The New Citizens
A Study of the Architectural Identity of Public Philanthropic Institutions Built by Two Isma`ili Communities in Contemporary Bombay

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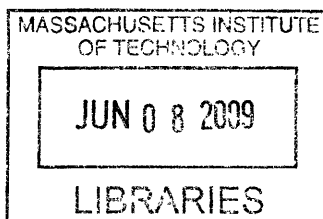Author_____

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Abstract

Just across the railway lines at Charni road, forming a backdrop to the Marine Drive, stands the Saifee Hospital in all its splendor. Across the city in the neighborhood of Mazgaon, nestled behind the St. Mary's school along the central railway line, and in an equal splendor, stands the Center of Excellence, Diamond Jubilee High School. Both buildings were built in the last five years. Both use a similar quantity of glass and cement plaster and establish their contemporaneity so. Both institutions were built by Shi'i Isma'ili communities, the hospital by the Bohras and the school by the Khojas. Both buildings represent a significant phase in the history of these mercantile communities in Bombay where their emergence as public philanthropists echoes the rapid increase in wealth and the creation of global diasporic networks in a liberal Indian economy. But while the Saifee hospital is cloaked in its massive pastel colored façade punctured by numerous arched windows and capped by ornamental domes, the Diamond Jubilee High School displays a playful juxtaposition of geometrical forms and volumes with dashes of color composed so as to expose structure and skin.

The thesis explains how these two buildings, which have such different appearances, are comparable strategies for expressing Isma'ili communal identity. In Chapter two, I construct a detailed comparison of the two buildings with respect to their location in the city, aspects of siting, façade, interior, spatial organization, program, client and architect teams. In Chapter three, I investigate and conclude that the two institutions mediate Isma'ili faith, citizenship and mercantilism in architecturally different but functionally comparable ways that respond to the complex social 'condition' in contemporary Bombay.

This thesis thus studies the expression of communal identity through its patronage of public architecture. It claims that architecture is instrumental in the creation, sustenance and subversion of communal identity and is an effective social construction used to communicate within the public sphere. I argue that for post-partition Indian Muslims, to contend with their identity in a rising tide of Hindu nationalism in the country, requires mediation of faith, citizenship and in the case of the Isma'ilis, mercantilism. Isma'ili public philanthropy, I propose, is a *mode* for expressing this communal identity. I explain Isma'ili architectural expression as a product of a condition distinctive of contemporary Bombay, where the simultaneous marginalization of the two Isma'ili communities by the Hindus and the other Muslims, *creates a space for them to perform within the public sphere.*

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The Saifee Hospital (left) and The Diamond Jubilee High School (right)

Chapter 1
Introduction

Just across the railway lines at Charni road, forming a backdrop to the Marine

Drive, stands the Saifee Hospital in all its splendor. Across the city in the neighborhood

of Mazgaon, nestled behind the St. Mary's school along the central railway line, and in an

equal splendor, stands the Center of Excellence, Diamond Jubilee High School [Fig. 1-5].

Both buildings were built in the last five years. Both use a similar quantity of glass and

cement plaster and establish their contemporaneity so. But while the Saifee hospital is

cloaked in its massive pastel colored façade punctured by numerous arched windows and

capped by ornamental domes, the Diamond Jubilee High School displays a playful

juxtaposition of geometrical forms and volumes with dashes of color composed so as to

expose structure and skin.[1]

Both institutions were founded by Shi`i Isma`ili communities[2] – the Hospital by

the Bohras and the High School by the Khojas.[3] Both communities were originally

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1 Refer to the images of these two buildings on the frontispiece.
2 The two main sects in Islam are the Sunni and the Shi`i. The Isma`ilis are a sub-sect of the Shi`is who
accepted the leadership of Isma`il, the elder son of the sixth Imam Ja`far-as Sa`diq, as his successor in 765.
The followers of the Imam's younger son, Musa-Kazim, were called Ithna-Asharis who form the largest
sub-sect of the Shi`is found in various parts of the Middle East and South Asia. The Isma`ilis are also the
precursors/ancestors of smaller subsects of Bohras and Khojas in the Indian sub-continent, as well as in
parts of North Africa and Yemen [From Engineer, Asghar Ali (1980) and Daftary, Farhad (1998)]
3 Following the schsim in 765, in 1094 there was a further split in the Isma`ilis. After Imam Mustansir's
death, two of his sons, Mustaali (youngest) and Nizar (oldest), disputed over the succession of the
caliphate. Their followers were called the Mustaaliams and Nizarians respectively. The Bohras are Shi`i
Isma`ili Muslims of the Mustaaliam sect. They constitute Hindu trader converts in the state of Gujarat. The
word 'Bohra' is derived from the Gujarati word 'Vohorvu' or 'to trade'. The Khojas are Shi`i Isma`ili
Muslims of the Nizarian sect. They constitute Hindu trader and landowner converts in the state of Gujarat
and the Punjab. The word 'Khoja' is said to be derived from the Persian word 'Khwaja' a name of
reverence for rich merchants or noblemen. The thesis will study the history of both communities in greater
detail. For now, it would suffice to say that the Bohras and Khojas have similar origins, although subtle yet

Gujarati[4] or Sindhi[5] Hindu traders and landowners who converted to Shi`i Isma`ili Islam

from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, as propagated by missionaries from Fatimid

Egypt.[6] And although today the Bohras number one million[7] worldwide and the Khojas a

substantially larger community of fifteen million, both communities trace their common

ancestry and heritage to the tenth century Fatimids in Egypt, after which a succession

feud at the end of the eleventh century led to their separation. Both communities had a

similar trajectory of development in Africa and in India, and Bombay became their

common center of religious and mercantile activity.

Their arrival in Bombay with the establishment of the East India Company in the

city in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ushered in a new era of economic

prosperity for both communities. Each community developed a dominant mercantile class

who found great favor with their colonial patrons. Leadership in both communities

played an important role throughout history in forming and sustaining communal

attitudes. Colonial Bombay then became the common center for both communities. With

the rising tide of Indian nationalism in the early twentieth century, both communities

supported the idea of Pakistan. However, during the partition, the majority of Bohras

remained in India while a sizeable population of Khojas migrated to Pakistan. Despite the

important differences between them will emerge as the thesis develops. [From Engineer, Asghar Ali (1980) pp. 18-25 and Daftary, Farhad (1998)]

4 From Gujarat, a state in western India.

5 From Sindh, one of the four provinces of present-day Pakistan, which lies immediately north of Gujarat and west of Rajasthan, India.

6 A tenth century Shi`i Isma`ili dynasty that established themselves in north Egypt.

7 These are approximate numbers. There has been no denominational data carried out after independence. In 1931 the Bohras numbered 212,752. Jonah Blank suggests a conservative estimate between 700,000 to 1 million. [From Blank 2001 p. 13]

migrations, Bombay retained its importance for both communities, as a center for the Bohras and as a significant historical city for the Khojas.

Today, the emergence of these two communities as public philanthropists in Bombay echoes the rapid increase in wealth and the creation of global diasporic networks in a liberal Indian economy. Under the leadership of the charismatic Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin,[8] the Da`i and spiritual leader of the Bohras, and Karim Aga Khan IV, the Hazar Imam[9] of the Khojas (or Nizari Isma`ilis as they are known outside India), both communities now find themselves in a favorable position to express their identity through public architecture. The Saifee Hospital and the Diamond Jubilee High School now mark the importance of this phase in the history of the two communities in Bombay – and raise three questions that are addressed in this thesis:

1. At first glance these two Isma`ili communities share much in common, and yet the architecture of their institutions appear so different. With due consideration to the

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8 'Syedna' translates as 'Our Lord'. The term was used much later in according respect to the Da`i, who was (is) a high ranking representative of the Mustaaliam Imams in the hierarchy of the Isma`ili Da`wa. Ismail, in the eighth century, organized his community of faithful into a closely-knit clandestine organization called the Isma`ili Da`wa. The entire Da`wa was placed in a hierarchical order under the Imam himself. He appointed various functionaries as propagandists and missionaries across the Abbasid empire with the motive of arresting political power at an opportune moment. The Da`i has been an important position in the Da`wa in organizing activities of the region under his charge. Today, the Da`i is the leader of the Bohras, who are organized as a community under the name Dawat-e Hadiyah, as an extension to the Isma`ili Da`wa of the time of Isma`il. The Bohras believe that their Imam (Imam Tayyib) is in seclusion and his progeny lives and that the Da`i is representing him at any time. From Engineer, Asghar Ali (1980) p.18-25.
9 Hazar Imam refers to the 'Imam who is present' today. Unlike the Bohras, the Imam of the Khojas, His Highness The Aga Khan, is 'Hazar' (present) and the absolute leader of his community. He traces his descendancy directly to the Nizarian Imams and so to the Prophet Mohammed himself. The Aga Khan was a title given to the 46th imam of this Ismaili lineage, Aga Hasan Ali Shah (1817-1881), by the Shah of Persia, Fath Ali Shah Qajar, in the 1850's.

difference of function, how are the Saifee Hospital and the Diamond Jubilee High School

different and similar in their expression of Isma`ili identity in contemporary Bombay?

2. With reference to their common context in contemporary Bombay, how does

each Isma`ili community mediate faith, citizenship and mercantilism[10] in the architecture

of their public philanthropic institutions?

3. Can we better understand the contemporary condition in Bombay through the

architecture of public philanthropic institutions built by the two Ismaili communities?

I will address these three questions in chapters that begin with empirical

observations of the two cases in Chapter 2, moving on to an interpretive Chapter 3 on

Isma`ili identities in Bombay, and then finally a speculative concluding note that begins

to contextualize the study in a contemporary condition in Bombay.

The empirical Chapter 2 is based on my numerous visits to the sites observing and

documenting in detail the institutions and their physical context. I conducted interviews

with architects and patron organizations regarding the various visual, historical,

institutional and geographical aspects of the buildings. This field research was carried out

during the months of July 2008 and January 2009 in Bombay. Two case studies were

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10 Mediating Faith and Citizenship: I must acknowledge at the outset that the two terms 'Faith and
Citizenship' are borrowed from the abstract of a Harvard PhD dissertation - `"Work no words":
voluntarism, subjectivity, and moral economies of exchange among Khoja Ismaili Muslims,' Zahra
Nasiruddin Jamal (2008). For this thesis I will define below how I understand the terms faith and
citizenship, and I add mercantilism to more fully assess the architecture of Isma`ili public philanthropy in
Bombay.

chosen for the thesis, the Saifee Hospital on Maharishi Karve Road, Charni Road Station,

built by the Bohra community in 2005; and the Center of Excellence, Diamond Jubilee

High School on Nesbit Road, Mazgaon, built by the Khoja community in 2007. The

chapter focuses on documenting similarity and difference between the two case studies in

their expression of Ismaili identity in contemporary Bombay, explaining their choice for

the thesis, and identifying key topics for the analysis. The sub-chapters 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3

are organized from the scale of the site and precinct; to that of the building (façade,

spatial organization, and interior design); the building program; and eventually to the

team of clients and architects that were instrumental in their making.

The interpretive chapter of the thesis, Chapter 3, draws out specific ideas and themes

from the Chapter 2 documentation. It focuses on the scale of the city along with a

constant awareness of the national and international context of each Isma`ili community.

Sub-chapter 3.1 explains the status of the Isma`ili communities within the city of Bombay

through a comparative framework to understand their philanthropic institutions within the

larger context of a mercantile cosmopolitan population. Sub-chapter 3.2 addresses the

larger trajectories of architectural patronage of both communities, to locate the two public

philanthropic institutions chosen for the study within them. The following sub-chapters

3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 specifically deal with the issues raised by specific articulations of identity

in the two case studies. Here, I explain how faith, citizenship and mercantilism manifest

themselves in the articulations of Isma`ili architectural identity in the Hospital and the

School. Sub-chapter 3.6 distills out the conceptual framework of the thesis that explains

public philanthropy as the mediation of faith, citizenship and mercantilism in each

community. I analyze the two case studies for their articulation of architectural identity as a 'mediation of faith, citizenship and mercantilism'. The emergence of these communities as philanthropists in the public realm today becomes an access point for understanding their *identity formations* at various scales – that is, the architecture of these two philanthropic buildings help articulate the identity of Isma`ili Muslim communities in Bombay within the larger body of Islam, their identity as members of an occupational class or ethnic group in the city of Bombay, and finally their identity as citizens in the larger context of the nation of India. In this way the architecture of Isma`ili public philanthropy is a *mode* for mediating faith, citizenship, and mercantilism in contemporary Bombay.

Chapter 2

Two Public Philanthropic Institutions:

The Saifee Hospital and The Diamond Jubilee High School

Choosing Two Institutions

With the Saifee Hospital located by itself opposite the Charni Road rail station and the Diamond Jubilee High School located in the neighborhood of Mazgaon, across the Nesbit Bridge, the difference of location is obvious. The Charni Road site has a specific Bohra philanthropic history of an existing hospital and sanatorium complex while Mazgaon is an established Isma`ili and minority community mohulla. The processes for the acquisition of these lands for development, and the mechanisms deployed for the execution of the two projects are undeniably a matter of complexity for both projects in Bombay. The sub-chapter 2.1 focuses specifically on the significance of site and precinct in the establishment of the institutions.

Modern health and educational facilities have been a contemporary concern for the country at large. That the Isma`ilis in Bombay partake in this need has an extensive record in the historical geography of institutions across the city. My visits to the city revealed a number of public philanthropic institutions built by them. The Saifee Hospital and the Diamond Jubilee High School are contemporary manifestations of this long history in the city of Bombay. Sub-chapter 2.2 provides a walk-through of the two

institutions starting with the façade, heading into the interior spaces and finally

understanding the philanthropic architectural program of each development.

      With these buildings, as with those that preceded them, the communities have

strived to work *with* the city, and *within* the economic, legal, political and social

frameworks provided by it at this time. The two institutions then become representative

of particular formations of project teams, and the design and legal processes instrumental

in their creation. Sub-chapter 2.3 is based on my interviews with architects and client

teams about the mechanisms adopted by them to facilitate projects of this magnitude in

Bombay.

2.1 Two Sites

What is undeniably common for any community in the city is the physical context of the city itself. Engagement with the real estate market in Bombay is a formidable proposition and the acquisition of land for the purpose of development comes with its share of economic, legal and at times political complexity for the Bohras and Khojas. Although, both locations have high real estate value and siting significance, the negotiations of site for the Hospital and School vary considerably.

Siting the Saifee Hospital

The sheer location of the Saifee Hospital at Charni Road station, commanding vistas from Marine Drive and Malabar Hill, brings to the fore questions of property, commercial value and siting [Fig. 1-5]. It truly is a visually and spatially compelling site as well as image of public philanthropy in the city.

The Saifee Hospital is built on land entrusted to a Saifee Hospital Trust formed in 1973 by a previous body called the Saifee Hospital Society that managed a smaller hospital on the site since the fifties.[11] The site has a long history of charitable institutions starting in 1886 when the plot of land was leased by Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy to build a

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11 Information on legal issues has been acquired online from websites managed by the Progressive Dawoodi Bohras: http://dawoodi-bohras.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=389&st=0&sk=t&sd=a&start=0 , from an online article in Indian Express: http://www.indianexpress.com/ie/daily/19970710/19150823.html and from an online article in Midday http://www.mid-day.com/news/2000/aug/1559.html. Information from these websites was moderated through interviews with prominent Bohras in Bombay. Information regarding Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy was acquired online from: http://dawoodi-bohras.com/about_us/people/peerbhoy/.

Mosque and construct three buildings for charitable purposes. Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy was an accomplished entrepreneur and philanthropist and a respected member of the Bohra community.[12] In 1944, the Polish Red Cross Hospital occupied the third wing of the property after which its functioning as a hospital was taken over by the Saifee Hospital Society to serve the Bohra community. At the time, the site comprised the Saifee Hospital, a sanatorium, two dilapidated buildings, the tomb of Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy and a Mosque [Fig. 6]. The proposal for the Saifee Hospital, as sanctioned by the Supreme Court after a 23 year long legal dispute[13] with the family members of Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy, required addressing each building existing on the site. There were detailed requirements as to the construction of a new sanatorium, the restoration and regular upkeep of the tomb and Mosque and an equal importance assigned to the names 'Saifee Hospital' and 'Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy' on site at all times.[14] The proposal hinged around the Saifee Hospital becoming accessible to all, a public institution.[15] The Syedna

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12 The current residence of the Syedna, the Saifee Mahal, located on a sprawling site on Malabar Hill was also once owned by Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy and is said to be gifted to the Syedna Taher Saifuddin early in the twentieth century. Based on an interview with an official in the Dawat-e Hadiyah. Please also refer Blank (2001) p. 145-46.

13 It is well established that some of the earlier proposals for the Saifee Hospital consisted of a commercial-hospital complex and housing-hospital complex but they were met with great resistance from the progressive Bohra community regarding the 'usurpation' of the land for commercial purposes, and the BMC (Bombay Municipal Corporation/BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation) denied sanction. These proposals included the graveyard land and freehold property on site. Advocates Abid Merchant and Mansoor Jani fought the case at the Civil, High and Supreme Court on behalf of the family of Sir Adamjee Peebhoy. There have been various cases filed with regards to other properties in Bombay (op. cit. footnote 11 above).

14 The family of Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy was ex-communicated from the Dawoodi Bohra community at the time of the Syedna Taher Saifuddin due to ill-will caused by their demands regarding the various properties of Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy around the city that were now under the administration (and ownership) of the Dawat. The name Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy was not to be spoken by any Bohra henceforth. Infact, his name has a 'laanat' or 'mild curse' mentioned in the sermon at the Mosque. Due to Supreme Court ruling of the equal importance to the names of 'Saifee Hospital' and 'Adamjee Peerbhoy', The Saifee Hospital has no sign board indicating its name, lest it have to write the name of those not to be spoken of. Based on an interview with an official in the Dawat-e Hadiyah.

15 The main opposition to the Saifee Hospital project by the family of Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy was its public nature. They were concerned about the public nature of the development affecting the sanctity of the Tomb of Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy which was visited by Bohras after his death. However, the court in principle

Mohammed Burhanuddin laid the foundation of the Saifee Hospital on 14th October,

2000. It was dedicated to the memory of the late Syedna Taher Saifuddin, the previous

Da`i. The hospital was completed in 2005.

The site fringes an old graveyard of the Bohra community. In fact, the entrance to

the graveyard is through the Mosque forecourt at the southern corner of the site. The

fringes of graveyards, as we will also see in some Khoja properties in the city, become

potential sites for charitable institutions and housing or other development for the

community. They constitute precious open land within Bombay city limits and are

usually freehold properties managed by trusts. The Saifee Hospital as it is located today

stands on a narrow linear plot, with its longitudinal axis running diagonally northwest-

southeast, parallel to the Western Railway line at Charni Road Station. Southeast from

the Hospital are the Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy Mosque and Tomb (Dargah) and an access

way to the graveyard [Fig. 6].

The Hospital is located in the middle of a bustling part of the city and setback by

only approximately four meters from the busy Maharishi Karve Road. Across the road to

the southwest is the railway line beyond which is the Marine Drive[16] running north-south

along the Arabian Sea. Although the site has a historical philanthropic palimpsest of sorts

that explains its location, the Saifee Hospital today stands outside the boundaries of the

community's historical residential center within the city.

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sanctioned the public nature of the institution. It only laid down strict guidelines to the development of the various parts of the project.

16 The Marine Drive is an important north-south coastal road on the west side of south Bombay. It has a frequently visited water front pedestrian promenade.

Siting the Diamond Jubilee High School

While the Saifee Hospital elucidates the acquisition of land in the city through the multiple transfers of property between trusts and private owners creating a palimpsest institutional record on the edge of a community graveyard,[17] the Diamond Jubilee High School brings to the fore a different process of land acquisition and development adopted by the Khojas in the city. Mazgaon is well known as an Isma`ili mohulla [Fig. 1]. Across the Nesbit Bridge over the Central railway line, off Mohammed Ali Road, is the Mazgaon precinct. It encompasses both the largest Jamaat (community) of the Bohras in the city and is also central to the Hasanabad and Karimabad Khoja mohullas. Significantly for the Khojas, it contains the Aga Hall, a private estate of the Aga Khan III (1877-1957) with sprawling gardens and a villa-palace complex. The extents of his estate are not discernible today but what remains is a monumental entrance arch on the Nesbit Road through which a narrow road leads into a cluster of non-descript buildings[18] surrounding a central open green.

The current complex contains the multi-facility Prince Aly Khan hospital, evacuated school buildings and residential apartment blocks [Fig. 7]. A Khoja Jamaatkhana is located along the narrow approach road to the cluster. The larger

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17 The Saifee Hospital in Karachi built by the Saifee Hospital Trust has a similar history of trust transfers, where each transfer accrues towards a clearer legal and financial definition and control of the property.
18 The architecture of the buildings in the complex appear as any other modern residential apartment complex in the city with a concrete frame structure and brick infills walls, protruding balconies that have been occupied by the rooms behind them, sliding glass aluminum shutters and two color tone paint emphasizing the horizontal bands or balconies on the elevation. They are each four to six stories high.

evacuated school building contained the original Diamond Jubilee Boy's High School established in 1947 by the Aga Khan III on the occasion of his diamond jubilee.[19] The Diamond Jubilee Girl's High School, founded along with the Boy's School in 1947, was located in the smaller school building. With the institutionalization of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in 1957 and the subsequent expansion of the schools, the boy's school shifted to its current location across the Nesbit Road on the site now known as Diamond Complex. The Diamond Complex is an L-shaped plot of land housing the now co-educational Center of Excellence, Diamond Jubilee High School and a three-tower residential Complex known as Philips Towers. The site is located east of the St. Mary's School consisting of a narrow linear plot of land with its longitudinal axis approximately in the north-south direction. The plot is located diametrically opposite the Aga Hall gateway, its location is outside the traditional enclave of the Aga Hall. The plot provides minimal frontage to the street (approx. 30 meters), and the school building itself is deeply recessed into the latter part of the site abutting the railway tracks. At the front and forming an edge to the street is the main administrative building of the Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) and Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS) operative at the city level. The residential complex is accessed through the common gate of the school and administrative offices. This complex forms a triangular extension to the site on its western side.

Today, the Diamond Jubilee Girl's High School is at its new location in Bhendi Bazaar in a recently restored building originally built in the early twentieth century. The building forms part of a Khoja housing development at the fringes of a Khoja graveyard

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19 Based on interviews with personnel at the AKPBSI, AKES and the Prince Aly Khan Hospital.

in the heart of Bhendi Bazaar. The original school buildings at the Aga Hall are now foreseen as the expansion plan for the Prince Aly Khan hospital.

This mode adopted by the Khojas 'within' the mohulla entails smaller adjustments, re-use and incremental growth. There are three aspects that come to the fore. First, the constant re-use of space within buildings and the shifting locations of institutions subvert the functional identity of the buildings. In that, the Khoja hospital and the Khoja school have been interchangeable over time. Further, the growth of the hospital facilities outside of its original building into temporary sheds, garages and the ground levels of the apartment blocks elucidates the relative ease by which institutional growth is dealt with on private property. In contrast to the development of the Saifee Hospital, on a site under dispute and in the public eye, the development of the Aga Hall and the Diamond Jubilee High School received comparatively less attention from media, and was facilitated with minimum legal or political dispute.[20] Although the Khojas are highly institutionalized today with the formation of the AKES, AKHS and the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services India (AKPBSI) in 1986, there are various mechanisms of 'Hafta' or weekly bribe paid for the sustenance of the institutions that might be in conflict with land use codes and the clean image of the foundation.[21] The methods of

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20 A significant difference that emerges between the two buildings is that of post-construction publicity. The Center for Excellence is surprisingly not well-publicized. The internet contains minimal records of the building and so do local magazines on philanthropy or architecture (possibly reflecting the "work no words" thesis in Jamal [2008]). On the other hand, the Saifee Hospital has managed to receive great publicity in these media. Its inauguration by the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh brought far greater attention as compared to the school. By virtue of its location as a backdrop to the Marine Drive, it also flaunts its façade with a display of fluorescent colored lights during the evenings.
21 From various sources at the Aga Hall, AKPBSI and AKES. The Hospital pays a regular 'Hafta' or weekly bribe to the local municipal ward office and the local police for the illegal sheds, garages and occupation of old structures on the site with hospital facilities. I was also informed by parents at the Diamond Jubilee High School that the bus service for the school was discontinued because the school buses

working with and within the frameworks provided by the state might differ in the two

case studies chosen, but their engagement with these state frameworks makes the two

case studies comparable.

Second, alongside incremental growth is the accommodation of community

housing in close proximity to community institutions. Adjacent to the Aga Hall precinct

is the Burhani College of Commerce and Arts built by the Bohras. This too is part of a

larger compound, containing apartment buildings almost exclusively for the community.

The Aga Hall, the Diamond Jubilee High School and the Burhani College, appropriate

valuable land into housing developments for the community. The growing housing

requirements of the community within historic precincts and their need to congregate

within their own for reasons of security and performing communal activities has caused

both Isma'ili communities to create small clusters of buildings forming mini-Jamaats on

every developed site.

The area occupied by the Aga Hall and the Burhani College is part of a much

larger public philanthropic precinct in the city. One of the first buildings to designate this

significance was Sir Jamshetjee Jeejeebhoy (J. J.) Hospital established and open to the

public in 1845. Following the Hospital is the St. Mary's School established in 1864 by

the Jesuits. The Aga Hall dates back to the end of the nineteenth century while the

Burhani College was a late purchase in 1970.[22] The entire precinct beginning from the

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caused congestion along the Nesbit Road and that the school refused to pay the BMC for accommodating them there.

22 The site contained a famous bungalow called the Rose Bungalow with an expanse of open gardens at the rear.

end of Mohammed Ali Road at the Sir J. J. Hospital fly-over, across the Nesbit Bridge,

thus assumes an institutional character of a certain kind. It is a precinct of public

philanthropic institutions built by minority communities – Parsis, Jesuit Christians and

Ismailis that have lived and worked in these areas since their reclamation by the British.[23]

Mazgaon contains one of the largest Parsi colonies (housing developments) known as the

Rustom Baug, a number of Christian schools including the St. Peter's High School, and

smaller clusters of Parsi, Christian and Muslim neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are

organized clearly by minority groups, often completely occupied by members of one

community or class. This is an aspect of the growth of the city of Bombay that I will

address in Chapter 3, but I would like to establish that these clusters of minority

institutions at the entrance to the Mazgaon mohulla alludes to the social composition of

the residential neighborhood that follows within the precinct.

Comparing Sites

The acquisition and development of land through the various processes described

above are trends observed across the city, and applicable for other communities beyond

the case of the Isma`ilis. Graveyard lands are fringed with development while private

property sees an incremental growth and re-use of institutions along with housing

developments. Sites with palimpsest institutional records usually involve legal and

political disputes from various stake-holders that nuance development considerably on

site. Aggressive developer-architects are involved in the design and government sanction

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23 Other residential areas of the Isma`ilis in the northern suburbs of Bandra and Andheri/Marol show a
similar trend. The Bohras and the Catholic Christians comprise the Bohra Bazaar area in Bandra while

of these buildings. For example, Sarkar builders, an infamous Bohra enterprise,[24] can be recognized by their numerous apartment towers alongside each of the institutional projects. The development of sites for residential-commercial or residential-institutional uses, evens out their high real estate value. The compensation for the real estate value of a school that provides education at Rs. 2-10 ($0.04-0.20) per year in a building with square footage costs of approximately Rs. 8-10,000 ($160-200) in the case of the Diamond Jubilee High School, is 'found' in the density of apartment complexes that can be squeezed into them. Needless to say, these apartments too are subsidized by the community, and are occupied almost exclusively by them.

The development of the Saifee Hospital site is very different from that of the Diamond Jubilee Complex. Here the property was originally leased from the East India Company by Sir Adamjee Peerbhoy and then kept under the management of a Trust with a specific institutional purpose. The hospital, sanatorium, his Mosque and tomb became instrumental in the development of the site in the future. Furthermore, legal documents and contested ownership or rights on the land complicated the process. The Saifee Hospital is very well documented within legal tabloids as well as construction and development tabloids due to the centrality of the site in the public realm so visible from the railway line and Marine Drive. Even though the Saifee Hospital site is valued much higher than the Diamond Complex site, its development was restricted by the very history of its use. Both institutions, however, looked to maximize available FSI[25] and built up

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24 Infamous in Bombay for being linked to the mafia. And infamous amongst urbanists for by-passing FSI (Floor Space Index) and by-laws to build otherwise impossible skyscrapers on disputed properties.
25 The allowances made for increasing Floor Space Index for Hospitals is considerably higher than those made for commercial complexes. Only recently, the Maharashtra Government announced a further 300%

area on the plot and deploy every possible legal and political mechanism to facilitate the same.

The location and development of the two sites have larger implications for their approach to the city. The Saifee Hospital shows its entire breadth to the street with its entrance accessible directly off the pavement, the Diamond Jubilee High School provides its shorter edge as a front and is accessed along a driveway that leads to its entrance at the latter part of the site. These are significant differences of 'approach' to comprehend architectural identity with respect to surrounding context and location in the city.[26] The Charni Road site commands vistas from across the Marine Drive and is visually accessible irrespective of intent or motive. The Diamond Jubilee High School is really a building one goes to by intent and which reveals itself only gradually as one meanders through the precinct. It was really the administrative building that was visible along the Nesbit Road as I walked into the Isma`ili neighborhoods.

The two sites differ in other important ways. The location of the institutional ensemble at Mazgaon precedes any other experience of the neighborhood. The location of the Diamond Jubilee High School preceding the well established historic Isma`ili mohulla at Mazgaon signifies it with Isma`ili identity. The various public philanthropic institutions across the Nesbit Bridge clearly allude to the various communities that reside

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increase in FSI for private hospitals built on the island city provided they agree to a few terms. The FSI was increased from 1.33 to 5.32 in 2008. From interview with a practicing architect in Bombay.
26 The associations of a certain precinct being predominantly Isma`ili then begins to impress upon buildings contained within it. The single building outside the precinct, in comparison, would be expected to be more self-conscious of its identity.

in the precinct. No one could ignore the Ismaili contributions[27] to civic life in the city, if crossing the Nesbit Bridge. But the Saifee Hospital, in comparison, is located by itself at Charni Road station well outside the defined Bohra precincts. What signifies its Isma`ili identity is a forgotten palimpsest institutional record of the site and more significantly its rather explicit 'Islamic' architectural style. I will deal with its façade in the next sub-chapter.

Comparing Precincts

My perambulations through the Bohra and Khoja mohullas at Bhendi bazaar had a similar outcome. Before I entered the mohulla along common public access-ways, I was always greeted by institutions of public philanthropy. On entering the Bohra mohulla at Bhendi bazaar from the busy Mohammed Ali road or while exiting the mohulla at Pydhonie a little to the south, one encounters in the same way, the Saifee Ambulance Society and the Saifi High School respectively. The extent of the mohulla became known by these institutional markers [Fig. 8-9]. One could then expect to enter a Bohra mohulla immediately. So while the religious institutions remained within the neighborhood, only accessible to the inquisitive visitor, the philanthropic institutions reached out to public thoroughfares.

While the institutional markers preceded the Khoja mohullas there was little else to assist in their definition. I could only recognize a Khoja precinct by the names of their

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27 The Burhani College built by the Bohras, the Aga Hall monumental gate leading to the Prince Aly Khan Hospital and the Diamond Complex administration building opposite the Nesbit road, both built by the Khojas.

shops at Bhendi bazaar – sometimes with 'Khoja', 'Ismaili', or Khoja family names in

them. And the institutions have a 'Jubilee' name referring to a celebratory jubilee of the

leadership of the previous and present Aga Khans who have led the community. The

Bohras have a similar way of naming their shops, often using names like Burhani, Saifee,

Badri, Najmi, etc. after the family names of the various Syednas.[28] The same

nomenclature carries forward into the institutions that they build. Main thoroughfares in

the city that skirt any of the Isma`ili mohullas have these distinct characteristics. The

moment these names changed to some other, I became aware of a change in the dominant

community in that neighborhood. The commercial sphere in Bombay reflects the ethnic,

religious or caste-based specificities of the community either trading or living in the

neighborhood.[29] This however can be generalized only to a certain extent. While the

Bohras are predominantly market dwellers, the Khojas have exclusive residential

neighborhoods as well, distinct from the market areas.[30] The Bohra bazaar is a common

feature at Bhendi bazaar and Bandra bazaar.[31] People in the city recognize these

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28 It is important to note that while 'Khoja' and 'Ismaili' are basically sectarian references, 'Saifee' and
'Burhani' refer to specific Syednas of the Bohra community. When I asked a shop-keeper why his shop
was named so, his answer was simple – to gain blessings from the specific leader. The relation of faith and
mercantile activities is further elucidated in the requests for 'Razaa' or permission. A Bohra would start any
new business only after requesting permission from the Syedna or his immediate functionaries. The
Syedna's blessings are vital in trading decisions [Please refer to Blank (2001) pp. 142-44 for a full
description of the setting and pp. 172-174 for its religious and political significance]. The Dawat also gives
loans to individual entrepreneurs to encourage smaller businesses within the community. Photos of the
Syedna and the Aga Khan are placed on the wall of every Isma`ili shop.
29 The mixed-use type of market-neighborhood where living and working in close proximity is common to
most communities in a traditional trading city. In the newer parts of cities, living and working becomes
more remote and shop names begin to obscure all the certainties of 'market' neighborhoods. There is a case
where a Muslim restaurant owner in Ahmedabad, Gujarat named his shops Tulsi and Navrang, Hindu-
associated names. This, however, did not provide any security cover during the riots in 2002.
30 The settlements of Karimabad and Hasanabad are gated Isma`ili residential neighborhoods with an
Imambara and Jamaatkhana each for community religious activities.
31 Bandra is a northern suburb of Bombay. It has a sizeable population of Isma`ilis with a Bohra bazaar
established in the early 1900s. The Bandra Jamaat was organized by a wealthy businessman, Nooruddin
Kasamji Noor. With the support of the Dawat, he purchased the two streets of Waroda Road and Chapel
Road, previously occupied by middle-class Christians. Here he built a Bohra Mosque. Soon the streets were
occupied by Bohras migrating from the island city. The Khojas moved to Bandra much later in the mid-

differences and certain neighborhoods get associated with certain kinds of products or services. This is after all the historic 'market' of a predominantly mercantile city.

Another significant aspect of understanding precincts in the city is the people in it. Bohras have a peculiar dress code. Even while going about their everyday chores, Bohra men dress in their typical long white *kurta* and *pajama* and the characteristic white and gold rimmed *topi* (cap). This dress is called '*kuomi libaas*' which translates as national or community attire (although it is popularly understood as religious or even sectarian attire). Women in the community wear a characteristic '*rida*' which is a pastel colored version of the black 'hijab' or veil worn by other Muslims. Ardent followers of the faith, which comprise most of the community, wear these clothes when in the public realm and dress casual at home.[32] Thus the Bohras are recognizable in public and so Bohra mohullas can be sensed just by higher concentration of Bohras in the street or in their shops. The Khojas, on the other hand, cannot be immediately recognized on the streets. Men and women dress like any other modern social group in the city. There is also no strict dress code for the Khojas during payer visits at the Jamaatkhana. With regards to an experience of Ismaili mohullas, it is easier to recognize a Bohra mohulla over a Khoja mohulla simply by the dress of the people.

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twentieth century after the Aga Khan III built his sea front palace along the west coast in Bandra now known as Band stand. A well-known exclusively Khoja residential complex and Jamaatkhana in Bandra, Yuvan Apartments, was established in 1978.

32 There are various grades to wearing the quomi libaas. With regard to men, the beard is of primary significance. One must also wear the topi at all times when in public. If one is dressed in a shirt and pant and happens to enter a community institution he must remove his shirt if it is tucked inside. The Kurta and Pajama is mandatory for Mosque gatherings and if the institution is to be visited by members of the royal family (family of the present of past Syednas) then an additional sherwani or sleeveless white long jacket is mandatory. For women, irrespective of the occasion, the rida is required when in public. [From Blank (2001) and Engineer (1980)]

A peculiar similarity in patterns of staffing at both Bohra and Khoja institutions began to emerge during my visits to the various community and public institutions. Community institutions had a non-Ismaili local Marathi or Gujarati-speaking receptionist. In the public institutions, Bohra or Khoja[33] receptionists greeted visitors to the building. The Saifee Hospital had three to four young ladies dressed in 'rida' at the front desk while any other institution built for the community had a non-Bohra fronting the desk. This is anecdotal albeit something to understand better in the following chapters.

The formation of Ismaili precincts and their varying levels of intelligibility in the city is a significant aspect to public life of the community and the expression of faith. With a basic understanding of the geography of institutions, their relative location with respect to the historical mohullas, and their approaches, I arrive at the scale of the buildings themselves to discuss what is really most striking about them.

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33 This is based on personal visits to both kinds of institutions. I was able to realize the Khoja receptionist at one of the Khoja public institutions at Mazgaon simply by his name. The Bohras are easier to identify and one not dressed in the characteristic clothes would immediately imply non-Bohra.

2.2 Hospital and School: Façade and Interior

The Hospital façade clearly alludes to a 'type' of Islamic Architecture. The combination of arch and dome, however displaced it seems for a hospital building, falls into the repertoire of popular forms associated with 'Islamic' buildings. The school makes no such allusion. Its façade is composed of geometric forms painted in various bright colors. A number of volumetric articulations cause the structure to expose itself from the façade enhancing its geometrical compositions. Its closest characterization could be that of an 'international' style. This starkness of difference in the exterior of the institutions, however, does not extend into the inside. The hospital obscures its exterior motif to reveal a *modern* interior. The school maintains its geometrical bias in modern interiors as well. However, the interiors have their subtle differences and each building warrants a detailed description of these formal, spatial (and ornamental) articulations.

The Saifee Hospital Façade

The Saifee hospital is a long narrow building, its plan measuring approximately 110 meters by 17 meters with its longer side fronting the street [Fig. 6]. It is oriented diagonally, approximately northwest-southeast, parallel to the street and railway line at Charni Road station, to its west. It stands twelve stories tall, with an imposing façade to the street. There are three basement floors. Although the building has articulated façades on all four sides, they are similar, so I will discuss the façade facing west, to the street and Arabian Sea. The almost-symmetrical facade is divided into twelve towers of varying

heights. The central tower is the tallest, thirteen stories in height, with those flanking it on either side stepping down gradually with the two end towers being only ten stories. I say almost-symmetrical as the number of towers on either side of the central tower varies. The northern wing consists of six towers while the southern consists of five. Of the twelve towers, the third, seventh (central) and eleventh are the main circulation cores. A tinted glass curtain wall runs up their entire height culminating in an arched profile at the top. The two strips of wall on either side of the glazed vertical element are painted a pastel shade of peach (almost pink) and contain a small four-petaled-flower-motif opening on each floor. This motif has been used extensively on skyscrapers in the city [Fig. 10] and a little familiarity with these architectural features would make these side walls, in fact, recognizable as service ducts. At the top of each of the three towers is a dome with lotus petals at its base and inverted lotus petals at the top. A golden finial rises high above the dome. The use of domes atop apartment buildings was popularized by the famous Bombay-based architect Hafeez Contractor and is now a developed aesthetic type for commercial development schemes [Fig. 11]. However, these particular domes at the hospital are of a different kind. The foliate motif is partly reminiscent of late-Mughal domes that in turn borrowed heavily from those built in tombs and Mosques in the Deccan region [Fig. 12]. The small bulbous dome with relatively large foliated details was also popular in the late 18th and early 19th century sub-imperial architecture in India. Under the patronage of the Nawabs and Nizams, builders in Lucknow and Hyderabad employed similar domes for Imambara, Mosque and tomb construction [Fig. 13]. Another possible, more probable allusion and the one suggested by a community member,[34] one

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34 Based on a number of interviews with various material contractors of the Saifee Hospital. It is misleading to question a Bohra regarding architectural style. Their immediate and unanimous answer is

that would inform the study substantially, is made to the domes of the Dargah-e Hakimi in Burhanpur, Rajasthan. [35] This reference has been used, with its Rajasthani motif, in the making of the several eighteenth and nineteenth century Bohra tombs, including the Roza Mubaraka within the complex of the Al-Masjid Al-Muazzam in Surat [Fig. 14][36] and various others in the Gujarat and Rajasthan region. Of significance then is that the current leader of the Bohras, Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, traces his family lineage to Burhanpur. It would suffice to say that there is a regional reference in the domes atop the Saifee Hospital that is not part of the repertoire of forms of the Fatimid style of architecture they have otherwise patronized so fervently in the last twenty years and deployed in every community and public institution in the country.

The towers in-between the three circulation cores contain the offices and treatment rooms. From the second to the seventh floor, each of these towers contains four openings on each floor. These are mostly arched except for the fourth and seventh floors, which are rectangular. Each arched window is divided into two smaller arched divisions by a central mullion that splits into two half-arches at the top. The arches are not fully pointed nor are they circular [Fig. 15]. [37] The arched windows in the Saifee hospital are not glazed. In fact, the actual windows to the various spaces are recessed by two and a

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"everything is Fatemi style." So any architectural elements used by Bohras today are directly ascribed Fatemi meaning or roots and are then appropriated by an all-encompassing Fatemi style. I will deal with this Fatemi style in sub-chapter 3.2 to understand how the Bohras invented this Fatimid tradition (as Eric Hobsbawm would put it) in their contemporary architecture. At this stage in the documentation I would confirm the use of a coherent architectural style in every contemporary Bohra institution irrespective of function and use.

35 The Tomb of Syedna Abdul Qadir Hakimuddin.
36 http://saifeesurka.multiply.com/photos/album/135/surat_photos_new
37 These too have been identified as Fatemi style windows by the same sources. However, contrary to the domes, this element has been used extensively in the contemporary Bohra institutions in some form or the other.

half feet and mostly don't align with the arched façade. The façade does not coincide with the inner spaces and there is an apparent horizontal slippage between the two on closer inspection. Below each arched opening is a rectangular panel containing a trellis-like pattern [Fig. 15]. It is painted in a cream-ish white color. Ornamental cornice bands run horizontally on the entire building, interrupted only by the glazed surfaces of the main circulation towers. These cornice bands contain geometrical patterns in plaster relief and small bracket-like elements holding up a protruding architrave [Fig. 15].[38] Above the seventh floor, the façade of the office towers contain two verticals of tinted-glass curtain walls, both ending with an arch at the top. A duct runs up the side of each tower, containing the same four-petaled-openings on each floor. These are painted white. The rest of the tower surface is painted light pink. At the top of each shaft, small domed pavilions adorn the skyline. Each pavilion has a square plan with the dome resting on four arches. The arched sides contain jaalis (perforated screens). The towers are lined with an ornamental balustrade at the top. The overall impression of the building with its ornamental domes and pavilions and the numerous arched window façade gives it a distinctive 'Islamic' aesthetic while the dome and pavilion combination gives it a kind of regional flavor. Even still, it is difficult to discern its lineage clearly. There are no Islamic inscriptions on the façade of the hospital to assert any definite Islamic identity.

The Saifee Hospital Interior

The building is entered at the bottom of the fifth tower through a curved glass canopy. Even though the lobby is double height, one becomes aware of the narrow width

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38 Again these patterns are identified as Fatemi. The Fatemi palette of repetitive patterns is elaborate.

of the building, with the limited space for circulation. The lobby has no indication of Islamic motif or element. However, the three to four receptionists as mentioned earlier are Bohra women dressed in their characteristic ridas. A photo-frame of the Syedna Taher Saifuddin hangs on the far wall. From the lobby, a narrow corridor leads north and another south, to the three circulation cores. Once at the circulation cores, lobbies on each floor open up to the west, through the completely glazed surface, providing stunning views of the Marine Drive and the Arabian Sea beyond. The interiors of the hospital are like any other, although with highly expensive finishes. Centrally air-conditioned, large carpeted lobbies, with custom designed waiting lounges and reception desks, high-speed elevators, well-uniformed staff, clear signage – these traits are unlike most hospitals in the city of Bombay today. The entire walk-in gave me an impression of a fine hotel building [Fig. 16]. The Saifee Hospital has 255 beds,[39] seven operating theaters, 37 ICU beds and a separate sanatorium block. The facility is equipped with state-of-the-art technology in a range of advanced medical and diagnostic facilities. It provides subsidized and free services for poor classes.

The Diamond Jubilee High School Façade

The Center of Excellence, Diamond Jubilee High School is also located on a long site, approximately 130 meters by 30 meters; although its shorter side faces the street [Fig. 7]. The site is oriented in the north-south direction with the street to the north and a railway line to the south. A wide driveway runs along the entire western edge of the site.

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39 The number of beds is not confirmed by me. It is an advertised number on the Saifee Hospital website: http://www.saifeehospital.com/

The built area is divided into two program parts enclosing a basketball court in between [Fig. 17].

The part to the north, facing the street, is a smaller building with a rectangular plan that houses the administrative offices of the AKES and AKHS. The office building becomes the front of the school building and shares its architectural language. Its street façade is narrow, approximately eighteen meters wide; and tall, rising up seven stories. Protruding out of the building, a wide staircase leading directly to the second floor rises gently across the first floor façade. Two round columns also protrude out from the building façade to frame the staircase. The staircase is not covered except for a few beams spanning between the columns and the building forming a kind of pergola above. The second and third floors are recessed creating a double height terrace volume within the building façade on the second floor. The recessed double height surface is glazed from top to bottom. In the middle is a thick plastered frame leading to the main door. Two more round columns support the building above on either side of the facade. Even though they support the beams on every level the walls are not flush with the columns and their round profile can be clearly distinguished from the rest of the façade. At the center of the façade, spanning between the fifth and sixth floors and more than half the width of the façade itself, is a large protruding panel painted red. It has three vertical openings that span both the floors. The round columns protrude upward slightly beyond the façade [Fig. 18].

The façade of the administrative office building becomes the first impression of the school. A small gate house assists the transition from the street into the premises along the western driveway. It contains a makeshift back-lit signage of the facility on its roof. The side of the administrative office building contains a protruding orthogonal composition of structural and non-structural beams and columns painted yellow ochre. Once past this building the basketball court comes into view with the imposing structure of the school above [Fig. 17]. The façade of the school facing the basketball court is similar to that of the administrative office building. The second and third floors are deeply recessed within the façade to create a triple height covered porch-like space. Two round columns at the two corners of the building support the rest of the building above. These columns remain separate from the façade walls while only supporting the beams and floor slabs. Within the triple height volume, a series of steps rise up sharply to the second floor level. These serve as an audience area for sports activities on the basketball court as well as a sit-out space for students during breaks. These are clad in dark grey stone and stand out against the white elevation of the building.

The western façade of the building is a display of various orthogonal and curvilinear forms. The building is seven stories high. It is not rectangular in plan, but has a protruding curved segment of a circle on its western side and its rear is bent quite sharply towards the southwest direction re-aligning itself perpendicular to the railway lines. The main entrance to the school is almost central to the western façade below the protruding curved surface. Above the entrance on the third and fourth floor the curved surface assumes the form of a curved glass curtain wall independent of the structural

columns. It is supported by two curved beams on the top and bottom. The fifth floor is a double height covered terrace. To the sides of this curved form, are two flat surfaces with deeply recessed windows [Fig. 19]. The surfaces are painted yellow ochre. The bent section at the rear of the building is painted black and also contains similarly recessed windows. The façade of the building facing the railway line consists of two volumetric recesses. The first is a single height recess on the first floor which forms a porch like space for the kindergarten. The second is a double height volume on the third floor.

Each façade of the building is a display of robust volumes and colors created by recessing portions of the building into porch-like spaces or covered terraces on upper floors. The round columns remain disengaged from the façade and skin to reveal their presence at odds with the vertical surfaces. The columns are painted white and against the light blue tint of the glazed surfaces, the yellow ochre, black and an occasional red beam, the building makes for explicit juxtapositions of structure and surface.

The Diamond Jubilee High School Interior

The entrance to the building leads into a generous lobby on the first floor with administration offices organized on either side. On the far wall, a series of photographs of Karim Aga Khan IV's visit to the school on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee make up the wall space. The school was inaugurated by Princess Zahra Aga Khan on the same occasion. A corridor heads south to the nursery section at the southern end of the building. The lobby contains two elevators for staff-use and a wide staircase leading up to

the rest of the building. The High School really begins on the second floor[40] where the lobby leads into two corridors one running up north and the other down south. Along the corridors a number of doors lead to different classrooms. The profile of the corridor widens and narrows depending on the shape of the classroom. The geometrical nuances of the exterior play themselves out on the interior as well. Classrooms are odd-shaped with trapezoidal and curved walls. Adjacent to the lobby towards the west is the library with the double height curved glass façade. The corridors are colorful and replete with top-student work. Light is ample in every space and cross ventilation is facilitated by opening windows. The rooms to each end of the school are kept for special subjects like Yoga and Performing Arts. The layout remains typical for every floor with spaces changing profile at times or becoming open terraces. The room looking out on the basketball court on the third floor is a multipurpose room used for yoga and music. The fifth floor room adjacent to the lobby is a covered double height terrace which serves as a plant nursery. The school encourages a number of vocations apart from the curriculum, and the arts are given special impetus. There are 1330 students enrolled from pre-primary up to tenth grade. The tuition is highly subsidized.

Comparing Façades and Interiors

The Saifee Hospital expresses an idiosyncratic 'Islamic' identity explicitly in its use of popular forms like the domes, arched windows and overhangs, domed pavilions, jaalis and trellis patterns. That its entire façade is a combination of white, pink and peach colors obscures its popular Islamic identity to a considerable extent while being

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40 My guide from the AKES suggested we skip the first floor because there was nothing to see there.

consistent with Bohra pastel color preferences. The Diamond Jubilee High School is clearly 'Not' Islamic and makes no gesture towards being Islamic in any way. It is truly a building of the modern city and of contemporary times. In its play of form and volume, it does not seem self-conscious in expressing an individualistic architectural identity.

In the interior, the hospital does not present a coherent identity. First, each floor is designed differently with different material palettes, finishes, designer elements and color schemes. Second, the exterior elements like the arched windows and jaalis become visible from the interior alongside the fine décor of the lobbies and office spaces. An occasional detail in flooring and carpet pattern might allude to Islamic geometric patterns but otherwise the space is mostly consistent with contemporary commercial interiors in the city, of no apparent style. The interior of the school, on the other hand, is continuous with the outside, with the predominant material palette and finishes of plastered walls and white painted surfaces interspersed with dashes of color, continuing into the interior.

In view of the specific choices and decisions taken in the architectural language and stylistic references in the various architectural elements, it becomes necessary to investigate the project teams that were instrumental in the 'making' of both institutions.

2.3 Two Clients, Two Architects[41]

The Saifee Hospital deployed a large team in its making. From the articulation of an 'Islamic-Fatimid' identity to the technological requirements of the hospital, the team represents the various areas of expertise and mobilization required for a project of such complexity. The Diamond Jubilee High School employed a smaller team but a well-defined process of commissioning and approving designs. The final outcome of both institutions is invariably a combined effort, a translation of a series of negotiations between the various members of the team and client.

The Saifee Hospital Team

The Saifee hospital was envisioned by Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, the present leader of the Bohra community and the 52nd Da`i in line. The project is based on the legal (and political) processes started by his father, Syedna Taher Saifuddin the 51[st] Da`i, and to whom the hospital is dedicated. The Bohras follow a highly centralized top-down approach to construction of contemporary institutions. All building projects are organized and managed by the Ta`amirat or Building Department with its office at the Dawat-e Hadiyah headquarters at Badri Mahal.[42] A member of the royal (any Syedna's)

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41 Information for this section is almost completely based on my informal and semi-structured interviews with architects, contractors and Bohra and Khoja client teams in the field in July 2008 and January 2009 and through telephone interviews in Spring 2009. In keeping with social research norms and interviewees' preferences for anonymity, interviewees not identified by name. Both the hospital and the school are large projects in Bombay that can only be conceived and executed through various private and government agencies working in tandem. I investigate the extents and mechanisms through which these projects collaborate with state authorities.
42 On D.N. Road in Fort, Bombay.

family is in-charge of all planning level decisions. Abdul Qadir Bhai Saheb[43] heads the

Ta'amirat department and Shabbir Bhai Saheb at the department was in-charge of the

Saifee hospital project. For smaller projects, individual architects from the community

are commissioned. Because the Bohra clergy today have elaborate instructions as to the

visual aspects of the building, architects familiar with stylistic and ornamental elements

and religious aayats or verses (inscriptions) are usually preferred.[44] The clergy have a

developed a repertoire of elements re-produced from the Fatimid buildings in Cairo that

they have deployed in the architecture of religious and non-religious institutions in India

in the last two decades. I will discuss this further in the following chapter. But it would

suffice to say that the instructions regarding the façade would be elaborate in this case.

Other instructions related to building or room orientations with respect to Qibla or

direction of prayer (Mecca), internal organization, hierarchies of officials, motif and

material would also be given.[45]

The commissioned architects for the hospital were J. P. Parekh & Son Architects,

a large firm that has designed a number of mega-projects in the city. Popular for their

housing schemes, apartment and office buildings, they work closely with builders and are

well-versed with legal aspects of projects in Bombay. J. P. Parekh & Son Architects are

also involved in the design of the new Burhani College of Commerce which is under

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43 Bhai Saheb translates Brother-Sir and is a suffix for members of the Royal family. It is also a more general honorific address in modern Hindi-Urdu conversation.
44 A small number of Bohra architects, usually pre-educated at the Jamea in Surat, Gujarat in religious studies, or familiarized with the repertoire of forms used in the Fatimid style, build these projects. Of the handful with this training Juzer Chaawala and Ismail Neemuchwala are most noted within the community.
45 In the case of a school built by the interviewed architect, the Ta`amirat department, in addition to overseeing the Fatimid architectural details, also specified the spatial relationship between the principal of the school and the various classrooms.

litigation due to discrepancies within the Trust..[46] The firm takes an active part in

fighting the court cases as architects signed up for the commission. Legal cases require

representation by architects to submit a number of alternate proposals for site

development, based on economic feasibility and profitability and to maximize and

legalize matters of FSI and TDR (Transfer Development Rights) and incorporate them

into the final design.[47] They also handle various approvals for demolition and

construction works carried out for any project. Another member on the team is the

'approval' or 'Municipal' architect. In the case of the Saifee Hospital it was Abhay

Talpade. This is an architect on behalf of the municipality who is commissioned as part

of the team to mediate the do's and don'ts of site and construction related issues. He

facilitates government sanction of various parts of the project, approval processes that

would take much longer and usually become very cumbersome if handled without his

support..[48]

Local contractors were employed for construction although there was also

significant technical input from various local and foreign firms regarding fire safety,

electrical engineering, air conditioning, etc.[49] The Bohras prefer assigning work

contracts to members of the community. The encouragement of Bohra enterprise through

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46 The Burhani College, as built today, does not reach its maximum allowable height 'due to the paucity of
funds in the Bohra Dawat in the seventies' [From interview]. The plans to increase its height to that
allowed by the municipality have been set in motion. The old building would be raised to the ground and a
new college building designed by J. P. Parekh & Son Architects is to replace it. Some members on the
Trust are opposed to some aspects of the re-construction and re-development of the entire property.
47 This is a special service provided by the approval architect where internal loopholes within sanction
processes, land-use specifications and property by-laws are utilized to exploit the site for its commercial
value.
48 From interview with a famous architect within the Bohra community
49 Honeywell Building Solutions was on the team for Fire Safety while a local firm Eskayem Consultants
Pvt. Ltd. took charge of Air Conditioning.

internal patronage works towards the re-distribution of community funds within the community itself. In addition it is believed that members of the Bohra community will further understand the significance and method of deploying the Fatimid style in buildings.[50] The contractors FEM Constructions, for the Saifee Hospital, were also involved in the Al-Masjid Al-Muazzam Mosque project in Surat. It was the first large-scale project to deploy the Fatimid style[51] in totality on a Bohra building In India. Their familiarity with the architecture of the community and close links with members of the royal family would make them suitable for the commission. A number of smaller sub-contractors for glassworks, grill-works, furniture and upholstery were part of the team. The interior décor was assigned to five different leading interior designers in Bombay, who divided their work by floor levels. Of these, Prakash Mankar, is a famous hotel and restaurant designer specialized in the design and execution of commercial interiors.

The Diamond Jubilee High School Team

The Center of Excellence, Diamond Jubilee High School was floated as an invited competition to a group of architects including the Bombay-based architect P. K. Das in 2001. The architects designing the winning entry were Mr. Nitin Killawala, Mr. Avinash Joshi and Mr. Himanshu Upadhyay from Group Seven Architects & Planners Pvt. Ltd. Charles Correa, a leading architect was on the jury. The brief specified the vision of the

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50 Isma`ili builder guilds have been popularized by various Isma`ili scholars. These guilds are supposed to have developed advanced knowledge of the esoteric meaning of various forms and ornaments of Fatimid architecture. Without going so far as suggesting the same, my conversations with various sub-contractors of glassworks and upholstery revealed an advanced palette of Fatimid patterns, inscriptions and forms with their implied methods of use amongst them.
51 The 'Fatimid style' and the construction of Bohra architectural identity will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3

AKES of high quality of education imparted at the institution. There was an emphasis on early childhood development and teaching methods. As far as I was told there were no aesthetic restrictions or recommendations. The architects described their work as 'functional'.[52] However, the Aga Khan is a sophisticated client with final approval and substantive interest in international architecture.[53] The AKES closely supervised the entire project. In contrast to the Bohra clergy, the AKES, AKHS and AKPBSI organizations are run by young Khojas with an older first-level staffing. It was refreshing to meet with young professionals heading philanthropic undertakings on this scale. All legal support and approval from local authorities are handled internally by the organizations. Elaborate teams for technical assessment and specifications for projects are formed by the AKPBSI. The completed Diamond Jubilee High School was inaugurated by Princess Zahra in 2007 on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the Aga Khan IV. The name of the institutions remains as a memory of the Aga Khan III's diamond jubilee in 1947.

Comparison of approaches

Both institutions, the Saifee Hospital and the Diamond Jubilee High School, provide modern health and educational facilities. The Bohras have built schools and the Khojas have built hospitals. But apart from institutional buildings, such as Saifee Hospital, they have a larger public philanthropic framework through which they function. The Bohras have been involved in a number of 'greening' and landscape revitalization

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52 From interview with high officials at AKES.
53 I will discuss the architectural patronage of the Aga Khan in Chapter 3

projects in the city of Bombay. There are various proposals for the D.N. Road and Nesbit

Bridge as well as traffic islands in the city that focus on a clean environment along with

plantations in different stages of completion. These programs skirt the historic Bohra

mohullas in the city[54] and are often in complete collaboration with the BMC. The Bohras

have been circulating various propaganda material in the city regarding eco-friendly

development and renewal projects [Fig. 20-24]. The Hasanah or banking and loaning

within the community has significant philanthropic impact for the community as a

whole.[55] However, even in this wider pattern of philanthropy, respondents indicated that

the commissioning, design, contracting, and construction approach follows that described

in the Saifee Hospital case study.

The Khojas in Bombay work through their various departments of the Aga Khan

Development Network. Their public philanthropy extends to areas of sanitation and water

management, 'technical and legal assistance' for infrastructure development, and housing

projects for poor classes in the city through the AKPBSI. They too have an elaborate

banking system in the city; and they too employ an AKDN pattern of design

commissioning, supervision, and contracting employed in the Diamond Jubilee High

School.

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54 The 'Saaf Aangan' project launched in 2005 focuses on clean surroundings within the mohulla and the
areas surrounding it. The caption read "Keep your mohulla clean & be a winner" with a first prize
amounting to Rs. 21,052 for the cleanest mohulla.
55 Blank (2001) p. 201

Both communities have expanded their philanthropic activity nationally and internationally in places with a substantial population of their respective communities.[56] The Bohras are a localized community with their administrative center currently in Bombay. The Khojas have an international community spread across the world with main centers at Canada, Central and North Africa, Syria, a number of countries in Central Asia, Pakistan and India. Bombay has been a center for both communities early in the twentieth century until a little after partition when the Aga Khan III passed away and the present Aga Khan IV set-up headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. For the Bohras, Bombay is still headquarters. The significance of Bombay for the construction of communal identity within each community will be discussed in the following chapter.

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56 The Aga Khan has sometimes been described as the 'venture capitalist to the third world'. However, the Aga Khan Development Network has also spread its influence across the world through entrepreneurship within the community. The Bohras have a more localized impact in the western regions in India, the bordering areas in Pakistan and a significant diaspora in parts of Africa and the rest of the world.

Chapter 3:

Constructing Isma`ili Identity in Contemporary Bombay

Chapter 3 extracts ideas from the previous chapter in two ways – by expanding the geographical and historical context of site and precinct to that of the urban scale, and by engaging the categories of faith, citizenship and mercantilism of the Isma`ili communities in the city of Bombay to understand how architecture reflects conceptual underpinnings of the contemporary condition. I weave together the fragments of history and geography of Isma`ili patronage from Chapter 2 into a geographical history of the Isma`ilis in the city. The city was established by the East India Trading Company in the seventeenth century and ever since has been a contested territory for the various foreign and indigenous communities that have settled within its limits. I survey some of the religio-political claims on the city by the Isma`ilis with respect to other communities to better situate their contemporary spatial, demographic and cultural context. This urban perspective on Ismaili identity reflects back on the two architectural projects of Saifee Hospital and the Diamond Jubilee High School. By explaining historically the significant changes in communal identity, as expressed through architecture, I suggest possible relationships of the communities with respect to the local state.

3.1 Claims to the City: A Geographical History of the Isma`ilis in Bombay

That the last twenty years mark a significant *modal* change in the expression of identity through architecture must be set against the trajectory of the longer-term development of the Isma`ili communities in the city. I will briefly explain significant modal changes occurring in their history through architectural developments in the city and in the region.

From *Taqiyya* to Urban Trade

It would suffice to say that the neighborhoods of the early converts to Isma`ilism in Gujarat dating from the twelfth and thirteenth century did not follow settlement patterns of their Fatimid ancestors. They simply followed the construction methods and settlement patterns of Gujarati cities and towns at the time. Their neighborhoods appeared as indigenous as any other while their religious institutions had a residential scale basically providing for a small community. The conversions were gradual yet highly organized. Although the Isma`ilis internalized religious aspects of the faith, early architectural patronage was limited to providing basic shelter to a community of predominantly petty traders.[57] Furthermore, the constant threat faced by the Isma`ilis

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57 Sidhpur, Gujarat has been identified as a common center for both Isma`ili communities in the early twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The state of Gujarat was under the rule of a Rajput king Raja Siddhraj Jaisinh who is said to have been tolerant of the Isma`ili missionaries and patronized their mercantile activities. Arguably, the earliest settlement of the Bohras, Hassanpura in Sidhpur, Gujarat dating back to the end of the thirteenth century comprises a main circular street with tightly clustered houses organized around dead end streets branching out of the main street. A fifteenth century Mosque at the gate of this neighborhood built of Hindu temple spoils suggests that they re-used a Mosque built by the Gujarat Sultans during their campaigns in the region. A similar appropriation of an existing Mosque can be seen in the newer settlements in Sidhpur. The Moti Mosque of the Bohras in the new town still maintains the basic

under the successive Sunni sultans in the state of Gujarat, caused them to resort to their

historical doctrine of *Taqiyya*.[58] Taqiyya implied a secrecy of religious practice,

community activity, and of the leaders themselves; and it was manifest in a complete

rejection of public identity. The Isma`ilis were even known to dress and re-name

themselves differently to protect their identity. This had direct implications on the

architectural identity of the community institutions.[59] As a result, the Isma`ilis became

highly de-centralized, alternately practicing as Sunnis or Ithna Ashari Shi`is in public life

depending upon the historical and political circumstances. However, internally they

maintained a strong networked hierarchical society centered on the Isma`ili Da`wa in

Egypt and Yemen.

The Bohras and the Khojas experienced a similar fate in the formative years with

sectarian violence in the state of Gujarat causing an outwardly rejection of identity. A

majority of the Khojas practiced Sunni Islam while a sizeable population practiced Ithna

Ashari Shi'ism. They were indistinguishable from other Muslim groups within the city.

However, with the transfer of the Mustaaliam Da`wa[60] to Gujarat in the sixteenth

century, the Bohra community experienced a new fervor of religious activity. The

proximity of the Da`i in Gujarat caused an influx of saints, theologians, missionaries,

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footprint and the two minarets of the earlier fifteenth century Mosque. [From Kadi, Zoyeb A. 2000.
Sidhpur and its Dawoodi Bohra Houses. New Delhi: Minerva Press, p. 43].
58 Please also refer to Blank (2001) p. 26-27, 43-44, Engineer (1980) p. 18-25 and Daftary (1998, 2004)
59 My previous research has dealt primarily with Bohra secrecy of faith in the architecture of their
Mosques built at the time when Aurangzeb was governor of Gujarat. The execution of the Bohra Syedna
Qutb Khan Qutbuddin ordered at the time, created an extremely vulnerable situation for the community. It
has also been remembered by the community as a single most horrific act of sectarianism in their history in
India. Blank (2001, p. 43-45) writes, "Sunni Imams were appointed to supervise worship at all Bohra
masjids, and attendance at these converted mosques was compulsory for all members of the community.
Heavy taxation was imposed…Bohras reverted to taqiyya, attending Sunni services in public while
carrying on their own rites in secret."
60 The branch of the Fatimid Da`wa led by Imam Mustaali in Yemen, was now led by a Da`i as
representative of the Imam in seclusion.

traders and refugees from Arabia and Egypt.[61] Bohra mohullas in Sidhpur, Ahmedabad, and Khambatt were embellished with Mosques and Madrassas. These institutions were built in the local methods with few 'Islamic' decorative details extant at the time.[62]

The Khoja community on the other hand, by now comprised a much larger population of Hindu land owners and traders, converts from Kutch and Kathiawar regions of Gujarat who initially accepted Islam in a Sufi-Hindu mix. The conversions took place on a large scale by missionaries in the region during the fourteenth century. Their earliest settlements in Mandvi and Mundra, both coastal ship-building centers, showed a similar indigenous method of construction of houses and institutions.[63] They remained in the Kutch and Kathiawar regions of Gujarat right up until the nineteenth century when the rise of Bombay and its shipping market caused a series of migrations to the city. The Bohras constantly migrated between cities in Gujarat with the shift in the Da`wa. The Khojas were not organized by the Nizari Da`wa at the time and were mostly localized communities having particular beliefs in Islam and the chain of succession in leadership of the community.

The Bohras have had deep roots in Bombay since the late seventeenth century when the city was established by the East India Company as a trading center in 1668.[64]

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61 Engineer, pp. 112-121
62 The cusped arch profile, the naukhana or nine niches, and inscriptions of Quranic verse embellished an otherwise indigenous building. From my previous research.
63 There are no definite accounts of the early Khoja settlements in India. The information presented here is based on personal visits to Mandvi and locating the present mohullas of Khojas in the city. There are sizeable populations of Bohras in these cities as well. One can thus generalize to some degree about the congruence of development between the early converts to Isma`ilism.
64 Surat was the major East India Company and Dutch trading post prior to the establishment of the East India Company fort in Bombay. The first dry dock in Bombay was constructed in 1734

Jonah Blank describes the relationship of the Bohras to Bombay as, 'The Bohras helped

create Mumbai, and Mumbai helped create the Bohras. Neither the city nor the

community would have precisely its present-day form if not for the presence of the

other'.[65] The Company favored the indigenous trading communities – the Parsis, the

Gujarati Banias and the Bohras, granting them religious freedom, security and tax-

exemptions to encourage trade in the city.[66] The Company was also responsible for the

allotment of land to house the immigrant traders and labor.[67] Areas north of the fort,

Mazgaon and Dongri, were settled as early as the seventeenth century.[68] A fort wall was

built around the town in 1715 with only a few privileged trading communities secure

within them.[69] The fortified 'European' town was separated from the 'native' town by a

large open expanse called the esplanade. The population of the entire city was estimated

as 60,000 at the time.[70]

The presence of these highly organized and structured trading communities

assisted the Company's trade. Each community had its own trading or mercantile

specialty. People were distinguishable by their dress and customs. Each built their own

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65 Blank (2001) p. 47
66 Kidambi (2007) p. 159
67 Rohatji, Bombay to Mumbai (1998) p. 138. The allotment of land coupled by the heightened needs for security caused the communities to settle in residential clusters in the city. Furthermore, this was a medieval population, migrants from Gujarat,
68 Just to locate these close affiliations of the Bohras and the East India Company within a national history, Aurangzeb's campaigns in the Deccan region at the time would have caused the Mughal Empire to expand to its largest size. His death in 1707 and the collapse of the Mughal empire in quick successive losses, parallels the growth of Bombay as a British trading port city.
69 The island of Bombay extended north and west along two arms. The area in-between was reclaimed at a much later date by quarrying the Malabar and Mazgaon hills. The areas of Mazgaon, where the Diamond Jubilee High School is located, is one of the oldest parts of the 'native' city. The western coast of the west arm of the island city was occupied by cemeteries for the Mohammedans and Christians in the city. It is at the fringes of one of these graveyards that the Saifee Hospital is located today. Rohatji, Bombay to Mumbai (1998) p. 138.
70 Ibid

place of worship, the diversity of which today are the markers of the historical legitimacy of the different communities in certain parts of the city.[71] The Bohra Bazaar or Bazaar Gate in the Fort Area today still preserves the mixed-use nature of the historical precinct. The first residential settlements within the Bohra Bazaar were built in the indigenous wooden trabeate structure with shared walls of brick and stone masonry. In 1805, in addition to the Europeans, several shipping companies were established by Parsi, Parsi China, Bohra, and Hindu merchants.[72] The monopolization of trade in the city by indigenous companies, gave impetus to smaller trades and businesses of all levels and types.[73]

The Khojas were also converted to Islam by Ismaili missionaries from Egypt. However, the lineage of Imams after Nizar took refuge first in Syria and then in Iran under the Qajars. The Aga Khan was a title given to the 46th imam of this Ismaili lineage, Aga Hasan Ali Shah (1817-1881), by the Shah of Persia, Fath Ali Shah Qajar, in the 1850's. The community maintained remote connections to the Imam in Iran. Much later than the Bohras, the Khojas moved into the city of Bombay from the Kutch region in the mid-nineteenth century with the rapid increase in shipping trade and cotton industry in the city.[74] The migration of large numbers of Khoja, Memon and Bhatia[75] businessmen

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71 The 17th century and the early 18th century were witness to a proliferation of Hindu Temples in the areas beyond the fort.

72 Parsis are Gujarati converts to Zoroastrianism. Although most of them trace their roots to coastal cities in Gujarat, they maintain strong cultural links to Persian Zoroastrianism. Parsi China refers to Parsi and Chinese trading collaboratives in the opium and cotton trade.

73 Rohatji, Bombay to Mumbai (1998) p. 146-150

74 The Khojas were centered around coastal cities in the Kutch, Kathiawar and Sindh regions but with the silting of the Gulf of Khambatt in the seventeenth century and the gradual decline of its port cities, Bombay promised better prospects.

75 Memons are Sunni Muslim trading communities having an ethnic origin in Kutch, Kathiawar and Sindh. The Bhatias are Hindu businessmen from Sindh and Rajasthan.

from Gujarat threatened to disturb the commercial dominance of the established Parsi, Bania and Bohra merchant aristocracy.[76] The nineteenth century also saw the migration of Sunni Muslims from the Konkan coastal region south of Bombay. The Jami` Mosque was built in 1802 mainly from funding by the Konkan Sunni Muslim community. Persian Shi`i Muslims and Sunni Muslims from the northern regions of the country migrated in large numbers as well. A large number of Maharashtrian Hindus moved into the areas of Girgaum and Khetwadi. The city had already expanded to the north of the fort due to extensive reclamation of the central Kamatipura and Kharatalao areas. The new communities settled in clusters within the city based on ethnic and class divisions.[77]

A strong distinction between Hindu and Muslim religious groups developed with the Hindu dominated areas of Bhuleshwar, Kalbadevi, Khetwadi and Girgaum in the west side of the Bombay peninsula; and the Muslim dominated areas of Bhendi Bazar, Dongri, Umarkhadi, Mazgaon, and Mandvi along the east side towards the dockyards. If a notional north-south axis can be drawn between these areas, it would run along the present Mohammed Ali Road laid out much later in 1911 by the Bombay Improvement Trust to make the inner parts of the city more accessible to the British municipality [Fig. 25]. The great influx of people from across the hinterland caused the city to densify around the market areas.[78]

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76 Kidambi (2007) p. 25
77 Rohatji, Bombay to Mumbai (1998) p. 152. The fortified European city still remained separated from the native city and although the Company organized some police patrols in the native town, security was a primary concern at the time. Furthermore, these were communities of specific ethnic and religious origins and lived in close proximity to their central religious institutions.
78 At this time, the burial grounds for the Mohammedans and the Europeans occupied a strip of land along the west coast starting at the present location of the Saifee hospital at Charni Road and extending south till the present Marine Lines Station. There were other pockets within the dense settlements of Mazgaon and Bhendi Bazaar that were used for burial of various different Islamic sects.

As briefly discussed in chapter 2, the Isma`ilis occupied smaller pockets within the neighborhoods clustered around the central market area [Fig. 9]. Their neighborhoods comprised the market and so they lived and worked in close proximity. These conditions can still be seen in areas like Pydhonie and Bhendi Bazaar which retain their significance as market areas associated with the commerce on Mohammed Ali Road.

However, there is a difference in the settlement patterns of the Bohras and the Khojas in these neighborhoods. The Bohras, after conversion, remained a single semi-homogenous body namely the Dawoodi Bohras[79] organized by a branch of the Isma`ili Da`wa in India. They had by then, ex-communicated the *rebels*, the village Bohras, the non-trading classes and created a community of urban traders organized under a single spiritual leader, the Syedna.

The remoteness of the Aga Khan's leadership, for the community in Gujarat that staunchly believed in Imamate,[80] caused many Khojas to adopt alternate faiths, mostly Sunni Islam being the dominant paradigm[81] in the western regions. As a result, the Khojas that migrated to the city from various coastal regions in Gujarat, formed de-centralized local communities of Shi`i and Sunni Khojas, some even adopting Hinduism. The dominant community of them all was the Sunni Khojas in Kutch. The Khoja

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79 In 1591, there was a further schism in the Bohra community. Those following the leadership of Syedna Dawood Bin Qutb Shah came to be known as the Dawoodi Bohras. More than 50% of the Dawoodi Bohras live in Gujarat and are predominantly a community of traders. Various internal schisms in the community caused dissident factions and non-trading village Bohras to be ex-communicated. The Dawoodi Bohra community today is largely a trading community.
80 Daftary (1998).
81 Gujarati and Konkan Sunnism.

communities had long-distance ties from India to the Imam through the centuries but

were not organized under him as a single leader based in India until 1866 when the Aga

Khan, on being recognized by the British as the leader of the Khojas, claimed the

community as his own.[82] That they were historically Sunni was a matter of contention for

some of the Sunni Khoja community members although the majority accepted the Aga

Khan's leadership.[83] This was also when the Aga Khan was recognized by the British

crown as the absolute and divine leader of the Shi`i Isma`ili community of Khojas and

assigned him 'mastership' of all Jamaat property including Jamaatkhanas and burial

grounds that were transferred to the Shi`i Isma`ili Khojas under the leadership of the Aga

Khan.[84]

Isma`ili Colonial Facades

The mid-1800's saw the first of many infrastructural colonial interventions in the

city – the railway in 1853, industrial mills in 1854, the reclamation of land by the

quarrying of hills in the 1860's.[85] The revolt of 1857 saw the transfer of administration

from the Company to the British crown. The University of Bombay was established in

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82 In 1834, Aga Khan I fled Iran for Afghanistan and then to India in the 1840's. The Gujarat region in India had a sizeable population of Khojas at the time. In 1845, the Aga Khan issued a public notice to the Khojas to convert to the Shi'i faith. The notice was opposed by Jamaats around the Kutch region. In 1851, the Aga Khan moved to Bombay and took over Jamaat property. This was opposed by the local Jamaat and a case was filed at the court. Sir Erskine Perry announced in his declaration of rights in favor of the Jamaat asserting that each member of the community whether Sunni or Shi'i had a claim to the common property. From Daftary (1998)
83 The Khoja Case 1866. From internet source - http://ismaili.net/Source/khoj.html
84 In 1906, the Aga Khan dismissed the committee of the Khoja Jamaat in Bombay and announced a Shi`i Imami Isma`ili Constitution in 1910 which explained his absolute and unfettered authority in matters of religion and Jamaat.
85 In addition to those mentioned, the removal of the ramparts in the 1860's, the construction of water mains and sewage system in the town, water works at the Vihar lake and the Tulsi lake in 1872 were undertaken by the British.

1857 to expand the educational system in the colonies. The fifty years to follow saw a

proliferation of educational institutions[86] in the city. The Ismailis flourished under British

patronage, consolidating their position along with other Gujarati communities as the new

and burgeoning middle class of the city. Modern education, entrepreneurship and

professionalism were encouraged within the community.[87] This provided impetus to the

community towards integration into the commercial apparatus of the British trading city.

The nineteenth century, after the 1857 revolt against the East India Company,

with the increased patronage of the British, was witness to a substantial change in

architectural identity of the Ismaili communities. The Bohrwads, residential

neighborhoods exclusively for the Bohra community, built in the nineteenth century in a

number of cities and towns in Gujarat, Rajasthan including Bombay were expressive of

growing economic prosperity, new values and aspirations of the bourgeois community.[88]

A number of richer merchant communities adopted the western building styles as a

symbol of status and 'progressiveness'.[89] The neo-classical[90] façade with its round

arches, capitals, pilasters, pediments, cornice bands, dormer windows and fan-lights was

readily adopted. The interiors were also embellished by ornamental staircases,

chandeliers and balustrade designs borrowed from western patrons. Bohra Mosques and

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86 By 1900, there were "13 institutions of higher learning (arts and professional colleges), 481 secondary schools (English Medium)". Bombay had become the premier center for higher learning in western India. From Kidambi (2007) p. 28
87 The Aga Khan was an important spokesperson for the entire Indian Muslim community at the time. His involvement in the establishment of the Aligarh Anglo-Oriental College in 1875 by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and its acquisition of university status in 1920 were of great significance to the country's Muslims. He was also one of the founding fathers of the Muslim League and its first President.
88 The newer neighborhoods of the Bohras at Bhendi Bazaar and the gated housing colonies of the Khojas at Mazgaon and Dongri date back to the early-twentieth century.
89 Kidambi (2007) p. 84
90 Ibid p. 67

Khoja Jamaatkhanas in the Bombay presidency region became symbols of bourgeois

pride having a eclectic mix of clock towers, arcaded street fronts, and eclectic neo-

classical facades.[91] With the leaders of both communities settling in Bombay during this

period, a number of social and religious institutions were established. Philanthropy *within*

the community in the form of 'building' Mosques, Jamaatkhanas, Madrassas, libraries,

medical facilities, community halls and Musafirkhanas for Isma`ili travelers became very

common. By the early twentieth century, institutions for modern health and education[92]

were being established for the lesser fortunate of their respective communities. This trend

carried on until independence and the partition of India.

The migration and settling of various Muslim sects to the city came with its share

of complications. There was constant tension between various factions that led to minor

conflict episodes. However, it was the celebration of Muharram in the city that was of

growing concern to the municipality. While the Isma`ilis kept their celebrations within

the Mosque or *Imambara*, the Sunnis and the Shi'i communities from Persia[93] and the

hinterland celebrated Muharram on the streets. To the Shi'i communities, this was a day

of mourning while for the Sunni communities it evoked varied sentiments, including for

some a day of actual celebration. These differences led to major conflicts where the

performance of celebrations and processions through the different neighborhoods became

a way of instigating violence between two factions. In a case filed in 1904, a Sunni

91 Saifee Masjid, built by the Bohras in 1925 to commemorate the arrival of the Dawa to Bombay, is a
landmark building dominating the residential neighborhood of the Bohras at Bhendi Bazaar. The Khoja
Jamaatkhanas at Karimabad, Hasanabad and the Darkhana Jamaatkhana built in 1935 have a similar impact
with their tall clock towers dominating the skyline of the neighborhoods.
92 The first English-medium school built by the Khojas was in the coastal city of Mundra in
93 Ithna Ashari Shi`i communities or Twelvers Shi`i Islam.

celebration in the Bohra mohulla at Doctor Street, Bhendi Bazaar was attacked by the

Bohras.[94] Bohras requested police protection, fearing an attack from the Sunnis, and were

granted it immediately. This led to an uproar regarding biases of the municipality towards

some communities. Furthermore, the economic prosperity of the Bohras caused further

resentment amongst other Muslims. In addition to conflicts between various Islamic

communities, August 1893 was witness to a horrific Hindu-Muslim riot in the city which

saw a complete breakdown of social institutions established by the British.[95] Isma`ili

status as members of a larger Muslim body has been contested on numerous occasions in

the Bazaars of Bombay. In any case Shi`i Islam is marginalized by the Sunni majorities.

Furthermore, Isma`ili beliefs in divinity of the Imam and priesthood and the heterodox

rituals and attitudes have been a matter of ridicule and critique by popular Muslim voices

and clergy as well.

Throughout the early and mid-twentieth century, the city expanded northwards

with middle class Bohras and Khojas migrating north along to various parts of the city

[Fig. 8]. In the 1900's, a Bohra bazaar in Bandra was created by purchasing two entire

streets within a predominantly Christian fishing village. The Khojas, on the other hand,

developed a number of gated residential neighborhoods in Bandra as well as Andheri.

Land, far north,[96] was acquired by the community leaders for development at a later date.

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94 Kidambi (2007)pp. 138-145
95 Ibid pp. 115, 117-121
96 Large tracts of land were purchased by the Syedna and the Aga Khan in the northern suburbs of Bandra
and Andheri/Marol. The development of the Bandra mohulla has been explained earlier. The Marol
mohulla is located in close proximity to a Christian settlement organized about a convent school. It is in the
midst of the eastern industrial suburbs of Bombay beyond the airport at Andheri. This land was purchased
by Syedna Taher Saifuddin in the early twentieth century and then developed as an exclusively Bohra
settlement. The entire precinct is spread over an area of approximately 18 acres. The Marol mohulla, as
compared to those in South Bombay and in Bandra, is not organized about a Bazaar. There is a line of

Religious complexes, community graveyards and private estates of the leaders and prominent members of the community were re-configured to house the growing community in South Bombay. A number of institutions sprang up to meet the immediate social and religious requirements of the community.

An important demographic that emerges is that the newer suburbs were settled by the more affluent middle-class who could afford to migrate within the city. The older precincts of Mazgaon and Bhendi Bazaar, within the dense market settlements, were left with predominantly poorer Isma`ili families. This demographic continues to date (with some exceptions). A greater concentration of community philanthropic institutions are also located in the poorer precincts in south Bombay while a number of socio-cultural institutions developed in the newer suburban areas with an indistinct architectural expression [Fig. 9].

Art Deco and Architectural Assimilation

Early in the twentieth century, the city experienced a series of contestations of interest, with increasing immigration, the surging nationalist movement attempting to unite the various religious factions, the khilafat movement against the British which divided the Muslims on sectarian grounds, and the various class-related struggles of unions and mill-owners with the Muslim trading classes egging the Muslim League into a two-nation solution – all of which encouraged an Isma`ili retreat to architectural

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commercial development on the main street but it mainly contains shops for the local Bohra population selling kurtas, ridas, and some groceries and general stores.

anonymity and assimilation. Gokhale, Tilak and Gandhi's campaigns in Bombay met

with great resistance from the various Muslim factions. The two World Wars had made

decolonization inevitable. A new Indian state, under the charismatic leadership of

Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhi, was sought to be a secular democratic nation. [97] But with

the formation of India, came the partition and the horrors of the mass migration across the

new border. A sizeable population of Khojas migrated to Pakistan. However, the Bohras

were advised by the Syedna to remain in India.

>He addressed a circular letter to his followers, calling upon them to remain
>
>composed and to pursue their traditional avocation with faith in God and
>
>confidence in the Government and the good intentions of the majority
>
>community. Thus the seat of the mission remained to flourish on Indian soil...to
>
>the nation he gifted, through the Prime Minister Nehru, Saifee Villa at Dandi, the
>
>place where Mahatma Gandhi, the idol of India, stayed during his historic salt
>
>March. [98]

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97 The burgeoning nation-state of India sought to 'modernize' its subjects to 'make' citizens of them. So
on the one hand there was the Indian nationalist fervor led by Gandhi and Nehru and the Indian National
Congress and on the other the British imperialist aspirations, both seeking the 'modernity' of the new
nation's backward and marginalized peoples. Nehru and Gandhi both were staunch secularists. The
identification of Hindus and Muslims as communities based on ethnic differences was clearly 'un-modern'.
So in the second decade of the twentieth century, while Indian nationalism was gathering momentum, the
British set out to design their new capital city at Delhi. For the Muslims, the modern nation however,
appeared as a political formation that necessarily needed to subsume religious identity and that traditional
community was fundamentally opposed to the idea of secular citizenship. And although the Khilafat
movement, with its pan-Islamic nature, was successfully launched by Muslims and non-Muslims against
the British in the sub-continent, nationalism in the country sought to subvert 'exclusively Islamic' political
claims for a larger nationalist cause. That this cause was perceived by the Muslims as overtly Hindu
becomes apparent in the memoirs of the Aga Khan III in the second decade of the twentieth century; "At
the same time I began to realize...that the Congress Party, the only active and responsible political
organization in the country, would prove itself incapable, was already proving itself incapable, of
representing India's Muslims, or of dealing adequately or justly with the needs and aspirations of the
Muslim community. The pressure of Hindu extremism was too strong. Already that artificial unity which
the British Raj had imposed from without, was cracking." Aga Khan III. 1954. The Memoirs of Aga Khan.
London: Cassell and Co., Ltd. As sited in From 'Role of the Late Aga Khan as a leader of the Muslims of
the Subcontinent in the Political field' by Sherali Alidina, Karachi. url:
http://www.ismaili.net/Source/0036.html
98 Speaking Among Friends p. 19

The partition had made Indian Muslims highly vulnerable. There was widespread insecurity about the loyalty of the Muslims in the country. Muslims were dismissed from the various service and labor oriented jobs in private, commercial and industrial enterprise. Muslim Government employees were under great suspicion of being a fifth column. They were accused of being "actively sympathetic to Pakistan [thus]...constitut[ing] a dangerous element in the fabric of administration."[99]

> [Jawaharlal] Nehru felt that it was the responsibility of the Congress and the government to make Muslims in India feel secure. [Sardar Vallabhbhai] Patel, on the other hand, was inclined to place the responsibility on the minorities themselves. He had once told Nehru that the "Muslim citizens in India [had] a responsibility to remove the doubts and misgivings entertained by a large section of the people about their loyalty founded largely on their past association with the demand for Pakistan and the unfortunate activities of some of them."[100]

The rapid modernization of the country under the leadership of Nehru had a strong secular and 'progressive' tendency.[101] Traditional religious identity, within the nationalist discourse of the time, was seen as the 'enemy of progress'. Nehru's 'modern' vision had a considerable impact on the social fabric of Bombay. The city saw a further flux of people. Immigration to the city increased with the increase in labor and service opportunities. Although some moved to Karachi,[102] Bombay remained the center for the

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99 Guha (2007) pp. 367-369
100 From Letter of 28 March 1950, in SPC, Vol. 10, p. 19. As cited by Guha (2007) p. 140
101 Nehru's secular 'modern' nationalism, in a certain way, suppressed religious identity. On the suggestion of Dr. Rajendra Prasad visiting the inauguration ceremony of the re-built Somnath temple in Gujarat (one that was demolished by the Muslim iconoclast Mahmud of Ghazni), Nehru dissuaded him from attending the event. "The prime minister thought that public officials should never *publicly* associate with faiths and shrines. The president, on the other hand, believed that they should be equally and publicly respectful of all." From Guha (2007) p. 142.
102 Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, also moved to Karachi.

Isma`ilis through the partition and its subsequent re-organization. But the most significant

challenge to the Gujarati monopoly over the city began in 1952 with the creation of

Andhra Pradesh based on linguistic lines. Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad, led by

Shankarrao Deo, claimed Bombay as part of the linguistic state of Maharashtra. The

former Bombay Presidency comprised most of what is now Maharshtra and Gujarat. The

Bombay Citizens' Committee was headed by a prominent Gujarati industrialist Sir

Purushottamdas Thakurdas. J. R. D. Tata was also a member of the committee at the time

along with the city's most successful lawyers, scholars and doctors. They constituted the

Gujarati-speaking bourgeoisie, irrespective of religion.

> The Bombay Citizens' Committee had a one-point agenda – to keep the city out
> of the state of Maharashtra.[103]

This was justified based on historical, economic, sociological and geographical

factors.[104] In 1955, N. V. Gadgil, a Congress member from the city of Pune, "warned,

then the future of Bombay would be decided on the streets of Bombay."[105] A violent

agitation and protest ensued leading to large scale rioting and looting. Finally, Nehru

agreed that the city of Bombay would be capital to the new Marathi-speaking state of

Maharashtra. In 1960 the two states of Gujarat and Maharashtra were formed.

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103 Guha (2007) pp. 197-205
104 The committee claimed the city based on linguistic lines with the Marathi speakers constituting only 43% of the city's population, They emphasized the required de-territorialization required for the city to function as the financial and industrial capital of the country. Further, they perceived the Maharashtrian claim as clearly compromising the cosmopolitan multicultural character of the city. The geographical isolation of the city from the mainland was deemed as the final justification for its independence. Ibid.
105 Guha (2007) pp. 197-205

For the Ismailis and their architecture in Bombay, the early years following independence have been that of an uncertainty of style. Religious institutions built in the northern suburbs of Bombay maintain traditional motif while adopting the new construction materials. With larger spans came larger institutions. Arches with foliate or cusped patterns in plaster relief, small domes or pavilions, stained glass inscriptions of names of 'Allah', 'Mohammed', 'Ali', or 'Husain', concrete jaalis were employed to imply its function. At this time a number of public philanthropic institutions were also built, re-built or older ones opened to the public. The Prince Aly Khan Hospital at Aga Hall, Mazgaon was built in 1945 and opened to the public in 1958. It is a plain five story high building having no recognizable 'Islamic' characteristics. Its recognizably art deco aesthetic makes it akin to any other apartment building in the city. The Diamond Jubilee schools established in 1947 have a similar non-aesthetic lacking even the art deco reference. The Burhani College of Commerce established by the Bohras in 1970 is a cuboidal building with vertical concrete sun shades on its façade. Its simple lines conform to the modernist aesthetic employed by the Public Works Department at the time. It is only through the publicity photograph in the college brochure that I realized that the building today stands incomplete and that the sun shades turn into subtle arched profiles at the top.[106] The Saifi High School and the Tayyibi Girls High School are more conscious of an 'Islamic' style employing arched overhangs above the arched windows. A number of social and philanthropic institutions were built by leading industrialists, businessmen and mercantile communities in this period. These buildings too were built with similar aesthetic sense. However, most of these buildings are indistinguishable for their patronage or ethnic/religious affiliations.

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106 Burhani College of Commerce & Arts Prospectus 2008-09 cover.

The Context of Isma`ili Architecture in Contemporary Bombay

In 1966, from the ashes of the Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad, the Shiv Sena

(Shiv's army) a right wing Hindu political party was founded under the leadership of

Balasaheb Thackeray, to claim the city back from the 'immigrants'. He agitated against

the marginalization of the locals in their own state and asked for greater representation of

Marathi-speaking locals in matters of the state, greater employment for the Marathis and

immigration checks to the city. Fashioning himself on the Maratha ruler Shivaji, and

valorizing Shivaji's battles with the Mughals, Thackaray soon aspired for a pan-Indian

influence and associated more vigorously with the more established Sangh Parivar

(United Family) in their anti-Muslim campaigns around the country. With their center

established firmly at Dadar area of Bombay, the Shiv Sena today involve themselves in

an extremist Hindu nationalism that centers around anti-Muslim propaganda and

violence, moral policing, immigrant checks and murders. However, their Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP)-combined electoral victory in 1995 at the state elections, following the

massive Hindu-Muslim riots in 1992[107] in the city of Bombay, have consolidated their

position in the city. And although they lost the following state elections, they have

107 On September 25, 1990, the BJP chief L.K. Advani, embarked upon a Rath Yatra (Chariot Procession/Travel) to a Mughal built Babri Masjid claiming its significance as the birth place of the Hindu god Lord Rama in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. Although the site was claimed for its significance as early as 1884, "…Ayodhya opened up the possibility of bringing these far-flung traditions together into a unified movement." The very idea of a united Hindu nationalist fervor took form against the Muslims. And in turn the threat to the Babri Mosque had caused the Muslims to unite in its defense. Even the state run Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was under suspicion. There were demands to allow worship in ASI controlled Mosques. [Guha (2007) p. 578-79]. In 1991 BJP won state elections in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. Following their victory, the BJP led right-wing Hindu parties united in the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992. It saw the confluence of different political parties from across the nation uniting in an overtly Hindu nationalist cause. The incident sent shockwaves in all parts of the country. Bombay was witness to the most horrific communal riots in its history, including the widespread destruction of Muslim buildings.

remained unchallenged in city elections with an unfettered reign over the Bombay

Municipal Corporation. It was also in 1995 that the city of Bombay was renamed

'Mumbai' after an indigenous Hindu Goddess, Mumbadevi.[108]

While these trends would suggest a new period of retreat in Isma`ili architectural

expression, the rise of the Hindu right-wing in Bombay was paralleled by the dramatic

increase in international and local businesses in the city. With the freeing of trade, under

the aegis of the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the then Finance Minister Dr.

Manmohan Singh (now Prime Minister) in the eighties, the city saw the development of a

new middle class population. With state mediation and control removed, the business

sector flourished. The Isma`ilis, needless to say, stepped up once again to the new

opportunities. Throughout the nineties, entrepreneurship was encouraged by the leaders

of the two communities. The establishment of the Aga Khan networks internationally and

those of the Bohras, albeit on a much smaller scale, further propelled the community into

trade and business. The networking with diasporic communities through a burgeoning

liberal international market marked a new phase of economic prosperity for the individual

and the community.

But the fate of the Isma`ili mercantile classes was not that of the majority of

Indian Muslims. The Sachar Report of 2006 confirmed the sustained marginalization of

the majority of Muslims in the Indian economy and social life. It confirmed the

vulnerability of Muslims in the Indian community, comprising the poorer sections of the

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108 A number of roads, junctions, transit stations and landmarks were renamed at the time. The renaming
of the Victoria Terminus and the Domestic and International Airport in Bombay after the famous
Chhatrapati Shivaji being some of them.

country, and their 'lack' of representation in the socio-economic, political and educational fields.

> Muslims carry a double burden of being labeled as "anti-national" and as being "appeased" at the same time.[109]

Muslims in the country expressed great insecurity regarding their 'visibility in public spaces' and their 'backwardness' with respect to housing, education, and gender. Their concerns about 'governmental inaction', police highhandedness in dealing with muslims and the injustices and discriminatory practices of the judiciary with respect to riot victims. That these insecurities had led to ghettoization of Muslims in every major city including Bombay served to isolate these neighborhoods from the purview of the state. The building of the Mohammed Ali flyover through the dense (and congested) heart of Muslim stronghold in the city echoes these apprehensions of the state. Access to modern health and education services were primary concerns that the Sachar Report voiced.

The last twenty years in Bombay have thus seen the rise of Hindu right wing politics in the city and a surge of Hindu communalism and nationalism at the scale of the nation. The simultaneous marginalization of the Muslims has led to widespread insecurity and a sense of vulnerability within the community. Amidst this communal antagonism, the mercantile Isma`ilis have economically flourished within the new liberal market reforms of the state. The flamboyance of Bohra and Khoja architecture in the city built in

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109 Sachar Report 2006 (Online Edition) p. 11

the last twenty years may thus be seen as an active renewal in their communal identities.

The following sub-chapters will analyze these recent changes in architectural identity.

3.2 Isma`ili Patronage of Contemporary Architecture

With reference to such a rich past, the last twenty years have been extremely significant for the Isma`ilis and their architecture. Their prominence in public life in the city and as Islamic communities functioning within its framework raises a number of questions of identity and patronage. Both communities have, since the eighties, vigorously re-constituted their identity. That architecture has been central to this quest becomes apparent in the resurrection of the Fatimid heritage by the Bohras through detailed documentation of Fatimid architecture in Cairo, the restoration of these 'heritage' buildings themselves and then a meticulous extraction of architectural fragments for re-production in contemporary Bohra buildings. The Aga Khan's passion for architecture focused on the Islamic world may also be interpreted as an indication of the instrumentality of architecture in articulating identity. I will explain contemporary Isma`ili patronage of contemporary architecture through a brief survey of their community and public institutions to better locate my two case study institutions in Bombay within a trajectory of development of architectural identity within Ismaili communities.

One of the most enduring conclusions of this research is that, by transferring the

concepts of Fatemi architecture from North Africa and Egypt to the city of Surat

in India, the members of the Fatemi community can revive and preserve the glory

of the Fatemiyeen in modern times.[110]

The Bohras say they have always been Fatemiyeen.[111] That the Syedna is a

descendant of the lineage of Da`is in Fatimid Egypt and in Yemen is indisputable. They

claim that theologically there has been continuity within the Da`wa since the time of

Imam Jafar-as-Sadiq when the Isma`ili Dawa was first organized. Their aesthetic turn to

Fatimid Egypt, however, has less established beginnings. The Syedna, today, has more

than a million followers in India, Pakistan, Egypt, East Africa, Yemen and in much

smaller numbers in the various big cities across the world. Most of those who comprise

these communities are the richer Gujarati Bohras who had migrated to these regions at

the time of the partition or more recently in the eighties with India opening up to

international trade. There is also a sizeable population of Fatemiyeen in North and East

Africa who are indigenous Mustaali Isma`ili populations now claimed by the leader

within the fold. The globalized society of the seventies allowed for diasporic

communities to be assimilated into a centralized religious ideology. Jonah Blank explains

that the adoption of communication technology led to greater "social cohesion" within

the community.[112] His book, 'Mullahs on the Mainframe' directly addresses the

centralized top-down orthodoxy that the Syedna and his clergy could impress upon the

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110 Dr. Ayman Fu'ad Sayyid Foreword to Al Aqmar p. 13
111 Based on Interview with the Bohra 'royal' family.
112 Blank (2001) p. 174-183

rest of the community, through the use of the internet, broadcasting technology, and even identity cards. He further explains that a heightened awareness of sectarian identity had emerged with the rise of the Ayatollah in Iran in 1979 and the theological pronouncements it made. The Syedna assumed the title of Al-Dai-al-Fatemi in the early nineties. Almost in consummation of his title, he went about the restoration of key Fatimid monuments in the medieval city of Cairo. The Mosque of Al-Hakim (Jame al-Anwar) was the first of the monuments restored followed by the Mosque of Al-Aqmar, Al-Juyushi, and Al-Lulua in various parts of the city [Fig. 26]. Architecture was an important medium for the transfer. Simultaneous to the restoration works, written and diagrammed monographs on each building were prepared by Jafar Us Sadiq M. Saifuddin, a member of the royal family, which documented in meticulous detail the history of the site, its significance today, various inscriptions, their meanings and esoteric interpretations, architectural details and elements that can be copied in mosques in India and the specific blessing associated with each [Fig. 27-29]. These kinds of documents are rare in that a conscious inquiry of architectural forms and details were made by religious leaders for the singular motive of deployment on a large scale as a new architectural identity.

> This volume provides an opportunity that is rarely available to scholars: to hear
> directly the authoritative voice of a community member for whom Fatimid
> buildings are neither mere monuments not tourist sites, but rather centres of a
> living tradition.[113]

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113 Sanders, Paula. Foreword to Al Juyushi p. 13

The Fatimid style finds physical form in a number of explicit and implicit ways. The blunt, stepped minaret of the Al-Juyushi, the screened arched windows, the central medallion in its Mihrab dome, the corner muqarnas detail of Al-Aqmar, the type of pointed arch or the radial pattern above the main entrance doorway. Every pattern on any part of the Mosque in any location is essentially Fatimid. Every inscription and every aayat on its surface is unarguably Fatimid. On asking about their origins, I received a quick answer 'Everything the Fatemiyeen does, is basically Fatemiyeen'.

For the construction of Bohra contemporary identity then, architecture was instrumental. The allusion to Egyptian mosques was a direct appropriation of a forgotten heritage. The fragments that became the Al-Jame al-Muazzam Mosque in Surat reminded the community of their heritage, of their 'descendency' and more importantly of their religious belief. This was clearly the *barakat* that the Mosque in Surat received in copying fragments of mosques in Cairo.[114] The meaning The Mosque in Surat was the first built in a Fatimid style and thus had the blessing of its ancestors. Baraqat as a mode of allusion is followed quite unabashedly by the community.

All these architectural fragments, allusions to heritage and its subsequent restoration, esoteric interpretations of inscriptions, patterns, and numerology had a distinctly Shi`i taste to it. The Fatimids were 'essentially' a Shi`i dynasty in that they challenged the (Sunni) Caliphate at Baghdad in the tenth century and established their

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114 The word barakat or blessing was repeatedly used by various members of the royal family during my interviews. Their way of understanding architectural referencing was by way of blessings. If they needed the blessings of a particular religious martyr, The architecture of his tomb was incorporated into the design of the new building. This method of referencing architecture extended into what they saw as 'local' as well.

own at Cairo, Egypt. This was a glorious moment in the history of the Isma`ili

community. It experienced a theological expression of Isma`ili Shi`ism as much as it did

in architectural forms. The significance of ornament, numerology, patterns, inscriptions,

details were established as Shi`i as recent studies have shown.[115] That some of their

appropriation in the architecture at Surat must be a construction of significance, its

essentially Shi'i meaning cannot be dismissed. The Bohras celebrate this by adopting

'their' heritage in re-defining contemporary identity.

This era is one of consolidation[116]

In this section I have explained how architecture was instrumental in creating

Bohra identity and moreover in reaffirming faith. The reification of these fragments of

constructed heritage begins to resonate in the various media and become instrumental in

sustaining identity. The multitude of Mosques, Jamaatkhanas, Community halls, and

Madrassas built with allusions to a Fatimid style are markers of contemporary Bohra faith

in Bombay, different from the ruins of the past that mark 'other' allegiances and

patronage. Older Bohra Mosques are constantly renovated to the Fatimid style in keeping

with the religious aspirations of the community. This is the patronage of a community

asserting its faith within itself. And the same Fatimid style marks its public institutions as

well. Whether school or hospital the fragments of Fatimid Egypt do not miss the eye. The

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115 Jonathan M. Bloom, (2007), Arts of the City Victorious: Islamic Art and Architecture in Fatimid North Africa and Egypt; Arzina Lalani, (2009), Degrees of Excellence: A Fatimid Treatise on Leadership in Islam; Heinz; and Heinz Halm, (1997), The Fatimids and their Traditions of Learning among some of the publications from the Institute of Isma`ili Studies. In addition, the conference 'People of the Prophet's House: Art, Architecture and Shi`ism in the Islamic World' had a number of renowned scholars speak to the topic of the Fatimids in Egypt and their 'Shi`ism'.
116 Interview with an architect working for the Bohra community speaking of Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin's reign as compared to a more formative period under the Syedna Taher Saifuddin.

consolidation of a Fatimid identity within the community and a projection of the same

outwards into the public realm through the medium of architecture is what characterizes

the last twenty years of the Bohra's architectural projects.

I must reiterate that Bohra identity, in its resurrection of a traditional Islamic

identity, also expresses an inherent willingness to adopt modern social ideas and

technology. According to Jonah Blank's (2001) *Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and*

Modernity among the Daudi Bohras, the Bohras constantly identify themselves through

this dichotomy – of modernist and traditionally Islamic.[117] He explains the pivotal role

played by the Syedna Taher Saifuddin, father to Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, in

modernizing education within the community. He mentions the Syedna's "fascination

with modern ideas and Western customs [that] continued to grow"[118] causing the

community to open up to new ideas and influences. Although he was a scholar of Fatimid

culture, the Syedna Taher Saifuddin sought to modernize within a mainstream of Indian

practice. The reform to a traditional Islamic Fatimid identity and a strict orthopraxy was

instituted by the present Syedna Mohammed Buhanuddin in the late seventies and early

eighties through a series of declarations. This, however, for the Bohra does not conflict

with the modernity to which the community aspires, or in buildings like the Saifee

Hospital.

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117 Blank (2001) p. 211
118 Blank (2001) p. 185

Since its inception thirty years ago, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture has played an important role in bringing the best of the architecture of the Muslim world to the attention of the international community. This recognition has benefited the dialogue between Islamic societies and the rest of the world, and has provided a much-needed source of inspiration at the local level for a new generation of architects committed to creating the best spatial and situational circumstances for the future.[119]

The Diamond Jubilee High School is one of a large portfolio of AKDN architectural and social projects. The Aga Khan has been an important political figure for the cause of 'modernization' of Muslims in many areas of modern India. The Aga Khan III had held important positions at the Aligarh Muslim University, an institution established in 1875 to further modern education in the arts and sciences within the Muslims of the country.[120] He was also instrumental in social reform within the communities along with the revered Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Having been educated in Britain, the Aga Khan III has had a highly westernized outlook ushering the Khojas into rapid modernization by encouraging education and entrepreneurship within the community. Their migration from East Africa through to various parts of the world has seen the rise of many prominent professionals 'working with' or 'leading' international institutions. The Aga Khan IV, the present leader of the Khojas since 1957, embodies similar ideals as those of his grandfather, the Aga Khan III. Prince Karim Al-Husseni

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119 Mohsen Mostafavi Event welcome address, Brochure, Aga Khan Award for Architecture Tenth Award Cycle, 2005-2007 Event to launch exhibition at Harvard University Graduate School of Design, March 31 – May 21, 2008.
120 Patronage of home towns is a common practice. The first modern educational establishment for the Khojas was a community school in Mundra, Kutch in 1905 under the patronage of the Aga Khan III Sultan Mohammed Shah.

Aga Khan IV was born in Geneva in 1936, but shortly after, with the outbreak of the

Second World War moved to East Africa, where was brought up. He joined Harvard

University as an undergraduate and pursued Middle Eastern Studies and Islamic History.

He was appointed heir to the Aga Khan III at the age of twenty and today operates from

his headquarters in Aiglemont, France.[121] His concerns are centered on the Islamic world

(broadly defined as societies with significant Muslim presence) and its 'development'.

Since the formation and incorporation of the Aga Khan Development Network in the

1970s throughout the Islamic World (that transcends continents in its endeavor), the Aga

Khan has taken on the responsibility of the entire region of global Islam. The Khojas

have re-constituted themselves into an international community, working through an

immaculate network of de-centralized units, providing services across this region.

The concern that the Aga Khan IV has clearly voiced is that of 'Islam' and

modernity.[122] His interest in architectural heritage of Islamic dynasties across the region

parallels the spread of his development network for the social and economic upliftment of

Muslim communities. That architecture to the Aga Khan has played a central role as

Islamic heritage and as an institutionalization of development across the region is crucial

to this thesis. The Aga Khan's passion for architecture has found various forms - from the

numerous heritage resorts and real estate development projects around the world to the

institution of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1977 and the establishment of the

Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture in 1979 at MIT and Harvard. At MIT and

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121 The Aga Khan Development Network, www.akdn.org.
122 The Aga Khan III explained his appointment of his grandson, Aga Khan IV, as heir because he "was convinced that the Ismailis would be better served if the next Imam was a young person, who had grown up amidst these changing conditions, and who could bring new perspectives and vision to the office of the Imamate." [From Thobani (1993) p. 26, 27-35]

Harvard, the program focuses on the study of Islamic Architecture in various historical contexts. It advances scholarship on theoretical issues of the study of Islamic architecture, modernity and Islam, exchanges between Islamic and 'other' cultures, amongst the most salient.

The Aga Khan Award was formulated to recognize examples of architectural excellence in the Islamic world with concerns ranging from social housing and community improvement and development to contemporary design and conservation work. It strives to award the project that meets "not only people's physical, social and economic needs, but that also stimulates and responds to their cultural and spiritual expectations."[123] As a model, it supports pluralism and diversity, contemporary architecture, social concern, cultural identity, relevant responses to local contexts of material, climate and people. At its inception, the Aga Khan Award, was concerned with the problematic questions surrounding Islam and modernity and the representation of an Islamic identity through contemporary media. In due course of time, the award has begun to represent even the non-Muslim developing world and consequently the geographical regions it occupies.[124]

That Islamic architecture, broadly defined, is central to the Aga Khan's interests' impresses upon the larger patronage of the Aga Khan Development Network, including the AKES Diamond Jubilee High School. The Development Network, although highly organized and centered around the Aga Khan's patronage, works through de-centralized

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123 From Aga Khan Award website: http://www.akdn.org/akaa
124 Also refer Romi Khosla, The Loneliness of a Long Distant Future: Dilemmas of Contemporary Architecture [Tulika Books, New Delhi, c.2002] p. 71

units that address different sectors (e.g., education, health, etc.) and varied local and contextual issues. So while the award has a range of issues, so does the Development Network. From award winning architecture like the Mughal Sheraton Hotel in Delhi to the Aranya Housing in Gujarat, and from the Aga Khan Academy in Hyderabad to the Diamond Jubilee High School in Bombay, the Aga Khan's patronage across the country is highly varied (or highly consistent depending on the way it is perceived). One can always ask the question, "Why does a school need to have anything 'Islamic' about it?" These questions have been dealt with by the Development Network across the world and have produced a wide range of results. In closer proximity to Bombay, the Aga Khan University in Pakistan directly uses forms from a popular repertoire of 'Islamic' architecture, the arch and the courtyard, abstracts them and then develops an architectural language for the same. In Hyderabad, the new Aga Khan Academy, established by the AKDN again finds an aesthetic expression of 'Islamic' and 'modern' through the use of the splayed arched arcade, clearly regional and also clearly regional Islamic; while its inner splayed surfaces remove it from its traditional context. These examples really do raise questions regarding the aesthetic of the school within the larger context of the Aga Khan's architectural patronage.

The inconsistency (or consistency the way you look at it) of the Aga Khan's architectural patronage can be explained by his position on with regard to contemporary society (including the Islamic world). The Aga Khan speaks of a plural society constituted by a rich diversity of cultural, political, social, and economic conditions. He alludes to a regionalist ideology. Architecture of the various institutions built by the

Development Network manifest the 'local' and 'regional' in their design and so reject the deployment of centralized forms and directives. Every situation is dealt with locally and through a specific mode. In that respect it is also a global or international mode of approach in which regional characteristics vary.

A significant aspect of this local approach emerged during one of my visits to the Aga Hall complex. Inspite of the non-descript buildings in the complex, the Aga Hall expresses a conscious 'Islamic' character. Once past the gate, along the approach road to the complex is the Aga Hall Wadi Jamaatkhana, built contemporaneously to the school, and designed with small bulbous domes with finials, arched windows with concrete jaalis shaded over by arched overhangs, a minaret like form reminiscent of the Fatimid minarets of Egypt flanking its two storied hall. I was amazed at the clarity in difference of expression between the Khoja community and public architecture. These were two manifestations of the 'local' approach. The de-centralized aesthetic that the Aga Khan promulgates finds sharply contrasting expressions at the level of the community and that of the public. Both levels necessarily need to deal with 'Islamic' of the Isma`ili identity, the public more conscious of its modernity while the community at ease with its traditions.

Summary

It is interesting to note that both the Bohras and Khojas deal with their 'Islamic' identity in their patronage of institutional architecture, whether at the scale of the region

or at the scale of the city. For the Bohras the construction of their Fatimid identity affects various aspects of their lives. From orthopraxy to attire and from community institutions to public philanthropic institutions, the Fatimid identity theme carries through. The 'modern' works its way into the gaps provided by the elements of Fatimid allusion in architecture. This sub-chapter brought forward a sharply contrasting aesthetic performance in the Khoja institutions at the community scale and those in the public realm. This difference is subtle for the Bohras. Within the centralized aesthetic of 'royal' Fatimid architecture, there is also room to express 'other' affiliations. For the Khojas, orthopraxy is maintained within the community, with limited expression in the public realm. A modern aesthetic prevails in the public realm. And a predominantly 'Islamic' aesthetic at the community level. However, the de-sacralization of Khoja aesthetics impacts both community and public institutions. The 'Islamic' and the 'modern' seek to mediate, and be mediated by, local conditions, sensibilities and capabilities as discussed below.[125]

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125 Based on an interview with a high official at AKPBSI (Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, India)

3.3 Faith and Public Philanthropy

The preceding sub-chapter explained the consistencies and inconsistencies between the two case studies and the larger architectural patronage of each Isma`ili community. The expression of Isma`ili communal identity in the hospital and the school thus requires a closer reading. Since the two institutions are identified by a larger populace as philanthropic institutions built by two Isma`ili communities in the city, brings to the fore modes of expression of 'communal philanthropy' adopted by each as well as the varying degrees of 'communal faith' expressed in their making. That philanthropy and charity is of significance to the Isma`ili communities becomes evident at the scale of the city and precinct. But its recognition in the two institutional buildings as communal acts of faith requires a more thorough reading of each building.

> Islam is a perpetual endeavour towards an equitable order, premised on submission to One God of all-encompassing benevolence who has gifted the human person the power to perceive and reason so as to discern the Truth.[126]

> May Allah make you share my blessings. May He keep one portion (of the blessings He has bestowed upon me) for myself and 69 portions for you O mumineen.[127]

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126 Shams Vellani, Philanthropy in Islam, Aga Khan Development Network - International Charity Law Comparative Seminar, Beijing, China October 12 - 14, 2004. As cited by:
http://www.icnl.org/KNOWLEDGE/pubs/ChinaConference/Philanthropy_Islam.pdf
127 Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (TUS), 5th Muharram waaz, Mumbai 1424 7:16 PM - 10th April 2009 | 16th Rabi al-Aakhar 1430H [as cited by www.Mumineen.org]

There exists a second form of generosity that contributes to growing the

independence of the person. This concept, in which the goal is to make the

person the master of their destiny, is the most beneficial in the eyes of Allah.[128]

Faith

Philanthropy within the Isma'ili community sustains itself simply, in large

measure, out of sheer faith. And there is nothing specifically 'Isma'ili' about this. *Any*

religious community would consider philanthropy as an act and obligation of faith.

Philanthropy forms a mechanism of justice and equality within the community where the

re-distribution of community resources 'towards equity' within the community is

facilitated when a successful member provides for a needy one. That this act is believed

to 'bless' the giver is clear in the dedicatory plaques of the innumerable Waqf institutions

across the Islamic world. The common notion of blessing or 'barakat' for those who

make charitable institutions is that apart from the goodwill in this life, Allah rewards

"those who have faith and do good works" with paradise in the after-life.

I would like to assert the religious ethic of philanthropy before heading into more

discursive structures of its reception in architecture. Charity in Islam is specified as the

primary mode of dealing with disposable capital. Investment for interest is prohibited in

Islam. Even still, both Bohra and Khoja communities invest money for profit, without

necessarily violating Islamic practices.[129] There are two kinds of charity – one obligatory,

the other optional. Obligatory Isma'ili taxes include Zakat, like for every other Muslim,

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128 Aga Khan IV "The ethic of Islam rests on generosity," Interview conducted by Eric Chol and Christian
Makarian. Translation of an interview in a French publication L'Express, France 4 July, 2007
129 Blank (2001) p. 195-96.

that amounts to 2.5% of a member's annual income. In addition to the Zakat, for the

Bohras there are various other obligatory taxes depending on the income of the family

and the number of members in the household. There are also a number of semi-voluntary

taxes imposed during burial, marriage and occasional offerings to the Syedna (not in

person). Optional contributions to this fund are based on individual acts of reverence

towards the cause, the barakat or simply the leader. In the Bohra community, the

spectacle of contributing optionally is the Kadam Bosi[130] celebration. Here people of the

community are 'allowed' to touch the feet of the Syedna in a massive community

gathering and offer their contributions to the community. These are in the form of

elaborate gifts or monetary contributions of a large order. Just the granting of access to

touch the feet of the Syedna is considered to be an act of extreme piety and is revered

among the community. Contributors are rewarded with the blessings of the leader and a

shawl, usually woven, that is wrapped around the person by the Syedna himself. This is

the highest form of honor for a Bohra.

Similar acts of faith can be observed in the Khojas, although more discreet today.

The act of giving is also less significant within the community since the Aga Khan, as a

leader, holds legal 'mastership' over all common property of the community. The British,

in the 1866 case, granted His Highness Aga Khan III, absolute leadership of the

Khojas.[131] Even still, individual members of the community make large monetary

130 Literally translates 'Touching feet'. For a full description of the type of setting please refer Blank (2001) p. 142-44.
131 In contrast to the Aga Khan, the Syedna Taher Saifuddin in 1921 was refused 'mastership' of the Bohra community and its communal property even though members of the community assigned 'ownership' of their property to him. The report of the Attorney General of Bombay read "The Mullaji Saheb has not and never has had any Sovereign rights in India." According to this report property purchased by the Syedna could be dealt with at will while community property would be mediated by a

contributions to the Aga Khan in sheer reverence of his spiritual and religious leadership.

And even though celebrations like the Kadam Bosi are not popular amongst the Khojas,

the Aga Khan hosts large fund raisers in the west for the various activities of the AKDN.

In both cases, resources are centralized under the leader of the community and then re-

distributed or invested by him at will.

The city of Bombay is replete with a number of philanthropic institutions built by

various prominent individuals, some industrialists, some businessmen and some

politicians. But their relationship to a community is sometimes tenuous. Parsi

philanthropists contributed immensely to public institutions in the nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries, often by name. And although individual institutions were dedicated

to and by individual patrons, the Parsi community at large benefited of their efforts, and a

communal identity of sorts started to emerge. This takes comparable forms in Isma`ili

public philanthropy.

Public Philanthropy

My interest in communal philanthropy is simply in the perception of these two

institutional buildings as representative of communal faith. Both the hospital and the

school inherent express the Isma`ili identity of their builders. The hospital, through its

mélange of Islamic motifs also expresses a 'Muslim' identity. The school makes no such

claim. That both these institutions are nevertheless perceived as built by 'Muslim'

trust. [From Attorney General of Bombay v. Yusuf Ali Ebrahim, AIR 1921 BOM 338. As cited by Banerji, Shiben. 2006. The Arbiter State: Governance of the Minority at the Micro-Level, MCP Graduate thesis (Unpublished), MIT, p. 28-31]

communities can be explained by a larger number of (other) Muslim patients and students

(recognizably Muslim women and girls), as compared to other institutions[132] built by

other denominations in Bombay. I attempt to nuance this perception of 'Isma`ili' identity

with a deeper understanding of communal and public philanthropy.

Philanthropy, in its communal mode, involves a re-distribution of funds within a

determinate group – the community. The "philanthropist," in the final instance, is the

community as a whole or its leader as long as his representation within the community is

undisputed. What is particular of religious philanthropy is that an act of individual piety

is also understood through the lens of religious faith.[133] Harking back to the Kadam Bosi,

it is the reverence and belief in the religion or the leader or the actual barakat that causes

such an act. The transaction of course is maneuvered through the religious community

institutions in whichever form they are.

We can most clearly perceive communal expression of philanthropy when the

community is determinate and *manageable.* The economic unit of philanthropy defined

by the Isma`ilis is that of the community itself. When we apprehend the two institutional

buildings, therefore, there is no doubt that they have been created through communal

charity. In these cases, communal contributions are channelized through complete faith in

the person of the community leader and even dispensed through him. So a sense of

religious faith pervades the philanthropic act.

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132 Based on personal visits to the site and informal interviews with secondary staff at both the hospital
and school.
133 The philanthropic act is associated with the community when referred to the Bohra hospital and the
Isma`ili (Khoja) school.

The re-distribution of community funds for the purpose of public philanthropy

adds another dimension to this act. The spectacle of public philanthropy by the Khoja

community, wholly embodied in its leader, the Aga Khan III, when at his jubilee

celebrations he publicly weighed himself in silver, gold, platinum, or diamonds[134] and

gave the proceeds for charity. He is said to have purposefully gained weight for the

occasion in that his body became a medium for defining the community. But the

philanthropist here was still a leader of a community. It was clear that he was the leader

of a community that has communally held faith 'in' him and had communally made a

contribution to society 'through' him.[135] Public philanthropic acts by the Isma`ilis then

directly allude to their communal identity, which although constructed around faith in

their leaders and religious principles, speaks directly of the (symbolic, financial,

institutional) contributions made by the two communities. The Saifee Hospital and the

Diamond Jubilee High School thus express significant aspects of Isma`ili communal

identity and religious faith.

With respect to both institutions, there are programmatic specificities that require

mediation alongside Isma`ili identity. The hospital is a specialized architectural program

with specific technical requirements. The expression of technology is as much part of a

hospital's identity as would be other aspects of identity. The mélange of traditional and

imagined 'Islamic' forms employed on the façade of the Saifee Hospital were not

perceived as conflicting with this technological requirement. In the case of the Hospital,

the façade and the interior express the two, Islamic and technological, dichotomously as

133 Corresponding to the jubilee celebrations of the Aga Khan's leadership of the Khoja community.
135 This practice has been discontinued by the present Aga Khan IV.

though two disparate aspects of identity, with each finding gaps in the other to express themselves. So in the tall glass curtain-walls of the circulation towers one finds expression of a technological interior while the arched top and slender arched mullions of the curtain wall re-confirm its 'Isma`ili Islamic' exterior identity. The remaining domed and arched façade makes direct references to an Isma`ili Islamic identity. The interior is one that expresses 'facility' and here technology is made explicit in the contemporary interiors of the spaces. The slippage between façade and the interior spaces further exaggerates their disparity.

The school does not require such specialization as with the hospital. However, an institution imparting modern education requires distancing itself from the traditional forms of education in India. For an Isma`ili Islamic educational institution, it becomes crucial to express the departure from the Madrassa, especially since the madrassa is a contemporary form of religious education. The façade and interior experience are consistent in their simultaneous expression of educational aims and Isma`ili identity. To nuance this observation, for the Khojas the separation of identities is at the level of the institutions themselves. Community and public institutions are dealt with differently. That both express aspects of Isma`ili identity becomes significant in understanding the Diamond Jubilee High School. Its outright rejection of any Islamic identity, and its adoption of a modern style is complemented by an overt Islamic identity in the nearby community religious institutions that do have Islamic architectural motifs. Moreover, an Isma`ili connotation is provided by its location on the site, within an Isma`ili neighborhood, opposite the Aga Hall and with the name – The Diamond Jubilee High

School. But whilst most of the Aga Hall complex remains inaccessible visually, the school provides a public front to the community. So while technological and Islamic play themselves out in the body of the Saifee Hospital, the modern and Islamic are separated and dealt with by different Khoja institutions.[136]

However, in its expression of modern immediately outside its traditional neighborhood, the Diamond Jubilee High School makes a clear statement as to its rejection of Islamic identity in the public realm. In sharp contrast the image of the Hospital in the public realm is that of an Islamic institution. This image transcends its use. The Bohras consistently deploy the Fatimid style and motifs on any community or public institution – hospital, school, Madrassa, Jamaatkhana, community hall, tomb, Mosque. The apparent conflict between façade and interior does not arise for the Bohras, which would suggest that the façade expresses beyond the function of the building, an Isma`ili identity. That said the Saifee Hospital does not use the Fatimid style in its original resurrections and so requires closer reading. The following sub-chapter will deal with these aspects of identity within the framework of Islam and citizenship.

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136 This in no way suggests a consistent approach within the Khojas. To mention a couple of exceptions immediately, the Khoja Jamaatkhanas around the world like the one recently built in Ottawa, Canada also address Islam and modernity within their body while educational campuses like the Aga Khan Academy in Hyderabad, India develop a similar language of hybrid forms.

3.4 Citizenship

...the bigger tragedy, perhaps, is not that India is no longer a secular country, but that Bombay is no longer a cosmopolitan city.[137]

The two philanthropic institutions, the Hospital and the School, in their expression of communal identity must engage the 'Islamic' in the public realm. Chapter 3.1 expressed the vulnerability of the Isma`ilis as Muslims in a rising tide of Hindu nationalism. First, their loyalty as Indians was questioned constantly, when slogans like "Go to Pakistan," were voiced by Hindu right-wing fundamentalists. Second, in 1992 riots brought the city of Bombay to a halt.[138] Social ties were severed, mechanisms of the state were deployed against the Muslims, several thousand Muslims were killed, houses looted, shops burnt, businesses uprooted.[139] The Isma`ilis suffered greatly as did the other Muslims. In fact, the visibly 'Muslim' attire of the Bohras made them highly vulnerable at the time.[140] Third, the Sachar Report of 2006 confirms the continued marginalization of the Muslims in the country in the social, economic, educational and moreover political realms.

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137 Behram Contractor, columnist "Bombay Has Lost Its Character," Afternoon Dispatch and Courier, 10 January 1993, reprinted in "Busybee," When Bombay was Bombed: Best of 1992-1993 (Bombay: Oriana, 2004). Upon the destruction of the Babri Masjid, Ayodhya and in the aftermath of the 1992 riots in Bombay. As cited by Guha (2007) p. 634
138 Ibid.
139 Not to suggest that Hindus were not affected, they were, but the losses incurred by the Muslims were substantially greater than those of the Hindus. Furthermore, the state police was involved in several riot incidents in Bombay. Muslim victims and their families were further denied justice for the atrocities when the Srikrishna Report was withdrawn by the BJP as an anti-Hindu document.
140 Blank (2001) p. 268

The sense of being a second-class citizen, let aside being identified as fifth-column, heightened by the communal antagonism of the Hindu nationalists, begins to raise questions of citizenship for Indian Muslims. Many have suggested that Islam is inherently anti-national. They believe that adherents of a certain religion understand that adherence in terms of belief. [141] Faith refers not to personal beliefs but specifically to communal concepts of faith like organized religion. But are these aspects of faith are doctrinally in conflict with 'other' faiths or non-Islamic political formations (like a non-Islamic nation). In the words of Bernard Lewis;

Muslims [] tend to see not a nation subdivided into religious groups but a religion subdivided into nations. [142]

This incommensurable situation for Muslims in Bombay, if true, implies that Muslims can belong only to a religious group and the nation is essentially in opposition to that formation. The term citizenship can then be understood through another term 'membership'. [143] As a citizen one can either be included or excluded from membership. Citizenship is implicitly bound to democracy. A significant aspect of citizenship is the reciprocal relationship of rights and duties. The granting of civil, social and political rights as a citizen is directly linked to an expected set of duties in each realm. So if The Constitution of India ensures equality and protection for all citizens before the law; prohibits any discriminatory acts on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex and place of

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141 Taylor, Mark C. Critical Terms for Religious Studies. 1998. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 21-35.
142 Lewis, Bernard. 2003. The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror. London: Phoenix, xix.
143 Kivisto, Peter on 'Citizenship', Sills, David L. and Merton, Robert K. (Ed.). 2008. International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2nd Edition. 542-544.

birth; and provides freedom and rights to its citizens; it would also require that citizens

perform within civil codes, and are answerable to the law and the state in certain matters.

Muslims in post-partition India are further (i.e., excessively) obliged to perform as

citizens of the nation.[144] Even though India is a secular nation, Muslims in India have an

added responsibility to express their 'loyalty' to it. Citizenship then becomes significant

in relation to their religious identity.

> ...citizenship exists only in democratic regimes, for in nondemocratic ones
> people are subjects rather than citizens. In this regard, there are three crucial
> features that characterize the democratic political system: (1) the right to
> participate in the public sphere; (2) limitations on the power of the government
> over the individual; and (3) a system based on the rule of law, not the arbitrary
> rule of rulers.[145]

These categories, when used to assess the status of Muslims in contemporary

India, and more specifically Bombay, with the recent publication of the Sachar Report in

2006 provide a dismal picture for the Muslims in the country. Citizenship is supposed to

conceal if not erase inequalities between and amongst members. Ideally, the question of

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144 It has been a matter of concern and propaganda for every Hindu right-wing group. Indian author and Scholar Kannan Srinivasan goes as far as suggesting that "The BJP and its paramilitary wing the RSS have been agitating on two issues. One: they have been agitating about the conversion of many tribal (people)s and people in the northeast of India in general to Christianity. And the other issue they have been agitating about is the Muslims in India. (The BJP and RSS are) saying that they (the Muslims) are in effect a sort of 'fifth column,' virtually Pakistani agents...They would like them [Muslims] to become more aggressively Indian and announce that they support Hindu values, and that they minimize their Muslim identity and they would like the Christians In India to become much more discrete in their worship and they would like missionaries in India to stop converting people to Christianity." From online article: http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2003-09/a-2003-09-02-30-1.cfm
145 Ibid

identity should not arise when citizenship is accorded.[146] But against this formidable,

antagonistic body of Hindu communalism, how do the Isma'ilis identify themselves?

The Isma'ilis find themselves in a distinctive condition in Bombay. As Muslims

they are marginalized by the Hindu communalists. But as Shi'i Ismaili Muslims too they

are marginalized by a larger Sunni and Ithna Ashari Shi'i Muslim umma. There has been

a contested identity with their beliefs in Imamate, esoteric interpretations of the Quran

and Hadith and heterodox Islamic attitudes, finding no favor amongst the larger Muslim

populace and religious clerics. This sectarian antagonism can be seen as historic since the

death of the Prophet and also one that has played itself out in the history of Bombay.[147]

That the marginalization of Isma'ilis by Hindus and Muslims has had a significant impact

on the construction of their public identities must then be explained against the broader

scope of 'Islamic' identity in contemporary India. Isma'ili identity, if formed against this

'Islamic' body, would create a tenuous, highly charged, political space for the expression

of citizenship. Within the radical communal antagonism of Hindus and Muslims in

Maharashtra and Gujarat, Muslims have come to be identified as the under-represented,

marginalized, second-citizens. Isma'ili marginality is capable of playing into this

communal antagonism in their identification with 'Islamic' but performing publicly as

'citizens' to meet the expectations of and appease[148] a Hindu dominated state. In a way,

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146 The government, however, follows a policy of non-interference in personal Law of citizens. Thus complete citizenship cannot be achieved until the law recognizes every person as equal citizen.

147 Taqiyya during Aurangzeb's reign, prosperity under the British colonial rule (while the rest of the Muslims were repressed), their lack of support during the Khilafat movement, and now their emergence as public philanthropists in the city. Please refer Chapter 3.1.

148 Another case in appeasing a Hindu dominated society was seen at Nizamuddin, Delhi when BJP (Hindu national party) flags were voluntarily put up around the village in anticipation of their victory with the "desire to have some amount of bargaining power over someone who might emerge as the biggest

their identification with contemporary Indian Islam itself creates that space, wherein the

simultaneous performance of citizenship (in contrast to the capability of contemporary

Indian Islam) sets 'an Isma`ili' identity apart from the rest.

> Bohra identity often veered closer to that of non-Muslim Gujarati mercantile
> communities such as the Parsis or Jain banias than to that of other Muslim
> groups. The communal polarization of the past two decades, however, has driven
> a wedge between the Bohras and the majority population, and forced them out of
> necessity to identify with other members of the besieged Muslim minority.[149]

That the Bohras required to identify with Islam has been proposed as an

imperative by Jonah Blank in his book 'Mullahs on the Mainframe'. With regards to the

Isma`ilis in general, I argue that their marginalization from mainstream Islam provides a

possible vantage from where their performance of citizenship in the public realm can be

perceived by a larger populace as mediating Islam and citizenship. I stress 'public'

because the question of faith and Citizenship for Muslims would only arise when the

larger political formation of Muslims (or nation) is not the same as/or congruent with the

ideal formation of Muslim community or it does not recognize the individual Muslim or

the community as an equal member. It does not necessarily need to imply a compromise

of communal faith but simply a performance of public citizenship. It raises the question;

does it become incumbent for personal and communal faith to find public expression? Or

can communal faith remain within the community and citizenship in the public realm.

This begins to imply a disjunction between communal and public life. It suffices to say

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threat." From Datta, Pradip et al. Nov 10, 1990. Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 25, No. 45, pp. 2487-2489 on http://www.jstor.org/stable /4396965
149 Blank (2001) p. 268

that the performance of citizenship by Muslims is required in the public realm

irrespective of its incorporation into community faith.

> Experience has shown that neither government-run hospitals nor private
> corporate hospitals have succeeded in fully addressing the healthcare needs of
> our people. On the other hand, charitable institutions have repeatedly
> demonstrated their capacity to care irrespective of which community is involved.
> It is my firm belief that all institutions that serve the cause of God by serving the
> needy first usually end up serving all of the society best.[150]

The Isma`ilis thus succeed in mediating faith and citizenship in their program of

public architectural philanthropy. Their concern for the city environment, the health and

education of socially and economically backwards classes, housing and banking needs

presents them as model citizens of the nation. But is the expression of citizenship simply

limited to the (economic) program of public philanthropic institutions or is it expressed in

their architectural identity as well? Following the argument from sub-chapter 3.3

regarding 'Islamic' identity in the public realm mediated by both philanthropic

institutions, a closer reading of the two buildings could begin to answer this question.

The Fatimid style formed by the Bohra community as a coherent visual identity

for every community or public institution distinguishes their buildings from any other

Islamic building in the city. By not distinguishing between community and public

institutions then, the Bohras create a homogenous identity that is recognizable in its

various manifestations. The construction of this distinctly Shi`i Isma`ili Islamic identity

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150 The Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, at the inauguration of the Saifee Hospital in Mumbai on
June 4, 2005. Following is the Text of the PM's speech –
http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=9619&kwd=

by the Bohras in their public philanthropic institutions alludes to an important aspect of the argument. The Fatimid identity is one necessarily in *opposition* to the larger body of Islam. Their Fatimid ancestors in Egypt were those Muslims who overthrew the Sunni Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad. Their assertion of Shi`i identity in their victory gave the war sectarian overtones. The conquest of the Fatimids in Egypt has been termed today as the Sunni revival confirming their sectarian status in history. By adopting the visual identity from their Shi`i Isma`ili ancestors, the Bohras necessarily 'other' Sunni (and Shi`i Ithna Ashari) Islam in the country. Theirs is an identity set in opposition to the rest of Islam in India.

Stories of origin are far more telling of their time of telling, than of the time they claim to tell.[151]

However, the Saifee Hospital has a more complex 'Islamic' reference. Recognizable Fatimid elements on the façade are combined with allusions to more regional Indo-Islamic style elements. This combination of Shi`i Isma`ili Fatimid style and local 'Muslim' styles lays greater claims to its heritage and identity formation. Reading into this a bit further, the Fatimid Egypt style in the case of the Saifee Hospital is mediated by a need to be local, of belonging to a region or country, of being familiar to popular perceptions, to express loyalty and citizenship. So while 'other'ing Indian Islam at large by adopting the Fatimid style in every other institution, the Saifee Hospital re-claims this Islam by adopting its motif.

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151 Robin Evans as cited by Vikramaditya Prakash. Identity Production in Postcolonial Indian Architecture: Re-Covering What We Never Had. From Nalbantoglu G. B. and Wong C. T. (Ed.) Postcolonial space(s), p. 39

I confess that I do not find myself very much at ease with the notion of [a single] Muslim world. Just as it is not possible to give a single face to the Christian or Jewish world, it is not possible to look at Islam as a single block. Muslims come from different cultures, regions and traditions. If you had to write the history of the Muslim people since 1948, what would you write?[152]

Pluralism as an attitude, in the case of the Khojas, begins to have a similar impact. Maintaining an eclectic religious identity in community institutions, Islamic identity is rejected in the Diamond Jubilee High School in lieu of a modern building. The separation of communal and public identity then becomes a mechanism in expressing citizenship in the architectural identity of public philanthropic institutions. The school is clearly a building of the city, built by a famous architect-group from Bombay, and thus establishing its commitment and emancipatory cause to a local context. It becomes a secular embodiment of an economic program of public philanthropy by a local community. But as one of the few modern educational institutions built by Muslims in the city, its complete rejection of traditional Islamic identity for a 'progressive' aesthetic alludes to the 'velocity' of change and modernization that is at odds with a larger body of Islam in the country.

The expression of citizenship in the architectural identity of the two Isma`ili institutions in a way then implies the simultaneous acceptance and denial of an 'Islamic' identity. It is in the choice of a specific Islamic identity that Bohras and by the rejection of Islamic identity that the Khojas perform in the public realm. This attitude is

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152 The Aga Khan 4 Interview: The ethic of Islam rests on generosity – Prince Karim Aga Khan 4th July 2007 French Publication L'Express

structurally similar in that it alludes specifically to a body, an often monolithic Islamic identity in the country, against which the Ismailis construct their own. Thus the breakdown of social relations between Muslims and Hindus allows the Isma`ilis to establish themselves 'within' and 'as distinct from' the 'other' Muslims and performing as citizens in a region that might see the escalation of Hindu nationalism and its impact on the Muslims in the country.

3.5 Mercantilism and Resilience

Immediately after independence in 1947, the new Indian government came down hard on the industrialists and businessmen who had amassed a lot of wealth over the years of colonial rule. They imposed heavy tax payments on the earnings of these companies. The Aga Khan was taxed on all philanthropic ventures. Those contributing to the Khoja treasury were also taxed heavily.[153] This transitional phase in Indian history experienced a boom in hospital construction. Every industrialist family or individual businessman in the city contributed towards the philanthropic cause. The Hinduja Hospital, the Balabhai Nanavati Hosptial, the Bombay Hospital (by the Birlas) are examples of philanthropic institutions established immediately after independence in the early fifties. Most of these institutions were inaugurated by Nehru.

I start with this snippet to radicalize an opposite position to faith and public philanthropy. The urgency was obviously two-fold. On the one hand was the exaggerated need of a new nation comprising a substantial lower economic class and their inaccessibility to health facilities; and on the other, the urgency to communicate effectively the re-distribution of resources back into the community at large.

The city of Bombay, as with any other financial center around the world, manifests the immediacy of the exploitation of resources (mostly human) to create money

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153 Website link

and the simultaneous philanthropic humanitarian concern.[154] The Ismailis comprise a

substantial part of the middle class Muslims in the city. Their vulnerability as a

mercantile community consisting of rich, modern-educated traders and entrepreneurs is

balanced out by their resilience in sustaining mercantile successes. The two communities

have shown a great willingness towards change, assuming the role of the bourgeois

middle class under British colonial rule in India, and now 'becoming' public

philanthropists in the liberal society of the same country despite the rise in Hindu

communalism. It is necessary to acknowledge the leadership in both communities as

being pivotal in the rapid changes in self-identity that the communities have undertaken. I

say undertaken simply because I argue that identity, in the case of the Ismailis, is

constantly constructed by a conscious and reflexive process. In the following sub-chapter

I explain the mercantilist attitudes towards re-distribution of resources within society,

which society itself has made possible; as a mode that affects identity formations in their

institutions.

On the one hand, there is the expression of resources being re-distributed in

society - a more opulent institution implies greater re-distribution. On the other hand, is

the class antagonism caused due to prosperous mercantile communities in the city, and

the extravagance associated with their indulgences. The Saifee Hospital provides an

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154 Slavoj Zizek, in a paper titled 'Nobody Has to be Vile' describes this combinative attitude in Bill
Gates: "[The two faces of Bill Gates are exactly like the two faces of Soros: on the one hand, a cruel
businessman, destroying or buying out competitors, aiming at a virtual monopoly; on the other, the great
philanthropist who makes a point of saying: 'What does it serve to have computers if people do not have
enough to eat?']" Online article: http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n07/zize01_.html.
Sir Jamshetjee Jeejeebhoy earned his money through the opium trade between India and China. The
legitimacy of his extensive philanthropy for the 'good' of a larger public has never been raised in this
respect. The simultaneity and immediacy of capitalist accumulation and the re-distribution of disposable
income within the public at large can be sensed in Bombay.

immaculate, ornamental, twelve story high front to the street, but in its overtly 'Islamic' identity, appears to complement the grandeur of the institution and location with a sense of religious piety. But the interior of the Saifee Hospital is a luxurious experience as well. It deploys expensive material finishes, technological apparati, and equipment. Within the hospital however, a patient or visitor would require reassurance of its services and capabilities. Here, opulence becomes facility. Thus the 'Islamic' garb works to express mercantile successes without the excesses of the same.

Contrasting with the hospital, the Diamond Jubilee High School is nestled within the Mazgaon ensemble of public institutions. Its grandeur is revealed gradually. Its sheer size, color, structural and volumetric displays complement the simplicity of its material finishes ie. plaster and paint. It represents as monumental a place in the simplest of materials. The school is consistent in approach to the interior.

Sub-chapter 3.1 explained the various modes that the Isamilis adopted to sustain themselves within the changing socio-political context of the city in Gujarat and then in Bombay. The agility in articulating identity within rapidly changing contexts is an indicator of the resilience of both communities. As traders and entrepreneurs in the city, the maintenance of goodwill and trust between the community and the state and that between the community and a larger populace is essential. The state benefits directly from the businesses of mercantile communities and the growing managerial class. The last twenty years, since the market reforms and liberalization of the economy in the mid eighties, has been witness to unprecedented growth of the Indian economy. Patronage is a

central aspect to the success of mercantilism. As a result, the development and

establishment of informal social institutions to facilitate mercantile activity, even in

unfavorable relations with the state, is an attitude of mercantile communities.[155] Ashutosh

Varshney, in his book 'Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India'

suggests the primacy of informal civil organizational networks in mercantile cities that

aspect their resilience to ethnic conflicts. His comparison of Surat and Ahmedabad, two

cities in the state of Gujarat, revealed a greater breakdown in social ties between Hindus

and Muslims in Ahmedabad. The cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic nature of the historic port

city of Surat provided resilience, at the level of civic life (outside of religious

affiliations), to the state-facilitated pogroms in 2002.

> ..."Civil society" refers to the space in a given society that (a) exists between the
> family level and the state level, (b) makes inter-connections between individuals
> or families possible, and (c) is independent of the state.[156]

In Bombay, with a history of mercantile communities, these attitudes are

institutionalized informally,[157] creating a resilience of sorts that plays out in the social

realm. Public relations are mediated by mercantilist attitudes where the vision of a larger

ameliorative goal moderates personal or communal tensions.[158] The investment of

mercantile communities in the 'working' of informal institutions in the city, also further

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155 In the aftermath of Gujarat riots in 2002 Isma`ili diplomacy extended itself to congratulate the Chief
Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi (whose involvement in the pogroms cannot be denied) on his successes
in the following elections.
156 Varshney (2002) p. 40
157 The development of social and civic institutions under colonial rule was incidental. The colonial
authorities in Bombay did not intervene into the social affairs of the populace to re-structure their
organizations, but used their existing informal institutional organization and leadership to mobilize the
groups. [Kidambi (2007) p. 133,159]
158 The 1992 Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay caused the breakdown of civic institutions. The Muslims
found themselves in an extremely vulnerable situation with the basic security threat to family and business.

their hold on issues of legality and sanction. Their inherent requirement to work 'with'

the city and 'within' the frameworks provided by it (and at times bending them) assist in

facilitating projects of the magnitude of the hospital and the school.

> I am especially enthusiastic about the potential of what I call "civil society". By
> civil society, I mean a set of institutions which are neither governmental nor
> commercial, organizations which are powered by private energies but designed to
> advance the public good…Civil and private institutions have unique capacities
> for spurring social progress - even when governments falter. For one thing,
> because they are intimately connected to the warp and woof of daily life, they
> can predict new patterns with particular sensitivity. The development of civil
> society can also help meet the challenge of cultural diversity, giving diverse
> constituencies effective ways to express and preserve their distinct identities.[159]

Public philanthropy can then be understood so as to impress at the social level

where the community provides facility to the public. The riots of 1992 in Bombay did not

discriminate between Isma`ilis and 'other' Muslims. For the mob, they were simply

Muslims. The act of accommodating a larger populace within the facilities of a hospital

and school then is tremendous. The association of the community with public

philanthropy establishes their social status with the larger populace and the Isma`ilis

naturalizating themselves within these philanthropic environments, partaking with the

larger public, becomes a mechanism for definition and recognition.

But if mercantilism can be understood as a set of external relationships, it has a

significant aspect of intra-consistency as well. Trading communities, the bourgeois

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159 Aga Khan IV. Speech July 15, 2007 for the Graduation Ceremony of the Masters of Public Affairs
(MPA) Programme at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po). Internet source:
http://ismailimail.wordpress.com/2007/06/16/speech-by-his-highness-the-aga-khan-15-june-2007/

middle class of the nineteenth century, have their own particular attitudes towards

modernization. In Bombay, the Ismailis constituted the middle class Muslim community

that rapidly modernized (and westernized) in the image of their British patrons.[160] A

conscious internal grooming coupled with the willingness to adopt modern education and

'sophistication', values and attitudes established them apart from the labor classes that

worked at the cotton mills or dockyards of the city. As a result, modern health and

education were central to the bourgeois consciousness of being the 'privileged class'.

Attitudes of social improvement and upliftment of lower classes through the development

of a moral code make the middle class the 'new arbiters of appropriate social conduct'.[161]

The insistence on maintaining mercantilist attitudes within the Isma`ili community[162]

actually sustains this hegemonic position with respect to a larger Islamic *umma* in the

city. In their being such compelling statements of their cause, the hospital and the school,

assume a similar hegemonic posture – as institutions of a prosperous and dominant

middle class Muslim community.

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160 The eclecticism of trading communities like the Isma`ilis can be observed in other Muslim traders like
the Memons as well. The Chettinads in Tamil Nadu were patronized by the British as accountants. Their
houseform incorporated a similar colonial façade and architectural elements. Furniture was imported from
various part of the world and the walls were embellished with photographs of themselves in western
clothes. With regard to Bohras, please refer to Blank (2001) p. 47-52
161 Kidambi (2007) p. 210
162 The status of Isma`ilis as petty traders, middle class businessmen and entrepreneurs has been
maintained within the community to this day. Leaders stress financial independence and dissuade members
of the community from providing government of other services. Members are encouraged through internal
loaning mechanisms to start their own businesses. In the nineteenth century Syedna Abde Ali Saifuddin
aggressively convinced village Bohras to accept trading as their profession. A series of ex-communications
of village Bohras and dissidents has maintained an internal consistency of a dominant mercantile
community. Although Dawoodi Bohras are basically a trading community, they are now entering
professional realms. The Khojas have diversified into various fields

3.6 Public Philanthropy as Mode: Mediating Faith, Citizenship and Mercantilism

I have demonstrated how architecture can simultaneously encode the changing socio-cultural aspirations of modern, educated, rich Isma`ili mercantile communities; the antagonism of contemporary Hindu-Muslim communalism; and the performance of citizenship by Muslims in a post-partition Hindu right-wing nationalist context in the city of Bombay. I assert that the various aspects of this condition are specific to contemporary Bombay and that the two public philanthropic institutions built by the Bohras and Khojas are intrinsically bound to this condition in their expression of Isma`ili identity.

Having to maintain various *modes* in the city, from practicing the religious doctrine of *Taqiyya* (or secrecy of faith) to identifying with their pre-conversion Hindu occupational status in adverse political contexts, the Isma`ilis in contemporary Bombay now express themselves as philanthropists in the public realm. My previous research dealt with the religious doctrine of *taqiyya* as practiced by the communities in rejecting Isma`ili identity in public buildings during conflict situations in Ahmedabad. I have explained how elements of colonial architecture were appropriated to create the identity of Isma`ili institutions during British rule in the country. Building upon the argument that the 'construction' of identity is conscious and reflexive of the incidental historical and contemporary context of the minority, I sum up the analysis to explain the public philanthropy of these two buildings in Bombay as a mode of expressing Isma`ili identity that mediates Faith, Citizenship and Mercantilism.

Returning to the Saifee Hospital and the Diamond Jubilee High School, I

conclude that while their architectural identities appear different they are still comparable

in that they are conscious reflections of the contemporary condition faced by these social

groups in contemporary Bombay. They both imagine a contemporaneous body of Islam

against which they choose to define themselves. When Isma`ilism is posed as critical of

monolithic Islam, in the process of establishing oneself against a perceived Islam at large,

minority communities find themselves forming more homogenous communities, where

dissent is punished severely and conformists are obliged to meet all attitudinal and

practical requirements. It requires a certain consolidation of internal attitudes and

orthopraxy to sufficiently identify oneself against another. In a way the Isma`ili

formation of a distinct critical attitude comes with the development of an internal

consistency and refinement of collective ideology.

Isma`ili communal identity has been contested at various levels. The

communities' vulnerability as Shi`i Isma`ilis in a predominantly Sunni and Ithna Ashari

Shi`i context of the Bazaar, as Muslims in a nation with an overwhelming Hindu majority

and as members of a prosperous, mercantile, Muslim middle class, has always been

ameliorated by their agility and willingness to change. Isma`ili public philanthropy is

intrinsically linked to the contemporary condition in Bombay as a conscious performance

of citizenship by a marginalized Islamic minority that finds that space, set against a body

of Islam in the state that is incapable of representing itself. Its inherently communal

nature, as an economic program within a liberal economy of a multi-ethnic, mercantile

city, towards equity in the public realm straddles the categories of faith, citizenship and

mercantilism. The act of public philanthropy cannot be separated from the act of faith within the community, for the betterment of a larger society and also the expression of re-distribution of community resources in the public realm. In that it becomes the 'mode' through which communal identity is articulated and realized. This 'mode' is found within a tenuous negotiation with a contemporary condition in Bombay, and seeks to transcend the inherent vulnerabilities of the Isma`ilis in each category to make specific claims in the articulation of faith, citizenship and mercantilism through the architectural identity of their public philanthropic institutions.

Today, the mercantile successes of the Isma`ilis creates a space for them to claim their position within Muslim Bombay, as a successful sectarian community. The marginalization of the Muslims in post-partition Bombay and the rise of a Hindu right-wing government with overt anti-Muslim propaganda then becomes a condition for forming and asserting sectarian identity. While the Bohra Fatimid identity makes these sectarian claims explicit, the Khoja adoption of a socially modern identity in the public realm implicitly suggests a different position. For the Bohras this is a centralized consistent approach while for the Khojas it is a seemingly de-centralized local approach towards 'modern Islamic' identity; that in a way become consistent with each other. But these claims are not limited to Islamic dimensions of architectural identity. The Khojas claim a local as well as modern identity in their public institutions, as do the Bohra's in the specific articulation of local, Fatimid, and modern interiors, in their respective claims to a local context (of Bombay). In their specific articulation of 'Islamic' and 'Indian', the Isma`ilis through the guidance of their charismatic leaders, then characterize a significant

aspect of our time – the resurgence of the 'religious' and 'regional' in the expression of self. These claims, expressed in architecture, reflect the 'consciousness' of this mercantile Islamic minority community as citizens in contemporary Bombay, and are products of 'a contemporary condition' that I will coalesce in the following concluding note.

Appendix
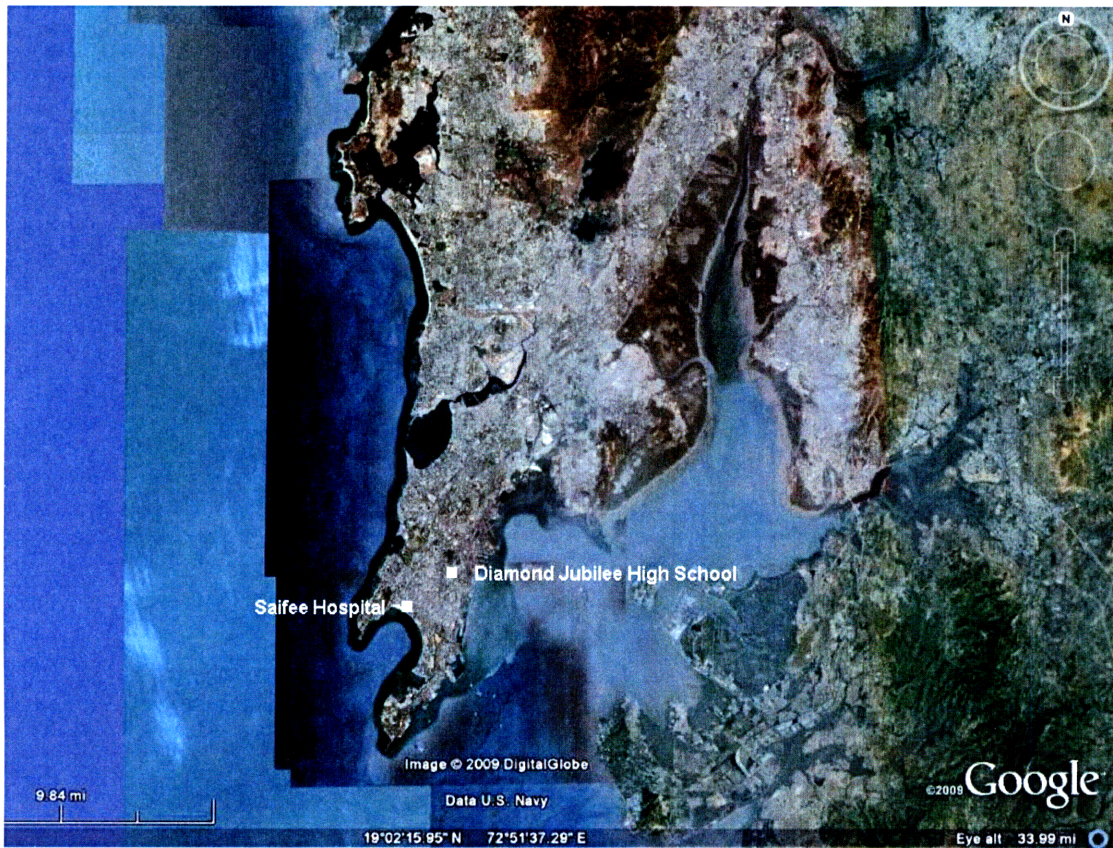
Fig. 1: Satellite View of Bombay indicating the location of The Saifee Hospital and The Diamond Jubilee High School (Source: Google Earth)

Fig. 2: Satellite View of The Saifee Hospital at Charni Road Station and across the Marine Drive (Source: Google Earth)

Fig. 3: Satellite View of The Diamond Jubilee High School across the Nesbit Bridge over the Central Railway line (Source: Google Earth)
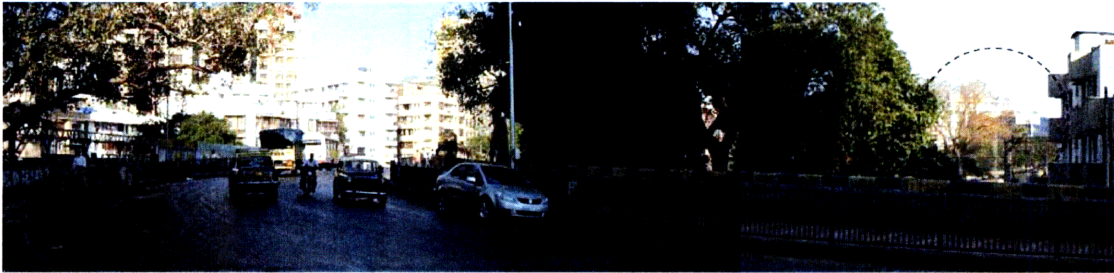
Fig. 4 (Above): The Saifee Hospital viewed from Malabar Hill
Fig. 5 (Below): The Diamond Jubilee High School viewed from Nesbit Bridge

Fig. 6: Satellite View of The Saifee Hospital site, Charni Road Station (Source: Google Earth)
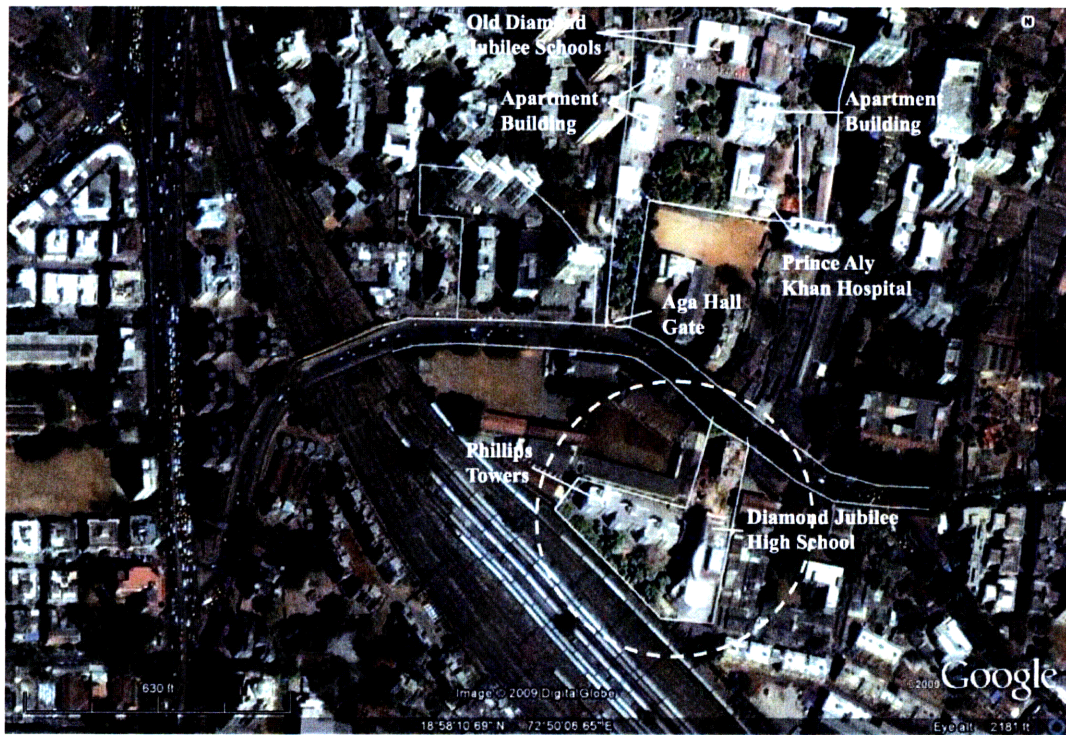
Fig. 7: Satellite View of The Diamond Jubilee High School and Aga Hall site, Mazgaon (Source: Google Earth)
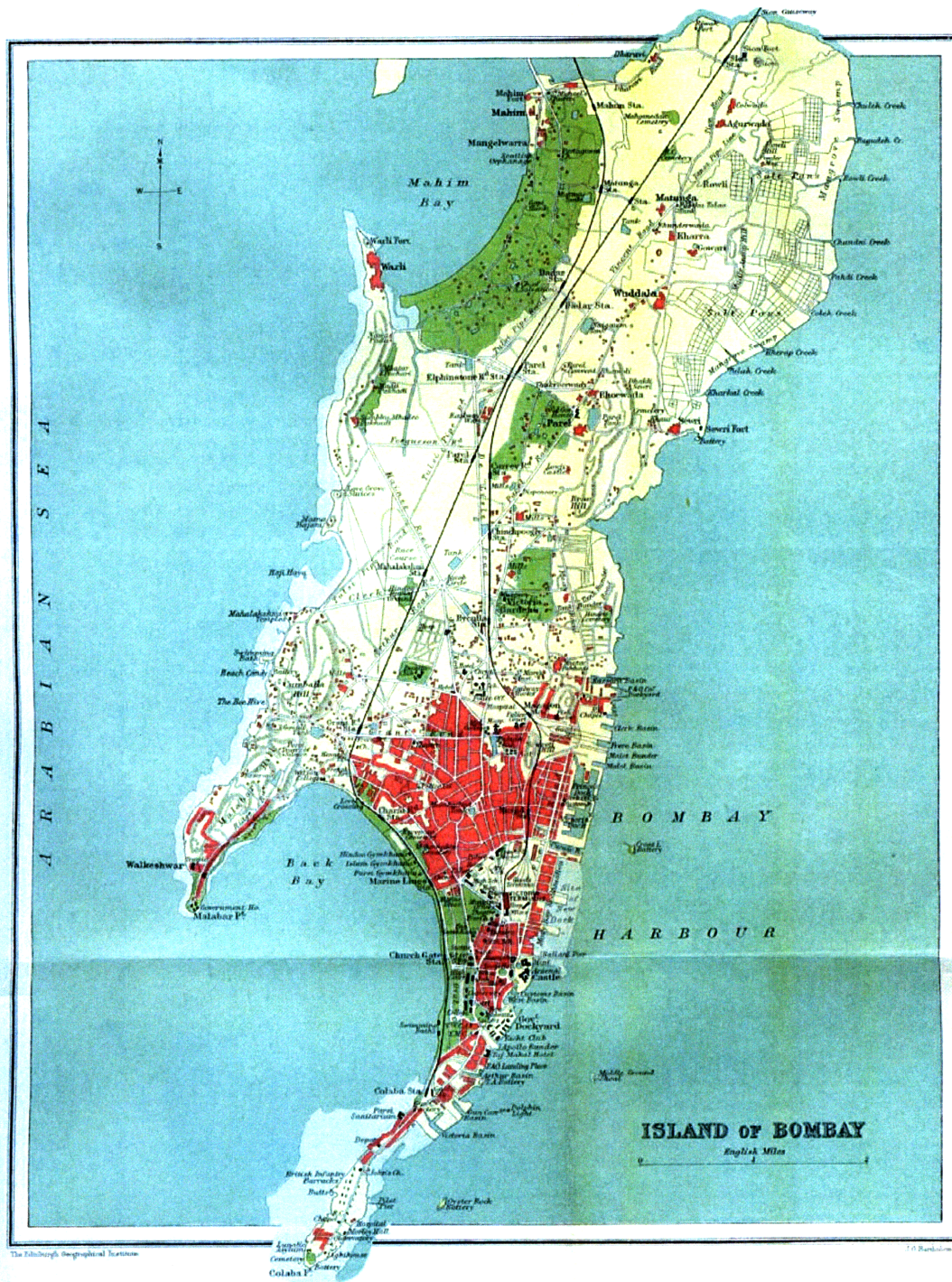
Fig. 8: 1909 Map of Bombay showing the extents of the city. The cemetery lands near Charni Road can be clearly seen, as compared to the institutionalized Mazgaon precinct (Online source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/bombay_1909.jpg)
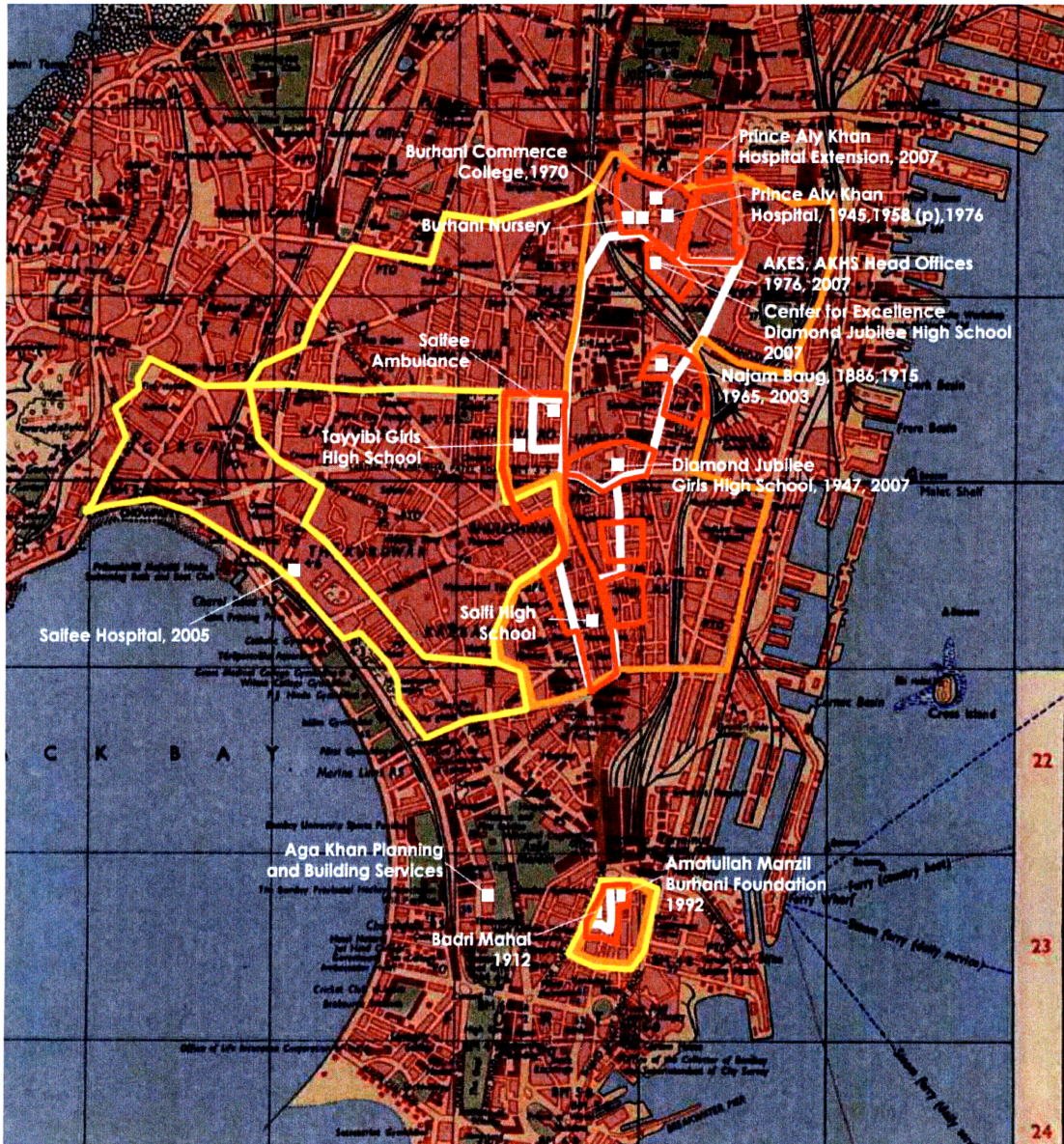
Fig. 9: 1969 Map of Bombay showing the densification of the city fabric. Areas indicated in yellow are predominantly Hindu while those indicated in orange are predominantly Muslim. Areas indicated in red have a predominant Isma`ili population. The white line indicates public thoroughfares through the site. White squares indicate Isma`ili public philanthropic institutions built along these public thoroughfares. (Source: Personal/ Original unknown)

Fig. 10: Apartment Tower at Hiranandani Complex, Powai designed by Hafeez
Contractor (Online source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/premshree/317991813/)

Fig. 11: Apartment Tower at Hiranandani Complex, Powai designed by Hafeez Contractor indicating the neo-Baroque domes (Online source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/himanshu_sarpotdar/358027190/)
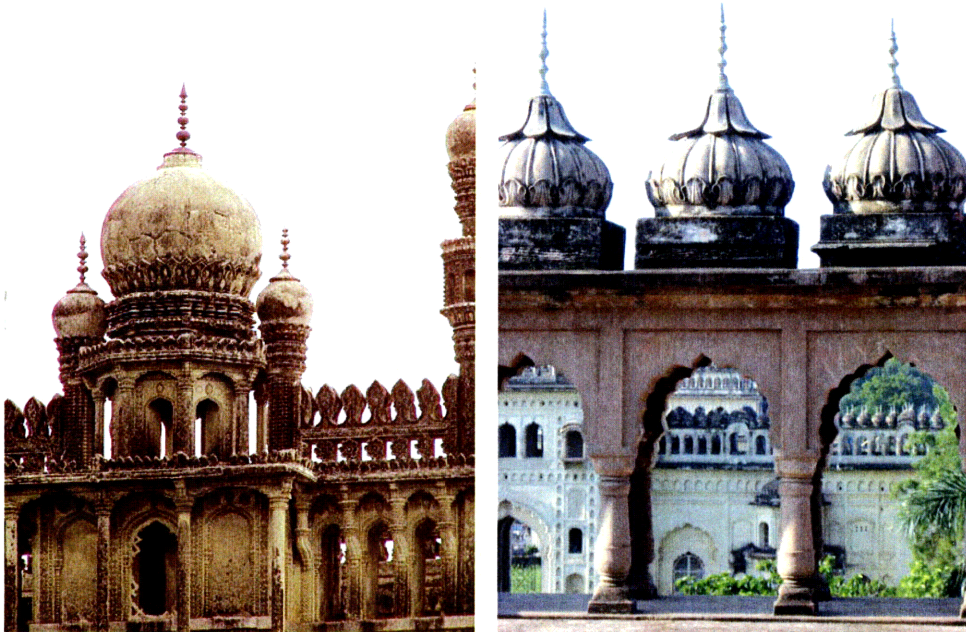
Fig. 12 (Left): Dome, Toli Masjid, Hyderabad (Online Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/deccan/42407988/)
Fig. 13 (Right): Domes, Bada Imambara, Lucknow

Fig. 14: Dome, Roza Mubaraka, Al Masjid Al Muazzam, Surat

Fig. 15: Detail of The Saifee Hospital Facade

Fig. 16: Interior views of The Saifee Hospital (Online source:
http://www.saifeehospital.com/PhotoGalleryLight.html)

Fig. 17: The main administration building fronting the street (Left) with the basketball
ball court in-between (Middle) and the imposing Diamond Jubilee High School building
at the rear (Right)
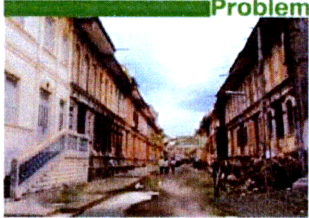
Fig. 18: Street view of The Diamond Jubilee High School
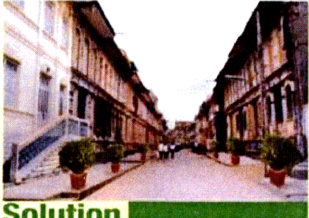
Fig. 19: The entrance to the school viewed from the common drive-way with the curved glass curtain wall above.

Fig. 20-24 (Clockwise): 'Saaf Aangan' or clean surroundings competition brochure. Cover letter to a city garden sub-maintenance contract. Competition brochure for Eco-Friendly School. Newspaper article (2008). (Source: Burhani Foundation, Bombay)
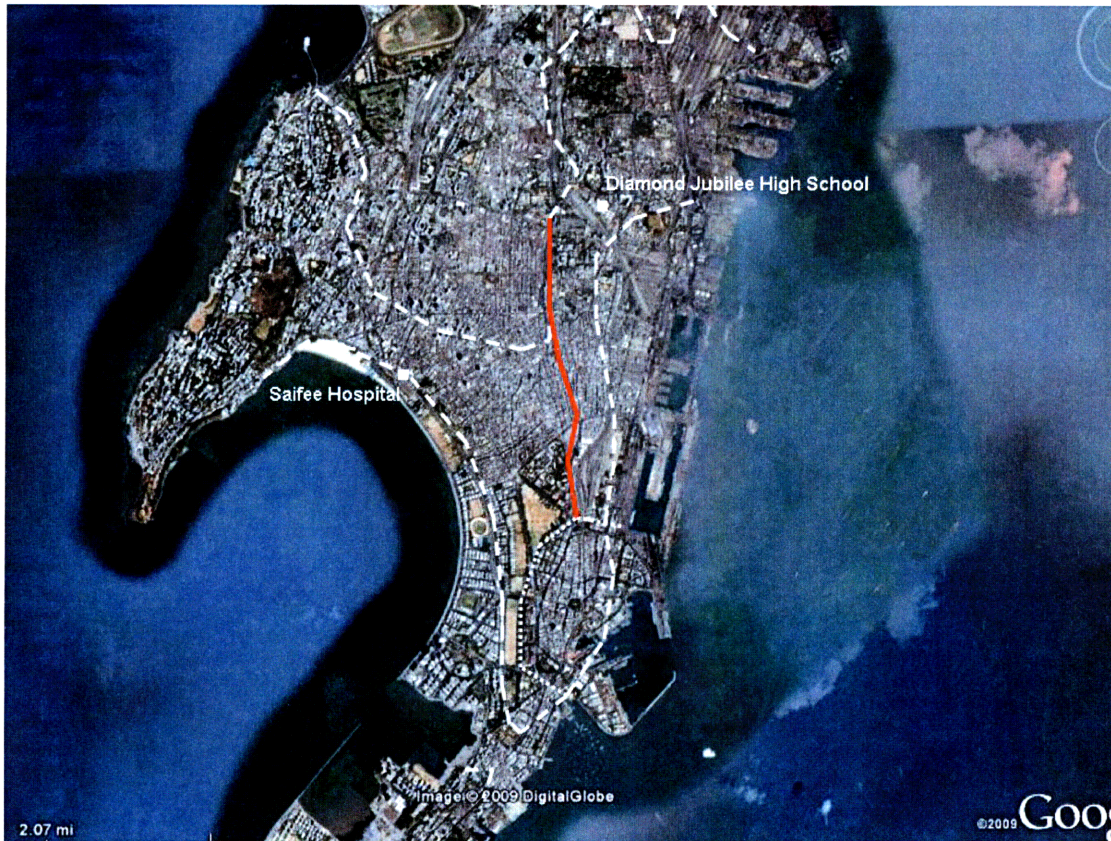
Fig. 25: Satellite View of Bombay indicating the fort (dotted) and original extents of the island city (dashed) with relative position of the two case studies. Mohammed Ali Road is indicated in red (Source: Google Earth)
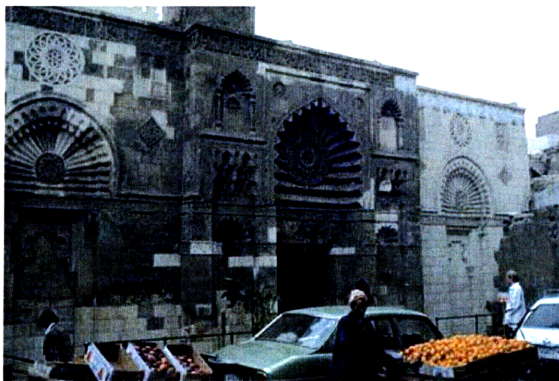

Fig. 26: Mosque restored by the Bohras. Mosque of Al-Aqmar. (Online source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/mitopencourseware/2986530737/)
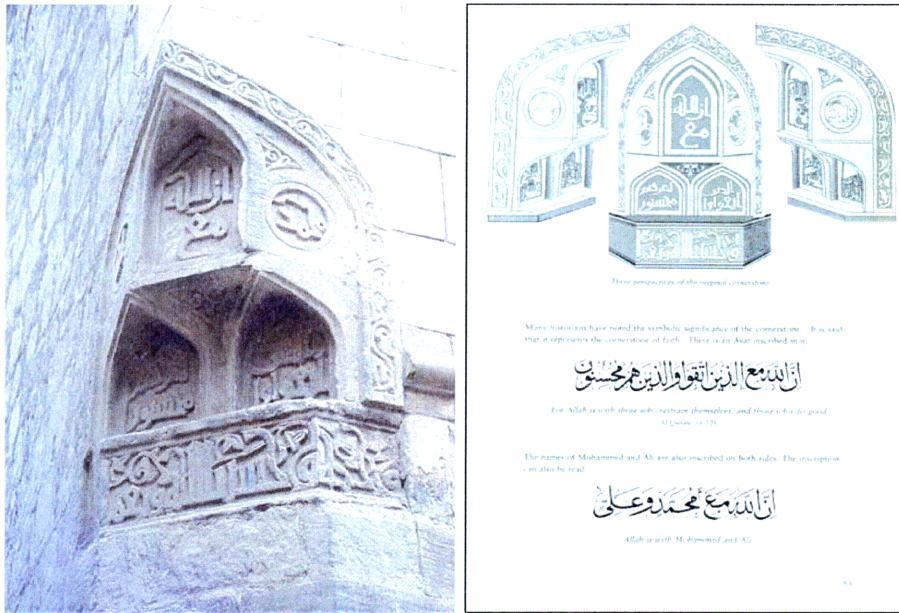
Fig. 27-28: Corner detail from Mosque of Al-Aqmar, Cairo (Left). Page from Al-Aqmar: A Living Testimony to the Fatemiyeen showing the corner detail documented and transliterated/interpreted (Right). (Online source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/33058958@N00/404616288/)

Fig. 29: Corner detail reproduced in Jamea tus-Saiffiyah, Surat building

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