Introduction

On the 17th of August 1852, a *Hijra* named Bhoorah was found dead with her 'head nearly severed' in the north Indian district of Mainpuri.[1] In the aftermath of Bhoorah's violent death, the British rulers of north India resolved that the *Hijra* community should be rendered extinct. *Hijra*s like Bhoorah performed and asked for *badhai* (a 'congratulatory gift') following the births of children, at marriages and in public spaces. They embodied a feminine gender identity, for instance through women's clothing, and described themselves to colonial officials as having been either castrated or 'born that way'.[2] *Hijra*s were initiated into discipleship lineages that linked generations of *guru*s (teachers) and *chela*s (disciples). Bhoorah had attained *guru* status and had two disciples, Dullah and Mathee, with whom she lived. For two years, Bhoorah had also lived with her male lover, Ali Buksh, but shortly before she was murdered, Bhoorah had left him for another man. On the 17th of August, Ali Buksh forced Bhoorah to return to him. Neighbours saw the couple arguing in the street before entering their house. Later, Bhoorah's disciple Dullah ran out into the street, shouting that Ali Buksh had murdered Bhoorah. In the subsequent murder trial, there were two suspects, Ali Buksh and Dullah, but the British judges were convinced that Ali Buksh had killed Bhoorah due to the 'severance' of their 'infamous connexion'. Although a *Hijra* was the victim of the crime under trial, the judges criminalised *Hijra*s as cross-dressers, 'beggars' and 'unnatural prostitutes'. One judge called *Hijra*s an 'opprobrium' upon colonial rule, while another claimed that the continued existence of the *Hijra* community was a 'reproach' to the British government.[3] Bhoorah's death sparked an anxious discussion in the official circles of the province in which she lived, the North-Western Provinces (NWP). British administrators claimed that *Hijra*s – or 'eunuchs' in colonial parlance – were

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[1] *Government* v. *Ali Buksh, DNA NWP* 2 (1852): 1314–6.
[2] 'Emasculated' and 'eunuch by birth' were the main terms used in English-language colonial records that reported *Hijra*s' statements.
[3] *Government* v. *Ali Buksh*.

'habitual sodomites', beggars, an obscene presence in public space and the kidnappers and castrators of children. In 1865, the NWP declared that its aim was to 'reduce' the number of 'eunuchs' and thus 'gradually lead to their extinction'.[4] The province launched an anti-'eunuch' campaign that had the explicit goal of 'extirpating' or 'exterminating' the *Hijra* community.[5]

This project of elimination was formalised under the Criminal Tribes Act (CTA) of 1871. While the much-studied Part I of the CTA targeted the 'criminal tribes' – groups that were apparently hereditary criminals by caste occupation – the under-examined second part of the law targeted so-called 'eunuchs'. Under the CTA, *Hijra*s would find their gender embodiment, domestic arrangements and livelihoods scrutinised and policed in new ways. The anti-*Hijra* campaign was a provincial project, since Part II of the CTA was enforced specifically in the NWP.[6] The CTA required police to draw up registers of the personal details of 'eunuchs'. Specifically, police had to register 'eunuchs' who were 'reasonably suspected' of sodomy, kidnapping and castration, thus legally defining a eunuch as a criminal and sexually deviant person. The 1871 law provided police with increased surveillance powers; prohibited registered people from wearing female clothing and 'adornments' or performing in public; provided for the removal of children in registered people's households; and included provisions that interfered with *Hijra* discipleship and succession patterns.[7] The short-term aims of the law included the cultural elimination of *Hijra*s through the erasure of their public presence. The explicit long-term ambition was 'limiting and thus finally extinguishing the number of Eunuchs'.[8] Fortunately, the *Hijra* community survived these colonial attempts to cause their 'extinction' and is evident today in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Given the present-day social marginalisation and police abuse of *Hijra*s, the history of *Hijra*s' interactions with the state is a pressing issue.[9]

[4] BL/IOR/P/438/61: Simson to all NWP DC, 9 June 1865.
[5] BL/IOR/P/840: Robertson to NWP&O IGP, 3 April 1877; BL/IOR/P/438/62: Robertson to NWP Secretary, 27 June 1866.
[6] From 1877, Part II of the CTA was also enforced in Oudh, which was amalgamated into the NWP. The new province was called the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. To avoid confusion, I refer to the province as the NWP throughout, except in citations. Part II of the CTA also applied to Punjab, but the Punjab authorities never enforced it. BL/IOR/L/PJ/5/82: Barron to Delhi DC, 22 August 1910.
[7] BL/IOR/V/8/42: Act No. XXVII of 1871.
[8] BL/IOR/P/438/61: Simson to all NWP DC, 9 June 1865.
[9] People's Union for Civil Liberties (Karnataka), 'Human Rights Violations Against the Transgender Community: A Study of *Kothi* and *Hijra* Sex Workers in Bangalore, India – September 2003', http://ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TS/PUCL/PUCL%20Report .html (accessed 24 August 2012).

For many colonial officials, *Hijra*s were not only a danger to 'public morals', but also a threat to colonial political authority.[10] The colonial government thus viewed the policing of *Hijra*s as an 'important branch' of the 'duties' of 'district officers' and a priority in local policing.[11] In the second half of the nineteenth century, Part II of the CTA received a greater level of attention at the upper echelons of government than did section 377 of the 1860 Indian Penal Code (IPC), which prohibited forms of non-reproductive sex defined as 'unnatural' intercourse until 2018.[12] To many high-ranking colonial officials, the small *Hijra* community endangered the imperial enterprise and colonial authority. If we are to understand colonial sexual regimes in India – indeed, colonial governance in general – it is important to explore why this was so. The colonial *Hijra* archive also gives unusually detailed insights into the impacts of colonial law on colonised peoples who were marginalised because of their gender expression, sexual practices and intimate lives.

To some historians who have stumbled across the sizeable volume of documents about 'eunuchs' in colonial archives, this project has appeared a 'strange' preoccupation, to quote Christopher Bayly.[13] Rather than dismiss the 'eunuch problem' as an odd colonial concern, this book takes seriously, and seeks to explain, the intense official concern with *Hijra*s. Issues of gender and sexuality were not just a moralising mask for more 'rational' and pragmatic matters of colonial administration.[14] The anti-*Hijra* campaign illustrates that gender expression, sexual behaviours, domestic arrangements and intimate relationships were central to colonial governance. In fact, these matters were so germane to colonial rule that British officials demanded that the 'immoral' *Hijra* community be rendered extinct.

Yet the colonial policing of *Hijra*s has been almost entirely absent from the historiography of late nineteenth-century India, despite a growing body of scholarship on gender and colonialism.[15] This is the first book-

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[10] BL/IOR/P/235/33: Couper to NWP MLC, 12 February 1861.

[11] BL/IOR/P/1467: Robertson to NWP&O IGP, 12 July 1880.

[12] As of September 2018, section 377 no longer applies to consensual adult sex. The historical pattern of the local enforcement of section 377 is unclear, but the implementation of Part II of the CTA was much more closely monitored by the Government of India and the NWP in the late 1800s.

[13] C. A. Bayly, 'Knowing the Country: Empire and Information in India', *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no. 1 (1993): 39.

[14] Stoler makes a similar point: Ann Laura Stoler, 'Affective States', in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, eds. David Nugent and Joan Vincent, 5–6 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

[15] For overviews: Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, 'Introduction: The Politics of Intimacy in an Age of Empire', in *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire*, eds. Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, 1–28 (Chicago:

length history of the *Hijra* community. Moreover, the small existing historical literature on *Hijra*s does not examine their criminalisation under the CTA, the most concerted nineteenth-century project to regulate the community. Laurence Preston has explored *Hijra*s' interactions with the state in the Bombay Presidency between the 1830s and 1850s, while Anjali Arondekar has examined a section 377 case involving a *Hijra*.[16] Thus, the experiences of *Hijra*s under the CTA have primarily received attention in studies of contemporary *Hijra*s. The last two decades have seen the publication of several anthropological, linguistic and theatre studies works on the *Hijra* community in South Asia, for instance, by Gayatri Reddy, Kira Hall, Adnan Hossain and Claire Pamment.[17] Aside from some brief mentions of colonial law and knowledge, this otherwise rich literature has not analysed the history of the community in depth.[18] Meanwhile, the colonial policing of 'unnatural sex' has been the subject of considerable discussion in India in the context of the long legal battle over section 377 between 1991 and 2018. Activists, queer studies scholars and legal scholars have frequently mentioned the policing of *Hijra*s under the 1871 CTA as another

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University of Illinois Press, 2009); Michele Mitchell, Naoko Shibusawa and Stephan F. Miescher, 'Introduction: Gender, Imperialism and Global Exchanges', *Gender and History* 26, no. 3 (2014): 393–413.

[16] Laurence Preston, 'A Right to Exist: Eunuchs and the State in Nineteenth-Century India', *Modern Asian Studies* 21, no. 2 (1987): 371–87; chapter 2 in Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009), 67–96. An unpublished thesis by Shane Patrick Gannon includes a chapter on the CTA, though the focus is on the colonial discourse of the *Hijra*: Shane Patrick Gannon, 'Translating the *Hijra*: The Symbolic Reconstruction of the British Empire in India' (PhD dissertation, University of Alberta, 2009).

[17] Gayatri Reddy, *With Respect to Sex: Negotiating Hijra Identity in South Asia* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005); Gayatri Reddy, '"Men" Who Would Be Kings: Celibacy, Emasculation, and the Re-Production of *Hijras* in Contemporary Indian Politics', *Social Research* 70, no. 1 (2003): 163–200; Lawrence Cohen, 'The Pleasures of Castration: The Postoperative Status of Hijras, Jankhas, and Academics', in *Sexual Nature, Sexual Culture*, ed. Paul R. Abramson, 276–305 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995); Serena Nanda, *Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijras of India* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1989); Kira Hall and Veronica O'Donovan, 'Shifting Gender Positions among Hindi-Speaking Hijras', in *Rethinking Language and Gender Research: Theory and Practice*, eds. Victoria Lee Bergvall et al., 228–66 (London: Longman, 1996); Adnan Hossain, 'Beyond Emasculation: Being Muslim and Becoming *Hijra* in South Asia', *Asian Studies Review* 36, no. 4 (2012): 495–513; Claire Pamment, 'Hijraism: Jostling for a Third Space in Pakistani Politics', *TDR: The Drama Review* 54, no. 2 (2010): 29–50; Shahnaz Khan, 'What is in a Name? *Khwaja Sara, Hijra* and Eunuchs in Pakistan', *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 23, no. 2 (2016): 218–42; Vaibhav Saria, 'To Be Some Other Name: The Naming Games that Hijras Play', *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 12 (2005): http://samaj.revues.org/3992.

[18] Reddy, *With Respect to Sex*, 25–30.

example of the colonial regulation of sexuality.[19] Yet these writers have not examined the actual implementation of the 1871 law or *Hijra*s' experiences of criminalisation.[20] Moreover, the connections and divergences between the metropolitan and colonial policing of non-normative sexuality are unclear in both the literature on section 377 in India and the large literature on the policing of 'sodomy' in Britain.[21] Hence, this book explores the ways that the anti-*Hijra* campaign intersected with and departed from the contemporary metropolitan regulation of sexuality.

The colonial policing of the *Hijra* community throws into sharp relief the gendered character of colonial criminal law. The large body of research on the regulation of the 'criminal tribes' under the CTA is one place we might expect to find analysis of the colonial criminalisation of the *Hijra*. Yet historians of the CTA have not considered why 'eunuchs' and 'criminal tribes' were policed under the same law. When they have mentioned Part II of the CTA, they have generally relegated it to the footnotes.[22] While there is fascinating gender analysis in the work of

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[19] Arvind Narrain, *Queer: 'Despised Sexuality', Law and Social Change* (Bangalore: Books for Change, 2004); Arvind Narrain, '"That Despicable Specimen of Humanity": Policing of Homosexuality in India', in *Challenging the Rule(s) of Law: Colonialism, Criminology and Human Rights in India*, eds. Kalpana Kannabiran and Ranbir Singh, 48–77 (New Delhi: Sage India, 2008); Suparna Bhaskaran, 'The Politics of Penetration: Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code', in *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture and Society*, ed. Ruth Vanita, 15–29 (New York: Routledge, 2002); Alok Gupta, 'Section 377 and the Dignity of Indian Homosexuals', *Economic and Political Weekly* (November 18 2006): 4815–23; Gautam Bhan, 'Challenging the Limits of Law: Queer Politics and Legal Reform in India', in *Because I Have a Voice: Queer Politics in India*, eds. Arvind Narrain and Gautam Bhan, 40–8 (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2005); Ratna Kapur, 'Unruly Desires, Gay Governance and the Makeover of Sexuality in Postcolonial India', in *Global Justice and Desire: Queering Economy*, eds. Nikita Dhawan et al., 115–6 (New York: Routledge, 2015).

[20] This is the case even in more extended analyses: Narrain, *Queer*, 57–60.

[21] E.g., H. G. Cocks, *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the 19th Century* (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2003); Charles Upchurch, *Before Wilde: Sex Between Men in Britain's Age of Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Movement* (London: Cassell, 1994); Matt Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[22] E.g., Mark Brown, 'Ethnology and Colonial Administration in Nineteenth-Century British India: The Question of Native Crime and Criminality', *The British Journal for the History of Science* 36, no. 2 (2003): 211. See also: Rachel J. Tolen, 'Colonizing and Transforming the Criminal Tribesman: The Salvation Army in British India', *American Ethnologist* 18, no. 1 (1991): 106–125; Meena Radhakrishna, *Dishonoured by History: 'Criminal Tribes' and British Colonial Policy* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2001); Sandria B. Freitag, 'Crime in the Social Order of Colonial North India', *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 2 (1991): 227–61; Stewart N. Gordon, 'Bhils and the Idea of a Criminal Tribe in Nineteenth-Century India', in *Crime and Criminality in British India*, ed. Anand A. Yang, 128–39 (Tuscon: The University of Arizona Press, 1985); Sanjay Nigam, 'Disciplining and Policing the "Criminals by Birth", Part 2: The Development of a Disciplinary System, 1871–1900', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 27, no. 3 (1990):

Padma Anagol, Satadru Sen and Clare Anderson, among others, such historians of criminal law and penal systems have largely explored gender issues in two specific contexts: first, the construction of female criminality in the policing of infanticide; and second, the gendered organisation of penal colonies and Indian jails.[23] In fact, few historians have considered the role that gender played in the policing of the 'criminal tribes'.[24] There is still much we don't know about the broader gender structures of colonial criminal law in India.

This book sheds new light on the colonial governance of gender and sexuality by examining a provincial project. The focus in the broader literature has been on forms of sexual regulation that were implemented across multiple colonies, particularly the policing of prostitution and venereal disease under the Contagious Diseases Acts (CDAs) that was enacted from the 1850s.[25] Though such trans-

257–87; Anand A. Yang, 'Dangerous Castes and Tribes: The Criminal Tribes Act and the Magahiya Doms of Northeast India', in *Crime and Criminality in British India*, ed. Anand A. Yang, 108–27 (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1985); Andrew J. Major, 'State and Criminal Tribes in Colonial Punjab: Surveillance, Control and the Reclamation of the "Dangerous Classes"', *Modern Asian Studies* 33, no. 3 (1999): 657–88; Henry Schwarz, *Constructing the Criminal Tribe in India: Acting like a Thief* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Mark Brown, *Penal Power and Colonial Rule* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014); Anastasia Piliavsky, 'The Moghia Menace, or the Watch over Watchmen in British India', *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (2013): 751–79.

[23] Satadru Sen, 'The Savage Family: Colonialism and Female Infanticide in Nineteenth Century India', *Journal of Women's History* 14, no. 3 (2002): 53–79; Padma Anagol, 'The Emergence of the Female Criminal in India: Infanticide and Survival Under the Raj', *History Workshop Journal* 53, no. 1 (2002): 73–93; Aparna Vaidik, 'Settling the Convict: Matrimony and Domesticity in the Andamans', *Studies in History* 22, no. 2 (2006): 221–51; Satadru Sen, 'Rationing Sex: Female Convicts in the Andamans', *South Asia* 21, no. 2 (1998): 29–59; Satadru Sen, 'The Female Jails of Colonial India', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 39, no. 4 (2002): 417–38; Clare Anderson, 'Writing Indigenous Women's Lives in the Bay of Bengal: Cultures of Empire in the Andaman Islands, 1789–1906', *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 2 (2011): 480–96; Clare Anderson, *Legible Bodies: Race, Criminality and Colonialism in South Asia* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 7–8, 20–1, 36–9, 63–5, 71–6, 80–6, 105–6, 114–9, 121–6. For a rare, brief mention of the policing of 'eunuchs': Radhika Singha, 'Settle, Mobilize, Verify: Identification Practices in Colonial India', *Studies in History* 16, no. 2 (2000): 154–5.

[24] There is scattered gender analysis in: Radhakrishna, *Dishonoured by History*; Tolen, 'Colonizing and Transforming'.

[25] E.g., Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793–1905* (London: Wiedenfield and Nicolson, 1980); Ashwini Tambe, *Codes of Misconduct: Regulating Prostitution in Late Colonial Bombay* (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2009); Judy Whitehead, 'Bodies Clean and Unclean: Prostitution, Sanitary Legislation, and Respectable Femininity in Colonial North India', *Gender and History* 7, no. 1 (April 1995): 41–63; Philip Howell, 'Race, Space and the Regulation of Prostitution in Colonial Hong Kong', *Urban History* 31, no. 2 (2004): 229–48; Richard Phillips, *Sex, Politics and Empire: A Postcolonial Geography* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

imperial projects are historically significant, this focus risks ignoring localised experiments in regulating sexual acts and norms, which can deepen our knowledge of the relationship between imperialism and sexuality.[26] Regional and local histories like the anti-*Hijra* campaign help to answer the question of why colonial administrators viewed sexual 'immorality' as a problem in some contexts, but not in others. Provincial schemes show the variety of agendas that could intersect with the policing of morality. Moreover, local projects demonstrate that the techniques and knowledge that underpinned colonial gender and sexual regulation shifted between different contexts. Even as ideas of sexual deviance and criminality circulated in imperial networks, experiments in shaping gender and sexual norms emerged from the margins of the Empire.

Solving the 'Eunuch Problem'

Between the 1850s and the 1870s, a panic about *Hijra*s materialised within the coterie of British officials in north India, amplifying earlier moralising and stigmatising European accounts of *Hijra*s. Panicked stories about people called '*Hijras*' or 'eunuchs' circulated within official networks in the NWP, against the backdrop of a prevailing sense of colonial vulnerability. As Chapter 1 explores, the spark of this panic was a handful of criminal cases involving *Hijra*s, either as the victim, as in Bhoorah's 1852 murder trial, or as the accused, as in a few kidnapping and castration cases. From each of these individual instances of alleged crime, colonial officials extrapolated an account of *Hijra*s as a criminal and sexually immoral collective. British officers repeatedly (re)discovered the *Hijra* community, resulting in repetitive, performative denunciations of *Hijra*s that reiterated a vision of the state as a bulwark against immorality.[27] The management of gender, sexuality and domesticity was one of the ways that the colonial government in India articulated the idea of the state or the 'state effect'.[28]

[26] Phillips makes a similar point: Richard Phillips, 'Heterogeneous Imperialism and the Regulation of Sexuality in British West Africa', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14, no. 3 (2005): 291–315.

[27] On the performative aspects of colonial rule: Kathleen Wilson, 'Rethinking the Colonial State: Family, Gender, and Governmentality in Eighteenth-Century British Frontiers', *American Historical Review* 116, no. 5 (2011): 1295. On the postcolonial state: Jyoti Puri, *Sexual States: Governance and the Struggle over the Antisodomy Law in India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 5.

[28] Timothy Mitchell, 'Society, Economy, and the State Effect', in *State/Culture: State-Formation After the Cultural Turn*, ed. George Steinmetz, 76–97 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

The preoccupation with *Hijra*s in the NWP reflected several broader characteristics of 'colonial panics' which Christopher Bayly, Kim Wagner, Robert Peckham and others have highlighted.[29] Yet the *Hijra* panic especially highlights the tendency of *localised* networks of colonial administrators to experience intensified anxiety about perceived threats to colonial rule. *Hijra*s were not a significant concern of the non-official European population. Though there was deep anxiety about *Hijra*s in the NWP government, British officials in other provinces did not view *Hijra*s as a major problem of governance, even if they denounced *Hijra*s as immoral. The *Hijra* panic was shaped by the administrative culture of the NWP and by the provincially fractured nature of British India. This sort of provincial panic represents a significant characteristic of colonial governance: the role of localised anxieties, visions, agendas and social conditions in shaping colonial rule.[30]

British officials in north India considered the *Hijra* community a problem population because they viewed *Hijra*s as ungovernable in a multitude of ways. British commentators frequently portrayed the *Hijra* community through images of filth, disease, contagion and contamination. In Chapter 2, I argue that these metaphors of dirt and impurity suggested that *Hijra*s were out of place in the colonial order and moreover, that they were a manifold threat to that order. These colonial representations of *Hijra*s highlight that gender and sexual disorder were interlaced with, and in fact signalled, political disorder to India's colonial rulers. The British saw *Hijra*s as 'habitual sodomites', a term which disregarded *Hijra*s' feminine gender identities and portrayed them as 'men' who were 'addicted' to sex with men. *Hijra*s' ostensible sexual practices were a threat to the colonial social order, which was premised on a pattern of succession based on reproductive sexuality, patrilineal

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[29] Kim A. Wagner, '"Treading Upon Fires": The "Mutiny"-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India', *Past and Present*, no. 218 (2013): 159–97; Harald Fischer-Tiné and Christine Whyte, 'Introduction: Empires and Emotions', in *Anxieties, Fear and Panic in Colonial Settings: Empires on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, ed. Harald Fischer-Tiné, 1–24 (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Robert Peckham, 'Introduction: Panic: Reading the Signs', in *Empires of Panic: Epidemics and Colonial Anxieties*, ed. Robert Peckham, 1–22 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015); D. K. Lahiri Choudhury, 'Sinews of Panic and the Nerves of Empire: The Imagined State's Entanglement with Information Panic, India c. 1880–1912', *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 4 (2004): 965–1002; C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 165–79.

[30] Adele Perry, 'The State of Empire: Reproducing Colonialism in British Columbia, 1849–1871', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 2, no. 2 (2001): https://doi.org/10.1353/cch.2001.0028.

descent and heterosexual conjugality.[31] The *Hijra* community appeared to the British to be beyond the binary gender categories of male and female, an unclassifiable in-between that challenged colonial attempts to make the Indian population legible by means of classification.[32] Moreover, in the eyes of the colonisers, *Hijra*s' feminine dress, 'begging', songs and dances, joking, erotic language and 'obscene' actions undermined the order of public space, and even its 'cleanliness'. The 'eunuch problem' was spatial in another respect too: *Hijra*s' periodic travels for alms-collection, though usually of short distance, undermined colonial concepts of centralised political authority by destabilising political borders and were seen as evidence of *Hijra* criminality. This aspect of the *Hijra* stereotype was related to long-standing associations between peripatetic peoples and criminality in colonial discourse and law.[33] Mobile *Hijra*s were especially accused of kidnapping Indian boys in order to forcibly castrate them. The British in India viewed 'kidnapping' as a problem of illicit commerce, as well as 'immoral' sexuality. Colonial officials further claimed that *Hijra*s prostituted kidnapped boys to Indian men, resulting in their sexual corruption and the further 'spread' of 'sodomy'. In the context of the marginalisation of various kinds of discipleship lineage under colonial Indian law, *Hijra* discipleship practices were characterised as coercive and criminal.

In sum, for the British in north India, *Hijra*s were an ungovernable people that needed to be regulated in order to produce an orderly and knowable population. The colonial concern with *Hijra*s thus illuminates the ways that the British conceptualised a governable colonised populace. Issues of sedentary social patterns, economic productivity, sexual relations, household arrangements, gendered behaviours and embodiment were closely interlinked in colonial efforts to make *Hijra*s controllable. This reflected the broader colonial management of population. Michel Foucault argued that between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe there was a gradual transition from 'sovereign' power – in which 'the end of sovereignty is the exercise of sovereignty', that is, the protection of the principality – to 'governmental' power. The aim of the latter is the management of population, specifically, the 'welfare of the

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[31] Indrani Chatterjee, 'When "Sexuality" Floated Free of Histories in South Asia', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no. 4 (2012): 945–62; Indrani Chatterjee, 'Monastic "Governmentality": Revisiting "Community" and "Communalism" in South Asia', *History Compass* 13, no. 10 (2015): 497–511.

[32] On 'legibility' see James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

[33] Radhakrishna, *Dishonoured by History*; Nitin Sinha, 'Mobility, Control and Criminality in Early Colonial India, 1760s–1850's, *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 45, no. 1 (2008): 1–33.

population, the improvement of its condition, the increase of its wealth, longevity [and] health'. This concern with population meant that issues of reproduction, household formation and conjugality were central to governmentality.[34] As Kathleen Wilson has recently highlighted, from the early eighteenth century, questions of population, family and sexual relations were a significant aspect of the 'arts of governance' in East India Company outposts, particularly in relation to European populations, but increasingly in respect to non-Europeans.[35] Orderly colonial subjects were sedentary people who were engaged in economic activities that were defined as productive, lived in households based on conjugal and reproductive sexualities and behaved in ways that were conducive to 'public morals'. In this context, the British viewed *Hijra*s as a manifold source of disorder, as ungovernable in multifarious, interlocking ways.

A number of wider colonial preoccupations intersected in the *Hijra* panic, ranging from 'immoral' sexuality to the porousness of political borders, from the order of public space to the kidnapping of children. The figure of the *Hijra* was a sort of channel for several anxieties that engrossed the British at mid-century. Some of these issues resonated with wider discussions about criminality, gender and sexuality in the British Empire. For instance, a colonial pathology of the cross-dressing, effeminate 'sodomite' emerged in India at roughly the same time that male effeminacy was increasingly associated with sexual deviance in Britain, demonstrating the interconnections between colonial and metropolitan contexts. At the same time, the *Hijra* panic in north India was shaped by regional discussions and projects, such as the anxiety about the 'criminal tribes', which was largely confined to the north Indian provinces of the NWP and Punjab in this period. This mix of regional and wider imperial factors highlights that existing explanations of the anti-*Hijra* campaign, as well as the policing of 'unnatural sex' under section 377, oversimplify the historical processes at play. Legal and queer studies scholars have suggested that the British brought with them to India a legal culture and a code of sexual morality that stigmatised 'deviant' sex.[36] Historians Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai also suggest that the colonial period saw the importation of colonial 'homophobia' into Indian society.[37] Yet this oversimplifies the multidirectional interactions between the metropole

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[34] Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality', in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality, with Two Lectures and an Interview by Michel Foucault*, eds. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller, 91–102 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[35] Wilson, 'Rethinking the Colonial State', 1296, 1300.

[36] E.g., Bhaskaran, 'The Politics of Penetration', 16–20.

[37] Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai, *Same-Sex Love in India: A Literary History* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2008), 221–30.