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I. All manuscripts in English should follow the following format:

The first page should contain title; author(s)'s name(s), affiliation, E-mail address; and abstract of 150-350 words, followed by three to five key words, main text, acknowledgment, endnotes, and references in subsequent pages. Key words should be given in italics.

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- 1.1
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The Writing of History: Construction and Deconstruction of Myths of the Sindhis in Sindh, Pakistan

Ameer Ali¹, Maya Khemlani David²

Abstract

Sindh was occupied by the British colonizers in 1843, and they ruled over it till 1947, year in which India and Pakistan were partitioned, and Sindh was made a province of Pakistan. Myths of the Sindhis had been created by the British to justify their rule over Sindh. This study describes these constructions and analyzes how Sindhis have resisted and deconstructed these colonial myths and constructed their own discourse of national consciousness. This deconstruction focusses on the creation of a collective consciousness of the struggles of local Sindhi heroes who resisted the colonizers. Primary and secondary data from interviews and historical sources are analyzed to demonstrate the deconstruction by using Eqbal Ahmad's (2000) concept of power triangle, and Reisigl and Wodak's Discourse Historical Model (2008). Findings showed that the British colonizers used negative terms, such as 'barbarism', 'the Sick man of India', 'martial-less race', 'hemp drinker' and other negative slurs to refer to Sindh and Sindhis, and how these misperceptions continue to influence the power elite and mass media in Sindh and Pakistan. Building upon indigenous historical sources and narratives, we counter such hermeneutic interpretations of Sindhis and argue how these misinterpretations are far from reality, and how these seek to preserve colonial/political and other interests.

Keywords: British, colonial myths, constructions, deconstruction, Sindhis.

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1. Introduction: Nationalist vs Colonial Narratives

Mubarak Ali (Mansoor, 2019) explains that history has always been written from two perspectives and it continues to be written in the same way. First, the colonizers/state write history about an area which they have occupied/are ruling in a way which gives support or champions their actions and policies and makes them appear as heroic and altruistic. In retaliation, the ruled community creates national narratives about their history which portrays their freedom fighters as heroes (Mansoor, 2019). In this way, the process of writing histories and textually producing heroes depends on who is writing history and the purpose of such writing.

Myth is a popular misconception or imaginary tale created by a group of people which may seek to create and define their superiority in relation to other groups. Similarly, the British in India created their myths of benevolence and progress (Barabanov, 2021), misrepresenting and degrading the inhabitants of the subcontinent. In contrast, Tharoor (2018) debunks these myths of British greatness saying that the British divided the subcontinent into religions, sects, and ethnic categories.

The history of Sindh² is also no exception to these opposing ways of writing history. Sindh's history was written by the British colonizers from their perspectives in which they created myths of their greatness, while the nationalists in the post-independence period wrote histories about Sindh in which they condemned foreign invasions and colonial projects. Therefore, this research addresses the question of myths and heroes in the colonial discourse declassifying colonial narratives in Sindh's context.

1.1 Colonial Myths about Sindh?

The British under the command of Napier³ occupied Sindh by defeating the Talpur rulers in the battle of Miani in 1843 (Verma, 2016). The British colonial era ended in 1947 when Pakistan and India came into being, and Sindh became a province of Pakistan. During their rule over Sindh (for the different periods of rule in Sindh, see Table 1), the British created myths about Sindh by deliberately misappropriating and misreading its past. For instance, Napier (Asif, 2017a) claimed that the Talpur rulers of Sindh were ruffians and imbeciles who treated the women in the harem with revolting barbarity. Napier also

² Sindh, a province in Pakistan, has borne the brunt of foreign attacks in the past. Persians, Greeks, Arabs, Arguns, Turkhans, Mughals, and the British invaded and occupied Sindh in different periods (see Table 1). Sindh had no natural protection, such as mountains to its north and northeast making it vulnerable to foreign attacks and invasions. In 1843, Sindh was colonized by the British after they defeated the Talpur rulers of Sindh. The British ruled over Sindh till 1947 when the subcontinent was partitioned into Pakistan and India, two independent countries. Consequently, Sindh became a province of Pakistan. The British colonizers, especially Napier, justified their annexation of Sindh on the pretext of a 'civilizing' mission (see Verma, 2016: p. 231). In this regard, the British constructed narratives and myths which misrepresented the Sindhis. Misrepresenting Sindhis enabled the British to legitimize their civilizing mission.

³ Charles James Napier (1722-1853) was a veteran British Army officer. He also served as a Major General in the Bombay Army and conquered Sindh in 1843.

asserted that the Talpurs were also given to enjoying occasional human sacrificing (see Asif, 2017a).

Even after 74 years of Pakistan's independence, the colonial mindset continues to influence the production of historical narratives in Sindh. The British-era gazetteers are still reprinted as introductions to the history of the subcontinent. This uncritical reproduction of historical narratives through mass media including filmmaking reflects the colonial attitude towards Sindh and Sindhis. Alternative narratives of national consciousness need to be explored and encouraged that will decolonize Sindh's history.

It is the aim of this paper to counter the myths created by the British about Sindhis using Eqbal Ahmad's concept of power triangle and Reisigl and Wodak's (2008) Discourse Historical Model. Ahmad was a Pakistani scholar activist whose ideas contributed to postcolonialism, an academic field which critically studies legacies of colonialism and imperialism.

The colonial-era British narratives about Sindhis have been interpreted differently. Reviewing narratives on Sindh's history, Kothari (2004) suggests that the British made two important changes to Sindh's history. First, they disrupted the Arab rule which had been established in Sindh in 712 when Mohammad Bin Qasim, an Arab general, annexed Sindh. Second, the British aligned Sindh with the Bombay presidency which she claims shattered Sindh's geographical, political, and cultural isolation from India. Sindh's merger with the Bombay presidency might be viewed critically as a colonial attempt at erasing Sindh's independent socio-cultural identity.

The British tried to learn the Sindhi language so that they could easily 'control' the region (Boivin quoted in *The Express Tribune*, 2014). While critically discussing the British ways of producing colonial knowledge about Sindh during the British era, Boivin (2020a) explains how the British colonial administrators, in collaboration with local scribes (munshis) conducted surveys and established that Sindhi was not a dialect of Punjabi or Hindi. Moreover, they wrote the grammar of the Sindhi language and created its dictionary.

After the annexation of Sindh, the British tried to create a class of people that would collaborate with them in ruling and managing the affairs of Sindh (Verma, 2016). As superiority cannot be maintained without creating inferiority among the people being ruled, the British created narratives which aimed to debase the culture, race, and language of the locals. In this regard, they also held prejudiced perceptions (Boivin, 2020b) which were pitted against the Sindhis to deal successfully with them. One of these myths which were created by the British was that Sindhis were a martial-less race who lacked skills and strategies in war.

Table 1: History of Sindh under Different Rulers⁴

Names of Ruling Dynasty	Their Ruling Period
1. Rai Dynasty	5 th to 7 th Century AD (Pal, 2016).
2. Brahman Dynasty	641-725 AD (Wink, 1991).
3. Arab Rule	712-10 th Century AD (Government of Sindh, n.d.).
4. Soomra Rule	1026-1351 AD (Siddiqui, n.d.).
5. Sama Rule	1351-1521 AD (The News, 2009).
6. Argun-Turkan Rule	1521-1591 AD (Siddiqi, 1972).
7. Mughal Rule	1595-1700 AD (Verma, 2016).
8. Kalhora Rule	1701-1783 AD (World Heritage Encyclopedia, n.d.).
9. Talpur Rule	1783-1843 AD (Talpur, 2002).
10. British Rule	1843-1947 AD (Ali, 2018).

For more details see Lari (1994).

1.2 Problematizing Colonial Categories in Sindh, Pakistan

Muslim-Hindu unity during the War of Independence in 1857 against the British colonial rule in India was seen as a serious threat by the British who later took to defining and dividing the peoples of the subcontinent based on their language, religion, sect, caste, sub-caste, ethnicity, and skin colour (Tharoor, 2017). Thus, they managed to divide the peoples of the subcontinent due to their orientalist assumptions (Tharoor, 2017). Therefore, all these categories along with ‘ethnicity’ were created by the colonizers. Pakistan inherited these categories. Pakistan is a multicultural country (Ali and David, 2021). Four major groups which include Balochis, Pashtuns, Punjabis, and Sindhis live in Pakistan, and they respectively live in Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Punjab, and Sindh, the four provinces of Pakistan. Members of one major group might also be living in Pakistan’s other three provinces. Since 1947, the power elites have dominated high military and bureaucracy ranks, in short, the ruling domains and this has produced grievances among the other provincial groups (Hameed, 2018).

⁴ The years can be different in different sources.

In this research, a theoretical framework has been developed by merging Ahmad's (2000) concept of power triangle and Reisigl and Wodak's Discourse Historical Model (2008) to analyse selected texts from the colonial narratives about Sindhis (see Diagram 1).

In his power triangle concept, Ahmad (2000) states that Pakistan inherited a triangular structure of power from the British rulers. The structure includes bureaucracy, military, and the ruling elite. This structure forms what Ahmad calls a power triangle. Although in the power triangle new faces replaced old ones, the colonial attitudes, norms, values, power relations, historical regulations, and misrepresentations continue to influence and shape the discourse of post-independence rulers in Sindh and Pakistan. In short, the power triangle continues to use and exploit the historical discourse of the colonizers and make use of inherited colonial patterns to harass and take advantage of the people of Sindh. In this research, Ahmad's concept of the power triangle has been used to show how Pakistan's academics and ruling elite inherited colonial myths and narratives which are still being used against the Sindhis.

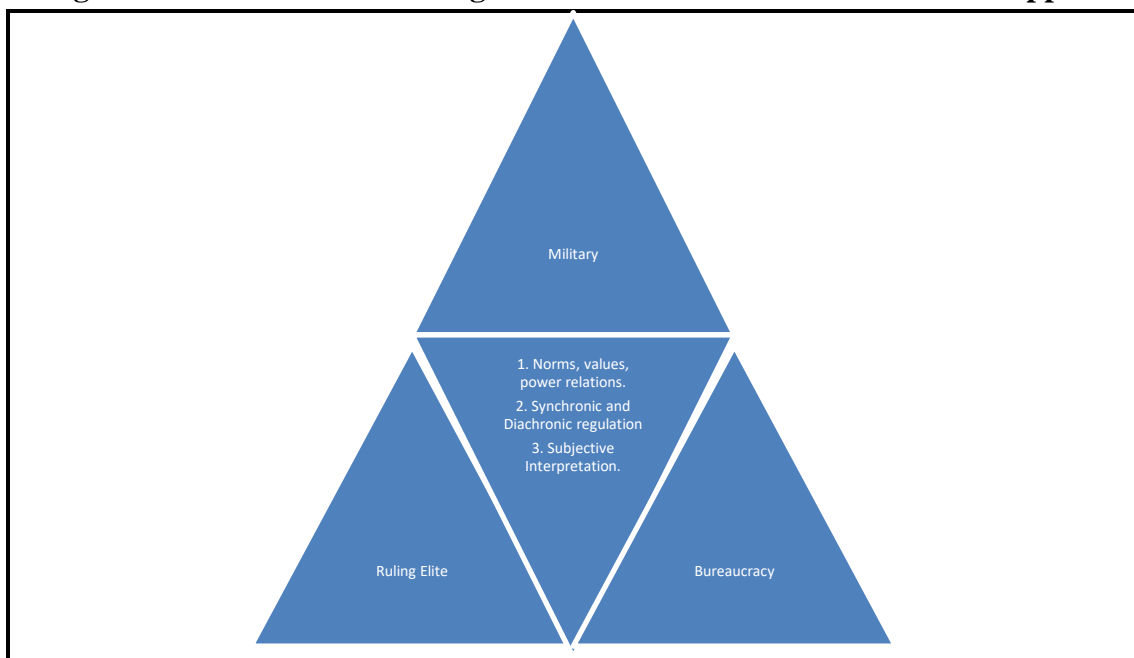
The power elite occupying the power triangle has retained the colonial attitudes and ideas in their discourse and actions. Such attitudes, and ideas expressed in discourse can be demystified by conducting critical discourse analysis. Therefore, in this research, Ahmad's concept of the power triangle has been merged with Reisigl and Wodak's (2008) Discourse Historical Model.

Reisigl and Wodak (2008) explain that discourse is regulated by ideologies, power relations, norms, and values. In the process of their production, colonial narratives are also subjected to political ideologies and political interests. Discourse is also both synchronically and diachronically constrained (Reisigl and Wodak, 2008). In the case of synchronic regulation, discourse relies on other contemporary power discourses. For instance, colonial discourse needs the support of theories about race and ethnicity, which are taken to be the scientific basis to justify colonial rule. In the case of diachronic regulation, discourses derive much of their content from past discourses and in this case, discourse exists in an environment that is characterized by interdiscursiveness, that is, the tendency of discourse being influenced by previous discursive traditions.

Discourse interpretation involves a subjective approach towards a subject and does not represent an objective aspect of experience. Such a hermeneutic interpretation enables individuals to approach a topic from different viewpoints. Hermeneutic interpretations may either be plausible or implausible (Reisigl and Wodak, 2008). These are subjective in their form and content. Therefore, it is not possible to say that a specific interpretation is right or wrong.

The data taken from colonial sources were countered with the data taken from indigenous sources. The colonial sources were qualitatively analysed using Ahmad's (2000) concept of power triangle and Reisigl and Wodak's (2008) Discourse Historical Model.

Diagram 1: Power Triangle and Discourse Historical Approach



2. Previous Research on the British Colonial Rule in Sindh and Pakistan

In this section, relevant research on the deconstruction of colonial myths in Sindh's context will be reviewed. Previous research demonstrated that colonizers created myths about communities they ruled as a pretext to justify their rule and policies. To date, to the best of our knowledge, there has been no research attempting to deconstruct colonial myths about Sindh and Sindhis using Ahmad's (2000) concept of power triangle or Reisigl and Wodak's (2008) critical discourse approach to question colonial myths. It is hoped that this research fills the vacuum by deconstructing the colonial myths about Sindh and its inhabitants.

Qualitatively analysing the repercussions of the subcontinent's partition, Jalal (1995) demonstrates that the end of formal colonialism and the redrawing of national boundaries was a tumultuous event which sent waves of shock across the world. Additionally, she argues that the British attempt of institution-building in India deprived the indigenous people of their loosely built interdependence and unity (Jalal, 1995). This situation led to the problems related to power sharing in Pakistan.

In addition to the issue of power sharing, Yousaf (2018) demonstrated that Pakistan inherited colonial institutions, such as Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) that was created and implemented by the British to tame the Pashtun tribes in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. This colonial, inherited institution negatively affected Pashtun culture and its traditional conflict resolution structure Jirga or local councils (Yousaf, 2018).

The British perception of Sindh has been investigated from two dimensions by Asif (2017b). First, qualitatively reviewing the British perception, he argues that the colonizers believed that the Indian Muslims "cannot produce their own histories for they lack the

language and archives for scientific objectivity” (Asif, 2017b: p. 1). Second, even if some natives happened to create history, such history was aligned with colonial archives, methodologies, and tools. Although Asif suggests incorporating vernacular narratives into Sindh’s anti-colonial past, his suggestion is limited to Urdu historiography. However, native, vernacular narratives in the Sindhi language will function as effective alternatives to the colonial misrepresentations and misperceptions of the Sindhis of Sindh.

Ansari (2011) has critically discussed the role of Sindhi nationalism and its coming into prominence during the earlier period of colonial rule. She also dispelled myths about Sindhi nationalism and shed light on the role of Sindhi nationalism before, during and after the partition. She emphasised the fact that Sindhi nationalism has been popular among both the Muslims and Hindus of Sindh, and it gave them a common identity. This communal unity, which she elaborated on, helped the Sindhis to combat the colonial policy of divide and rule in Sindh.

Ludwig (2013) has critically analysed the colonial narratives of sexuality about Sindhis. He elucidates the incoherence in the British, colonial officials’ narratives in which they tried to rationalize homosexuality by using so-called scientific theories of criminality, climatic determinism, and race in Sindh’s context. According to Ludwig (2013), “the story of the colonial engagement with ‘unnatural vice’ is thus another example of how knowledge gathered and produced in the colonial realm fed into and interacted with supposedly European theories...” (Ludwig, 2013: p. 11). Hence, his findings show how the scientific theories were used by the colonizers to degrade the colonized communities and thereby justified their rule on the natives.

3. Research Methodology

In this research both primary and secondary data have been collected through purposive sampling. The primary data were collected through half an hour interview with two activists who were aware of Sindh’s colonial history and post-colonial narratives. One of them is a human rights activist and lawyer in Sindh, while the other is a student activist in Sindh. The two participants were chosen purposively because they are proponents of nationalist narratives in Sindh’s historiography. Radical nationalism, declassification of colonial narratives can decolonize the history of Sindh. To justify the limited selection of the participants, their responses were triangulated with some secondary data sources which are now discussed.

Secondary data were collected from Abro’s (2019) YouTube channel and Napier’s work *Conquest of Sindh*, Aftab and Mangrio’s book *The Court Martial Execution of Pir Sibghatullah Shah (Soreh Badshah)*, Richard F. Burton’s book *Sindh and the Races that Inhabit the Valley of Indus* (1851), and *Report of the Indian Jails Committee* (1921). Additionally, Tribune newspaper of 20th January 2013 and 19th April 2013 and Dawn of 22nd April 2018 and 16th November 2020 were used for data collection. These newspapers of the known dates were selected because they contained articles on Sindh’s freedom slogan and freedom fighter (Hemu Kalani). Moreover, these are widely read English dailies in Pakistan.

This research is qualitative and answers research questions using Ahmad's (2000) concept of power triangle and Reisigl and Wodak's (2008) Discourse Historical Model. The excerpts selected purposively from the above-mentioned sources have been codified into broad themes which have been critically analysed. The data taken from colonial sources were codified and triangulated using a table. The colonial claims laid in the data were qualitatively countered by using excerpts taken from indigenous data sources and narratives. Moreover, the colonial claims against the backdrop of indigenous narratives were critically analysed using Ahmad's (2000) concept of the power triangle and Reisigl and Wodak's (2008) Discourse Historical Model.

4. Colonial Discourse and Stereotypes/Myths

In this section, British colonial discourse, and stereotypes/myths about the Sindhis have been presented in descriptive and tabulated form (see Table 2).

Table 2: Negative Terms Used against Sindhis and their Sources

Negative Terms	Sources
1. Barbarism	Napier's letter to India's Governor General (see Khera, 2013).
2. The Sick Man of India	Mentioned in Khera (2013).
3. Martial-less Race	Mentioned in Amin (2017) and Macmunn (1980).
4. Unnatural Vice	Brahman's colonial report.
5. Hemp Drinker, Degraded Condition, Mean, Cunning; Semi Barbarous Country	Burton (1851).
6. Lazy	During conversation with Haleem.
7. Dull, Prejudiced, Ignorant, Superficial	Eliot and Dowson's <i>The History of India, as Told by its own Historians: The Mohammadan Period</i> (1867).

In this section, secondary data have been presented. The findings in this section suggest that the British colonizers took it as their responsibility to carry on their shoulders what Kipling (1899) called 'the white man's burden' to civilize the people of Sindh. White man's burden was a pretext which enabled the British administration to justify their rule over Sind which had produced the Indus Valley civilization, one of the most remarkable civilizations in the past (see Talpur, 1995; Advani, 1997).

Colonizing a region requires a thorough understanding of the geographical characteristics and routes of the area. Before colonizing Sindh, the British had also begun to explore the geography of Sindh. When they navigated the Indus River which flows through Sindh, their intentions had been voiced by a local Sindhi and his words were later recorded by a colonial writer. He said: "Alas! Sindh is now gone, since the English have seen the river, which is the high road to its conquest!" (Napier, 1845: p. 38-39). Eleven years later, his concerns materialized, and Sindh was colonized by the British in 1843 after they defeated the Talpurs in the battle of Miani.

The colonization project was based upon ‘us’ versus ‘them’ relation between the colonizers and the colonized. This is confirmed in Napier’s words: “strangers coming from afar, more civilized, more knowing in science and arts, more energetic of spirit, stronger of body, more warlike, more enterprising than the people among whom they settle, must necessarily extend that power until checked by natural barriers or by a counter civilization”. (Vide Vol. 1 p.23, 1844 quoted in Khera, 2013: p. 37). In this excerpt, the colonial writer claimed that the British colonizers represented all the good qualities, whereas the local Sindhis demonstrated weakness of character, mind, and body. Thus, in the colonial narratives, the British were shown both mentally and physically superior to the local Sindhis.

After conquering Sindh, Napier wrote a letter to India’s Governor General of that time, and the letter also reflects the colonial superiority complex with respect to the Sindhis. In the detailed letter, he mentions the treaties which guarantee colonial interests: “...the evident object of these treaties is to favor our Indian interests, by the abolition of barbarism, by ameliorating the condition of society...” (quoted in Khera, 2013: p. 67). The colonial narrative of the British superiority with respect to the Sindhis was also manifested in the remark: “the full light of European truth and discernment begins to shade its beams upon the obscurity of the past, and to relieve us from the necessity of appealing to the Native Chroniclers of the time, who are, for the most part dull, prejudiced, ignorant and superficial” (Eliot and Dowson, 1867: p. 20).

Apart from the colonial narrative of sickness associated with Sindh, the myth of martial race was also tactically used by the British to misrepresent Sindhis. In the eastern part of the world, only certain races and clans were associated with colonial martialness (Macmunn, 1980). Similarly, in Pakistan, this status was extended to some Punjabis and Pashtun tribes (Amin, 2017). Sindhis were not included in the category. The British colonizers created the martial race myth to recruit people who were loyal to their empire and served their interests. For these people, the British flatteringly used the phrase *martial race* (see Amin, 2017).

Burton (1851) also misrepresented Sindhis in his book. Associating negative traits of character with Sindhis, Burton (1851) labelled them as hemp drunkard, mean, cunning and living in degraded conditions. His observations resulted in him perceiving the Sindhis negatively. He says: “Superstition is rife throughout Sindh; scepticism, rare” (Burton, 1851: p. 174). In another place, he continues with respect to Sindh: “ugly old women are generally feared and hated by common people” (Burton, 1851: p. 175).

The British colonizers also viewed the Sindhis’ sexuality in a prejudiced way. The Sindhis who were serving their sentences in the British jails were reported to have abnormal/unnatural sexuality. One of the colonial reports on the Sindhi prisoners stated that much like Pashtuns, Sindhis were naturally addicted to unnatural vice (Brahman, 1921: p. 277-78). Although their behavior might have been unnatural but generalizing it to an entire ethnic group reflects bias.

5 Narratives of National Consciousness: Counter to Colonial Discourse and Stereotypes

In response to the colonial myths, national, alternative narratives of national consciousness have been provided to contest such colonial perceptions of the Sindhis.

Here, notes from discussions with Sindhi activists on the nationalist consciousness of Sindh's history of resistance against the colonizers are presented. Two activists from Sindh who were aware of Sindh's colonial past and post-colonial narratives were interviewed to explore indigenous attitudes towards the colonial myths. Discussion was mainly related to the reasons why the colonial myths were created and the views of the interviewees to the myths. Shedding light on the colonial myths about Sindh, the respondents gave the following responses.

One of the participants said: "The reasons of creating the colonial myths were politically inspired. The colonizers created narratives about the colonized nations. This was a continued systematic effort. These narratives were never embodiments of reality. These were deliberate attempts to degrade the colonized nations' language, culture, and history. Thus, misrepresenting Sindhis aided the British to justify their rule based on their superiority complex".

The other participant, a lawyer and human rights activist, said:

"The Britishers were systematically doing it, their narratives were based on binary relations between the colonizers and the colonized. The former was represented positively, while the latter were represented negatively. They were doing so because they wanted to create a sense among the colonized that they are being ruled by learnt, civilized rulers. This was one of the main reasons why they created myths about Sindhis. For example, the British would say that Sindhis are hashish-drinkers and lazy".

Much of the interview revolved around the theme of binary relations between the colonizers and the colonized. During the conversation, the participants quoted well-known post-colonial scholars, such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak⁵ to support their arguments. The central idea which was developed during the conversation was that in colonial narratives negative traits were associated with the colonized and such traits had political underpinnings.

Mehtab Akbar Rashidi, a Sindhi politician, while speaking during a book launch ceremony stressed the fact that Sindhi researchers should bring to light the colonial brutalities perpetrated against Sindhis (Hasan, 2020). Dawn newspaper reported her saying "there are eyewitnesses, there is oral history and still we, the people of Sindh, don't know the brutal aspects of colonial times. The Hur Movement is to be owned by Sindh, by the people of Sindh" (Hasan, 2020). This remark was made when the book

⁵ The participants mentioned Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Bhabha's concept of hybridity, and Spivak's work *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (2010).

Defying Colonial State Power: The Court Martial Execution of Pir Sibghatullah Shah (Soreh Badshah) was launched.

Nabi and Mangrio (2020) compiled and edited the book, *The Court Martial Execution of Pir Sibghatullah Shah (Soreh Badshah)* by collecting articles on the Hur Movement⁶ from Dawn. The collected articles shed light on Sindhis' resistance against colonial rule. Dawn reported them saying "We are collecting the missing parts of our history in the form of literature that is made available to encourage researchers" (Hassan, 2020). In their edited book Nabi and Mangrio (2020) narrate the tale of Pir Sibghatullah Shah Rashidi II, popularly known as 'Soreh Badshah' in Sindh which means 'brave king' (Akhtar, 2013), who was a Sindhi freedom fighter. He raised the famous slogan against British colonialism: *Watan ya Kafan! Azadi ya Maut!* (Either the country or coffin! Either freedom or death!) (Akhtar, 2013). This leader was killed by the British. His story of bravery is exemplary and contested the myth of a non-martial race often attributed to Sindhis.

Apart from the book, a religious scholar named Israr Ahmed (Abro, 2019) also contested the colonial myths about Sindh. He contested the colonial claim that Sindhis are martial-less race. Ahmed quoted Ghulam Murtaza Shah who argued that Sindhis never liked to be colonial mercenaries, and they never wanted to join the colonial forces which were fighting against their freedom fighter brethren. Moreover, he also pointed out the fact that unlike other areas of northern India, the British did not build educational institutions in Sindh, because they knew that the Sindhis would never collaborate with them in administration. Therefore, they created the myth that Sindhis are a martial-less and lazy race.

The case of Hemu Kalani, who was a young revolutionary of 18 years, also shows that Sindhi heroes bravely resisted the British colonial rule. In 1943, the young freedom fighter along with his two friends tried to derail a British train full of ammunition by removing the fishplates. In that act of valour, Hemu was caught and later hanged in the Sukkur jail (see details Israr, 2013). Hemu's brave act of resisting the oppressive rule of the British also exposes the futile, racist myth that Sindhis were not a martial race (Israr, 2013).

6. Analysis

In this segment, colonial myths about Sindhis have been analysed using Reisigl and Wodak's (2008) Discourse Historical Model and Ahmad's (2000) concept of power triangle. Against the backdrop of indigenous narratives of national consciousness discussed in section 5, this section counters colonial myths/stereotypes about Sindhis in relation to barbarism, uncivilization, martial-less race, unnatural vice, hemp addiction, misogyny, and other such adjectives.

⁶ The Hur Movement was launched by Pir Sibghatullah Shah Pagaro against British colonial rule in Sindh during the Second World War. The followers and freedom fighters of Pagaro were called 'Hurs', hence, the movement of resistance was called "Hur Movement" (for details see Aftab and Mangrio, 2020). According to Akhtar (2013), the Hur Movement lasted 108 years from 1843 to 1951.

The colonial discourse about Sindh is based upon political norms and values which tend to establish power relations between the rulers and the ruled. Napier's phrases (cited in Khera, 2013: p. 37), such as 'more civilized', 'more knowing', 'more strong' 'more warlike', and 'more enterprising' assertively define his compatriots as having more meritorious attributions than the local Sindhis. Moreover, the comparative adverb 'more' followed by positive adjectives implies that Sindhis are not as capable as the British. These phrases inspired by colonial norms establish power relations between the British and the Sindhis. Additionally, this discourse of power relations synchronically derives its contents from the discourses which advertise European/British superiority. These power relations in the colonial discourse were produced by the colonizers about the colonized, and was politically motivated and relied on the colonizers' implausible descriptions.

The British colonial discourse about Sindhis reflected colonial interests. For example, the Napier's letter to the Governor General reflects colonial interests. In the letter, he talks about preserving British interests in India. Deriving from discourses of civilization, he uses the phrases, such as 'the abolition of barbarism', and 'ameliorating the condition of society'. In these expressions, barbarism has been attributed to Sindhi society. Therefore, he assumes the responsibility of 'ameliorating' Sindhi society. In colonial discourse, freedom-fighters were subjectified as 'barbarians' and 'uncivilized'. These were blatantly implausible interpretations of the people who were heroes for their indigenous brethren.

Apart from these negative myths about Sindhis, there were other negative connotations about Sindhis. The phrases, such as 'martial-less race', and 'unnatural vice' were also imputed to Sindhis. These myths were taken from scientific theories of racism and sexuality to consolidate colonial discourse which demeaned the colonized Sindhis. These negative views reflected the colonizers' subjective interpretation of the Sindhi world and were politically used by the British to strengthen their colonial ambitions of exploitation. The implausibility of the martial race myth is also supported by the fact that many Sindhis were resisting colonial rule as seen in the Hur Movement launched by the Sindhis against the British colonial rule.

The colonial discourse constructed by Burton (1851) about Sindhis is also an implausible interpretation. Such sweeping generalisations of negative traits are not logical. Not every Sindhi, as he claimed, was mean, hemp drunkard, or a hater of old women. Similarly, his argument on old women being ugly is fallacious. In Burton's subjective interpretations, the Sindhi way of life was 'degraded' or uncivilised, while the British way of life was upgraded and civilized.

After analyzing the colonial discourse about Sindhis using Reisigl and Wodak's (2008) critical discourse method, we now move on to analyze the continuity of the colonial discourse in the post-independence Sindh and Pakistan using Ahmad's (2000) concept of power triangle.

Some of the myths continue to be exploited, independence from colonial rule does not necessarily mean eradication of colonial narratives. The colonial demeanour towards the Sindhis has been inherited by the Punjabi rulers of Pakistan. Pakistan's Punjab province

has been a heartland of the establishment-centric power, and the British made Punjabis the dominant arm-bearers, and position-holders of the army (Akhtar, 2019). The ruling class, bureaucracy, and the military comprises the power triangle represented by the power elite. This power triangle has not been decolonized (Ahmad, 2000). Therefore, the colonial attitudes in these power domains towards the Sindhis continue to dominate mainstream mass media discourse. The Sindhis are still being misrepresented as ‘dull’, ‘prejudiced’, ‘ignorant’, ‘superficial’ (once used by Eliot and Dowson 1867) and these and many other stereotypes are also being used against the Sindhis in Pakistan’s mass media (Shah, 2018).

The Sindhis have been also misrepresented as ‘miscreants’ and ‘extremists’ in the local Sindhi TV channels (Dawn, 2017). These stereotypes reflect how colonial legacy has been owned by the media discourse. These channels are controlled by the power elite in Sindh and Pakistan. Media, said to be the fourth pillar of state, is controlled by the ruling class made up of military, bureaucracy and governing upper class politicians. This is how the fourth pillar of state is controlled by the power triangle in Sindh and Pakistan. Although the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has warned against anyone misrepresenting the Sindhis, such misrepresentation is not always complied with.

Colonial views of the Sindhis and their culture have also affected some Pakistani politicians who look down upon symbols of Sindhi culture. One such symbol of Sindhi culture is *Ajrak*⁷, a Sindhi fabric. A politician named, Shahbaz Gill, made derogatory remarks about *Ajrak* facemask by resembling it to the cloth tied around the mouths of calves in villages to stop them from drinking too much milk (Baz, 2020). This pejorative remark about a popular cultural entity reflects the politician’s colonized mindset. It was the British propaganda to degrade local culture to justify their rule and superiority. As ill-luck would have it, this is still being practiced by some. In this way some ruling politicians are attached to the power triangle in order to maintain colonial norms, attitudes, and values.

7. Discussion

The myths in colonial discourse about Sindhis reflect the hierarchical nature of power relations between the colonizers and the colonized. The colonial discourse is regulated by colonial norms, diachronic/synchronic discursive forces, and subjective interpretation. The colonial narratives which describe Sindhis, and their land are unreasonable interpretations. Although such interpretations might have served colonial interests, they are far removed from reality. Furthermore, such interpretations reflected “the colonial embrace of the Hegelian view of Indian history-because [it claimed that] Indians had no philosophy, hence, they had no history” (Asif, 2017b: p. 4).

⁷ *Ajrak* is a traditional, cultural fabric of the Sindhis. It is used/put on as a *Chaddar* by the Sindhis. Its lineage is traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization. The Sindhis respect it as a cultural entity.

The colonial discourse has continued to shape the minds of post-colonial administrators where the decolonizing process has not yet taken place. This continued exploitation has been retained by what Ahmad (2000) calls the inherited power triangle in Sindh and Pakistan's contexts. Therefore, Pakistan's power elite still reproduces discourse of power relations in which the rulers distanced themselves from the ruled by virtue of their socio-economic status. The increasing gaps between Pakistan's elites and the common people particularly in Sindh might be bridged by decolonizing the institutions and minds of the former.

Rewriting Sindh's history from a national perspective can play a vital role in the reconstruction of post-colonial Sindh. The same suggestion has been forwarded by Banik (2016) and Ansari (2011). Consequently, the Hegelian notion⁸ of history employed by the colonizers in constructing myths about the colonized nations needs to be discontinued with alternative/counter and indigenous narratives. The interviews conducted in this research, and indigenous unearthing of colonial myths can challenge and resist the Western hegemony of historical narratives.

For Ludwig (2013), colonial narratives of sexuality misrepresent colonized nations and their sexuality. Similarly, this research demonstrates how the British colonizers described Sindhis' sexuality as unnatural. However, unlike Ludwig's (2013) findings on colonial narratives, our study has moved on to critically analyse linguistic binarism used by the British against Sindhis.

According to Asif (2017), incorporating vernacular narratives can help in resisting the hegemony of Western colonial narratives. Similarly, this study draws on vernacular narratives and indigenous sources to counter the colonial myths/stereotypes in relation to barbarism, uncivilization, hemp addiction and many other such negative adjectives about Sindhis. While Asif's (2017b) suggested using Urdu historiography, this study suggests the use of Sindhi indigenous narratives and historiography. Such localised narratives can help in resisting what Ahmad (2013) calls 'the power triangle'.

8. Conclusion

Sindhis have been misrepresented in the colonial narratives and such misrepresentations and generalizations are inconsistent with ground realities. Even independence has not been able to eradicate these myths which have been imprinted on the minds of the current rulers. The power elite in Pakistan continues to exploit these myths by intensifying what Hameed (2018) calls regional grievances.

⁸ Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was a philosopher who believed that history of the world progresses in a linear manner towards freedom. This progress is regulated by human reason which later led to the phrase 'Hegelian notion' of history. Hegel's view of history has been considered as reductionist because it does not take complex forces, such as geography, class, economy, power, etc. into account. The Colonial rulers exploited this notion of history in claiming that colonial rule is driven by reason towards human freedom and progress. Therefore, many of them associated terms, such as 'civilizing mission', 'science', 'progress', etc. with their rule in India.

Much of the focus in this research has been directed to colonial narratives constructed before and after 1947 against the Sindhis. There is a need to conduct further research at a much broader level on how these narratives and myths have been inherited and retained by Pakistan's post-independence power elite against other minorities in Pakistan. These myths must be deconstructed so that Pakistan's institutions can be liberated from the colonial mentality, and harmonious relationships across the various ethnicities in the country might result.

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