ghana is likely to be permanent. With unmarried women – daughters, sisters and nieces – having a greater tendency to migrate out of Ghana through marriage, it becomes ever more important for married women to create a sense of permanence in networks that they know are secure. Therefore, the IWA monthly meetings act as a social place constructed by 'identifications and memberships, and the ways in which social place has resonances with stability of the self, or with feelings of being part of a larger whole with the emotional and social bonds, that are related to such places' (Anthias 2006, 21). So, these Indian women who attend the monthly IWA meetings transform the ISCC Hall at Osu Temple on a monthly basis into a place that is solely theirs and in which they belong. It is a space that is occupied only by women, all of whom are present to work towards a common goal together.

During the IWA meeting in March, the President encouraged members to bring along other women, either friends or family members, especially younger girls. She told me during an interview, 'we want more ladies to join with us. At present we are a very nice and active executive committee, day and night they work.' Mrs Cheema mentioned that

she is aging so she would like younger women to become involved to continue the work of the IWA once she retires from her role. However, my conversations with younger women, both married and unmarried, revealed that they are not keen to join the IWA. One of the main reasons they give is that they do not wish to spend their time playing games and making small talk with people they do not really know. My observations of younger women in Ghana revealed that their lack of enthusiasm is reinforced by their other commitments, either through work or young families. They foster their support networks in different ways, such as through lunches together and by keeping in touch with one another via WhatsApp groups. One young married woman, born and bred in Accra, told me that she associated the IWA committee with being 'aunties' so it has never appealed to her to attend meetings and become closely involved. Younger women do recognise, however, that one day when their children leave home they may join the IWA. Until then, they continue to attend events such as the annual IWA Breast Cancer Awareness Brunch and the Melas, but as members not organisers. Young women often tell me that they do help with the Desi Mela when they are asked to, but they do not wish to have permanent roles in the IWA.

Cultural institutions: women in public space

For my older participants then, the IWA represents a culturally acceptable way for them to participate in public life and insert themselves into public spaces. There is a vast literature on migrant women engaging in paid labour, which is often seen as a form of

empowerment (Oishi, 2005; Deshingkar et al, 2009, Pio, 2005).[94] However, when one looks more closely comparatively at women's roles in the labour market, it becomes clear that they are disproportionately limited to those that mirror their reproductive roles in the home. For example, Van Eyck (2005) explores the impact of migration on health workers from thirteen different countries, including Ghana, on their conditions of employment. Van Eyck (ibid) argues that 'the social cost of migration for women workers is potentially far greater because of unequal power relations in socio-political spheres' (2005, 706). Furthermore, when women migrants enter the workforce, they tend to enter into roles that are associated with 'women's work' that leave them with little social or legal protection (Bakan, 2003; Awumbila et al, 2008; Wong, 2000; Heintz 2005).95

For Sindhi women in Accra, migration did not result in influx into the workforce. However, there has been a shift in their traditional roles as home-makers. As a direct result of their migration, the women I spoke with noted a loss of, most notably, their female-orientated networks in the places they had grown up. The creation of the IWA allows us to see how migration has led to the active creation of women-centred networks by women themselves, allowing them to move into public spaces without

[94] These studies are focussed on South Asian women, however there has been a focus on migrating women and their empowerment, notably in in Latin America (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994) and other parts of Asia (Pe-Pua, 2003; Willis et al, 2003). The term empowerment itself needs to be understood in individual contexts (Malhotra et al, 2005). For example, in some contexts women's participation in household decisions is considered empowerment while this may be the norm in other societies. Empowerment is often seen as a process whereby women have the ability to make choices that affect their own life decisions, as well as ownership and control over resources. (Charmes et al, 2003).

95 Although both male and female migrants face working in low-skill jobs in the service sector and the informal sector (Sassen, 1991; King 1995) the discussion in the main body draws upon particularities of migrant workers distinctive to women.

questioning their expected roles in society. As in other parts of the world, these women-centred networks are a source of sisterhood and solidarity, economically and socially (Bailey, 2012; Kurien, 1999; Werbner, 1988). The IWA's main purpose is not to encourage women to enter the workforce or pursue political agendas in the wider context; it is a space for women to 'give something back to society', a phrase often used by its members. Society here refers to indigenous Ghanaian society, specifically, those who are living in some form of poverty. In this sense, then, Indian women are inserting themselves into the public sphere in ways that do not conflict with their ability to fulfil the expectations of the ideal Indian women. In addition, this also highlights that Indians' difference from Ghanaians, and the Sindhis' wealth in particular, does not preclude them from playing a socially useful role in the country, but might rather be viewed as a contribution. The IWA can be seen as an extension of women's domestic duties, which allows them to give their time and efforts to the community in a way that mirrors their responsibility for improving their families.

Although participation in the IWA is voluntary, in some ways there are parallels between the effects of being a part of the IWA and those that come from looking after families and engaging in paid work, which I will explore in more detail in Chapter Six (Women and Work). For example, Chen et al's study on married women migrants in Germany underlines that whilst women may enter the workforce as a result of migration, this does not relieve them from their household duties (2007). In the same way that working women in Chen et al's study bear the 'double burden' of carrying out productive work plus household work, women in the IWA must bear the double burden of looking after their families whilst carrying out the work of the IWA that requires both time and effort.

The ‘double burden’ that women experience may also further explain the higher propensity for older women (who are married and have children in their teens or who have children studying or working abroad) to be more willing to give their time and effort to the IWA organising committee. When their domestic duties decrease, they are able to give more time to the IWA.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified the increasing diversity among Indians in Ghana, and has drawn the distinction between old timers and new timers. The impression of a homogeneous Indian community is conveyed to Ghanaians. The Indian community has grown and become more diverse, but the Indian Association and Indian Women’s Association and particularly the ‘old timers’ have worked to create an Indian ethnicity that is unique to their Ghana context, and is recognised by Ghanaians. The roles of the Indian Association and the Indian Women’s Association have been pivotal in fostering this ethnic identity through the organisation of cultural and religious events throughout the year. However, Sindhis and other Indian groups themselves understand that the Indian community is in fact quite differentiated.

This chapter has also shown that gender and ethnicity are mutually constitutive forms of social ordering and meaning-making. Sindhi women are becoming ‘ideal women’ through their cultural and charity work, whilst a sense of Sindhiness is also being achieved by women engaging in this work. This has been outlined through a focus on the IWA and their activities. Although migrant women’s roles continue to be centred on

their domestic lives, the IWA can be seen as an *extension* of their domestic roles as they are voluntary service providers to the community. The work of the IWA is unpaid and charitable, but it would be wrong to say that the establishment of the IWA has not had any impact on Indian women's empowerment in Ghana. We will also see later in the thesis that more women are now moving into paid employment, especially second and third generation women. The establishment and work of the IWA has led to some important changes in perceptions of what women are capable of. As a result, the Indian Association changed its constitution in 2016 to allow women to join the executive board. Although there is not yet a woman board member, there is one woman who is a part of the Indian Association administrative team. These changes show that a traditionally male-led organisation is now beginning to acknowledge women's abilities outside of the home and make space for them.

The latter section of the chapter pointed to the importance of women-centred networks in the context of migration. The IWA seems to be more popular amongst the older generation of women who migrated to Ghana for marriage, and who lost their networks in the places they grew up; the IWA is less popular among younger unmarried women who were raised in Ghana but who live with the knowledge that they are likely to leave in the future. In the following chapter we will see how these networks become increasingly important as mothers prepare their daughters for potential marriage proposals that require them to migrate out of Ghana. For mothers and other married women, the lack of permanence for unmarried girls in Ghana means that their own durable networks forged through the IWA become even more important to them. This may be why my young married participants often tell me that older women from the

IWA encourage them to join the Association. They say that they will have to take it over and take its work forward for future generations.

CHAPTER FOUR

TYING KNOTS: SINDHI MARRIAGE NETWORKS AROUND THE WORLD

Rajan was born and raised in Ghana. His father is Sindhi and his mother Palestinian, which already sets Rajan and his family apart from his Sindhi counterparts. Because of his mixed heritage, Rajan found himself struggling with doubts about whether he was truly accepted and truly belonged to the Sindhi community in Accra, which is close-knit and characterised by exclusivity. Rajan left school at the age of eighteen after completing his A Levels at an international school in Accra and joined his father's successful business. Soon after joining his father's business, the family experienced serious financial difficulties and their business went into liquidation.

In an interview with Rajan in June 2015, he explained to me:

> Before our financial problem we were very rich, and every Indian,[96] especially the older Indians, the much older ones, the ones who are married now…they all wanted to be my best friends, they would invite me to all their parties, to all their get togethers, they welcomed me into their group.[97]

However, in 2007 after Rajan's family business broke down in his friends abandoned him, he was no longer welcomed to be a part of their social circle – he was now an

[96] By Indians here he is referring largely to Sindhis.
[97] Interview with Rajan held on 25/06/2016 at his residence in Accra. Interview conducted in English.

outsider. No invites to social gatherings, no help or advice, nothing. Rajan reflected upon this time: 'no one helps anyone over here. The Sindhi community is completely cut-throat. If you're doing bad they will laugh at you. If you're doing good they envy you, they look for a way to point out the flaw.' Rajan's father faced a similar problem whereby his friends cut ties with him during the period of their financial difficulties.

Ties with their foreign suppliers in China and elsewhere had suffered greatly. Rajan recalled with great anger in his voice that members of the Sindhi community had personally taken it upon themselves to call their suppliers to tell them of the Rajan's failing business – as a result these suppliers withdrew their services from Rajan's family. Business networks that were established long ago by Rajan's father were completely ruptured.

Whilst Rajan and his father were rebuilding their business, Rajan decided to marry his long-term girlfriend, a young woman also born and raised in Ghana who came from a Lebanese and Ghanaian background. The decision to marry was taken for personal reasons. However, the wedding that was organised was well thought out in order to regain their position in both their business networks and Sindhi society in Ghana. Rajan told me in detail about their wedding. It was the biggest wedding Ghana had ever seen for a foreigner[98] – six hundred people had attended, which is a large number even for a destination Sindhi wedding. Rajan's father invited all of their suppliers (who at the time were doing very little or no business with them) from around the world, paying for their tickets and hotels, and hosted a grand wedding in Accra, which took place over the

[98] Rajan used the word foreigner to describe himself, other Sindhis and Lebanese people in Ghana.

duration of a week. Full of Sindhi, Muslim and Lebanese traditions, there were also lavish decorations, and an array of food and drinks, including alcohol such as champagne and Johnny Walker Black Label whisky.[99]

After their wedding took place, suppliers began to regain trust in Rajan's family business. They saw that the family had the resources to throw such a grand wedding, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on all of the activities organised for guests. Very quickly after the wedding festivities were over, Rajan found that their business was growing at a rate that it was not previously. Suddenly, they had an array of suppliers wanting to supply their goods to them, and their business went from strength to strength and has continued to do exceptionally well ever since.

Rajan also found that his social networks began expanding once more – the same friends who had abandoned him were inviting him to their parties once again, his wife was being befriended by their wives and being invited to kitty parties and lunches, and his family had once more created a space for themselves within the Sindhi community in Accra (and beyond). As in other parts of the world, the social lives of married women in particular are important. Social events such as kitties and lunches provide these women with a space where they can showcase their finest jewellery and clothes to others who understand the significance. They not only portray a cosmopolitan self-image, but also use these opportunities to adorn themselves with fine clothes and jewellery and perform behaviours which establish a good reputation for their families (Srinivas, 1977; Waldrop, 2011).

[99] Which is something that my research participants would tell me is a typical Sindhi drink.

Why is Rajan's case important? What does it tell us about living within Sindhi society in Ghana? Rajan's case shows not only the difficulties of existing within Sindhi society, but also how pivotal a moment such as a wedding can be for families such as his. Having always existed on the peripheries of Sindhi society in Accra, Rajan's wedding put his family 'back in the game,' in both business and social life. It asserted their position in a way that may have been more challenging to achieve in the course of mundane everyday life. But this one moment had an impact on their everyday networks, which still play a central role in their economic and social lives more than five years on from the wedding. Reflecting on his experiences, Rajan told me, 'I believe money makes money. If you saw a poor man and you saw a rich man, you'd invest in the rich man because he's succeeded. So now showing success is about showing wealth. So now to make more money you would have to show you have money.'

Rajan's case is both reflective of wider Sindhi weddings and also an exception within the realm of Sindhi weddings in Accra. It was one of only two Sindhi weddings that have taken place in recent years in Accra (the other took place in 2015 during my fieldwork). The majority of Sindhis instead opt for destination weddings in places such as Thailand, Goa, Hong Kong and Dubai. Whereas Rajan's wedding was used as a tool to re-establish the family business, other Sindhis, who do not have the need to do this, also host lavish weddings. And, if re-establishing connections in such a deliberate manner is usually unnecessary, maintaining networks is absolutely crucial. Below I turn to some more typical Sindhi families and the types of weddings they have.

Arjun was someone most Sindhis in Accra would refer to as one of the most eligible bachelors. Now married, he comes from a very well-known and extremely successful business family with roots in West Africa since Partition. Arjun's grandfather is the eldest of two brothers. His younger brother migrated directly from India to Accra at the age of seventeen to work for their uncle who had a business there at the time. Like many young boys as we saw in earlier chapters, after some years of working for his Uncle, he set up his own business. Arjun's grandfather's route to Ghana was different to that of his brother. First, he migrated from India to Sierra Leone, then due to the effects of Sierra Leone's civil war, in 1997 the family split to go to two different destinations. He, his wife and son, left for Accra to start up their business there, and Arjun, his mother and younger brother left for London. Arjun and his brother were schooled in London until 2000, when they left to join the rest of the family in Ghana. For Arjun's family, having extended family there helped them to settle into a new place, but in 2002 Arjun left to attend boarding school in London. Arjun stayed in London from 2002 until 2013, by which time he had completed his Undergraduate and Master's Degrees, and he then moved back to Accra.

Upon his initial arrival in Ghana in 2013, Arjun shadowed his grandfather and father to learn how they ran the business. During this early period, Arjun found himself frustrated at the prospect of joining the family business and felt he had little autonomy in his working and personal life. In the years that followed, Arjun was given more responsibility by his grandfather, and was given the capital to explore business ventures of his own, all under the company name Arjun International. Although there was no

pressure on Arjun to find a marriage partner right away, since late 2014 his grandfather expressed his wishes for Arjun to embark upon his quest to find a wife.

According to Arjun's grandfather, finding a wife should not have been as difficult as people of Arjun's generation made it. During fieldwork, after I met Arjun's grandfather at the Mandir for the weekly Sunday service, he kindly offered to drop me home. As we got in to the car, Arjun's grandfather asked, 'why is Arjun not getting married?' He could not understand why he was sending Arjun to weddings all around the world, where he might meet someone, but to no avail. During our car journey he expressed his concerns that modern boys were too fussy when it came to choosing wives. In his day, parents would pick a girl for their son and the young couple would not refuse. 'At the end of the day, all girls are the same,' were his closing words on the subject.

This was a part of the problem for Arjun. He found that the girls he met, through various marriage CVs and contact details passed on to him through family and friends, were not suitable. Some were too materialistic, others were unwilling to migrate to Ghana, and still others only wanted to be with him for his family credentials. However, in 2017, Arjun met a girl from Bombay through his cousin, who he felt was the right match for him on many levels. She was originally from Lagos, but had lived in Bombay for most of her life. Her family were long-standing friends of Arjun's family, and their socio-economic backgrounds were similar. After meeting in Bombay and London on numerous occasions, Arjun proposed to his now fiancée and the wedding preparations began.

One of the biggest challenges was finding a suitable location to host the wedding. Members of both Arjun's family and that of his fiancée travelled to India, Sri Lanka,

Mauritius and Thailand to search for the perfect wedding venue. After much deliberation, the families settled on a wedding venue in Bangkok, and a renowned wedding planner from Indonesia was employed to manage the details. In the summer of 2018, Arjun and Aleena had an intimate religious ceremony to celebrate their engagement in Bombay, followed by a formal dinner and dancing at a high-end restaurant.

Arjun's wedding was a grand affair. Held at a five-star hotel in Bangkok over a four-day period, there was a plethora of events. The first of the events was the Ghari Puja. This was a prayer ceremony, the only part of the proceedings to take place separately for the bride and groom, during which various prayers were performed to prepare the individuals for marriage. The significant part of this ceremony was where the priest handed wheat grain to the bride and groom, after which a number of married women ground the wheat to flour. The purpose of the ritual was to encourage the prosperity of the household. As happens for other Sindhi families, Arjun's parents exchanged garlands with one another, symbolically recreating their own wedding ceremony – after which there was a procession of singing and dancing with their close family and friends. After guests adorned the parents with garlands, they returned to the front of the room and this concluded the Ghari Puja. Directly after the Ghari Puja, there was an evening of dinner and dancing for which a Sufi band flew in from India to perform music throughout. As this event took place one day before the official wedding festivities began, it was smaller than the rest, but still had about 150-170 people present. The party went on until approximately 3am, which was the earliest any of the events ended.

The days that followed were full of various wedding festivities that for the five hundred-plus guests were centred around drinking and dancing until after 6am every night, and there were a lot of Sindhi youth from around the world present. I met a young man from Canada who did not know the bride and groom personally, but was encouraged by his parents to attend as he was in Thailand for another wedding taking place directly after Arjun's. He explained to me that, although his own parents were not putting pressure on him to get married, nor was he actively trying to seek out a partner, every unmarried boy or girl at a wedding will keep an eye out in case they do meet someone. However, he did point out that because there were so many people from all over the world, notably West Africa (Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria), London and India, the chances of meeting someone at a wedding and keeping in touch were slim.

What these case stories show us is how Sindhis in Ghana court, wed and form ties with other people. By tracing marriage networks of families in Ghana, it shows how vital marriage has been and continues to be in creating an elite in reference to Ghanaian society, as well as Indian society, which is explored in greater detail in Chapter Four. The marriage process creates and reinforces barriers with regards to suitable marriage partners, not only amongst Sindhis but between Sindhis and Ghanaians too. This helps to explain the lack of assimilation into wider Ghanaian society and the exclusivity of the Sindhi community.[100] Marriage also cements dense webs of kinship and affinal relations that continue to promote the economic interests of families and Sindhi society as a whole, particularly through family business ties. Exploring the different aspects of

[100] Although this chapter shows how marriages allow for an elite community to live and prosper in Ghana, there is a wider discussion of inter-community relations in Chapter Three.

marriage illuminates the expectations placed on Sindhi boys and girls and how they experience the process differently.[101] Lastly, this chapter shows how, while marriage remains central to the lives of Sindhis, the process has transformed. Marriages can create, reflect and maintain the networks in which Sindhis live – to be a part of this desirable global network, one must ensure that marriages take place between the right people, at the right time and in the right places.

Conspicuous consumption and Sindhi weddings

Thorstein Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption offers a starting point for understanding why Sindhis put their resource into having such lavish weddings (1994 [1899]). Such conspicuous consumption plays two main roles in the case of Sindhi marriages. The first is an apparent affirmation of existing social hierarchies, in which some families are more prestigious than others – as was the case with Arjun's family. The second is a means for families to alter those hierarchies and experience upward mobility – as was the case for Rajan's family. It shows how what is perceived as an ethnically specific practice, which is that of a modern yet still distinctly Sindhi marriage, plays a role in personal advancement for people.

For Veblen, whose research explores the evolution of the leisure class, the social performance of its members is key to the transformation of wealth into status. In other words, status is only achieved when it is recognised by other members of society, and

[101] This discussion will be taken further in Chapters Five and Six.

this can only be done by displaying one's wealth. Veblen, writing specifically about the leisure class – those who share the common economic characteristic of being historically non-industrial but who gained monetary wealth through the rise of capitalism during the Second Industrial Revolution (1860 to 1914) – identified two ways in which this class display wealth: indulging in extensive leisure activities and excessive expenditure on consumption and wasteful goods (Veblen, (1994 [1899], 85). Veblen views both as 'wasteful' (ibid, 40), but it is the mere fact that individuals can engage in these that indicates their wealth and status. For Veblen, more mobile societies such as transnational Sindhis are less well informed about the leisure activities in which others engage as the more mobile they are the less close-knit they become. Thus, he contends, in these cases the display of wealth through consumption of goods becomes more important than the display of leisure (ibid, 24). He was writing at the end of the nineteenth century, and it may be argued that now even dispersed communities are much more connected through mobile phones, the use of the internet, social media platforms, as well as more frequent travel.[102] However, these opportunities may not be frequent enough for individuals to turn their display of wealth into status, which is one of the reasons that Sindhi weddings make for a prime time in people's lives where both leisure activities and extensive expenditure on consumption and goods can be displayed simultaneously. Bourdieu's development of Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption allows us to look beyond Sindhi weddings and instead at the wider

[102] Social media use will be explored in greater detail in chapter seven (Social Media).

institution of marriage.[103] In particular, his framework for understanding the lifestyles of different social groups using economic and cultural capital enables us to understand that the wedding itself is merely the culmination of strategies that individuals and families have been working on over many years. These strategies involve sacrifices for children's education, as well as other choices families and individuals make over time that will be explored in further detail later in this chapter. For Bourdieu (1986), economic capital refers to money, property or other assets people hold, while cultural capital is the knowledge, educational credentials and skill sets that individuals gain from their social upbringing, as well as education or other kinds of more formal learning. For Bourdieu (ibid), there can be transferability between the two types of capital, and they operate in relation to a third type, which he called 'social capital', meaning:

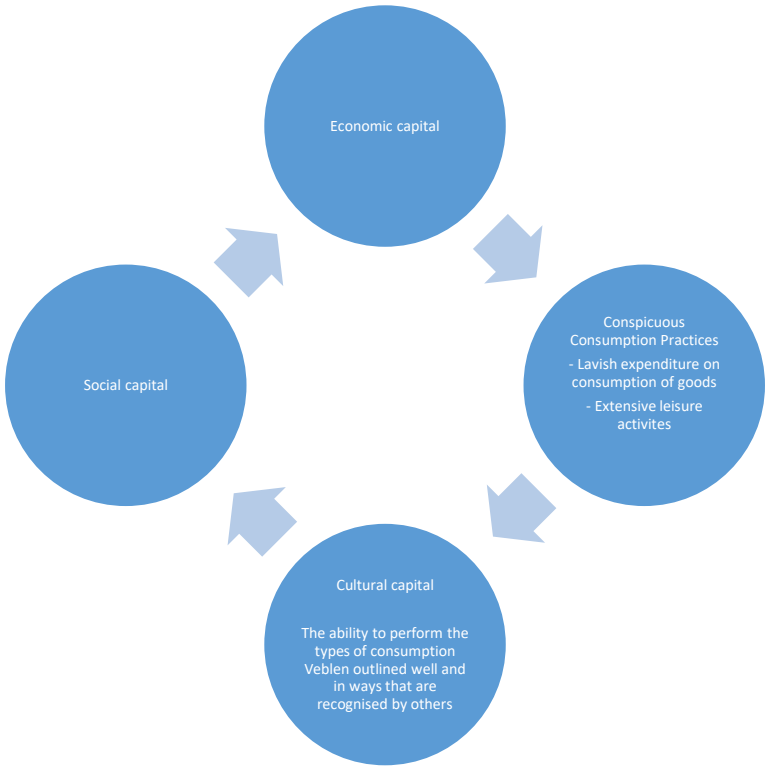
> the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (ibid, 248).

How do Bourdieu's ideas about capital relate to the case of Sindhis described here? Take for example a small family business which can be said to have economic capital but low cultural capital – sending their children to boarding school or universities abroad enables their children to develop high cultural capital. This in turn allows for their children to achieve desirable matches (families with both high economic and cultural capital), which in turn results in higher social capital. At a very simplistic level, it is social capital then,

[103] The use of Veblen and Bourdieu's ideas regarding conspicuous consumption are not confined to understanding marriages, but have relevance for wider social life. Therefore, we will return to these in later chapters.

which economic and cultural capital can lead to, which allows people to be a part of networks that prove to be of use to them, especially in business activities, which then lead to a rise in economic capital (see figure 1).

Figure 1



The making of an eligible marriage partner: a family affair

Like many other Sindhi girls in their early twenties, Heena returned to Accra after completing her undergraduate degree in Boston.[104] There is a stark difference between her grandfather's expectations of her, and her own, for her next stages of life. For her

[104] There are a few girls who have stayed abroad after their studies and have taken up employment. Although their experiences may differ slightly, the expectations of them getting married are very much the same as girls who return to Accra.

grandfather, after Heena obtained suitable qualifications, the next natural step for her to take should have been to reside in Accra, and learn how to cook and how to be a good Sindhi wife in order to find an eligible Sindhi bachelor to marry. However, for Heena, her undergraduate degree served as a foundation for further study and she went on to undertake a Master's programme at a business school in the UK. It became clear during my fieldwork that it was common for Sindhi women, including older women now in their fifties and sixties, to have attained at least a bachelor's degree. Aside from gaining educational qualifications, the exposure to other ways of life, most notably 'Western' ways, adds value to these girl's marriageability. Some girls may even meet their potential spouse during their time at university, especially in towns like Boston that have become increasingly popular among families seeking a suitable place for their children to attend university. Although many of my informants undertook their primary and secondary schooling in Accra, mostly at Ghana International School (GIS), the vast majority attended international institutions for their undergraduate and postgraduate studies.[105] The emphasis placed on receiving an international education can be seen through a conversation a participant recalled having with her friend:

> Everyone knows they are struggling, yet they are breaking their back to send their daughter to university abroad. I asked my friend, "Why are you doing this? There are good universities here in Ghana you can send your child to." But she insisted, "Who will marry my daughter if she goes to university here

[105] With the exception of a few attending boarding schools in the UK.

in Ghana?" They're taking the food off their own table to send their daughter abroad. It's really sad.[106]

This epitomises how central an *international* education is for girls seeking marriage partners. Although they may not utilise their qualifications for paid work after marriage, their qualifications are important in ensuring that they are seen as deserving of good marriage proposals. This may not even be because an international education shows that a girl herself has achieved a certain educational standard through intelligence or diligence, but rather because it reflects that the girl's family has the resources to send her to live and study abroad. A family's effort and commitment to their daughters' education also helps them to show other Sindhi families (both resident in Ghana and elsewhere) that they are 'serious'- i.e., that they understand what it means to invest in a long-term project such as education.

Most Sindhi boys, like girls, obtain qualifications which they do not go on to use in seeking salaried employment. Unlike the girls, however, they are expected to return to Ghana to work in family businesses, which sometimes leads to feelings of frustration about the 'waste' of their skills and qualifications. Rishi, who is now in his late twenties, left Ghana at the age of nine to attend boarding school in the UK. At the age of eighteen he moved to the USA to study International Relations and Operations Management at Boston University. After completing his degree, he went to work in South Africa with a contact of his father. Although Rishi spent nearly a year living and working in South Africa, he always knew he would return to Ghana to join his family business. In 2014,

[106] Interview with research participant in Accra in April 2015 (specific interview details omitted to maintain anonymity).

Rishi returned to Accra and began being assimilated into the daily running of his family business with his grandfather, father and uncle, who all run the business together. In 2015 however, Rishi left Ghana once more to undertake an MBA programme at Shanghai University. On completion in 2017, Rishi once again returned to Accra and has since been working in his family business.

What is interesting to note for the purpose of this chapter is that the investment made by Rishi's family into his education can be seen as unnecessary when the end goal was always to join the family business. Nevertheless, if Sindhi boys like Rishi receive an international education it helps them to add value to themselves as eligible bachelors. Although boys can use at least some of the skills acquired during their studies to eventually run their family businesses,[107] it also shows that the family has the necessary resources to send their child to live and study abroad, thus adding value to their eligibility. With parents often travelling to attend various university events such as graduations, this overall education project and the events which happen as a result project an image of families as cosmopolitan and connected to people and places outside of Ghana, all of which lead to attracting better marriage proposals.

A suitable match

In order to help understand how different generations think of marriage partners, it is important to recognise that the notion of love is embedded into historically situated worlds, cultural practices and material conditions (Cole et al, 2009; Padilla et al, 2007).

[107] As we will explore further in Chapter Five, boys like Rishi have little control over decision making in how their family businesses are run as they are juniors in what can sometimes be a business run by three generations of men at the same time.

For my young unmarried Sindhi participants in Ghana, their version of who constitutes an eligible marriage partner often differs from that of their parents or grandparents, which can sometimes cause tensions between family members and wider kin. This phenomenon has been explored in recent studies for both Indians in diaspora and those who live on the subcontinent. Research shows that young people are more involved in the selection of their marriage partners and love and conjugality plays a greater role than it has done traditionally for Indians, where categories of class, caste, religion and region serve to determine marriage unions (Donner, 2002; Fuller et al, 2008; Parry, 2001; Raj, 2003; Twamley, 2013). In particular, Parry has argued this case by comparing expectations of marriage of a Dalit illiterate man and his educated middle class daughter, the former seeing marriage as an institutional arrangement and the latter viewing marriage as the relationship itself (2001, 815). Sindhi boys and girls follow the trends identified above in wider studies of marriage for Indians. However, for arranged marriages especially, Sindhis display more traditional modes of picking marriage partners than recent research has found.

Who do people marry?

In arranged marriages, a significant emphasis is put on the credentials of families when weighing the eligibility of suitors. The mother and father of two young unmarried Sindhi boys told me it is common for some girls and their families to ask for bank statements to ensure that the bachelor and his family have the means to provide their prospective daughter-in-law with the comforts that she is used to. The term 'comfort' here is used

in a relative sense. For example, as explained to me by these boys' mother, girls feel that if their fathers have provided them with comforts such as diamonds and pearls, then they would want the same standard of provision from their husbands. Although for some traditional families, jati is still an important identity marker when finding suitable matches for marriage, monetary wealth has become more important for some families.

Here we see a change in the way people are thinking about value in relation to marriage. Where once jati reflected status, hence organising marriage alliances, now money signifies one's status. That is, for some Sindhis in diaspora the value of economic wealth now represents status in relation to other Sindhis. It will become clear as we move through this chapter that is it not money alone that signifies status, but money as a signifier of status highlights the centrality of the economic position of families in determining networks. These networks have always been critical in forging marriages and extending networks of cosmopolitan Sindhis, but the ways in which such networks are defined and evaluated has changed considerably over the years.

Although geographically dispersed, the strength and exclusivity of these networks in creating clear boundaries for the Sindhi community can be seen by examining instances of people who have married outside of the Sindhi community. In most cases, these courtships are cut short through family intervention. For a young boy in Accra from a very well-known business family this was the case. When he told his parents about his courtship and wish to marry a Sindhi girl, the parents refused to entertain the idea as the girl was not from a well-known family, nor did they have a family business. For this individual, this signified the end of their courtship, although it is not forgotten as people

brought it up to me in the months after this happened. This particular case was between two Sindhis. For those who choose to marry outside of the Sindhi community, the ramifications are great; their position within both their immediate family and the wider Sindhi community is compromised as a direct result of marrying outside of their ethnicity.

Pamela, a Sindhi woman residing in Ghana, is the archetype for Sindhis in Ghana. Pamela married her Sindhi husband in the 1980. Her husband was born and raised in Ghana with his family all living there. Although their courtship was not traditional in many ways,[108] their extended family is a core part of Accra Sindhi society. Being a mother of three young adults, Pamela reflects on why she feels there is undue pressure put on individuals to marry within the Sindhi community: 'They think society won't accept them if your child marries outside of the community. So it's all a matter of yourself more than the child. You're thinking about yourself. But you're not thinking in the long run about how that child is going to be in the future if you say no or yes or whatever. So it's all society's fault.' Although there are instances of mixed marriages in Ghana,[109] Pamela went on to tell me that there are still serious consequences for those who choose to marry outside of the community: 'They [parents] wouldn't want their child to marry outside. They wouldn't. And if they [children] do, it would be by force. And there are still people I know that would throw their kids out of the family house.'[110]

[108] In order to maintain anonymity, details of their courtship have been omitted.
[109] Discussed in more detail below.
[110] Interview between myself and Pamela conducted in Accra in June 2016. Interview conducted in English.

There are three key points here. The first is that children's marriage choices have an effect on their family position in relation to society. In other words, to marry within the Sindhi community ensures their family's place within society, whereas marrying outside of the community may result in being shunned from society. The second is that there is a high price to be paid by children marrying outside of the Sindhi community. For example, if a Sindhi boy who works within the family business decides to go against his parent's wishes and marry outside of the community, his right to a share in the family business would be jeopardised and he would also lose his inheritance. However, in most instances where this has happened, eventually families reunite. Thirdly, these mixed marriages reinforce status difference and consolidate the identity and exclusiveness of Sindhi society. Although the Sindhi community's social boundaries are in some sense very rigid, there are ways in which families negotiate intermarriage in order to maintain these rigid boundaries. For example, families may not agree with the marriage choices of their sons and grandsons, yet keeping family members close is important therefore they might reluctantly agree – either before the marriage, or through eventual reconciliation. For boys, the primary reason is business. It is seen as very important that family businesses should stay within the family and be passed through the male line, rather than go to any outsiders (Sindhis and non-Sindhis included). Therefore, reconciliation is sometimes a tool families use in order to save businesses, as well as family name.

Bhagwan Khubchandani prides himself as being a part of what he calls an international family. During his interview, Bhagwan explained that his uncle was first married to a Sindhi lady with whom he had four children. He then married an Austrian lady, with

whom he had a daughter. He then married a Chinese lady from Hong Kong, and had a son and a daughter with her. He then had a Japanese girlfriend whom he did not marry. Bhagwan also told me that after his mother's death, his father had a relationship with a Japanese woman. Bhagwan's cousin married a Christian Lebanese lady, with whom he had three children. Their two sons are married to Canadian and Dutch women, and their daughter is married to a Lebanese Muslim. Bhagwan's brother is married to a Taiwanese women. After Bhagwan explains this to me, adding that their family have Gujarati and Punjabi members as well, he finished off by telling me: 'It's a very cosmopolitan family and we have every reason to be very proud about it.'[111]

However, he also told me how individual members of his family suffered the consequences of marrying outside of the Sindhi community. He shared his experience of the family reaction to his cousin's marriage to a Christian Lebanese lady: 'The cousins were barred from attending the marriage. One cousin attended by smuggling his suit and keeping it in the office and wearing it. One cousin attended, but everybody else was barred from going.'[112] He explained that the mindset was different as this marriage took place in the 1960s, but now their family is very broadminded about mixed marriages: 'If my nephews go and marry an American or a European I don't think anybody will ever …. It's his life, let him live the way he wants.'[113]

These instances of mixed marriages described within the Sindhi community are relatively small in number and from Bhagwan's account as well as other examples in

[111] Interview with Bhagwan Khubchandani held at Kuku's Nest, an Indian restaurant located next to Melcom Head Office, North Industrial Area, Accra on 14/03/2015. Interview conducted in English.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.

Ghana it becomes clear that these have taken place mostly between Sindhi men and non-Sindhi women. Mann (1985) discusses mixed marriages between elite educated men and women from traditional Yoruba backgrounds during the colonial period. Mann found that women and children who came from mixed marriage backgrounds were not seen as equals by others in the community; rather they were viewed as inferior – something I also observed. While incorporating non-members, this serves to reinforce the exclusivity of groups, especially in forging marriage alliances and continuing lineages – in order to carry their ethnicity forward. It is also interesting to note that when Bhagwan explains that his family is very opened-minded he refers only to his nephews marrying outside of the Sindhi community. But what of his nieces? It is unclear whether his nieces marrying outside of the community would result in the same reaction from his family or the wider community. Bhagwan's father had a relationship with a Japanese woman after his wife passed away. By contrast, a very old Sindhi lady whom I interviewed, who migrated to Ghana with her husband after the Partition in 1947, told me that her husband passed away very early on in their marriage. However, she never had another relationship and never remarried. This gender difference may be explained by the different expectations of Sindhi women and Sindhi men, as well as generational differences between the migrant generation and their descendants.[114] A married woman with adult children pointed out, during an interview, that Sindhi girls are pressured by their parents into marrying within the community: 'Parents will say to their

[114] Gender differences are more closely examined in Chapter Five (Boys to Men) and Chapter Six (Women and Work).

daughter…" Oh what will people say?" And then the girl gets taken in. Some who cannot stand up for themselves.'[115]

It is worth considering whether this pressure from parents is linked to the expectation that females carry the honour of their families, which has developed into a cultural norm prevalent across South Asia (Das, 1995a, 1995b). Sindhi girls tend to marry within the Sindhi community, or of late, wider Indian society. For example, we see below the example of Mira, a Sindhi girl married to a Gujarati boy – in particular, the trouble she went through in order to marry this non-Sindhi.

Although there are a growing number of young Sindhi girls marrying Indian boys (Gujarati, Punjabi etc.), these boys are from business families and therefore it is seen as acceptable. However, families will often try to encourage these girls to marry an eligible Sindhi bachelor instead. There have been instances where a Sindhi girl has fought to marry her Punjabi boyfriend for over two years until her parents accepted and allowed them to marry. In an interesting conversation with a group of Sindhi girls, they explained how the pressure to marry a Sindhi comes not only from parents, but also from their extended family and the wider community as well. One young girl told me that her parents are happy for her to have a job and travel, as long as at the end of it she marries a Sindhi boy. For that reason, she explains, her mother especially tells her not to become too independent or else she will struggle to find a suitable match and adapt to her new family one day.

[115] Interview with research participant in June 2015. Details omitted to maintain full anonymity.

Pritesh and Mira

Mira is a young Sindhi female in her mid-twenties. Born and raised in Kumasi, Mira went to the UK to complete her undergraduate degree and returned to Ghana to live in Accra. Pritesh is Gujarati and was born in Kenya into a successful business family. Pritesh migrated to Accra in 2007 to live with his grandparents and work in the family business. Mira and Pritesh met one another in Accra through mutual friends. At first Mira's mother was not happy with their relationship, and on their initial dates Mira was not allowed out with Pritesh alone. Instead, her younger sister would accompany them on their outings. Pritesh was also not allowed to stay overnight in the house. Mira's father felt he should stay in the guest bedroom however Mira's mother did not feel that this would be suitable. Mira and Pritesh are now married, but before they were married they also faced some challenges within her extended family. When Mira's aunt found out that she was in a relationship with a non-Sindhi boy, the aunt took it upon herself to call the mother to inform her that she should have done more to get her daughters acquainted with two particular Sindhi boys who have done well in business. Mira told me that for Sindhis the amount of money a boy and his family makes is the top priority, but she did not care for this.

Although Pritesh is not a part of the Sindhi community, the success of his family business is very well known amongst the Sindhi community. Women have commented that Mira is very lucky to become a part of his family, as she will be 'well kept' and any children that will be born from this marriage will acquire its wealth and status.

Chandni Khubchandani

Chandni was born and raised in Accra. During my fieldwork, Chandni was in her late twenties. Chandni is a beautiful, independent girl and she is a pioneer amongst Sindhi girls in Accra. Chandni's experiences have differed from other girls of her generation in Accra. After spending some years in India for her secondary schooling, she returned to Accra with her mother and undertook her undergraduate studies at Ashesi University College in Eastern Region. After University, Chandni worked as a qualified accountant in Accra before starting her own business in baking. Not only was Chandni the only Sindhi girl in Ghana who started her own business using her own investment, but her marriage to a young man from a Venezuelan and Italian background made her one of the only Sindhi girls in her generation in Ghana to have married outside of the Indian community.

What does Chandni's case tell us? It tells us that a new generation of Sindhis are still trying to fulfil traditional expectations of their family and community – but they are negotiating new ways to do so. In some ways Chandni's story is typical of a Sindhi courtship– for example, Chandni met her husband Stan at a Sindhi wedding which took place in Goa in 2014. From that wedding, Chandni and her partner went on to get married, which is something many of my informants pointed out during my time in Ghana. Chandni and Stan's friendship turned into a relationship and although many of Chandni's mother's peers discouraged her from allowing her daughter to be with a non-Sindhi, Chandni's family supported her decision and were happy with the marriage taking place. In terms of the wider community, once the couple got engaged and travel to Miami decreased (an unmarried girl travelling to spend time with her boyfriend alone is not seen as being respectable behaviour), members of the community had much less to say about this alliance, as it now fit into the traditional and expected marriage path.

Where do people marry?

For Sindhis in Ghana, marriage determines migration patterns. These migration patterns are highly gendered. My research participants would tell me that that Sindhi girls from Ghana tend to migrate out of Ghana, whereas boys who are a part of family businesses tend to settle in Ghana and marry women who join them from other countries. A generation of women in Ghana, now in their early fifties, is made up of individuals from Spain, India and elsewhere who all married Sindhi men and moved either directly to Ghana, or first to another West African country before migrating to and settling in Ghana.

For girls in Ghana, migrating out does not pose a large problem. Having lived in West Africa for the majority, if not all, of their lives, they expressed their ability to adjust to living conditions wherever they may move after marriage. Although there are some instances of husbands moving to join a wife and her family in her home country, post-marriage migration is still characterised by virilocality. In various conversations, boys expressed that it is difficult for girls to adjust to life in Ghana, which they describe as the 'third world', especially if they have spent their life growing up in the 'first world'. They find that the perception of living in Africa is a negative one, especially girls from wealthy families in Dubai, Asia, South America and the UK. This is especially apparent if families have never visited Ghana or do not have family living there. For some, having family in Ghana allows for them to visit the country before deciding if it is a place they could see themselves settling down in. Among the young married couples I met during my fieldwork, some women had visited Ghana twice before engaging in a relationship with

a boy from Ghana which led to marriage. It is unclear whether these girls are sent by their families in order to find a marriage partner, or whether these liaisons happen as a coincidence, but this circulation of young girls helps in finding suitable marriage partners. For some girls, marriages were arranged outside of Ghana, so the first time they visited the country was after their marriage took place.

Some girls and their families were reluctant to create marriage ties with boys from Ghana due to the reputation of 'Ghana boys,' a term people used time and again to describe Sindhi men who have been born and brought up in Ghana. In a conversation with a married woman with children, she explained how her relative abroad told her that she should ensure her daughter does not marry a 'Ghana boy' as she had heard through the grapevine that they were not eligible bachelors. Although the specific reasons are unclear, what was extremely clear is that the term 'Ghana boys' has negative connotations attached to it. A young Sindhi male from Ghana, who met a young girl at a wedding he travelled to in Dubai, felt that their courtship had the potential to develop into a marriage. However, his concern was that she was not open to living in Ghana. When he questioned her about this, she told him that she would want to travel to her parents for approximately six months of the year and whenever the opportunity arose. For him, this indicated that this young girl was not willing to settle fully in Ghana. After having explained that he would have to live there permanently (when he would not be travelling for holidays, business etc.) due to his family business being based within the region, and that he would like his future wife to be able to stay with him, he decided that it would be best to end their courtship. This scenario is common amongst young Sindhi boys and reflects the challenges they face in finding potential marriage partners.

Life after marriage

With a new name, a new family and a new home, a Sindhi bride's first twelve months of marriage illuminate how members of her new family and wider Sindhi community think about gender and honour, and the expectations of married girls in their newly acquired networks. Historically, Hindu marriages have been characterised by a transfer of a woman to another family, characterised by a complete shift in the female's residence and lineage from her own kin to her affinal kin (Dube, 1955, 151; Gough, 1956, 841-842; Mandelbaum, 1970). More recently, Bhat et al (2006) found that virilocal post-marital residence and post-marriage migration to different towns and villages isolates women both physically and psychologically from their natal kin (355), and Sindhi brides who migrate to Ghana after marriage find themselves absorbed into their marital families and Sindhi society in Ghana.

Myra Jackie Mirwani, born as Lavina Ravi Daswani, married Jackie Mirwani in August 2014. At the time of their engagement, Lavina was studying at the London School of Economics for her Master's degree, and they met at a mutual friend's house in India. They were engaged after three weeks of courting before Lavina returned to the UK to complete her studies. Lavina finished her Master's programme the week of her wedding, which took place in Goa. After their wedding festivities were over, Jackie and Myra (formerly Lavina) travelled to the Maldives for their honeymoon, before travelling to Ghana to settle into their newly married lives. Myra travelled to Ghana on a tourist visa and had to go through a lengthy process to enable her to officially change her name in

order to apply for a residency permit to remain in Ghana with her spouse. Lavina had to publish her name change in two national newspapers – one in India and one in Ghana.[116] Many brides such as Myra never travelled to Ghana before their marriage –Myra was sure that she wanted to be with Jackie, so visiting Accra before marriage was not a priority for her.

This section builds a picture of life as a new bride in Ghana, which spans a time period of approximately nine to twelve months after marriage. It uses elements from different research participants' lives to draw out some of the nuances of this period of time.

An important rite of passage for a newly married couple in Ghana is a cocktail party. Often, not all of the Sindhi families in Accra can travel to weddings, especially if they are long distance destination weddings, so on return the family hosts a cocktail to welcome the newly married couple into the community. These cocktails are instrumental for a new bride as it is a way for her to meet her in-laws' family, friends and acquaintances and find her way into social circles that will become a large part of her life in Ghana. Having attended a cocktail party during my time in Accra, it struck me as a wedding reception on a smaller scale. The bride and groom carried out a meet and greet with everyone, followed by a cake cutting ceremony and a first dance. As always, Sindhi women were dressed in beautiful dresses, some short, some long and were adorned in

[116] See appendix B for article outlining Lavina's name change in Deshtoot Times. For some women, changing both first and surnames after marriage can have both legal and emotional implications. Some research participants have faced difficulty when travelling, especially when entering territories where they hold permanent residency under their maiden name. In some cases, women have to change their marital name back so it holds some resemblance with their maiden name. There are emotional factors to consider here as well. Some women conveyed a strong longing for a connection with their family – for them, changing names and living in a new place far away from their family made them feel differently about changing their name.

jewellery. What hit me were small groups of women who would sit in groups and make small talk, exchange gossip and make comments (positive, of course) on one another's dresses, jewellery, hair and nails. 'Ah, you're looking so pretty today, this dress is *gorgeous*!' 'O did you go to Marie Noelle for your nails? I was there only yesterday!' Although to one another comments were nothing but flattering, women also took note of others wearing dresses they had worn previously.

Clothing, specifically the sari for South Asian women, has been a way of maintaining a group identity as well as markers for caste, religious and socio-economic identities (Tarlo, 1996; Banerjee et al, 2003; Wilton, 2012). I argue that this is no different for Sindhi women in Ghana (and elsewhere), only with the on-going rise of a cosmopolitan Sindhyat, these women and men attach the same value to Western dresses, jewellery and shoes – all of these things portray ideas about the person (and their family). For Sindhis, women are still as integral to safeguarding community life, and embodying traditional ways of life. The way in which Sindhi women do this has changed from wearing saris as a marker of traditional Indian life and as an ideal of feminine attire to having on-trend Western garments and shoes (Chatterjee, 1993). In some moments, such as religious and cultural festivals, saris and Indian garments still hold significance – however, the style and type of sari is as important as wearing a sari itself. For example, whole wedding parties will be dressed in renowned Indian designers such as Manish Malhotra, who clothes famous Bollywood stars. People (mostly women) infer family status from this, as some of these outfits can start at £3,500 upwards to anything in the region of £15,000.

During the cocktail party I described above, men congregated mostly by the bar and brought drinks to the ladies who were sitting or standing by their friends. Comments were passed between people about why some people were not invited, speculations about their friendships were shared, and a lot of people were ready to leave soon after the formalities were over. Although I felt there was a general discontent that people had to take time out of their Saturday night to attend these cocktails or parties, they still considered them an important part of life in Accra. They bring people from close family to acquaintances into one single space which is important to help to create a sense of community in Accra.

Post-marriage residence

During my fieldwork, Neelam and Arun lived in a residential area of Accra in a two-storey house. The ground floor consisted of a hall, kitchen (that is used to prepare food for everyone), dining room and Neelam's in-laws' bedroom.[117] This was their floor. The first floor consisted of the bedroom of Arun's brother and the latter's wife, their hall, their children's bedroom and Neelam's and Arun's own bedroom. According to Neelam's description of the house, it was as if there were three nuclear families occupying the space which had distinct boundaries for each nuclear unit. Neelam's day began at about 6am when she woke up to have breakfast with her husband before he left for work. Both her husband and Neelam herself would have breakfast downstairs with her mother-in-law and father-in-law. The men then went off to work and Neelam retreated to her space upstairs. She mentioned that she would spend most, if not all, of her day upstairs

[117] Pseudonyms used to maintain anonymity.

unless she popped downstairs to see her mother-in-law. However, the latter would *never* come upstairs. This further emphasised the segregation between spaces that each unit occupied. Arun's parents ate food downstairs each evening and Neelam and Arun, along with Arun's brother, his wife and their two children, would eat food upstairs. They all ate different things. Neelam managed what food would be made for her husband and herself, while her sister-in-law managed what was made for her family, and Neelam did not specify who managed their parents-in-law's meals.

This layout is typical of Sindhi residences in Ghana. Traditionally married men and their wives would live in a single house, sharing space with patrilineal kin on a constant basis. More recently, houses, such as Arun's parent's house, have been purposely built with separate floors for each nuclear family unit. There is also an increasing number of apartment complexes being built by parents of Sindhi boys in Ghana. From the outside the apartments or houses look as though they are one single unit, but inside they are separated into individual, self-contained apartments. These types of properties illustrate the way in which there is still a cultural norm amongst Sindhis in Ghana whereby sons and their wives are expected to look after the husband's parents and grandparents.[118] However, more importantly, these new types of properties signify a shift in the way the family unit is thought about amongst Sindhis. There is definite recognition that the new generation of sons and their wives require their own space, and these spaces within single complexes allow for nuclear families to exist within extended family units. Even so, alongside this growing flexibility in patterns of residence,

[118] Although not as common now, this sometimes extends to the wider patrilineal kin if they live in the same house.

there is a continued emphasis on the outward portrayal of the family co-existing within one single space, although such unity is not reflected on the inside. This helps us to understand how Sindhis have changed traditional post-marriage residence patterns to accommodate changing norms amongst young couples who do not always wish to live in households with parents and grandparents after marriage. They have done so without compromising outward perceptions of the family unit as unified and adhering to traditional norms in which married men, along with their wives, live with their parents after marriage.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that there are stable ideas about success amongst Sindhis that are agreed upon by the vast majority of the community. For example, married life, lucrative business and personal networks that span across the globe are all seen as things to aspire to in life, and marriage is one way to achieve these things. Using Veblen's (1994 [1899]) theory of conspicuous consumption to understand the lavish weddings Sindhis organise, and by using Bourdieu's developments (1986) on Veblen's theory to understand activities within wider marriage practices for Sindhis in Ghana, I have shown how Sindhis strive to create, maintain and expand networks through good marriage alliances. However, this chapter also shows that people cross boundaries in different ways. For example, we learnt of marriages occurring across ethnicities,[119] which shows some blurring of what seem like very rigid boundaries, but also reinforces this exact

[119] This is something I return to in Chapter Five (Boys to Men).

rigidity. Although this chapter has come some way in exploring how marriage patterns are successful in creating and maintaining an elite, this elite does not operate in isolation. There is a constant interaction between members of the Sindhi community within Ghana, the indigenous Ghanaian community, as well as Sindhis around the world, which I explore further in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

BOYS TO MEN: NEGOTIATING MASCULINITIES IN ACCRA

As I walked in, the smell of cigarettes and beer was the first thing that hit me. We walked through the smog that had filled the room and found our group of friends as the sound of football commentary bellowed through the pub. 'Another shot?!' shouts one of the boys,[120] but before he waited for an answer he ordered a round of whisky shots from the bar. As he ordered, Manchester United scored a goal and loud cheers thundered throughout the room. In celebration, another round was ordered and the boys hugged one another. The losing team had only a few supporters commiserating together, hoping that their team would come back with a goal in the final half of the game. As the celebrating continued, the losers were being teased by their peers. 'Pussies!' and 'tits!' were just a few of the insults being thrown around, all in jest. The second half was fast paced, with some intense moments. No one had an empty glass. Beer after beer, shot after shot, and the football chants got louder and louder. The final whistle blew and a roar circulated around the room amongst all Manchester United fans. Their team had won; they continued to celebrate with a round of shots for everyone, as they hugged and kissed one another. A losing team supporter took a sip of his beer, smiling meekly as his friends taunted him with more insults. Football continued to be shown on the multiple televisions placed around the bar, but the boys had no reason to be there any

[120] I discuss the rationality for using this term below, but I use the term 'boys' throughout the chapter to refer to unmarried Sindhi men who are in their mid-twenties to early thirties, as this is how they refer to one another and how others within the Sindhi community refer to them. It also implies their youth status, whereas they become men once they are married.

longer. 'Where shall we go next?' they asked one another. 'This country is so shit. Where do we go?' Ideas were thrown around about where their next destination should be. The front runners were a rooftop bar or a quiet restaurant, but a few of the boys cut in with a few departing words: 'We're going home, boys – family stuff.'

This vignette is representative of most weekends for Sindhi boys in Accra, especially during the European football season. Although it makes up only a part of their day, usually followed by a meal out or continued drinking at another venue, the football is a regular fixture and a highlight. Yet the masculinity that boys perform at the pub is by no means indicative of the ways in which they behave outside of the pub. Indeed, the pub can be seen as an arena where they perform a hyper-masculine version of themselves.[121] This chapter explores the multiple masculinities that unmarried Sindhi boys perform within different social contexts in Accra. Literature on Indian men and masculinities has tended to put men into neatly defined roles. For example, Madan writes about Hindu culture and the roles of men as householder, renouncer or priest (1982, 1987). This body of literature also subsumes all men into one category focusing on 'male dominance' (Derne, 1995). However, as Mines (1994) has outlined, there are many arenas and styles of masculinity available to South Asian men, specifically South Indian[122] men which are still to be explored. This chapter will make headway in breaking the above assumptions by exploring the multiple masculinities that influence how Sindhi boys and men make sense of themselves. I show that, as is the case for Indian women,

[121] It should be noted here that during the vast majority of my visits to the pub with my research participants, I was almost always the only female amongst the group in a largely male dominated space.
[122] Similar themes are emphasised in the masculinities literature on Indian men, whether the studies focus on North India or South India.

Sindhi boys' identities are closely linked to their roles in relation to others, often older men and women. I explore in detail how my research participants navigate and negotiate these roles in their everyday lives as Sindhi boys and men in Accra. Research has explored this phenomenon for South Asian women whereby they are not seen an autonomous individuals but as daughters and sisters in their maternal homes or wives and daughters-in-law in their marital homes (Sekhon, 2000, 72; Ghosh et al, 1997). I argue that this perspective can be extended to Sindhi boys, who are viewed as sons and grandsons, and I show that with these roles come many expectations, aspirations and frustrations.

The 'boys': a discussion of the term

Until now, I have noted in footnotes that I use the term 'boys' to refer to my male research participants who, during my fieldwork, were unmarried and in their mid to late twenties. The term is used by older men, older women, girls, and the boys themselves. In this section, I discuss the term 'boys' in the context of social adulthood. This discussion will be reprised in Chapter Six (Women and work) where I use the term 'girls' to describe unmarried Sindhi women in Ghana, also in their mid to late twenties.

When used by older men and women, 'boy' suggests something incomplete. Also, as Schlegal notes in her commentary on marriage as one of the social criteria of adulthood in the West, 'boy' or 'girl' is a 'child form of address' (1998, 325). Therefore, these boys are still viewed as having not achieved social adulthood. At the same time, the designation reinforces their junior status in the power hierarchy of their families and businesses. Age, marital status and positions within family business are all social markers

of adulthood for my research participants. *Men* are of a certain age and married, and *men* run their family businesses; boys have yet to. Social markers for Sindhis - age, marital status and roles within family business are intrinsically linked, as are family and business more generally. So too are the deficits that define 'boys'.

This period of life could be classed as what Arnett calls 'emerging adulthood': 'having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, and having not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative of adulthood, emerging adults often explore a variety of possible life directions in love, work, and world views' (2000, 469).[123] Honwana (2010) refers to it as a period of 'waithood'. Those writing about this stage in men's lives in Africa and India have emphasised the liminality of this stage, being neither a child nor an adult, and the many frustrations that come with it – although this research has often been carried out in contexts where opportunities for employment are scarce and young men struggle to generate enough income to marry and support a family. For example, Masquelier writes about unemployed men in Niger and their membership in *fadas* (conversation groups) where they 'listen to popular music, play card games and enjoy each other's company', in lieu of employment (2013, 472). Similarly, Jeffrey has found that young unemployed men in the north Indian city of Meerut were simply passing time – however, '"passing time" has become a means through which young men could build youthful solidarities' (2010, 465).

[123] Arnett (2000) classes those between 18-25 years old as emerging adults. Although some of my research participants were slightly older than 25, Arnett's insights are still applicable as my research participants have still not yet reached social adulthood.

This growing literature on masculinities in Ghana, and Africa more generally has been explored through volumes such as Making Men in Ghana (Miescher, 2005), Multiple Meaning of Manhood among Boys in Ghana (Adomako Ampofo et al, 2007) and Masculinities in Contemporary Africa (Uchendu, 2008), which focus on the experiences of black African men from the continent. This literature focuses heavily on the struggles of men needing to make money and the difficulties they face in doing so. This is not to downplay the fact that Ghanaian men travel both within Ghana, Africa and internationally to seek opportunities (Manuh, 2005). However, by focusing on Sindhi boys who have been born and raised in Ghana, we are able to broaden our understanding of masculinities in Africa to include non-indigenous ethnicities settled in metropolitan areas such as Accra, and see that even relatively wealthy and privileged men have to navigate their way to becoming the 'right' kind of men.

Although technically my young male research participants are employed in their family businesses, and are privileged compared to many Ghanaians of their age, they are still in limbo, between childhood and adulthood. In the same way that the young men Jeffrey (2010) and Masquelier (2013) researched found solidarity amongst themselves during this time, the vignette presented earlier in this chapter begins to shows how the 'boys' have made the pub a place of sociality for themselves. Here, they can claim the term 'boys' and enjoy it, rather than focussing on the incompleteness the term suggests when they are outside of this setting.

In order to explore how my male research participants make sense of their masculinity in their everyday lives, especially in relation to their families, I move away from the

assumption of 'male dominance' (Derne, 1995) as being a unified project or position that all men occupy. A short overview of gendered inequalities, and their entrenchment during the colonial period, enables us to see how some men, women and children (male and female) have come to occupy subordinate positions in relation to others. Given the caste system in India, men were not exempt from subordinate inherited positions, although the low status of women vis-à-vis men was emphasised during the colonial era. British authorities considered men from upper-caste families most suitable to occupy administrative positions within the colonial government. Females generally, as well as males from lower castes, were limited in their access to formal education during the colonial period (Sekhon, 2000). An ascribed hierarchy governed the everyday lives of Indian women *and* men through to the twentieth century and beyond.

In contemporary India there have been several constitutional provisions which aim to create equality for all Indian citizens. However, women and children (both male and female) have continued to occupy subordinate positions in relation to adult men in Indian society through patriarchal extended family structures (Ghosh et al, 1997, 903-905). This subordination, deeply entrenched in Indian societies, is equally evident amongst Indians in diaspora, as I will show in the following exploration of the lives of young Sindhi men in Accra. Here, unmarried Sindhi boys are subordinate to other male (and certain female) kin within their immediate family and social group, as family hierarches are organised by gender, age and seniority.

In this chapter, I first explore unmarried Sindhi boys' expectations and frustrations in striving to perform the roles of the budding businessman, good son and eligible

bachelor. Together, these comprise the cultural ideal of a Sindhi man. I then broaden the scope of analysis, looking at both local and global notions of masculinity that influence Sindhi boys and men's lives. All of this casts fresh light on the pub in the opening vignette, showing how and why Sindhi men come together to perform the hyper-masculine version of themselves outlined above.

To appreciate the multiple types of masculinities that boys perform, and the place of these in their lives more broadly, I borrow the concept of 'vital conjunctures' from Jennifer Johnson-Hanks (2002). Johnson-Hanks' emphasis on vital conjunctures stems from her rejection of the life stages approach, which assumes a coherent series of events which enable an individual to progress from one status to another in a socially approved manner. She uses the example of young and educated Beti women in Cameroon to show that certain life events such as marriage, completion of education and motherhood are not experienced in neat or linear ways. They may be the results of uncertain periods of negotiation and upheaval in people's economic and social lives. Moreover, she calls for a broad perspective and writes: 'although for my purposes the prototypical vital conjunctures are those surrounding marriage and childbearing, all major life events—including migration, illness, and career change—can be construed as vital conjunctures' (Johnson-Hanks, 2002, 871). These 'vital conjunctures are experiential knots during which potential futures are under debate and up for grabs' (ibid, 872). As we will see throughout this chapter, these vital conjuctures are 'negotiable and contested, fraught with uncertainty, innovation, and ambivalence' (ibid, 865).

I argue throughout this chapter that, among my young, Sindhi, male interlocutors, one particular vital conjuncture is especially significant – their decision, whether by choice or by obligation, to move back to Accra after completing their higher education. Johnson-Hanks specifies that the contested futures that conjunctures present are not only confined to events, but 'also the future person, the range of identities that could potentially be claimed' (ibid, 872). This sense of uncertainty, openness and potential is crucial for understanding how Sindhi boys in Accra choose between models of masculinity, and ultimately how they become men.

The vignette of the pub reminds us that gender is not innate or even a characteristic of a person, but it is something people do – in the pub, Sindhi boys *do* hyper-masculinity (West et al, 1987, 140). If masculinity refers to the processes and ways that masculine subjects perform being and becoming male – boys and men[124] (Whitehead, 2002, 4) – then hyper-masculinity is an exaggeration of these processes and masculine behaviours (Mosher et al, 1984). Hyper-masculinity is a characteristic that embodies male physical strength, aggression, violence, competition and dominance (Mosher et al, 1984; Benson, 2001). Although these are traits that my male research participants display clearly in the pub, it will become clear throughout this chapter that their behaviour in that particular setting is not reflective of their masculine behaviour in other aspects of their everyday lives – it is a *hyper*- masculinity that they perform, which draws upon a distinct sub-set of the multiple behaviours that they learn and which constitute being men.

[124] Masculinities are socially specific and often more than one version of masculinity exists within a given context. Neither do they exist in a vacuum, as they are affected by a whole range of factors such as race, religion, culture and historical experiences.

These boys are well aware that masculinities may not have equal status: a *hegemonic* masculinity is the normative version of masculinity at a particular place and time (Connell et al, 2005, 77). In this context, hegemonic masculinity entails marriage, and subsequently children and runnin a successful family business. They are also aware that they do not always live up to the hegemonic masculinity throughout their everyday lives, but they aspire to become men that fit this dominant model of masculinity. It is their move back to Ghana that often begins this process of doing masculinity in ways that make them men. This is not an easy or straightforward task for my research participants, as we will see throughout this chapter.

Focussing on the lives of Sindhi boys, we begin to understand the intricacies of being and becoming men – after all, as we will see, their models of masculinity are entangled with their cosmopolitan aspirations – and the pressures of living up to the expectations of others – men, older women and girls alike. As noted above, literature written on young men and masculinities, especially in Africa, focuses on the frustrations of low-class men, who are often relatively worse off economically and socially than their peers (Masquelier, 2005; Honwana et al, 2005). This often leads to an assumption that men from more privileged backgrounds are always in positions of power and therefore embody hegemonic masculinities, leaving them free from these frustrations. In this chapter, we will see how many young men enjoy their experiences of international study, which is a key element in their self-identification as 'cosmopolitan'. But since Sindhis masculinity is also so tightly bound up with family businesses, they are obliged

to return to Accra – a location in which their cosmopolitanism needs to be reworked to fit with other constraints and demands.

The budding businessman

There is an expectation on Sindhi boys to become successful businessmen like their fathers, grandfathers and other male members of the wider Sindhi community. Even for those boys who come from less economically successful families, they are often influenced by the overwhelming number of Sindhis surrounding them who run successful business empires, and they too wish to be their own bosses.[125] The majority of my unmarried male interlocutors returned to Ghana to join their male kin in running family businesses, after completing their higher education abroad. This propensity to return is also prevalent amongst indigenous Ghanaians, as research conducted on returnee migrants to West Africa, specifically Ghana, has highlighted (Ammassari, 2004). Ammassari identifies two categories of returnee migrants: the old-generation elite returnees - those who left Ghana at the time of Independence in 1957 in order to enrol on educational courses that were not available in Ghana and returned quickly to take up leadership positions in new governments - and the new-generation elite returnees who are enterprising and contribute to private-sector development in the region (ibid, 21). Although young Sindhi men do not fit either of the categories of returnee migrant highlighted by Ammassari – they are, after all, returning specifically to take over already-existing family businesses – there are often both expectations and aspirations of boys to continue and grow the success of their family business. Thus, similarly to new-

[125] However, as we will see, this brings about various obstacles for such young men who have to go into business independently and not through the family business route.

generation elite returnees, Sindhi boys' return has an impact on the socio-economic landscape of Ghana, making them an important group of returnee migrants to understand.

Upon return, Sindhi boys spend time with other Sindhi boys and older men – either within formal business settings, such as accompanying fathers to meetings with stakeholders - or in social contexts where much of the conversation tends to be business related. During a conversation with Jimmy Lalwani,[126] whose grandfather and father run a successful retail business in Ghana, he explained how he was attending more national awards ceremonies upon request of his grandfather and father as he had come of age to meet the right kinds of people and make connections at these events. These interactions are important. They teach young Sindhi boys how to make new business connections as well as introduce them to existing business connections, both of which help to ensure their own business success which is an important aspect of Sindhi masculinity. Jimmy also reminded me that attending formal events in local business settings is important because in social contexts there is limited interaction between Sindhis and indigenous Ghanaians. In a place like Ghana, where kinship networks have long been important in the running of small businesses (La Ferrara, 2003; Mazzucato et al. 2006) these opportunities enable boys to build connections and expand their local business networks.

Through more social interactions with other Sindhis young boys, I quickly learned that for Sindhi businesses, certainly, social capital has always been and continues to be

[126] Pseudonym.

central to their success. Moser defines social capital as 'reciprocity within communities and between households based upon trust deriving from social ties' (1998, 4). This reciprocity goes beyond trust and creates expectations of support within relationships that both individual migrants and members of their social networks can draw upon to obtain financial and human resources (Portes et al, 1993). This reciprocity is quite clearly at work amongst Sindhi men in Ghana; many individuals have at least one business interest with another Sindhi businessman, even if it not their main business. However, it is also clear that *who* one chooses to do business with is vital, as no one wants to be involved with someone who is untrustworthy or has a bad track record for losing money through their business ventures. Particular Sindhi names are associated with a track record of business success, whilst this is less so for other families.[127]

For example, Moti Lalwani[128] is viewed as a successful businessman. With over 40 years of experience in Ghana and other parts of West Africa, he runs an import/export business with his sons. The name Lalwani is known amongst Sindhis in Accra (and beyond) as being one that reflects success in business. For those businessmen like Moti, who are extremely successful and who have more to lose if they tie themselves into bad business partnerships, sons and grandsons become the safest business partners they could hope for. Sons represent strong ties in kinship terms; they can be trusted and have a responsibility not only to their fathers, but also to their mothers and other members of their households.

[127] Although I could specify the names that are most strongly associated with business success in Ghana, in order to maintain anonymity I will not do so here.
[128] Pseudonym.

Jimmy, who we met above, is Moti's grandson and although he had travelled out of Ghana to study and work over the years, he returned to join the family business. Like other boys in his position, Jimmy feels a sense of duty towards his family that he should be an active part of their business and ensure its continued success. Jimmy recognises that there is an expectation placed upon him by his family that he should be a part of the business. This sense of obligation helps to ensure that business stays within the family. In turn, Moti's business is safeguarded and Jimmy is learning how to be a Sindhi businessman in Ghana. As Jimmy pointed out during a conversation in 2015, 'In Accra, business is family and family is business.'

Jimmy's grandfather and father also often exert power and control over him by ensuring he does not have complete financial independence. Most Sindhi boys experience this in some form and it can be achieved in several ways. For example, when they return to Ghana, many young boys are paid a modest salary to meet their everyday leisure expenses, and any travel expenses for flights or hotels are controlled by the elders in the business. Therefore, no boy has the autonomy to make decisions about when he travels, how he travels and even where he travels, as this all requires permission and funds from elders. Boys' salaries upon return, although not very high when calculated in pounds or dollars, are generous considering that their living expenses are lower than they would be living abroad working for a non-family business, especially as they have no board to pay (i.e. no accommodation costs) in Ghana. But their remuneration falls far short of what they will one day earn when they have fully taken over the family business. These long term incentives for boys to work for their own family businesses may help to explain

the continuing pressure on boys to return to Ghana to join their fathers in running their businesses.

However, for some individuals who do not have family businesses, there is an expectation that they should find employment abroad, usually in the country where they studied for their higher education qualifications, and make a life for themselves there. Kishore, a young Sindhi boy in his late twenties, was born in Mumbai and taken to Ghana as soon as he was able to travel. His childhood was spent in Accra, where he completed both primary and secondary education in an international school. The first time he travelled abroad for an extended period of time was for his undergraduate studies in the United States. Kishore spent five years studying for a bachelor's degree in Business Studies.[129] Although Kishore's grandfather owned businesses in Ghana, his father now holds a senior position within an international company. Kishore's mother runs a jewellery business, which she began when her children were older and she felt she wanted to do something else with her time. Kishore felt there was particular pressure on him to remain in the United States and seek employment there, as he did not have a family business to return to in Accra. Yet now he works in Accra for an extended family member as an employee, assisting in building apartment blocks. During an interview with Kishore, who returned to Ghana after he failed to find employment in the United States, he told me of the pressure on Sindhi boys to return to Ghana and join a family business:

[129] Most Sindhi boys tend to undertake degree programmes such as Business Studies, Accounting, and International Business in order to help them with their future endeavours with their family businesses.

> ‘There is [a pressure] especially when it comes to business. Everyone is expecting you’re supposed to be good at business, you’re supposed to go and you take over your father’s business, you make it your own.’[130]

Kishore reflected on how it felt for him not having a family business in a context where most of his friends did:

> ‘It is [difficult] when you hear all these guys especially talking…when they start talking business and stuff I always try and…I don’t really like it…I always feel that it’s not really a conversation for me to be a part of because I don’t have that. And even now I’m still working for someone and a lot of these guys have now become their own boss in a way.’

However, Kishore’s case may not be all that different to some other young boys in Ghana who have returned Ghana to work for their fathers as employees. Some sons are not given free reign of the family business and begin their journey as any other employee would. During our interview it became clear that a young boy’s position within the family business has an impact on the ways in which they are treated by older Sindhi men. Referring to interactions between older Sindhi men and his friends who are running family businesses, Kishore described how ‘they sort of give them more of an equal footing.’ This is something that I often witnessed during the time I spent with a group of young Sindhi boys. Older men, who would be in their 30s and 40s, would often approach those boys in the group who were known to be running successful family businesses and

[130] Interview between myself and Kishore in Airport Residential Area, Accra on 27/04/2015.

buy rounds of drinks as well as discuss various business interests, whilst those boys who were not running such businesses would continue to talk amongst themselves.

Kishore's reflections, as explored in this chapter, resonate with and enable us to better interrogate the big themes of the thesis – especially cosmopolitanism. Firstly, the hierarchy *between* Sindhi men is very clear in Kishore's account, and the ways in which experience achievement (especially in business), influences perceptions of age or seniority. This in turn helps build a picture of Sindhi masculinities in a community with a history of migration. For Sindhi boys in Accra, cosmopolitan aspiration and international connections jostle with local everyday commitments in Accra.[131]

Age plays an important role in organising the relationships between Sindhi men. Elders (parents and grandparents) are treated with respect at work and in their personal lives, and the two are intrinsically linked. Many of the young boys I spent time with would speak about how they looked after their grandparents by driving them to see other family members, ensuring they had eaten if their parents were traveling at the time. They would stress the need for their potential wives to respect their grandparents. Although these young men knew that it was their responsibility as grandchildren and children to look after their elders, this also reflected the level of control that older men have over younger men. They answered to both their fathers and grandfathers at work (where grandfathers were still working within the family business), as well as at home. Big decisions were not to be taken without the consent of their elders. For example, a

[131] Saying this, cosmopolitan aspirations do not require people to move, as is shown by Ferguson (1999) in his monograph *Expectations of Modernity.* Ferguson explores how people's dress, styles of speech and attitudes all reflected being 'modern', 'urban', and 'Western' – without having travelled.

young man wished to travel to a wedding but was unable to book anything until he was granted permission by his grandfather. This points to the lack of autonomy that young Sindhi boys experience upon their return to Ghana, both economically and socially. Although they relied on their families for support (notably housing and spending money) when they were students, their behaviour was not policed so closely and there was rarely an elder actually there with them. Return to Ghana thus represents a decrease in independence and can lead to frustration, especially in the initial stages.

The good son

Doing well in the family business feeds into the larger role that boys are expected to perform in being good sons. 'Good sons' are those who are deemed as responsible boys by their parents, grandparents and other members of their extended families and the Sindhi community. As noted above, business and family are inextricably linked in the lives of Sindhi boys, but family expectations are also at work in the relationships between Sindhi boys and their female kin.

On a late evening, a group of young boys were celebrating a win by their football team at a European-style pub. Rounds of drinks were being distributed and consumed, and at this stage the pub was loud and full of fans celebrating. One young boy who was a part of the group began to say his goodbyes to his peers. I asked why he was leaving so soon, to which he replied that Sunday is family day and so he likes to be at home with his parents, relaxing with them. This young man was ensuring that he was spending time with his parents, for although he shares an office with his father all week, he felt it was important to spend time with his mother at the weekend. Another young boy

received a phone call from his mother. She wanted to know whether he was drinking and asked him to return home so he could spend time with his parents and grandparents. After he came off the phone, he turned to the group and said his mother had called him 'irresponsible.' When asked why, he responded that she expects him to be at home looking after his grandparents and being with them, but he did not agree that he was irresponsible because he spends 6 days working and he feels he deserves to have a day off with his friends if he pleases. What we see here is the expectation – most clearly articulated by the boys' mothers – which they should spend time with their families on their days off.

Such everyday expectations are common. On reflection, one boy said to me that his mother did not have these expectations during his younger years, when he first arrived back in Ghana after completing his studies in the UK. But he was now in his late twenties. He felt that the prospect of him marrying in the near future was at the forefront of his family's mind. His mother wished to police his behaviour in order to ensure he was responsible enough to look after a wife and subsequent children. Kishore also underlined the responsibility that mothers have in ensuring their sons are ready to marry. He spoke about the expectation that Sindhi girls will marry once they finish their education. When I asked him whether there was also an expectation on boys to marry, he replied:

> 'I've always been lucky in terms that mum's been open about it. I know she wants me to get married but at the same time she wants me to be able to completely support the whole family and to be able to do that without any worries – she

> doesn't want any of that in my life – so she's never going to say a word until she feels like "ok he's on his own he can completely support his own thing. He's got his own base, he's got everything together" – but at the same time she does make little comments, little subtle things that you can see it's still there on her mind.'[132]

This expectation does not only come from boys' mothers, but also wider networks of Sindhi women both in Accra and elsewhere. Kishore went on to say:

> 'And that's just from my mum. Then you've got all the aunties, her friends, that always ask "ah, Kishore when are you getting married?" You sort of feel that that's expected from the Sindhi culture, whenever there's a wedding the aunties come up to you [saying], "you're next, you're next, you're next."'[133]

The expectation that boys should get married and bring a wife to Ghana is one reason why their behaviour is policed by their mothers and other Sindhi women. From a gender perspective, these boys will continue to remain boys until they marry, and the way in which their boyhood (and thus their junior or subordinate status) is made clear to them is through their enforced submission to women, specifically their mothers. The solution to their predicament is to transcend the authority of their mothers by struggling to meet the criteria of success which enable them to marry, and thus exert their own authority over wives and children. In effect, an adult man who is under the authority of a woman (in this case, his mother) is being reminded of his 'incomplete' achievement of manhood.

[132] Interview between myself and Kishore in Airport Residential Area, Accra on 27/04/2015
[133] Ibid.

Thus the mother actually reinforces patriarchal norms and the status quo, even if, in the moment in which she rebukes her son, she exerts her own power over him.

The influence on young men by female kin is evident in other places too. For example, Shire explores how young male children in Zimbabwe learn how to be 'real men' through what he refers to as the 'myths of masculinity' that are fostered by female relatives (2005, 147). These myths include teaching boys about contraception and sex, what kind of woman to marry, how to handle women and control them and how to stop them from leaving. Shire uses his own example of his aunt telling him that if he argues with a woman, she would always leave. Shire goes on to write, 'you might want to beat her up, but at the end of the day she might just disappear or she can use medicines to poison you or make you insane.' (ibid, 153). For Shire, 'it was the vatete [father's sister], more than anyone else, who reinforced myths of maleness' (ibid, 153).

Literature on familial piety also explains why the influence of older female (and male) kin remains strong. For example, in both traditional and modern Chinese cultural contexts, respect for elders is upheld as sacrosanct (Chow, 2009). Here, as among Sindhi boys and men, filial piety goes beyond respect for parents, extending to all senior members of the family and society as a whole (Yang, 1959). Young men have a place in a gendered and age-based hierarchy. They negotiate their place within this hierarchy, which they experience differently as they age and occupy different roles within their family structure. The way boys learn how they will make their way up the hierarchy is similar in the context of the USA. Collins discusses how 'ideal families consist of heterosexual couples that produce their own biological childre' and 'have a specific

authority structure; namely, a father- head earning an adequate family wage, a stay-at-home wife, and children' (1998, 62). In the same way as it works for Sindhi boys, this ideal:

> 'assumes a male headship that privileges and naturalizes masculinity as a source of authority. Similarly, parental control over dependent children reproduces age and seniority as fundamental principles of social organisation. Moreover, gender and age mutually construct one another; mothers comply with fathers, sisters defer to brothers, all with the understanding that boys submit to maternal authority until they become men' (ibid, 65).

It is the latter point here that I wish to focus upon in the context of my young Sindhi male research participants. As discussed previously, although Sindhi boys occupy subordinate positions in relation to older male and female kin, they also know that this subordination is temporary. In this sense, the 'patriarchal dividend' recognises that although all men do not meet normative standards of masculinity, or conform to it wholesale, the majority of men gain from the fact of its hegemony. In other words, the patriarchal dividend refers to the general advantages that men gain from the overall subordination of women (Connell, 1995, 79). Although I do not deny that boys benefit from the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 1995), during this time of their lives when they are unmarried, they are subordinated to their mothers and elder male kin. Elders have a high degree of control over their behaviour, as we saw above in the case of Kishore as well as the young men who were out during the weekend.

The eligible bachelor

Although most boys acknowledge that marriage will bring with it a level of independence from their mothers – and from other older members of their families – their marriageability can be compromised after they move back to Ghana. Unlike Sindhi girls who have real potential to insert themselves into global networks of cosmopolitan Sindhis by leaving Accra first by studying abroad, but eventually marrying abroad, Sindhi boys have to be cosmopolitan *in* Accra, from where their family businesses are run. They have to live a cosmopolitan lifestyle and display it to potential marriage partners (often through social media channels) in order to attract a wife who already belongs to a cosmopolitan diaspora and has other options of marrying boys in other Sindhi diasporas around the world. The boys then have to meet two big criteria to become men: the first is to get married, and the second is to do well in their family business and eventually take it over. The boys experience these two in tension with one another. This section outlines some of the difficulties experienced by young men when they attempt to find wives.

Firstly, as we have seen in Chapter Four (Tying Knots), boys' efforts to find marriage partners can be limited by the unwillingness of Sindhi girls to move from other countries to Ghana. One of the main reasons reported by young boys and their relatives was that it is difficult for young girls to move to Ghana. They refer to Ghana being viewed as a 'third world country' and 'undeveloped', and therefore they feel that it does not meet the expectation of girls who are from cities such as London, Hong Kong and Mumbai, and who consider themselves cosmopolitans with other options for marriage in the

global Sindhi diaspora. During an interview, one research participant recalled some of his friends' experiences of finding wives when girls visited Accra on family trips. Some, he said, depict these visits as a pretence under which girls come to meet boys in Accra, or at least assess the liveability of the city ahead of meeting prospective marriage partners from Ghana. However, he acknowledged that most boys meet their partners abroad. In one case, his friend's girlfriend visited Accra on numerous occasions, after they met, in order to be reassured that she would be able to live there. In another, the first time his friend's wife visited Accra was when she moved there after their wedding ceremony. The latter is still the most common pattern, and the one deemed respectable by older members of the Sindhi community. During the same interview, having described his friends' experiences, the young boy concluded by referring to his own encounters with potential marriage partners: 'I do know that I have had a potential relationship fall apart just because that girl was not interested in ever living in Ghana, so I was told to never think about it.' Being permanently resident in Ghana is seen as a real obstacle when it comes to finding wives.

Sindhi boys' attempts to marry are also coloured by their efforts to reconcile aspirations of intimacy and companionship with other criteria for selecting a 'good' marriage partner. Central here is the notion of the 'arranged marriage'. Pande, writing about marriages among South Asians in Britain, refers to arranged marriages as being 'mediated by the self and the family and where the exercise of choice and agency may be conditioned by anumber of socio-economic factors' (2014, 76). According to Pande, arranged marriages are seen as being 'a characteristic of male-dominated and non-western societies and does not acknowledge the diversity of the actual practice,' and

are misinterpreted as being 'based on cold rationality, a contract between families rather than a companionate loving relationship between two people' (Pande, 2014, 77). Pande goes on to argue that ideas of love and romance are compatible with arranged marriage, as she exemplifies for the case of South Asians in Britain. For example, in her case study of Kanta, a British Asian woman, Kanta referred to herself as 'arranging' who she fell in love with. Having met her husband at a family wedding, Kanta ensured she knew the boundaries of who she could fall in love with – in other words, who would also meet her family's expectations of religion, ethnicity and kinship. So here Kanta negotiated falling in love in relation to more structured aspects of arranged marriages. Although Pande focuses on the fact that there is no universal 'marriage' but rather a diversity of marriage practices, what is important for my case here is that this idea of arranged marriage is seen in stark contrast to Western ideals of marriage (Ballard, 1978), which are imagined as focusing on the affective dimensions.[134]

Young Sindhi boys in Ghana have similar experiences of arranged marriage as Kanta in the example above. Kishore explained during his interview that there are few ways of meeting new girls in Ghana, and therefore there is a reliance on networks outside of Ghana to introduce boys to potential marriage partners. Yet boys see romantic love as a pre-requisite. If they do not feel a level of companionship or emotional intimacy with the girls they are introduced to, they do not wish to continue their courtship. This often causes tension between boys and their relatives.

[134] Although this is not reflective of reality, as Pande acknowledges that even in Western contexts expectations of class, ethnicity, appearance, religion and/or national affiliation do count in the marriage process (2014, 79).

One grandparent during an informal conversation after a visit to the temple voiced his concern that his grandson was failing to find a wife. In the grandfather's opinion, his grandson was being much too fussy. He had been introduced to girls from Hong Kong, London and India, but none seemed to be suitable in the eyes of his grandson. The grandfather remarked to me that neither his generation nor his son's generation ever had a real choice in finding their marriage partners. He simply could not understand why his grandson was being so picky: 'at the end of the day, they [girls] are all the same.'

This reveals generational differences in what men expect from their relationships with spouses. Often, young boys, who have studied abroad and encountered girls from all over the world, feel themselves pulled in different directions. They struggle to find ways of reconciling competing ideals and expectations: what kind of girl they would like to meet; whether she will be deemed suitable in the eyes of their families; whether she will be willing to move to Ghana.

Beyond Sindhi masculinities: a global perspective

The above three aspects are intrinsically linked and make up what I refer to as Sindhi masculinity. These are elements of masculinity that are seen as central to Sindhi ethnicity in the context of Ghana. This is not to say that these versions of masculinities do not exist elsewhere. What I mean to emphasise is that these three versions are central to a *Sindhi* boy's idea of what it is to become a *Sindhi* man *in Ghana*. However, my research participants are increasingly connected to other parts of the world through travel, technology and social media, even as they also encounter local notions of

masculinity. Appreciating this means reaching beyond family contexts. As Connell (2005) notes, much research has been done on the social construction of masculinities around the world (Fuller 2001; Taga 2001; Sinclair- Webb, 2000), while a handbook of research on men and masculinities by Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell (2005) puts the various debates into a global perspective. This suggests that, as different parts of the world become more connected, gender construction is being influenced by factors that are outside of peoples' immediate surroundings. These factors can include popular culture, global media and social media, that all provide avenues for global ideas of masculinities to be shared with individuals, and to then play out in local settings.

My research participants have grown up watching Bollywood films, which traditionally show fathers fulfilling productive roles and mothers' reproductive roles. The majority of my young male research participants grew up in the 1990s and remember watching films such as Kuch Kuch Hota Hai.[135] Jimmy recalls his experience of Bollywood cinema:

> 'It was always a struggle for me. If it wasn't for my mum I wouldn't have watched any Bollywood ever. She did it very actively and very purposefully. It was her way of teaching us Indianness. Whatever Hindi I know is because of Bollywood. All the Hindi songs that I know even though I don't know what I'm saying is because of Bollywood. I personally enjoyed it but my dad was very cynical about it all he would always want to fast forward songs and made it seem silly.'[136]

[135] This film is one of the most popular Bollywood films made the 1990s, of which I will explain the significance in my discussion on the following page.
[136] Phone call with Jimmy in early 2018.

Jimmy's reflections illuminate two important things here. Firstly, they point to the strong influence of women on young boys' ideas of masculinity, similarly to what Shire (2005) found in Zimbabwe. In Jimmy's case, he recognises that it was his mother who actively wanted him to watch Bollywood films. Although for Jimmy this was an introduction to Indianness, within this comes learnings of gender and family structures that Bollywood films project to their audiences. Secondly, Jimmy recognises his father's dislike of Bollywood films, deeming them 'silly'. This is telling of the romanticised versions of men in 1990s Bollywood films and the multiple and conflicting masculinities young boys are presented with at home and through Bollywood. In Jimmy's case, he enjoyed the films, but there was something about the male characters that was less manly in his father's eyes - possibly the emphasis on being romantic and courting a woman in a particular way.

A particular group of films popular in the 90s and early 2000s were produced by Yash Raj Films - India's leading production and distribution houses. These films had a profound influence on Jimmy's idea of love and romance. All of my research participants, even if they vowed not to be Bollywood fans, had watched at least one or two Yash Raj films growing up and would know the songs – some boys would admit to particular films or scenes making them cry – but this was of course emphasised as being the exception. For Jimmy, his fondness of Bollywood was directly linked with his love of one of its leading heroes, Shah Rukh Khan. Jimmy recalled some of his favourite films starring Shah Rukh Khan as: Baazigar (1993), Yes Boss (1997), Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998),

Mohabbatein (2000), and Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham (2001). Jimmy would have been between three and ten years old when these films were released, although he watched Baazigar long after its release and has watched these films multiple times. Whilst laughing at his thoughts, Jimmy explained what it was about Shah Rukh Khan that made him his favourite actor:

> 'I loved anything he was in. The most beautiful girl was always falling for him. Bollywood is what taught me about romance and love because you didn't see too much of that in real life. I loved Shah Rukh Khan's hair, I always wanted hair like him. He had a lot of swag, his dialogues were really cool, poetic. The way he speaks, I always thought it was very mesmerizing.'[137]

Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (KKHH) is one film that epitomizes the character of Shah Rukh Khan whom Jimmy loved so much. This film was popular amongst the global Indian diaspora and was flagged in a leading Indian newspaper called Trade Guide as an 'All Time Hit' (Ciecko, 2001, 122). As described by Ciecko, the 'strongest ideological message of the madly popular KKHH is that the mobilizing masculine agency represented by Rahul is influenced by the forces of globalization' and 'tempered by the recognition that the restored family unit is of foremost importance' (2001, 123). In some ways, this character represents a period of change in the type of masculinity male Bollywood stars portrayed. Earlier, the image of a male Bollywood star was one of a 'bad boy, a persona consolidated by the angry young man image of Bollywood's stellar Amitabh Bachchan in

[137] Ibid.

the 1970s' (ibid, 121). Even after Ciecko published their article, a new wave of Bollywood cinema, with films such as *Taare Zameen Par*[138] gaining popularity, increasingly show men taking the lead in caregiving roles.

These depictions of men have a profound influence on how male diasporan audiences perceive fatherhood. Young Sindhi boys in Ghana, although they do not reject their cash-earning / bread-winning roles, do take a more active approach to parenting. For Jimmy, Amitabh Bachchan's character in Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham portrayed the ideal father figure. For Jimmy, this character had 'done it all.' He was a 'loving husband, adored father, clearly a very successful businessman.' These films that boys watched in the 1990s and early 2000s as children have had a lasting impact on them. Even off screen, when Shah Rukh Khan became a father in 1997 and then 2000, Ciecko writes that a magazine called Showtime recognised Shah Rukh Khan for his ability to take on fatherhood and still maintain his superstar status through an award for 'Performance (Off-Screen) of the Year' (Ciecko, 2001, 130). Ciecko notes that 'marriage and fatherhood can discursively function as a community-sharing force on the star's popular image,' (ibid) which emphasises that both characters and actors themselves have a strong influence on defining masculinity for Indians both on the subcontinent and in diaspora.

Fatherhood makes for an interesting way to look at changes in ideas surrounding masculinities across generations and is something that is being explored in the UK as

[138] Taare Zameen Par is a Bollywood film released in 2007 that follows the journey of a dyslexic boy who is sent away by his family to boarding school. He is particularly good at art and his art teacher, played by a popular actor Amir Khan, nurtures this boy's artistic flair to help him to overcome the challenges he faces.

well. As Connell notes, in some parts of the West there has been discussion of 'the new fatherhood' which discusses changes in men's involvement in families (2005, 1803). Gregory et al (2011) write about this in the context of the UK and France, focusing primarily on the construction of fatherhood in the public sphere. Gregory et al conclude that 'the breadwinner model of ''family man'' provided a construction of masculine identity based on ''virile'' values of performance and achievement in the public sphere and paternal authority inside the home, based on a strict separation of gender roles within a heterosexual family unit' (ibid, 600). Social and economic changes have led to the downfall of this model, while that of 'the new fatherhood' has become culturally dominant or mainstream. 'The ''new fatherhood,'' based on greater paternal involvement at home and conversely lesser engagement in paid work outside the home, and a shift toward a more egalitarian sharing of caring responsibilities within the household' (ibid, 601). Public policy with regards to issues such as paternity leave, as well as messages emanating from the media and film industries, still provide a long list of masculine ideals that can prove to be challenging for men to meet. As seen above, a man should be both successful in business, but a doting husband and father. A man should be sensitive and romantic, but not 'silly'. Men portrayed on screen seem, in Jimmy's words, to be 'so well put together'. This has a profound effect on cultural representations and constructions of masculinities.

For young boys, the breadwinner model and new fatherhood model co-exist and often can cause conflict for those attempting to fulfil both versions. Watching American and British TV shows and films online means that they are exposed to these ideas of

masculinities, which affect their own ideals of manhood. When it comes to fatherhood, young men often find themselves in conflict with older family members about 'paternity leave.'[139] Whereas younger men (and women) increasingly wish to realise a version of fatherhood that is much more in line with the model of 'new fatherhood', older family members expect young fathers to focus primarily on more traditional roles, especially as providers. Young Sindhi fathers compare themselves to men in 'the West' who may be employees in companies far removed from their own families, and who are able to benefit from legislative provisions for paternity leave specific to their country of residence. By contrast, young Sindhi fathers in Accra have to negotiate time off work with their own elder male relations in the family business.

For example, before their child was born, Neha and her husband had many discussions about paternity leave arrangements. Neha's husband wanted to take a full two weeks off, but knew that this would be difficult for his father to understand as the latter went straight back to work after his own children were born. After much discussion, and once the baby was born, Neha's husband did stay at home during the first two weeks of their child's life, but did have to take work phone calls from his father during this time. Nevertheless, Neha and her husband were happy with the arrangement reached.

Older ideals of man-as-provider can be much more starkly enforced by a young man's senior male relatives, by curtailing time off or refusing it altogether. The pressure to

[139] I use inverted commas because most young boys working in family business do not have official paternity leave. Rather, time off is negotiated with their fathers or other senior members of the family business.

play the part in the family business and to respect one's elders leaves young Sindhi fathers with few negotiating tools with which to carve out a space to enact the 'new fatherhood' model. Yet they perceive it to be achievable in 'the West', and aspire to it as part of their cosmopolitan masculinity. Often these young men are said to have been granted a few weeks off. But, as we have seen, that does not necessarily mean exclusive time with their wives and children, as opposed to being at the disposal of their fathers. As suggested above, young men are often expected to be available to work when their fathers need them, and when socialising at home with their fathers and other male kin, conversation often very quickly turns to business. Although some young men (and their wives) find this quite frustrating, they themselves also internalise expectations. One new father emphasised to me the pressure he felt to build a successful business, in order to leave a legacy for his son to take over.

For young Sindhi boys in Accra, competing messages about fatherhood play out in a local context. They navigate their way through such complex understandings by trying to please their wives, their parents and themselves, as well as members of the wider Sindhi community. As they attempt to succeed in the roles outlined above, all this adds to their growing frustration. The local context in which these men negotiate their masculinity cannot be understood fully without considering Ghanaian masculinities and how these ideals also influence Sindhi boys' ideas of what it is to be a man. As we see through Anoop's experiences, sometimes men have to choose to adhere to one form of masculinity whilst jeopardising their reputation as a good man in another form.

Anoop, who is now in his late seventies, first had a Sindhi wife and two children. During a time of political instability in Ghana, he became very close to a Ghanaian-British woman who helped him through this turbulent time for Indian businesses. As their relationship developed, she fell pregnant with his child. Throughout this period, his Sindhi family had been unaware of his extra-marital relationship. However, with the prospect of having a child with this woman, he told his family that he wanted to raise the child as his own and support both the mother and his child. He recognised that the Sindhi community would frown upon his promiscuous behaviour and his decision, but as a Ghanaian citizen he went on to marry his mistress in a customary ceremony and now has a daughter and a son who are in their twenties and early thirties. Anoop's Sindhi wife and family were upset and shocked at the time they found out about his 'affair'. Since then, they have refused to acknowledge the existence of his Ghanaian family.

It was clear through both Anoop's self-reflection, and comments made by other Sindhis about Anoop's predicament, that he was understood to have been influenced by 'the Ghanaian' way of life. Whilst polygamy might be justified through what is seen as a Ghanaian model of manhood in Anoop's eyes, Anoop's choices have equally compromised his adherence to a Sindhi understanding of masculinity. He does not approximate the ideal of an economically successful man in a monogamous marriage who provides for that family.

However, this apparent contrast between a Sindhi monogamous masculinity and a Ghanaian polygamous masculinity bears some further analysis. Arguably, it is precisely

because there are some similarities in ideals of masculinity and in the everyday behaviours of Ghanaian and Sindhi men, that particular forms of difference must be strongly asserted by Sindhis in order to maintain distance and reinforce boundaries.

Masculinities in both colonial and contemporary Ghana have received significant scholarly attention, and it is widely accepted that there is no archetypal Ghanaian masculinity. Miescher (2005), for example, identifies multiple masculinities amongst the Kwahu during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including adult, senior and Presbyterian masculinities. Both Obeng (2003) and Miescher (2005) highlight Ghanaian masculinities emphasising the achievement of wealth, authority over women and younger men, and bravery and courage shown through military participation. These ideas of what it means to be a man have continued to influence ideals of Ghanaian masculinity in contemporary Ghana and gendered roles in the family are very much based on such ideals.

Men are meant to be providers, regardless of educational and economic background (Adomako Ampofo et al, 2007; Sarpong, 1991). Even in everyday phrases used that focus on men not crying or fearing death, there is a focus on the expectation on men to be brave and invincible (Adinkrah, 2012). By being providers and therefore respectable, men should meet all the material needs of their wives and children. This includes providing the required resources for housing and education, as well as 'chop money' for their families. In reality many men cannot make adequate provision, or choose not to do so, resulting in frequent domestic conflicts around 'provisioning' and an ongoing and

rancorous public debate about male responsibility or lack thereof (Adomako Ampofo et al 2007). These ideas surrounding Ghanaian masculinities largely complement the Sindhi masculinities discussed above. Just as Ghanaian men are expected to take on the role of provider and older men exercise power over younger men, Sindhi men (both married and unmarried) are expected to perform these roles and perform them well. Similarly, for both Ghanaians and Sindhis, procreation within marriage is deemed highly important and desirable (Sarpong, 1991).

But Sindhis perceive of a strong distinction between 'their' culture, which is monogamous, and that of Ghanaians, which they see as tolerant of polygamy. Polygyny has long been, and still remains, a culturally accepted practice by Muslims and traditionalist groups in Ghana (Ojo, 1997). During the colonial era, polygamous marriages were permitted under both customary law and under Islamic Law (Charmie, 1986 cited in Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2006, 136), and this has remained the case since Independence. Thus some Ghanaians adhere to polygamy – both as a desired ideal state, and in their everyday behaviour. However, the missionary Christianity of the colonial era, and the expansion of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches since the later C20, placed considerable emphasis on monogamy. Thus there are also Ghanaians who adhere to monogamy – both as a desired ideal state, and in their everyday behaviour. It is therefore obviously not the case that all Ghanaians are polygamous.

However, popular debates and sociological studies of marriage and household in Ghana reveal some further complexities (Vellenga, 1974). Some Ghanaians who adhere to the

ideal of monogamy do not practise it in their everyday lives. Thus some men live with women and have children with them in 'consensual unions' (for which neither customary, nor Islamic nor Christian rites have been observed). Other men, who identify as Christian, and who enter into an apparently monogamous marriage, then go on to take other partners (sometimes described, rather disparagingly, as 'concubines'), and to have other children with them.

This latter situation is deemed particularly problematic when men do not have sufficient resources to provision both the wife and the 'concubine', and/or when the children of the 'concubine' are side-lined as 'illegitimate' by their father's lineage members or by the wife and her children. Defenders of polygamy therefore sometimes argue that since it 'allows' men to marry multiple women, it also clearly renders the man responsible for all of his wives and children, and thereby avoids stigmatising some women as 'concubines' (rather than 'proper' wives) and some children as 'illegitimate'.

These complex situations – which belie a clear-cut distinction between monogamist and polygamist Ghanaians – are a source of anxiety for some Sindhi men and their Sindhi wives and children. It is widely known amongst my research participants that many other Sindhi men (mostly from the migrant generation) have fathered Ghanaian children in extra-marital relationships, which they have tried to keep hidden from their Sindhi wives and the wider Sindhi community. As one of my research participants put it, hiding an affair is one thing as it can be passed off as gossip if people find out. But children born of such relationships prove any speculation right.

This points to a similarity in the behaviour and dilemmas of certain Sindhi and Ghanaian men: some of those who adhere to an ideal of monogamy, and whose wives expect this of them, nonetheless have other relationships and other children. Men in these situations confront some similar problems - whether to openly recognise these 'other' women and children, whether to provide for them (either on an equal or different level to that of the 'proper' wife and her children), or whether to sweep them under the carpet. Anoop's decision, and his reflections on it, suggest that he thought that he could best resolve his dilemma by recognising and providing for all of his children and their mothers. Some Ghanaians would agree that this was indeed the mark of a good man; other Ghanaians might see things differently.

The reactions of other Sindhis indicate some resistance to Anoop's solution to his dilemma. They did not want to allow him to absolve himself by recognising and providing for all of the children and their mothers. They wanted to insist that Sindhi men 'have' to choose monogamy. This means that those who 'err' from monogamy can best protect their Sindhi masculinity by covering their tracks, rather than by according recognition to a Ghanaian partner and any children of that union. Sindhi descriptions of Sindhi culture as 'monogamous', then, do not accurately describe the behaviour of all Sindhi men; nor do descriptions of Ghanaian culture as 'polygamous' accurately describe the behaviour of all Ghanaian men. When Sindhis draw this distinction, it serves to underline a principle of endogamy, and thus to reinforce boundaries between Sindhis and 'others'.

Conclusion

We have seen how, among Sindhi boys and men in Ghana, performances of gendered selves are important in everyday interactions with others as well as in their self-understandings. Boys and men *do* Sindhi masculinity (West et al, 1987).

However, when we return to the scene of the pub described in the opening of this chapter, we see how that particular performance is the exception in the everyday lives of young boys. The pub is a hyper-masculine arena for a hyper-masculine performance. In this setting, they are becoming – albeit only temporarily – a part of a dominant masculinity in which social and cultural expectations are not placed upon them by their kin, and they are not questioned or judged about their behaviour. From the misogynist language the boys use, to their body language and behaviour towards each other, it becomes clear that this can be seen as a performance of hyper masculinity. For example, the words used in the pub setting would never be used in the presence of their parents or other women.[140] The use of language is more generally reflective of the type of masculinity boys attempt to perform. This can be seen in research on school settings and misogynist talk (Kenworthy 1994 cited in Connell, 2005). Even where misogyny is confined to particular arenas and social settings, it can offer a way to resist perceived everyday subordination. I argue that these very deliberate performances both reflect the everyday subordination that the boys encounter, and also represent a way for them to create a temporary social space. In this space, they do not exist in a hierarchy with

[140] It was noted by some of the boys that my regular presence made me 'one of the boys', and they recognised that the language they used in front of me would not be used in front of other women.

others in terms of gender and age. Hyper-masculine performances create a sense of camaraderie among those boys involved.

Returning to the work of Johnson-Hanks then, Sindhis' negotiation of potentially competing forms of masculinity also entails a construction of a Sindhi masculinity through deliberate and strategic contrasts with indigenous Ghanaian practices. There may also be some elements of similarity in Ghanaian and Sindhi forms of masculinities that surface more clearly in particular moments in their daily lives. This constant negotiation and re-negotiation emphasises the need to look at the everyday lives of men to understand how boys and men navigate their way through complex understandings of what it means to be a Sindhi man in Accra.

CHAPTER SIX

SINDHI WOMEN AND WORK IN ACCRA

Sonya Sadhwani, born as Rekha Bhagwan Khubchandani,[141] was born and raised in Accra. She lived and studied in Accra, Hong Kong and New York before migrating to Nigeria and then back to Accra where she resided during my fieldwork. Although now Sonya is the Director of Brand Management at Melcom Group, a group of businesses run by her father Bhagwan Khubchandnani, her early work as a married woman was different. Having gained an undergraduate degree at New York University, Sonya taught at an international school for a brief period in Hong Kong, before moving to Lagos after marriage. There, Sonya taught at an American International School. When she was a newly married woman in Lagos, Sonya's mother-in-law was not keen for her to work and instead insisted that Sonya attend various social events during the working day. Sonya emphasised that her in-laws only allowed her to undertake paid work if she agreed to maintain her social life to a degree deemed acceptable. Sonya explained that she would have to ensure she organised her day so that she could attend lunch parties after finishing her working day. 'So in the morning or the night before I had to take out the clothes then you run to school… [After school] you had to wait for the students to leave [which would take] another half of an hour, whatever, then you reach [home at] 2.30pm

[141] Bhagwan Khubchandani who we were introduced to in Chapter Two is her father.

to go in two minutes to lunch with your mother-in-law because it was very important to her that I was social [with other Sindhi women]. So yeah in Lagos, yeah, I had to.'[142]

The relationship between married women and in-laws has been touched upon earlier in the thesis. Sonuga-Barke et al (1998; 2000) found that in the hierarchical structure of some families, the power differences between men and women, combined with the power of in-laws, can lead to the subordination of married women. Sonya exemplifies this, and one way that the power asymmetry manifested itself here was the requirement to maintain her social life. In Lagos, she felt constantly watched – a feature of what Sonuga-Barke et al (ibid) describe as the culturally orchestrated dynamics of relationships between young women and mothers-in-law. For Sonya, working has always been something she has enjoyed and wanted to do, but she also wanted to focus solely on raising her children whilst they were growing up. Although Sonya worked part time at Ghana International School when her children attended, she told me that it was her father who pulled her back into work when her children were coming into their teenage years and leaving for boarding school:

> My father pulled me, he just found me wasting, as they were growing up he was like 'c'mon'. Dad said, 'it's time to you know, I just got a new office, I'm putting a desk for you, come on Monday morning,' just like that. I didn't even know what I was going to do, I hadn't worked for so many years and sat with him for two years. But I thank my father because if I didn't start then when they both left me I would have been devastated, I'd have nothing to do. I used to dance around my

[142] Interview between myself and Sonya Sadhwani conducted in English held at her residence in Accra on 15/06/2015.

> children from morning to evening, that was my life and I loved it. And then I would have had a double void. With both of them going, I can't tea party.[143]

Like many other women of Sonya's generation, there was an expectation from herself and from others that she would stay at home and look after her children. Indeed, for those women I came across from this generation, their decision to work coincided with their children reaching their teenage years, which suggests an active effort on their part to ensure that their roles as 'good' mothers and homemakers are not brought into question.

Another example of a Sindhi woman creating her own world of work is Meera. Meera runs a successful jewellery business in Accra. She, too, first began when her children were entering their teenage years. My interview with Meera looked somewhat like the one with Sonya. As I sat on Meera's sofa to find out more about her life and journey into business, she offered me drinks and food, ensuring I was comfortable before we settled into our interview. At various intervals there would be a knock on the door followed by a member of house staff who would require Meera's attention for some reason or another. Again, Meera seamlessly hopped between the interview and being pulled in other directions. Throughout the interview it became clear that this was the norm for Meera, and was one of her main reasons for running her business from home.

Meera was born and raised in Mumbai and migrated to Accra after she was married in her early twenties. After falling pregnant immediately with her first child, she went on

[143] Interview between myself and Sonya Sadhwani conducted in English held at her residence in Accra on 15/06/2015.

to stay at home with both her children during the early years of their life. Until they were approaching secondary school education, Meera and her husband felt that the children needed a full time parent at home. Meera described the time she decided to start her own business:

> When did that come about? That came about in 1997. So my son was already ten years old. He was already 10 years old when I started and it was just something to keep me busy because I still worked from the house so I'm at home but I work. So at least when they were at school if I had to go for an appointment or anything I could do it. So when they came home I would be at home.[144]

Meera told me that this was typical of other women from her generation running their own businesses from home:

> They were all doing things from the house, different things. You know, some were selling clothes, some were selling, like I was selling jewellery. My work is from India but then people would bring things from the Far East, the States: bags, shoes, clothes, just things like that. I think it was just basically to keep ourselves busy because there was nothing really, we couldn't really work because we were dependent on our husbands' work permits and stuff like that. So we couldn't really go out and find a job because it was more difficult to get a work permit at that time. Now it's a bit easier. A lot more girls go and get their jobs.[145]

[144] Interview between myself and Meera (pseudonym) conducted in English held at her residence in Accra on 12/05/2015.
[145] Ibid. I return to this generational shift later in this chapter.

Sonya's and Meera's stories offer some insights into migrant women's decisions to work. Firstly, both emphasise the boredom and their feelings that their children no longer need their full attention as reasons to begin work. Sonya and Meera made it very clear that they did not jeopardise or neglect their roles as mothers. These women were able to combine childcare and employment, albeit in two different ways. Sonya, like many other women, chose to work in a school. The setting is seen as an extension of the home, and the role of teacher an extension of the role of nurturer. For Meera, working from home enabled her to be available when the children needed her to be there. Meera's example shows particularly well the challenge that Sindhi migrant women of her generation faced migrating to Ghana through their husband's work permits that did not give them rights to take roles in formal employment. Sonya's example illuminates the social challenges of in-laws expecting women to socialise during times when they would go out to work.

Sonya and Meera emphasised their primary roles as mothers and carers to their children, a gendering of domesticity that many other women (and men) expressed in conversations during my fieldwork. As in many other cultural contexts, South Asian women are socialised from a young age to provide a service to their family, to nurture and to be primary caregivers. The gender disparity between young boys and girls takes effect from early on in life. In a 1997 study in rural India, Seager (1997) found that girls spend twice as much time per day doing chores as boys do, and boys spend six times longer reading than girls. This inequality continues into adult life. In fact, statistics show that women in South Asia spend twenty to thirty hours more per week than their male counterparts doing unpaid domestic work (ibid). Although Seager's study was rooted in

rural India, the inequality between men and women in Indian culture it highlights from childhood through to adulthood helps us to understand how even in urban Accra, Sindhis reflect this inequality; it becomes engrained in women that if they deviate from this norm they are compromising their primary roles in life.

Engaging in economic activities beyond the household, and crossing from domestic space into public space which is seen as masculine, are seen as deviations from their 'natural' roles. This is as true in diasporan contexts like Accra as in India itself. But Sindhi women of Sonya's and Meera's generation, most of whom have obtained at least undergraduate degrees, and some also Masters qualifications, have negotiated ways to ensure they can fulfil both roles without compromising the other.

This chapter argues that Sindhi women have been able to exploit their position as being part of a wealthy and elite group in Ghana by accessing resources from male kin in the form of capital or by negotiating their entrance into public spaces that sit in line with their domestic roles. This has given rise to women becoming recognised business owners, which in turn has led to women entering previously male dominated spaces. It then moves onto exploring Sindhi girls' perceptions and expectations around work.

'Girls' and 'waithood'

I use the term 'girls' to describe unmarried Sindhi women in their early to mid twenties. As is the case for the boys discussed in the previous chapter, my research participants used the term 'girls' to refer to unmarried Sindhi women. There are markers of social adulthood these girls are yet to attain before becoming women, marriage and childbearing being key. Unlike for the boys, roles in family businesses are not an

important marker of social adulthood for girls, but similarly, new expectations and obligations gradually become more central to marking the adult lives of my female research participants. As women they will be expected to run a well-organised home, manage domestic staff, be the main caregivers for their children, help identify suitable marriage partners for their own children, become involved in the IWAs events and do charitable work. As discussed in Chapter Five, much of the literature on 'waithood' in Africa and India has been centred on young, urban men (Honwana, 2012; Jeffery, 2010; Masquelier, 2010, 2013). Although his research focussed heavily on young Indian men, Jeffery (2010) mentions that young women are expected to 'wait' in the private sphere, i.e. their family homes. Young women 'must endure a prolonged childhood while they wait for a husband to make them adult wives and subsequently mothers' (Kovacheva et al, 2018, 451). When young women have been the focus of studies on 'waithood', this has overwhelmingly been in the context of having a shortage of men to marry; men who struggle to find employment and thus be in a position to marry (Jeffery, 2010; Sommers, 2012; Enneli et al, 2017). These examples portray women in a passive position during this period of waiting, which more recently has been challenged by scholars who have sought to address the imbalance of literature on youth and waithood leaning towards young men (Gilbert, 2018; Johnson, 2018). Johnson places young unmarried women in Malawai at the centre of her analysis, questioning the centrality of marriage as a marker of social maturity and waiting as a negative period of time, and argues that women are encouraged by their elders 'to further their education as a means of marital delay and in the hope that they might thereby make "good" marriages in the more distant future' (ibid, 799). Gilbert (2018) explores what she calls a 'feminine culture of waiting' amongst

young graduates in Calabar, who have high hopes for their futures – but after studying and before getting jobs find themselves 'waiting'. Gilbert points out that her interlocuters lives are spent in their homes, often with their families, attending church, and fulfilling social obligations – 'a young woman could not be seen "just anywhere"' (2018, 239). Therefore, these young women placed emphasis on maintaining connections with other young women through mobile phones. Gilbert argues that 'maintaining that mobile communication, as a tool of sociality, has become a strategy for young women to manage their time spent in the house' (ibid, 251). It is a safe way of these women maintaining distance, whilst enjoying effect and sociality, whilst keeping hope for their futures (ibid, 251-252)

Although my unmarried female research participants are from different socio-economic backgrounds to the young women Johnson (2018) and Gilbert's (2018) research focuses on, we can draw some comparisons about the waithood period itself and how young women experience this period. Maintaining female respectability are central to these young women's lives, which I will draw upon later in this chapter. This period of waithood for Sindhi girls is not simply spent waiting for a husband. These women are often gaining an international education and even working or running their own businesses, all before getting married. As we will see, this does not come without its own tensions, especially amongst family members, notably, older men, but shows that waithood is a time during which girls' are exploring their potential outside of becoming good wives, and eventually mothers. Indeed, the experiences they have during this period have potential for them not only to find husbands living in cosmopolitan centres around the world, but also builds their experience of a running business and working –

which they may return to, either through their own business ventures, or those of their family.

I first explore how Sindhi women compare to other migrant women whose movements outside the home are limited but who nonetheless carry out forms of trade from their homes. It then shows how Sindhi women and their activities fit into the informal economy in Ghana, in which their Ghanaian counterparts play active roles. From here, I focus on generational changes and the tensions that my interlocutors face. By exploring their timing into work, the type of work, and the spaces in which Sindhi women carry out this work, it illuminates both continuity and change in perceptions of women and work between generations of Sindhi girls and women. As we will see later in the chapter, young women increasingly have experiences of international study and work, after which they are expected to focus solely on their domestic lives. It becomes clear throughout the chapter that tensions exist between the experiences that are necessary for Sindhi girls and women to insert themselves into cosmopolitan networks, such as gaining an international education, and then the expectations on them when they marry and settle in a particular place. Returning to the overarching point of this thesis; my research participants must all find ways of being cosmopolitan from the specific place of Accra – and men and women experience this in different ways.

Migrant women and work

In order to understand the experiences of married women in Accra, most of whom migrated to Accra after marriage, we must first gain an understanding of what happens to gendered norms when people migrate. Specifically, we have to ask whether the large-

scale mobility of South Asian women outside of the sub-continent has had an impact on gendered norms amongst both men and women.

Both Sonya and Meera's accounts, as well as those of other research participants, show that the expectation on women to be homemakers and reproductive agents did not diminish when they chose to work, and at times there was conflict between their roles as productive and reproductive agents. Scholars such as Appadurai (1996, 45) makes two theoretical claims in his discussion about the gendered qualities of work and leisure in new ethnoscapes that are relevant for the case of Sindhi women and work in Ghana. His first claim is about the ideals of Indian women in a diasporic setting. In these new settings, the honour of women is still linked to their male counterparts. Therefore, women have the added difficulty of negotiating their traditional roles with new desires they may want to fulfil, which can often come into conflict with one another. The second claim relates to women's access to capital and technology. Although women may have access to these things, is this access governed by male kin? By adding this new dimension to gendered roles, does this make life harder for women in terms of juggling conflicting wishes, whilst trying to fulfil traditional roles? A closer look at the experiences of Sindhi women in Ghana will help us to answer these questions.

Studies that focus on female migrants often emphasise that one of the outcomes of migration is that women have access to waged employment, which they may not have had previously. As a result, their domestic duties need filling, and some of this work is often picked up by men as broader studies of women and migration both in South East Asia and South Asia have shown (Chantavich 2000; Gamburd, 2000; Asis et al, 2004).

This then leads to the boundaries between traditional gendered roles becoming more fluid for men and women, albeit not openly. For example, as Gamburd (2000) found that in Sri Lanka, when women were working, the men were forced by circumstances to pick up the pieces at home. However, they regarded this as a 'needs must' situation, which was hopefully temporary and did not therefore entail a radical transformation of the gendered order.

What should also be noted, and is important in understanding the working lives of Sindhi women in Accra, is that at times migration may lead to increased emphases on female respectability (Lefebvre, 1999), which restrict where women are allowed to go and what they are allowed to do. For Sindhi women migrating to Ghana, ideals surrounding respectability largely accounted for why they did not engage in waged labour. However, there was also a legal element to this decision. As Sindhi female migration to Ghana was (and still is) overwhelmingly characterised by wives coming to join their merchant husbands who worked with permits issued by the Ghanaian government, the women would not have had the legal right to work in Ghana. This inability to work in Ghana may have made it easier for these women to continue to carry out the traditional roles that were expected of them in India.

Yet I observed that ideas of respectable female behaviour are not limited to the migrant generation, but also extend to second- and third-generation men and women. For example, first-generation Sindhi women in Ghana were still believed to be keepers of the home and family, rigidly confined to reproductive roles. Men, meanwhile, were understood to continue to engage in trade and commerce, as the primary breadwinners

within the family. This remained a frequent narrative amongst both second- and third-generation men and women. Even so, gender stereotypes were not agreed upon by all members of Sindhi society. For example, one young woman in her mid-twenties, who was born and raised in Ghana, took up a marketing role at a Lebanese company in Accra. Although she was happy with her career progression, she recognised that neither male nor female members of the community understood why she was working, especially as she was recently engaged. She felt that people often downplayed the importance of her job, and some married women often asked her why she did not give up work in order to dedicate her time to planning her wedding. We will see later in this chapter whether Sindhi women in Ghana tend to continue working after marriage, or if the type of work they engage in changes as a result of maintaining their image as respectable wives and daughters-in-law.

Patriarchal authority and gendered space: female respectability

In the previous section I introduced us briefly to the importance of respectability for Sindhi women, and South Asian women more generally, in influencing their decision to engage in waged employment. For many of my female research participants, if they thought about working, or were already running businesses, it was overwhelmingly activities they could do from home such as baking cakes, selling jewellery or clothes, or providing hair and beauty services. As we will see in the discussion that follows, respectability for women confines them to the private sphere, hence the trend amongst

my research participants is not random, but a well thought out way for these women to maintain respectability and still engage in economic activities.

Taking a data-led approach, women's work was a theme that surfaced early on in my fieldwork. It emerged predominantly through conversations in the field with unmarried 'girls' about them wanting to work, unlike the older generation of women who were predominantly viewed by other Sindhis as housewives, a role with which they also identified. At the same time, individuals would share with me that they had ordered jewellery from an older Sindhi aunty who was travelling to India. Initially, I had attributed this trend to older women having a higher propensity to travel as their children were older, and saw this as doing favours for friends and their families.[146] But, through further questioning, I found that these were not random occurrences. There were, as Meera confirmed in her interview, women selling shoes, bags, clothes and jewellery sources from all over the world, from their homes in Accra.[147] Indeed, this was understood as work. As I began exploring women's work, it became clear that this was not centred in public spaces, like men's work, but instead in their homes.

As Takhar (2011) notes, private spaces become settings of significant struggles for women's agency (Takhar, 2011). Although Takhar focuses on the home as a site of women's *political* participation, for the case of the Sindhi women in my research, the home becomes an important site of *economic* engagement for women, as we saw

[146] It is common for people to ask individuals travelling to bring back household goods or clothes that are difficult to access in Accra. I myself have taken clothes, kitchen appliances and even food back to Accra upon request from individuals.

[147] It is important to note that girls and women are present in public spaces, but their behaviour is circumscribed in different ways to that of boys and men.

through Meera's example earlier. To understand the real significance of this decision to work from home, we have to first understand the subordination of South Asian women in relation to men, and in turn their confinement to private spheres.

An earlier study by Mies (1982) explored the lives of female lace makers in Narsapur, India. Mies interlocuters use the home as their space to engage in lace making to sell, but are seen as ‘“women sitting in the house” or housewives' rather than producers or workers (ibid). This can be attributed to the prevailing structures of class, caste and family in India that govern women (and mens) everyday lives. Mies reminds her readers that the:

> exclusion of women from work outside the house is a status symbol in India. Families, casted and classes which have risen economically usually seclude their women in the house, whereas all the women of the poorer sections have to work along with their men' (Mies, 1982, 33).

Some comparisons can be drawn to Sindhi women's work in Ghana, the prevailing perception of them as housewives or homemakers has led to the home being the hub of their economic activities, yet there are also contrasts in play that this chapter will bring out. For example, my research participants, unlike Mies, travel abroad regularly which means that economic opportunities available to them are different to the lace makers of Narsapur.

For Sindhis and other Indians alike, the idea of womanhood is deeply imbedded within patriarchal structures that have existed since early Brahmanical Hinduism. In her

writings about women's subordination and Hindu propriety in early patriarchal Hindu structures, Chakravarti notes that:

> 'In the case of Hindu society the design of patriarchal caste-class structure was mapped out by the Brahmins, 'pativrata' (Wife's loyalty to her husband), the specific dharma of Hindu wife then became the ideology by which women accepted and even aspired to chastity and wifely fidelity as the highest expression of their selfhood' (1993, 582-583).

Here we see how Hindu ideals emphasise a woman's loyalty to her husband as intrinsically linked to her respectability, in other words an 'ideal woman' is an 'ideal wife' and vice versa. Although Chakravarti is referring to early Hinduism, these ideals prevail in contemporary India and have become the basis of Indian cultural ideals for those living on the subcontinent and for Indians in diaspora. Mukherjee similarly writes about the ideals of Indian women in early Hinduism, but writes about the changes to women's lives in post-1947 India: 'The customs and institutions have altered in response to the necessities of a new economic and spiritual structure. Yet, the second-class citizenship of Hindu women, as engineered in the past, is still relevant to the overwhelming majority of Hindu women today' (1983, 380-381). Dhruvarajan, who writes about *pativrata* in modern India, notes that, for Hindu women participation in the public sphere is a 'function of, and circumscribed by their position in the family' (1990, 58). Furthermore, as Abraham (2010) notes in her study of Hindu and Muslim women in small Rajasthani cities, women who are married experience patriarchy in a particular way which more often than not limits their access to public spaces outside of the home. So we see how

these ideas and ideals surrounding women's roles continue to govern Indian women's everyday lives.[148] For example, in more recent years Hindu nationalist movements have:

> …a history of controlling the lives of Hindu women to maintain patriarchal power structures that privilege upper-caste Hindu men. This strategy was heightened during colonial rule, but continues to sustain divisive gendered and communal power structures. This also maintains women's status in society as secondary, and discourages their presence and participation in public spaces (Narayanan, 2016, 28).

As Narayanan suggests in the above passage, women's lives have become bound to private spheres, most notably the home, which becomes an important site for the preservation of Hindu culture and women's chastity (Raju, 2006; Sarkar, 2001). Other researchers have also found that Hindu women's lives have been confined to private spheres, especially in the case of upper-caste women. For example, Hancock, focusing on public religiosity amongst Hindu women in South India, notes that despite women being educated, women defined both themselves and other women 'through their domestic activity and relations, which were grounded, in turn, in notions of Hindu propriety,' (1999, 75).

The above literature emphasises how social codes surrounding women's roles can be a powerful factor in determining their movement in public spaces, which in turn limits

[148] The sharp stratification between the male and female spaces is replicated in other conceptions of hierarchy in Hinduism and modern Indian life more generally. A key instance of such stratification is the caste system, which shapes people's everyday interactions and the spaces they occupy. Dating back to the Vedic period (c.1500 – c.600 BC), the caste system, although noted for its fluidity since this period, still has significance in India today as an organising system of social and economic relations (Srinivas, 1957; 1966, 2-4; Dirks, 2001).

their participation in economic life, insofar as economic activity takes place in public spaces (Hill, 1969). Neither the notion of the 'ideal' Indian woman nor the spatial connotations of this ideal are limited to Indians living in South Asia as we will see below.

Similar to the South Asian context, Western ideas of respectability have developed significant spatial connotations and, in the same way as for Indian women, 'good', respectable women have become increasingly associated with domesticity and the private sphere. Since the eighteenth and nineteenth century, respectability has long been a signifier of class (Skeggs, 1997; 1999). Skeggs uses the notion of femininity, described as 'the process through which women are gendered and become specific sorts of women' (2001, p. 297), to explain how women from upper and middle class groups were seen to be respectable. For Skeggs the traits of being caring and passive made up an important part of femininity (ibid). This was the type of femininity that upper and middle class women performed, unlike working-class women who worked and were therefore seen as 'inherently healthy, hardy, and robust' (Skeggs, 1997). It was these working-class women who engaged in the kind of work that did not allow for them to be seen as being feminine, and in turn respectable.

This idea of respectability remains an important marker of class (Skeggs, 1997). For example, Finch, focussing on urban slums in the UK and Australia, found that during the colonial era interpretations of women's behaviour classified them as respectable or non-respectable (Finch, 1993). During this time, non-respectability included a lack of religious belief and behaviours that were seen as immoral, such as a forwardness towards men in making emotional and sexual advances, having children out of wedlock, and dressing

inappropriately – for example, by showing leg when skirts were too short. This notion of respectability was actively produced by middle-class women in Victorian England, to represent themselves as socially valued women and place working-class women below them as the 'other'. Respectability also shaped ideals of domesticity, which middle-class women now aspired to attain. In these, women were cast as responsible for the home and family, and during this time women turned to domestic manuals and guides to ensure their behaviours conformed to expectations (Branca, 1975).

These ideals of respectability, along with the prevalent ideology of the male breadwinner (Leonard et al, 1986; McRae, 1989), have continually underlined a respectable woman's place as being the home. At the same time that a woman's place was becoming confined to home in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these ideas also reached Ghana during the colonial period, albeit directly affecting only a limited number of women who were part of an educated elite. These women were 'turned into ladies' in line with the kinds of Victorian ideas discussed above (Mikell, 1989, 66). These norms, in turn, have resonated with ideas of Hindu propriety and have shaped the far-reaching spatial confinement that 'respectable' women, including Sindhi women, experience.

The women of a particularly well-known family in Accra, the Achanis,[149] had never worked. So for some Sindhi families like the Achanis, the idea of their daughter-in-law working was unthinkable. It was a matter of family honour for them. The women of their family stayed at home and ran the household as well as spending their days

[149] Pseudonym has been used in order to maintain anonymity.

socialising with other Sindhi women, and the men went out to work in their family business. The women did not need to work, it was not respectable for them to do so when the men provided in abundance for the family. One of the Achani sons married a Sindhi girl from India. Sindhis in Accra often referred to the rumoured story about what occurred between this couple leading to their separation.

The story went that when the new bride moved to Ghana she found it extremely difficult to adhere to the expectations placed upon her by her in-laws. She could not work in any capacity, at home or outside the home. This was only a part of the problem, but it meant that the daughter-in-law's time was spent solely in the company of the female members of her husband's family. Her behaviour was closely monitored so that it did not compromise the honour of the Achani family. After a few years this all proved too much for the daughter-in-law and she initiated a separation and returned to India. Being an Achani daughter-in-law was not easy, according to most.

Purdah[150] as a set of norms and practices that limit participation in public life is illuminating here as an extreme form of seclusion that women face to ensure they maintain 'respectability' for both themselves and their families. For the Achani family, their daughter-in-law working both inside and outside the home would have meant compromising their honour and so they ensured her confinement to the domestic sphere. For both Hindus and Muslims female seclusion is linked to notions of honour and social status (Vatuk 1982; Jeffery 1979; Kantor, 2002, 147). Beyond ensuring female/male separation (Papanek, 1982, 3; Minturn et al, 1993; Agarwal, 1994), purdah

[150] The literal translation of this word is veil or curtain.

has the effect of significantly reducing women's economic opportunities outside of their home (Sharma, 1983; Kantor, 2002; Barkow, 1972; Schildkrout, 1978) which is clearly seen through the example above. Yet the Achani family is in some ways an extreme example. In fact, as we saw through Meera's example, women have been navigating their ways around forms of seclusion and their confinement to private spheres by running businesses from their homes. Much like Sindhi women, Hausa women are traditionally confined to the domestic sphere. Enid Schildkrout's work on the working lives of secluded Hausa women exemplifies how women have actively found ways to navigate their way through purdah. They find ways of using their children as their link between the private and public domains, therefore allowing them to carry out economic activities within the confinement of their homes (Hill, 1969; Schildkrout, 1978).

For Sindhi women who experience a level of seclusion that is associated with their respectability, living in Ghana and seeing indigenous Ghanaian women working in public spaces has an influence on their self-expectations of work. Ghanaian women are embedded in the fabric of economic life in Ghana, with their visibility in public spaces growing through their participation in 'traditional areas of economy activity - agriculture, forestry and fishing as well as petty trading… teaching, nursing, secretarial and clerical work' and 'business and the professions such as medical, academic and legal' (Greenstreet, 1972). This in in sharp contrast with the continued trend of Sindhi women remaining at home, even when they are also earning money.

There are some distinct differences in marriage practices that may underpin these differences in economic opportunities and behaviour. Amongst Accra's indigenous population – members of the Ga ethnic group – some men and women lived and continue to live separately after marriage (Kilson, 1974; Robertson 1984; Fayorsey 1995),[151] unlike Sindhi women, who almost always practice patrilocality. Ga living patterns after marriage often give women a higher degree of control over their productive and reproductive activities (Robertson, 1984; Fayorsey, 1995). However, a lack of resource pooling or joint decision-making between spouses can also mean that women more easily fall victim to economic hardships and must find ways to support their households by themselves. In particular, women were hit hard when Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were introduced, as they lost employment opportunities vis-à-vis men with retrenchment in civil and public sectors (Manuh, 1994).[152] APs and the continuing devaluation of the *cedi*,[153] both of which have affected household budgets,[154] have required Ghanaian women to supplement household incomes or even bear the majority of household expenditure. This, in turn, has meant Ghanaian women have had to negotiate their role as productive agents, in a society that promotes their roles as wives and mothers (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000, 474; Fine et al, 2000; Teal 1995). Ghanaian women's strategies have brought about a rise in informal

151 After marriage men live with their father's kin and women with their mother's kin. Children are raised in their mother's household (although young boys go to live with their fathers once they reach puberty). Although for educated Ga cohabiting is becoming the norm for married couples, separate living is still prevalent amongst low-income married couples (Fayorsey 1995, 92).

152 See Manuh (2004) for an in depth analysis of the effects of SAPs on women's employment in Ghana.
153 Currency in Ghana.
154 For example, real wages in 1995 were half what they had been in 1970.

ways of generating incomes, which has provided a backdrop against which Sindhi women take advantage of their access to capital in order to engage in economic activities.

In order to understand this backdrop further I turn now to the informal economy in Ghana. I want to illuminate how the informal economy, along with special boundaries of public and private spheres, have enabled Sindhi women to become economically productive agents and simultaneously maintain respectability.

Writing in the early 1970s, Hart called for an analysis of informal as well as formal structures in development economics. Hart's research on the economic tactics of slum dwellers in Nima in Accra in the 1960s led him to emphasise what he termed the 'informal economy', that is 'the mass of economic transactions that takes place beyond effective state control' (Hart, 2000, 98). For Hart, the recognition by the state of economic activities is only the first distinction: formal activities are recognised by the state whereas informal activities are not. The second difference Hart highlights is that between wage-earning and self-employment (1973, 68). Hart's research focused on Frafra migrants in Accra and makes the point that, as many are denied success through formal opportunities, they seek ways of gaining income through informal structures (Hart, 1973). This lack of access to formal structures is not unique to Ghana, nor is it a particularly new phenomenon (Whyte, 1943; Mayhew, 1851).

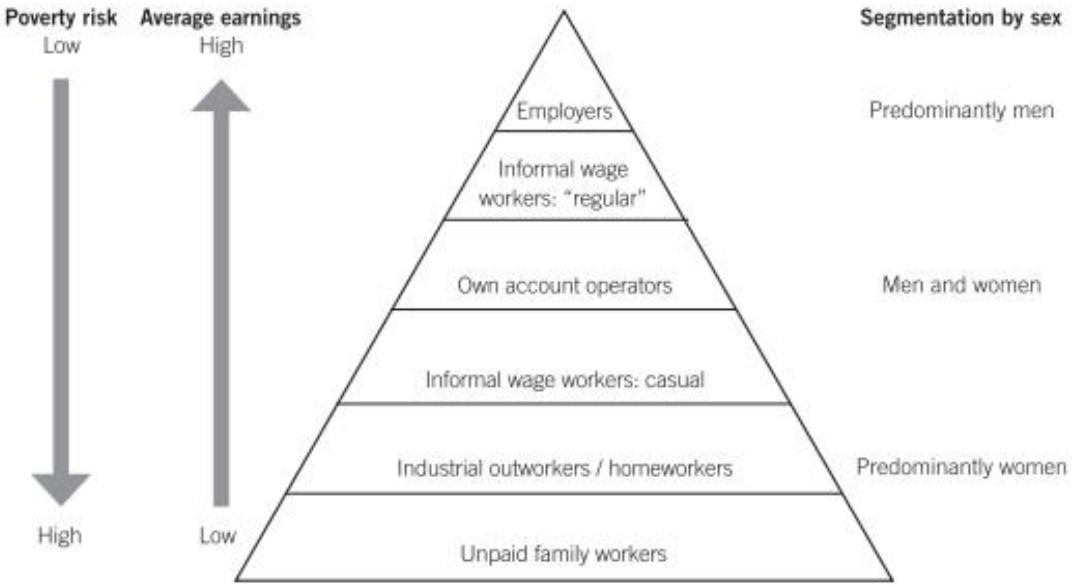
As is the case with other settings, in Ghana the boundaries between the informal and formal economy are blurred, and the two are often interdependent (Hilson et al, 2005).

Although there are figures for Ghana's expanding informal sector,[155] Sindhi women are exempt from national statistics as most do not hold Ghanaian citizenship and therefore are not included in national surveys such as the census or employment surveys. Yet it has been noted both for Ghana and elsewhere that women tend to participate more in informal economies than their male counterparts (Bortei-Doku Aryeetey, 2000; Hoyman, 1987). Hoyman, and others (Manuh, 1994, 69; Amu, 2005, 6), argue that obstacles women face in entering the formal economy, such as lack access to credit, land and education, are more likely to push them towards informal economic activities. Women's' experiences in the informal economy have received much scholarly attention. Milkman et al (1994) attempted to understand how the history of labour relations saw women in the US and Europe enter the informal economy. Before the rise of capitalism, both productive and reproductive labour was characterised by unpaid activities. Albeit gender inequality existed within families, and men and women were responsible for different tasks, the economic contributions of both were considered equally important. With the introduction of capitalism and paid employment, unpaid forms of work became devalued and were not considered to be a part of economic life. With women's roles being considered as primarily reproductive, men gained dominance in the formal economy and women increasingly became excluded from the formal sector (Milkman et al, 1994). The clear distinctions between formal and informal activities were a result of the European economy influencing Ghana's capitalist economy.

155 45% in 1990 (Ninsin, 1998, 28), 89% in 1997 (Yankson et al, 2001, 30).

These distinctions, along with Ghana's economic decline, such as the failure of SAPs, 'forced wives and daughters into the informal sector to supplement, or even earn, the household income' – Ghanaian women had no place in what was and continues to be a largely male-dominated formal arena and therefore have been pushed into engaging in informal economic activities (Meagher, 1995, 270). This is not to say that Ghanaian women have not been generating income to run households for a long time, but there were ideals of full-time housewifery among elite women especially. What Meagher (ibid) makes clear is that in the recent times where the informal/formal distinction has become more prevalent, women are increasingly pushed into informal spaces.

Informal activities (most often carried out by women) create a set of cheap services often for those working in formal sectors – such activities help to keep costs of living low. This means that the ultimately beneficiaries of women's work in the informal sector are formal employers, who are overwhelmingly men, which is certainly true when we look at Sindhi women working for free in family businesses. Although at first glance the relationship between the formal and informal sounds mutually dependent, for the majority of women this does not offer them the same gains as formal activities would offer them. This is illustrated in the diagram below shown through the lower average earnings and increased risk of poverty women face in informal or unpaid labour.



Source: (Chen, 2012, 9) WIEGO Model of Informal Employment: Hierarchy of Earnings & Poverty Risk by Employment Status & Sex

When looking at Sindhi women's lives, we see how this hierarchy is not as clear cut as it seems. The discussion so far has taught us that like many others, Sindhi women face a level of seclusion from public space. This safeguards their own reputation as well as that of their families. It also emphasises their domestic role and limits their ability to participate in economic life more broadly. In Ghana, where women are generally not excluded from public spaces, Ghanaian women have often been economically active, albeit in disproportionately informal ways. Sindhi women are in a unique position in that they have access to high levels of capital through their husbands and have found ways to navigate their way through barriers they face from Indian ideals about women's roles.

If we look beyond public spaces and at the work of Sindhi women, we see how their ways of conducting informal economic activities within private spheres works to their

advantage, much as Hausa women in Schildkrout's case were able to engage in economic activities from their homes in order to maintain in purdah. Through undertaking profit-making / cash-earning activities, such as managing jewellery making and baking at home, they do not negate their traditional roles. It is a way in which they can be both businesswoman and wife/mother. Some Sindhi women are avid traders and work the stock markets on a daily basis, which gives them a sense of economic independence from their husbands and families and enables them to generate what becomes their disposable income. Secondly, when women do enter public spaces as economically active characters, they choose places, such as schools, which can be seen as an extension of home.

Although other ethnographers have looked beyond public spaces to see how economic activities at home are impacting the lives of women and their families (Sen et al, 1985; Kantor, 2002; Avazalipour et al, 2012; Guruprasad, 2016) it is difficult to explore the intricacies of how these processes play out. During my fieldwork, I faced difficulties in seeking the answers to some complex and sensitive questions, such as who controls the income generated by women, or whether income generated by women is used for household expenses that are expected to be the responsibility of men. In the latter case, insofar as women do make up deficits left by men, they are not quick to admit this. They are keen to protect their husband's reputation, which in turn also protects their own status in society.

Secondly, women's choice of home as their base from which to conduct economic activities also highlights that the boundary between private and public spaces has been

maintained by women in order to uphold their respectability. Sindhi women have been successful in bringing productive activities usually associated with public spaces into their homes whilst safeguarding their reputation in line with traditional norms and values.

Ultimately, Sindhi women, like many other South Asian women, have had to balance competing expectations of themselves through the sorts of strategies outlined above that enables them to maintain "respectable modernity" (Thapan, 2004) and "respectable femininity" (Radhakrishnan, 2011).

Expectations and experiences of work: Second generation 'girls'

In November 2017, I interviewed Chitra K Ram. Chitra is a Sindhi girl, born and raised in Accra, who is now in her mid-twenties. She completed her primary and secondary education in Accra before moving to London to complete her undergraduate and Master's degrees. My interview with Chitra took place at her family apartment in North London, where Chitra has lived and worked in events management for the last five years. Her father was also present at the interview – he flew in at the last minute for emergency dental treatment. Coming from a successful business family, which first migrated to Ghana in the 1960s, Chitra watched her mother's transition from the home into the family business:

> She started when I was five, and went into the family business, being the paint factory side of things. Before that, what I think I remember is her going to these

> kitty parties – Navrang,[156] these cookery groups and bhajan groups. And people who you've met…these were her friends and I used to see these ladies every Wednesday or something. I used to think that that was normal, ok. And then when I turned five and was starting school in GIS and she started in the business. And I was like 'oh this is strange' – I was five though, right. But then it was the new normal after a while. And then I found it very strange, or I didn't think it was as fulfilling for those who weren't able to go out and do what my mum was doing, do you know what I mean? I guess it's a choice for some and for some it's not, because I've had conversations with some women in Accra who have had people judge them based on the fact that they want to go out and work, so you're now being judged for being a not good enough wife, mother, home maker because you want to go out and do that. And seemingly it's more important. But it's not. I mean why is that a question at all, because you're a woman?

Here we see how people's opinions reinforce the kinds of ideas surrounding women's 'natural' roles that Ortner (1984) alludes to. One of Chitra's main concerns was that women's work was seen as unnatural and in opposition to their roles as wives and mothers. Chitra also touched upon generational continuity in perceptions about women and work. For Chitra, one of the biggest problems is that even people from her own generation felt that when women work they neglect their domestic roles:

[156] Name of a particular Sindhi women's group that existed during Chitra's childhood in Accra. There were numerous groups formed by friendship groups to reflect different interests, for example, playing cards, cooking etc.

> Not everybody in my generation feels that, but those people that do, I'm just like wow. Because a lifestyle choice is a lifestyle choice, but then judgement is that you're not running the home well enough, not well enough, at all, if you're going out to be doing such things. But there's this opinion that if you're a teacher, 'that's an okay job to do for a woman', but if you're an executive at a bank, 'oh your husband lets you do that?' Oh shut up!

From the tone of Chitra's voice and the quickening of her words throughout her interview, her frustration became clear. Here, Chitra noted that ideas about women's domestic roles filtered through to the younger generation. She also touched upon occupational sex segregation. Just as people believed that domestic roles require feminine qualities, and many employment roles required masculine qualities – with the effect of channelling men and women in these respective directions (Eagly et al, 1984) – the effect extends to types of employment women and men engaged in. Some occupations – Chitra gave the example of teaching – were viewed as 'feminine' occupations, whereas other occupations were viewed as 'masculine'. Women safeguarded their own reputations by associating their own employment or business interests with 'feminine' traits. Baking and teaching were seen to require 'feminine' traits and to be closely linked to the domestic roles that women fulfil. These ideas influence the lives of younger women, as we will revisit later in the chapter.

Chitra's father also commented on his wife's transition into the family business:

> You see, when she [his wife] entered into the business it was on a fifty-fifty basis. Fifty-fifty means one leg at home and one leg in the work and helping me in sales.

> And around 1997, in the family business there was my father with my uncle. My uncle then decided to step out and do his own thing. So when he stepped out and was doing his own thing then I stepped into that business in 1997. So when I stepped into that business, which was the agricultural machinery, that was when Chitra's mum came more, with two feet, into the paint factory we were running. And between us and my father we were running the two businesses. And I must say that she took it up with the thinking 'where do we get the best things at the best price' theory. So when you take that theory of thinking, not really knowing technically or chemically anything about paint materials, I must say she picked up pretty fast, she's not a chemist, but just using her logic. And we had technical staff with us. Using her time in marketing out the product she brought the business up to what it is today. And in family business we managed to pay for the education of my son, we managed to pay for the education of Chitra, we've managed to purchase two properties in London, it's the growth so to speak. And she's been very much there.

At this point in the interview, the influence that women can have in family businesses became clear when Chitra reflected on her mother's central role during the hardships they faced. What also became clear is that even when working in family businesses, women were not automatically treated with respect. Chitra again:

> Every family business has setbacks and somehow in those setbacks her work has really kept it afloat which is quite incredible and admirable to look at…I mean she has had the struggle of going in and she's this woman in the business and the

> men, the workers are like 'ohhh madam!'[157] …She had to find this voice of authority. You're finding your feet but you realise they don't care, so you come in with some form of strength. Which I think is what she used to do because there used to be so much taking the piss because you're a woman, which in any Asian or African society – even though funny enough the women run a lot of industries – it still exists.

Chitra's father added:

> My father, then the head of family stepped in and told those Ghanaian workers that "you have no choice my friend because she's the boss, you play the fool and you're out."

Although Chitra's father was aware of the initial hardship his wife faced when joining the business, he had no memory of any negative comments passed about his wife working. However, he recognised that his mother, who met women more regularly during social events than him or his father, may have experienced this more. Nevertheless, he does not recall her receiving negative comments from anyone because, as he said to me, his wife 'succeeded in what she did, so it would have been more admiring her capabilities or the fact that oh she's really doing that kind of thing. As she [Chitra] mentioned, women would not otherwise be involved in that kind of work or business activity. And amongst her friends I think they all admired her.'

[157] What Chitra means here through the tone of her voice and phrase is that the workers would not take her mother seriously when she gave orders in the factory.

Examining how women perceive their own roles both in business and family shows how they have been able to negotiate space in what are usually overwhelmingly male-dominated arenas. For a married woman I met at a lunch, by emphasising her role as a helper to her husband, she was able to move into a role beyond the household that otherwise would not be available to her to occupy. According to this woman, she did not work so that she could give her children the attention they needed growing up. She explained that as her daughter had left Accra to attend university in the United States, she found that she had time on her hands and nothing to do. She then went onto say that she *helped* her husband with his work. When I asked her to delve into what she did to help her husband, it became apparent that she managed the financial accounts for the business. In effect, she was fulfilling the role of a financial accountant, however, she never once took ownership of her work or her role in the business. She simply saw it as helping her family. This further emphasises how women are conditioned to provide services for their families, and therefore view their own roles even within businesses as being supportive rather than valuable in their own right.

She was also not compromising her role as a wife. In fact, one might argue that she was adding to her role as a wife by *helping* her husband with his work. In Sonya's case, working within a business that is part owned by her father and her husband ensured she was not seen as being rebellious. By working within the confines of the family business, women expand the number of ways in which they can serve their families, and improve the terms on which they do it.

For both Chitra's mother and for Sonya, working in the family business has actually served as an advantage for them. As Chitra's father said, many women would not otherwise have the chance to be involved in formal business activities, so family businesses gave them a way in. In an online news article published by the Weekend Leader, Sonya explained how she became a director at the company: 'Seven years ago, I was given my first project to run for the company and slowly graduated to the Director of Brand Management' (Kokutse, 2011). Not only has a role in the family business given Sonya a chance to transcend the boundaries of domestic duties, but it has also offered her the opportunity to progress to the level of company director. This may be for a few reasons. Unlike when Sonya was undertaking paid work, her role within the family business can now be viewed by herself and by others as an extension of her family duties. The negative response she previously received from people such as her mother-in-law is now limited, as she is working with her husband and father as well as other male kin. Explicitly intentional or not, this strategy ensures that extended kin do not frown upon women working. In Ghana, a country that still sees very few women at director level in the formal economy, Sonya's experience, like those of the other women I refer to above, represents a way in which women navigate their way through working life and can enter traditionally male-dominated spaces.

However, this does not mean they can neglect their roles at home. This double shift that women take on by working outside of the home and also fulfilling their domestic duties reflects what researchers call the 'double burden' or 'dual burden,' (Berk, 1988; Calasanti et al, 1991; Bryant et al, 1996). Even as I sat in Sonya's exquisitely decorated dining room with her and her daughter, speaking about how women juggle work and

home life, it struck me as ironic that she was actively managing this struggle as we spoke. She constantly directed her house help and cooked throughout the evening and, ever the attentive host, she ensured my plate was kept heaped with the various dishes she had prepared earlier. Meanwhile, she responded to my endless questions about the lives of Sindhi women in Ghana. Sonya was, as many women say in Accra's Sindhi community, 'managing' things around her with what seemed like great ease and elegance. Women like Sonya, working in family businesses may be even more likely to face double burdens and be constrained by traditional female roles than women who work independently from their families as their caregiver role extends from the home to the workplace and there was little distinction between the two (Lyman, 1988). Nevertheless, as we have seen for people like Sonya and others, working *within* family businesses offers some women opportunities that would not be available to them otherwise. For Lyman (1988) and many others (Drozdow, 1990; Hollander et al, 1990; Salganicoff, 1990), women's roles within family businesses reflect 'a number of social and cultural factors. Women's roles within networks are influenced by traditional expectations of women's family and work responsibilities' (Lyman, 1988, 385). Lyman notes that these women are vulnerable to 'role-conflict', a term used to describe the tension between women's family roles and their business roles. Salganicoff outlines the double messages that women receive when working in family business contexts: '"Dedicate yourself fully to the business, but give the family children"; "Be independent and autonomous and behave like a businessman, but be dependent, take care of the family, and behave like a mother"; "Do not take business home, but let's talk shop

tonight"; "Don't postpone your career and personal needs, but help the business now"' (Salganicoff, 1990, 133).

The discussion thus far has shown that for a generation of women with expectations of being homemakers and nurturers, confined to domestic spheres, women have in fact found ways to do both. Although there are practical challenges for women to enter the formal economy such as not having legal permits to work, what has become clear is that cultural factors play an even larger role in determining women's decisions whether to work. We can understand this further by looking at how women's behaviours and actions have an impact on others. In what some authors refer to as collective cultures, such as Sindhi culture (and South Asian cultures more widely), one's behaviour reflects on others, whereas in cultures broadly defined as individualist, emotions such as shame or pride reflect on the self (Cohen, 2001; Mesquita, 2001). While it is important not to overdraw this distinction, it highlights the particular implications for these women if they were to enter the formal economy and engage in paid work. It would be damaging not only to their own reputations, but crucially to those of their families. Hence it is advantageous for these women to employ such strategies as those described above when entering any sort of employment.

With the exception of Sonya, the majority of women who carry out work in both the formal and informal sectors remain invisible. However, they have been instrumental in creating a change in attitudes towards women at work which has paved the way for girls in younger generations. In the following section I use data collected from a focus group

discussion with three unmarried girls to explore whether both attitudes and opportunities are changing for Sindhi girls in Ghana.

Continuity or change between generations?

Thus far we have discussed Sindhi women from the older generation running small-scale businesses operating from home and their participation in family business activities. As mothers are still very much central to the socialisation process for children, their own norms, values and behaviour have a profound effect on their own children, as we saw in Chitra's case above. As Himmelweit et al (2002) discuss when looking at the decision of mothers with regards to work and childcare, the behaviour of others is vital in measuring appropriate behaviours and therefore creating and maintaining social norms, especially those in one's social circle, as is the case for close-knit Sindhis in Accra. These behaviours can lead to what Himmelweit (2002) refers to as cumulative change, by creating a positive loop in changing self-perceptions which is turn produce small changes in behaviours, which then produce changes in other people's self-perceptions and so on. For Sindhi women in Accra, the changes that women have produced by engaging more in economic activities from the home has produced a standard of acceptable behaviour amongst those within the group.

By analysing a focus group discussion that took place over lunch with three unmarried Sindhi girls, where we discussed topics mainly relating to their experiences as young unmarried women in Accra, we can see the wider impact of changes around women and work by looking at the effect on younger girls' attitudes towards work and family life.

Generational differences between them and their mothers became central in their reflections of what is expected of Sindhi women in Accra, as well as comparing their experiences and expectations in relation to Sindhi boys of their generation. In the following excerpt, the girls are reflecting on gender differences in relation to work:[158]

Amiya: 'For me, most of the gender differences come to work ethic. Like they don't take girls seriously. Like they [boys] work a whole day and even though a girl works the whole day it's still never a whole day because you're a girl, your work doesn't matter because you're a girl. They're running their family business and they're so exhausted because they're at work, but even though you have the same job as them and you do the same hours as them [it is not the same] because you're a girl.'

Me: 'Do you mean if you're in an office?'

Amiya: 'See, it doesn't matter if you're in an office or doing other work, you're still working. Whether you're going to the office and sitting at a desk for eight hours a day or you're in a bakery baking for orders eight hours a day or you're sitting in a shop and helping out your parents for eight hours a day, it's still all eight hours of work. And there shouldn't be a difference but because they are guys and they have the responsibility there is.'

Priya: 'And most of the guys just sit around and their dads do most of the work.'

Amiya: 'Exactly, they just sit and do nothing, but they're the ones that are tired because they're the guy. That's the impression I got. I started working; there would be days I

[158] All names in this section are pseudonyms in order to maintain anonymity. Any resemblance to an individual living in Accra is purely coincidental.

would be in the office 'til 9.30, 10pm. I don't feel like I need to brag about the fact I left work at 9.30pm that day, but because I'm a girl it doesn't matter what time I left, I didn't do the hard work that they did even though I'm sure they sat and did nothing but watch TV on their computers at work.'

Priya: 'Ya…it's true.'

Amiya: 'This is something that really bothers me. I'm not even talking about guys our age, I'm talking about guys in general, guys in their forties or guys in their twenties. I mean, my grandfather doesn't take me seriously because I'm a girl even though I work longer hours than my father sometimes. Like it doesn't matter because you're a girl, your career doesn't matter because you're going to get married.'

This discussion highlights the stark difference in expectations between Sindhi boys and girls in relation to work, but also in perceptions of work between older married women and unmarried girls. Whereas older women did not speak about their businesses in language that reflected upon themselves as businesswomen, for these girls, regardless of where the work occurs (at home or outside of their homes), it is work. They made their frustrations clear that others (usually older male family members) did not recognise that work. During the focus group, the discussion was much wider, focussing on the other inequalities my interlocutors thought existed between Sindhi boys and girls in Accra. These included how girls' behaviours are policed much more closely by members of the community, and how people are more likely to pass negative judgment on girls than on boys if their behaviour deviates from societal norms. The group also highlighted generational differences, most notably, the way members of their

grandparents' generation view women in work, and how the work these girls do is devalued in comparison to the work that boys do.

All three of these unmarried women were working, albeit in different ways. In October 2014, Amiya had recently completed her Bachelors degree in USA and returned to Ghana. Amiya, whose mother worked the family business, was working within her mother's team during my fieldwork. As Amiya herself mentioned above, she worked long hours which she felt were not recognised as work by members of her family, most notably her grandfather. On a separate occasion, Amiya told me how her grandfather thought it was unnecessary for her to work, and that she should focus on developing her house-keeping skills so that she is ready to enter a marriage. However, throughout my fieldwork, Amiya was determined to do her Masters abroad to pursue her chosen career in business and marketing. Although she felt anxious about telling her grandparents that she wished to do an MA and have a career independent of the family business, Amiya went on to study International Marketing and Certification in Digital Marketing. She went on to become the Chief Marketing Officer and co-founder of a start-up company abroad.

The other focus-group participants also had substantial experience of work beyond the household. Priya, was a qualified accountant. She left her full-time employment to run her own business on a full time basis. During my fieldwork Priya worked from Monday to Saturday doing her activities and keeping accounts for her business. Since my fieldwork, Priya married and relocated to another country. Meanwhile, Tara was at the time of my fieldwork unmarried and had studied abroad before writing for a magazine

there. She decided to leave her job abroad and returned to Ghana and spent her time assisting her parents in running their business.[159] These three girls engaged in business activities within their family businesses. But all three discussed at length how girls in their own generation do not work, their lives controlled largely by husbands and in-laws. When discussing what happens when girls meet together, my interlocutors commented:

Amiya: 'They always ask for it to be in the day so that they can go back to their husbands. I feel like in Accra, as much as our parent's generation overcame a lot of these things, our generation is going backwards with a lot of these things.'

Tara: '[Uh huh], I agree.'

Priya: 'Like some mother-in-laws, they don't allow their daughter-in-laws to work. Even husbands don't like them to work.'

We see here how the theme of women and work fits into a wider idea of a woman's place within her family. During Chitra's interview, this equally came to light. Chitra reflected throughout the interview on her mother's hard-working disposition, and mentioned that her mother has encouraged her to return to Accra to run the paint factory with her. Although Chitra does not now see going to Accra as an option, she recognises that, if in the years to come she is in a comfortable position in London, she may join the business in a support role and travel between London and Ghana to assist her mother in running the business. At this point, I asked Chitra's father if he would want his daughter to join their family business. He replied that he would not want to force his

[159] I have been vague about the background of these three individuals in order to maintain anonymity.

children into anything, using the example of his son, to whom he showed the running of their family businesses, but did not force him to join. However, he did provide the capital for his son to enter the building materials sector, and the latter is now working for himself and making money. Interestingly, his reflections on the possibility of his daughter joining the family business differed.

Speaking about Chitra he said:

> 'She's been living here for some years, like every parent you're looking at her, she's got to get married, and that's the hope. Now, it's unlike yesterday when you'd arrange the marriage, so I'm free minded enough to say she would have to find her partner. And if she chooses that Ghana is really the place that she wants to be in and out of then that's by her choice. As a parent do I want her back into a family business? I think it's the wrong direction of movement. Because the direction of movement is that she actually should be at some point finding her partner and living her life, not returning into *our* business. That's the normal direction of thinking.'

It has already been made clear in this chapter and elsewhere in the thesis that there is a high level of importance placed on Sindhi girls getting married, and Chitra's father's opinions about his daughter reflect those of many others during my fieldwork. The idea of work, be it paid, working in family businesses or running her own business, interferes with an unmarried woman's (and her family's) goal – that she get married. As Chitra so poignantly put it:

> ‘Women, coming down even to our age…feel like once they’re married that they’re suddenly somebody…That existing in itself is fundamentally what is wrong with our society.’

Conclusion

By examining the patriarchal structures Sindhi women live within, this chapter has shown how there is great emphasis placed on women’s respectability, which plays out in forms of seclusion. As we saw, although purdah signifies the most extreme form of seclusion for women, it stands as a useful analytical starting point, and there are elements of it present in the lives of Sindhi women. Most notably, Sindhi women’s roles are supposed to be confined to the domestic sphere, and they are expected to limit their movement beyond the household. Yet outside the household tends to be where valorised and profitable economic activities (both formal and informal) take place.

In Accra, a place where most other women’s roles are not confined to the home, and where women engage in non-domestic economic activities, Sindhi women represent a distinct minority in their spatial restrictions. Nevertheless, they have found their own ways to overcome the cultural limitations placed on them. By doing so, these women cross the private/public divide and engage in both formal and informal economic activities. As we have seen in the above examples, there is no single approach towards work taken by women – but they all do so in ways that protect their reputations as ‘good’ mothers and wives.

The role of women as reproductive and productive agents in not a new phenomenon in the academic literature or in the policy world. Women in Ghana, as in many other

countries, are recognised by the state as both mothers and workers and there are policies that give working mothers allowances or rights, such as maternity leave (Misra, 1998; Kahu et al, 2007a; Kahu et al, 2007b). However, my participants have no such recognition in state law. Although the literature on informality and gender suggests informality dominates women's economic activities more than it does men's, Sindhi women have been able to use their elite positions to access the resources of male kin and run their own businesses from home. It is hard to say whether these businesses are regulated in the same way as businesses that are run beyond the home, but it is recognised that they can be a lucrative way for Sindhi women to earn money.

This chapter also shows the continuity and change in relation to work between generations of Sindhi women in Accra. As was seen through my focus group discussion, now Sindhi girls in Accra are pursuing work before marriage. The distinction they draw between work and private life is much sharper than those of older married women – regardless of the space work is undertaken in, for these girls – it is work. On completion of my fieldwork, it was difficult to say whether these girls would continue working as they moved through their lives and got married, but I have seen that research participants who have since married have continued to work or started new businesses after marriage, even when they have babies and small children. This shows a clear shift in timing into work being much earlier than for earlier generations. It will be interesting to see whether this trend continues to grow – potentially shaping new expectations of women's work. What is clear however, exemplified by Chitras father's reflection on his daughter, is that expectations around women marrying and family life do not look like they are significantly changing.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MAINTAINING A DISTINCT DIASPORA COMMUNITY: COSMOPOLITAN SINDHINESS

Like any other day, I woke up and started flicking through my Instagram stories. A picture of Mia wearing high-heeled shoes from a high-end designer flashed up on my phone screen. The photo featured her feet in Prada heels, the box clearly displaying the brand of the designer, and the photo was overlaid with a sticker flashing in bright pink saying 'world travels'. As I continued to explore what my research participants whom I followed on Instagram had been sharing with their followers over the last 24 hours, I came across Lena. Lena, whom I had met just two days before at a bar in Accra, had shared a photo of herself during a shopping trip in London carrying multiple bags from high-end designers including Gucci and Christian Louboutin. I scrolled through her followers' replies to this photo with comments of praise and excitement, and emoticons of hearts conveying their appreciation for the items and the main protagonist herself – it was unclear which their comments were aimed at, for these bags and their contents were a part of Lena now. Later that day, I attended an intimate lunch where individuals (both boys and girls) reflected on the Instagram stories we had all seen that very morning. Some conveyed their annoyance at Mia and Lena as they felt they did not need to show off their designer items – they referred to it as 'oversharing', signalling that there was a scale where people might 'share', but also, as in this case, 'overshare'. Others remained indifferent, but still knew all details of the photos we had all seen.

Lena and Mia's posts were not unique occurrences during my fieldwork – even four years post fieldwork, most days as I scroll through my Instagram account, I see mostly women, sharing their new purchases, their travels, their children, food they are enjoying, and photos with friends they meet in cosmopolitan centres around the world such as Mumbai, London or Hong Kong. Photos are coupled with hashtags such as #accrainlondon, #ghthings,[160] #ghbrides, just a few examples amongst others such as #expatinafrica. These hashtags signal some of the identities these individuals claim, as well as create boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. Some days there will be videos of suitcases, first class cabins and champagne in flutes bubbling away as emoticons and comments tell me where people are going on their travels, and often who they are travelling with. I see the same things my research participants see of one another on social media.

This chapter explores how Sindhis in Ghana focus on creating a distinct diasporic identity, one of *cosmopolitan Sindhiness* that enables them to assert and maintain their position within both local and global hierarchies of Sindhis, and more widely, Indians. Taking Lena and Mia's Instagram posts as a starting point, I argue that the internet, specifically social media channels such as Instagram and Facebook, have increasingly become a key tool for Sindhis to assert and maintain their *cosmopolitan Sindhiness*, an identity that is forged through the consumption practices of this group.

Thus far we have seen how Sindhis' activities through formal associations, weddings and charity work are central in solidifying a sense of Sindhiness but also to place this group

[160] Here, the 'gh' stands for Ghana.

within a local and global hierarchy, vis-à-vis other Sindhis and wider Indians. But, relatively recently, social media has provided a significant tool to aid network building and maintaining for this group in diaspora – these networks central to maintaining their distinct group identity.

Drawing together these earlier themes, and approaching them through the lens of social media use, I show how this tool is being harnessed across generations. Seemingly individual performances of wealth and status in fact strengthen a collective sense of *cosmopolitan Sindhiness* across global networks. Lock et al, writing about Sikhs and Sindhis in Hong Kong, indicate that:

> in contexts of migration and diaspora, ethnic identities and relationships with culture and language that were previously taken for granted tend to become problematic, and one may expect to see communities and individuals engaged in more or less *conscious constructivist activities* as they seek to make sense of their heritages and their contemporary predicaments (2006, 268).[161]

It is these conscious constructivist activities that are the focus of this chapter. I first build upon my argument by introducing Michel Boivin's work on the reassertion of Sindhi identity in the post-Partition period and their use of the web in creating a Sindhi identity in diaspora. I then re-introduce economic, cultural and social capital to show how consumption has increasingly become central to forging a distinct diasporic identity of *cosmopolitan Sindhiness* that enables people to insert themselves into prestigious networks of global Sindhis. I reveal how these practices are inflected today through an

[161] Emphasis added.

exploration of my younger research participants' social media performances. Social media connections share features with a longer history of networking but also have important differences. These historical changes have affected not only experiences of physical mobility, but also the significance of international travel in building cultural and social capital. The chapter thus shows that the older generation, having relied on older forms of long-distance connection relate to the social media channels available to them differently from the younger generation. By the end of this chapter, we see how Sindhis in Ghana play their part in creating and inserting themselves into a distinct global diaspora community of *cosmopolitan Sindhis*.

Social media as a tool for creating cosmopolitan Sindhiness

Michel Boivin's reflections on Sindhis in Hong Kong and North America provide a useful a starting point for this chapter. Through his focus on Hong Kong Sindhis, he shows that during the years after the Partition of India, this group relied on activities of their association called *Sindhi Sabha* to nurture a regional Sindhi identity in Hong Kong. However, Boivin highlights that 'the diasporic Sindhis stayed more or less isolated in the foreign countries' (2004, 151). Using Sindhis in North America as an example, Boivin points out the rising importance of the web from the late 1900s in creating 'a Sindhi virtual identity' in the post-Partition period (2004, 161). Boivin found that Sindhis in North America were not simply mirroring what Sindhis in India were doing, nor what Sindhis in Hong Kong were doing, but were creating their own regional identities through their engagement on the web.

By exploring how my research participants use social media as a tool to assert their own distinct sense of Sindhiness, I begin to answer Boivin's question of whether the 'internet will be sufficient to maintain the existence of a Sindhi virtual identity' (ibid). My fieldwork commenced a decade after Boivin posed this question, and during this gap, there was a continuing rise in internet use and Web 2.0[162] platforms. My fieldwork signals clearly that social media is playing an important part in asserting *cosmopolitan Sindhiness* in relation to other Sindhis and Indians, which in turn helps to maintain their positions within their prestigious networks. This is not to say that Sindhis do not connect with non-Sindhis, but for the purpose of my discussion, I focus on a self-consciously Sindhi network rather than the other social media connections that my research participants keep. My choice to focus on a Sindhi network takes its lead from my research participants' own statements about its particular importance - they emphasised that their networks were centred on other Sindhis (both in Ghana and globally) – rather than Indians more widely or Ghanaians.

Regardless of the tools or medium used to create connections, connections are important – they embed individuals, especially young people, into transnational networks that serve purpose in their lives, both personally and professionally. As seen earlier in the thesis, studying abroad, the activities of the Indian Association of Ghana and the Indian Women's Association, and global marriage networks all embed individuals into a distinct local and global Sindhi diaspora. In more recent years, social media has provided my research participants with a powerful tool to transcend

[162] Web 2.0 refers to the second wave of the internet which is defined by the change from static web pages to dynamic or user-generated content and the growth of social media (O'Reilly, 2007).

boundaries to reach other Sindhis around the world in order to assert their own position as cosmopolitan Sindhis.

Through displaying their consumption via their Instagram posts, Mia and Aleena asserted not only their own affluence, but their family's affluence. These displays of consumption are not a new phenomenon, as we have seen throughout the thesis. For example, weddings that display this group's affluence, notably to one another, have over the years grown in their grandeur and continue to hold importance for global Sindhi networks. But, social media is a relatively recent tool that has given this group another avenue to display their consumption to one another.

There has been an increasing demand to view social media spaces as part of real-world social arrangements rather than accept the interpretation that online spaces are radical, exceptional and unique (Baym, 2010). In other words, social media is not disconnected from the 'real world' or people's offline lives; rather it needs to be viewed in relation to and as part of the 'real world'. The kind of interplay between the online and offline space has already been highlighted by researchers such as Pype (2017) and Boellstorff (2008). Boellstorff's monograph exploring the online social networking world is particularly helpful in understanding that, although his research participants were playing an online game called Second Life,[163] people who met each other as players in this online game also exchanged views beyond their role of 'player', about a range of issues that they interpreted through their offline social experiences such as identity, gender and race. I

[163] Second Life is a virtual world game where players engage in everyday life activities such as buying and building homes, socialising in bars and restaurants, attending social events such as religious ceremonies, weddings and birthday parties, finding friendships and also courting.

repeatedly use the term 'real' here to emphasise Boellstorff's view that the online and offline world are strongly interlinked, that the relationship between the two is 'cocontitutive' – he goes as far as claiming, 'it is in being virtual that we are human' (ibid, 29).

Economic, social and cultural capital

In order to understand these relatively new tools that my research participants are using to assert and maintain a sense of Sindhiness, I build upon Veblen's concept of conspicuous consumption (1994[1899]), Bourdieu's cultural capital (1986) and Goffman's performance theory (1959). What becomes clear is that social media has become a central tool in showcasing economic success and demonstrating cultural capital, enabling the consolidation of social capital. There is a directional flow between performing conspicuous consumption practices online, which when fluently performed through a social media platform can build upon one's cultural capital, as a result building their social capital, but also assert the elite position of a group vis-à-vis others.

Social media has become a tool through which pre-existing objectives can be pursued online by individuals that can impact their offline personal relationships significantly. As we have seen earlier in the thesis, particularly in Chapter Two (Routes and Roots) and Chapter Four (Tying Knots), whereas once travel was vital for Sindhis to accumulate cultural and social capital and to create and maintain transnational ties, social media has become a new avenue for people to perform their conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899).

As we saw in Chapter Four, Veblen explores how, through the rise of capitalism during the Second Industrial Revolution, those who gained monetary wealth displayed it through extensive leisure activities and through lavish expenditure on consumption and wasteful goods (Veblen, 1994, 85). The fact that individuals are able to engage in such wasteful activities displays their wealth and status. I briefly mentioned in Chapter Four that for mobile societies their consumption of goods is seen as more important than the display of leisure activities as it is difficult to do the latter when people are not in the same place (Veblen, 1994, 24). This for Sindhis has long been the case, as we saw through the weddings being important in providing the time and space for Sindhis to display their wealth to one another. However, through the rise in social media use, Sindhis now have another tool to enable them to display both their consumption of goods and their leisure activities to people who live in different cities around the world. For Bourdieu (1986), this would be both peoples' economic capital, refering to money, property or other assets people hold, while cultural capital is the knowledge, educational credentials and skill sets that individuals gain from their social upbringing, as well as education or other kinds of more formal learning.

If these displays are performed to the right people at the right time they build people's social capital (Bourdieu, 1992). Bourdieu defines social capital as the following:

> Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, 119)

Sindhi identities in the post-Partition era

Sindhis in Ghana are just one element of a global Sindhi diaspora, situated within a wider global Indian diaspora. As Boivin notes, there are three main geographical settings in which Sindhis are located;[164] Sindh proper, the external Sindh (places in which the Sindhi language has been spoken for many centuries outside Sindh) and the diasporic Sindh – the latter being divided into two; the Indian Sindh (namely Mumbai and Kutchh), and the global Sindh – located in places outside of the Indian sub-continent (Boivin, 2004, 136). Sindhis in Ghana are a part of the latter sub-group – who in contrast to some of their counterparts in India or those still residing in Sindh, live privileged lives. The relative differences between Sindhis in Ghana and their counterparts in parts of India such as Kutchh was recognised amongst my research participants, as they did not speak of Sindhis in Kutchh as equals, but symphathised with their positions as they described them as refugees and people living in poverty. Despite the fact that Sindhis in Kutchh have rebuilt their lives in India post-1947, many running successful businesses, 'it is today refered to as a "Mini Hongkong"' (1996, 136). But the point is that it is not viewed as a metropolitan centre by my research participants who alluded to a difference in political status and wealth, which placed themselves in a position of privilege vis-à-vis Sindhis in Kutchh.[165]

[164] Although Boivin writes this in reference to Sindhi speaking areas, it can be broadened to describe the Sindhi presence more generally.

[165] This was discussed in more detail in Chapter Two in my discussion of Sindhis as refugees.

Udero Lal or Jhule Lal: a symbol of Sindhiness

Markers of Sindhiness have become important for Sindhis in diaspora. Boivin points to the importance of Udero Lal (also referred to as Jhule Lal, which is the name my research participants used) as a 'hero or saint' to unify the Sindhi diaspora in India and elsewhere in the post-Partition period (Boivin, 2004, 146). Boivin notes that it was Ram Panjwani, a writer, singer and actor, who decided that Jhule Lal would be the unifying symbol for Sindhis in diaspora, and in 1959 Panjwani 'launched a movement for the Sindhi identity with this almost forgotten deity' declaring that 'Chettichand (the new moon of the Sindhi month of Chaitra) would be celebrated every year as the Sindhyat diwa or the "day of Sindhiness" (ibid). Parwani also writes about how Panjwani and his associates were key in re-imagining Jhule Lal as a Sindhi cultural icon which helped to 're-invent what it meant to be Sindhi in the post-colonial world' (2010, 16). None of my research participants shared this version of history with me, but they were devoted to the worship of Jhule Lal as their main saint and celebrated him through Chettichand celebrations at the Sindhi mandir in Accra. The centrality of Jhule Lal as a marker of Sindhiness was clear at the weddings I attended throughout my fieldwork, by the popularity of a song titled 'Dam Mast Mast' being danced to with much enthusiasm by old and young research participants.[166] As recognised by Boivin, along with the worship

[166] 'Dam Mast Mast' is a spiritual Sufi song written in honour of one of the most prominent saints in Sindh, Lal Shabaz Qalandar, later being popularised by Nustrat Fateh Ali Khan in the release of his album in 1991.Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (1948-1997) was a Pakistani-born vocalist, and one of the most popular Qawwali (a form of devotional music) singers recognised worldwide for his music. There have been multiple remixes and versions of the song released in mainstream Bollywood films.

of Udero Lal, the transfer of sacred places from Sindh to Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the essays published in India about Sindhi Sufism, and the creation of institutes for Sindhi language and culture in both Hyderabad (Sindh) and Adipur (Kutchh) have all played their part in unifying Sindhis and helping *Indian* Sindhis to begin to (re)build a motherland for themselves (2004, 148). But this is very much embedded in the geographical closeness between areas such as Kutchh and Sindh and the historically shared similarities between dialects and elements of culture (ibid). This points to two questions: what are the ways in which global Sindhis assert a sense of Sindhiness, and is it the same as the Sindhiness Boivin describes of Indian Sindhis?

Global Sindhi hierarchies

For global Sindhis, Boivin signals the hierarchies that exist *within* global networks, noting that Hong Kong Sindhis are among the most powerful in the Sindhi diaspora. My own research participants recognised that Hong Kong Sindhis were amongst the most elite - and that only the wealthiest Sindhi families in Ghana were connected to Hong Kong Sindhis. Although Boivin does not explicitly delve into the meaning of 'power', I take it to encompass the status and wealth that enables Sindhis to insert themselves and maintain their place within their powerful global Sindhi networks. In their study of Sindhis and Sikhs in Hong Kong, Lock et al write that Sindhis are able to send their children to English medium international schools, but Sikhs are unable to due to the expense, putting Sikh children at a disadvantage as the majority of Hong Kong's government schools teach in Chinese language (2006, 271). The wealth disparity between these two groups seen through their ability to educate their children in

international English speaking schools vis-à-vis Chinese language government schools is clear – and as Lock et al write, nods to Sindhis 'further "internationalizing" their community' (ibid, 270).

Whilst Ghana is a 'marginal' location for the Sindhi diaspora as compared to Hong Kong, Sindhis in Ghana nonetheless attempt to position themselves within the most prestigious international networks. As noted earlier, some are a part of these powerful networks, and others are not. Elaborating on Lock et al's example above of education, we saw earlier in the thesis how families will strive to give their children an international education to help realise their aspirations of being a part of prestigious networks of Sindhis around the world. For those who are a part of such networks, it is not easy to gain access or keep their place, especially when located in different time zones and across great geographical distances. As we have seen throughout earlier chapters, especially when looking at the role Rajan's lavish wedding played in his family regaining their place in their network (Chapter Four), networks are as delicate as they are strong, as exclusive as they are inclusive, and therefore a lot rides on maintaining one's place within such networks.

I agree with Boivin that 'to some extent, it is possible to think that the world is under the control of the Sindhi networks', and this group occupies a space within the global Indian diaspora, both on the African continent and elsewhere, that reflects high status and power (2004, 150). What is clear is that Sindhis are one of the wealthiest Indian communities in the world (Markovits, 2000). In the same sentence my research participants would tell me that Sindhis are amongst the most successful business people

in the world, but would also recall a saying that Cook notes as an Indian proverb: 'if you meet a snake and a Sindhi, kill the Sindhi first' (2010, 133). Although often said followed by a laugh, my research participants were reflecting as much upon perceptions of global Sindhis within the wider Indian diaspora as much as they were recognising their position within the global Indian hierarchy.

Recognising diversity within the global Indian diaspora has captured the interest of scholars for some time (Jain, 1998; Friesen, 2008; Pande, 2013). There are edited volumes dedicated to understanding such diversities within the Indian diaspora.[167] Indeed, as we saw in Chapter Three (Sindhi, Indian and Ghanaian), the diversity of the Indian community in Ghana has grown in recent years with both North and South Indian communities forming. Even with this growing diversity, much of my research participants' lives both within and outside of Ghana is dominated by their relationships with other Sindhis. As has become clear throughout earlier chapters, creating a community embedded in ideas of *cosmopolitan Sindhiness* both within Ghana and outside is a central focus in my research participants' lives – whether through marriage, associational activities or charity. So, social media is more recent tool that this group has at their disposal to aid them in showcasing their cosmopolitan Sindhiness to one another, affirming, reaffirming or improving their place within their networks.

[167] See *Diversities in the Indian Diaspora: Nature, Implications, Responses* as one such example (Jayaram, 2011). In addition to chapters focusing on varied geographical locations of Indians around the world such as Malaysia and Mauritius, this volume also focuses on the different Indian ethno-religious groups that make up the Indian diaspora, such as Punjabis and Jains.

Social media as a tool for creating networks: the courting period

Arjun is 30 years old. He was born in Sierra Leone and migrated to Accra with his family during the civil war the mid-1990s. He moved to London to attend boarding school, and stayed on to complete his Undergraduate and Masters degrees before moving back to Accra to join his father and grandfather in running their business. In December 2018, Arjun married a Sindhi girl, Aleena, from Mumbai. Aleena was born in Lagos but moved to Mumbai with her family when she was a child. Whilst her father travels between Lagos and Mumbai, Aleena, her younger brother and her mother have been based in Mumbai since.

Arjun and Aleena began their courtship via WhatsApp. As soon as Arjun was given Aleena's number by his cousin in Mumbai, he looked her up on Instagram to get an initial idea of her physical appearance as well as her interests. At the beginning of their courtship the two communicated through various social media avenues, although Arjun tells me that Facebook did not play an important role as younger people do not use that very often. However, for Arjun, other types of social media were integral to the early phase of their courtship as it gave them an insight into each other's everyday lives and created momentum for them to get to know each other better.

These early interactions between the two relied on a level of fluency on both their parts with how to present themselves in a positive light to one another – although the two grew up in different countries, and at some level in different cultures, they are both from a generation of young Sindhis that have been exposed to online performances of cultural

capital. Arjun and Aleena were both exposed to similar performances on social media through their networks which in turn influenced their own ideas of what constitutes cultural capital, and appropriate ways of performing this to one another. It is important here to recognise that if this fluency had not been there on both parts their relationship would not have developed past this initial stage.

Social media plays a key role in three ways. It is a tool that both individuals can harness to connect with one another across long distances and different time zones – it also gives them a platform to explore and recognise each other's performances as being appropriate and desired with no physical travel. It also helps to minimise risks going forward to the next stages of their relationship. For the young couple, their relationship developed past these initial stages, and phone calls and video calls organised around a five and half hour time difference between Mumbai and Accra became a daily event for them both. Although they met on a handful of separate occasions, in London, Mumbai and, as the relationship moved towards marriage, Accra, the majority of their interaction was via social media platforms. For this couple, sharing *snaps* with one another on Snapchat was a way for them to keep up to date with each other's day. For Arjun and others, for whom many relationships are created and maintained over long distances, being able to share their lives in real time bridges geographical distances and time differences.

The ability for social media to bridge distances is something another unmarried boy in his late twenties born and raised in Accra highlighted during an interview:

> Obviously it has made it so much easier to stay in touch with somebody. You don't even have to call them at this time or that time, so everyone messages at their own time. You're busy at work, you can message when you're free. So you still have that conversation going. You don't have to both be free and set aside a certain time…..you can have a constant running conversation. Reply the next day if you have to.[168]

The example of Arjun and Aleena's courtship via social media speaks to the potential of social media as a tool to establish and maintain meaningful connections. Social media was clearly a central tool in forging their relationship, displaying their status to one another, and eventually giving these two individuals access to one another's networks through connecting two cosmopolitan Sindhi families together. For example, these two families now have the potential to invest in joint business ventures either directly with one another, or with individuals they meet through one another's networks at social events around the world.

Arjun and Aleena's example also signals the generational shifts in how Sindhi networks can be formed and maintained. Historically, there would be letters exchanged, sometimes pictures and possibly a trip or two taken to meet potential spouses. Families would meet a handful of times before the wedding to make arrangements together. However, with the introduction of social media, time and space have become compressed. Unmarried girls and boys are able to share their everyday lives with others around the world who could be potential marriage partners. The kind of marriage

[168] Interview held in Accra in January 2018. Details omitted to maintain anonymity.

migration I explored in Chapter Two came with great risks – girls would leave their homes and families to join their husband's kin in Ghana with little or no prior knowledge of the place, culture or way of life that would become their everyday. Social media, then, has the potential to mitigate some of the risks associated with migration for unmarried Sindhi boys and girls especially – for example, boys can share their lives with girls through videos and pictures via Instagram, Snapchat and WhatsApp so that their potential wives are exposed to life in Accra before travelling there themselves to see it as a potential place to live.

However, what exactly these boys choose to share is a selective process and there is a balance between wanting to show girls a mix of what they might view as the unpleasant aspects of Accra – the bad roads, unfinished infrastructures, even poverty - and more fun things like pictures and videos from nights out with friends in bars and clubs, family lunches and dinners, and friends watching football games together. In some cases, girls do not feel the need to travel to Accra before they marry and migrate there because they have seen pictures and videos and feel that this is enough for them to make the decision, again signalling the power of social media as a tool for connecting people.

Social Media use across generations

As will become clear through the reflections of my younger research participants, when social media platforms were occupied largely by only their own generation it became a space for them to express themselves without the surveillance of older family members – they felt that they could share aspects of their lives without being judged or misunderstood by older people. However, since older people started to enter online

spaces, most notably Facebook, younger people consciously moved away from using such platforms to share aspects of their lives they wanted to keep separate from older people.

Aisha, a married woman in her late twenties, tells me how over time the way she uses social media has changed. Like many other younger research participants, Aisha used to be an avid user of Facebook and tells me that over time she uses less social media, especially Facebook:

> Facebook, I just go on and look. I don't think I actively use it so much. Snapchat I do use because that's fun, and Instagram - I use it for so many things. So many companies are on it, you can buy stuff off it because everybody puts their products up, basically for whatever, whether it's an events company or any other company. And [I] also [use it] for media, and I just watch actors and actresses. By media I mean to wish someone happy birthday or if there's a fun moment I'll capture it. I'm not on it in the way other people are in terms of watching stuff. I'm always looking for new things, looking for new products in India like where I can get my stationery done, through Instagram what clothes and stuff I love. I don't post that often, I've never posted a story before.[169]

Since our interview in early 2018, Aisha has posted multiple stories on Instagram of her travels. By 'watching stuff' here Aisha means to watch other peoples' everyday lives (like Lena and Mia's) that they share via Instagram through pictures, videos and a recently

[169] Pseudonym used to maintain anonymity. Interview between myself and Aisha held in Accra on 24/01/2018 speaking in English.

added Instagram story feature, which allows people to put up pictures, short videos called 'boomerangs' and longer videos.

What surfaced from Aisha's reflections is that Facebook has become much less popular amongst the younger generation of Sindhis in Ghana (as is the case for younger people elsewhere in the world), mostly because their parents and grandparents have started to use it. When asked how she thinks other Sindhis in Ghana use social media platforms Aisha giggled and immediately drew upon generational differences in social media use. She said:

> So you can break it down in generations, I think this applies everywhere in the world. I think my generation is at the point where you've got two lots of people. One where they're obsessed with this thing [social media], [and share] what they're up to and how everything is. Actually, three sorts of people. So one group are thoroughly obsessed with it, they document literally every minute, every moment of their life, stuff like that. Then you've got the middle people, I would probably classify [myself as one], once in a while they post stuff on Instagram and use it for whatever. Then you have people who have Instagram accounts and like literally [never] go on it.
>
> Then you've got the slightly older generation, I think they're a bit more obsessed in a different way. But they would literally post everything, like they go out for a party and literally now they post ten pictures and things like that. Like every aspect of their life will be documented, every day they go out or something happens, a picture will be posted. Do you understand? I don't know, I don't think

> they're doing it out of show. Maybe some are because it's hard to really judge, but there's a certain aspect of these guys I'm talking about are probably in their late thirties/early forties and it's probably a way they feel like they can maybe share their life. I still don't understand the logic behind it but you have my cousin in Bombay – she will post a picture every night she goes out.[170] Instagram is mainly for you capture those one off moments and stuff like that.[171]
>
> Then the older lot don't really use Instagram but they're obsessed with Facebook.'

This 'obsession' Aisha refers to is that of her parents' generation, those in their fifties and sixties, who are enthusiastic users of Facebook. It is also something my other younger research participants highlighted – and it has directly influenced their decreased use of Facebook. A young man in his twenties who used to be an active user of Facebook felt that his peers has stopped using it because of the increased online presence of their parent's generation. He told me during an interview:

> Facebook, I don't use so much anymore. When it first started it was the only one back at Uni. Honestly pretty much everyone else joining, like mums, aunties, uncles it grew into this other thing, I feel like everyone has withdrawn from Facebook and it's the 'old skool' kind of thing.[172]

Another young man in his twenties also echoed this:

[170] The generation Aisha is referring to was a difficult group for me to gain access to so their own perspective is not offered in this chapter. I have only heard about them through the younger generation.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Interview held in Accra in January 2018. Details omitted to maintain anonymity.

> Umm, Facebook became that thing where I'm not really active on it at all because it transcends generations. Everyone's on it from grandparents down to people our age, and even a bit younger. So then it just became an adult's thing where not very up to date stuff is there. Instagram is more of an up to date thing. And you don't necessarily want to show [your family], for example, I don't want to show my Masi[173] what I'm doing.[174]

Once Facebook was a space for younger people to express themselves freely without their elders' judgements. However, as these excerpts suggest, this online space has become increasingly shared by multiple generations, making it difficult for younger people to share their lives more openly. Although focussing on teenagers who are younger than my research participants, Boyd argues that, 'while particular systems may come and go, how youth engage through social network sites today provides long-lasting insights into identity formation, status negotiation, and peer-to-peer sociality,' (2008, 119). For the case of my younger research participants, this rings true: they have moved away from Facebook as the 'peer-to-peer sociality' is no longer as easy to do when mothers, fathers and grandparents can see the details of their lives they are sharing.

In the discussion that follows, I use my research participant's reflections to suggest how the purpose facebook serves for older generations may be different for the purpose that other social media serve for the youth. How people connect over social media can vary.

[173] Term used to describe your mother's sister in Sindhi and Hindi. It is also sometimes used as a generic term for women who may be your mother's friends.
[174] Interview held in Accra in January 2018. Details omitted to maintain anonymity.

Joinson (2008) suggests that the 'keeping in touch' element of Facebook comprises two functions. The first is surveillance—the desire to see what old contacts and friends are up to, how they look, and how they behave. The second is social searching, that is, the desire to maintain and reconnect with offline connections. Over time it has become clear that my younger research participants have consciously moved away from using Facebook for the latter function, and now use Facebook more as a surveillance tool, whereas older research participants are using Facebook for its social searching function.

The young man quoted above also felt that Facebook was important for his parents' generation who had lost contact with their peers when social media was not available for them to keep in touch:

> I've realised a lot of parents on Facebook use it just to get in touch with old friends they completely lost contact with. Like dad for example, because of Facebook he's got in touch with all these old people that used to live in Ghana 20 years ago, that he wasn't in touch with at all. [They] started adding each other on Facebook, tracked each other down. He talks to them now, he's got friends who come and visit him. Like now, through Facebook they were back in touch. So actually I think it's a lot more useful for parents and stuff like that sort of generation – it's easier for them to get back in touch.[175]

Aisha also echoed this young man's sentiments when she reflected on her own father's use of Facebook:

[175] Ibid.

> If I look at my dad's generation ok, I would say for them it connects them to long lost friends that they couldn't keep in touch with because at that time there was no WhatsApp, no phone - there was none of that ok. And I think our parent's generation are more inclusive of everyone, in the sense they're more, I feel like the people they want to be connected with are not always on their phone or WhatsApp with them. So when they're on Facebook – like how my dad sent you a message – you know, instead of taking your number from me and messaging, he sent a message via Facebook and connecting in that kind of way. I would say to some extent yeah for a lot of people maybe, even when my mum passed I got so many messages on Facebook, like inbox messages, that I would not have expected or don't even have my number so I'm not in touch with the whole time.[176]

Previous research into Facebook shows that Facebook is used primarily to maintain contact with offline connections rather than to develop new relationships (Ellison et al, 2007; Lampe et al, 2006), which is something the above excerpts highlight. In their study of undergraduate students at Michigan State University in the USA, Lampe et al (2006) found that Facebook was used by students for purposes related to 'social searching'—to learn more about someone they knew offline, rather than for 'social browsing'—the use of Facebook to develop new connections. For undergraduate students, Facebook was used to keep in touch with old friends and people they knew from high school (Lampe et al, 2006, 168). Ellison et al (2007) found similar results, indicating that

[176] Interview held with Aisha at her residence in Accra on 24/01/2018.

students used Facebook for both maintaining pre-existing close relationships and keeping in touch with high school acquaintances and classmates. Similar to my participants, for Ellison et al (ibid), Facebook provides a low-maintenance way for users to keep up-to-date on friends' activities, making this platform especially suited to sustaining offline connections rather than developing new online connections. For example, birthday notifications require minimal effort on the part of users to keep in touch with friends as Facebook sends people a message when it is their Facebook friend's birthday and prompts users to write on their wall to wish them well and mark their day (Miller, 2011).

The young, the highly educated and the cosmopolitan tend to have various networks of strong ties. For Granovetter, 'the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie,' (1973, 1361).[177] In this sense, strong ties are characterised by trust and shared social circles. Granovetter asserts that if a person shares a rumour with all their close friends, i.e. strong ties, it is much more likely that the rumour would reach people twice or thrice due to their shared friendship groups. However, if shared through weak ties, i.e. those who are merely acquaintances, it can reach a larger number of people and travel across larger social distances (ibid, 1366). Strong ties that can be forged and maintained via social media platforms can prove to

[177] Since Granovetter introduced the concept of tie strength, other researchers have put forward other factors that can influence tie strength, such as structural factors, for example, socioeconomic status, race and gender (Lin et al, 1981), and level of emotional support offered by individuals on intimate issues (Wellman et al, 1990).

be much more advantageous to people in their personal and professional lives, as we have seen through this chapter.

What is the significance of understanding the generational differences in social media use for Sindhis in Ghana? Firstly, it enables us to see the increasingly central role social media has played in the lives of Sindhis in Ghana and the overarching shift from the reliance on physical travel to the ability for social media to make and maintain social networks across the globe – and ensuring their positions within these networks. Secondly, understanding generational shifts in what social media older and younger people are using enables us to understand the social media journeys of my younger research participants, and how they strive to find spaces that are separate from those that their parents' generation use. These distinct youth spaces are important for younger people as what constitutes cultural capital differs between these two groups, and if younger people are constantly censoring their social media posts for the older generation this will impact their performances, which in turn will influence the ties that they are able to make online. Notably, forging romantic relationships online becomes easier if young people eliminate the option of surveillance by relations such as parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles by moving away from the social media platforms that the older generation becomes active in using.

Maintaining places in the global Sindhi hierarchy

According to Goffman's dramaturgical approach first put forward in 1956,[178] individuals present idealised rather than authentic versions of themselves. Therefore, individuals engage in everyday performances, which Goffman describes as, 'activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers' (1959, 22). Goffman uses the term 'impression management' to describe how individuals can change their behaviour to share only details they wish to share.[179] Successful performers are aware of the impression they foster. Thus, displays of conspicuous consumption they share need to be constructed in ways that their audiences can observe whuch often happens without them knowing (Goffman, 1959, 144-145). Although at the time Goffman was writing social media did not exist to influence his theoretical considerations, his approach is extremely helpful in understanding how people present themselves in their online lives today.

More importantly, these performances are very selective, both in content and timing, which is vital to ensuring the success of people's social media pursuits. Here, Goffman's approach complements that of Veblen's conspicuous consumption and Bourdieu's cultural capital well. As we are well aware at this point, Sindhis can generally be considered as part of the high class in Ghana. Veblen states that consumption norms of

[178] Goffman first version of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* was published in 1956 at the Social Sciences Research Centre at the University of Edinburgh. However, for my discussion I use his revised and expanded edition published in 1959.

[179] Other scholars have used Goffman's dramaturgical approach in studying aspects of online self-presentations. Boyd (2004; 2006; 2007) uses Goffman to ground SNS activity as networked identity performance. Hewitt et al (2006) use Goffman to explain identity production on Facebook.

the high class, in this case, Sindhis, 'will to some extent shape [men's] habits of thought and will exercise a selective surveillance over the development of men's aptitudes and inclinations' (1994 [1899], 212).

By revisiting Aleena and Mia's Instagram posts described at the beginning of this chapter, as well as the reactions of their wider peer group, we already begin to see through Veblen's approach that social media performances have wider impacts on other people aside from the performer. When these performances of taste (Bourdieu, 1984) are well executed and the audience reached is one that is desired and shares these norms, the performer reasserts their position within their social circles, and can even insert her or himself into new social circles (it is in this sense that this whole process can be transformational for individuals). The end goal of social media then is to maintain and build one's social capital at an individual level, but this also helps to (re)assert Accra Sindhis' positions within the global hierarchy of Sindhis and Indians in diaspora.

Taking Bourdieu's social capital, the focus comes less on social media itself, but on its use as a tool for individuals and groups to display social capital to create and maintain distinct networks that inform group identities. For example, posts with friends from the global Sindhi diaspora taken in Hong Kong or Mumbai allow people to share the networks in which they have a place. At the same time, posts are often reshared by indivduals who are tagged in them, which gives potential for people in their own network (that may not be connected to the person who shared the original post) to see how well these people are connected. This then aids peoples perceptions of the original sharer as having a place in prestigious networks, which makes them more attractive to

connect with. These relationships are not limited to online relationships, i.e. friends or followers increasing in numbers on social networking sites, but extend to offline relationships, as we have seen earlier in the chapter with strangers becoming girlfriends and wives. Another particularly good example of this is when a couple posted a picture of themselves in front of a five star hotel they were travelling to in Hong Kong, and someone commented on their photo asking if they were in the city at that precise moment and asked for them to call so they could arrange to meet. Again, the timing of this photo was important, as it reached a person online that they had the potential to meet in person during their trip which would work towards strengthening their tie.

What makes social media such a remarkable avenue to do this through is that people can do this without physically moving. Sometimes not moving from their home or city, sometimes not moving from their hotel room whilst travelling – the options available to users are vast, and they have the choice of how to utilise it. In some ways then, it requires less effort from people, but in other ways it is much harder because the online world is so fast moving and sharing the right things at the right time becomes extremely important in order to remain embedded in the networks people wish to be in. This latter point refers to cultural capital in its online form, which as we saw earlier, is experienced differently by people of different generations. For both my older and younger participants, their use of this tool requires a particular kind of knowledge – which is difficult to gain unless people are a part of the prestigious Sindhi global networks of which people aspire to be a part, or at least close enough to it to observe how social media performances need to be done amongst this group. Arguably, it is more important

for my younger research participants to get this right, as they are solidifying their networks and spend much more time online as the older generation.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have emphasised how a lot of the work people do online in sharing their consumption practices is done without the need for physical movement. However, travel is still vital in being able to engage in the right kinds of consumption practices and thus put on the right kinds of performances and to take long-distance online relationships offline. For example, a Snap or Instagram story of an individual walking through the streets of central London, followed by a picture of Selfridges shopping bags and maybe a video of their plate of food at a high end restaurant with a tag of the name and location of the place would be much more valuable in the impact it would make to audiences than a comparable story of someone's day in Accra. The Accra version simply would not have the same impact because it would not contain the type of conspicuous consumption that is available in cosmopolitan centres such as London, Dubai and Mumbai.

So if travel is still important to be able to create these performances, this chapter has shown the importance of social media platforms as a tool to selectively share aspects of their lives they feel would benefit them in building and maintaining their social networks around the world. Before the social media age, physical travel was the only way people could meet others in order to perform their accumulated cultural capital – usually for big social events such as weddings. However, with the introduction of social media into peoples' everyday lives, these performances can be shared in real time, which in turn

makes them more frequent. In this sense, we see how social media allows people to compress time and space in one sense, but also highlights the importance of the timing of social media performances in ensuring that they are well received by audiences.

As this chapter has shown then, social media has fast become one of the key tools through which people can perform versions of themselves that can build upon their status and consolidate their social capital. This is ultimately very important as it further solidifies a sense of *cosmopolitan Sindhiness* that continues to be a shared group identity and asserts this identity to other diaspora groups within Ghana and elsewhere, both online and offline. Social media performances embed people into groups that share their social status, and build upon their social capital. As we have seen throughout earlier chapters, these elements of peoples' lives aid individuals in their endeavour to become cosmopolitan Sindhis.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION: BECOMING A 'COSMOPOLITAN SINDHI'

In this thesis I have explored how a *cosmopolitan Sindhiness* has been fostered amongst Sindhis in Accra who are a part of a global Sindhi and Indian diaspora. By focussing on Sindhis in Accra, I have shown that for this group, being cosmopolitan is not a given, nor does it simply mirror a universal type of cosmopolitanism. It is a cosmopolitanism that is deeply embedded with a sense of what it means to be Sindhi. My research participants do not strive to be only cosmopolitan, they strive to be *'cosmopolitan Sindhis'*. This thesis has delved into what the process of what *becoming* a 'cosmopolitan Sindhi' looks like and how it is experienced by Sindhis in Accra – a location that is in many ways 'marginal' in the global Sindhi diaspora.

This thesis has captured the nuanced ways in which people strive to achieve aspirations. In this thesis, having treated cosmopolitanism as an analytical category, what has become clear is that for Sindhis what constitutes being Sindhi and being cosmopolitan have become intrinsically linked in the emic sense. However, we cannot speak about Sindhis being 'cosmopolitan' alone, it is always followed by being Sindhi. Cosmopolitanism becomes a central feature or aspiration of *becoming* Sindhi and as has increasingly become clear throughout the thesis, is important if individuals want to be a part of prestigious global Sindhi networks.

In lieu of a homeland, fostering a sense of belonging for Sindhis that is not connected to a place, but rather to other Sindhis in the global diaspora has been paramount in shaping their everyday lives – which may explain the over emphasis on the self-identity of being

cosmopolitan for my research participants. This thesis began with showing how early migration to Ghana before 1947 set the basis for how this group would experience the Partition of India. Rather than Partition being the beginning of the Sindhi story of migration to Ghana, Partition was a catalyst for women and children to join existing male family members in Ghana, as well as new families migrating after – which played a role in establishing a fully-fledged Sindhi diaspora in Ghana. In a lot of ways, the Sindhis I researched were the lucky ones – they escaped having to live in refugee camps and relying on government resources to sustain their lives post-Partition and this laid the foundations for the emergence of a global Sindhi diaspora – one that increasingly self-identified as cosmopolitan. As noted in the introduction of this thesis, unlike other Indian diasporas having no connections with their homeland, nowhere to go back to, has meant that Sindhis have been able to invest their time, effort and resource into ensuring they create and maintain their networks with other Sindhis around the world, which is turn fosters a sense of *cosmopolitan Sindhiness*.

This is not as easy task, as the rest of the thesis has explored and people who do not achieve these aspirations risk being rejected from networks that can impact both their economic and social lives. This was particularly clear to see when exploring Sindhi marriages. Families pool their resources together to ensure that their children receive an education in parts of the world that are seen as desirable amongst Sindhis, usually the USA or the UK. This helps with maximising their desirability as potential marriage partners and also exposes them to Sindhis from other parts of the world. We also saw how weddings themselves play an important role in the lives of Sindhis as it is a space in which Sindhis can display their capital to one another. I remind us here of Rajan, for

whom a lavish wedding was instrumental in inserting themselves back into business and personal networks both in Ghana and elsewhere after their family business has collapsed. Their wedding has had a positive lasting effect on Rajan's overall success, and still continues to today.

The importance of creating and maintaining local and global ties to other Sindhis becomes even clearer when looking at how Sindhis have fostered an ethnic identity in Ghana. This has not been easy with both challenging citizenship laws and the increasing dynamism of Indian ethnicities in Ghana. Never the less, Sindhis occupy a distinct place amongst Indians – they are a part of an elite group. Being the oldest Indian group in Ghana, Sindhis are the producers of Indianness in Ghana, although this is changing now with the first non-Sindhi president of the Indian Association of Ghana coming into his third year of his official term. Sindhis (as others) are constantly negotiating their ethnic identities in relation and reaction to the local context in which they live, and women play important roles creating and maintaining an ethnicity in Ghana. My research participants feel an inherent connection to Ghana, but it still seems it is not enough for them to refer to themselves as Ghanaian. This may be for multiple reasons – both political and social. Until now, Ghana has not recognised non-indigenous ethnicities in their official Census. This study may encourage us to think about how long a diaspora has to be resident in a country before being included in official statistics. Granted this proves problematic as many Sindhis hold Indian passports, but we are seeing more being granted Ghanaian citizenship. This does not mean an automatic feeling of being Ghanaian comes with gaining citizenship – as we saw through Bharat's experiences of being a third generation Ghanaian national and still not being classed as Ghanaian by

indigenous Ghanaians. But as is the case for South African Indians, it is clear for my research participants that Ghana is considered 'home' (Vahed et al, 2010).

How Sindhis in Ghana experience *becoming* is a highly gendered experience. For unmarried boys especially, Ghana is and will remain home for the foreseeable future. This means constructing their masculinity will always be done in relation to their immediate surroundings in Ghana, as well as global influences. Through looking at the lives of unmarried boys in Chapter Five, we saw how challenging contradictory models of masculinities can be for them, and how they negotiate these models to fit their needs for different stages of their lives. In a similar way for unmarried Sindhi girls and married Sindhi women, they continue to navigate their ways through changing social norms and values that allow them to become increasingly active in the economic sphere but also maintain their respectability as Sindhi women – which is an ideal that has not changed and arguably does not show signs of changing.

It is clear that the everyday lives of Sindhi men and women are spent navigating their ways through complex processes in order to achieve cosmopolitan aspirations that are shared by other Sindhis in their global networks in order to create and maintain a sense of *cosmopolitan Sindhiness* amongst them. What *cosmopolitan Sindhiness* means has changed over time, and will continue to change. Towards the end of this thesis in Chapter Seven, I considered how Sindhis in Ghana strive to create a distinct diasporic identity rooted in their consumption practices and networks. Social media has become a valuable tool for Sindhis in Accra to share aspects of their lives that help them in

creating and cementing themselves into prestigious global networks that we know have the potential to impact their economic capital and social capital.

As the first in depth study focussed on Sindhis in Ghana, this study has opened up avenues of enquiry I would hope researchers could take forward. In some ways, each of my chapters could be the focus of a complete study. For example, this thesis does not delve so deeply into the experiences of women during the early migration phase, partially due to older women being less open to speaking about this early phase of migration. For example, during informal conversations it became clear that these women experienced the coups in very distinct ways having had babies and small children at the time. It has had a lasting impact on the way they relate to Ghana and Ghanaian people, and it would be worth exploring this further.

My study has focussed only on Sindhis in Accra – Sindhis in Kumasi are worth considering especially when looking at the different ways in which they experience living in Ghana. The few Sindhis I did meet from Kumasi knew how to speak fluent Twi, and would convey a stronger sense of feeling Ghanaian that Sindhis in Accra. This comparison can also be extended to other parts of West Africa. For example, there is a much larger population of Sindhis in Nigeria, who are viewed by Sindhis in Ghana as being more economically successful, but also different in their way of life. This is interesting as their migration histories are much more closely relatable to those of Sindhis in Ghana than elsewhere, but Nigeria does not seem to be as 'marginal' of a location for Sindhis as Ghana – my research participants would often tell me that Sindhis in Nigeria are much better connected than they are to Sindhis in Hong Kong, London and Dubai. A comparative

project could potentially help to explore the differences between the two, and emphasise the influence local contexts in which people migrate have on their success.

Lastly, from when I began this study in 2014 until now, there have already been so many changes amongst Sindhis in Accra. People I met as unmarried individuals are now married and others I met as newly married women just having arrived in Accra are now mothers. Some people have migrated out of Ghana and have no plans to return, others have left temporarily for education and have returned. As individuals are moving through life, so are ideas about what it means to be Sindhi in Accra and beyond. Therefore, the cycle of *becoming* will never really end, as what it really means to *become* keeps changing.

APPENDIX A

India's Republic Day

Visit www.graphic.com.gh

Daily Graphic, Friday, January 26, 2018.

SS13

Arrival of the first Indian family in Gold Coast

By Seth J. Bokpe

TIME check: 1909. A ship docks at the Tema Port. A family of six steps out. The parents with three girls, probably decked in saris, and an eight-year-old boy step out of the vessel. If they had come by air, the distance would have been 8,671 kilometres.

But commercial flights were still nascent so the Mahtanis had to endure months on the high seas, crossing the Indian Ocean to the shores of the Atlantic in the Gold Coast.

Before going back to India to bring his entire family to settle in the Gold Coast, Mr Kundanwal Wadhumal Mahtani had earlier come to the Gold Coast in 1929 or earlier to open a small business of general merchandise which included clothes and shoes from Japan. That business was registered/formalised in 1930 as Mahtani Brothers.

With a friendly weather and people as company, he went back to the Asian country to bring his family — a fact that was recorded in the West African Magazine of Saturday, June 10, 1939.

"The first Indian family to settle in the Gold Coast arrived recently. Mr Kundanwal Wadhumal Mahtani of Mahtani Brothers intends with his wife and four children to live in Accra for he says the climate is healthy to Indians and it is like that of parts of India. Mr Mahtani partly attributes his decision to live in the colony to hospitality experienced on previous visits. His two elder children are expected to go to Achimota as soon as arrangements can be made," the magazine reported.

Early birds

While Mr Mahtani may be the first to bring his entire family to the Gold Coast, records suggest that there were other Indians who had registered their companies as early as 1919 in the Gold Coast — Metharam Brothers.

The two brothers who owned that company, however, split in 1920, with one deciding to keep the name, while the other registered another company, Bombay Bazaar in that same year. It was followed by Lilaram Thawardas in 1923 and then Mahtani Brothers (now Pemasu Trading and Industries Limited) in 1929 and then the fifth, K. Chellaram & Sons.

The Mahtanis

On a sunny morning last Wednesday, the *Daily Graphic* caught up with Mr Mahesh Mahtani, the Country Director of the Stallion Group who shared some insights about his family.

"I gathered from my father that my grandfather was very happy about the Gold Coast and decided that this is where he would want his life to be. He was the first Indian to bring his entire family to the Gold Coast in 1939," he recalled.

Mr Mahtani said his grandfather's first contact with the Gold Coast was probably through a pen pal as it was in vogue those days.

When they arrived, the family settled at Swalaba in Accra Central and the old Mahtani had his shop opposite the General Post Office. The girls went to Achimota School and the only boy, Peekay, was sent to the Bishop Boys School, also in Accra.

"My father's early memory was that the major street in the country then was the high street, and that's where was known as Accra. There were banks. In those days, things were hard so in his spare time, he would help my grandfather in his business.

"My father was the only boy among the girls. In our Indian custom, my father had a lot of responsibility to ensure that the girls got married and were well settled down.

My father was taken out of school and put in the business when he was 15 or 16 and could not continue his education because my grandfather had a lot of responsibilities," he mentioned.

However, by 1967, old Mahtani had to relocate to India because of family commitments and his health and eventually died in 1982.

Going industrial

With his father out of the picture, the heir, Mr Peekay Mahtani (Mahesh's father), took control of the business and it flourished.

As Ghana tuned to industrialisation in the 1960s, so did the company's portfolio diversify. He also naturalised, becoming the first Indian to naturalise as a Ghanaian in the 1960s.

"In the 60s, Ghana was becoming industrialised so my father ventured into industry and opened the first mosquito coil factory in the whole of West Africa known as Peekay Industries Limited and was employing about 200 people in the 1960s and 70s," he stated.

The company did very well for about 20 years and then in the 80s, Ghana's trade liberalisation policies opened the doors to imports.

"With cheaper goods coming, the business became uncompetitive so my father had to rethink his strategy and in the late 1980s, we had to close down. We could just not compete with the foreign products," he said.

With the family's manufacturing company biting dust, the Mahtanis changed the business name to the Pemasu Trading and Industries Limited, and diversified into trading.

"My father went into full-time trading because everybody was doing it and you have to join or lose out. We brought in household appliances, sewing machines, electrical goods from the Far East, Korea, Indonesia and Taiwan. China opened up to the world in the 1990s," he recollected.

Today, the company's balance sheet in trade has reduced but it still holds sway in rentals.

As Ghana seeks to intensify its industrialisation efforts, Mr Mahtani believes that incentives for companies in the form of tax cuts and import duty reductions will be enough cushion for the fracturing sector.

A growing economic partnership

The tale of the Mahtanis are just one of many.

Although political and diplomatic relations between Ghana and India started as a personal friendship between Ghana's first President, Dr Kwame Nkrumah and India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, the flames of the two champions of South-South cooperation were carried further by hundreds of Indian merchants who have made Ghana their home, building flourishing businesses.

Predominantly, the Indian-origin people in Ghana are of Sindhi origin whose ancestors first came to the country more than 70 years ago. The Indian Association of Ghana was for instance founded in 1937. They are mostly in the trading business.

However, some of them have started moving to small-scale industries such as pharmaceuticals, plastics, cement and steel products.

Over the years, the likes of Stallion Group of Companies, Melcom, the Mohinani Group, TATA, Mahindra, Ashok Leyland, Airtel, Larsen & Toubro, NIIT and Blow-Chem have made significant contributions to the Ghanaian economy.

According to the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), Indian companies have invested in more than 600 projects, with total investment of almost $1 billion since 1994, and trade between the two countries has been projected to hit $5 billion by 2020.

Writer's email: seth.bokpe@graphic.com.gh

Fact Sheet

Do you know that the Directive Principles of State Policy in Ghana's 1992 Constitution was borrowed from the Constitution of India?

WEST AFRICA

SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 1939

The first Indian family to settle at the Gold Coast arrived recently. Mr. Kundanmal Wadhumal Mahtani, of Mahtani Brothers, intends, with his wife and four children, to live in Accra, for he says the climate is healthy to Indians and like that of parts of India. Mr. Mahtani partly attributes his decision to live in the Colony to hospitality experienced on previous visits. His two elder children are expected to go to Achimota as soon as arrangements can be made.

The Mahtani Brothers' first shop in Accra

Image source: Mahesh Peekay Mahtani (2018) Image received via Whatsapp

APPENDIX B

Name change article is Deshtoot Times published on Friday 21st November 2014. Image courtesy of Myra Mirwani.

THEATRE - MOVIE

- Mahalaxmi - Mamachya Gavala Jau Yaa/Viti Dandu
- Damodar - Kill Dil
- Big Cinemas - Baaz/Kill Dil

व्यवसाय

"यशस्वी उद्योग" ६९९/- रुपयांचे दोनशे लघुउद्योगांच्या डिटेल माहितीचे पुस्तक मागवून उद्योजक बना. (कच्चा माल/ मशिनरीचे ॲड्रेसचे पुस्तक मोफत) ऑर्डरसाठी कॉल - 7741086006. **(31/12/14)**

DT CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE IN NAME

My old name Tukaram Shravan Kandalkar has been changed to my new name Ravindra Shravan Kandalkar as per affidavit No. 128064 dated 13/11/2014. **(2601)**

My old name Mahendra Uttamrao Kapse has been changed to my new name Mahendra Uttam Kapse as per affidavit No. LK-077007 dated 19/11/2014. **(2600)**

My old name Ashok Shankarrao Gadave has been changed to my new name Ashok Shankarrao Gadhave as per affidavit No. LK-077003 dated 19/11/2014. **(2600)**

My old name Shaikh Mustaqeem Ansar Ahemad has been changed to my new name Sayyed Mustaqeem Ansar as per affidavit dated 20/11/2014. **(2606)**

My old name Yuvraj Sukdeo Sonawane has been changed to my new name Yograj Sukdeo Sonawane as per affidavit No. LS-228494 dated 14/11/2014. **(2602)**

My old name Mrs. Kalapana Digambar Gosavi has been changed to my new name Mrs. Chandrakala Digambar Gosavi as per affidavit No. LS-147355 dated 20/11/2014. **(2611)**

My old name Lavina Ravi Daswani has been changed to my new name Myra Jackie Mirwani as per Gazette No. 010982 dated 23/10/2014. **(2611)**

My old name Agrawal Bhagwati Prasad Lakhiram has been changed to my new name Agrawal Bhagwati Lakhiram as per affidavit No. 123932 dated 18/11/14. **(2610)**

My old name Saini Manjit Tarsem Singh has been changed to my new name Saini Manjeet as per affidavit No. 131053 dated 19/11/2014. **(2610)**

APPENDIX C

Consent Form

Dear Sir/Madam:

Please write your full name here

_____

Thank you for agreeing to being interviewed! I'm very excited to speak with you about your life experiences. Before the interview, I would like to gain your informed consent. All the information you give during this interview will be treated in confidence. It will be evaluated by Nimrita Rana from the University of Birmingham and will be used in a PhD thesis based on the Sindhi community in Ghana. The thesis will be read by two supervisors and internal and external examiners. Information will also be used in future publications (articles, books etc).

If you would like to have your real name used in the final version of the thesis and future publications, please tick here ☐

If you would not like to have your real name used in the final version of the thesis and future publications, please tick here ☐

Please state the full name you would like to be known as in the thesis

_____

If you have any questions please feel free to ask.

Contact email: [redacted]

Contact telephone: [redacted]

Thank you! ☺

Signed:

Date:

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