Marginality and Embodies Practices: Exploring Chicago's Little India

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Abstract: The Indian diaspora in United States is touted as being the model minority. In the 1960s and 70, owing to favourable immigration policies towards professionals, a good number of professionals from India—doctors, engineers, academics and others—migrated to US. These migrants became successful, earning salaries that are above American average incomes, owning massive suburban houses. They posed little problems integrated as they were with the American Way of Life and got a reputation of being hard-working, hence a model minority. Subsequent to this first wave of migration of professional was followed by another influx of professionals into America during the 80s and 90s silicon boom. But between these two strands of migrants are unaccounted for migrants, who end up working as cab drivers, helps in shops, domestic servants, in other words a host of working class migrants. Their presence is most noticeable in big cities of America. They often live in ethnic enclaves and spaces that are on the margins, spaces that somehow defy the logic of what 'America' is about.

This essay seeks to enter these spaces to understand the dwellings and sub-

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jectivities of the marginal working class diaspora. In seeking to understand such urban global spaces of dwelling and being, where spaces are 'made'; one way of understanding the presence of these marginal working class is to look their spacial arrangements, bodily practices and the culinary otherness as way of claiming the urban space. These visual clues and associated practices help us to realise that spaces are socially constructed and that the social implicates a range of identities and class formations, alliances and intermingling that need to be seen in the context of larger global processes.

Immigrants do stand-out in visceral sense due to their otherness—a different appearance because of dress, bodily gestures, odours, mannerisms, voice and speech, as well as by the places they live in and by the food they consume. The ethnic enclaves encapsulate this otherness of the migrant community with their distinct ambience that separates them for the mainstream host country.

Most immigrant populations and minorities are known to invest a space they occupy in their host country with all things 'home' by creating enclaves that represent the community. The minority or ethnic enclaves have existed as long as there has been movement of people and trade. Jewish ghettos and China Town have existed for a long time in modern cities, and they are the spaces that enclose the minority or immigrant community, both physically and metaphorically, and also spaces for tourist consumption as the 'Other'.

A physical setting such as Chicago's south Asian neighbourhood on Devon avenue, with all its accoutrements that spell home, "reflect and shape people's understandings of who they are as individuals and as members

of groups" (Brown & Perkins, 1992: 280). Relph, in his pioneering work *Place and Placeness* (1976) brings out the significance of place, as a source of identity and security. He writes:

> The relationship between community and place is indeed a very powerful one in which each reinforces the identity of the other and in which the landscape is very much an expression of communally held beliefs and values and of interpersonal involvement. (1976: 35).

Several scholars over the years have pointed to spatial aspects of community: Brown & Perkin, 1992; Hummon, 1989, 1992; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1999; Molotch, Freudenburg, & Paulsen, 2000; Orum & Chen, 2003, to name a few. Little India, China Town, Little Saigon or such ethnic enclaves across the globe are an attempt by the immigrants to recreate a home—away from home, and a sense of community that reveals a symbolic life among the migrants as well as connections with the host country (see Orum & Chen, 2003, also Mazumdar et al., 2000).

Devon Avenue's 'Little India' with its sensory and somatic overload evokes and indicates a space of creating and crossing of boundaries; a dense space occupied by many ethnicities, religious groups, occupations and cultures, who subtly create both palpable and intangible boundaries between Us and Them, the in-group and the out-group and in these spaces of dwelling and being one finds expressions which capture subjectivities that are on the margin. This paper attempts to capture the spaces of marginality by 'looking at' the various sensory and visceral clues in the following aspects of immi-

grant life-worlds: spatial arrangements, bodily practices, and ethnic culinary practices; together they lend an embodied aspect to the place. The term "embodied place making" acknowledges the role of the human body in the reproduction of material worlds. Embodied practices which are apparently bodily oriented and therefore seem second nature are in fact cultivated social practices which reproduces societies and social systems.

The paper draws on the ideas of Elias, Bourdieu and Foucault who have all brought the body as a socially determined dynamic entity. The sociologist Norbert Elias (1939) looks at seemingly innate psychobodily habits as moulded by attitudes and societal structures. In his book *the History of Manners*, 1978, Elias traces the historical developments of the European *habitus*, in such areas as sexual behaviour, bodily functions, table manners and forms of speech. He argues that the civilising process of constraint was imposed through ideas of shame and repugnance, which had a nucleus in court etiquette.

For Foucault too the regimens of body, imposed from the outside by various technologies of power, not only discipline the body but are internalised to an embodied selves. He referred to this controlling process of the body as "the biopolitics of power". For analysing the class aspect of the body, Bourdieu (1966) developed a significant and persuasive concept of habitus as a unified pattern becoming social practice by various forms of taste, distinction and display of the body.

The immigrants with their bodily practices of being and dwelling at once call to attention their otherness. And especially so in the recent past. Post 1990s

immigration policies of US have attracted a wave of immigrants, both legal and illegal. While the silicon boom and surge in the economy have been partly responsible for favourable immigration policies the bust in the silicon boom and consequent crisis in economy has added to employment crunch. The narratives that immigrants add to the burden of employment crunch is abound in the larger public sphere of US. The terrorist attack of 9/11 in 2001 have added another layer of anxiety and fear around the immigrants. “As the public deals with this diffuse set of fears, immigrants have been simultaneously cast under a more watchful eye” (Singer, 2009:4). And the watchful eye notices the visceral aspects of bodily practices first. The odour of food the immigrants eat or the clothes they wear or the dwellings they live, their bodily gestures can all become sites for repugnance and separation or an active cultivation signalling a certain cosmopolitan sensibilities.

For the immigrants being with their own kinds in enclaves that are source of comfort and security where they can be comfortable with their sense of being is well established. However there has been little work on the bodily practices, which bring in their own eddies of alliances, distinctions, separation, and perhaps a process of othering. This essay seeks to explore these aspects keeping in view the context of larger global process in mind as they implicate these visceral embodied practices. But before, one enters these spaces in Little India, it is equally important to contrast the working class subjectivities in their neighbourhoods with the suburban upper crust diaspora.

Indian Migration and Suburbia

Indian migration the United States occurred in two major waves followed by a minor wave of immigration. The first wave occurred in early 20th Century. The migrants were mostly Sikh and Muslims who were farmers from the Punjab and they contributed enormously to the agricultural economy of the California state. As single men they were not allowed to marry white women, they married local Hispanic women and many subsequently migrated to Canada, as US immigration acts of 1917 and 1924 were not favorable.

Between 1947 and 1965 a small wave of migration occurred. Under the Luce-Cellar Act of 1946, Indian migrants could become naturalised citizens and could sponsor relatives to immigrate. In 1965, the US Immigration and Naturalisation Act led to a second major wave of Indian immigrants, who were primarily professional migrants. They were scientists, teachers, professors doctors, and medical professionals. The migrants were from different regions, castes, ethnic and religious communities. The policies were not as restrictive to these immigrants unlike the earlier migrants from the rural Punjab. Many of them hence, endeavoured to hone their Indian identity through continued contacts with India and creating ways and avenues to keep alive the cultural tradition. The 1965 Act was followed by the Family Reunification Act 1985 and 1990, which allowed relatives of the immigrants who arrived in US in 60-70s to migrate to the United States. Many of the migrants who came through these Acts were not from professional backgrounds and came into America during periods of economic downturn. Some of these entered America illegally or overstayed their visas (Rangaswamy, 2000; Danico, 2014). The number of working class grew consider-

ably and they tend to live in the small tenements in the Devon Avenue of Chicago (Rudrappa, 2004) while, as mentioned earlier, the well-off tended to live in the suburbia.

American suburbia, which was an active creation by the nation to disperse urban population to hinterland, is characterised by large swatches of land available for huge houses, malls with accompanying huge parking lots, multilane fast-lane roads etc. Home ownership and the accompanying accouterments of conveniences -- cars (especially SUVs), TV (big, flat screen) kitchen appliances and various other gadgets – signaled a social status (Haralovich, 1989). The suburbs with their picture perfect well-manicured lawns, neat rows of sprawling mansions, and tree lined avenues presented what a 'hard working American could aspire for' (ibid). Immigrants could also aspire for this utopian model of living. These homes were not for singles or bachelors they focus on the family. A representation of these families can be seen through various television shows where the father is the bread earner, the mother a home maker, the children went to good school and were ambitions, if somewhat difficult to deal with (Haralovich, 1989). This representation of suburbia and its reality was woven around white middle class family culture and values and the Indians who lived there melded as much possible in this idle of middle class mobility and class aspirations.

Spatiality of suburban architectural arrangement intends to create a sense of order and homogeneity and it not an organic outcome of urban growth but a meditated and mediated construction. The significance of single family ownership of houses in the suburbia is strengthened by the various prescriptions and restrictions imposed by housing policies, financial and mortgage

arrangements, zoning codes, architectural designs etc. The prescribed format of arrangement requires compliance to the American way of doing, at least in the public domain. The façade of the houses and the landscaping had to be in a particular way. I recall to my surprise when an Indian immigrant lady told me "No I cannot have a kitchen garden" when I suggested she can grow *karela*—bitter gourd-- in the summer in her garden. It seemed there were other stipulations, which I did not dwell on or ferret out of her, but the houses by their appearances did not reveal the residents identity in any manner. They all seemed to blend into almost indistinguishable molds of prosperity, civility, and properness.

One of the striking differences one notices between urban dwellings and suburban homes is the spatial arrangements at home. The interiors of the homes, to a great extent reveal a class orientation not necessarily of the place of origin but the white American ethos. The occasional Indian element in drapery, furniture (especially among the younger generation) etc. signals a reference to an exotic origins rather than pure habitus. The 'taste' décor was distinctly what can be called America. For example: the family portrait with father in formal clothes or a suit and the well-scrubbed smiling children, had distinct stylisational aspects that are so de-rigor in family portraits of America, with smiling children and body language of camaraderie among the members of the family (see Chambers, 2001 for detailed discussion on representation of the family in Post-war America and Pinney, 2008 for discussion on photography in India)

In the course of my fieldwork I interacted extensively with various Indian families who lived in the suburbia and who were rather cautious and circum-

spect about their daily conduct. And it seemed that it was very important to blend in and not stand out[1]. Visiting elderly parents were often reprimanded for strolling around in the neighbourhoods especially in Indian casual clothing such as *kurta-pajama* or *mundu* /*lungi*. One is more likely to find Indians in suburbs wearing clothing similar to others in their neighbourhood than the immigrants from the cities who live in ethnic neighbourhoods.

What one eats also becomes a complex signifier of seeking affiliate associations to one's place of origin, ethnicity, or religion. This is especially true in a diasporic situation of loss and nostalgia that turns to food as potent signifier that expresses identity "affiliative desires" and anxieties of loss. Writing on this theme Tulasi Srinivas (2006) says "Food provisioning is fuelled by a "meta-narrative of loss" in which food consumption is seen as a "narrative of affiliative desire" that affectively recreates caste, micro regional and other social identity groupings for the cosmopolitan Indian family. Fuelled by a "narrative of anxiety" over "authentic" foods- "as mother made them"-the act of eating is transformed into a performance of "gastro-nostalgia" that attempts to create a cultural utopia of ethnic Indianness (Srinivas, 2006:191)."Food therefore becomes a potent symbol for signifying the ethnic integrity of Asian Americans, serving both as a placeholder for marking cultural distinctiveness and as a palliative for dislocation" (Mannur, 2007:13). Women as the main providers and provisioning of food taken upon themselves the role of passing on one's culture to their young through ethnic culinary practices. However, eating one's own ethnic cuisine often becomes a contentious issue among the immigrants and their children. Eating ethnic cuisine is seen, consciously or unconsciously, by the

1Though this is fast changing in many suburbs with sizeable Indian population, one does notice discernable bodily practices of the ethnic other; in dress etc.

immigrant children as a throwback to the parent's background, when they are anxious to be like one of their peers. In the course of my fieldwork, I have often heard young second generation Indians in US complaining about having to eat Indian food. The ones who seem to enjoying eating Indian cuisine were often hailed by their parents as being more Indian. Attempts have been made, by scholars, to unpack the school lunch boxes as potent signifier and a site for negotiation of differences in a multicultural contexts. Thorne who studies lunch-time practices at middle school in US says that immigrant children often avoided bring packed lunch from home which would "mark them as different" (Thorne, 2005;78). A great deal of practices that affirm one's identity through noticeable markers of identity such as dress, language, food were not worn on the sleeves if possible for fear of being noticed as different.

Gans (2007) writing about Immigrant mobility and its possible implications for the terms acculturation writes:

> Immigrants who add significantly to their disposable income or become successful entrepreneurs in the mainstream economy may be tempted to adopt class-appropriate non-immigrant lifestyles. Perhaps economic success will persuade people to speak English more often or resort to the standard middle-class version of the language. They might eat more often at non-ethnic restaurants and participate in more typically American leisure activities. Occupationally mobile immigrants may have to adopt such lifestyles to accommodate colleagues or customers, although in that case, they might turn to American practices with them while maintaining immigrant ways

at home (2007)

While there are these substantial and apparent clues to 'blending'[2] into the American way of doing, one is equally seized with the issues that is the focus of much research on Diaspora which is the question of identity. 'Indianness' exhibits and expresses in myriad ways, Conzen and her associates (1992:4-5) argue that immigrants tend to carefully select such cultural items that sit well within host countries. Certain aspects of Eastern cultures enjoy a currency and acceptance in multicultural America and may perhaps acquire cool quotient , which then are proudly displayed by the Indians—be it yoga, Ayurveda or vegetarian cuisine, *bhangra*[3], among others. Still others are modified, changed, adapted, transformed, reformed and negotiated in the course of immigrant adjustments (Garcia, M.C. 1996).

Despite this layered articulation of Indianness there is distinct difference between the bodily practices of Indians in suburbia and the Indians in the ethnic enclaves. One can clearly see that articulation of Indianness in all its regional, caste based or other affiliate axes is at a private realm and often among co-ethnics. And when the ambit of the audience is wider to include others, especially White America there is conscious orchestration and performance of the traditions and culture of India, this is especially significant in the context of multicultural America; where America seems to realise that it is not the "melting pot" that seems to signify successive immigration into the country, but a more ethnic variation where people continue to retain their ethnic identities to some degree or other, and hence the new metaphor

2 One is hesitant to use the terms acculturation or accommodation here as these words open up a can of worms rather than explain a process.
3 bhangra is dance form set a particular folk rhythms of Punjab state in India. This dance musical form has gained some coolness quotient writes Sunaina Marr Maira in her book *Desis In The House: Indian American Youth Culture in New York City* writes thatthe acceptance of bhangra as "cool" helps negotiate the second generation Indian sense of ethnic identity.

of "salad bowl".

Little India: Devon Avenue

In Chicago too there is the Indian enclave like elsewhere, where there is a concentration of Indian populations like Jackson Heights in New York or Southall in London. Devon Avenue is, for all purposes, the place where India is to be found in greater Chicago region. It is the Devon Avenue neighbourhood, where the little India lives in all it essentialist elements, it is a place "where you don't feel out of place wearing a saree" as one of my interlocutors told me. She added ;"Everything about Devon Avenue is like home, the sights, sounds and smells…including the general chaos and occasional garbage heaps"

The Indian enclave in Chicago is often referred to as the 'Little India' of Chicago is spread along the span of Devon Avenue on the northern edge of the city. It is, excluding perhaps Jackson Heights, the busiest Indian "neighbourhood" in the United States. Indian restaurants flourish, as do Indian grocery stores, boutiques, electronic stores, video and entertainment shops, and jewelry shops on this avenue. The Devon Avenue neighbourhood is a conflation and dispersion of the various differences within India. For instance, the Patel Brothers, a grocery store that caters to the Indian population in general, also features specialty items that cater to specific ethnicities and regions. The Patel Brothers sell, for instance *gongura* and *dosakai* (vegetables that are a favourites among the Telugu population), *Sona Masoori* rice, *papad* made in rural Gujarat and many such items that cater to the regional palates of India.

The Patel Brothers or for that matter the Devon avenue's Little India is at once indicative of the Indianess as well as the regional differences within India and in South Asia, capturing the dynamic sets of relationship within a particular community, between communities and regions and nations and of course the larger world. The entire stretch of Devon Avenue houses establishments that represent the south Asian regions, religions, ethnicities, and communities.

The contestations and identity politics are also reflected in the way the 'place' of Devon avenue is organised, lived and owned by the communities: For instance, the growing strength of Indians is indicated by the fact that in 1991, the 'Little India' stretch of Devon was also designated Gandhi Marg (Way), which in turn prompted Pakistanis to press for the re-designation of an adjoining stretch to Muhammad Ali Jinnah Way, in memory of the founder of Pakistan. For a passer in this neighbourhood, the distinctions within the South Asian regions and the politics of contestation -- of state, nation and community are not immediately visible. But for this superimposed markers of division such as partitioning off the streets in three states – India, Pakistan and Bangladesh; represented by their nation's iconic figures of Gandhi, Jinnah and Mujibur. The diversity of regions, languages, cultures, and religions along Devon enables the construction of a pan-Indian identity based on particular forms of consumption. Meanwhile, the particular consumption opportunities draws non-South Asians to Devon, both from the adjacent neighborhood, from all over the Chicago metropolitan area, as well as from other parts of the U.S.

Patricia Govas at the Chamber of Commerce described Devon as the pub-

lic face of Chicago's South Asian population, explaining that a business on Devon establishes legitimacy for South Asian-owned businesses."When you see their commercials on the Indian cable station, they advertise their Devon store first, even if they have stores in the suburbs." While many advertise their Devon avenue shops first, it is not always that the suburban population travels to these places first. Many of the suburbs, with high concentration of Indian populations have started establishing businesses and restaurants that cater to the needs of the suburbanites. A large number of Indians who were forced to make the trips to Devon now avoid the trips. The avoidance is in part an attempt to differentiate themselves from the new immigrants that seem to be drawn to Devon Avenue for the comfort level it offers. As I explained earlier many of the new immigrants who are from the working class find it easier to start out from the ethnic enclaves like Devon Avenue (Massey, 1985; Waldinger, 1996 and Waldinger and Lichter, 2006) The Little India enclave provides them initial succor, comfort and necessary networks, before they can move out to suburbs, which is a sure sign of their upward mobility.

While established immigrants from all groups generally seek to differentiate themselves from their more recent counterparts, the role that caste and class play in Indian society, as well as the status attained by professional Indian immigrants here intensifies this "othering" processes, producing increased suburbanisation and an avoidance of Devon by more affluent Indians. While South Asian communities seek to establish a visible connection to Devon, many of their members strive to sever ties with the enclave in order to disassociate themselves from lower status community members.

Chaotic and a Sensory Overload or the Comfort of Home

The first-hand experience of the recreated world of the new immigrants in ethnic enclaves is the visceral bodily elements: The smells, sounds, and sights of Devon Avenue engage the senses in ways that are simultaneously perplexing and captivating, familiar to some and alien to others. Behind this chaotic sensory overload is a social fabric that is woven by various ethnic groups that reveal complex social structures, affinities and cleavages.Engaging with a spatial and sensate atmosphere has its locus in what Bourdieu calls habitus; a socially determined embodied practices and behavior. Thus places are not about the built environment but the way it implicates the body. And as Hannah Arendt (1959) explains "Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position" (ibid:57).

The immigrant leave their mark in the way they inhabit the little India enclave;In its spatial sensibility too, while the building styles are inherited from the an earlier generations, Often with a certain heritage value, the immigrants, mostly from south Asia, and often the working class, indicate their social backgrounds in the way they dwell in the tenements. The packed tenements with tiny apartments and the general unkempt exteriors, the occasional clothes line in the back-lanes signals a working class backgrounds. The buildings are temporarily transformed in subtle and not so subtle ways, which are symbolic and physical. Spatial environment offers visual clues that convey cultural messages to the viewers. And the source of invoking the habitus that causes judgments or repugnance or plain fascination for the difference.

One can clearly mark out the ethnic differences and class backgrounds from the signage and storefront displays and the multitude of things being sold. The working class sensibilities are seen in the way the storefronts are used for instrumental purposes than purely aesthetic reasons. It is quite usual to find clothes being displayed on racks right outside the stores on the sidewalks. One is likely to find display windows having a jumble of utility item--luggage, pressure cookers, ladles, tinfoil, plastic plates etc. As against the more upscale store display windows with their statuesque mannequins, many looking decidedly Caucasian but wearing elegant expensive sarees. The class differences come out quite stark in the way stores and display windows are lit; bright fluorescent lighting of the more working class sensibility as against the more subtle expensive recessed yellow light or spot lights.

The immigrant backgrounds, especially working class backgrounds come into play in the way public spaces are used. The denizens of these neighbourhood have different body rhythms. They are seen lounging around, gathering in clusters. Sitting on store fronts late night. It is fairly normal to see men or women gathered outside their houses sitting on public seats for socialising with their coethnics. A Caucasian American interlocutor commented on this aspect as being very 'eastern', perhaps "they are used to a more community oriented living" she added. The sense of place and time that is immediate and produced by the everyday life on the Devon Avenue; on display in the store fronts, the streets and avenues, as public spaces are filled up, calls to attention the idea of public and private that is informed by the logic and habitus of the immigrant cultural context. This use of public

spaces does not necessarily correspond with the spatial sensibility of larger America; even though the idea of America is also undergoing changes owing to huge number of immigrants and the intermingling of varied sensibilities. Immigrants construct for themselves a life that has many spatial characteristics that are either similar to or evocative of the places that remind them of home, enabling them to maintain continuity with place. Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996, call this practice "place congruent continuity". This can take place in the literal sense or at an emotive level. Architectural features that are reminiscent of place of origin are found superimposed or incorporated into building along the avenues in Little India. Thus one can easily spot various religious groups and their spaces of congregation by the architectural features in the façade of the buildings. On the western end of the Devon Avenue for instance one notices marked presence of architectural features such as arches which are quintessentially Islamic in nature signaling the huge presence of Muslim community.

The smells that emanate from the Devon Avenue bring back memories of home, for the south Asian communities. For the others it is foreign and exotic at best or strange or even offensive for some. The olfactory clues signal a range of social backgrounds. As a fellow stroller along the Devon Avenue commented: "we must be nearing the Muslim section of Devon Avenue, I can smell delicious kebabs and spices". Other visual clues signal the presence of Muslim communities such as storefronts with signage for meat products that sell *halal* and *zabiha* meat, which is butchered according to Islamic prescription on ethical meat eating. As much as signage that indicating the presence Bangladeshi with their store signage that has prom-

inent pictures of fish, with notices in Bengali script. The smells, sights, and sounds serve as the function of indicating the habitation of certain groups of people and these indicators then help people navigate. As one of my interlocutors from a very strict vegetarian Brahmin background narrated: “there are more and more meat shops in Devon Avenue and too many places that serve meat, you can smell. I try and avoid going towards those areas” she added very quickly “you see I am not used to it”.

While one can avoid going in to certain areas there is always room for navigating through Devon Avenue to look for what one is seeking. It is clear that Devon Avenue attract a plethora of clientele, the middle class from suburbs, and the seekers of specialised restaurants. And the non-residents, who are typically from upper classes both South Asian and white Americans are likely to be found in specialised restaurants. Arya Bhavan is one such restaurant who has taken new avatar from its earlier vegetarian orientation and now serves healthy alternatives such as raw food, gluten free or organic cuisine.

Consumptive practices do reveal congregation of certain kinds of groups but sites of congregation also reveal processual and structural elements that underlie. As I found it in the cabbie joints that I would frequent often. This essay looks at a couple of these eateries to get a sense of their location not just in the host country but as part of global process underway and as part of the larger global circuits of transnational fields.

The Cabbie Joints and the Marginal Working Class

The moment there is mention of ‘cabbie joints’—a term that is popularly

used for dive eateries, serving Pakistani and Indian food, typically kebabs, *nan*, butter chicken, *korma* etc. -- I have visceral recall of driving down to these cabbie joints late nights, looking for a quick meal, often a take-away that filled you up, even though I remember the food being greasy. The most frequented cabbie joint was close to the neighbourhood I lived. And it was open all night. I used to feel I am transgressing an invisible border by being there. In all the times I went there I was the only female. I had similar such feeling when I used to occasionally stop by to have chai at Gareeb Nawas, during my forays into the neighbourhood in 2001. Both these places have changed drastically in appearance. The dinginess is given way to some renovations; florescent lights, big screen flat TV. In short they are now a bit of wannabe restaurants.

Gareeb Nawas is a favourite with the cabbies and other working class who gather on this corner of Devon Avenue, as is Hyderabad House. Hyderabad house is not a fine dining place. The ambience, as one reviewer on Yelp says "resembles hyd (sic) local cafes". The bright florescent lights and the cheap furniture and the general aesthetic arrangements signal a cheap eatery. It clearly was space where working class, usually cabbies, who are nearly all men and mostly Muslim who tend to congregate.

The separation between front areas and back zones may not be walls and doors, but instead, be marked by smells, interior layouts, and signage that induce affective responses from those who engage with it. Frequent users may respond to these boundaries as "products of habits and bodily practices that produce a combination of cognitive and habit-memory"(Sen & Silverman, 2014:190) Their behaviour becomes so habitual and taken for

granted that the powerful impact of these spaces on behaviour, thoughts, and actions may not be easily evident. An outsider may not even realise that such boundaries exist

The regulars both at Hyderabad House and Ghareeb Nawas are motley group of not just South Asians but Palestinians, and few West Africans. I suspect that fact that many of them who are cab drivers may find that these spaces – Ghreeb Nawas and Hyderabad House-- serve to bring a sense of solidarity borne out of work cultures that is on the fringes of the global economy, which Sassen points out, but rarely discussed when talking of Indian diaspora. Biju Mathew's book (2005) on the plight of taxi drivers in New York gives us sense of the kind of peonage system the cab driving involves; having to battle with various city authorities that includes the police who harass them, especially Muslim cab drivers post 9/11, the immigrant unfriendly customers, inclement weather and most of all the cab owners and companies to whom most their most of their earns go to. For Mathew, the entire cab system is an exploitation of Third World cheap labour in a globalising capitalist world. These are the spaces that capture the marginality of various subjects that are united by their work situation –impermanent, fragmented, bringing these disparate social groups of Muslims and immigrants on the margins of global economic system together in to intersecting interactions of affiliation.

Conclusion

The Ethnic enclave of Little India is clearly a protean and dynamic space that reveals class cleavages and where classes and groups leave their traces

with their everyday life and rhythm. These embodied practices of dwelling and being however cannot be seen in restrictive sense of geography or locale as the spaces occupied by the working class cabbies reveal. The alliances and connections among the cabbies cut across geographical boundaries (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992, Glick Schiller et al, 1992, Basch et al 1995) pointing to the transnationality of global economies which bring people together despite the affiliations of nationality. Ethnic Enclaves were seen as cultural different from the mainstream host societies. (Gans, 1962) There was also the general notion that new working class immigrants tend to mingle and interact with their own kind; all of which has relevance on the face of it. But a deeper analysis would reveal the larger forces that operate in the embodiment of space and the subjectivities of immigrants. Sassen contends that much of the narrative on ethnicity is “actually a series of processes having to do with the globalisation of economic activity, of cultural activity, of identity formation” (Sassen,1999:218) For Wacquant, who writes about the *Urban Outcasts* (2008) The chief foundational feature of the emerging regime of marginality in the city is that it is fed by the ‘fragmentation of wage labor, that is, the diffusion of unstable, part-time, short- term, low-pay and dead-end employment at the bottom of the occupational structure --a master trend that has accelerated and solidified across advanced nations over the past two decades’(Wacquant, 2008).

The body, imbued with social meaning, is historically and contextually situated, and becomes not only a signifier of belonging and order, but also an active forum for the expression of dissent and loss. Paradoxically these bodily practices of exercising one’s own agency works in ways that lays

claim on the urban space.One way of looking at ethnic presence, through their spacial arrangements, bodily practices and the culinary otherness, is a "formation of new claims on that space. …there are indeed major new actors making claims on these cities… These are claims made by actors struggling for recognition and entitlement, claiming their rights to the city." (Sassen, 1999:220) Not the same claim when immigrants who have integrated into the economic –cultural life move into hipper neighbourhoods, as a marker of classificatory practice of distinction.

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