

**Project Title: Sindhi Sufi Poetry Performance in the India-Pakistan Borderlands**

The history of Kachchh, a border and littoral district in the Indian state of Gujarat, is intertwined with that of the ethnolinguistic region of Sindh, Pakistan through migration, grazing routes, trade, language, and Sufi poetry (Ibrahim 2009). In this ethnomusicological dissertation project, I ask: How does Sindhi-language Sufi poetry performance in contemporary Kachchh, Gujarat maintain and create cultural, social, and historical connections with Sindh, Pakistan? I examine how the sustained relevance of four Sindhi Sufi poetry performance genres (kafi, shah jo rag, molud, and bait) has generated an ongoing relationship with Sindh since Partition in 1947, and especially since the border between Kachchh and Sindh became less permeable after the India-Pakistan war of 1965. In particular, I analyze how Sufi poetry performance functions as a form of ethical pedagogy in contemporary Muslim communities in Kachchh, as poetic verses and their explication by performers impart ethical teachings to listeners. I approach Kachchh as a “borderlands” (Anzaldúa 1987) in order to underscore how musical life can revive and enact transborder social and cultural relations in post-Partition South Asia. This study historically contextualizes performance practices that evince ties with Sindh, and thus contributes to a discussion of musical life in both Pakistan and India. Analyzing the ethical value of Sindhi-language Sufi poetry transmission in Kachchh, I provide insight into how Muslims in this region of western India position themselves in cultural terms relative to historical and contemporary Sindh, Pakistan.