

ANTHROPOLOGY-SPECIAL VOLUME

■ ANTHROPOLOGY: TRENDS AND APPLICATION

(Special Volume of *The Anthropologist* - No. 1)

M.K. BHASIN and S.L. MALIK (University of Delhi, Delhi, India)

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■ INDIAN DIASPORA THE 21ST CENTURY - MIGRATION, CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

(Special Volume of *The Anthropologist* - No.2)

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Caste, Class and Identities among Surtee Muslims in KwaZulu Natal (South Africa), c. 1880-2009

Goolam Vahed

The Indian community in South Africa is a complex one. Indians arrived in different streams and were drawn from a variety of regions, embraced several religions, spoke many languages, and practiced a myriad of cultures. Indentured workers were imported to Natal between 1860 and 1911. They were followed from the 1870's by Gujarati traders on the west coast of India who were termed "passenger Indians" because they came on their own free will and at their own expense. The appellation "Gujarati traders," which is often used to refer to passenger migrants, does not correspond to any existing merchant community. Gujarat has been home to a multitude of cultures over many centuries and lacks a common cultural, historical and civilizational heritage. Gujarati identity, in fact, only became nationalised when Gujarat became an Indian state in 1960. "Gujarati traders" applies to traders from different regions of Gujarat (Kutch, Kathiawar, Gujarat proper), religious groups (Hindus, Jains, Parsis, Shia and Sunni Muslims), and class status (trader or retail assistant) (Markovits 2000). Migrants to Natal, as this paper argues, defined themselves in the first instance in regional, sub-regional, and micro-regional identities (Nair 2001).

Given the political situation in South Africa, where "Indians" were categorized as a racial group in contrast to "Whites", "Africans" and "Coloureds", most have studies tended to focus on the political dimension of the Indian experience, paying scant attention to their religious, cultural, and social complexity. Viewing migrants from the subcontinent seamlessly as "Indian" conceals this diversity. Not only were there differences between traders and indentured migrants, but these broad groupings were divided along religious, class, ethnic, linguistic and caste lines. This essay draws attention to one segment of the passenger group, Gujarati-speaking Muslims from the villages of Surat, who came to be known in local parlance as "Surtees." It focuses on their identities and how these transformed over time. Surtees' multiple subject positions included being Kathorians or

Dhabelians; Tabligh or Barely Muslims; Surtee in relation to Memon or Miabhai Muslims; passenger as opposed to indentured migrant; Indian against Whites and Africans; store owner or retail assistant. This study explores the range of identity choices available to Surtees, how these changed over time, and what constituted Surtee social "community" at various points in their history in South Africa. It also seeks to explore how relationships in India were reproduced and challenged in the new context; and whether / how involvement in religious activities, sport, food, and politics impacted on identities.

This paper emerged from reflecting on the considerable changes among Surtees over the past four decades, which I witnessed as a member of this group, as well as the oral testimonies of individuals interviewed for unrelated projects who, during the course of an interview, sometimes reflected on differences and prejudices among Muslims. Differences were especially stark during my childhood, with deeply held stereotypes about the dress, culinary taste, trustworthiness, and other habits of Muslims from different ethnic, class, or linguistic backgrounds. The religious beliefs and practices and marriage patterns of families have undergone fundamental changes. Yet ordinary Surtees fail to acknowledge how deep the prejudices of earlier generations were and how Islamic traditions evolved over time.

Research for this paper has included some archival work to construct life histories of early migrants; a perusal of select newspapers at different points in history, informal conversations, interviews, and insider observation, an important aspect of this study. Surtee identity is viewed as heterogeneous and evolving, rather than fixed and static. This concurs with Stuart Hall's view that identities are fluid and constantly negotiated in the 'interaction' between individual and society. The inner core of an individual ('the real me'), Hall suggests, is modified in 'dialogue with the cultural worlds "outside" and the identities which they offer.' Consequently, identity becomes a 'moveable feast: formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are

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ABSTRACT This paper examines the history and settlement of Gujarati speaking Hindu immigrants from Western India, a minority group who settled in colonial Natal in the late 1890s. It attempts to explore the history of social, economic and cultural factors that contributed to the creation of a distinct ethnic group, who were often stereotyped for being "conservative" and displaying an "in-group exclusiveness", but who were in fact a diverse conglomeration of people. It argues that the nature of their immigration status, their strict adherence to caste affiliations and their kinship ties and trade networks, were important elements in sustaining and maintaining their endogamous ethnic character. Several questions are raised in this study: Why are the Gujaratis perceived by some members of the wider society as being "conservative"? In what ways have the Gujaratis in the diaspora, particularly, South Africa managed to maintain their identity as an ethnic group? How do they reconcile their ethnic identity with a wider national identity in post-apartheid South Africa?

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represented or addressed in the cultural systems that surround us' (Hall 1992). The broad argument is that at the time of their arrival in South Africa, Indian Muslims comprised a number of ethnic/linguistic/regional groupings, such as Surtee, Memon, Miabhai, and Konkani. Over time these have been transforming in reaction to changing social, economic, cultural and political contexts, and are gradually evolving into a broadly identifiable "Muslim" identity.

MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

Following the British annexation of Natal in 1843 and arrival of white planters who successfully experimented with sugar, the government was persuaded to import indentured workers from India. Between 1860 and 1911, 152,641 Indians were brought to Natal, including 7-10 per cent Muslims.¹ The indentured Muslim population was characterized by diversity of religious tradition, caste, language, ethnicity and regional cultures. Traders from Gujarat on the west coast of India followed from the mid-1870s. They were termed 'passengers' because they arrived at their own expense. Although constituting a small segment of the Indian population, Gujarati traders were divided in the spheres of language, class and religious practice. The majority comprised Memons from Porbandar in Kathiawar and Sunni Bohras from Surat, while there were small numbers of Urdu-speaking migrants from Rander and Marathi-speakers from Konkan. Swan (1985) estimates that passengers averaged around 2,000 persons in the period 1890-1910. According to the 1904 census there were 100,918 Indians in Natal, including 9,992 (9.9%) Muslims, the overwhelming majority (72%) being male.

Passenger merchants dominated "Indian" trade, not surprising given their long history of overseas trade links, and access to credit extensions, finance, exploitable family labour, suppliers and distributors (Padayachee and Morrell 1991). Aboobakr Amod told the Wragg Commission of 1887 that he owned businesses in Bombay, Calcutta, and Durban, and used 'ships of my own' in addition to chartering others to transport merchandise from India (Meer 1980). This was the exception, however, as most passengers were retail assistants or small retail traders and hawkers with limited capital who were either agents of larger merchants or relied on them for credit. Traders spread throughout the rural

areas of Natal where they traded mainly with Africans (Padayachee and Morrell 1991).

There were many levels of differentiation among Muslims. This was to be expected as migrants were drawn from a wide area of India. At the broadest level, Muslims in India were divided into "elites", who claimed foreign descent from Arab, Turkish, Afghan and Persian settlers and were considered of noble family, and "converts" who embraced traditional low ranking castes (Ahmad 1992). Passenger Muslims were incorrectly called "Arabs" in Natal because of their Muslim religion and mode of dress, which consisted of a skull cap (*topi* or *fez*), trousers (*izzar*), tight waistcoat with silk buttons, and chemise (*kamis*). During the 1880s and 1890s, many passengers argued that they were British subjects and demanded equality with whites (Ginwala 1974). Ebrahim Camroodeen, for example, complained to the immigration restriction officer that 'no distinction is made between common and better class Indians' (Padayachee and Morrell 1991). In a confidential report to the Durban Town Council (DTC) in 1885, police inspector Richard Alexander pointed out that the 'Arabs will only associate with Indians so far as trade compels them to' (Alexander 1885).

While the most obvious distinction was between passenger and indentured migrants, passengers themselves were heterogeneous. This paper focuses very specifically on Surtee passengers who came from villages like Kathor, Rander, Ghala, Tadkeshwar, Variawa and Surat. During the 1860s and 1870s, rural families in Surat profited from the short-lived cotton boom resulting from southern states stopping cotton production during the American Civil War. When the boom ended the British did not reduce land revenues but increased land tax by thirty per cent in Bombay Province in 1873, which depleted individual incomes by twenty per cent on average (Hiralal 1991). The 1877 *Gazetteer* reported that 'rural Bohras are not in so good a condition.... Many of them contracted expensive habits during the prosperous times of the American war, and have fallen into debt' (*Gazetteer* 1877). Many left their villages for Bombay, Mauritius, Burma, Siam, Rangoon, and China in search of alternative employment (*Gazetteer* 1877). Monies remitted by migrants led to personal and community recovery. The *Gazetteer* reported in 1899 that the 'Rander and Surat Bohras have of late become rich and prosperous in trading with Burma and

East Africa'. From Mauritius, some traders made their way to Natal.

Dawud Mahomed, E.M. Paruk, I.M. Bobat, H.C. Coovadia, D.M. Tinol, Amod Jeewa, and A.H. Moosa were among the earliest and most influential Surtee traders to settle in Natal. Dawud Mahomed was described as the 'highest ranking' Surtee businessman and politician by his contemporaries. He was born in Kathor in 1861, immigrated to Mauritius to work for *Ismail Mamoojee & Co.*, and went from there to the firm's Transvaal branch in Pretoria in the early 1880s. He worked in Potchefstroom and Delagoa Bay (Mozambique) before settling in Durban in 1884. He started *Bombay House* at 441 West Street, a firm that dealt in general drapery and carried current fashion from England. The firm had many white customers and even employed white shop assistants. He later started an estate agency *Dawud Mahomed & Co. Estate Owners*. He lived ostentatiously. It is said that his bungalow off the bay in Congella had room for fifty people in the dining room. At a time when Indians had to sit in areas reserved on the top of trams because of the racist policies of the Town Council, Dawud Mahomed was permitted to sit in the white section. He was active in politics as well as education and religious organizations such as Durban's Anjuman Islam and West Street Mosque. Gandhi described Dawud Mahomed as his 'greatest supporter and staunch ally and independent - or insensitive - trader in Natal. His jokes and songs were composed of steel' (*Indian Opinion* 13 February 1909). Dawud Mahomed was president of the NIC from 1906 to 1912 and spent approximately a year in prison with Gandhi during various passive resistance campaigns.

While there were a handful of extremely wealthy Surtee families, the majority of passenger Muslims were either small-scale traders who obtained goods from Indian-owned firms on credit, salaried managers, or shop assistants. Salaried shop assistants were usually young and single. They served an apprenticeship with relatives, some were promoted to branch manager, and a few even opened their own stores, either with the assistance of relatives from their *gaam* (village) or through credit facilities extended by larger wholesalers (Hiralal 1991). Few traders employed colonial-born Indians as retail assistant. Police Superintendent Richard Alexander, for example, told the Wragg Commission on 30 June 1885 that 'proprietors or managers of these [Arab

stores are assisted mostly by their relatives, or in absence of such, their countrymen.... The Arabs employ very few Indians in town, only about 10 in all, and they are free men and are employed only as labourers' (NAB, GH 1589, 247). Traders employed fellow-villagers because of "trust" or to get young individuals out of the villages.

There were stark class differences between traders and their shop assistants who were often from the same village. Shop assistants lived in overcrowded and unhygienic accommodation, usually on the shop premises. Reports of police and sanitary inspectors during this early period bear this out. For example, Inspector Daugherty recorded in 1889 that seven Muslims owned stores in Gardiner and Pine streets. In almost all the stores, windows could not open; partitions between the shop and sleeping premises in the rear were made of sacking; bedrooms did not have windows; some of the stores had wooden fronts; kitchens were dilapidated; and there were no proper toilets. He concluded that 'all the premises are unfit for human habitation' (TBD, 3/DAR, 5/2/5/4/1, 26 September 1889). Reports such as this were common. Most ordinary workers lived in filthy and overcrowded rooms without adequate cooking or toilet facilities. Being young, and usually a relative of the shopkeeper, they could not seek redress. Class differences shaped life chances in fundamental ways. The social location of a Surtee migrant like Dawud Mahomed living on the Congella, overlooking the Bay, differed fundamentally from that of an exploited Surtee retail assistant living in decrepit conditions behind a retail store, which was the experience of many. This is important to bear in mind when defining "Surtee" identity.

"Beginnings"

Gujarati-speaking Muslims of Gujarat were Sunni Bohras (also referred to as Vohra, Ohra or Hora in the literature), who were known as 'Surtees' in Natal, the term employed in this paper, to distinguish them from other groups of Muslims, such as Memons, who spoke Memonese, and Miabhais, who spoke Urdu. When A.S. Goga of Ladysmith died in Surat during a short vacation in 1899, for example, his death certificate gave his caste as 'Sooni Hora', while his Natal death certificate described him as 'Indian, commonly called Arab' (MSCE 17/28). Here we see Goga's multiple identities. He was a Sunni as opposed to

Shia Muslim; a 'Hora' as opposed to Memon or Miabhai; a Muslim Indian ('Arab') as opposed to a Hindu Indian; a trader as opposed to an indentured migrant. The origin of the term 'Bohra' is unclear, but most writers accept that it derives from the Gujarati *vohorvu*, meaning 'to trade', the occupation followed by many of the earliest Gujarati-speaking Hindu converts to Islam (*Gazetteer* 1899). The term Sunni Bohras stood for several broadly similar agrarian groups that converted to Islam from the time of the Sultans of Gujarat, 1390-1554 (Misra 1985). A recent publication on the Muslims of Gujarat, based on secondary sources, oral recollections, and family trees, examines how some of the villages in Gujarat became Muslim (Mayat 2008). "Beginnings", as understood by Surtees is important in terms of identity and ethnicity as many lay claim to non-Indian ethnic origins.

From around 1677, according to legend, Arab families began entering the villages of Kathor and Kholvad in Gujarat. According to oral testimony, a saintly Arab named Ebrahim Shahid founded a mosque on the river Tapti in Kathor, which stands to this day. The Vahed families claim him as ancestor. The first imam of the Ebrahim Shahid mosque was Sheikh Ahmedullah Qurayshi. The first three imams went by the name of Qurayshi but the fourth was a local individual named Maulvi Abdul Waahid, changed to Vahed over time, meaning "one" or "first". The seventh Imam was Hafiz Sulaiman Waahid, also known as Tabaaji. It is held that the king of Baroda, Khanderoa Gaekwad, gave him a dagger as a gift because of his loyalty, which has been preserved by the Vahed family of Kathor. Ninety percent of Tabaaji's off-spring immigrated to South Africa (Mayat 2008; Vahed 2003). The Ebrahim Shahid Mosque served as a base for further conversions. Thus, it is held, the Brahmin and Veshya families of the nearby Vaw village became Vawdas. Vaid, a Vawda who practiced medicine (*hakim*) is also an offshoot of this family (Mayat 2008).

Many families claimed similar origins. At different times Turkish, Mughal, and British battalions were stationed along the Tapti River. Not only did they give names to villages like Tadkeshwar (place of Turks) and Agjee (Agchi of Turkish root), but Turks, Afghans, French and British regiments also married locals. Hence some of the Surtee families are distinguished by their auburn and ginger hair and even green eyes. The Mahomed family is particularly conspicuous.

One of its members, "Ginger" Mahomed, for example, was as famous tennis player in the 1960s and 1970s. Green eyes are also common among many in the Mahomed and Haffejee families. This is not conjecture and imagination. Sunni Bohras were described by the 1899 *Gazetteer* as 'showing some considerable foreign element.' Men were described as having a 'strong muscular frame with fair complexions and high regular features.' Some even claimed descent from Ismail, the son of Prophet Ebrahim. While legends about beginnings are never certain, these are based on social consensus, which rests on relations of power and have an enduring legacy, as Thomas Blom Hansen found out when he engaged a Muslim shopkeeper during a visit to South Africa in November 2001:

The discussion went on in a most polite and friendly atmosphere and customers gathered around us, contributing at various points to the shopkeeper explanation: "we are Muslims, first and foremost, and just because our forefathers came from Gujarat, it does not make us Indians as we were told by the government for so many years." He lamented the fact that many still do marriages and ceremonies in the old Gujarati way. "It has nothing to do with Islam, it is all cultural influence from Hindus... we should get rid of that", as he said and continued explaining that the heart of the matter was that many of his own people, Surtees (Muslims from Surat) believed that they were converts from Hinduism. "Some will even say that our fair skin and light eyes are because we were Brahmins ... but all that is not true. We were never Hindus; our forefathers were Arabs who came as traders and soldiers to Gujarat more than a thousand years ago. They took local women as their wives and that is why there are many Muslims in Gujarat. In Islam it is the blood of father that determines what you are, so even if the women and mothers were born Hindu, it can never make us Hindu. We are Arabs from Gujarat" (Hansen 2003:1).

"Corporate Outlook"

Bohras were considered corporate in outlook, their tendency to marry in small local units resulting in their constituting distinct regional communities within Gujarat (Haynes 1991). The 1877 *Gazetteer* described them as 'very hard-working, intelligent, independent' peasants. While professing Islam, they did not 'intermarry with other Mussulmans' (*Gazetteer* 1877). Marriage

was important in retaining distinct identities. According to the 1877 *Gazetteer*, Sunni Bohras, 'while professing the faith of Islam, do not intermarry with other Mussulmans.' The formed distinct regional communities within Gujarat by marrying within reach of the home family. Village of origin was one form of social distinction. Another was "caste" even though this was not permitted in Islam. In Dhandhuka, for example, families with the name Desai did not mix with the 'common Bohora', while those who claimed descent from Brahmans or Rajputs did not allow their daughters to marry lower-caste Gujarati converts (*Gazetteer* 1899). Such distinctions were evident in marriage patterns during the early decades of settlement in Natal when migrants mostly married relatives in "home" villages in India.

One way of determining rank was distance from the city of Surat. Kathorians, for example, regarded those from Tadkeshwar as "rural" and "less sophisticated" because their village was situated further from Surat than Kathor. There is a popular told legend about Ismail Moosa, son of pioneer passenger migrant A.H. Moosa. Ismail arrived in Natal in 1899 and returned to India in 1908 to marry Hoorbai Patel of Kathor. This created a storm in both Durban and Kathor. Kathorians were furious that one of their daughters would marry someone from Tadkeshwar, and threatened to disrupt the *nikah* ceremony. A.H. Moosa, who was on good terms with the Maharaja, arranged for the local army to be present so that the marriage could proceed uninterrupted in the village of Jetali. In Durban, A.H. Moosa had to pay "compensation" of £1000 to Kathorian societies to avoid ostracisation (Mayat 2008). Authentic or not, this tale is widely accepted and points to the depth of difference among Surtees from different villages. Immigrants from Kholvad, which adjoined Kathor, considered themselves the "Royal family" among Surtees, shunning marriage with people from outside their village and rarely allowing non-Kholvadian visitors to stay at Kholvad House, a guest house in Johannesburg built for Kholvadian visitors from throughout the country.

The special circumstances of traders enabled them to retain their corporate character and social distance. Their experience points to the fact that the "Indian" was not a stable and fixed entity in Natal. Despite the difficulties of communication and transport, many migrants occupied multiple locations and moved culturally, socially and even physically between their Gujarat homeland and

Natal. They maintained links with family members in India by visiting home, marrying their sons and daughters in India, and remitting money to build mosques and schools in their villages of origin (Ginwala 1974). Theirs was a diaspora in motion, a tendency reflected in some of the histories of early immigrants.

Ebrahim Asmal was born in Kathor in 1880, married to his cousin Khatija Asmal in 1892 when he was twelve, and sent to work in Natal immediately after his marriage. It would be another twelve years before he was able to return to Kathor in 1904 to fetch his wife (NAB, MSCE 12198/1927). H.C. Coovadia was born in Ghala in 1853, came to Natal via Mauritius in 1881, and established businesses throughout Natal. Like many pioneer traders, Coovadia maintained links in both Natal and his ancestral village. His wife and family, in fact, only joined him permanently in Natal in 1918, thirty-seven years after he first set foot in the colony. Being in partnership with family gave Coovadia and other pioneer traders the opportunity to spend long periods in India without their businesses being neglected (NAB, MSCE 18488/1932). When H.C. Coovadia was in India, his brother M.C. Coovadia stayed in Natal and vice versa. Traders like Hajee Mahomed Haji Dada, Moosa Hajee Cassim, and Adamji Miankhan remained wedded to their villages of origin where they built mosques, boarding houses, and wells. Mohamed Saleh Randeree was born in Kathor in 1867, emigrated to Natal around 1880 to work for relatives, and returned to Kathor in the late 1880s to marry Hafeeza Vahed. After her death in 1895, Randeree returned to Kathor in 1900 to marry his cousin Ayesha Randeree. There are many such examples but one more will suffice to underscore the importance of village-level micro-identities.

In September 2002, the Indian Government launched the People of Indian Origin Card (PIO), which allows visa free entry to people of Indian origin living abroad. Many South Africans have been trying to apply for such a card. Applicants have to demonstrate familial ties to India. Ironically, this has proven easier for descendants of indentured Indians than passenger migrants whose entry into Natal was not recorded systematically. Many persons have contacted the author for assistance to trace 'roots'. In a recent instance an individual asked for assistance to demonstrate that his grandparents were born in India, which is the key to the PIO card. The initial

inquiry is promising. His grandfather Ebrahim Suleman Patel married thirteen year old Hawa Essop Dawjee in Kathor on 2 May 1918. It seemed that all that was required was unabridged birth certificates linking the family to him. Further enquiry was to prove disappointing. Like many Gujarati traders, Suleman Patel and his wife Fathima left their ancestral home in Kathor for Mauritius in the late 1870s to work for a relative. After a decade in Mauritius, Suleman became aware of new markets opening up in Natal and made the trek to Durban where many fellow-Kathorians had begun settling. He opened a retail store in Saville Street. Their son Ebrahim was born in Durban in 1896 and educated in the Colony until 1905 when he was sent to Kathor for further studies. He returned to South Africa in 1908 and began working for a relative in Grey Street. Like the children of most traders who sought marriage partners in their native *gaams*, Ebrahim returned to Kathor in 1918 to find a "suitable" wife. A match was found in thirteen year old Hawa Dawjee and they married on 2 May 1918. Hawa, however, was born in Newcastle in Northern Natal on 17 December 1905 where her father Essop Dawjee was a storekeeper. She had been sent to Kathor at the age of ten to complete her Islamic education and get married (Interview, S.E. Patel).

While the search for the PIO card continues for Ebrahim Patel's family, this story underscores the ways in which early migrants retained their identity through marriage and ties to their village of origin.

The importance of corporate Surtee identity in relation to other Muslims is reflected in mosque-building in Durban.

The West Street Mosque

Passenger Muslims set about building mosques shortly after their arrival in Natal. The *Jumuah Masjid* in Grey Street, Durban, built in 1881, remains the largest mosque in the southern hemisphere and a major tourist attraction. Its construction was the initiative of Aboobakr Amod, a Memon merchant from Porbander. The mosque is known among Muslims as the 'Memon Mosque' because the majority trustees have always been Memons who built the mosque and have been responsible for its upkeep. The depth of sectarian divide among passenger Muslims is indicated in the decision of Surtees to build their own mosque half a kilometre away. According to

tradition the split occurred because of an argument between a Memon and Surtee. The latter is alleged to have questioned the cleanliness of the mosque. The Memon's riposte was, 'If you are so fussy, why do you use our mosque'? Seemingly trivial, elders believe that this triggered the decision to build another mosque for Surtees.

Surtee traders purchased a site in West Street in 1885 where they built a mosque. According to the Trust Deed dated 25 November 1893 the trustees had to be 'natives' from the village of Rander, Surat, an indication of the depth of corporate outlook of Surtees. The amended Constitution of 1899 stipulated that the mosque was for the use of 'Sunni Mahomedan worshippers coming from the District of Surat' and broadened the trustee base. While at least two had to be from each of Rander and Kathor, others could originate from any part of Surat as long as they long as they were Sunni, 'a storekeeper having a business in the Colony of Natal or connected with any such business in the capacity of General Manager,' and had subscribed at least £25 pounds to the Trust. The stipulation that trustees had to be Sunni is important as they were marking themselves off from the Shia who constitute an important schism in Islam dating to the seventh century.

The depth of ethnic divide becomes clearer when we look at the story of the *Jumuah Masjid*. Due to simmering differences, the Court appointed the Master to investigate the Trust, which was made up entirely of Memons. His report on 26 June 1915 recommended a change in the ethnic composition of trustees to make it more 'representative' of Muslims. The new Deed, confirmed by the congregation on 31 March 1916, provided for five Memons, two Surtee, one Konkani, and one 'colonial-born' trustee. Trustees had to choose one of the five Memon trustees as chairman. Since the chairman had two votes, Memons effectively had six of ten votes. This ethnic and linguistic distinction survives into the twenty-first century despite Latiff Moosa, Shaik Ansary Raboobee, and Shaik Ahmed Hoosen, all colonial-born Muslims, applied in September 1917 for the Deed to be cancelled. The outcome of the case is not as important for this paper as the testimony. Defendants argued that the meeting to vote on the Trust had been 'usurped' by the congregation of West Street. They were irate that Dawud Mahomed was elected chairman. One witness, Bux, told the court that Mahomed was a 'West Street man'. Grey Street members objected

because 'he is a Surtee. Surtees came of their own accord because they are influential and rich men.' Nathoo Omar also testified that the meeting had been usurped by Surtees. Asked how he knew this: 'We know that certain people are Surtees and certain people Memons. Some may have been born in India and some here. We may not know the names but we know that they are Surtees by sight.' Mustapha Osman told the court that he could tell the difference between Surtees and Memons 'by their talk.'

Memons constituted a minority of the congregation even though they controlled the mosque. On a day-to-day basis the actual struggle was between *Surtee* traders and working class *Hydrabadees* who made up the majority of the congregation. The term 'colonial-born' referred to descendents of indentured Indians who were known locally as *Hydrabadee*. This appellation, mostly used in a derogatory way, referred to all descendents of indentured Muslims even though the majority embarked from Madras. *Hydrabadees* were determined to curtail the influence of Surtees in the mosque but failed as judgment was given against the plaintiffs (NAB, RSC 1/5/307, 71/1917).

Gujarati Muslims had more in common with Gujarati Hindus than they had with descendents of indentured Muslims.² George Mutukistna, a free Indian, testified before the Wragg Commission of 1885 that 'caste feeling... is kept up by the Indian merchants, who think themselves better because they are rich and think that, by observing caste distinctions, they can set themselves apart from the Natal Indian people (Meer 1980). Almost half a century after their arrival in Natal, the first "Indian Emigrant's Conference" in India in 1930 noted that although the caste system had received 'a fatal blow' in the Colonies, the 'Gujarati's of South and East Africa have, however, clung to their old customs as they have been able to maintain their social connections with their caste people at home' (*African Chronicle*, 5 July 1930). This was a reference to both Hindus and Muslims.

The importance of ethnicity in identity formation was evident on the sports fields as well.

Within the Boudary

Divisions along the lines of Surtee, Hydrabadee, and Miabhai were evident too in the way cricket was played. Durban's Indian

cricketers formed teams on the basis of commonalities around neighbourhood, religion, class, and language. The cricket club Ottomans, for example, formed in October 1911, comprised of Urdu-speaking traders and their shop assistants from Rander (*Miabhais*).³ The main benefactor was businessman Abdul Hack Kazi for whom most of the players worked. *Hydrabadees*, on the other hand, constituted the core of Greyville Cricket Club. Although Greyville contained non-Muslim players, its founding members, officials and majority of players were Muslims like Shaik Emamally, Mahendeally Thajmoon, Hoosen "Sonny" Buckus and C.N.M. Khan, all descendents of indentured Muslims. Intense rivalry between Ottomans and Greyville reflected class, ethnic and language differences. Passenger Indians had a clear sense of differences between them and those of an indentured background. According to G.M. Butler, whose father and uncles played for Ottomans, they mocked the indentured heritage:

When we played Greyville we said that we were playing the thirty three and one-third's ... You know, they were children of indentured Muslims. When indentured Indians came, the English, although they were Christian, sent one woman per three men. One woman was shared by three men, so the children could not know for sure who the father was. It had to be one-third, one-third and one-third (Interview, G.N. Butler).

Yusuf Emamally, whose father Shaik Emamally was an official of Greyville, concurs:

There was a lot of division among Muslims at the time. Ottomans did not like us because they thought that they were higher class. We also had non-Muslims like S. Shams, G.K. Singh and Jack Papa. They looked down on us. Even M.I. Yusuf (the best Indian batsman of the 1930s and 1940s) did not escape this. When they could not get him out they would say "Koja" (Black) to upset him, because most indentured Indians were from south India and darker (Interview, Yusuf Emamally).

According to Butler, Surtee Muslims displayed little interest in cricket until the 1920s, when 'old-man Akoojee, M.I. Badat, M.E. Jadwat, the Timol's and the Jeewa's took up the game.' Teams like Kismet catered largely for Surtees, and there was intense rivalry between them, Ottomans, and Greyville, representing the Surtees, Miabhais, and Hydrabadees respectively (Interview, Butler).

The fluid subject position of Surtees is illustrated clearly in these recollections. They were Surtees in relation to Memons, Miabhais, and Hydrabadees; traders in relation to workers; Indian Muslims in relation to non-Muslim Indians. And as we see below they were Indians in relation to Africans and whites.

The Political Sphere

When it came to politics, the "Indian" identity of Surtees was paramount. In 1894 merchants formed the Natal India Congress under the leadership of Mohandas Gandhi. Each of the NIC's six presidents between 1894 and 1913 was a prominent Muslim merchant, including Surtee trader Dawud Mahomed who served from 1906-1913. The highpoint of Gandhi's stay in Natal was the passive resistance campaigns of 1906-8 and 1913 when Indians pursued the repeal of a tax on Indians, removal of residential barriers in the Transvaal, the right to inter-provincial migration, just licensing laws, and removal of restrictions on the entry of wives and children from India (Calpin 1949). When the government did not comply, Gandhi initiated a strike on 16 October 1913. The eventual outcome was the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement and Indian Relief Act of 1914 which provided some relief for Indians. For our discussion, what is significant is that many Surtees participated in the struggle, including at leadership level. Aside from Dawud Mahomed, other Surtees like Amod Bayat, H.C. Coovadia, and A.H. Moosa were among Gandhi's fervent supporters. In the political sphere then, Surtees could not escape being "Indian". The NIC was a tool of the Indian elite and concentrated on protecting their economic and political interests. While Memons and Surtees may have disagreed in religious matters, they worked closely in political affairs as a result of their common race and class interests.

Surtee Identities in Apartheid era, 1948-1994

The period from the mid-twentieth century yielded important social, economic and political changes which shaped Surtee identities in important ways. The coming to power of the National Party (NP) government in 1948 had paradoxical consequences for Indians. While segregation was intensified socially, politically and economically, Indians were finally recognised

as permanent citizens, and there was an expansion of educational opportunities and economic mobility. Of the 367,000 Indians in South Africa in 1951, 79,000 (21.52%) were Muslims who mostly resided in Natal. Around 25 per cent of Muslims gave their home language as Gujarati and the rest primarily Urdu. Surtees thus made up between a quarter and a fifth of the total Indian Muslim population. Economic mobility and systematic residential segregation were the main features of Indian life after 1960 (Brijlal 1989).

Clearly defined residential areas existed in Durban even before the NP came to power because of deliberate attempts by the local state to implement segregation. There was 91% residential segregation between Indians and whites in Durban in 1951 (Davies, 1963). Segregation was consolidated after 1948 through the Group Areas Act. In Durban, 140,000 Indians were moved from their original homes to new residential areas between 1950 and 1978. They were segregated in two large townships, Chatsworth and Phoenix, while areas like Reservoir Hills, La Mercy and Westville were made available for middle class housing. The Population Registration Act further reinforced this identity as all South Africans were compelled to belong to a "race" group. This had important consequences for Surtees. On the one hand, population concentration in particular areas where there were many fellow Muslims meant that it was relatively easier to build mosques and madrassahs, and practice Islamic rituals. At the same time, dislocation meant that long-existing bonds with family members were broken and new social networks were formed in suburbs and townships.

Education and Social Change

Sociologists and anthropologists have long argued that marriage is an important indicator of group solidarity as well as social isolation from other groups. Surtees practiced endogamy which meant that there was a greater chance of children recognizing their parents' shared identity and carrying that identity forward. The choice of marriage partner was strictly controlled in mid-twentieth century though this gradually loosened. Not only was marriage across religious lines rare but village of origin remained important. In a letter to *Indian Views* (4 June 1958), "Very Disgusted" reflected on why some Muslim men were being forced to marry non-Muslims:

There is, of course, the caste system and the

class system in our community. And I believe this to be one of the main reasons why so many of our young men turn away from the women of our community. One finds the caste system very strictly adhered to. And even in the respective castes there are classes. This sad state of affairs was summed up by an elderly Muslim when he was asked about a young Muslim girl by a very nice young Muslim. The answer was: "She does not belong to your community and, in any case, her parents consider themselves aristocratic." I sincerely believe that a change will only come if young Muslim girls put their foot down and claim that they are Muslims first and Vohras, Memons, Koknis or Hyderabadis last.

This certainly resonated with Zuleikha Bismillah when she married Mohamed Mayat in 1947. They were from Dhabel and Kathor respectively. Both families were disappointed:

Everybody stuck to their village, their gaam.... My sister, who married someone from Ghala, and I broke ground. The Bismillah's were very letdown. Even in Dhabel they only married other Bismillah's or connected families like Akhalwaya and Haffejee.'

Surtees tried to maintain traditional rules of endogamy. Some succeeded. According to Mayat, during the 1950s and 1960s most members of the Paruk family, for example, almost always married relatives because their extended family was large. It was more difficult for others to maintain endogamy, particularly after immigration restrictions prohibited Indians from bringing wives from India into the country. One result was that those from Kathor began to choose partners from other families in Kathor, though they had to be 'the right type of Kathorian,' meaning of a similar class background. Members of the Mayat family married into the Lockhat family, for example (Interview).

Education played an important role in transforming Surtee identities. Literacy levels were low among Surtees in mid-century. Religious training rather than secular education was a priority. Formal religious education was provided at inadrassahs attached to mosques. For example, the Durban Anjuman Islam School, attached to the West Street Mosque, was opened in 1909 and catered mainly for Surtees (*Indian Opinion*, 5 February 1910). Similarly, a madrassah attached to the May Street Mosque had an average daily attendance of 79 in 1920 (*Indian Opinion*, 15 April 1921). A.M. Lockhat, proprietor of a large wholesale

and import business, established the Hajee A.M. Lockhat Wakuff (Trust) in 1922, which founded madrassahs in many parts of Durban. According to Advocate I.M. Bawa, madrassahs taught Gujarati, Urdu and Arabic in addition to the tenets of Islam (Interview). Few Indian children had access to secular education. In 1930, for example, only 30.9 per cent of children of school-going age attended school (Henning 1995). It was only during the 1940s and 1950s that leaders like A.I. Kajeer and A.M. Moolla attempted to combine religious and secular education and opened the South Coast Madrassah State Aided School, Ahmedia State Aided Indian School, Anjuman Islam State Aided School and Orient Islamic High School.

The control of Indian education shifted to the Department of Indian Affairs in 1965 and free and compulsory education was available from 1970. The rapid increase in the building of schools resulted in adequate space for all children by the early 1980s. This was reflected in the numbers of children attending school. For example, the number of candidates who wrote the final year examination at secondary school level increased from 2,623 in 1968 to 10,449 in 1984 (Naidoo 1989). This was coupled with the opening of the University of Durban-Westville (1963) and expansion of the M L Sultan Technical College. The advantage taken by Indians of these opportunities is reflected in the fact that the number of Indians who regarded English as their home language increased from six per cent in 1951 to ninety-three per cent in 1996. According to the 1996 census, of 24,842 Muslims in formal employment in Durban, 7,900 (32%) were women. Figures specific to Surtees are not available but this is relatively high considering that prior to the 1980s few women were in formal employment and the census does not account for women in informal work such as dressmaking, cooking, babysitting and religious education.

Education and work brought more women into the public sphere and created opportunities for interacting with Muslims from other backgrounds. Important changes were taking place incrementally from the 1960s. At first marriage partners from the same village were acceptable as long as they were of the same class; later, most members of the village were acceptable; eventually, most Surtees were regarded as suitable. Parents found it difficult to resist this trend.

As children attended school and later university, many young Surtees began to explore networks and

relationships across narrow ethnic boundaries. Many asserted their right to choose their marriage partners, though most settled for Surtee partners. Once the University of Durban-Westville was established in the early 1970s, marriages even took place between Surtees from Durban and other parts of the country whose villages of origin were often different (Interview, Mayat). In important ways they were breaching the various boundaries that existed. By the late 1970s, it may be said, Surtees had largely spurned the practice of controlling marriage through locality of origin as they coalesced into a larger Surtee identity. "Largely spurned" is used deliberately because as a student at university in the 1980s I witnessed several instances of affluent parents objecting to their daughters marrying Surtee partners of their choice because of differences of class. In all instances the women eventually succeeded in getting their parents to accept their choices.

Changes in marriage patterns are indicative of broader changes in consolidating Surtee identity since marriage is viewed as enjoining family units rather than individuals. By the end of the 1980s, more dramatic changes were taking place as marriages, especially among professionals, were beginning to take place between Surtees and other segments of the Muslim population, including Memon, Konkani and Urdu-speaking Muslims. This increased into the post-apartheid period, resulting in further changes in Surtee identities.

Beliefs and Practices

Being Surtee also mattered when it came to religious practices. From the late 1960s Muslims began introducing Islam into their lives more systematically. Crucial in this regard was the Tabligh movement which was primarily associated with Surtees during the formative period, while the more populist practices came to be associated with Hydradees (Moosa 1997). Deoband Islam became a force in India from the 1860s when certain *ulema* targeted popular behaviour and attempted to eradicate practices associated with the visitation of saints shrines and tried to simplify Indian customs related to marriage, funeral rites, dress and so on which they viewed as "Indian" rather than Muslim. Deoband *ulema* were closely allied to the Gujarati trading class. According to Robinson, reformist Islam required Muslims to be literate, and most who

embraced reformism were located within the middle class and engaged in aspects of the modern economy (Robinson 1997). Closely allied was the role of the Tabligh Jamaat, the transnational religious movement founded in India by Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944) in the early twentieth-century. This movement made inroads in South Africa in the early 1960s among Surtee traders when it was introduced by south coast businessman Bhai Padia (Moosa 1997).

The Surtee dominated Tabligh tradition was challenged in particular by the Barelwi tradition which has its origins in the work of Ahmad Raza Khan (1856-1922) of Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, India (Sanyal 1996). In South Africa the main following is among descendants of indentured Muslims who followed this more populist form of Islam. There were many instances of violence as these groups contested hegemony, the most tragic being an altercation on 7 March 1987 in Azaadville which resulted in the death of Sheik Mohideen Saib, a Barelwi (*Sunday Times* 8 March 1987). Barelwi's used their numerical superiority to oust the traditionally dominant Surtee trading elites from many mosques across the province. The usual response of Surtee traders was to build their own mosques a short distance away to carry out their practices, even though population numbers rarely warranted this (Vahed 2003).

The chasm in traditions closed as South Africa moved into the post-apartheid period.

Post-Apartheid South Africa: Turning to the Core?

Social, cultural, political, and economic changes from the late 1980s have impacted on Surtee identity. It is reasonable to argue that by the 1990s the demarcation between Surtee, Miabhai, Kokni, Memon, and Hydradees was much more fluid and Surtees cannot be discussed in isolation from a larger Muslim grouping. Globalisation, the communications revolution, dismantling of apartheid and legalization / tolerance of practices like abortion and prostitution produced many concerns among Muslims, including Surtees. One result has been the growth of conservative tendencies such as women covering their faces; greater dietary concern; dramatic increase in numbers visiting Saudi Arabia on pilgrimage; the rooting out of televisions from Muslim homes; return to "authentic" Islamic

dress; turning to Islamic finance, and a dramatic growth in Islamic schools (See Vahed 2005).

Growth in technology and communications is also helping foster Muslim identity. For example, during the fasting month of Ramadaan (September 2008), the Johannesburg based Channel Islam sent a team to Saudi Arabia to provide live coverage of the minor pilgrimage (*umrah*). This made listeners feel very much a part of the proceedings. Daily announcements of weddings and funerals, and other countrywide notices on radio also help to foster a sense of Muslim community. Likewise, e-mail lists and web-boards from Islamic organizations are serving a similar purpose. Shared consumption of material cultural items (food, clothing, hijab, Islamic singing, education, fairs) allows Muslims to display their religion in a very public way and increasingly links larger numbers of people across national boundaries.

These developments have had important consequences as far as the practice of Islam is concerned. While a homogeneous Islam remains unattainable, there is greater tolerance for the perspectives of others. Altercations between Barelwi and Deobandi, for example, have been subsiding. More important, the Tabligh movement has been attracting support from Memons as well as Urdu-speaking Muslims. In fact, the new headquarters of the movement in Durban (*markas*), the Masjid Al-Hilal, has been funded largely by the Memon community and its chief *imam* is of Memon background. Another conspicuous feature of Islam in the contemporary period is the growing popularity of *Shaykhs* (spiritual leaders). Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds are embracing the practice of attaching themselves to spiritual leaders for guidance. In considering where identity come from, and it congeals, one of the great incubators in Durban were the Surtee and Memon mosques. In the last decade, most Muslims have moved away from central Durban to areas like Umhlanga, Westville, the Berea, and other formerly white areas. With the exception of the Friday prayer, ninety percent of the congregation of these mosques comprises of migrants and refugees from other parts of Africa and the Indian sub-continent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh). At the same time, those who have moved to Durban North attend the already existing Soofie Mosque, the residents of Umhlanga go to the Gateway Mosque, and so

on. The de-terrorialisation of mosques makes it difficult to maintain boundaries.

These are some of the important ways in which boundaries are being crossed (See Vahed 2007). The period since the 1980s has also been witness to a number of Muslim organizations which cut across ethnic lines: Islamic Medical Association, Association of Muslim Accountants and Lawyers, South African National Halaal Authority, Al Ansaar Foundation, and a host of other organization, which provide a basis for new networks. Such networks serve, on the one hand, to bridge ethnic divides and simultaneously promote Muslim belonging, underscoring the fact that identities are forged through social relations (Purkayashta 2005).

There is an anomaly in this "turn to the core." Changes in education provide one example. Many children are attending Islamic schools, where classes are segregated by gender, or all-girls schools. While it may seem that placing girls in *purdah* (veil) and taking them out of school at an early age provides an opportunity for parents to reassert control over marriage, ethnographic observation suggests that this is not the case. Parents often provide their children with mobile phones, ostensibly because of heightened crime. The result is that many teenagers are part of the chat application MXit. The nefarious use of MXit has been well publicized. A sizeable number of Muslim teenagers are finding marriage partners in this way. This has resulted in Muslim boys and girls not only marrying at a young age but often across the Surtee/Miabhai/Kokni/Memon/Hydradees divide. As Mayat observed, 'older people are more accepting' of these marriages because they fear the alternative may be marriage to a non-Muslim or even across race and national boundaries. The post-apartheid period has witnessed the arrival of migrants from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, as well as the Middle East and North Africa. South African Muslims harbour various prejudices against these new arrivals and find it disconcerting that some marriages have taken place between "insiders" and "outsiders" (Interview, Z. Mayat).

CONCLUSIONS: CHANGING DISCOURSES, BOUNDARIES AND IDENTITIES

Amartya Sen has written that religious identity and 'culture does not sit still' (Sen 2006).

The veracity of this assertion is borne out in this study of the transformation of Gujarati-speaking Muslim (Surtee) identities from the time of their arrival in South Africa in the last decades of the nineteenth century to the contemporary period.⁴ Their multiple subject positions became apparent as we witnessed the various regional, sub-regional, and micro-regional identities that they embraced at various times in response to religious, economic, political, cultural, and social changes.

Surtees, like other Muslims, have undergone a myriad of changes over the past few decades. Virtually all Indian Muslims speak English as their first (and mostly only) language, there is greater acceptance of differences in Islamic beliefs and practices, professional ties are being established across ethnic groups, and endogamy is difficult to sustain. In fact, the stark transformation in Surtee identities is most perceptible in marriage patterns which have witnessed an evolution from seeking partners in villages of origin in India to seeking partners in Natal from the village of origin; this expanded gradually into a broader Surtee identity; now, in many cases, marrying a South African (Indian) Muslim of similar class and professional background is accepted in most instances. Marriage across the colour line, however, is rare despite the Quranic injunctions against race discrimination. None of this is to ignore the fact that some Surtee Muslims continue to harbour prejudices against those from different ethnic, village or class backgrounds; rather, that that boundaries are gradually dissipating.

As we close the first decade of the twenty-first century we can expect further transformations. Events post-9/11, such as the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, the ongoing Palestinian question, tension over Iran's nuclear ambitions, the imploding of Pakistan, among other factors, means that Muslims (including Surtees) are conscious of being part of a global *ummah* (Islamic community).

In *Liquid Modernity*, Zygmunt Bauman argues for the dynamic nature of subjects as opposed to the established sense of place once associated with nation states or even the diaspora / nativist model associated with migration. He uses visual metaphors like 'flow', 'spill', 'splash', 'drip' and 'ooze' to describe the movement of people in the contemporary period (Bauman, 2000). Manuel Castells (1996) likewise suggests that with the compression of space, time and distance, identity has not only become more

important in defining community and self, but also more fluid because individuals rely on many networks (cultural, religious, social, financial, technological) for identity construction.

This paper has argued that this notion of fluidity needs to be treated with caution. Greater fluidity is accompanied by the trend towards insular identities. "Muslim" has become a racialized / ethnic category on the global scene and it is difficult to escape being Muslim and all the negative connotations associated with that, particularly in the Western world. Even as I write (28 November 2008), Mumbai is under siege, apparently by Muslim insurgents. Will Muslims in India, or elsewhere for that matter, even if they abhor the violence, be able to carry on with "business as usual" or will they be forced to retreat into a shell? Bryan Turner has provided a pessimistic rejoinder to those who push the notion of cosmopolitanism by arguing that there is also a move to re-territorialise space through what he calls an 'immobility regime'. This paradox of globalisation is that there are increased mobilities alongside 'new systems of closure' (Turner 2007). The classic example of this is the xenophobic attacks in South Africa in May 2008. With the demise of apartheid South Africa has become integrated into the global world from sport to multilateral forums. Yet, at the same time, South Africans of all classes and races exhibit incredible levels of insularity and chauvinism (Crush et al. 2008).

Greater adherence to Islam as a referent for self-identification and empathy with the global *ummah*, however, should not be construed as opposition to the nation state in the local context. Most Muslims, while expressing occasional disquiet about the current political situation within South Africa, are comfortable in being Muslim and South African. This is largely because, as many Muslim individuals and organizations point out across mosque pulpits, in Muslim newspapers, and Islamic radio channels, the South African state has been extremely accommodating to Muslims and makes them feel part of the body politic.

NOTES

- 1 Figures supplied by Tom Bennett and Joy Brain who are compiling an inventory of indentured Indians. Of 130,000 immigrants analyzed thus far, 7874 were Muslim, comprising of 4958 males, 2418 females, 233 girls and 248 boys
- 2 Padayachee and Morrell, 'Dukawallahs', 10

- 3 The origins of this appellation are probably to be found in the fact that many of their first names included the suffix Mia such as Goolam Mia. *Bhai* means brother.
- 4 "Surtee" and "Muslim" have been used synonymously in the last quarter of this paper to reflect the blurring of boundaries between ethnic / linguistic groups that constitute the broader Indian Muslim grouping.

INTERVIEWS

Bawa. I.M. 30 March 2001. Advocate Bawa was born in Durban in 1928. He was president of the Islamic Council of South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. This interview was conducted as part of a research project on Advocate Bawa's contemporary Ahmed Deedat but included general discussion on Muslim life in South Africa. Advocate Bawa passed away in 2004.

Butler, Goolam Nabie. 25 January 2001. Mr. Butler was born on 5 July 1912. His father was a founder member of Ottomans Cricket Club. The interview was part of a series of interviews conducted for a project on cricket but which included discussion generally about Muslim life in Durban. Mr. Butler passed away in 2006.

Emamally, Yusuf. 13 June 2001. Mr. Emamally was born on 8 November 1917. His father was a founder member of Greyville and official of DDICU. The interview was part of a series of interviews conducted for a project on cricket but which included discussion generally about Muslim life in Durban.

Mayat, Zuleikha. 20 October 2008. Mrs. Mayat was born in Potchefstroom in 1929. She was a founder member and president of the Women's Cultural Group.

Patel, Suleman. 10 October 2008. Mr. Suleman Patel is the son of Ebrahim S. Patel.

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ABSTRACT This essay explores the variety of subject positions of Gujarati-speaking Muslim migrants from Surat, India, from the time of their arrival in South Africa in the late 1870s to the contemporary period. Known as "Surtees" in the local context, they have a range of regional, sub-regional, and micro-regional identity choices. They were variously "passenger" as opposed to indentured migrant, Kathorians or Dhabelians depending on their village of origin, "Surtee" in relation to "Memon" or "Miabhai" Muslims, "Indian" against Whites and Africans, and store owner or retail assistant, depending on the political, social, religious, and economic contexts. This paper argues that what constituted Surtee social "community" has changed over time. In the post apartheid period, boundaries in religious beliefs and practices are blurring, virtually all Indian Muslims speak English as their first (and mostly only) language, and marriage patterns have transformed quite fundamentally. It may be said that class, more than ethnicity, now inflects Surtee identity. Like other Indian Muslims, Surtees too are seeking to redefine Indian Muslim identity in "pure" Pan-Islamic terms that supersede inherited "Indian" culture.

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*Indian Diaspora-21st Century Challenges-
Globalisation, Ethnicity and Identity*
Anand Singh, Guest Editor

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