

Göttingen Series in
Social and Cultural Anthropology

Elfriede Hermann,
Antonie Fuhse (Eds.)

India Beyond India: Dilemmas of Belonging



Göttingen University Press

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Ed. by Elfriede Hermann and Antonie Fuhse

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Published in 2018 by Göttingen University Press
as volume 12 in “Göttingen Series in Social and Cultural Anthropology”

This series is a continuation of “Göttinger Beiträge zur Ethnologie”.

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Cultural Anthropology



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2018

Bibliographische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliographie; detaillierte bibliographische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

Funded by grants from the German Research Foundation, the Ministry for Science and Culture of Lower Saxony, Georg-August-University of Göttingen, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, and the Government of India.

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Set and layout: Steffen Herrmann

Cover picture: Port Louis, Mauritius, 2007. Photo credit: Wolfgang Kempf.

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<http://univerlag.uni-goettingen.de>

ISBN: 978-3-86395-361-4

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2018-1093>

eISSN: 2512-6881

Contents

Acknowledgments 7

1 Introduction: Dilemmas of Belonging in Indian Diasporas 11
Elfriede Hermann and Antonie Fuhse

Part I: Belonging in Transnational Space

2 Indian Diaspora and Global Organizations:
Communities and Contested Boundaries 27
Chandrashekhar Bhat

3 Navigating Belonging in a Mobile World:
Young Indian Students and Researchers in Germany 49
Antonie Fuhse

Part II: Belonging and Nation Building

4 Anxieties of Belonging: East Indians and the Cultural Politics
of the Nation in Trinidad 67
Viranjini Munasinghe

5 Dilemmas of Belonging in Fiji, Part I:
Constitutions, Coups, and Indo-Fijian Citizenship 83
Martha Kaplan

-
- 6 Dilemmas of Belonging in Fiji, Part II:
Shanti, Swaraj, and the Problem of Political Armies 99
John Kelly
- 7 Guests without a Host: The Indian Diaspora(s) in Mauritius 131
Burkhard Schnepel
- 8 India Beyond India: The Indian Diaspora in East Africa 151
Roman Loimeier
- Part III: Politics of Belonging and Violence**
- 9 Domestic Violence and the Implications of Belonging:
 Experiences of Indian Immigrant Women in North America 175
Swati Shirwadkar
- 10 The Call of Home and Violence of Belonging:
 Diasporic Hinduism and Tamils in Exile 195
Kamala Ganesh
- Notes on Contributors 211

Acknowledgments

First of all, our express thanks go to all the members of Indian diasporas in various countries who participated in our research projects. As editors of this volume, we join the authors in acknowledging our interlocutors' efforts to introduce us to their collective and personal histories, to acquaint us with their sense of belonging to their country of origin and their countries of present residence, and to provide us with insights into the challenges they have been facing in their endeavors to maintain their relations to people and place, here and there.

Cooperation provided us with insights into Indian diasporic communities and contexts, but it also afforded us the opportunity to exchange our findings at an international conference that we held at the University of Göttingen between May 24 and 26, 2012, titled "India beyond India: Debating Communalism and Belonging" and jointly organized by Elfriede Hermann and Roman Loimeier. The chapters of this volume are based on the conference presentations. The designation of Indian diasporas as "India beyond India" was suggested by Roman Loimeier and proved to directly speak to the interests of many scholars working in Indian diaspora research. Focusing on Indian communities in various countries, all the presentations highlighted the significance of issues of belonging in the past and the present. Reflecting on this, John Kelly trenchantly argued that the common theme of all the papers was dilemmas of belonging, leading us to the present volume's title, "India beyond India: Dilemmas of Belonging." We wish to expressly thank both Roman Loimeier and John Kelly for their inspiring contributions to specifying this thematic focus.

Our conference brought together a wide range of scholars who have been working on Indian diasporas in various disciplinary fields and in a number of countries. We would like to thank them all for travelling to Göttingen in order to engage in debate. Our thanks also go to colleagues of partner institutions in Göttingen, especially to Ravi Ahuja, the director of the Centre for Modern Indian Studies, and to Steven

Vertovec and Peter van der Veer, co-directors of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, for their valuable input at the conference.

The lively exchange we had at the conference proved to have a long-lasting effect on the direction this volume has taken. We wish to thank all who participated actively in the conference for their valuable contributions. Peter van der Veer, Abdul Sheriff, Ravi Ahuja, Frank Heidemann, Margret Frenz, Steven Vertovec, Franz Kogelmann, Patrick Eisenlohr, and Kim Gutschow all acted as panel chairs and enthusiastically discussed the papers. All of the presenters enriched the conference and gave each other inspiration. In addition to the chapters collected in this volume, a number of other papers that were presented could not be included in the anthology. These were the following: Brij Lal's keynote speech, "From Common Roll to Consociationalism: The Political Trajectory of the Fiji Indians"; Helene Basu, "Intimate Histories of Mobility and the Diversification of Diasporic Ways of Belonging in/to Gujarat"; Philipp Zehmisch, "Mini-India within or beyond India? Social-engineering, Belonging and Autonomy in the Andaman Islands"; Ashwin Raj, "Indo-Fijians: An Absent-Present Center of Fiji's Political Ontology"; Iqbal S. Akhtar, "Nasur Jesa versus Hurbayee Jesa Dhamani: Negotiating Racial Boundaries of Khōjā Caste Membership in Nineteenth Century Zanzibar"; Brigitte Luchesi, "Religious Life of 'Little Indias' in Germany – Displaying Belonging in the Public Space"; Martin Tamcke, "Indian and Christian in Ethiopia: Abraham Verghese's Constructions and its Background"; Anurekha Chari-Wagh, "Citizenship and Indian Diasporic Films: Construction of 'India' beyond India"; Lakshmi Subramanian, "Vishal Bharat: Greater India or the Global Indian? Reflections on Indian Ocean Journalism"; Ingrid Therwath, "The Global Sangh Parivar: A Study of Contemporary International Hinduism"; Radhika Chopra, "Fortress Southall: Asylum Politics, Sanctuary Spaces, and Diaspora Communities"; and Harish Naraindas, "Gurus, Gyration, and Goa Parties: India beyond Indians in Germany." We wish to thank all of these presenters for providing insights into their research and we also acknowledge contributions from our colleagues in the audience, which enlivened our discussions.

We are also grateful for the financial support we received, without which we could not have realized both the conference and this publication. We are greatly indebted to the German Research Foundation and the Ministry for Science and Culture of Lower Saxony for the funding they provided for the conference. At the University of Göttingen, our thanks go to the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and to the Faculty Research Committee for the assistance, both financial and practical, they have so generously and unstintingly extended with regard to both the conference and this volume. Furthermore, the University enabled the conference to go ahead by channeling funds from one of its divisions, Göttingen International. In addition, we are grateful to the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, the Government of India, and the Embassy of India in Germany for sponsoring the conference in connection with the "Days of India 2012–2013."

Looking back on the conference, we wish to thank all those members of the University of Göttingen who contributed to making it possible. In particular, we are

grateful to Doris von der Brelie-Lewien for support during the process of applying to funding institutions; to Ramesh Ahuja for directing our attention to the “India Days” in Germany; to Petra Hillebrandt from the Dean’s office for expert administrative advice; and to Ute Westphal, Andrea Ladermann, and Kristin Jansen for providing secretarial support at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology. We also wish to thank the student team who helped with the organization of the conference, with special thanks to Valerie Bleisteiner and Carolin Landgraf.

During the process of preparing the manuscript for publication, we also received a great deal of professional support that we would like to acknowledge. Our sincere thanks go to Roman Loimeier, who acted as co-editor until he was forced to withdraw due to other important commitments. We are deeply grateful to Steffen Herrmann, who created the conference website, poster, and flyer and designed the conference booklet, and who later expertly helped us with bibliographic research, copyediting, and the formatting and laying out of the manuscript for publication. Let us add our express thanks to Bruce Allen, Matthew Fennessy, and Jovan Maud for their professional proofreading of the chapters in early and final stages. In addition, our thanks go to Andrea Lauser, Roman Loimeier, and Nikolaus Schareika, the general editors of the Göttingen Series in Social and Cultural Anthropology, for including this work in the series. Finally, we are greatly indebted to the production team at the Göttingen University Press, and especially to Jutta Pabst for her strong commitment to seeing this work into print.

1 Introduction: Dilemmas of Belonging in Indian Diasporas

Elfriede Hermann and Antonie Fuhse

People's transnational mobilities, their activities to build homes in their countries of residence and their connectivities have resulted in multiplicities of belonging to encountered, imagined and represented communities operating within various political contexts. Migrants and their descendants labor to form and transform relations with their country of origin and of residence. People who see their origins in India but are now living elsewhere are a case in point. They have been establishing worldwide home places, whose growing number and vibrancy invite reconsideration of Indian diasporic communities and contexts in terms of 'India(s) beyond India.' Issues of belonging in Indian diasporas include questions of membership not only in the nation of previous and present residence and/or the nation of origin, but also in other communities and networks in political, economic, religious and social realms at local, regional or global levels. Yet, belonging – and especially simultaneous belonging – to various formations is rarely unambiguous. Rather, belonging in all its modes may entail dilemmas that arise from inclusions and exclusions. Bearing in mind such processes, the contributions to this volume endeavor to provide answers to the question of what kinds of difficulties members of Indian communities abroad encounter in connection with their identifications with and participation in specific collectivities. The underlying argument of all the essays collected is that members of Indian diasporas develop strategies to cope with the dilemmas they face in connection with their sense of belonging to particular communities, while they are subjected to specific power relationships. Thus, the volume sheds light on the ways in which dilemmas of belonging are being negotiated in intercultural fields.

Indian Diasporas

The Indian diaspora is a global phenomenon. Thirty-one million Indians live outside India, as estimated by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (now under the Ministry of External Affairs).¹ Migrants stemming from India and the surrounding states that once formed part of the British Raj can now be found in just about every country in the world (Lal 2006a: 10). These millions of people comprise not one homogenous Indian diaspora but mirror, in fact, the many different waves of Indian migration over hundreds of years. Motivated to leave India for multiple reasons – trade, work, security, education – they landed on many different shores. In contexts where their relation to India is at stake, these migrants and their descendants are referred to as ‘persons of Indian origin’ (PIO) and ‘non-resident Indians’ (NRI) (Lal 2006a: 11; Bhat this volume). The Indian diaspora is already, as many publications demonstrate, a considerable field of study in the humanities (see e.g. Vertovec 2000; Lal, Reeves and Rai 2006; Oonk 2007; Jacobsen 2008; Safran, Sahoo and Lal 2009). Indeed, this field has been attracting increasing attention from a plethora of disciplines – among them, cultural and social anthropology, gender studies, history, literary studies, religious studies, sociology and South Asian studies. The topics covered have been many and multiple: The nation, migration and transnational processes, identity, ethnicity and diversity, social relationships and gender, economics, politics, religion, the media, the performing and other arts, as well as studies delving into intercultural, transcultural and global processes.

Taking our lead from *The Encyclopedia of the Indian Diaspora* (Lal, Reeves and Rai 2006), we have decided to retain the term ‘Indian diaspora,’ which lends itself particularly well to the historical perspective we are including. Alternatively, we could have chosen to talk of a ‘South Asian diaspora’ – a term consonant with the fact that the migrants did not stem solely from India within its present borders, but rather from territory in what is now Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma and Sri Lanka (see e.g. Vertovec 1991; van der Veer 1995; Shukla 2001). When referring to the Indian diaspora as configurations of persons who trace their origins, wholly or partly, back to the Indian subcontinent, we do not wish to suggest they are fixated on this fact. Rather, we can safely assume that this relationship is only one among many, each one having its own weighting.

In choosing the title ‘India beyond India’ we disavow any intention of viewing either India or the Indian diaspora as a solid or homogeneous block. Even if we have opted for generic concepts, we construe India – both as a historical presence and contemporary state – and South Asia generally no differently than the multiple Indian diasporas, i.e. as heterogeneous configurations which have been exposed to a diversity of associations – at times, even dissociations – and which find themselves in a state of permanent transformation. ‘India beyond India,’ a designation Roman Loimeier (this volume) devised, has the potential of going beyond the common

¹ http://mea.gov.in/images/attach/NRIs-and-PIOs_1.pdf (accessed 18 June 2018).

phrase of 'Little Indias.' If 'India beyond India' seems, at first glance, to foreground the relationship between Indian diasporas and India, it should be emphasized, however, that Indian communities abroad have also been forging particular relationships with the states in which they are located. In addition, Indians have been creating networks between their communities worldwide. All these relationships are of the utmost importance regarding issues of belonging.

Historical Contexts of Indian Diasporas

Foreign trade of South Asian merchants can be dated back to around the second century AD (Mann 2015: 216). In the following centuries, different merchant communities (Chettiars, Khojas, Sindhis) developed further trading networks that eventually spanned the East African coast and Southeast Asia (Brown 2006; McPherson 2006; Mann 2015). Indian trading posts were established in ports such as Mogadishu, Mombasa and Zanzibar. These were the beginnings of permanent settlements in these areas and the formation of an Indian diaspora on the Swahili coast (Mann 2015: 216). This diaspora was a complex network of traders and sailors, in fact, a collection of communities defined by language, religion and regional background (McPherson 2006: 34; Sheriff 2010). The arrival of the Portuguese, Dutch and English trading companies and their subsequent fight over trading monopolies for spices and textiles had a major influence on the activities of the Indian merchants in the Indian Ocean and in Southeast Asia (Mann 2015: 216–218). Several trading communities, such as the Sindhis, were able to take advantage of the structures of the British Empire and expand their own trade; others were less fortunate. Nevertheless, these communities have been of great importance for the structure and development of the Indian diasporas that followed. Communities that go back to these trading networks still exist in many parts of the Indian Ocean world (east and west) (Loimeier this volume).

Many parts of South Asia had been under the control of the British Empire since the 16th century and India was incorporated as a crown colony in 1858. This development had a great impact on the Indian migration, especially after the abolition of slavery and the subsequent introduction of the system of indentured labor (Mann 2015: 219–225). As there was a constant need for cheap laborers for the plantation economies, millions of people were sent to the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, Africa, the Pacific, and South and Southeast Asia (Lal 2006b). Fleeing bad conditions (such as famines and unemployment) in India at that time, many of the indentured laborers were hoping to improve their economic situation and return to India after their work contracts expired (Mann 2015: 225–226). In fact, many of the laborers did return to India, but more decided to stay in their new homes. The system of indentured labor and everything connected to it – the travel on the *kalapani* (black water), the work and living conditions on the plantations, the relationship to the colonial power and the other communities in the new country – have been the starting point

for the formation of a lot of different Indian diasporas in many parts of the world. Furthermore, this development was an important historical event not only for India or the Indian communities, but also the many different communities and countries that have been involved in this process. This is clearly shown by the histories of Mauritius (see e.g. Eisenlohr 2006; Schnepel this volume), Trinidad (Vertovec 1995; Munasinghe 2001; Khan 2004; Munasinghe this volume) and Fiji (Lal 2004; Trnka 2008; Kaplan this volume; Kelly this volume) and the postcolonial struggles fought in these countries to define who belongs to the newly established nations.

Indian migration changed in the middle of the 20th century. For the first time, not only students from the Indian upper class, but also larger groups of migrants were drawn to the center of the empire and later the Commonwealth. Great Britain had been the main destination until the liberalization of immigration laws in Australia, Canada and New Zealand in the 1960s intensified the migration to the Commonwealth. Part of these waves of migration were the so-called 'twice displaced,' Indians who left East African countries for reasons of insecurity (Khadria 2006, 2012). The USA and the Gulf region have become important destinations for different groups of migrants since the 1970s. The oil-rich Middle East has attracted laborers who worked on the many construction sites and had a considerable impact on the Indian economy, especially in Kerala state, due to the remittances they sent to their families (Osella and Osella 2000; Vora 2008). The introduction of flexible policies for highly skilled migrants in the USA and Canada spurred the migration of Indian engineers, doctors, scientists and managers (Brown 2006: 25). Canada changed its immigration policies in the 1960s to admit people with much needed skills (Brown 2006: 54). India soon became one of the most important sending countries for skilled immigrants to Canada. In this volume, Swati Shirwadkar focuses on Indian women in Canada.

The migration from South Asia to European countries had multiple causes and took many different routes. In the case of Germany, Indian migration was documented from the early 20th century when Indian freedom fighters who sought support for their fight against colonial rule arrived and students were attracted by German universities (Gottschlich 2012: 1). After World War II, it was again Indian students, mostly from the fields of engineering and natural sciences, who found their way to universities and companies in Germany. Germany has recently been facing a skills shortage, gearing its migration policies towards attracting highly skilled migrants and students from India (Fuhse this volume). The Tamils in Kamala Ganesh's study (this volume) fled Sri Lanka's civil war and came to Germany and Switzerland in the 1980s and 1990s (Baumann, Luchesi and Wilke 2003: 8–9). Most of the Tamil refugees were Hindus who started to found prayer groups soon after their arrival. By now, the Sri Lankan Tamils have built several temples in Germany and other European countries, among them the Sri Kamadchi-Tempel in Hamm-Uentrop (Baumann, Luchesi and Wilke 2003: 11).

The routes and destinations of Indian migrants have been various regarding the contemporary migration of Indian students, scientists, laborers and maids to many different parts of the world. Their roots in India have been as different as their routes

of migration. Various routes and roots are articulated by the many organizations that Indians have established on the grounds of a common background (e.g. regional, religious) or a common migration experience (Bhat this volume). The Indian diaspora is, thus, highly heterogeneous and represents the linguistic, religious and cultural diversity of India. This fact evokes the question of how the dimensions and dynamics of belonging play out in India beyond India.

Debating Dilemmas of Belonging

Integrating historical contexts of Indian migration into their analyses, the contributions to this volume are alert to the extent to which issues of belonging in postcolonial times bear the imprint of historical legacies, such as politics, religion, social and ethnic dynamics, as well as the attendant modes of 'othering.' In this context, we wish to investigate the challenges that go along with belonging.

A person usually experiences a sense of belonging to a variety of communities during their life (e.g. Cohen 1982; May 2013). This also applies particularly to people whose personal history is shaped by their own or their forbears' migration. Belonging is culturally constituted, while membership of as well as loyalties to local, regional or national communities and people's emotional attachment to places depend on sociopolitical processes and the accompanying power relationships (Kempf, van Meijl and Hermann 2014: 15). If the granting of access or denial of membership to such collectivities and places is geared towards constructing fundamental 'others' and distancing 'them' from 'us,' political projects are at work that Nira Yuval-Davis (2006: 204), with reference to John Crowley, called "the politics of belonging." Being fully, partly or hardly accepted in various communities, however, often causes people to feel torn between their acquired and more or less desired memberships. People find themselves in situations in which they have no choice but to choose between allegiance to one or the other community that is of emotional significance to them, or else between one or the other place, being aware of adverse effects this decision will, in all probability, have. They find themselves in what John Kelly (this volume) has aptly termed "dilemmas of belonging."

In turning our attention to diasporic configurations of persons whose ancestors originated from the Subcontinent or else who left it during their own lifetime, we seek to elucidate how Indians beyond India cope with dilemmas of belonging. We ask: What are the kinds of dilemmas that emerge in specific configurations? What kinds of strategies do people develop to deal with the specific dilemmas of belonging they face? Our debate focuses on three fields of belonging and related dilemmas in three parts of this volume. The first part offers a broad perspective on various ways in which Indianness and multiplicities of belonging are articulated in transnational space. In the second part, we zoom in on issues of belonging that Indian diasporas have been facing in their efforts to contribute to the making of a nation in their new

countries of residence. In the third part, the politics and violence of belonging in Indian diasporas are explored.

Belonging in Transnational Space

An ever-increasing number of people are becoming mobile and engage in social relations and practices that cross borders and, thus, live in a transnational social space (Pries 2001; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). This space, of course, also includes those people who, for various reasons, are not mobile but are connected to migrants around the world. Living in a transnational space means the simultaneous connection to and embedding in many different lifeworlds (Luckmann 1978; Strauss 1978) and, thus, a multiplicity of belonging. This first part of the volume offers two different perspectives on this multiplicity of belonging in transnational space. Chapter 2 focuses on various Indian diaspora organizations. Chapter 3 engages with the topic on the level of the personal navigation of multiple modes of belonging.

Chandrashekhar Bhat, in chapter 2, regarding Indian diaspora organizations, shows the multitude of Indian organizations that developed based on different modes of belonging. After discussing four streams of migration that are the basis of today's heterogeneous Indian diaspora, Bhat continues to describe two categories of Indian diaspora organizations: Global organizations that are based on the notion of a pan-Indian identity and those that are based on regional and linguistic, religious or caste identities. His discussion of different pan-Indian organizations reveals the interesting point that migration history can also be employed as a marker of belonging. Hence, different pan-Indian global organizations developed for PIOs and NRIs. The former category consists mostly of the descendants of Indian indentured laborers, the latter of Indian professionals whose migration to different parts of the world started in the middle of the 20th century. Both global organizations lobbied in India for the development of institutionalized connections between India and its many diasporas. Chandrashekhar Bhat summarizes the policies that were established by the Indian government in this regard and, thus, shows the success of the pan-Indian organizations in advocating for Indians beyond India. In addition to these organizations that are based on the notion of an Indian identity, Bhat discusses some of the many diaspora organizations that are based on regional and linguistic, religious or caste belonging. These organizations foster not only transnational networks among Indians abroad, but also links to their region of origin. The connections between the diasporas and India are visible in the many investments that Indians beyond India make in their respective regions and communities of origin. Thus, in his conclusion, Bhat argues for the notion of 'Indianness' that transcends geographical boundaries and is transnational in character.

In chapter 3, Antonie Fuhse focuses on a younger generation of mobile Indians: Students and researchers who come to Germany for the completion of a PhD or a postdoctoral fellowship. She uses the concept of 'biographic navigation' (Vigh 2007, 2009; Pfaff-Czarnecka 2012) as a tool to analyze individual strategies in the

negotiation of the multiplicity of belonging. Antonie Fuhse discusses four facets of belonging that are central for the students and researchers' biographic navigation in transnational space. One of these facets involves the practices of belonging at various festivals that are organized by the Indian association in Göttingen. These festivals provide a space for social interaction and a platform to perform the 'Indian' culture in familiar ways. However, these events also pose the question of what India and Indianness actually mean to the young students and researchers. The second dimension of belonging that the author discusses is the importance of the regional background for the formation of circles of friends and the organization of festivals. Fuhse shows that the formal organization for Indians in Göttingen can act as a regime of belonging, as it tries to unite all Indian students and researchers under the common and rather apolitical notion of 'unity in diversity.' The third facet that the author analyzes is the young Indians' professional belonging as 'scientists.' Coming to Germany and specifically to Göttingen, a well-known university city, is part of the students and researchers' strategies to achieve certain professional and personal goals. Many expressed the feeling that Göttingen is the right place to fulfill these goals. However, a lot of the students and researchers do not plan to stay in Germany. Antonie Fuhse discusses the (imagined) futures of the young Indians as the fourth aspect of their navigation through transnational space. Many of the young students and researchers expressed their wish to go back to India at some point in time. The author argues that this idea of a return to India is an important anchor in the young Indians' biographic navigation, irrespective of the realization of this vision. Antonie Fuhse concludes that being Indian is only one facet of the students and researchers' multiple modes of belonging that intersects with other dimensions and is constantly constructed and reconstructed in their biographic navigation in transnational space.

Belonging and Nation Building

Belonging figures prominently in diasporic people's efforts to contribute to nation building or seek other forms of self-determination in their countries of residence. As the contributions by Viranjini Munasinghe, Martha Kaplan, John Kelly, Burkhard Schnepel and Roman Loimeier show, this holds true for Indian communities in Trinidad, Fiji, Mauritius and Zanzibar. For the most part, Indian diasporas in Trinidad, Fiji, and Mauritius descend from indentured laborers who worked in sugar plantations, and in the case of Zanzibar from trading communities. Historical legacies of colonial rule and racial discourses have shaped their conditions – and dilemmas – of belonging to their countries of birth, albeit to different extents. Thus, autochthony has played an important role in Fiji, where it was mobilized by ethnonationalist elements among ethnic Fijian *iTaukei* to counter the emotional belonging of various other cultural communities, including the Indo-Fijian part of the population, but it did not feature in either Trinidad or Mauritius. In postcolonial times, Indian diasporic communities in all these countries have developed strategies to pursue equal citizenship rights. However, they are still seeking recognition of their sense of

belonging in terms of political representation in Trinidad and Fiji, whereas they have achieved full electoral and citizenship rights in Mauritius. In Zanzibar, political oppression prevented the development of feelings of belonging to the nation. Rather, the sense of belonging to distinct religious and/or ethnic communities shapes the presence of Indians in Zanzibar today.

Viranjini Munasinghe, in chapter 4 “Anxieties of Belonging: East Indians and the Cultural Politics of the Nation in Trinidad,” turns analytically to emotions of belonging that were involved in Indo-Trinidadian strategies to achieve full inclusion in the nation. She traces the history of Indian indentured laborers who, after their arrival in the middle of the 19th century, were positioned outside the ‘incipient nation’ in Trinidad by colonial discourses of race. From then on, Indo-Trinidadians were constructed in opposition to ‘Creoles,’ a broad category that came to include people of African and European ancestry and signified local, indeed native status. Descendants of Indians came to be seen as culture bearers, being accorded an exceptional status in the colony and the Caribbean state of Trinidad and Tobago. Focusing on a span of time of intensified cultural and political contestation of the nation in this postcolonial state, Viranjini Munasinghe argues that the cultural excess ascribed to Indo-Trinidadians prevented them from being fully included in discourses that have constituted the nation of Trinidad. Members of the Indian diaspora in Trinidad have faced a dilemma of belonging by claiming national sameness as Trinidadians and ethnic difference as Indians. While Indo-Trinidadians, mobilized by their anxieties of belonging, have developed discursive strategies for national inclusion that reproduce difference, they have also engaged in processes of interculturalization that connect them with Afro-Trinidadians. This intercultural space of commonalities is still, however, dominated by discourses of difference that all communities in the country adhere to and are perpetuating Indo-Trinidadian dilemmas of belonging to the Trinidadian nation.

In chapter 5, Martha Kaplan introduces us to “Dilemmas of Belonging in Fiji,” focusing on “Constitutions, Coups, and Indo-Fijian Citizenship.” Analyzing the struggle for national belonging fought by descendants of Indian migrants in the context of the political history of Fiji in the southwest Pacific, she pleads for a historical anthropology of dilemmas. From a historical perspective, postcolonial Fiji emerges with a baggage of legacies from the colonial era. Among these legacies were racial discourses ascribing fundamental difference to autochthonous Fijians, called *iTaukei* (owners of the land), by comparison to descendants of Indians, most of whom had come as indentured laborers to work on Fijis sugar cane plantations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among these historical legacies were also political privileges the colonial British had accorded to the autochthonous Fijians. Thus, structures had been put in place for an unequal belonging in terms of citizenship when Fiji gained its political independence in 1970. Since then, postcolonial Fiji has had a number of constitutions that have followed not only democratic elections, but also and especially a number of coups. In 1987 and 2000, these coups espoused, once again, political privileges for autochthonous Fijians, whereas the coup of 2006 did not proclaim

iTaukei political paramountcy but imposed military rule until general elections were held in 2014. Confronted with ethnonationalist discourses, Indo-Fijian aspirations of national belonging have frequently been frustrated. In view of these sociopolitical processes, Martha Kaplan argues that the dilemma of belonging for Indo-Fijians is linked to the question of self-determination: Should they stay and pursue a withdrawal strategy as a minority, or pursue a strategy of seeking self-determination by emigration and the hardship this might bring?

John Kelly in chapter 6 zooms in on “Dilemmas of Belonging in Fiji” with an analytical eye on “*Shanti*, *Swaraj*, and the Problem of Political Armies.” Like Martha Kaplan, he sees the dilemma of belonging that Indo-Fijians have been facing in postcolonial Fiji crystallized in the question of whether they should stay, aspiring to a minority status, or take on the burden of emigrating. Turning to cultural conceptions, he argues that the Indo-Fijians’ specific dilemma is one between the virtues of *shanti*, meaning peace, and *swaraj*, self-rule. He calls this dilemma a “dilemma of virtue” and explains that this means whether to define the situation, to valorize or even transvalue possible courses of action, in one light or the other. When, in Fiji’s postcolonial history of successive coups, Indo-Fijians doubted the prospect of national belonging, their tactic was to act according to their value of *shanti* as emotional peace in the face of hardship. However, they were not only seeking *shanti*, but also pursuing the tactic of *swaraj*, self-rule, and this in a political context of military omnipresence. Talking of political armies, John Kelly compares Fiji’s political trajectory to military occupations in the Asian Highlands. He finds that the wisdom of Indo-Fijian commitment to non-violence, the complexity and tragedy in their cultural dialogue with ethnic Fijians, and even some tangible grounds for hope become clearer when the political dynamics of the Asian Highlands and the Fiji Islands are understood in one analytic field. In his conclusion, Kelly points to the prerequisites for self-determination of both of the largest groups and continuing peace in Fiji despite all the ruptures: Whether autochthonous Fijian *mana*, power, and Indo-Fijian *shanti*, peace, can be reconciled in moves toward a common future.

In chapter 7, Burkhard Schnepel writes about “Guests without a Host: The Indian Diaspora(s) in Mauritius.” He describes the specificity of the Indian diaspora – understood as a plurality of diasporas – in this state in the southwest Indian Ocean by discussing seven characteristics of Indo-Mauritian groups. These particularities are: 1) The Indian diasporas in Mauritius have many different roots and routes, with the majority of today’s Indo-Mauritians having descended from indentured laborers who came after 1834; 2) Indo-Mauritians have established a new life relatively close to ‘home’; 3) the Indian diaspora in Mauritius is substantial in absolute numbers but even more so in relative numbers; 4) the Indian diaspora in Mauritius is not the only one there; 5) all Mauritians come from elsewhere, value their diasporic links and have a diasporic consciousness; 6) the Mauritian kind of nationalism can be called ‘(multi)ethnonationalism,’ based on the idea of the legitimate existence of a number of different ethnic groups building their nation; and 7) the role model for ethnic-cum-diasporic identity on Mauritius is provided by the Indian diaspora, especially

its Hindu variant. Taken together, these particularities offer Indo-Mauritians a fill of opportunities for belonging to various communities, be they characterized by roots in different regions in India, language, ethnicity, religion, education, rural or urban location, economic success or professional standing, or be they the larger entities of the Mauritian nation or the broad category of Asians. As Burkhard Schnepel observes, Indo-Mauritians may select from and mobilize some part(s) of their identifications with these communities depending upon contexts. During the democratization processes, all citizens of Mauritius achieved equal citizenship rights with Indo-Mauritians being successful in terms of political representation.

Roman Loimeier looks closely at the historical development of the Indian diaspora in East Africa and particularly Zanzibar in chapter 8. Through his detailed account of the history of the highly diverse Indian diaspora, he illustrates how political agendas and sentiments influence the possibilities of having a place in a nation and, thus, of creating a sense of belonging. He also shows how most of the Indian communities in East Africa have maintained strong religious and social boundaries and thus remained fragmented even under political and economic pressure. Thus, most Indians decided not to abandon their identification with the Indian diaspora and their roots in India, even during the independence movements in East Africa and the accompanying pressure to commit themselves to new identities. The Indian diaspora has also maintained exclusive practices among themselves. The many different places for religious practice in Zanzibar – temples, mosques and churches – illustrate the plurality of the Indian community. In view of these facts, Loimeier concludes that communal divisions along the lines of regional and social descent, occupation and religion have continued to define Indian communities in East Africa.

Politics of Belonging and Violence

The third part of this volume is concerned with the relationship between belonging and violence in two very different ways. Swati Shirwadkar in chapter 9 on domestic violence in Indian diasporas in North America demonstrates how modes of belonging influence the access to policies and programs to reduce domestic abuse. She argues for paying greater attention to the intersection of gender and ethnicity in the analysis of domestic violence and, thus, for policies that take the women's community belonging into account. Shirwadkar's analysis shows that there are multiple obstacles that prevent Indian immigrant women in Canada and the United States from taking the measures available against their abusive husbands. Among other things, the women fear losing their connection to the Indian community and to their families, while they also fear the stigma of divorce. Furthermore, the author shows that Indian immigrant women prefer the intervention from within the community and are, thus, reluctant to call for "outside" help from social workers. Domestic violence, thus, also becomes an issue in the negotiation of more general concerns of 'Indian' and 'Western' values and what it means to belong to the Indian immigrant community in North America.

In chapter 10, Kamala Ganesh shows that how the Sri Lankan Tamils relate to their homeland is influenced by the experience of forced displacement and the civil war. Ganesh stresses the importance of religious practices and temples for coping with the stress of leaving home and building a new life in a foreign country. Tamil religiosity is not only an existential response to the loss of the homeland, but also a political one. The temples in the diaspora become forums for LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) propaganda and mobilization. However, Ganesh makes a point of showing that the responses of Sri Lankan Tamils to trauma and feelings of loss are various. Some become active in homeland politics and even support violent methods, others criticize the LTTE and violence. The articulation of belonging to Sri Lanka is multiple and depends on personal history and values.

Conclusion: Diversities of Dilemmas and Coping Strategies

It becomes clear in the debate in which the contributors to this volume engage that dilemmas of belonging have been emerging that differ in their degrees of intensity in the Indian diasporas in which they have worked. Dilemmas often arise from the difficulty in choosing which of one's manifold memberships of collectivities to prioritize: Belonging to a diasporic Indian or South Asian community that is characterized by religion, region of origin, language or caste; or belonging to a group that is putting great emphasis on their roots in India and is globally organized; and, importantly, belonging to the supraregional Indian diaspora in a particular country and/or to the nation of the country of residence, as diverse as this may be. A comparison between the ethnographic case studies collected in this volume suggests that the degree of intensity of dilemmas is determined by a number of factors. The first factor to be considered is that of the type of diaspora: Is it a diaspora that grew from an earlier community of merchants (i.e. in East African countries), a diaspora founded by former indentured laborers (i.e. in Mauritius, Trinidad and Fiji) or a diaspora mainly constituted by labor migrants who travelled to other countries in the past few decades (i.e. in Canada and Europe)? The second factor to be considered is the extent of relationships that current diasporic groupings maintain to the country of origin in South Asia. The third factor that plays a crucial role in the constitution and maintenance of belonging is the politicization of cultural similarities or differences regarding religion, region of origin, language, class or caste – all of them aspects that are mobilized for the purpose of inclusion or fundamental exclusion. Dilemmas of belonging arise frequently if not always, so our debate showed, from historical processes and political contexts. The existence of ethnonationalist claims on the part of one or more of the other ethnic communities in a given country poses a special challenge to belongingness. A fourth factor is composed of legal, economic, religious, social and moral orders – in short, cultural configurations – in postcolonial countries that are the home for Indian diasporas. All these factors may come together, be complemented by yet other factors and unfold their efficacy.

As the contributions to this volume show, members in Indian communities abroad have to cope with the specific dilemmas they encounter. They are subjected to power relationships, structures, events and encounters that may entail hostilities and set up conditions for their belonging that are hard to accept. But they have also been developing cultural strategies for dealing with these dilemmas of belonging – strategic practices that confirm, alter or even dissolve attachment to particular communities. In any case, members of the many Indias beyond India are exercising their agency in relating to their past, making their living in the present and imagining their future.

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Part I:
Belonging in Transnational Space

2 Indian Diaspora and Global Organizations: Communities and Contested Boundaries

Chandrashekhhar Bhat

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the emergence of Indian diaspora organizations operating at the global level to articulate their socio-cultural, economic and political interests. The Indian diaspora comprises communities no less diversified than those found in the land of origin, often reflecting these diversities through a wide variety of ethnic minority associations. Unlike the ethnic associations of Indian immigrants, which are formed specifically to address their immediate concerns in the context of adjustment and integration into the 'host society,' the diaspora organizations are essentially transnational, uniting global collectives based on national, subnational, linguistic, caste or religious identities. These diversities are further compounded on a temporal plane, differentiating the descendants of early colonial indentured immigrants (PIO, i.e. the Persons of Indian Origin diaspora) from later immigrants who left after India's Independence (NRI, i.e. the Non-Resident Indian diaspora). The dynamics of these diversities carry implications for the grouping and regrouping of Indian diaspora communities: all of them compete and contend in their efforts to form global organizations.

This chapter explores the formation of pan-Indian Global Organizations of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) and the regional/linguistic organizations formed, for example, by the Telugu, Gujarati and Punjabi communities. The state response, which is to engage these diaspora organizations at both the national and sub-national levels via new policy initiatives, is another significant development in the new millennium toward bridging India beyond India.

Recent population estimates suggest that the Indian diaspora has grown far beyond 25 million, scattered as it is around the globe in more than 110 countries. The numbers run to over 10,000 in 48 countries and have reached the half million mark in 11 countries (Ministry of External Affairs 2002). People of Indian origin represent a significant proportion of the population in countries such as Mauritius (60.69%), Trinidad and Tobago (38.63%), Guyana (51.93%), Surinam (36.04%), Fiji (41.34%), South Africa (2.3%) and Malaysia (7.2%) and Singapore (9.71%). Presently they constitute nearly ten million, according to the Ministry of External Affairs,¹ and are spread across all continents. The descendants of the indentured labor immigrants from the erstwhile Central Provinces – Bhojpuri-speaking people from the present day states of Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh – form the largest cluster of the PIO Diaspora, followed by those originating from the Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam speaking regions of South India. Indian immigrants constitute a ‘visible’ or ‘model’ minority in countries like Canada (2.8%), the United Kingdom (2.11%), New Zealand (1.45%), Australia (1.02%), and the USA (0.6%). Almost all countries in West Asia or the Gulf Region have a substantial workforce (above 3,000,000) recruited from India, even though workers return to their places of origin after termination of their contracts. The Indian diaspora today comprises – broadly speaking – four streams following the diverse situations under which they emigrated. The nature and process of emigration and the destinations in question are briefly explained in terms of these distinct streams of emigration and settlement.

The First Stream

The first stream includes 3rd to 5th generation descendants of the early emigrants who migrated during the mid-nineteenth century. The main destinations were the British and European colonies in Africa, Southeast Asia, Fiji, and the Caribbean, where the newcomers were used as plantation labor and railway workers under what the British colonizers called ‘indenture system,’ which Tinker (1974) has rightly described as “a new system of slavery.” According to Clarke, Peach, and Vertovec (1990), under this system some 1.5 million persons migrated to the above destinations. Robin Cohen (1997) has classified them as a “labor diaspora.” Many lost contact with their ‘motherland,’ including their mother tongue, despite otherwise retaining salient features of their culture, including regional identities and religions. They may be called the ‘PIO diaspora,’ which is indeed how they call themselves, and should be distinguished from the later emigrants after India’s independence, the ‘NRI diaspora.’ The former often recall that their great-grand parents and ancestors were enticed, or forced, to immigrate to unknown destinations on ships as ‘cargo’ from Calcutta and other ports, while the latter left on flights from airports for destinations in developed countries (the *jahaji* and the *havayee jahaji*).²

¹ Figures compiled from Ministry of External Affairs (2002: xvii–xx).

² Indenture laborers were transported to plantation colonies on ships chartered by recruiting agencies

The Second Stream

The second stream consists of professionally trained and skilled emigrants to the developed countries of the West during the second half of the 20th century, who settled down initially as Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and in due course became 'green card' holders and naturalized citizens in their host countries. The NRI diaspora continues to take an interest in their place of origin, paying frequent visits to India and maintaining a vibrant interaction.

The Third Stream

The migrant labor force, semi-skilled and unskilled, to the countries of West Asia and the Gulf, including a few professionals like engineers and doctors, followed in the wake of the oil boom and forms the third stream. Many members of this stream have left behind their families in India and contribute to family maintenance with remittances; what is left of their saving they invest. The volume of remittances made by the Indian immigrants from West Asia is great, exceeding payments received from all other countries. They form the majority among the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) or expatriate Indians and remain so till they return to their places of origin on termination of their work contracts, since they are invariably denied any citizenship rights and permanent residency in all the West Asian countries.

The Fourth Stream

Over the past three decades there has been unprecedented movement of highly trained professionals in the fields of information and communication technologies (ICT) and management and nursing, in order to meet the increasing demand for these services in the developed countries. These skilled workers initially emigrate to take up short term assignments ranging from 6 to 10 years under schemes like US H1 B VISA, paving the way for the 'green card,' which entitles bearers to permanent residency and, ultimately, naturalization and citizenship. They form the fourth stream.

Each stream of emigrants differs from the others in terms of the socio-economic and educational background under which the workers emigrated from India, the overseas destinations in question, and their socio-economic location in the host society. During their long stay and interactions with the host society, they further acquired certain distinctive socio-cultural features that often differentiated them from communities who immigrated elsewhere, but also from their kith and kin or descendants back home in their places of origin. However, the identities of belonging to a location or region or nation – say Bhojpuri, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, or some other

and during the course of their long journeys laborers unknown to each other evolved endearing bonds of brotherhood calling themselves *jahaji* or *jahaji bhai*.

Indian region – emerge as a significant factor in the grouping and regrouping of diverse diaspora communities.

The Diversity of the Indian Diaspora

That the Indian diaspora is perhaps the most diversified among the world's diasporic communities cannot be overstated. Indeed, one recent Oxford University publication (Jayaram 2011) is exclusively devoted to *Diversities in the Indian Diaspora*. Foremost among these diversities is the distinction between the PIO and the NRI diasporas, as mentioned earlier. Not only have the workers varied in the contexts of their emigration and destinations, but they also differ in terms of their socio-economic background and degree of interaction with the motherland. While the NRI Diaspora has retained vibrant relationships with their families and communities in India, the majority of the PIO Diaspora have lost all contact with the motherland. In the course of their long journeys made by ship to distant destinations, the unknown co-passengers became *jahaji bhai* (literally meaning 'ship brother,' a brotherly affinity owing to the fact that they were all sailing away together). In such a situation the emigrants lost their caste and religious identities to a large extent.

The overseas Indian communities formed during the colonial era were not even allowed access to members of their own folk who were attached to different plantations under the 'indenture' system, let alone to then existing means of transportation and communication that might have permitted them to engage with the motherland.

The Indian emigrants after India's independence, however, not only enjoyed the advantage of being professionally trained, urban middle class and Anglophone, but also earned an adequate income that could facilitate frequent visits home, as a result of which they could maintain their socio-economic and cultural networks with their places of origin.

Language and Region

Language and region are the next significant parameter of identity articulation and differentiation among the Indian diaspora. Following the States Reorganisation Act of 1956, language came to assume greater significance in the reorganization of India into federal states. The Indian diaspora, too, is differentiated on the basis of linguistic and regional belonging – there are, for instance, Bhojpuri, Gujarati, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telugu diaspora communities connected and networking across several nation states.

Religion and Caste

Religion is yet another aspect of the multiple diversities within India, and so too is it within the Indian diaspora. As a result, we may distinguish between a Hindu diaspora (Vertovec 2000), a Muslim diaspora (Brah 1996), a Sikh diaspora (Tatla 1999), and a Jain diaspora (Jain 2009).

One cannot underestimate the importance of caste in contemporary India, so much so that the Government of India decided to reintroduce caste for purposes of classifying India's population in the most recent census of 2011; it will be recalled that classifying the population in terms of caste was discontinued after India became independent. It is therefore not surprising to find diaspora communities articulating their caste identities, especially among the NRI Indian diaspora. While browsing online for 'Patidar Samaj' in the United Kingdom, I discovered several diasporic organizations of Kadwa and Leuva Patidars based on regional and sub-caste identities. Immigrants belonging to the dominant castes of the Reddys and Kammas of Andhra Pradesh, the Vokkaligas and Lingayats of Karnataka, the Jats of Punjab and Haryana, for instance, maintain distinctive diasporic formations and networks worldwide to promote their socio-cultural, economic, and political interests.

Early Ethnic Formations

Pursuit of diversities is not new to Indian immigrants, a sizable population of whom have formed ethnic collectives on the basis of regional, religious, linguistic, or caste affiliations. Overseas Indians, as they were popularly known for decades until the 1990s, have been distinctively known for the maintenance of traditional culture and identity that they meticulously promoted in the countries of their settlement for almost two centuries. Although the emigration of Indians has been taking place since the early Christian era, the bulk of the Indian migration leading to diaspora formation occurred mainly during the colonial period from 1830s to 1920s, and after India's independence.

The need for migrants to organize themselves to collectively respond to the diverse contexts of their settlement is not a new phenomenon; several such organizations have successfully articulated issues of great concern to them. Such organizations are primarily minority ethnic associations, essentially local, regional, or national in their outlook. An important feature that distinguishes an ethnic association from other kinds of voluntary groups is the criterion of restricted membership. Whereas membership of an ethnic association is based on certain primordial features such as language, religion, race and culture, the voluntary associations are open to anyone who wants to be a member. It is common to find, for instance, associations formed by Gujarti, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali and Bhojpuri communities in the countries where such clusters of Indian immigrants are found. These associations reflect the magnitude and diversity of the diaspora. The Commission for Racial Equality in

the United Kingdom, for example, listed as many as 577 associations of immigrants from the world over in Greater London alone. In each Borough Council area, there are as many as 20 to 25 associations (Bhat 1993) that serve one or multiple purposes, covering almost all immigrant requirements.

What has transformed over the past two to three decades is the networking of these immigrants and associations with their kith and kin, either back in the place of origin or in the other countries to which they have immigrated, resulting in the establishment of diasporic relations. As observed by James Clifford (1994: 311), the “diasporic language appears to be replacing, or at least supplementing, minority discourse,” a phenomenon that was noted by the mid-1990s in the wake of contemporary globalization and is being mediated by great advances in technologies of travel and communication.

Contemporary Globalization and Global Organizations

By the end of the 20th century, the process of globalization had moved beyond its initial association with the liberalization of markets and the growth of multinational corporations (MNCs) and transnational corporations (TNCs) and had spread over several nation states to include “...worldwide diffusion of practices, expansion of relations across continents, organization of social life on a global scale and growth of shared global consciousness” (Lechner 2005: 330). There is now an ever greater interdependence between nation states across borders, not merely in trade and commerce but in almost all aspects of life, ranging from, say, food, clothing, sports, music and entertainment to ideology and spiritualism. With the revolutionary advancement in technologies of information, communication and travel during the 1980s and 1990s, there has been steep increase in the global transfers of people, capital, technology, cultural commodities, media and ideologies across several nations.

The process of globalization is so complex today that no single theory can hope to explain its multifaceted manifestations. Hence scholars have attempted to conceptualize globalization from different perspectives. For instance, Robertson (1992) looked at the process from a cultural stance, demonstrating how the world is being compressed as global consciousness is spreading. He argued that technological and *organizational* (as I would emphasize) developments lead to the compression of the world and the creation of a global field, in which individuals and societies become part of a larger system of societies and come to identify themselves in relation to global standards. Globalization, according to Robertson, has produced a more integrated yet also differentiated world society. For instance, there is the phenomenon of glocalization (Robertson 1995), incorporating some of the global or universal features in local cultures while also incorporating local specificity at the global level. Taking the local – culture, commodities, media, cuisine – to global destinations is of particular interest to diaspora communities.

Robin Cohen prefers to use the term 'diasporization' as a concept akin to globalization, for the two are inseparably enmeshed. According to Cohen (1997), globalization has enhanced the practical, economic and effective roles of diasporas, showing them to be particularly adaptive forms of social organization. The rise of global civil society, global citizenship, global governance, border-crossing nongovernmental organizations emerge as institutional arrangements of this globalization project.

Contemporary globalization is propelled by "sociotechnological infrastructure" (Nonini 2005: 565) – social uses and application of new technologies of communication and transport – accelerating the scale of movements of people, commodities, ideas and capital more than ever before.

India today has spread far beyond being a mere nation state; it is not just a place, space or territory, but encompasses the entire globe and is there wherever Indians are found, dispersed in countries like the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Fiji, Malaysia, Uganda, South Africa, the USA, Canada, and Australia. India now stretches to all corners of the globe, to wherever Indians have remained Indians; as a result, we can speak without hyperbole of a global Indian family. Globalization today has given rise to a huge transnational social field (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) where Indian families and organizations extend their family, caste, linguistic, regional, or national ties across the globe.

Emergence of Indian Diaspora Global Organizations

The Indian diaspora launched the first Global Organization of the People of Indian Origin in 1989 at its New York Convention. There have been, of course, several religious organizations networking for the promotion of religious activities, such as Vishwa Hindu Parishad, International Swaminarayan Satsang Organization (I.S.S.O.), the World Sikh Organization, and the International Sikh Youth Federation. Operating across the globe, they pursue limited objectives. In addition, there are a variety of associations (often referred to as ethnic minority organizations in those countries where Indian immigrants are in a minority), all of which articulate a specific interest. One cannot underestimate the role of such associations, especially the support they offer immigrants in safeguarding their culture, economic interests, and political rights. A number of global diasporic issues, as well as leading personalities, have emerged from these structures operating at the grassroots level.

Diaspora, as an idea and a reality, today occupies a key position in the transnational space that is increasingly rendered accessible by contemporary globalization. Diaspora communities dispersed around the world have established global organizations, transcending the boundaries of multiple nation states. In addition, they have initiated dialogue among themselves and with their countries of origin and residency in order to provide mutual support for socio-economic and political advancement. The term 'diaspora global organization' is used here to refer to voluntary associations formed by diaspora communities, or a single community, that enrolls members from

across all nations. They reach out concerning the issues that possess relevance for those now dispersed from their original homeland or place of origin.

Global organizations initiated by the Indian diaspora may be broadly assigned to two categories:

- global organizations based on pan-Indian identity, and
- global organizations based on regional/linguistic, religious and caste identities.

Pan-Indian Global Organizations

In the First Global Convention of People of Indian Origin (New York, August 28 – September 3, 1989), the largest representation ever of Indian immigrants from different parts of the world, it was decided to set up the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin. GOPIO is a voluntary, non-partisan, non-sectarian, global organization mandated to promote the interests of people of Indian origin worldwide. Over 3000 delegates attended it, representing almost all countries where an Indian diaspora is present. The Convention passed a number of resolutions to promote the interest of the entire diaspora community, addressing issues ranging from the violation of the political and civil rights of the Indian community, to seeking human rights and gender justice, and also changing the image of India.³ But soon (within a span of just three years) there emerged serious differences pertaining to leadership, causing a split to open up between the PIO and NRI.

The split came to the fore when a section of GOPIO, who subsequently established the PIO capital in Mauritius – henceforth referred to as GOPIO (M) – organized the 2nd GOPIO International Convention (Paris, 1992), whereas the other section, mostly comprising NRI, continued to run GOPIO from its New York headquarters and proceeded to hold their own 2nd Global Convention (New Delhi, 1993). Both GOPIOs have successfully mobilized Indian diaspora the world over. While GOPIO (M) traces its origin to a first meeting held in the United Kingdom back in 1988, followed by the First Global Convention held in New York a year later, GOPIO (NY) claims that it was established after that First Global Convention organized by the National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA).

Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (Mauritius)

Following the Global Convention of New York, GOPIO (M) has so far organized eleven International conventions: from Paris they moved to Montreal, Canada for the 3rd convention in 1994, to Mauritius in 1996 for the 4th convention (at which time Mauritius was declared PIO Capital with state support), to Durban for the

³ GOPIO website (http://www.gopio.net/first_convention.htm) provides detailed information on the First Convention, Convention Resolutions, formation of Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), Constitution etc.

5th convention in 1998, to New Delhi in 2000 for the 6th convention, and the 7th convention was held again in Mauritius during 2003. The 8th and the 9th conventions were organized in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur respectively in 2005 and 2008. Durban was again the venue for the 10th convention in 2010 to commemorate the 160th year of Indian arrival in South Africa, and the 11th convention was recently held in Kuala Lumpur. GOPIO (M) is supported by diaspora communities in Fiji, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius, Reunion, Guadeloupe, France, and South Africa. They consider themselves an inclusive Indian diaspora, as demonstrated by incorporating Francophone Indians. Mauritius is Francophone by choice, though the official language is English, so there is the advantage of bringing together diasporic communities that are either Francophone or Anglophone.

GOPIO (M) has 15 members in the Executive Committee, out of which 10 members are from the PIO diaspora, 2 from the NRI diaspora, and 3 from India. Among the prominent leaders responsible for the promotion of GOPIO (M) was the late Sri Dhundev Bahadoor, a social worker who established the Human Service Trust of Mauritius. Others included Sri Baleshwar Agrawal, the founder of Anther Rastriya Sahayog Parishad in Delhi, Mr. Selvarajoo Sundaram, a businessman from Malaysia, Mr. Mahendra Utchanna (President, GOPIO International), a former minister in Mauritius and businessman, Prof. Dasrath Chetty of Kwazulu-Natal University, South Africa, and Mr. Devraj, a former MP from Sri Lanka.

GOPIO (M) has been holding its conventions in Delhi at the ICCR auditorium or the ASSOCHAM Hall, which are not expensive venues. Recently they have been organizing their meetings at the Hotel Meridian, a French franchise, symbolizing their affinity and concern with the Francophone Indian communities residing in the former French colonies.

Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (New York)

GOPIO (NY), which draws its support from the National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA), the Associations of Indians in America (AIA), and the Indian American Forum for Political Education (IAFPE), organized its Second Global Convention in 1993 in New Delhi. It organized the Global Convention '99 to mark its 10th Anniversary Celebrations (New York, September 24–26, 1999), as well as holding Global Conventions in various European cities (Zurich in 2000 and Leiden in 2002).

An analysis of the leadership pattern in GOPIO (NY) points to a controlling influence over the organization by the elite of the NRI diaspora, who are first generation immigrants to the United States. GOPIO (NY) appears to be synonymous with the person of Dr. Thomas Abraham, who holds a doctorate in chemistry from Columbia University, in the role of the President/Chairman of GOPIO International. Then there is Dr. Jagat Motwani, who holds a doctorate from Fordham University, NY, and is a practicing psychotherapist, his role being that of Secretary General/International Coordinator. Also playing a leadership role are Inder Singh, a businessman

from California, and Sunny Kulathakal, a businessman from Saudi Arabia. Except for the two office bearers – Mr. Ashook Ramsaran, the current president of GOPIO (NY) International, is an engineer of Guyanese origin with his own company, and Deo Gosine, a New York businessman of Trinidad and Tobago origin – all the rest (on the current committee of 19) are first generation immigrants from India. The majority of members of the GOPIO (NY) Executive Committee come from affluent sections of first generation Indians living in North America or Europe.

Today GOPIO (NY) has 25 chapters spread among 19 countries; of the 148 life members, most of them (about 96) come from the USA. The others are from India, Australia, the United Kingdom, Germany, Middle Eastern countries, and the Caribbean. The organization successfully runs a monthly online e-news bulletin, providing information and covering events in North America and Europe. GOPIO (NY) is organized along chapter lines: the United States and India have 6 chapters each, established in different parts of their respective countries, while the remaining 13 chapters are located in Australia, Europe, Fiji, Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, South Africa, Mauritius, and Zimbabwe. They have been holding most of their programs in India at expensive locations, such as the FICCI auditorium and Hotel Claridges in Delhi.

Both the GOPIOs were about a decade old when the Government of India, under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, decided in 2000 to set up a High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora (HLCID). The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs was established much later in 2004, after some of the significant recommendations of the HLCID were implemented. There was also the rejuvenation of activities of both GOPIOs following official recognition of the diaspora community by the government of India and the pro-active role assumed by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs.

The GOPIOs and the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora

Both GOPIO (NY) and GOPIO (M) claim a significant role in lobbying for the formation of the HLC on the Indian Diaspora as well as formulating various policy recommendations promoting matters of mutual interest and advancement. Both GOPIOs claimed a role in persuading the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government to set up a High Level Committee to examine various issues and concerns of the overseas Indian community. And so a High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora was duly appointed by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, in September 2000, with the approval of the Prime Minister. Its mandate was to recommend a broad and flexible policy framework after reviewing the status, needs and roles of People of Indian Origin (PIOs) and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs).

The Committee was presided over by Dr. L. M. Singhvi, an MP and former Indian High Commissioner to the UK. Members included Shri R. L. Bhatia, MP and

former Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri J. R. Hiremath, Indian Foreign Service (Ret.), and Shri Baleshwar Agarwal, Secretary General of the Antar Rashtriya Sahyog Parishad. Shri J.C. Sharma, Secretary (NRI & PV) of the Ministry of External Affairs, handled the secretarial duties. The Committee was expected to look at the role of PIOs and NRIs in India, the rights and facilities extended to them, and also to examine such matters as the denial of their rights and much else, including discrimination in the countries of residence.

The Committee submitted its report to the Prime Minister in January 2002, recommending various measures to resolve the problems faced by NRIs and the PIOs, drawing up, for example, country-specific plans for forging a mutually beneficial relationship, not to say facilitating their interaction and participation in India's economic development.

The HLCID has extensively examined the contemporary context of the Indian Diaspora in most of those countries where people of Indian origin have a significant presence and has tabled several recommendations for the Government to consider. Apart from its many policy recommendations, the *Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora* offers a wealth of information on the Indian diaspora.

HLCID Recommendations

In its interim report, the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora (HLC) recommended that the government should prioritize some of the significant issues that had figured in discussions with the members of the Diaspora communities. These included:

- The observation of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on January 9th (the day Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa); the point of marking this annual event, which is of great significance to Indians at home and abroad, was to recognize and appreciate the role of Indian Diaspora in the promotion of India's interests.
- The institution of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards to recognize eminent PIOs and NRIs.
- The establishment of Pravasi Bharatiya Bhavan, an administrative center offering a 'single-window mechanism' to facilitate diaspora interaction and engagement with India.

The HLCID has examined all the major issues – culture, education, media, economic development, health, science and technology, philanthropy, and dual citizenship – with a view to recommending concrete steps for bringing the Indian Diaspora closer to their old homeland, doing so for the first time in an institutionalized manner. In order to facilitate closer interaction between India and the Diaspora and to be able to continuously monitor these evolving ties, the HLCID has suggested setting up

an autonomous and empowered body, similar in kind to the Planning Commission, and also constituting a Standing Committee of Parliament. On some major issues like culture and the media, it is envisaged that the people and government of India will take effective steps to promote languages, philosophy, spirituality, performing arts, and ethnic Indian media among Indian Diaspora communities, with especial reference to the PIO diaspora. The HLCID has drawn a list of programs and activities through which Indian culture and media can effectively reach the younger generation in the diaspora.

The HLCID has made several recommendations in the areas of education, economic development, healthcare, and science and technology that require active participation from all three parties: the people of India, the Indian Diaspora, and the government of India. The *Report* of the HLCID (Ministry of External Affairs 2002) suggests that the government of India and the various state governments should try to remove all obstacles standing in the way of philanthropic and voluntary or welfare activities, especially those involving NGOs, that the members of the Indian Diaspora might wish to pursue in India.

Dual Citizenship

A significant but controversial issue – that of dual citizenship – came up for consideration by the HLCID, particularly when meeting with prominent members of the Indian community in North America and a few other advanced countries (NRI diaspora). It was argued that the granting of dual citizenship would foster investments, trade, tourism, and philanthropic contributions in India. According to the Citizenship Act of 1955, an Indian forfeits Indian citizenship when he/she acquires citizenship of a foreign country. The HLCID recommended embracing dual citizenship, but only after appropriate safeguards had been put in place pertaining to India's security concerns; that said, they saw amendments to the Citizenship Act of 1955 as inevitable. However, the HLCID did not see dual citizenship as conferring any right to participation in the electoral process, neither as a voter nor as a candidate for office, and employment in the Indian civil services was out of the question. The Government of India had already approved a scheme for granting Overseas Citizen of India status. The so-called OCI card was designed as an alternative, not as a step toward, to dual citizenship, a concession made especially to those who left India after 1947. But there is the hope that dual citizenship might prove an attainable goal in the near future. At any rate, this agenda is being actively pursued by the resolutions of GOPIO (NY).

The PIO Card

The Government of India introduced the PIO Card scheme in 1999 for all persons of Indian origin down to the fourth generation, with exceptions made for citizens of Bangladesh, Pakistan, and some other designated countries. It conferred on holders

several economic, educational, financial and cultural benefits, placing them on a par with Non-Resident Indians. A central provision was a visa fee regime for 20 years set at US\$ 1000. The HLCID, after considering several representations, recommended that the fee and the period of validity should be reduced. In 2015, the PIO Card scheme has been merged with OCI Card, providing a lifetime visa. According to the HLCID Report, most of the PIOs, *except* for those living in North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore, have not evinced interest in dual citizenship and prefer PIO Cards.

Hence, in a series of game-changing initiatives, the Government of India undertook to recognize the presence of the 20+ million-strong Indian Diaspora, formulating new policies for building sustainable links between homeland and emigrants. Implementing the new policy initiatives, a first global meeting – the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas – between the Indian diaspora and the Indians, operating under the logo ‘The Global Indian Family’⁴, was organized for January 9–11, 2003. Subsequent conventions are being held every year in January. A new ministry was created in 2004 – the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) – a nodal body that functions as a ‘one-stop shop’ in all matters pertaining to overseas and non-resident Indians.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Pravasi Bharatiya Samman

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Pravasi Bharatiya Samman are two important events for both GOPIOs, permitting them to engage in an annual stocktaking of their activities and achievements, as well as to lobby and make their resolutions and demands known to the government. It is also an occasion for the latter to showcase India’s achievements, while stressing the opportunities for involving the ‘diaspora as partners’ in India’s growth.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBDs) offer enormous opportunities for interaction between members of the Indian diaspora from different countries, but also with the Indian entrepreneurs, professionals and businesspersons who attend them. The first and the second PBDs (2003 and 2004 respectively) were held in Delhi by the Ministry of External Affairs. Soon afterwards, the newly constituted Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA), following the change of government in Delhi, took over the charge of organizing the PBDs from 2005 onwards in different state capitals such as Bombay, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Jaipur.

The 10th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was organized for January 7–9, 2012 in Jaipur, the city of palaces and gardens in Rajasthan. It was an ideal time and location for such an event, and huge crowds turned up from all over the diaspora. As on earlier occasions, the Confederation of Indian Industries managed this event, attended by

⁴ The organizing committee of the first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas designed a logo with the slogan ‘Global Indian Family – Celebrate Pravasi Bharatiya Divas’ especially to reach out to the diaspora hitherto not duly recognized by the government until the Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora recommended it in 2002.

more than 2500 registered delegates from different countries, including India. The Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs hosted a banquet for the delegates to PBD followed by a cultural program. The PBD was formally inaugurated, as always, by the Prime Minister, who announced some of the policy initiatives the government proposed to take. Then followed panel discussions on issues of industrial, economic, and technological progress, the panelists being ministers and bureaucrats and members of the diaspora. The chief guest was the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Kamla Persad-Bissessar. The second day ended with a cultural evening and dinner with cocktails. The third day commenced with the chief ministers of various states addressing the delegates, underlining the scope for participation in the developmental programs of their states and pointing to a range of incentives offered to the diaspora. The next session was interactive: delegates were able to interact directly with chief ministers, as well as with other ministers and bureaucrats, for purposes of seeking clarification on the schemes/opportunities proposed by the states. The PBD was formally declared closed by the President of India after presentation of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman to a dozen or so diaspora personalities, recognizing their contribution to community service, science and technology, or some social cause.

On the sidelines of the PBD, different states were provided with space to highlight what they are doing to promote industries and tourism. There were also stalls showcasing, for instance, the banking services, real estate, jewelry and handicrafts of Rajasthan.

GOPIO (NY) and Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

Since 2003, GOPIO (NY) has held its annual two-day convention in India, generally on January 5th and 6th, coinciding with the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. The PBD program offers special provision of tax-free accommodation (about 30% discount on hotel tariffs), 50% discount on the PBD registration fee, and free transport from designated hotels for delegates to the venue of the PBD conference programs.

GOPIO (NY) encourages and assists its members in booking accommodation and in PBD advance registration, making sure they attend the pre-PBD convention held on the eve of PBD. They identify one of the 5-star hotels in the city hosting the PBD as the venue and book accommodation for all of the overseas delegates. On the first day, they hold the Executive Committee and General Body meetings, followed on the second day by country-specific presentations by the GOPIO executives of the respective countries. The highlight of the convention is on the first evening, which includes an address by one of the VVIPs. This could be a Chief Minister or a Cabinet Minister of the state hosting the PBD, or it might be the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, or even an Indian diplomat. Afterwards, the GOPIO presents its achievements during the year under review. The event culminates in a banquet honoring some distinguished Persons of Indian Origin for their community service or professional achievements.

GOPIO (M) and Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

GOPIO (M) holds a one day convention – PIOs Dialogue with India – generally after the PBD program; the date is January 10th and the venue is one of the hotels where their members are staying. The GOPIO (M) executive coordinates and organizes this event. Three panel discussions are convened after an inaugural session addressed by the Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, Ministers from PIO countries such as Mauritius, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Singapore. The post-PBD Convention ends with a decision being taken about GOPIO (M)'s next event – a mini-PBD, say, or the International GOPIO Convention. The Malaysian delegation generally outnumbers all other delegations to the PBD, followed by Sri Lanka and the United States.

Bringing the GOPIOs together

Attempts have been made to bring the two GOPIOs together by the Chairman of the HLC on the Indian Diaspora, Dr. L.M. Singhvi, as well as several well-wishers from the diaspora. The international convention of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a significant achievement on the part of the Indian Government, mobilizing both PIO and NRI diaspora segments around a common platform, but the effort to unify them still has some way to go. The Executive Committees of both GOPIOs were persuaded to attend each other's Conventions during the PBD in January 2010 but as of 2016 no solution is in sight for their merger.

The differences between the two streams of the Indian diaspora – PIO and NRI – can be traced to their very formation. As mentioned earlier, the PIO diaspora, constituted by the 3rd, 4th or 5th generation of descendants of 'indentured laborers,' was recruited predominantly from the poorer, deprived and untouchable sections of Indian society, who were even forced to board the ships chartered to take them to the various European plantations. Their further subjugation as 'slaves' under the ruthless British and other European planters only added to their misery, distancing them from their own people left behind in India. The majority of these emigrants under the indentured labor system, as we saw, lost contact with their families back home in India, and they also became alienated from their mother tongue in the course of settling down in the plantation colonies.

The PIO diaspora consider themselves denied of their due position as *the* Indian diaspora, since the new policy initiatives by the government primarily address the needs of the 'Dollar Diaspora,' i.e. the NRI diaspora. They believe that NRIs and NRI diaspora members, particularly those from North America and Europe, are well connected with India and already have a firm foothold there. They were neither persecuted nor deterritorialized, but had immigrated to greener pastures for lucrative jobs and business careers. They are affluent and have bank balances to invest in India or carry out business with India, as a result of which they demand dual citizenship.

The PIO diaspora, on the other hand, see themselves as the 'unfortunate children of Mother India,' deserving attention and support as the true Indian diaspora, rather than the much later NRI diaspora from the developed countries.

The NRI diaspora, as mentioned earlier, comprises the first or second generation of Indian immigrants from the middle and upper classes and castes of urban India, who had opportunities for an elite education and job placement. They have the best of both worlds, the world of India and the world of the developed countries. Besides frequent family visits, they evince a keen interest in economic and political spheres in their places of origin. They have gained leverage with the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, not only in seeking favorable policy initiatives but also in having their candidature considered for the award of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman.

The diversity and the distance between the NRI and the PIO diaspora are eminently visible where they have an opportunity to converge. For instance, the Indians who have directly immigrated to New York largely head for Jackson Heights, where they have created a 'Little India,' while the 'East Indians,' as they are popularly called in the Caribbean countries of Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Surinam, generally head for Richmond Hills, where the 'twice migrant' Indian community has created its 'Little India' along with *dhal-roti* and goat, 'doubles,' *chatney* music and dance.⁵ Except for the Indian national celebrations of Independence Day and Republic Day, organized by the Indian Consular Office, they hardly come together for any family or socio-cultural events. Jackson Heights and Richmond Hills seldom meet, clearly drawing boundaries between the two. The barriers are unlikely to disappear in the near future.

Global Organizations of the Regional/Linguistic Diaspora

The articulation of regional, linguistic or caste identities and belonging has given rise to a regrouping of diaspora communities at the global level. These regional/linguistic groups have established their own global organizations to promote their cultural, socio-economic, political, regional and linguistic interests across nation states, including their region of origin. For instance, there are Telugu, Gujarati, Punjabi global organizations that have their patronage in states like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Punjab (briefly discussed below). It is interesting to note the absence of a NRI and PIO diaspora distinction among these regional/linguistic global organizations. In fact, initiatives for diaspora involvement in developmental activities are taken at the local or regional levels to which the diaspora originally 'belonged.' While the diaspora policies are initiated at the national level, it is the state/provincial govern-

⁵ *Chatney* is a word used in Indian languages for the spicy accompaniment served with snacks and this word is used to refer to the music and dance form – *chatney* music and dance – created from the fusion of Bhojpur folk songs and dances accompanied by *dholak* (drum), harmonium and Western guitar by Indo-Caribbean singers and dancers.

ment that pursues 'their' diaspora pro-actively, partnering with them for advancement in all spheres of life. The regional diaspora has emerged as a significant player in the growth story of its place of origin. Some of the members of pan-Indian global organizations like GOPIO (NY) or GOPIO (M) may also be members of regional diaspora organizations, provided that they, their parents or ancestors originally 'belonged' to that region and vice versa.

The World Telugu Federation (WTF)

The World Telugu Federation (WTF) is an NGO set up in 1992 to promote Telugu language and culture among overseas Telugus. The initiative came from Chennapuri Andhra Maha Sabha, the Telugu Association of North America (TANA), and the Tamil Nadu Telugu Federation (TNTF). The First Convention of the WTF was inaugurated by Sri N.T. Rama Rao, the then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, and was duly held in New York in 1992. Today WTF has emerged as a coordinating body for most of the Telugu associations worldwide, including the International Telugu Institute. In addition, it liaises with Andhra Pradesh government and other organizations.

The leadership came from leading Telugu film producers such as Dr. V.L. Dutt and V.S. Rao. The first WTF conference was held in Madras (December 1994) with a second following in Hyderabad (December 1996). The third Conference was organized in New Delhi (December 1998), followed by a fourth at Visakhapatnam (December 2000). The only conference held outside India so far was in Singapore (December 2002). Besides promotion of Telugu language and culture, the WTF has broadened its canvas to include business, tourism, education, and collaboration in science and technology. The Federation has also emerged as a forum to attract trade, commerce and investments in Andhra Pradesh by the Telugu diaspora. Members of both the PIO and New Telugu diasporas attend these conferences in large numbers and renew their links with the motherland. Regional and linguistic sentiments of 'belonging together' are often stronger than pan-national identity.

Vishwa Gujarati Samaj (VGS)

Founded in 1989, Vishwa Gujarati Samaj (VGS) is an International Organization of the global Gujarati community. It has grown from strength to strength over a span of 22 years and can boast membership from 101 countries. VGS is registered as a Public Trust under the registration no. F-1927, Ahmedabad under the Bombay Public Trust Act, and is a registered society under section 80 (G) of the Indian Income Tax Act. VGS is governed by its members and office bearers settled throughout the world. The apex body of Vishwa Gujarati Samaj is registered as 'Vishwa Gujarati Samaj (USA)-INC.' under section 402 of the Not-For-Profit Corporation Law of the state of New York. It has its head office in Ahmedabad, India and enjoys exemption from Federal Income Tax under section 501 (A) of the Internal Revenue Code (USA).

Membership is open to all Gujaratis, and to all those who understand the Gujarati language or belong to Gujarati associations throughout the world and accept the aims and objectives of the organization. VGS also undertakes projects and programs in accordance with broad objectives, such as organizing social, cultural, educational, environmental, and humanitarian activities for Gujaratis settled around the world.

The Government of Gujarat set up the Non-Resident Gujarati Foundation (NRGF) in 1998, besides launching many schemes targeting NRGs, not only to attract investment in Gujarat but also to enhance communication. The World Gujarati Meeting held at Vadodara on January 4th, 1999 attracted NRGs from many parts of the world, such as Uganda, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, UAE, Australia, and South Africa. Gujaratis are well known for their close networking along family, caste and religious lines, both in India and abroad.

International Gujarati associations and organizations play a very significant role in promoting transnational networks; they seek to unite all Gujaratis for the benefit of Gujarat and to preserve Gujarati culture, its traditions, and folklore. There are considerable numbers of Gujaratis living in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and East Africa. Overseas Gujaratis have formed these associations to pursue and safeguard their interests at the local and global levels. Their solidarity with fellow Gujaratis could be gauged by the global response to the crises in Uganda, the Middle East, and Fiji. The unprecedented earthquake of January 26, 2001 brought together Gujaratis worldwide, mobilizing men and materials to enable immediate and long-term recovery from the massive damage. In order to rebuild economy and infrastructure, they raised funds on a grand scale – not just at a personal but also an organizational level.

The Global Punjabi Community

Punjabis have maintained strong networks – sociocultural, economic, religious and political – with their kith and kin around the world, as well as with their relatives back home in Punjab. These networks are manifested in remittances sent to the families left behind, by involvement in various national and international associations, and by visiting the homeland for manifold reasons. Further, the process of maintaining these networks is facilitated by the spectacular progress in global media and communication technology.

With the help of the Internet, the world wide web and news groups, plus interactive communication via email, diasporic Punjabis form today the 'Global Punjabi community.' As a pro-active state, the Government of Punjab has operated Pravasi Punjabi Divas since 2003, inviting Non-Resident Punjabis (NRPs) to interact with the leading industrialists and businessmen of Punjab. Following the Government of India, distinguished members of the overseas Punjabi community were honored with the status of 'Punjabi Gaurav Sanman.' The state of Punjab offers incentives to NRPs for setting up industrial enterprises on a preferential basis, providing 'Single Window Clearance' for investment proposals. The state established a Ministry of NRP Affairs

in 2002, with its Secretariat at Chandigarh; it created an NRP Helpline to obtain feedback from NRPs, especially those from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Government of Punjab started a new scheme called the Mera Pind Initiative in 2002, offering matching grants (50%) to NRPs for funds invested in 'development projects' such as rural infrastructure or investment in ancestral villages (Kaur 2011).

In Conclusion: Observations and Reflections

Diaspora global organizations play a significant role in articulating issues, challenges and opportunities facing the diaspora community and the motherland/ancestral land, keeping in mind the protection and promotion of wellbeing and common interests of both parties. Contemporary globalization has facilitated more than ever before the bringing together of dispersed people and communities, taking those who 'belong' to a common place of origin and connecting, or rather reconnecting, them on a truly global basis. The global organizations of the Indian diaspora, based as they are on pan-Indian, regional/linguistic, religious, or caste identities, have emerged during the last decade of the 20th century following the advent of technologies of superfast travel and also information and communication highways.

Today the Indian diaspora communities, no less diversified than India itself, are actively engaged in reconnecting with the people and places of their origin, extending what it means to 'belong' to those communities or regions that they, or their ancestors, left when they immigrated to global destinations. Perceptions of Indian identity among the Indian diaspora vary based on how members are situated in the host country. In Mauritius, for instance, where PIOs form a majority, Indian identity is perceived through its constituents of Hindus, Tamils, Telugus and Marathis (Bhat and Bhaskar 2011), while in Trinidad they are primarily categorized as PIOs, with little deviation. However, the NRI diasporas in the United Kingdom and United States exhibit all the diversities for which India itself is known. Thus, depending on context, the Indian diaspora responds to the situation on the ground by forming 'Little India,' 'Little Punjab,' or 'Little Gujarat'; thus, communities assume one or other of multiple identities and come to define themselves as belonging to a nation, region/language, religion, or caste. Another significant distinction that vertically differentiates the Indian diaspora is that between its PIOs and NRI sections. The former are largely 'children of the indentured,' whose parents or grandparents immigrated to colonial British and other European plantations, whereas the latter immigrated to the developed West after India gained independence.

Despite the diversities, Indians have a strong sense of unity that is often described in terms of 'unity in diversity':

Though the concept of India is barely 53 years old, 'Indianness' has evolved over the centuries. Certainly the freedom movement against the British saw its consolidation further. Indianness has a geographical connotation but is not any longer spatially limited. It includes the notion of a nation marked by its cultural confluence not bound by frontiers, for it is transnational in character. (Bhat 2006)

India today stretches far beyond her borders, and the Indian diaspora, thanks to the new policy initiatives of the Government of India, is set to take India beyond India. It shares equally in the achievements of the Indian Space Research Organization and in the dynamism of Silicon Valley in California. Needless to say, any disaster or tragedy striking any Indian anywhere in the world is a matter of concern to all Indians wherever they may be. The news of 27 September (Hindustan Times 2016) from Washington that the Indian American community in the United States has petitioned the White House to designate Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism, this coming only days after a bill to this effect was tabled in the US Congress by two powerful lawmakers (following an incident where Pakistani terrorists killed 18 Indian soldiers at Uri in Jammu and Kashmir), amply illustrates the reality of India emerging beyond India.

Acknowledgments

This chapter is based on field studies carried out in Mauritius, Malaysia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the United States, and the United Kingdom. It also reflects input from global conventions held by Indian diaspora organizations, on the occasion of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas celebrations in different parts of India. I sincerely thank my interlocutors in 'India beyond India' conference and the editors of this volume for their valuable suggestions on an earlier draft of this chapter.

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3 Navigating Belonging in a Mobile World: Young Indian Students and Researchers in Germany

Antonie Fuhse

Since 1998, there has been an ongoing internationalization of higher education. One result of this has been an increase in student mobility. The OECD estimated in 2013 that more than 4.5 million tertiary education students were internationally mobile (OECD 2013). To attract students and researchers to Germany, the government as well as research institutes and universities have developed numerous programs and advertising strategies. Institutions such as the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and the International Max Planck Research Schools (IMPRS) court young students by offering attractive financial and scientific opportunities. In doing so, Germany has attempted to brand itself as the “land of ideas,”¹ a land of innovation, and science. Statistics show that India is one of the top three sending countries for postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers.² With its university and variety of research institutes (mostly Max Planck Institutes), Göttingen, or the “city of science,”³ is one center attracting Indian students and researchers. As of 2017 around 300 Indian postgraduates and postdoctoral fellows are studying or working in the

¹ The ‘Germany – Land of Ideas’ initiative is supported by the German Government, the Foreign Office, the Ministry for Education and Research and various companies (<https://land-der-ideen.de/en/partners>).

² Data from the website <http://www.wissenschaftweltoffen.de/daten/1/2/1>, run by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW).

³ “Göttingen – City of Science” (“Göttingen – Stadt, die Wissen schafft”) is the slogan of the city.

city, mostly in the fields of engineering, natural sciences, and mathematics. There are also about 30 Indian students and researchers in the humanities and social sciences. Only about 30 percent of the Indian students and scientists in Göttingen are female.⁴ These students and researchers come from different regions, are from the heterogeneous Indian middle class, are mostly single, and typically aged between 22 and 35. Most of them plan to stay in Göttingen until they complete a certain academic degree, and thus their stays are limited in duration.

In the following pages, I sketch out strategies the students and researchers adopt to navigate their lives between ‘home’ and abroad, what being a scientist means for their biographic navigation, and how the presence of India influences their feelings of belonging in a mobile world. My findings are based on data from qualitative interviews, participatory observation, and online research on Facebook between August 2010 and April 2016.

Theoretical and Methodological Framing: Studying Belonging in a Mobile World

Because “all the world seems to be on the move” (Sheller and Urry 2006: 207), we, as social scientists, have to ask how we can study the dynamics of belonging in a mobile world. Sheller and Urry propose the “mobility paradigm” (ibid.), which asserts that mobility (physical, virtual, material) is an important part of most people’s lives. At the same time, they note that spatial, infrastructural, and institutional “moorings” (ibid.: 210) enable and shape the mobility of individuals. This underlines the fact that mobility is influenced by multiple structures of power and inequality, for not everyone has the same access to mobility (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006: 3). This is elaborated in Glick Schiller and Salazar’s (2013) concept of “regimes of mobility,” which emphasizes that individuals are not free to move as they want, not even the highly skilled. Building on this, I have developed the concept of the “regime of student mobility” as a tool for analyzing the biographic navigation of the young students and researchers (Fuhse, forthcoming). This concept takes into account that my respondents navigate in a transnational space that is shaped by multiple actors, structures of power (international, national, regional, familial), inequalities, discourses, and imaginations. The process of biographic navigation entails the positioning and negotiation of multiple formations of belonging and conscious and subconscious constructions of the self (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2011: 10–11). The students and researchers balance different modes of belonging, create new ones, combine them creatively, and thus reestablish their “social location” (ibid.: 2) in a new context.

⁴ This imbalance is also indicated by statistics that include all Indian students in Germany and studies about Indian students in other countries (Sondhi 2015). The reasons for the gender imbalance are discussed in Sondhi (2013) and Fuhse (forthcoming).

In moving – both physically and virtually – between India and Germany, the students and researchers negotiate different social spaces, and therefore different modes of belonging. As Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013:13) argues: “Belonging is an emotionally charged, ever dynamic social location – that is: a position in social structure, experienced through identification, embeddedness, connectedness and attachments.” If individuals or groups feel threatened or insecure, feelings of belonging tend to become increasingly relevant. In this process, people start to (re)consider the normal, self-evident and unconscious feeling of belonging (Yuval-Davis 2011: 4). That leads to the articulation, (formal) structuring, and in some cases, to the politicization of belonging (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2012: 16), or what Yuval-Davis (2011:4) calls the “politics of belonging.”

Belonging is multidimensional and consists of different elements which are often difficult to combine (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 9, 21). Over the course of their lives, individuals encounter and therefore navigate through diverse constellations of belonging (ibid.: 21). In this process, the individual person negotiates collective constellations and hence (re)creates belonging (ibid.: 20). As an analytical tool to capture this dynamic relationship between individual agency and the social environment (see also Vigh 2009) I use the concept of „biographic navigation“ (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2012, 2013; Vigh 2009).

I studied young Indian students and researchers in Göttingen and their individual strategies of navigating the diverse constellations of belonging in their mobile “life-worlds” (Schütz and Luckmann 1973). In this chapter, I focus on different dimensions of belonging central to their biographic navigations: regional and national identifications, professional belonging, and imagined futures. All four revolve around different articulations of belonging: social relations, practices, and narrations. I use ‘articulation’ in the twofold meaning of ‘to express’ and ‘to connect,’ as proposed by Hermann and Kempf (Hermann and Kempf 2005: 313–315, referring to Comaroff 1985, and Hall 1980, 1986). Social relations, narrations and practices are not only expressions of belonging, but also ways to connect oneself with other people, places, or discourses. These articulations take place in specific situations and are individual or collective ways of expressing and negotiating different modes of belonging, such as nationality, religion, region, profession, gender, and class.

Organizations and Festivities as Spaces for Practicing Belonging

Steven Vertovec (1999: 450, referring to Gilroy 1987, 1993) states that “the awareness of multi-locality stimulates the desire to connect oneself with others, both ‘here’ and ‘there’ who share the same ‘routes’ and ‘roots.’” In the case of the young Indians I studied, this awareness is reflected in formal and informal organizations, festivities and leisure activities. Analyzing these aspects and the processes connected to them – such as the construction of organizations and groups – and the dynamics of exclu-

sion and inclusion, can reveal a lot about the dynamics of belonging in the form of negotiated and performed commonality (see also Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 14–15).

Nirmiti, the “Indian fraternity in Göttingen,” states on its website: “We sowed the seed of our association in 2009 and now aim to create an environment of mutual support, social interaction and a blend of two countries and cultures – India and Germany. Our name and logo thus signify creation.”⁵ As a student association with an elected committee, Nirmiti organizes several events each year, including a Sports Day, Indian Independence Day, and Diwali,⁶ and attempts to integrate newcomers from India into the group. This organization is founded on a common notion of Indianness, and tries to acknowledge the diverse meanings of this concept. In practice, this means selecting events that are considered Indian (that is, events not especially connected to one region or religion), and to organize these events as representations of India’s diversity, such as in the event’s cultural program. As an increasing number of Indians are coming to Göttingen, the events are becoming larger, and the task of organizing them to everybody’s satisfaction is becoming increasingly complicated. Aside from these difficulties (which will be described in the following section), these events provide the young students and researchers with an important space for socializing and self-expression. In addition to allowing Indians to meet each other and eat Indian food together, the cultural program is an essential part of these functions. Everybody who wants to is allowed to perform dances, songs, or other pieces, thereby offering each an opportunity to enact what he or she considers to be Indian culture. In Butler’s (1990, 1993) concept of performativity, these practices are not only the expression, but also constitutive elements, of belonging. In performing, the individuals connect with each other through their collective belonging as Indian, and evoke norms and values already associated with these performances. Festivals are therefore a space to meet other Indians, and to socialize and perform ‘culture’ in familiar ways. These two aspects are described by a member of the Nirmiti committee:

[We] started these celebrations just like fun-feel party. And then as time went on, [we] moved on so. We wanted to use this get together function – I mean mainly after Nirmiti started to take this over, so we started to organize celebrations in more Indian way, so [that] every little thing started to remind us of our home. So we wanted to celebrate Diwali at the closest weekend possible and ... crackers and every little thing, the puja, everything, the cultural activities, the quiz. ... So we wanted to recreate our Indian celebration in a foreign land. So this not started out like this, [at the time] we just wanted to get every-

⁵ Website Nirmiti (<https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/132691.html>).

⁶ As did my respondents, I will use the English spelling without diacritics. Diwali is the ‘festival of lights,’ celebrated almost all over India, which commemorates the return of the mythical couple Rama and Sita to Ayodhya (there are also other stories about the origin of this festival) (Malinar 2009: 164). A presentation is held on Diwali to inform the non-Indians colleagues and friends about the reason for the festival.

body together and have fun. That's what happened in [the] first or three Diwali's, but after [that] Nirmiti started to take [over] this thing themselves... I think the main reason why it attracts more people is the togetherness they can find more Indians here and it brings back the Indian celebration, the whole mood, everything. Nirmiti was successful in achieving this to the fullest level, to the complete level. We, they give attention to minor details that is very nice. ... Food will also be one of the most important factors. (Interview R.⁷, 15.09.2011)

Some respondents stated that the time of the festivals was when they missed home and family the most. In recreating the festivals in the most Indian way possible, the young Indians try to build a 'home away from home' and "reroot" themselves (Ghosh and Wang 2003: 274). Thus, the festivals could be understood as providing a place to practice, perform, express, and articulate multiple modes of belonging and identities (such as national, regional, religious, and class identities). Diwali, which many of my respondents consider to be celebrated more or less all over India (sometimes also regardless of religion), is one of the main events for coming together. Every year, the Diwali celebrations are organized by the Nirmiti members, with planning starting months before the event. The celebration is almost the same every year: It starts with a short presentation about Diwali, followed by a *puja*⁸, the cultural program, games, dinner, sparklers, another game, and ends with people dancing to the newest music from India. Both my observations at the event and interlocutors statements suggest that the religious aspect of Diwali is not so important for most present. Although *pujas* were performed by a student with a Brahmin background at the Diwali celebration in 2010, 2011, and 2012,⁹ the other aspects of the celebration, like the food, games, cultural program, and the presentation language are given significantly more attention in the organizing phase and during the event itself. Indeed, the choice of clothing, participation in the cultural program, the choice of food and so on are the central platforms for the articulation of the group's perceived diversity, and therefore also of multiple ways of belonging (such as regional, class, caste).

The importance of socializing with other Indians is not restricted to the festivities and important events. The circles of friends and thus the day-to-day interactions also show that belonging to the Indian community is an important part of life for most of the young Indians I spoke to. As one respondent stated:

⁷ Male, early thirties, PhD, was a founding member of the Nirmiti committee. Has been in the USA for a postdoctoral fellowship since 2012.

⁸ Puja (Sanskrit) "Worship" is a religious ritual where offerings are made to a deity. Done at multiple occasions and settings: from the daily puja at home, to elaborate temple ceremonies and large festivals (Oberlies 2008: 23–24).

⁹ I was not present in 2013. No puja was performed in 2014 and 2015, as, according to one respondent, no one there had the ceremonial knowledge to perform it.

I know that people from my land are here, my own people are here. And then the Nirmiti's Diwali program ... it brought me in contact with so many Indians, Bengalis, Non-Bengalis, Maharashtrians, Gujaratis, so many Indians. And then the bond started increasing and it increased like anything, and nowadays I feel like I'm not alone here... . [In my] first month, I had the feeling that I should escape from here, this is not for me. But now it feels like I could stay here for three more years or four more years for PhD ... The friends' circle is something which Germany gave to me. (Interview An.¹⁰, 20.02.2013)

As these groups of friends are often organized around regional affiliations, they provide a place for speaking in the same mother tongue, eating regional dishes and watching movies. This points to the importance of regional identification and belonging, and leads to the next aspect I focus on.

Dilemmas of Belonging: The Importance of Regional Identities, or the Difficulties of Being 'Indian'

For many of the Indian students and researchers that I met in Göttingen, one of the key dimensions of belonging is the regional background, which seems to play an important role in forming a circle of friends, leisure time activities, and organizing events (regional and Indian) (see also Bhat this volume). Aside from Diwali, which is understood as an Indian celebration, there are other celebrations that are organized around regional and/or religious belonging. In 2013, for example, a group of mostly Bengalis organized Saraswati Puja which was also announced as the "Bengali Spring Festival." As the invitation stated:

We are now named as Bangladesh and West Bengal (part of India). Politically and officially we are two different countries. Somebody had drawn a fractal boundary and we are divided. But, we still share the same culture. Our cultural authenticity, our language transcend the political boundaries. One of our cultural events to welcome the spring is Saraswati pujo¹¹. It is a Bengali Hindu religious custom of worshipping the goddess of education and culture. But, we celebrate all Bengali cultural events without maintaining any barrier of religious and political boundaries. We carry our culture beyond the geography, surpassing the religious view. So, come and join us in this joyous moment to welcome the spring.¹²

¹⁰ Female, 23 years, from Calcutta, doing her master's degree in sociology, short-term DAAD stipend for Germany, plans to do PhD in Germany.

¹¹ 'pujo' is the Bengali version of *puja*.

¹² The invitation was circulated via the Facebook group "Nirmiti: Indians in Göttingen" (04.03.13).

As the authors of the invitation use words and phrases like “we,” “our cultural authenticity,” “our language,” and “same culture,” and point out that “the Bengali culture” transcends religious and political boundaries; they highlight the common belonging, culture, and language of Bengalis, be it in India or Bangladesh. This emphasis on a common background is also reflected in the event program: “Breakfast with typical Saraswati pujo food”; “games that will remind your childhood with some gifts”; “all homemade typical Saraswati pujo food made with the spirit of Charuibhati (picnic): Khichuri, Aloor dum, Payesh, Pantooa.” Although not only Bengalis were invited to the event, at least 80 percent of the participants had Bengali roots, be they in India or Bangladesh. In offering an opportunity to speak Bengali, eat Bengali food, sing Bengali songs, play Bengali games, and perform a Bengali Hindu ritual, the celebration provided Bengalis with a space for articulating their belonging, both to their region as well as to their group and each other as Bengalis. As inclusive as this event was for Bengalis with different national citizenships and religions, it excluded non-Bengalis, especially through language. While language can be a strong factor in exclusion, for people with the same mother tongue, it can also be an important means of creating feelings of familiarity and belonging (Antonsich 2010: 648). As one respondent told me:

If I get to talk in my language I feel most happy and you know. And I might tend to talk to people who are talking in my language ... you know [this is] the thing which happens in India, so which we do not realize it... (Interview S¹³., 26.01.2013)

The importance of speaking or writing in one’s mother tongue is also illustrated on Facebook. A few of the young Indians (almost) exclusively use their mother tongue in posts or comments. Language use is typically related to the people they are connected with via Facebook (family and friends from the same region) and the topics they are discussing, such as regional politics, music, or movies. Language is also a sensitive topic in the organization of Diwali and other major events. In 2012, a committee member noted that the previous year some students from Tamil Nadu had commented on the use of Hindi in the presentation and the music. As such, the committee decided to pay more attention to language and ensure the presentations, the cultural program, and the music choice was multilingual. This illustrates the importance of language in articulations of belonging, and the powerful role that language can play in including people in or excluding them from a defined group. In attempting to reconcile the importance of regional belonging with the wish to unite Indian students and researchers of all backgrounds and religions in Göttingen under the umbrella of *Nirmiti*, members of the organization emphasize the notion of ‘unity in diversity.’ Especially when there are occasions for the representation of India or the Indian students and researchers in Göttingen, a lot of thought is put into the

¹³ Female, early thirties, PhD, back in India and searching for postdoctoral position.

program. At the annual Indian Cultural Night (ICN) for example, master's students from one of the MPI programs in Göttingen are asked to represent the country. For the 2013 Indian Culture Night, as the host of the evening stated, organizers chose 'Indian festivals' as the theme to showcase India's diversity. Different regional and religious festivals (Hindu and Muslim, but no Christian or Buddhist festivals) were presented and demonstrated through songs and dances. The Indians in the audience I spoke to were impressed by the choice of the topic and the attempt to represent India's diversity. But not everybody was content with the presentation. One interlocutor stated that some regions were not represented, such as Northeast India. So how much diversity is enough? Is being diverse part of being Indian? It seems to be so in the perception of a former Nirmiti president:

So now the aims of Nirmiti team as such is to promote this mixing of different cultures, which is like, if you are in India from a region and you did not have a chance to go to other region and study or, for some reason, then you are somehow confined to that region and then you take values only from there. But when you come here then you get a value from this country and also of your own country from [a] different region. And we want to promote this really, and we wanted people to recognize this difference and also to respect this in a way. Because there are been instances where people confined from a particular region did not respect the differences from the other region, and they somehow tried to either dominate or suppress others, which we do not really want to happen. So that's one thing we wanted to promote: that India is of different values and different diversity and this need to be respected and accepted as a fact, and that's where it brings in more spice I guess. Because if you expecting your Indian food to be spicy it's not just one spice that brings in, but it's different a lot of things that brings in that taste, so I believe this. ... [S]imilarly, Indian community is also a masala of something. (Interview V.¹⁴, 26.03.2013)

Employing the image of the Indian community as a "masala", a mixture of different spices, V. illustrated that he understood being Indian as being diverse (to have different mother tongues, different religions, different food), and he wanted to acknowledge this diversity. The discourse on 'unity in diversity,' and the attempt to implement it in the events, is a way of trying to integrate everybody into the 'Indian masala.' But this rather apolitical view of India masks the problems that India actually has with regionalism and communalism (among others), and therefore excludes the more critical or political young Indians in Göttingen, who find it difficult to relate to Nirmiti and its events.¹⁵ In this process, Nirmiti as an organization acts as a

¹⁴ Male, 24 years old, pursuing PhD at MPI for Biophysical Chemistry, member of the Nirmiti committee.

¹⁵ I realized this aspect in an interview with an Indian social scientist whom I had never met at any

“regime of belonging” (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 19) that influences individual persons and defines its boundaries. Nevertheless, in trying to define for themselves what India and Indianness mean, the Indian students and researchers in Göttingen are part of a larger process of defining and redefining India in and beyond its territorial boundaries.

Being a Scientist in “Göttingen – City of Science”

One spatial and social location for the young Indians I worked with is Göttingen, the “city of science”, in Lower Saxony. Although it only has about 130 000 inhabitants, Göttingen is a well-known university city, highly regarded for its achievements in mathematics and the natural sciences, and boasts over 40 Nobel Laureates. In telling me about leaving India and coming to Göttingen for their studies, my interlocutors provided me with narrations on who they think they are, on what is important to them at this stage in their lives, and how Germany provides them the opportunity to achieve these goals.

A common topic in the narrations about the decision to leave India for studies is competition at home. As one interlocutor told me, “there are a lot of students in India, and it’s always a kind of competition, which happens especially in the study place” (Interview Ar.¹⁶, 14.12.2011). The selection of Germany is also partly connected to this spirit of competition:

One [reason to come to Germany] is to be [a] little bit different from where others are going. Second is, like, to learn from the place where – especially in my field – where it came from. All the technology is [from] there/here, so I thought “okay.” (ibid.)

In their narrations my interlocutors represented India as a country full of skilled people, but with few good opportunities for study. Germany, however, is understood as a country that has a lot of quality institutes, charges no tuition fees, and offers the possibility of achieving a doctoral degree within three years. For my respondents, it is clear that mobility is the key to career success. In order to achieve a good position in the future, it is necessary to go abroad, work in well-respected institutes with established researchers, and to be part of a scientific community. However, it is not only important for the success in one’s work life; a career is also a “cultural product” (Cohen, Duberley and Ravishankar 2012: 106) that is situated in dynamic contexts. It is not only formed by the scientific community (in this case), but also by the expectations of one’s family, peers, and society. My interview partners repre-

Nirmiti event, but at other events like Saraswati Puja. She made it clear to me that it is hard for her to relate to the apolitical and sometimes idealized manner in which India is represented at the events.

¹⁶ Male, 28 years, pursuing PhD at MPI for Biophysical Chemistry, member of Nirmiti committee.

sented migration as something which everybody does, and which makes the family proud. The “diasporic path” (ibid.: 116), and the social capital that can be ‘earned’ by fulfilling it, is sanctioned by families and communities, and provides a feeling of security in a situation characterized by temporality and social, financial, and other forms of insecurity. This means career and national and/or cultural affiliations are interrelated, as “ongoing facets of individuals’ identities as they develop diasporic careers” (ibid.:106).

Providing the young Indians with a space for scientific research, networks, and contact with colleagues from various countries, the workplace is a space for negotiating different aspects of belonging. One aspect is the work itself. For my respondents, being a researcher and belonging to a scientific community is important. This is reflected in the time they spend at work – most say they work 10 hours a day, up to six days a week – and in their narrations about the decision to come to Germany. As one said:

Germany, for many reasons. One of the reasons is [that] Germany is very famous for physics. You know the modern physics have started in Germany: Max Planck, Heisenberg, Einstein. All are from Germany. And Germany has this rich tradition of producing wonderful physicists. And I’m a physicist so it is quite natural selecting Germany. (Interview P.¹⁷, 10.07.2011)

The freedom of research at the Max Planck Institutes, the easy availability of resources like chemicals and laboratory equipment, and the work environment, which is often described as very liberal, are understood as central in providing the possibility of achieving one’s full scientific potential.

Aside from being a place of research and work, the institutes are also a space for meeting people and socializing. For some, it is the only place where they socialize with non-Indians on a regular basis. It is thus also a space for the negotiation of belonging to different nation-states, ‘cultures,’ religions, and so on. This becomes obvious in the various cultural evenings organized by the students, which include Slavic Culture Night, German-Swiss Night, Arabian Culture Night, Nepali Culture Night and, of course, Indian Culture Night. At these events, students and researchers are expected to represent their country, and thus their ethnic-national belonging, to their colleagues, professors, and friends through food, a cultural program and games.

Depending on the stage they are at in their careers, the young Indians are either planning to finish their PhD, or are applying for a postdoctoral fellowship or a permanent position. However, a foreign doctoral degree appears to be regarded as only the first step on the diasporic path. Completing at least one postdoctoral fellowship outside India is perceived as the next imperative in working one’s way

¹⁷ Male, early thirties, in Göttingen as a postdoctoral fellow, shifted to Weizmann Institute in Rehovot in January 2013, has been in the USA for another postdoctoral fellowship since 2014.

up. My interlocutors' ideas about the necessity of going abroad, about where to go, what to achieve and when to go back 'home' are related to the structures, inequalities, images, and discourses that constitute the regime of student mobility (Fuhse, forthcoming).

Almost every respondent formulated the wish to return to India at some point in time, though this was likely to be (repeatedly) delayed on the basis of pursuing further qualifications, be it a PhD, or a (second or third) postdoctoral fellowship. I now turn to how this narrative of returning to India is part of the negotiation of belonging.

“One Day I’m Going Back to India”: (Imagined) Futures in India

Still India is, well for me, Delhi is the best city. [That] means, no matter how unsafe it is or how much crime levels are there, I still want to stay in Delhi forever, like really forever, the life kind of thing.
(Interview S., 26.01.2013)

This statement reflects the sentiment of many of my respondents: there is a definite wish to go back to India, but exactly when and how has not been planned in detail. I argue that it is not important if the young Indians return or not: the very concept of India as the 'arrival point' (cf. 'arrival points,' Baas 2010: 3) and as a permanent 'anchor' in their biographic navigation is what is of interest here. Baas (2010: 3) defines arrival points as "imaginary moments in the future when migrants imagine themselves as having arrived at where they intended to be by going through a particular migration process" (Baas 2010: 3). In a time of insecurity concerning their personal and professional future (being away from family, searching for a partner, having temporary employment, and so on), India and being Indian provide the young students and researchers with continuity and rootedness. One of my respondents, who in fact returned to India in summer 2013, expressed it in the following way:

There were times that I wanted to leave but I always had the hope that I'm going anyway. So this was very good. For me this surety of going back was very important. (Interview G.¹⁸, 19.01.2013)

Thus the simple knowledge that one will go back, even if it is not clear when exactly, can provide the individual with a feeling of security and certainty, and may even help to continue through hard and frustrating times.

The idea that the migratory process leads to a certain arrival point reveals another important facet of the students' and researchers' biographic navigation: coming to

¹⁸ Male, finished his PhD in theology in Göttingen in April 2013, has been back in India since May 2013, holds a position at a theological college in his hometown.

Germany is part of the fulfillment of long-term goals. Completing a degree, a PhD, or a postdoctoral fellowship in Germany or another ‘western’ country is perceived as a requirement to create a certain imagined future – a future that many of my respondents envisage in India, and that will hopefully include a well-paid job and finding a partner. International mobility is thus a strategic means not only of shaping one’s scientific career, but also one’s personal future, by accumulating the social capital important for marriage.¹⁹ Underlying these perceptions are discourses that are part of the regime of student mobility. These discourses naturalize international mobility as something everybody does and you have to do if you want to be successful in India or internationally (Fuhse, forthcoming).

Yes, yes, yes, given the chance I want to go back. I’m here to fulfill that *requirement*. No, I have respect on this country, but I think it is quite natural, you know it is quite natural that, I have some social obligations as well, I have to go and serve my people: something like that. I feel like that I have to go back and I have to take up some job in India. If I take [a] job outside India, it is out of compulsion, not out of choice. Because if I don’t get any job in India, good job I mean, which can suit my qualification and my interest, then I may take up some job in Europe or US. But it is definite[ly] not by choice. I will, given the chance, I want to go back... . (Interview P., 10.07.2011; emphasis added)

In other words, there are not only clear ideas and discourses on how to make a career (by going abroad), but also how this path should end – in India. How this will be accomplished, and how the feelings of responsibility and the wish to find a job that suits the acquired qualifications are consolidated, depends on the individual and poses a number of challenges.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined four facets of the biographic navigation of young students and researchers from India in a mobile world. Firstly, formal and informal organizations and festivals provide the Indian students and researchers the opportunity to meet and socialize, as well as practice, perform, express, and articulate multiple modes of belonging. Secondly, the importance of regional background in this belonging is demonstrated in the way regional festivals and get-togethers are organized, circles of friends are formed, and in the use of regional languages. The relevance of regional belonging can also be recognized in the organization and the

¹⁹ Education and degrees are very important in the process of finding a spouse. Many of my respondents married after completing their PhD. At least half of the marriages were arranged with the help of the parents.

realization of important events that are considered to be Indian such as Diwali and Independence Day. At such events, organizers try to prevent the predominance of one Indian language, and the cultural program aims to represent India's diversity. In doing so, the organizers try to unite all students and researchers from India in Göttingen into a big 'Indian masala' that is 'united in diversity,' thus seeking to avoid the broader dilemma of trying to define what it actually means to be Indian. As I argue above, this does not mean that all of the students and researcher from India are able to relate to *Nirmiti* and its goals.

Thirdly, for my respondents, being a scientist is another important aspect of belonging. Expressed in their narratives about the decision to come to Germany, the time they spend at their workplace, and their future plans, it is apparent that mobility and being part of an international scientific community are understood as crucial to career success. Since a career is a cultural product, the international mobility of the students and researchers from India is sanctioned by families and communities, and thus leads not only to professional success but also to social capital. That means that career and national and/or cultural affiliations are interrelated facets of individuals' belonging. For professional and personal reasons, most of my interlocutors envisage their diasporic path ending back in India. In this way, India becomes a permanent anchor in their biographic navigation and provides them with continuity and rootedness in a time of insecurity. My respondents understand their international mobility as a step to the fulfillment of specific long-term career and personal goals. I understand this imagination and working for an aspired future as an important strategic means of coping with living in mobility and in avoiding dilemmas of belonging. In this dynamic, to be Indian is only one facet of their multiple modes of belonging that intersects with multiple other dimensions, including professional or regional identifications and imagined futures. In other words, in navigating these new, multiple and challenging social spaces, these young students and researchers from India are constantly constructing and reconstructing their belonging.

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Part II:
Belonging and Nation Building

4 **Anxieties of Belonging: East Indians and the Cultural Politics of the Nation in Trinidad**

Viranjini Munasinghe

Introduction

I begin with a controversy that erupted in January 2012 in Trinidad¹ when the Indo-Trinidadian Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar attended the major annual conference for the Indian diaspora, the 10th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (Non-Resident Indian Day), held in India. Persad-Bissessar was one of a few “eminent overseas Indians” honored with a Pravasi Bharatiya Samman (award). The anxieties burdening the fault line between diaspora and nation came to a head, at least for many Trinidadians, when after accepting the award, the Indo-Trinidadian Prime Minister bowed and touched the feet of the Indian President Pratibha Patil. This gesture of the Indo-Trinidadian Prime Minister touching the feet of the Indian President was captured vividly in the media and provoked heated debate. Of the many concerns raised regarding the Prime Minister’s gesture, the most salient demonstrated a familiar anxiety that haunts Trinidad’s cultural politics – the ambivalent national subjectivity

¹ The ethnic composition of the two islands of the nation-state Trinidad and Tobago is significantly different. In 2011, East Indians constituted 35.4% and Africans 34.2% of Trinidad and Tobago’s total population of 1,328,019. In contrast, East Indians accounted for 2.5% and Africans 85.3% of Tobago’s population of 60,874 (Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago 2012). Given the large proportion of East Indians in Trinidad relative to Tobago, the chapter addresses the situation in Trinidad. This is not to say, however, that the cultural politics dominating Trinidad has little or no bearing on Tobago.

projected on to Indo-Trinidadians² because of their allegedly excessive identification with India and things Indian. To allay fears that Trinidad's sovereignty may have been compromised by Persad-Bissessar's 'deferential' act, some in the Hindu establishment argued the gesture was in keeping with religious traditions. This defense, however, only heightened the controversy by foregrounding the Prime Minister's Hindu subjectivity. Current Prime Minister Keith Rowley, who was then Opposition Leader, expressed his umbrage: "Nobody sent the Prime Minister abroad to represent her religion or her race. She went abroad to represent all the people of Trinidad and Tobago and, however, she feels when she stands in front of the head of government or the head of state she must stand there proud representing the people of Trinidad and Tobago" (Daily Express 2012).

This story illustrates that in the Caribbean, East Indians' relationship to India and things Indian is a highly contested field because this identification threatens their capacity to legitimately represent the nation. In comparison to other diasporic groups, East Indian culture does not easily translate into Trinidadian national culture. This chapter is an inquiry into the challenges of cultural translation and Indo-Trinidadian efforts to circumvent it.

Made 26 years after independence, Trinidadian novelist Earl Lovelace's assessment of Caribbean culture reflects dominant assumptions about East Indians and their apparent cultural excess.

It is the Africans who have laid the groundwork of a Caribbean culture – those Africans who struggled against enslavement and continued their struggle against colonialism – and the reason that they did so is that they had to. They had no choice but to become Caribbean and address the Caribbean landscape and reality. No other group had to. The Europeans didn't have to ... they retained their culture. They couldn't change it because it was through their institutions at home that they were culturally and politically empowered. ... The Indians also were tied to their culture because in this new land where they were strangers, it gave them a sense of being. They had their pundits and divali and hosay and their weddings and teeluck and had no reason to want to change them. (Lovelace 1988: 340)

Here, Lovelace is doing much more than merely registering differences in contributions to Caribbean culture. By comparing each ancestral group's contribution to Caribbean culture based on respective capacities, Lovelace elevates Afro-Caribbeans

² Ethnic terminologies are highly complex in Trinidad and seemingly arbitrary changes in terminology signify contested ideologies of belonging to the nation. Here I use the term 'Indo-Trinidadian' to refer to Trinidadians claiming Indian ancestry because it situates this group *within* the nation of Trinidad, unlike the more common term 'East Indian.' Historically, the term 'East Indian' developed in opposition to the category 'creole,' which signified native status par excellence (Munasinghe 2001 and 1997). My use of terms registers not only their respective histories but also their symbolic investments in relation to the nation.

to the level of 'culture creators.' He harnesses different groups racialized attributes to single out and align 'Africans' with Caribbean cultural authenticity, thereby engaging in the comparative exercise of race making that is critical for nation building. Comparison is constitutive of nations in several ways. As a "tactic of rule" (Stoler 2001), comparison is used to classify, value, and hierarchically place different ancestral groups in relation to the nation's patrimony. In its more subtle forms, comparison performs symbolic political work for the nation by attending to the contradictions of its ontology and historicity – namely, the impossibility of living up to the prerogatives of a general/universal form with a culture history that is always particular.

The nation – at least as we know it – is paradoxical. While it is the most common geopolitical unit shaping the twentieth century, each unit must claim its own exceptionality, its own national genius, in order to 'exist' and be recognized as a sovereign entity among other sovereign entities. In this sense, every nation is both the same and unique, with its own claim to exceptional status. Claims of exceptionalism based on national genius are possible only because they imply comparisons to other such 'exceptional' units. Claiming national genius for one's people, in turn, is a crucial strategy in race making, where sameness and difference are carefully calibrated and ideologically grafted onto the racially mapped national geo-body. Though this ideological racial mapping may be taking place within the nation state, the exceptionalist ontology of the nation state renders race making an inevitably comparative exercise, implicating entanglements with other nations and imperial projects.

This chapter therefore examines how exceptionalism was produced and claimed on the basis of a Creole³ genius in the Trinidadian nation. The ideological production of this Creole genius involved a comparative project of race making that ossified the preexisting colonial racial caricatures of a 'culturally naked' African, who could then become the 'culture creator' in the New World, and a 'culturally saturated' Indian, who remained a 'culture bearer' (Munasinghe 1997). I argue that the cultural excess attributed to East Indians prohibited their inclusion in the indigenizing narrative of creolization and symbolically positioned the group as outsiders to the nation of Trinidad. In arguing this, I focus on the late 1980s and early 1990s, a period of heightened cultural and political contestation of the nation in which Indo-Trinidadian leaders challenged their group's outsider status. These challenges, however, tended to reproduce rather than unravel the comparative logics of race that rested on the exclusivity of the Indo-Trinidadian and the Afro-Trinidadian, with Indo-Trinidadian strategies for national inclusion reinforcing earlier colonial and nationalist discourses on the fundamental differences between the African and the Indian.

The particular historicity of Trinidad (and the Caribbean generally) posed certain challenges to conventional narratives on the nation. The almost total destruction of the Native American population meant that the colonizers were able to treat the Caribbean as empty lands. The Caribbean colonies were also extractive colonies, as op-

³ To mark the distinction between creole as a theoretical concept and Creole as a noun to signify persons of African and mixed African and European ancestry, I capitalize the "C" in the latter.

posed to settler colonies, where every aspect of these societies was geared toward the efficient production of sugar for the sole benefit of the metropolis. Unlike settler colonies, the logic driving development in extractive colonies like Trinidad undermined the cultivation of belonging. The relation of the colonizers or of the enslaved to the land, at least initially, was not one of home. These features combined to demand new narratives of indigeneity to the nation that did not revolve around normative ideas of autochthony. Having annihilated the ‘native,’ the ‘native’ had to be redefined in this New World nation. In turn, defining the native subject was significantly informed by colonial race-making projects.

Colonial Project of Race Making

When East Indians arrived in Trinidad as indentured laborers in 1845, the associated planter and colonial race discourses that legitimated the labor scheme positioned them outside the ‘incipient nation’⁴ of Trinidad, and in opposition to those of African ancestry. After Emancipation in 1834, planters in Trinidad faced a dire labor situation. Although they phrased it as a ‘labor shortage,’ the planters’ real concern was the procurement of a *cheap and easily manageable labor force*, a demand the freed slaves could not and would not satisfy. However, with humanitarian concerns gaining currency in Europe, planters had to cloak their interests in a moral discourse. To do so, they claimed that the injection of a new labor force would create competition among labor, ultimately benefiting the existing labor force by improving their ‘moral character.’ To legitimate this claim, the planters had to prove to the colonial authorities that the Black labor force was morally degenerate. To support their case for immigrant contract labor, big sugar planters, much to the detriment of the Black labor force, actively generated a specific discourse on the alleged ‘labor situation’ in Trinidad (Munasinghe 2001 and 2009). Planters targeted the ex-slaves as the *cause* of their problem and emphasized contract immigrant labor as the only possible *solution*. Making a case for immigrants entailed derogation of the Black laboring population as dishonest, immoral, improvident and of limited mental capacity, the planters’ character attacks on ‘the Negro’ served to forge a stereotype of Creoles in Trinidad as ‘free spending, luxury loving and improvident,’ in contrast to the ‘industrious, diligent, self-sacrificing’ East Indian. As the ‘big sugar planters’ solution’ to the ‘labor shortage,’ East Indians came to occupy a position antagonistic to the Black laboring population. In time, many of the planters’ characterizations of Creoles and East Indians became seen as characteristics inherent to the groups, and were later used by

⁴ My use of the phrase ‘incipient nation’ does not denote a teleological unfolding of a predetermined ‘national essence.’ Rather, it suggests that a symbolic space for the nation – in identifying ‘legitimate national subjects’ who will assume the mantle of state power with independence – can be constituted even during the period of colonial domination, when the ‘nation’ was being positioned against the state, as was the case in Trinidad and, indeed, in all colonies.

the groups themselves to undermine one another. Thus, the 'Negro' carried the same prejudices and contempt as the White man for the 'Coolie,' as did the 'Coolie' and the White man for the 'Negro.'

Almost 144,000 Indians were brought to Trinidad between 1845 and 1917 to work the sugar plantations. The circumstances under which Indians entered the country relegated them to the lowest status. The Afro-Trinidadian workers viewed the Indians as 'scab' labor who diminished their own bargaining power with planters, a view intensified by the 'Coolies' agreement to do work that slaves had only done under coercion. Moreover, Afro-Trinidadian's regarded Indians as culturally inferior: their forms of dress, especially the loin cloth, invited ridicule, as did their 'heathen' ceremonies. In a colonial milieu where Christianity stood for civilized behavior, the practice of an alien, 'pagan' culture further consolidated the Indians' social isolation. It was under such hostile conditions that Indians first established their roots in Trinidad.

Indenture not only pitted the East Indian against the majority Black population, but a host of related factors also conspired to symbolically situate the East Indian as the 'outsider' to the incipient nation of Trinidad. When East Indians first arrived in 1845, they were latecomers to Trinidadian colonial society. By that time, the society had thoroughly creolized, with an elaborate system based on race and color structuring social relations among people of different ancestries. In certain respects, nineteenth-century Trinidad conformed to the classic three-tier social structure: Africans and their locally born descendants, the majority population, formed the base; people of mixed descent and 'free-Blacks' comprised a middle tier; and those of European descent (British, French, and Spanish) were situated at the apex. This three-tier structure altered with the arrival of Indians. Indeed, according to Brereton, in colonies like Trinidad, Guyana and Surinam, Indians were distinguished as a fourth tier (Brereton 1993: 36). The material, social structural, and cultural factors that relegated Indians to a fourth tier situated them symbolically outside the core of Trinidadian society.

The legal status of indenture restricted the mobility of East Indians and minimized their interaction with the wider society, thus intensifying their social and spatial isolation. On arrival in Trinidad, East Indians were almost immediately banished to the sugar estates. Planters also developed legal mechanisms such as contracts, vagrancy laws, and fines to further curtail East Indian mobility. Indentured laborers were prohibited from leaving the plantations unless they carried an official pass, and even Indians who had completed their term of 'industrial residence' had to carry a 'free paper' to prove they were indeed 'free.' Living conditions for the Indians were similar to those under slavery – wretched. Moreover, as Indians were perceived as sojourners, little was done to improve their circumstances or integrate them into the wider society through education or other institutional mechanisms.

The ideological race-making projects which produced East Indians as 'outsiders' to Trinidad were equally formidable. Trinidad's colonial racial order was founded on the distinction between 'pure' races, which characterized the Old World, and

the 'mixing' of races, which characterized the New World. 'Mixing' was a condition specific to Trinidad and, by extension, to the West Indies as well (Segal 1993). The notion that to be West Indian was to be indeed 'mixed' and that 'pure' races belonged outside of Trinidad constituted a major ideological axiom through which East Indians came to be defined as 'outsiders.' In these colonial racial caricatures, East Indians were simply deemed 'unmixable.' This idea was based on Orientalist understanding of the Indian as a person saturated with an ancient (albeit inferior) culture which resisted mixing, and was thereby always rooted in the Old World. The African, in contrast, was seen as lacking an ancestral civilization, and was therefore in a state of imputed 'cultural nakedness' that allowed 'mixing.' This state became privileged as the necessary condition for creating novel constellations native to the New World (Segal 1993; Munasinghe 1997).

The trope of 'mixing' became crucial in casting a new narrative of indigeneity realized in the concept of 'Creole.' The most revealing exclusion is the one that refuses East Indian entry into the category 'Creole' – a word broadly meaning 'local' or 'West Indian,' signifying native status in the New World (Bolland 1992). The term Creole is applied to all persons of White and Black ancestry that were represented in the color spectrum. East Indians were and are not considered to be a possible ingredient in the Creole mix. If mixing was the principle through which 'nativeness' was defined, then to be 'native' or 'local' was to be Creole. Denied the capacity to mix and denied social recognition⁵ of their local connections to other ancestral groups, East Indians never became Creoles. In fact, one could argue that the terms 'East Indian' and 'Creole' developed in opposition. Even today, East Indians are not designated as Creole. Indeed, this exclusion from Creole status had significant implications for the group's positioning vis-à-vis the incipient nation during decolonization, when Trinidadian identity became firmly anchored to Creole identity.

The National Project of Race Making

From the 1930s, political developments that augured decolonization in Trinidad went hand in hand with certain cultural alignments. In Trinidad, the Creole middle classes 'discovered' and appropriated Creole lower-class cultural patterns. In their search for 'roots' and a source of inspiration, middle-class artists turned to the formerly denigrated folk culture, spearheading interest in and recognition of the culture of the man on the street. Established Black lower-class cultural forms like carnival, steelband, and calypso assumed the stature of national symbols, though these forms were somewhat domesticized and institutionalized to suit middle class sensibilities.⁶

⁵ In practice, there was ample evidence of East Indians mixing with other groups, but it is the absence of social recognition that is significant here.

⁶ There is substantial literature on this topic.

While Creole middle classes were mobilizing Creole culture in anticipation of independence, East Indians' public activity reinscribed their status as bearers of a foreign culture. Indeed, during the postwar period, Indian culture in Trinidad became increasingly identified with India. During the centennial celebrations of Indian Arrival Day⁷ in Trinidad in 1945, leaders referred to 'mother India' as their source of inspiration and vowed to preserve Indian culture and their community. Visits by a host of Indian missionaries and cultural performers generated new interest, especially among the East Indian middle class, in cultivating connections with India. In other words, both Creoles and East Indians were actively fashioning their respective cultures during the postwar period, but the social and political significance of the two trajectories were significantly different. While Creole culture gained greater legitimation through its incorporation into the nationalist agenda, East Indian culture (with its emphasis on 'mother India'), was increasingly perceived as a threat to the emerging nation. The particulars of Caribbean history, in concert with the divergent trajectories of Creole and East Indian cultures, set the limits and possibilities of narrating the Trinidadian nation.

Caribbean historicity also posed a peculiar dilemma for the aspiring nations in the region. The almost total annihilation of its native peoples, and its status as an extractive colony, meant that former subordinate ancestral groups had to create narratives of belonging which were not contingent on autochthony. But on what basis can one group claim native status when historical memory dictates Old World origins for all ancestral groups? Narrating the nation in the Caribbean context called for a reformulation of the origins and the concepts of Creole. Indeed, creolization would become central to this new narrative of origins. In this narrative, only the products of creolization – the very embodiment of mixture – could legitimately claim New World origins and therefore indigenous status. Creole was about inventing new identities out of many old identities. Ironically, it was precisely the Africans alleged state of cultural nakedness that allowed them to emerge as culture creators in the New World. This putative lack of culture was harnessed and transformed by nation-builders into Trinidadian attributes of dynamism, creativity, and multiplicity. Since Creole was projected in opposition to East Indian identity in the Trinidadian racial economy, the collapse of Trinidadian identity to Creole during the different phases of nation-building carried the disturbing implication that East Indians were not really Trinidadians. The native privilege accorded to Afro-Trinidadians has historically legitimized their claims to the state, both prior to and since independence in 1962. In contrast, East Indian bids for the state had, until recently, been impeded by their symbolic representation as 'outsiders' within the nation. As late as 1990, the political mood suggested that an East Indian as Prime Minister was 'unthinkable.' But in November 1995, the unthinkable happened, with the East Indian dominated coalition United National Congress (UNC) coming to power with Basdeo

⁷ On 30 May 1845, the first Indians arrived on the island. The date is marked each year by Indian Arrival Day.

Panday, an East Indian, serving as Prime Minister. The UNC lost power to the Afro-Trinidadian PNM in 2002, before the People's Partnership coalition came to power under Kamla Persad-Bissessar in May 2010. While Indo-Trinidadians securing state power is significant, it does not necessarily suggest symbolic equivalence with Afro-Trinidadians in regard to cultural citizenship. Indeed, the anxiety created by Prime Minister Persad-Bissessar's gesture illustrates this continuing asymmetry. The ensuing exploration of Indo-Trinidadian efforts to redefine the nation is less concerned with making a causal connection between such efforts and the subsequent ascendance of Indo-Trinidadian political parties than with analyzing the particular style in which Indo-Trinidadians have framed their cultural and political struggle for belonging. In their efforts to redefine terms of belonging to the nation of Trinidad, East Indians have strikingly deployed the comparative logic of the culturally naked African and the culturally saturated Indian. I turn to this now.

Contesting the Nation

In October 1989 I heard a lecture on "The History, Life and Contribution to the Development of Trinidad and Tobago of East Indians" by prominent Indo-Trinidadian lawyer Suren Capildeo.⁸ It was the fifth in a series of government-sponsored lectures entitled "Let Us Discover Ourselves" to commemorate the 500th Anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the New World. Unlike the previous four lectures, which related the experiences of Amerindians, Syrian-Lebanese, Chinese, and Europeans, Capildeo's lecture took a dramatic turn and provoked an explosion of rhetoric on race relations. Newspapers ran headlines such as "Bacchanal at City Hall," with editorials chiding the audience Trinidadians for their unseemly behavior. When some realized that I had witnessed the fiasco, they urged me to relate the story and even borrowed my taped recording to figure out "what all de fuss was about."

Capildeo began with a warning:

The regulars, let me caution you, this is not the usual lecture you have heard. This is a horror story. ... Now let us consider, you and I, the Indian. An extraordinary specimen of the species *Homo Sapiens*. A remarkable survivor. You are looking at one, a real true, true Indian. ... *We are like no other race. We are different. Indians are a world unto themselves. We regard ourselves as the eternal people.* ... We have been and are witness to a continuous unbroken thread of Indian civilization, which began before the memory of man. We

⁸ Suren Capildeo is the first cousin of the author V. S. Naipaul and the nephew of Rudranath Capildeo, who assumed leadership of the Opposition (Democratic Labor Party) in 1960. The DLP was formed in 1956 by a merger of the PDP (the largely Hindu-based party), the Party of Political Progressive Groups (POPPG), and the Trinidad Labor Party (TLP).

have customs, we recite prayers, we do things Indian, as our ancestors have done thousands of years before, you say, Christ set foot on this earth. So when you look at an Indian in Trinidad, or wherever, you just remember that. An Indian is no ordinary being. He belongs to a special race. (Emphasis added)

Capildeo then depicted the history of his people as one checkered by successive waves of conquering invaders, beginning with the Greeks and culminating with the British. Despite their history of victimization, he declared that

the Indian mind does not submit to slavery. You cannot enslave the Indian mind. ... That is our legacy. That is our heritage. Indians do not seek refuge behind the skirts of indentureship. That is history. History has its lessons. But we must learn and move on. The Indian experience is not to blame the Arkatiah and the Empire. It is to absorb, assimilate and create.

He argued that the Indian saved Trinidad from impending ruin after Emancipation, when Europe, America, and Africa failed to come to the rescue. Capildeo then described the East-Indian experience, emphasizing the hardship, ridicule, and discrimination the Indians faced, before discussing their achievements and contribution to agriculture:

The Indians ... began to change the face of this land. Defying all efforts to confine them to the cane estates, Indians began in true frontier style to open up undeveloped areas of Trinidad. ... By the time immigration ended [in 1917], Indians in Trinidad owned one-fifth of the total land owned and cultivated in Trinidad. An extraordinary feat, remarkable more so when you realize that chattel who were imported to plant cane ended up by being land owning cane farmers themselves.

Capildeo showed slides of early Indian migrants whose stature, adornment, and poise explicitly questioned the stereotype of the indentured laborer, the barefoot, meagerly-clad, illiterate 'Coolie.' He repeatedly stressed the contribution of Indians to Trinidad with comments like

above all, the Indians had brought with them the stabilizing factors of a strong family system, thrift, a penchant for savings and enthusiasm for hard work and a burning zeal for education. The Indians have not only rescued Trinidad in no uncertain manner, but have (also) laid the foundation for its future transition into a modern model nation-state.

Toward the end, he discussed the increasing alienation and frustration experienced by the Indo-Trinidadians:

Throughout the tenure of his history here, the Indian has been made to feel alienated, that he does not belong. ... That this is a Black country for the Black Caribbean man. *God knows how much longer it will take to accept us as part of this nation.* ... By 1990 there will be an Indian majority in this nation still believing and behaving as a minority. If you want to dramatically consider the impact that the Indians have on this country just imagine the scenario if the Indians were to cease all criminal activity, drug related and otherwise, withdraw their money from the Banks, cease doing business, leave the fields, stop producing food and dairy products, withdraw from all services. ... Imagine the country then – top heavy with Central Bank and statutory bodies; filled with form but empty of substance. Law and order will collapse. Bankruptcy will be the norm. Starvation will be your daily wage. Life here will cease. (Emphasis added)

He then offered an alternative to this gloomy scenario:

But really, seriously, what of the future? I, me, make bold to say that it shall be a great and glorious future. That given an equal chance the Indian community will take this country to heights unimagined.

At the end of his oration Capildeo received a thunderous applause from the predominantly Indo-Trinidadian audience. It soon became evident to the audience that Capildeo was making a significant deviation from what the establishment had had in mind when they originally sponsored this series of talks. The ambience was at once both electrifying and tense, punctuated by the comic relief supplied by Trinidadians' flair for *Picong*.⁹ The 'bacchanal' erupted during question time, with people representing the whole spectrum of the Trinidadian 'rainbow' (those of African, Indian, Chinese, and mixed race ancestries) patiently waiting for their turn to speak. Many, even Indians, pointed to the bias in Capildeo's speech. The turning point came when an Afro-Trinidadian political scientist made a lengthy speech accusing Capildeo of racism. The scholar put forward an alternative view of Trinidad history in which the introduction of indentured laborers retarded the development of an independent peasantry. Capildeo supporters sprang to their feet, grabbing the microphone from the speaker. The hall erupted into chaos, forcing the organizers of the event to declare an end to the evening.

This event provides an appropriate point of entry to examine the dynamics of the political and cultural struggle waged by Indo-Trinidadians to reconfigure the Trinidadian nation. Rhetorically, Capildeo identified East Indians as the propellers behind the modern nation-state, anchoring their contribution to the nation in their culture. In this rhetorical move, he sought to undermine the projected dichotomy

⁹ A Creole style of speech conveying satire and irreverence, expressive of an attitude that refuses to be impressed by anything or anybody.

between Indian ethnic and Trinidadian national identities by placing the very particularism attributed to Indian culture at the core of the nation. Capildeo's effort to insert East Indian culture into the national symbolic space was characteristic of the broader cultural struggle waged by Indo-Trinidadians during the late 1980s and 1990s. In this period, both Indo-Trinidadian moderate and radical cultural activists, religious and political leaders were united in challenging the hegemonic Creole representations of the nation. They undermined the notion that steelband, calypso, and carnival alone symbolized the national culture of Trinidad and Tobago and argued for the inclusion of East Indian cultural forms such as *Chutney* music and *Tassa* (an East Indian form of drumming).

Indo-Trinidadian cultural activists challenged the notion that their ethnic identity was antithetical to their national identity by changing the culture-history referent¹⁰ of the nation. They argued for the inclusion of Indian elements alongside hegemonic Afro-Caribbean forms. In doing so, they aimed to become a legitimate part of the nation not by redefining what it meant to be *Indian*, but by redefining what it meant to be *Trinidadian*. Despite their seemingly radical stance, the assumptions underlying the strategy reproduced, rather than challenged, colonial discourses about the nature of 'African' and 'Indian' culture. The strategies used to combat the Indian identity dilemma rested on a premise that resonated with earlier colonial discourses that posited an essential difference between Indian and Afro-Caribbean cultures and their respective identities. This approach therefore called for equal representation of heterogeneous elements at the national level, a multicultural or 'tossed salad' vision of the nation, where each unit preserves its identity, as opposed to stressing a common core of creolized Caribbean values and orientations, which would be the Callaloo¹¹-metaphor of the nation.

Capildeo's depiction of the Indo-Trinidadian saga provided a spectacular myth for his people. It incorporated all the essential ingredients of a nation-building charter, including the claim of belonging to a pure, ancestral race. Capildeo's portrayal of the Indian as unique, as the bearers of an ancient, rich and essential culture was an overt attempt to create a myth of homogeneity out of the heterogeneous East Indian population. Capildeo thereby challenged the state and the nation to recognize the immutable fact of difference between Afro- and Indo-Trinidadian, thereby denying the assimilability of the 'Indian' into the nation. It was this difference, rather than sameness, which had become the essential element of the Indo-Trinidadian vision

¹⁰ Through its deployment of specific cultures and histories to represent the nation, nation-building invariably privileges certain human-made relations and features over others. Trouillot: "In a fundamental way, 'nation' has everything to do with culture, for culture and history are its sole constant referents. Claims of nationhood always imply a reference to some past and to the cultural present eventuating from that past. This reference is always a fiction, but only to the extent that all cultural constructs are somewhat fictitious. Cultural constructs always privilege *some* human-made relationships and features" (1990: 24, emphasis added).

¹¹ Callaloo is a popular local dish in the Caribbean in which a number of distinct ingredients are boiled down to a homogenous mush.

of the nation. Moreover, he exalted India's apparently great civilization and undermined the popular notion that only the dregs of Indian society set sail to Trinidad. In other words, Capildeo's strategy mobilized the racial dichotomy between Creole and East Indian to displace Creole as the sole referent for the Trinidadian nation.

Yet, if that was all Capildeo inferred, the 'bacchanal' would probably not have erupted. But Capildeo's depiction of the Indian story was tacitly juxtaposed to the Afro-Trinidadian story, demonstrating once again how comparison is used in national race-making projects. In his speech, Capildeo implicitly engaged the Afro-Trinidadians in dialogue. His caricatures of both groups drew on stereotypes that emerged during the early indenture period. Consider, for example, his characterization of East Indians as "pioneer" cultivators: Whereas land policies combining local government and planter interests had been instrumental in the ultimate consolidation of the Indians in the rural sector¹² and the Afro-Trinidadians in the urban centers, he chose to downplay these structural elements, instead invoking a 'natural will' explanation to account for the East Indian dominance of agriculture. Today, Indo-Trinidadians highlight this contribution as a sign of their superior worth as citizens. Indeed, some Afro-Trinidadians resent the image of the Indian as cultivator, as it diminishes their own contribution to Trinidadian society, both prior to and following indenture. After all, to claim a greater contribution to national development is also to stake a greater claim for the nation's patrimony. In this context then, Indian claims that they saved the colony from ruin and became the nation's primary food producers constitute a major point of contention, as clearly demonstrated by the uproar greeting the suggestion that East Indians had retarded the growth of an independent peasantry.

Drawing on popular stereotypes that essentialize 'Indian' and 'African' mentalities and behaviors, Capildeo challenged Afro-Trinidadian definitions of the legitimate social order and the authentic national subject. In doing so, he trivialized the Afro-Trinidadian story and created a new and particular kind of moral discourse. Capildeo did move beyond a mere discussion of racialized differences by also (and albeit indirectly) establishing a commonality between East Indian and Afro-Trinidadian suffering. Following his glorification of the Indian race, he focused on the suffering Indians (like Afro-Trinidadians) had endured under conquering invaders and later in Trinidad. He poignantly depicted the suffering Indians underwent in developing Trinidad by claiming "the life blood of this nation pulses through the Indian." He was thus attesting to the fact that Indians, too, had "bled for the nation." These dis-

¹² The colonial government provided the first major incentive for Indians to settle permanently in Trinidad. In 1869 a law was passed whereby 'free Indians' could exchange their return passage for initially ten, and later, five acres of Crown Land. Indeed, "between 1885 and 1912, 89,222 acres were sold or granted to Indians" (Brereton 1985:28). Many Indians chose to remain in Trinidad after their indenture had expired, forming a vigorous peasant class, so that by the 1890s villages of 'free Indians' began to emerge. Such an option was not made available to slaves after emancipation, when land policies made it prohibitively expensive for them to become small proprietors. Fearing a depletion of their labor supply, the planter class had been determined to prevent the laboring population of freed Blacks from becoming small farmers.

ursive strategies provided the necessary moral capital to claim a stake in the nation, as for Indo-Trinidadians, the need to build moral capital was all the more urgent because Afro-Trinidadians had long owned the title of victims *par excellence*. Thus, the emphasis on East Indian suffering sought to undermine the notion that victim status was an exclusively Afro-Trinidadian privilege.

However, Capildeo's discourse on suffering also reiterated essentialized differences. He cleverly counterpoised his illustrations of East Indian suffering to East Indian contributions to the nation. This mix overtly challenged (or at least minimized) Afro-Trinidadian suffering and contributions. Consider, for example, Capildeo's portrayal of East Indian contributions to agriculture. While he did not explicitly deny the Afro-Trinidadian contributions to agriculture, he contrasted this to the East Indian contribution. He did so by arguing that, despite the numerous obstacles, East Indians had pursued frontier-style cultivation until they had gone from being "those who were imported to plant cane [into] ... land owning cane farmers."

In strategically associating suffering with contribution, Capildeo drew on the common belief that Afro-Trinidadians used slavery (suffering) as the excuse for their alleged failures. More importantly, in associating suffering with contribution, he sought to undermine another popular belief – that Afro-Trinidadians are 'owed' rewards for their historical subjugation. After all, Capildeo's aim was to show that East Indians had secured and preserved phenomenal gains in the new society *despite* their suffering. Thus, the message he conveyed was that while East Indians had also suffered, they had made a positive contribution to the nation, without using their suffering as an excuse for failure. Indians had succeeded where Afro-Trinidadians had failed because of innate Indian characteristics: "Indians do not seek refuge behind the skirts of indentureship. That is history. We must learn and move on." The moral discourse both connected East Indians with Afro-Trinidadians through the trope of suffering, and distanced Indians from them through the trope of material uplift. In combining suffering with material success as a rhetorical strategy, Capildeo sought to gain the upper hand on the issue of moral capital – that is, which group has both suffered most *and* contributed most to the nation. Such a two-point argument was crucial, as even Indo-Trinidadians would be hesitant to claim greater suffering in comparison to those enslaved. In other words, it was by tethering 'success despite suffering' that East Indians gained the moral upper hand.

Capildeo's zeal in portraying the Indian contribution and suffering was a direct challenge to the predominant Afro-Caribbean ideology of 'racial paramountcy,' in which Afro-Trinidadians had the moral right to rule because none had suffered for or contributed more to the nation. Direct attacks on the invisible Other were encoded in comments such as "the Indian mind does not submit to slavery," "Indians do not hide behind the skirts of indenture," and his prognosis about Trinidad's future if the Indians were to leave. Of course, these attacks also drew symbolic traction from entrenched racial caricatures dichotomizing Indian and African.

Despite Capildeo's and his supporters' emphatic claims that the Indian was an essentially different being from the Creole, the fiasco at City Hall – with its impas-

sioned and humorous exchanges – rather served to underscore the extent of creolization that the Indian population had undergone. Indeed, many aspects of Indo-Trinidadian life, both in public and in private arenas, illustrate such a creole sensibility. Yet due to the ideological flattening of Creole with Afro-Creole, there is an almost in-built resistance to formally recognizing Indo-Trinidadian forms of creolization. As I have written elsewhere (Munasinghe 2001), the fluidity and multiplicity of Indo-Trinidadian practices do not reflect the acculturation into Afro-Creole cultural forms that conventional understandings of creolization would imply. Instead, they reflect processes of *interculturalization*, which theories of creolization eloquently speak to: the simultaneous enactment of multiplicity drawing from a number of idealized cultural models. The multiplicity is evident in the Hindu weddings I witnessed in Cambio, a predominantly East Indian village situated in the heart of the sugar belt in Central Trinidad.

In Cambio, I was intrigued by the way villagers moved so easily among various culturally demarcated ‘spaces’ – movement not conceived here as linear temporality nor space to mean literal space. Rather, the wedding activities I witnessed those Sunday afternoons seemed to embody diverse cultural strains – that is, cultural practices that are *ideally*¹³ understood as East Indian, Creole, European, or even modern – *simultaneously*. Brides would sometimes wear a western type veil with a yellow sari for the initial part of the ceremony, but always, before departing to the in-laws’ house, would change into an elaborate white wedding gown. At the end of the marriage ceremony, grooms would also change into western attire. At the bride’s home across the cane fields, a hired group of Indian classical singers would perform, or Indian film music would blare in competition with the calypso and American pop music pounding from the cars parked on the road side. While the women and little children would sit diligently, observing the ritual and helping out with the preparations for the feast, men would invariably hang out where liquor is in ample supply, either at the adjacent ‘snackettes’ (bars) at the road side, or at the neighbor’s house. Just as men had found creative ways to circumvent the prohibition of alcohol during Hindu ritual events, villagers also managed to get around the taboo of eating ‘fresh’ (meat, usually duck, chicken or goat) by arranging for the neighbor to prepare taboo foods. Guests, including my husband and I, were periodically invited next door for shots of rum and generous portions of deliciously ‘bitter’ (spicy hot) duck curry. As soon as the pundit leaves, the dancing begins. Men, by now intoxicated on rum or beer, usually begin ‘wining’ (a sexually suggestive Afro-Caribbean style of dancing involving the gyration of hips), and nearly always, a few ‘bold’ women join them. The spectacle of women ‘wining’ in public – a practice traditionally considered taboo, but which is increasingly violated in today’s Trinidad – is usually greeted with embarrassed shrieks

¹³ For an excellent ethnographic analysis of how Guyanese peoples’ behavior can be interpreted through a linguistic model of the Creole continuum, one which emphasizes the simultaneous enactment of multiplicity while drawing on various idealized ‘pure’ cultures, see Drummond (1980).

of laughter and amusement. Invariably, a few men and women look on disdainfully and condemn the “vulgarity” of the “ladies getting on.”

At any given moment, these weddings drew upon a number of diverse cultural patterns that Trinidadians cognitively associate with idealized cultural spaces – that is, with cosmopolitan, western, Afro-Trinidadian and Indian norms and values. To reduce this complexity to a mere instance of acculturation is to deny East Indians the creative disposition to combine effectively diverse cultural strains in the process of becoming East Indians in an irrevocably Trinidadian or even Caribbean fashion that attests to their very creolization. The symbolics of the Trinidadian nation, in which Creoles metonymize creolization and, thereby, national belonging, resist recognizing this intercultural space of creole entanglement that includes East Indians. Whether for colonial or national imperatives, race-making projects in Trinidad have been built on distinguishing the Indian from the African. Today, in a nation founded on difference rather than creole (see footnote 3 for explanation of uses of ‘Creole’ and ‘creole’) commonality, these distinctions remain central in shaping Indo-Trinidadian strategies for inclusion.

Acknowledgements

A version of this chapter was presented at the conference “India Beyond India,” held at the University of Göttingen in Germany from 24–26 May 2012. I am deeply grateful to the organizers of the conference, Elfriede Hermann and Roman Loimeier, for inviting me. I would also like to thank the other scholars from all parts of the world, many of whom I met for the first time, for the exciting conversations about the many “Indias beyond India.” This chapter has benefited from these conversations and from the thoughtful comments by Elfriede Hermann and Roman Loimeier.

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5 Dilemmas of Belonging in Fiji, Part I: Constitutions, Coups, and Indo-Fijian Citizenship

Martha Kaplan

Introduction: Towards a Historical Anthropology of Dilemmas

Postcolonial nation-states and democratic electoral systems were meant to enable self-determination. Yet they have not resolved dilemmas of belonging. The Indo-Fijians, descendants of Indians who came to Fiji in the 19th century labor diaspora, are currently a minority in the nation-state which they share with ethnic Fijians, descendants of Pacific Islanders resident in the islands. This chapter describes the twentieth century history of how Indo-Fijian anticolonial spokesmen fought for independent Fiji and national belonging with a focus on ‘common roll’ electoral rights. But Fiji’s constitution at independence in 1970 was unusual for its continuation of implacable colonial race categories, its refusal of common roll, and its weighting against Indo-Fijian political representation. And then, a series of coups were mounted by ethnic Fijian military leaders, not Indo-Fijians. Many Indo-Fijians have chosen emigration when possible, seeking self-determination by diaspora. Soberly, this chapter considers the history of plans for Fiji’s democracy embodied in constitutions, elections and other political rituals since 1970, the prospects for self-determination via democracy in Fiji, and the conditions for national belonging for people of Indian descent in Fiji.

In the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, across the globe, people have faced a common global situation: utopian hopes of the self-determining nation-state, within a post-World War II framework of states and institutions as the way out of

colonial domination, have been unsettled by “failure of the nation to come to its own” (Guha 1988: 43), by global dynamics pushing and pulling at the framework itself (Appadurai 1996), and by realizations of diverse potentials of democratic institutions in practice (Tambiah 1996). Insistence on the contradictions inherent in social orders of Marxist social theory might suggest a set of inevitable crises provoking new stages. But the kinds of contradictions of social systems, and their outcomes in peoples’ lives, are far from predictable. If we take seriously the egalitarian premises that anticolonial activists fought for, an anthropology of dilemmas leads us to sober consideration of what variously and less predictably may happen when egalitarian possibilities of democracy run into, or even generate, inequalities, especially in social fields rife with colonial insistence on racial otherness (Kelly and Kaplan 2001a, 2001c). Scholarly thinking about dilemmas of belonging in the Indian diaspora generally begin with India – dilemmas of leaving heritage connections behind. But here, let us focus on the other side of the coin: Belonging to what? Looking forward to what?

Let us consider new ways to respect the history of anticolonial nationalist visions, especially Gandhian explorations of independence and interdependence, while we also understand the often disappointing outcomes. These are not new challenges for political and historical anthropology.¹ Anthropology complicated the proposal that cultural orders are unchanging templates for individual experience when Ruth Benedict discussed dilemmas of virtue in her 1946 *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. Indeed, Benedict considered both individuals and the transformations of a sweep of Japanese political history in relation to dilemmas that are experienced individually, but culturally oriented, culturally distinctive but highly dynamic. Stanley Tambiah, scholar of dialectical tensions in the sweep of Asian histories, brings a similar focus on systemic possibilities in postcolonial states. In his 1996 *Leveling Crowds*, he considers the dilemmas of democracies and draws our attention to the phenomenon of leveling, in which – under certain conditions – members of actual or potential electoral majorities nonetheless seek to dispossess others of rights or privileges, real or imagined.

This chapter provides a brief overview of Fiji’s wider multi-ethnic colonial history, and then considers national belonging through focus on three historical periods of Indo-Fijian experience of citizenship and democracy. First, in the colonial and decolonizing era up to 1970, Indo-Fijians were at the forefront of Fiji’s anti-colonial struggles. Indentured sugar cane workers and free immigrants to Fiji looked to Gandhian leadership and tactics to challenge the British and work for ‘common roll’ electoral self-representation. Simultaneously, in the constituting of citizenship, long-term colonial racism deliberately set the stage for uneven belonging through citizenship in independent Fiji.

¹ Dilemmas of social and policy sciences more broadly have also been considered insightfully, see Rittel and Webber (1973), who in the 1970s discussed challenges facing social planners along dimensions of goal formation, problem definition, and consideration of equity and justice.

Second, from independence in 1970 until 2006, democratic electoral possibilities were shaped and skewed by colonial 'race' categories. 1970 Independence images of a 'three-legged stool' envisioned national leadership by ethnic Fijian chiefly elites and interdependence of ethnic Fijian commoner landowners (83% of Fiji's land is owned by descendants of indigenes), with Indo-Fijians as economic backbone of the sugar industry, and the British crown as guarantor of the parliamentary system. But at independence, to participate as national citizens, Fiji's citizens had to identify themselves 'racially' (as the colonial British termed it) for 'communal' (i.e. not 'common') voting rolls, as 'Fijians,' 'Indians, or 'General Electors.' The complexities of ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian visions of belonging were channeled into a particularly persistent and unequal set of racist and 'race' categories. Thus colonial contradictions pervaded the post-colonial belonging, creating a political climate in which multiple Fijian ethnonationalist coups took place. In a hopeful moment in 1997, led by a historically and globally aware constitutional commission, Fiji citizens, including Fiji's Indo-Fijians (by then under 44% of the population), contributed to the design of a new electoral system that was meant both to acknowledge historical community ties and to lead to a common feeling of belonging as citizens. But in 2000, another coup toppled the multi-ethnic government elected under the 1997 constitution. In 2006, the leader of Fiji's military seized power and abrogated the constitution.

Third, thus, in 2013 common roll was instituted, but by a military government. To be clear, this coup was neither led by, nor on behalf of, Indo-Fijians. Nor is the current regime explicitly Fijian ethnonationalist (although the military forces and leadership are still overwhelmingly ethnic Fijian). Instead, it came to power in a military coup similar to other military coups across the globe, in which the goals of military rule supplant other political stances. The regime propounded a modernizing, 'anti-corruption' message and imposed military rule, claiming provocation, as colonial governments did, by 'disorder and disaffection.' This chapter will thus end with questions, rather than conclusions, about the potential for national belonging in Fiji.²

² This chapter draws upon previous publications, many co-authored with John D. Kelly (e.g. Kelly and Kaplan 1999, 2001b, 2001c, 2004, 2007, and Kaplan and Kelly 1994, 1999, 2017). While my historical and contemporary research initially focused only on anticolonial and postcolonial ethnic Fijian experience (Kaplan 1995, 2007, 2011), collaboration with John D. Kelly has shaped my appreciation of the relation of the Indo-Fijian experience to global South Asian and decolonizing culture and history. Touchstones for the understanding of these histories are the works of Bernard Cohn (1987, 1996, 2002 (with Teri Silvio), 2013) and Stanley Tambiah (1996). Brij V. Lal (1983, 1988, 1992, [1997] 2011a, 2011b) is the author of a body of foundational political histories of Fiji which focus on Indo-Fijian experience. The work of Marshall Sahlins (1978, 1985, 2005) is crucial for an understanding of *longue durée* ethnic Fijian history and history-making.

Narratives of Fijian Colonial History

The colonial experience was very different for Pacific Islander descended peoples and for Indian descended people in Fiji.³ Fijians resident in the islands when Europeans arrived in the late 1700s were organized in competing local kingdoms in the coastal and island areas, especially the largest island, Viti Levu, and in less hierarchical polities in the interior. Led by King Cakobau, most Fijians converted to Christianity in 1854. In 1874, Cakobau and a group of high chiefs ‘gave’ the islands to Queen Victoria. This founding moment, and the document known as the Deed of Cession, can be understood in Fijian cultural terms as the installation of a king or chief, in which the leader is given rule over the people but not the land itself. Unusually for a colony, ethnic Fijians were administered through an early version of ‘indirect rule’ and ethnic Fijians retained over 83 percent of land, registered to kin groups and inalienable. The colonial alliance solidified the power of coastal Christian chiefs and their kingdoms, while dispossessing other Fijian groups (Kaplan 1995; Kaplan and Kelly 1999). The colonial administration set up a sugar cane industry, but did not force ethnic Fijians to work in it.

Indians from British colonial India came to Fiji mostly as short-term indentured workers to work on British sugar plantations – part of the wide diaspora of Indian laborers in the colonial era (Tinker 1974). They called themselves Girmityas, from the indenture contracts they signed (Kelly 1988b, 1999, 2004a; Kelly and Kaplan 2008; Lal 1983; Sanadhya 1991). Their experience in colonial plantation Fiji was of an exploitative racial hierarchy. Those who chose to remain in Fiji moved away from plantations to other occupations. Indenture across empire was ended as part of Gandhi’s and the Indian National Congress’s first global success. Indeed, the memoir *My Twenty-one Years in the Fiji Islands* (Sanadhya 1991) was an important polemic in Congress’s anti-indenture advocacy. Fiji’s colonial sugar industry was transformed into a system of share-cropping by Indo-Fijian tenant farmers, on land rented from ethnic Fijians. Other migrants to Fiji from India included ‘free’ (not indentured) people, including pandits, business people, and, importantly, lawyers sent by, or with ties to, the nationalists in India (Kelly 1992).

³ The first group often call themselves ‘iTaukei,’ which can be translated as people of the land, or owners of the land, or the common people in relation to the chief. Throughout the colonial era and until recently, this group were called ‘Fijians’ – an unmarked term. In the late twentieth century there was a scholarly and activist trend to use the term ‘ethnic Fijians’ to create a parallel to the marked ‘Indo-Fijians.’ The Indians of Fiji were, initially, from India, and were called ‘Indians’ by the British. ‘Indian,’ as opposed to ‘Fijian,’ was a common usage in Fiji throughout the twentieth century, enshrined in electoral citizenship rolls, as this chapter describes. In the twentieth century, some activists and scholars used the term ‘Indo-Fijian’ to emphasize belonging. Thus, typically in late twentieth century Fiji, ‘Fijian’ meant indigene-descended Fijians, and ‘Indian’ or ‘Indo-Fijian’ meant Indian descended Fijians. In the 1980s, the Fiji Labour Party proposed using ‘Fijian’ to apply to all Fiji citizens. As will be discussed, the 2009 Constitution refers to all Fiji citizens as ‘Fijians.’

From initial Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, onwards, colonial officials privileged ethnic Fijians, establishing an elaborate system of what in later colonies came to be called ‘indirect rule.’⁴ And backwater Fiji officials resented colonial officials with experience in India. For example, as John Kelly has chronicled, J.R. Pearson, who had spent 30 years in India, clashed with Dr. Victor McGusty, a Fiji-trained colonial officer: Pearson operated with a social evolutionary ‘progress’ model, finding Indians to have ‘progressed’ to a point where they had a role to play in governance, both in India and in Fiji. McGusty employed fixed ‘racial’ categories. Insisting that he was protecting ethnic Fijians from Indian threat, he defended European pre-eminence (Kelly 1991: 140–165). In sum, throughout the colonial period, the British in Fiji regarded ethnic Fijians as their allies in the colony, especially ethnic Fijian chiefs. They regarded Indians as necessary laborers in Fiji, and denigrated their aspirations for belonging.

Visions of Self-Determination in Decolonizing Fiji⁵

Throughout the 20th century, Indo-Fijians led Fiji towards independence. Indentured sugar plantation workers, their descendants, and other Indian migrants followed, and sometimes influenced, Gandhian movements to end British colonialism in India, and to establish independence throughout empire. Representation through common roll was a key goal. For example, in 1929 Vishnu Deo, a prominent Arya Samaji⁶ and editor of *Fiji Samachar*, was a successful candidate for an ‘Indian’ seat on the Legislative Council.

Vishnu Deo argued for a common roll voting system as a matter of equal citizenship, fairness and justice. He denied allegations that Indians sought to dominate Fiji or make it an Indian colony, noting that the majority of official members over elected members on the Legislative Council precluded Indian dominance regardless of how many Indian voters could meet the standard of the Indian electoral roll. He argued that what Indians wanted was freedom (*swaraj*) for India and in Fiji, “a fair field and no favour.” He promised “co-

⁴ It is important to note the diverse ways in which ethnic Fijians encountered the colonial British. Whereas an alliance of Christian, coastal chiefs, and colonial officials developed, from the 1860s on there were also dynamic anticolonial movements, often associated with the less hierarchical polities of the mountainous interior or the western side of Viti Levu island (see Kaplan 1990, 1995). Note as well the multi-ethnic appeal of the Fiji Labour Party.

⁵ This section draws on Kelly (1988a, 1991, 1993, 1995b, 2004b), Kaplan (1988, 1998, 2004, 2008), and on Kelly and Kaplan (2001c).

⁶ The Arya Samaj was founded in Bombay in 1875 by Dayanand Saraswati. It advocated reform of Hinduism by return to Vedic principles, consistent with (western) science. It was anticolonial, counter-Christian, and focused on Hindu uplift. Arya Samaj missionaries were the first Hindu missionaries to Fiji (Kelly 1991: 121–139).

operation” in Fiji but demanded “the full and unrestricted rights of British Citizenship.” (Kelly 1991: 145)

World War II saw the end of the British Empire and the beginning of the UN era of nation-states. In Fiji, the war was a watershed, bringing into focus and contrast the differing colonial pasts and different visions of the future of ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Ethnic Fijian chiefs envisioned a system that kept them at the center of political power, and a world in which aristocratic power remained a necessary political form. Indo-Fijians, like the Indian nationalists, were more attuned to impending decolonization and democratization. Ethnic Fijians fought on behalf of the Empire during the war. Indo-Fijians followed Gandhi in refusing to fight for an imperial system that classed them as inferior. Faced with the Indo-Fijian challenge, the British claimed to represent Fijian interests, drawing upon ethnic Fijian fears of Indo-Fijian population growth, and denigrating Indian and Indo-Fijian anticolonial resistance.

At the so-called Deed of Cession debate in the Legislative Council in 1946, European members argued that the original deed of cession ‘giving’ Fiji to Queen Victoria and her heirs in 1874 provided that the British would preserve and protect Fijian interests. These arguments were clearly directed at quelling Indo-Fijian initiatives for greater legislative representation. Fiji Indian legislative council member A.D. Patel pointed out the irony of colonial claims to protect indigenous Fijians against foreigners and made powerful arguments against the colonial position:

“As a matter of fact,” he argued, “if anything the coming of my people to this country gave the Fijians their honor, their prestige, nay indeed their very soul. Otherwise I have no hesitation in saying that the Fijians of this Colony would have met with the same fate that some other indigenous races in parts of Africa met with.” (Legislative Council of Fiji 1946: 48)

In the colonial era, it had been assumed that different populations, ‘races,’ or ‘communities’ had different natures and roles to play in the colonial polity, and would each be represented separately in the governing bodies of the colony. As Fiji moved slowly towards independence, a model of representation based on ‘communal’ rather than ‘common’ electoral rolls dominated Fiji’s politics, with fundamental implications for the future of Fiji as a nation.

Common roll electoral systems regard all citizens as equal, with one person one vote, within a particular electoral district. Communal roll systems, on the other hand, require people to register themselves as members of particular communities, and to choose representatives of those communities. They are found primarily in former colonies that relied on ‘racial’ categories for political and economic structuring of the colony.⁷ Thus, until 2013 in every constitution in independent Fiji, citizens

⁷ South Africa’s recently dismantled apartheid system is another inheritor of British colonial communal political divisions.

have also had to identify themselves as ‘Indians,’ ‘Fijians,’ or ‘General Electors’ as they carried out the task of electing representatives and shaping the nation (see *The Commonwealth*, n.d.; Fiji Government 2013).

Chronicling racial politics on the cusp of independence in Fiji (1969–71), a late colonial officer highlighted the implacable nature of colonial ‘race’ divisions. Tim Hardy (2009: 322) was a military and police specialist in the colonial service. In Fiji, he headed Special Branch, charged with identifying and dealing with threats to internal security. His sardonic and unsettling memoirs chronicle his working class origins, his distaste for empire and monarchy, *and* his service on behalf of a series of anti-communist colonial military and police agencies, from Africa, to Southeast Asia, to Fiji. In Fiji, Hardy belittles colonial fears of unrest in the 1960s, seeing instead the pathetic endgame jockeying of backwater colonial officials and offices attempting to maintain funding and prestige. One theme stands out from his account: the enduring colonial tendency to find threats among Indians in Fiji. Hardy finds it amusing to tell of how, as head of Special Branch, he investigated 600 dossiers of people “fingered by Special Branch as potential insurrectionists: rabble rousers, lefties, trouble-makers, agitators, racists, anti-colonialists, would be revolutionaries, and so on” (Hardy 2009: 324). He debunks the dossier of one man, a minor official of a provincial branch of the National Federation Party (the largely Indo-Fijian political party that grew out of cane farmers unions and other unions).

Nair [a pseudonym] had come to have a personal dossier only because he happened to be a minor official of the Labasa branch of the National Federation party, the Indian-run political party which, because it stood for ‘liberation from colonialism’, had been well and truly smeared not only by the colonial establishment but by the council of Fijian chiefs, the English-language press and the Special Branch as ‘disloyal, subversive, ungrateful destructive, serving only Delhi’s interests and Moscow/Peking directed.’ ... I liked Mr Nair. I saw no menace in him at all. I flew back to Suva and ordered that his dossier be shredded.

I repeated the Nair test over and over again, and although I wasn’t as captivated by other National Federation Party Officials as I was with Mr. Nair, the result was always the same: files into the shredder. (Hardy 2009: 325–326)

Hardy’s voice is condescending. While avowing anticolonial sentiments himself, he shows little respect for the world-transforming bravery and insights that oriented Gandhian *swaraj* or Indo-Fijian platforms of ‘liberation from colonialism.’ And he didn’t shred A.D. Patel’s file (Hardy 2009: 327). But he confirms what archives show as well: that throughout the twentieth century, colonial Fiji ran on ‘race’ categories,

in which the British privileged ethnic Fijians (especially their chiefs) and consistently denigrated Fiji Indians.⁸

The Skewed Democracy of Independent Fiji

The legacy of these colonial divisions was played out in independent Fiji. Repeatedly in independent Fiji, ostensible pluralism in policy coexisted with colonial continuations of ethnic Fijian paramountcy. The ceremonies of independence in 1970 dramatized these ambivalences. On the one hand, for the first time in Fiji's history, Indo-Fijians and other peoples had a major role in public ceremonies. The celebrations were intended to represent Fiji as a 'three-legged stool.' Language policy gave equal status to English, Fijian, and Fiji Hindi. But in fact, the independence ceremonies themselves, presided over by Prince Charles, gave special weight to royalty in political life, underlining the ongoing position of Fijian chiefs – a kind of authority, leadership, and appeal to tradition not open to Indo-Fijians (see Kelly and Kaplan 2001c: 121–142). The ambivalences toward pluralism seen in the independence ceremonies of 1970 were to harden into polarized political parties. In the late 1980s, multi-ethnic political party democratic victories would fall victim to ethnic Fijian military coups.

In 1970, Fiji had two major political parties which gave voice to the aspirations of Fiji's peoples for the nation-state. Because of constitutional requirements, each party had mixed 'racial' membership and fielded candidates of all three electoral categories ('Fijian,' 'Indian,' and 'General Elector'). Each at times espoused more or less pluralistic ideals. However, they swiftly became parties representing different ethnic groups. The largely Indo-Fijian National Federation Party was founded by leaders of cane growers' unions and other unions in 1964, with a history of contestation against colonial policies. The largely ethnic Fijian Alliance Party, headed by ethnic Fijian chiefs, held power from 1970 to 1987.

In 1984, a new Fiji Labour Party formed to combat the 'racial' parties, with key platforms such as the designation of all Fiji citizens as 'Fijians.' Labour won the 1987 election, forming a Coalition government with the National Federation Party. Within a month, an ethnic Fijian army Colonel, Sitiveni Rabuka, led a military coup, claiming to represent ethnic Fijian interests. Rabuka became Fiji's Prime Minister in elections held under the new constitution he sponsored, which was 'ratified' by Fijian high chiefs. This new constitution of 1990 simultaneously simplified and reinforced principles already at work in Fiji's Constitution at independence in 1970. Not only were the 'races' out of both balance and demographic proportion, but major offices were reserved for Fijians.⁹

⁸ For further history of this late colonial period, and other examples of colonial and anticolonial discourse from the same period, see Lal (1992 and 2011), and Kelly and Kaplan (2001c).

⁹ See Rutz and Balkan (1992) and Rutz (1995) for delineation of plural ethnic Fijian national and

However, following the establishment of this constitution, a period of debate ensued. Public discourse about the fate of the nation was largely about the ethnic Fijian polity within the polity. But simultaneously the debates and fragmentation of ethnic Fijian solidarity created opportunities for multi-ethnic, non-exclusively ethnic Fijian parties as partners. Even more importantly, concerns driven by a need to have a constitution that met recognized international standards led to the formation of the Fiji Constitution Review Commission of 1996, and then to a new constitution in 1997. While it continued some of the 1990 constitution's many concessions to ethnic Fijian custom and chiefly power (the Great Council of Chiefs were to appoint the President and Vice President, the largely ceremonial Heads of State), the new constitution altered the 'racial' composition of representation in important ways.

In a crucial expression of the voice of Fiji's citizenry, the first election under this new constitution in May of 1999 did not lead to the electoral return of coup leader Rabuka. Nor did the National Federation Party win any seats, not even its leader Jai Ram Reddy, who had become famous for his efforts to work together with coups' leader Rabuka. Rather, the multi-ethnic Labour Party, led by Mahendra Chaudhry, won an absolute majority and formed a new government in coalition with several ethnic Fijian parties. The voice of the people supported the multi-ethnic democracy envisioned in 1987 in the first Labour victory.

But one year following the election, a complicated aggregation of agents led and solidified a coup against Chaudhry's Labour Coalition government. First, George Speight, a failed businessman, led a group of military personnel and took Prime Minister Chaudhry and Coalition parliamentarians hostage. Speight claimed to act on behalf of indigenous Fijian rights. Outside analysts have noted that Speight, past head of the Fiji Hardwood and Fiji Pine commissions in the Rabuka government, had seen his carefully laid plans to sell Fiji's mahogany reserves (planted by colonial planners in the 1950s) to a US buyer overturned by the newly elected Labour coalition government. Speight's coup was overtaken and solidified by a second simultaneous coup, more from the top down, led by ethnic Fijian stalwarts. Ethnic Fijian bureaucrat Laisenia Qarase was installed as interim Prime Minister, with the support of Fiji's military forces under commander Frank Bainimarama. As head of the interim government, Qarase announced and implemented a range of programs to solidify ethnic Fijian paramountcy in the nation.

In the wake of the takeover of the nation in May and following months, there were many local takeovers of roads, power stations, tourist resorts, factories, and even police stations by ethnic Fijians asserting (as in the national takeovers) their rights as landowners and indigenes to define the nation as a whole. The interim government, headed by ethnic Fijian bureaucrat Qarase, presented its role as returning Fiji to peace, order, and 'normality.' Their interim budget and blueprint for Fiji sought to reconcile diverse ethnic Fijian claims and projects, their vision making ethnic Fijian interests the main national interests for Fiji and once again diminishing the rights

and contributions of Indo-Fijians to the nation. Anthropologist Susanna Trnka, in her 2008 ethnography *State of Suffering*, has described in detail the silencing impact of the coups on many Indo-Fijians.

A New Kind of Coup?

In 2006, the military ousted Qarase and seized power. One cause may have been the Qarase government's support of a reconciliation bill that would have pardoned 2000 coup participants, including soldiers who mutinied against their superior officers. Frank Bainimarama, naval commander and head of all of Fiji's military, has also set out a series of reforms, including a common roll electoral system. When the Fiji Appeals Court found his abrogation of the constitution illegal in 2009, he dismissed and replaced the judges.

A new constitution was promulgated on 6 September 2013. It includes a bill of rights and provides for a single-chamber legislature, Parliament, with 50 members directly elected by universal adult suffrage for a term of no more than four years from its first session. All Fijian citizens from the age of 18 are entitled to vote in a single national constituency and under a system of proportional representation. Parliament elects a non-executive President from a field of two candidates, one nominated by the Prime Minister and one by the Leader of the Opposition. The presidential term is three years and a President can serve no more than two terms. After an election, the leader of the party with the most seats in Parliament becomes Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is head of government. (The Commonwealth n.d.)¹⁰

This was the first coup that did not explicitly proclaim ethnic Fijian political paramountcy. Indeed Bainimarama has espoused a common roll for the future. Some observers have been tempted to call this the first coup to serve Indo-Fijian interests.

But the historical tactics of Indo-Fijian activism have been nonviolent: strikes, boycotts, electoral politics, and use of media to build communal solidarity and make moral arguments, in other words insistence on the truth.¹¹ It is thus difficult to read the 2006 coup as a vehicle for Indo-Fijian hopes and aspirations in Fiji. Some Indo-Fijians and some Labour Party supporters may have hoped that the military would return the democratically elected Chaudhry government to power. But although Chaudhry was for a time in the cabinet as Finance minister, he was forced by Bainimarama to resign when he alienated foreign business investors in Fiji through

¹⁰ See also Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2013), Fiji Government (2009a, 2009b, 2013), and Fraenkl, Firth and Lal (2009).

¹¹ See Kelly for an analysis of the Indo-Fijian value of *shanti* in relation to the ethnic Fijian value on *mana* Kelly (1998, 2001, 2005, 2011 and also this volume).

proposing new taxes. While disavowing ethnic nationalism, Fiji's military is almost completely ethnic Fijian. The sense of political possibilities of the personnel of the coup government was surely shaped in the ethnically defined parameters of the independence political era. And the coup is a military coup. The historical tactics of Indo-Fijian activism have always been nonviolent.

The rise of political armies is surely a phenomenon connected with the nation-state, as John Kelly's chapter (this volume) discusses. But Fiji's military also evokes parallels with colonial governments. Most apparent in Fiji recently has been the impact of the military censorship of newspapers, radio, television, and internet. Claiming to seek order and normality, the military suppresses truthful accounts of Fiji and of popular will throughout the world. Early on, the newspapers were full of trivial articles from wire services or local human interest stories about dogs who took bus rides and then returned home, seemingly passive aggressive choices to fill space by deeply frustrated editors and journalists. It is hard to speculate on the motives for this particular regime's focus on media. But it seems quite similar to the colonial British insistence on rewarding loyalty and fearing what they imagine to be 'disorder and disaffection.' Yet this particular tactic seems unlikely to succeed. On the one hand, there is a deep history of anti-colonial 'vernacular' Indo-Fijian media in Fiji. And on the other hand, young people fill the internet cafes. Today's global media sources and the protean capacities of the internet reach far beyond local censoring capacities.

Are Indo-Fijians seeking self-determination by 'pessimal' belonging?¹² A withdrawal strategy's limit is that it refuses – non-cooperating – to join evil. Such a tactic may not actually shape structures except by moral suasion. So, the dilemma of Indo-Fijian belonging in Fiji has continued to be the problem of self-determination, not by building the political house in which one lives, but finding oneself dwelling in a place and role constituted by others, moving into a house built by others, and for other purposes. In colonial days, Indo-Fijians refused the role of 'guest' (as some ethnic Fijians termed them) and 'working population and nothing more' (as colonial discourse would have had it) and, across their history, demanded recognition as citizens. As a tactic against violence, and a successful one (not a weapon of the weak), they embraced 'striving for minority,' and indeed were the most powerful continuants of Gandhian reliance on non-violent resistance (Kelly 1995a, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2011; Kelly and Kaplan 2001b). They did not collectively protest or regret their return to minority status in the islands but, paradoxically in a democracy, hoped for better political terms as a result of minority status (Kelly 1998). In recent elections, no party commands a major political role as an explicitly Indian nationalist voice, neither as a Hindutva party (despite the rise of Modi in India) nor as a specifi-

¹² By pessimal, I mean an interaction strategy of minimal engagement. The term was developed by anthropologist McKim Marriott (1976) in a discussion of the social potential of different exchange and engagement strategies. Asymmetric exchanges can be what he terms "optimal" in which the exchanger emphasizes giving over receiving. Exchanges can be symmetric, some valuing many transactions in balance, others (pessimal) seeking to avoid engagement.

cally Indian national congress. Might such a party arise? Perhaps not. Even when blamed for benefiting from an anti-democratic decade and consequential reforms that they did not cause, Indo-Fijians choosing to stay in Fiji strikingly sustain the path of *shanti* (peace), to the point of quietism. And despite emerging global hostility to migration, many still chose to leave, often citing their children's future. Most likely of all, therefore, is a continuation of the now decades-long expression of Indo-Fijian sentiment: self-determination by diaspora, away from Fiji.

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6 Dilemmas of Belonging in Fiji, Part II: *Shanti, Swaraj*, and the Problem of Political Armies

John Kelly

“Societies hide the pain of belonging.”
McGranahan (2010: 3), citing Das (1995)

Belonging to What?

Dilemmas of belonging: our volume’s theme poignantly captures the situation of all too many peoples in the diasporas of the postcolonial world. As Martha Kaplan’s chapter has made clear, the dilemmas of belonging to post-colonial nation-states reveal the real limits to the utopian prospect of liberal self-determination. Especially for some people, like those in India beyond India, the diasporic South Asians? Clearly. But can their experience illuminate issues larger than that experience? Are there dilemmas of belonging only for some people, or for all? And what shall we investigate further, to better understand dilemmas of belonging? Writing for peace during what we now know as World War One, Thorstein Veblen ([1917] 1998) observed that advocates for peace were always persuasive, yet the world plunged into ever more devastating wars. “What Shall We Say?” he then asked (typically garishly, with the quotation marks and the capital letters). His answer will help us with our own, as we seek insights into politics responsive to changing situations, but also deeply rooted in cultural valuations, precisely the stuff of politics beyond primordialism and instrumentalism. And Fiji as experienced by Indo-Fijians can help us as we seek

to track the emotions of belonging in their historical connections to reasons of state, nation, religion, and all other precedent relevant realities.¹

Let us start where Kaplan (this volume) left us, among Fiji's realities, and thus among things on earth not dreamed of in Versailles's philosophies. Kaplan's account tracks a legal and social history for all people in Fiji, somewhere well beyond and far more complicated than any story of a single group's "self-determination." Yes, by the time of Fiji's decolonization there was a clear template for nation-state law and order. Independent Fiji began with a constitution. And that constitution began with a preamble in the voice of "we the people." But Fiji's constitution was actually delayed by six months in London's colonial office because the constitution drafters there were working through contradictions in Jamaica's document. And, the exiting British did not meet local requests for drafts translated into Hindi and even Fijian language for perusal before its adoption in London and Fiji (Kelly and Kaplan 2008). Further, Fiji's document was unusual among postcolonial constitutions: it found sovereignty to begin not with the decolonization struggle but rather in a chain of custody marked from the *Deed of Cession*, wherein Fijian chiefs recognized the British Crown as sovereign, construed as "giving" the British a sovereignty now coming back to the islands (Saunders 1997). Fiji's independence constitution thus ambiguously always locates sovereignty, finally, with the Fijian chiefs. Acts of election then enter democratic representatives of the people – any and all people, whether in ethnically delineated districts or national districts – merely into power-sharing with others always already there (a status that also includes the police and military, of course, in every actual nation-state). Kaplan shows the difference real hierarchy makes for citizenship, the pessimal² disposition necessary for Indo-Fijians to belong comfortably to Fiji as their place, and the grim alternative of renewed diaspora against increasing hostility to migration. We can carry her discussion further both by exploring a specifically Indian dilemma of virtue and reconsidering those valuations within more global dialectical tensions. The dilemma of virtue is that between *shanti* and *swaraj*, *shanti* meaning peace, *swaraj* self-rule (and 'a dilemma of virtue' meaning, whether to define the situation, to valorize or even transvalue possible courses of action, in one light or the other).³ The global backdrop, then, is dialectical tensions not only

¹ Stanley Tambiah (1996) is my primary source for insistence on the wisdom of taking political anthropology beyond both primordialism (as, for example, in cultural template arguments, people respond as culture wires them to) and instrumentalism (as, for example, in rational choice arguments, which naively extend the chronotope of choice while they extend reckoning to cover all thinking). From William Mazzarella (2013) comes inspiration for insisting on the wisdom of connecting reason and emotion in all actual depictions of human action. All of this commits to Marshall Sahlins' (1976) view of culture encompassing and informing not-so practical reason, and above all extends the problem of the history of culture into the realm insisted upon by Veblen ([1917] 1998), situations with violent (in game theory terms, coercive and compelling as well as would-be persuasive) states already constituting irreducible parts of social situations, limits and opportunities.

² I will discuss pessimalism in the next section.

³ People actively engage with the core values of their culture, and cultures set and change their priori-

about equality and justice in theory and reality, but also about organized violence, peace and right. Fiji, with its frontstage chiefs and (usually, but not recently) backstage military, and changing relations between the two, Fiji with its complex engagements of both with Indo-Fijians, Fiji can show us the sometimes implications of two less frequently reckoned dimensions of nation and citizenship. The first, that Veblen emphasized, is the situating precedence of states and their organized violence over nations and their claims of right. The second, the more frontstage problem after all for belonging in Fiji, is the sometimes appearance, within nation-states, of political armies. Political armies claim themselves to be the conduit between nation and state – the nation in the state, legitimate and sovereign – by uniquely embodying national will at time of need. In Fiji's case, the army after the first three (or four; cf. Kelly and Kaplan 2001b, ch.6) coups legitimated itself as the expression of the needs and will of an ethnically exclusive inner and sovereign nation. By its roots and acts, the army embodied the *taukei*, owners of the land, and was the servant of chiefs, sovereigns. In the latest, 2006 coup, the powers of state before nation became most clearly and strangely visible, as the army proved able to disassemble all other institutions before it could delimit itself, and even the Great Council of Chiefs found itself outside of the new realms of law and order.

Shanti and Swaraj

The extraordinary public responses to coup violence in Fiji have been led by insistence on peace, centered in the Indic, Islamic, and especially devotional Hindu value of *shanti*. *Shanti* is a broadly, soteriologically valorizing concept of peace as sign and destiny of the truly good in a world of suffering. The extension of the ethnic Fijian conception of *mana* to valorizing the usurpations of the coups has not launched spiraling violence, ethnic or otherwise, because the counterweight of *shanti* has kept the peace in the face of aggressive assertion and testing. Elsewhere, Kaplan and I (Kelly and Kaplan 2001a, Kelly 2005, 2011) examine in more detail the “intimate enemy” dynamics that have opened a cultural dialectic between *mana* and *shanti* in Fiji. Here, let us hone in on the emergence of a transvaluing *shanti* amidst the dilemmas of belonging faced, across many decades, by the South Asian migrants who became the Indo-Fijians. Dilemmas of belonging will seem, and feel, different if one is in quest of peace, than if one is in quest of justice, or in quest of *mana*, or of self-determination. While Americans have veered, across the long ‘American Century,’ between Wilsonian views of self-determination as good policy, toward views of the quest for self-determination as inevitable expression of free human nature, and back to the concept of best policy, variously placed Indo-Fijians have relied on strikes and

ties, when people are faced with dilemmas in which virtues lie on both possible courses of action, and with narratives variously situated that recommend solutions. Ruth Benedict pioneered the concept in the tenth chapter of *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946). See also Kaplan's chapter this volume.

withdrawal to seek justice and peace even before the electric news of Gandhi's successes. They have since debated the core values of social and political life from various places and positions, with a strong sense both of global trends and local distinction, usually understood as local limitation, especially if the goal is self-rule.

The Hindu value of *shanti*, emotional peace in the face of hardship and suffering, has come to be of great importance to many Indo-Fijians, whether or not they come to feel that they belong in, or even to, the islands of their birth. *Shanti*, a cardinal emotion of *bhakti* or devotional Hinduism, is the virtue of pessimal transacting with God – peacefully accepting whatever God gives with all attendant confidence and hope in eventual good and love. The *bhakti marg* of *sanatan dharm*, which is to say, the devotional path within the eternal *dharm*, enables grace within alienated labor, and acceptance of one's own good and right even when a lifetime will not see its just deserts realized. This confidence in divine love and in more ultimate hope is different from a Christian call for redemption from sin. In Fiji's emerging moral economy, Indo-Fijian *shanti* and grace in alienated labor has both complemented and contested ethnic Fijian fears of alienation and pursuit of *mana* and *loloma*, power and Christian love. *Shanti* has been a circuit breaker when 'coup culture' overturns democracy in the name of Fijian chiefly *mana*, even when the results have led Fiji Hindus and Fiji Muslims to doubt the wisdom of belonging to the islands, and especially to the locating of children and grandchildren there.

Yet all these considerations, these profound interactions of culture and law within postcolonial political dialogue, have still only examined part of what the Indo-Fijian dilemmas of belonging to Fiji can teach us about the postcolonial nation-state. Kaplan has detailed how legally-ensconced hierarchy in land laws, electoral laws, and public culture can place real limits onto the utopian deep, horizontal comradeship of the nation-state. *Shanti*, with its pessimalism⁴, fits the situations of many of the postcolonial labor diaspora colonies much better than either the knowledge-focused, self-help purification movement of the Arya Samaj, or the confidence of self-determination liberalism, explaining why a *bhakti*-centric Sanatan Dharm movement was more successful than the reformist Arya Samaj in so many labor diaspora colonies across the twentieth century.⁵ Prospects for *shanti* were obviously relevant, but also

⁴ Pessimism is a transaction strategy in which you take what you can get, rather than minimizing, maximizing, or seeking to optimize by negotiating one's terms of transaction, in the model originally pioneered for South Asian culture of exchange by McKim Marriott (1976). *Shanti* devotional world view tends to treat Hindus in this the *kali yug*, or fourth- and final age in a devolving, corrupting universe, as moral kin to Sudras, the low, service castes when society was better organized. Sudras by their own actions become too polluted in substance to succeed on the path of knowledge or *jnana marg*. All are equal in dependence on God's grace, love and generosity to succeed, and the wise among them embrace this situation. Thus, the ethic to pessimal transacting, taking whatever comes one's way, relying on God and not self for outcomes.

⁵ The most famous diaspora discourse emanating from one-time labor colonies, ironically, occludes this key point; in fact it is precisely what V.S. Naipaul's (1999) modernism seeks to overcome. Naipaul, in his alienation from his Indo-Caribbean roots (and citizenship) in both his life and works shows

prospects for *swaraj*, peace and also self-control, each sometimes seen as means to the other. In Fiji, land of *shanti* and *mana*, what about that latest, largest coup, whose transfigured *mana*, if it can even be considered such, led to the disbanding of the Great Council of Chiefs itself? What is to be done, if you quest not only for *shanti* but also *swaraj*, not only peace but also self-rule, in confrontation with political armies claiming sovereignty over you?

Pessimism can only be a tactic, and probably a doomed tactic, if one's ultimate goal is not merely *shanti* but *swaraj*, not only peace but self-rule. And vice versa, insistence on *swaraj* can be considered a useful tactic sometimes, but it is ultimately doomed and unpeaceful, in the real world, if one abandons Gandhian self-rule and/or American self-determination as the ultimate end. *Ahimsa*, non-violence, becomes more than a tactic if *shanti*, peace, is the end, as well as means. This chapter seeks to situate Indian diasporic dilemmas of belonging, whether to belong in, even to, Fiji. Ultimately, the chapter will be about war, peace, and political belonging generally. But proximately, and first of all, it is about how, for many Indo-Fijians, the dilemma of virtue between *shanti* and *swaraj* vitally sets the question – to stay, or to go – and on what terms.

Swaraj encompasses, roughly, the prizing of rights, duties, justice and uplift, above all via self-control, 'self-rule.' Two ethnographic vignettes will illustrate how *shanti* and *swaraj* can come to be in tension, before we return to the most general questions of theory. First, in 1985, in other words, before any coups in Fiji (yet shadowed with inchoate awareness of what was coming; see also Bharati 1972 on Uganda), an old man arrived late to a *Ramayan mandali* in Ra Province on Viti Levu (Fiji's 'big island'). Ra district is predominantly ethnic Fijian, with population thin on the ground, the edge of decent cane-growing territory. Ra's Indo-Fijians are farmers – hardy but mostly not prosperous. A very good motive for persisting there in the suffering cane economy was after all desire for *shanti* – a peaceful, rural life. *Ramayan mandalis* (*mandali* is related to *mandala*, but really just means circles) are evenings devoted to collective singing of *bhajans*, devotional hymns set to themes from the Tulsi Das, Hindi-language *Ramcaritmanas*, a *bhakti* devotional rendition of the *Ramayana* story put at the center of Sanatan Dharm ("eternal tradition") style Hindu-

the successive alienation, an Arya Samajist father rejecting a Sanatani, much more folksy grandfather, leading to a grandson whose path of knowledge walked away from belief altogether, to firmly reorient toward modernist, individual self-emergence. Here we will not pre-emptively model all of diaspora as self-determination according to scale and location of place, as if one is merely to choose whether to be Indian writ global, or member of some more lately joined nation, or a free sojourner in this world somehow otherwise construed – and in the end, imagine people oriented solely to a secular future, an immanent temporal redemption. Modernism does have a strong constituency among Indo-Fijians, often combined with other valorizations of place and time. Both because those other valorizations have, I think, the outsized impact on what makes Fiji's history different, and to resist modeling that contrasts Fijians' cultural vibrancy with Indian instrumental calculating, here we explore the Fiji situation with South Asian, with the population especially South Asian Hindu, cultural commitments also in mind.

ism.⁶ The old farmer joined the *bhajans*, and afterward in quiet conversation was apologetically agitated. Why was he upset? Youth from a Fijian village (*koro*) threw stones at his car as he drove quickly past in the dusk. Yes, he was in a hurry, but why did they break his truck's back window? What was their motive? Varieties of bored, resentful, and deluded hatred were suggested, but the old gentlemen (in all senses deserving the term) cut off assessment, firmly apologizing, again, for this existential disruption of their quest for devotion-oriented peace. Even when another member of the circle raised the question whether Fiji was making it impossible to seek *shanti*, he firmly resisted. He was not going anywhere, and windows could be fixed. Resenting his own, unsettling, resentment, his irritation was above all not about the injustice of this assault on his property but on the interruption of his own flawed pursuit of *shanti*, and he was all too aware that restoring calm was in crucial part up to him. His own self-control was to serve the pursuit of peace, not only vice-versa.

This gentleman's depth of commitment to seek *shanti* was marked; thus I remember it; others would no doubt have responded differently. Indo-Fijian memory is much about assessing varieties of response to different types of violence. Its existential tinge clearly goes back to *girmitiya*, indentured laborer days, and the fateful decisions whether to stay in Fiji, as 60% of surviving indentured laborers chose to do, or return to India, as 40% did, often at great expense and real hardship. We will next look briefly at Totaram Sanadhya's *Story of the Haunted Line* ([1922] 1991), perhaps the most famous iteration of indenture-line dilemmas. The hero of Sanadhya's story was forced to live in an abandoned, reopened "line" or plantation housing shed, a line thought haunted by former suicides. He was starving, one night, after acts of generosity had depleted his food supply. He came very close to suicide himself, standing on a stool with a noose around his neck, before a heterogenous set of simultaneous intercessions saved him. The causality was ambiguous. After a prayer to the Goddess for rescue from his longing and suffering, when memory of his mother was triggered by recognition of his duty to her, there was a knock on his door. Stepping down from his stool, opening his door, the hero met ethnic Fijians, not ghosts. They had returned, in the cool of the night, with large gifts of root crop food, in generous return on a perforce scanty meal of rice he had provided them earlier in the week, with the last of his week's food ration. At Fiji's independence, in the most optimistic of moods, efforts were made via stage play and even film to make this *Story of the Haunted Line* a paradigm for future recognition and exchange between

⁶ I have written elsewhere (Kelly 2001) in detail about the Arya Samaj reform movement and its rationalist, reformist knowledge-path (*jnana-marg*) Hinduism, its early success in Fiji building schools and leadership structures, later overcome by *bhakti-marg*, i.e. devotionally oriented Sanatan Dharm missionaries, who persuaded the majority of Fiji Hindus to adopt the Ramcaritmanas as the perfect shelter for Hindus suffering the exile of labor diaspora. Thus *shanti* in the shelter (*sharan*) of devotion to Ram via this text is a particular soteriological goal of many Fiji devotional Hindus, as well as a widespread worldly value orienting (sometimes, often, or even always) the deontology of many more people there. *Ramayan mandali* meetings, depending upon (often revolving) leadership (as circles) sometimes involve reading and interpretation of Tulsi Das passages, but always the singing of *bhajans*.

ethnic groups. In its chastity and generosity this story wrote over many dilemmas on the ground in actual *girmitiya* history, concerning Brahmins, caste, gender, sexuality, and kinship. But the point, for us here, is the way the story focalized (in Tambiah's sense, see Tambiah 1996, discussed below) the dilemmas themselves: this "Story of the Haunted Line" has justly become a paradigm of how to move forward in exile, addressing violence and fear of violence, hunger and shame, memory and duty, devotion in despair, humility and its rewards, and even life and death itself. This core dilemma is not so much to be or not to be, since the story presumed his soul would continue some way, but how to respond to extreme suffering.

And how does this dilemma, the quest for *shanti* or *swaraj*, look outside of Hindu parable? The moralization of pessimism (this strategy of accepting all that is offered) can be reconsidered if we remove sanguine hope for divine reward, as something much like what a Californian philosopher (James 2017) has recently called "adaptive attunement." This adaptive attunement, argues James, is free will reconsidered (and Jean-Paul Sartre's ([1957] 1968) existentialism reconsidered) to be compatible with a deterministic universe, imposing will not by controlling things but by efficient and purposeful alignment to them. A politics and ethics of extreme acceptance can be theologically optimistic. But under what conditions is it practically, let alone ethically, sufficient in the human political world? There is a problem of possibility here that needs to be further explored, crucial to the dilemmas of belonging. Dialectical tension between *shanti* and *mana* has emerged in Fiji, a new, fraught, trans-ethnic political culture in which chief-like self-justifying domination is delimited by withdrawal, non-participation and avoidance, a dialectic that has been as productive as it has been frustrating for all who stay there. But can it sustain peace, let alone anything comparable to the ideal of liberal democratic self-rule? It is unwise to underestimate successful assertions of *mana* in Fiji's 'coup culture.' But perhaps, as we shall see, it is even more unwise to neglect the more global history of postcolonial state violence.

A New Kind of Militarism in Fiji, amidst Global Problems for Self-Determination

Fiji's current military-backed government is different from Fiji's previous coup governments. It is stranger, less positioned in the ethnic landscape and unstuck in ideology, professing respect for global standards of equality and democracy, ratified by a closely controlled election in 2014, but more generally, for more than a decade now, forbidding most kinds of political discourse and action. Fiji's current regime is extremely strange. However, the failure of Fiji to thrive as a self-determining nation-state is all too typical. The mid-twentieth century promise of decolonization has led not to the realization of a globe of peaceful, free, prosperous democracies but to increasing asymmetries and smoldering, increasing violence. Neoliberal pressures from capitalist centers in Europe and the United States, the so-called Washington Consensus, overwhelmed efforts to organize a counter-ideology. Yet it seems also to

have generated even in Europe, and certainly globally, the uneven field of diffuse resentments and restlessness that Appadurai (2006) has aptly named “the geography of anger.” This development has global roots. A key nexus for both the positive and the negative, for both political constitution, and this shadowing anger, is the 1955 Bandung Conference. What African-American novelist and social critic Richard Wright said of the delegates to the Bandung conference could aptly be said, now, of the vast congeries of global skeptics of the neoliberal institutions of the new world order: “They were much clearer about what they did not want than about what they wanted” ([1956] 1995: 212). At Bandung, what they did not want was continuing interference from ex-colonizers. The call for the conference began with the question posed by Ali Sastroamidjojo, Prime Minister of Indonesia, at the 1954 Colombo conference, when five Asian prime ministers there pondered why the fate of Indo-China was being settled, instead, at a simultaneous conference in Geneva: “Where do we stand now, we the people of Asia, in this world of ours today?” (Weeraratna 2014). Our contemporary geography of anger might well, still, concern the failures of mobilizations of “we, the people,” many places, to realize peace, prosperity, and justice. And while Fiji’s current rulers might be said to be clear about what they want, if we take them at their word that they wish to join the neoliberal world and to end many of Fiji’s experiments with communal exceptionalism in voting and governing, we still have to observe two things. First, they are late to a party that is not shaping up as its organizers planned. Second, their means bear little relationship to their ends. If Fiji’s current rulers do know what they want, they certainly do not know how to get it.

We seek to understand Fiji’s political extremes, both because we want insight into Fiji itself, even possibly grounds and lines for hope for politics there, and also because Fiji, in its extremes, might clarify some of the structures of the new global order of nation-states, emergent in decolonization after World War II. Fiji might help explain our global failure to meet the high expectations that decolonization into nation-states once entailed. Its study might make us wiser in the engineering of new hopes and expectations more globally, especially about belonging and its dilemmas in a world increasingly built by diasporic connections and movements. The Indian National Congress, with real wisdom, spent much of the twentieth century urging Indian labor diasporic communities not to return to India: exactly what, where, will constitute wisdom for India beyond India in the twenty-first century?

Fiji’s politics are surprising by many measures, especially when considered in combination. Fiji was extreme among new nations in the symmetry presented by its major ethnic populations, ethnic Fijian and Indo-Fijian, shortly after independence, close to a 50/50 population split. Fiji has also been extreme in the intolerance of one of the two groups to government by the other, with ethnic Fijian-backed coups following just one month (in 1987) and one year (in 2000) of government by Indo-Fijian backed parties, within a long century of democratic or partially democratic government, with never a military move in the other direction across unbroken decades of ethnic Fijian overrepresentation and dominance. But Fiji is also extreme,

and this is perhaps the key extreme, in the non-violence of its coup culture, with only one solitary death by military violence across five coups. Extreme in symmetry of ethnic divide, in one-sided political domination, and in non-violence. But in other ways, the problems of the nation-state in reality in Fiji are not extreme at all. Fiji is squarely among the majority of new nations engineered in the decolonization era that have, as Ranajit Guha put it speaking of India, 'failed to come to their own' (Guha 1982: 7) (or as an American would say, 'failed to come into their own'). The failure of most of these new nations to find freedom, peace and prosperity by way of their exercise of self-determination has frustrated utterly the planners, and even more the denizens, of the new world order after World War II. In fact, in its peacefulness, in its prosperity, and until recently in its civil freedoms Fiji has done much better than most, though it suffers now on all three measures.

The ethnic symmetry in Fiji is more complicated, historically dynamic and politically hedged than is convenient for consociational democracy planners. Consociational modeling would be simpler if ethnicity was some kind of natural historical phenomenon independent of specific historical engagements and movements. Structuring institutions for communal sharing is vastly harder when we recognize labile social, cultural and legal histories. As Kaplan's chapter explains, at Fiji's independence in 1970, the Indo-Fijians were actually 51% of Fiji's population. But the British designed constitution gave them only 40% of the communally designated parliamentary seats, not an insignificant shift in a democracy. The departing British, in negotiation especially with their Alliance Party successors, built into Fiji's first independent constitution further asymmetries against the ordinary liberal design expected in republican government. These included appointed Senate seats for the quasi-aristocratic ethnic Fijian Great Council of Chiefs, and also control by those Great Council appointees over a wide swath of law governing land ownership and regulation of ethnic Fijian social life. A third asymmetry was overrepresentation in parliament of people neither Indo-Fijian nor ethnic Fijian, the 'general electors,' who were originally, prominently, the Chinese- and European-descended citizens of the new nation, but who over recent decades have come to be mostly people of mixed, part-European ethnic descent, and other Islanders resident in Fiji, as most of the Chinese and European citizens have migrated out. Over time, every decade since independence, all of Fiji's demographics have shifted significantly. Consonant with the rise of 'other Islanders' among the so-called 'general electors' has been an increase in the proportion of the overall population that is ethnic Fijian, an accelerating trend caused both by higher ethnic Fijian birthrates and a large outmigration of Indo-Fijians, an outmigration especially of the educated and skilled that in its numbers, if not in its proportions, has paralleled and overmatched the rejection of Fiji by its initial Chinese and white citizens. The population has, in a history very brief for such significant demographic shifting, gone from an absolute Indo-Fijian majority to parity to an absolute ethnic Fijian majority at present. Overall, Indo-Fijians have been surprisingly sanguine about this trend, particularly puzzling in light of the history of transgression of Indo-Fijian social and political right. In my experience, Indo-Fijians

often hope that an ethnic Fijian majority will work as a tactic against violence, to lessen fears and calm roiled political and social waters (Kelly 1998). Readers of Susanna Trnka's vivid ethnography (2008) of post-coups Indo-Fijian life will know that Indo-Fijians have long lived in fear of ethnic Fijian violence. While deaths have been rare to non-existent, crimes against property have been all too common, and the justice system is often lenient when the vector of the crime is ethnic Fijian and poor against anyone wealthy. Strong physical barriers to protect private property became the middle class and upper class norm in Fiji, especially as the decades of coups have unfolded.

Fiji's surprises and extremes can show more when compared to other complex realities than when measured against an ideal type of normal governance. To put this differently, Fiji is not simply a successful, a normal, or a failed state. Fiji's troubles are part of the failure of a global nation-state system. Multiple, partial, all too common, and increasingly general failures of the theory of self-determination in reality, I think, are the cardinal problem for the political anthropology of our times. Many of these problems are well known. One of the best sources for contemplation of them is the magisterial review of UN declarations, protocols and treaties compiled by Brij Lal and others in the 1996 Fiji constitutional review document, *Towards a United Future* (Reeves, Vakatora and Lal 1996). Other problems are more obvious in reality than theory, notably the prevalence of political armies, military governments as an alternative grammar to the relationship of nation and state, and/or states in perduring military occupation of part or even all of their citizenry, with or without such a legitimating 'political army' (sometimes legitimacy depends on who you ask). Here, some new comparisons may be rewarding. Many modes of comparative study of Fiji's politics have already been fruitful: much has been gained by comparing Fiji to other Pacific Island histories, as Stewart Firth (2000), for example, has brilliantly shown, along with many others including Doug Munro (1990), Epeli Hau'ofa (1993), and Nicholas Thomas (1991). The comparison of the indentured labor colonies of the British Empire has its own political and social stories to tell, with insights in particular from Brackette Williams (1991), and much to be learned from the ethnographies of Thomas Blom Hansen (2012), Viranjini Munasinghe (2001), Aisha Khan (2004) and others. The questions of racism and communalism in Empire have drawn many to compare the political duality in Fiji with that of South Asia's Hindu/Muslim politics and the traumas of partition (see also Kaplan and Kelly 2017).

A different comparison will highlight different local and global patterns. Especially because of the increasing role, and increasing strangeness, of Fiji's military in government, let us compare Fiji's political trajectory to that of the part of our planet that has been most persistently dominated by military government in the era of decolonization. That is the Asian Highlands.

Highland Asia's Endless Warfare: India's Other Decolonization Trauma, and What Nehru Found "Absurd"

Compared to military incursions in many locations in Asia's Highlands, Fiji's coups are small affairs. Afghanistan is now deep into its second decade of US counter-insurgency occupation, and that after a decade of US-backed war against Soviet occupation engineered by Pakistan's Directorate of Inter-services Intelligence (ISI), and then the rise of the Taliban. Death tolls from militarized conflict in Afghanistan since World War II are in the millions, and military conflict has disrupted everyone's lives. Pakistan, too, has lived a heavily militarized and violent half century, its own highlands held in amber in striking continuation of British colonial indirect rule policy, and simultaneously managed as a conduit for the episodically continuing warfare in Afghanistan and Kashmir. Before supposing that the military conflicts of the Highlands are somehow determined by Islam and jihad, notice the episodically raging and simmering conflicts, also, in Tibet, and the struggles in Nepal (the only major independent nation-state in the Highlands) and the fifty years of Indian army occupation in Northeast India, where twice as many people have died in counter-insurgency occupation violence as have died in Kashmir. I am unaware that anyone has the full story on violence, conquest, and social reorganization in Yunnan. From the days of the Long March through its sudden prominence for Chiang Kai-shek and the Burma Road in World War II, Yunnan transformed from a sleepy outback into a strategic conduit. And meanwhile the extraordinary unraveling of Burma's democratic order, its civil wars and long military dictatorship changed utterly what the Burma Road offered China, though China clearly has never forgotten or given up on its plan for Burma and commercial development. If everything from Tibet to Burma is evidence against blaming Islam for highland political strife, highland Burma's story among many should caution us, also, against ascribing highland struggles mainly to the Cold War or other larger geopolitics. Let us track the rise of military government in the era of nation-states by considering the region with so many, from Afghanistan and Pakistan and Kashmir to Tibet, Nepal, and Yunnan, to Northeast India and Burma. While religious conflicts and Cold War proxy-fighting will be important, we have another story to unearth in this long and sad history: to put it simply, and oversimply, the fate of tribes in the era of nation-states. Without a quasi-evolutionary view of the tribal as primitive (in contrast, e.g., to Ahmed 2013), Fiji's fate hinges on the category itself, and a unique extreme sympathy. Fiji was shaped and is still path-dependent on a unique British sympathy for the people they saw as tribal, a sympathy sufficient to justify precedence for Fijian chiefly claims of sovereign right. Why did colonial Fiji insist on what Nehru found "absurd"? Let us seek to understand this strangeness in Fiji amidst the devastating ubiquity of military occupations more generally.

Consociational democratic theorists often point at India's partition and Hindu/Muslim minority issues in both India and Pakistan as fertile ground for testing con-

ceptions of community, minority, and democracy, with South Asia's partition seen as the failure of its potential for consociation. But it may not solve the only, or most important, problems with postcolonial states if the cosmopolitan world simply teaches reliance on power-sharing to ameliorate the unresolvable among citizens' differences in cultural and religious value-orientations. Here we learn about sustained, perduring structures of violence from the other trauma of South Asia's decolonization. In the interests of time and to insure that we move from whole to part, our story starts long after it actually began, and we barely touch on its roots, above all looking over the shoulders of the famous progressive anticolonialist, Jawaharlal Nehru. Thus we will start with the real impact of the famous 1955 African-Asian Conference at Bandung on Highland Asia to clarify why, in a range of styles, the substance of politics in Highland Asia from Afghanistan to Burma has been endless military rule, usually with explicit impunity for military violence against civilians (from China's endless imprisonments and the American drones and their 'collateral damage,' among the most imperious, to India's staged 'encounter killings' of Northeast dissidents, among the most hypocritical).

This account of the Bandung Conference, examining Bandung from the points of view of the one hundred million people who live in Highland Asia, will not follow the typical modes for writing the Bandung Conference story.⁷ Yes, at Bandung, Asian leaders took control of Asia's political destiny. But in the same moment, one hundred million people lost their last best chance at a right to self-determine via independent nation and state. There were no representatives of Tibet invited to the table at Bandung. And Tibet is merely the most charismatic of many highland groups whose diplomatic and military claims on nationhood and statehood were neglected. Consider for example the Karen on the Thai Burma border, seven million, in the 1940s armed, trained and organized by the British Special Forces to fight the Japanese, then abandoned when the keys to the one-time kingdom were handed by the British, in 1948, to leaders of the Burman lowlanders, most of whom had allied with the Japanese. The Naga, the Wa, and myriad other highlander groups would have similar stories to tell: what some Pathan thought, and more important, did about the partition of India and Pakistan started the troubles that have never ended for semi-partitioned Kashmir, without any recognition of a Kashmiri nation, let alone a Pathan one.⁸ Jean Michaud (2006), Willem van Schendel (2005) and James Scott (2009) have led scholarly reconsideration of these highlands (uplands, massif) as a geographical,

⁷ On the model of Henry Louis Gates's (1991) critique of "Critical Fanonism," let us resist "Critical Bandungism." Gates argued that a generation of postcolonial theorists were over-reading Frantz Fanon and misrecognizing his French roots, because they wanted a social theorist to proclaim authentic voice of the colonized, the third world, the global south, the wretched of the earth. Similarly, not only in the non-aligned movement itself but in global nostalgia for its quest for a third way outside of the soviet communism and western capitalism, there was vast hope to see only some things, and not others, planned and produced out of the diplomatic discussions at the Africa-Asia Conference in Bandung.

⁸ On the Wa, see Fiskesjö (2010). On Kashmir and on Northeast India, a good place to start is Ramchandra Guha (2007); for Northeast India see also Baruah (2005).

historical, and political entity – here termed not ‘Zomia’ but the more user-friendly Highland Asia, or Asian Highlands. Leaving aside geographic determinism, leaving aside any romantic notion of the region as culturally anarchist, and above all, leaving aside the British allochronic cultural fantasy that the region was tribal in the sense of primitive, we reconsider the fate of the Highlands at Bandung, in effect at the moment where James Scott’s more romantic and geographic story leaves off, after World War II and ensuing events have engaged what Scott (2009) calls “distance demolishing technologies” to make Highland Asia a part of the rest of the world. What happened to the Highlands at the Bandung Conference?

In short, Jawaharlal Nehru and Zhou En Lai made a very large deal, a deal all about borders, metaphorical and literal. The deal was already made in outline the year before, in conversations between them in Delhi in 1954. Each made major concessions. Zhou, against Mao’s advice, sought a diplomatic foundation for ‘peaceful coexistence’ with his neighboring states. Arriving at Bandung with the experience of tens of millions of war deaths behind him, from China’s World War II through Revolution and warfare in Korea and Vietnam, Zhou led an exhausted and depleted warfare state. He was willing to sign on to the United Nations rules and definitions for legitimate and illegitimate warfare, and even rules against political intervention into other countries.⁹ Nehru, contrapositively, was willing to act outside of the UN’s mantle, despite his achievements there, and challenged the West’s Cold War by planning Asian history in Asia, for Asia.¹⁰ Reflecting careful compromises and strong political will, the final Bandung communiqué was about other things too. It famously condemned colonialism in all its manifestations.¹¹ In its ten points, built from seven drafted by Zhou, Nehru, and the Burmans, it added as point one an endorsement of the UN charter on human rights, and in its last two points called for economic and social cooperation among its signatories. From this the story of birth of a non-

⁹ Mao, like Che Guevarra a decade later and elsewhere, was highly skeptical that the political lackeys of global capital (a category in which Mao included Nehru) could be trusted to stay peaceful and abide while a socialist revolution consolidated. Four years later, when the Dalai Lama fled from China to India, Mao was privately critical of Zhou and publicly of Nehru, and his unforgiving diplomatic criticism played a major role in the increasingly hostile exchanges between India and China that led three years later to the Sino-Indian border war. This war, a classically Maoist exercise in demonstrating that power flowed from the barrel of a gun, enabled China to declare exactly where the borders would be and left Nehru more bitter than any political event in his life (Ramachandra Guha 1999, 2007).

¹⁰ See also Mazower (2009) on Nehru’s 1946 UN triumph versus Smuts and global racism, and Ramachandra Guha (2007) on the UN’s deliberate reconfiguration of Kashmir politics in a mode that stymied Nehru’s effort to mobilize the UN against Pakistan. In 1955 the UN still refused to recognize the legitimacy of Mao and Zhou’s China, but Zhou was willing even to abandon the phrase “peaceful coexistence,” and redeploy rhetoric from the UN charter (Wright 1956), to enable in substance Nehru and Zhou’s deal to settle borders and sovereignties and end legitimate war in Asia – which was to say, between states in Asia, not between each state and those resisting among its claimed citizenry.

¹¹ Zhou ignored the anti-Soviet debate leading to this phrasing and insisted it referred only to European empires. “There cannot possibly be any other interpretation,” he told the National People’s Congress in May 1955 (Kahin 1956: 62).

aligned movement has real roots. But the remaining seven points are an expansion and consolidation of the five-point deal between Nehru and Zhou, which was also accepted by Burma's rulers before the Bandung conference began: a deal for recognition, non-intervention, and respect for settled borders of three new nation-states, India, China, and Burma. The observers of Bandung from the Nanyang (overseas Chinese) world trusted Nehru little and Zhou less, and argued that the non-intervention promise was never seriously embraced by the mainland Chinese state.¹² But at Bandung this sovereignty question was basic: would Revolutionary China, with its updated doctrines founded on Lenin's united front strategy and permanent revolution, would this China seek to claim via sovereign authority over Southeast Asia's tens of millions of Chinese-heritage residents a right to rework government across Southeast Asia? Zhou, cognizantly, was trading away any sovereign claim of right to sponsor Southeast Asian revolution. And what he was getting in return was not small: it was Tibet. Nehru agreed, first of all in Delhi in 1954, to withdraw the remnants of an originally British claim to suzerainty in Tibet, a small chain of sleepy post-offices with armed guards styled as government outposts. He also agreed, generally, not to interfere in future events there, construed as 'internal' matters for China. In return he got a promise of peace and room for national industrial development policies, all the rage in the mid-twentieth century on all sides of the Cold War. Nehru was trading for peace and prosperity, and he traded away other people's freedom. This did not happen by accident. In 1956 he met the Dalai Lama for the first time, and the Dalai Lama managed to find, in a private garden walk, the occasion to brief Nehru about efforts to organize resistance against the Chinese occupation of Tibet. He implored Nehru for help, much preferred to that of the American CIA. It would not be fair to say, of this meeting, that Nehru did nothing. In fact, he returned with the Dalai Lama, who was there as part of Zhou En Lai's entourage for this diplomatic visit, and continued to negotiate with Zhou.

Any attribution of a particular motive to a Nehruvian action, for example his military occupation of Kashmir, has to reckon with the many levels and types of intellectual tensions that organize his thinking.¹³ Let us outline not his motives but

¹² Here see also Tan and Acharya (2008). The Singaporean and other Southeast Asian skepticism that Mao's state accepted Zhou's commitment to peaceful coexistence had evidence and consequences. In an era informed by Lenin's advice that revolutionary parties form 'united fronts' with bourgeois parties to decolonize, and then betray them, the 1960s were scene of tense suspicion and violently exploded alliances: after the 1962 Sino-Indian border war, while China's left led a succession of cultural revolutions against Zhou's state, Singapore's PAP acceded to the 'Cold Store' of its leftists, arrested before elections, and 1964 became Indonesia's year of living dangerously, in which erstwhile allies turned murderously onto Indonesia's Marxist left, killing a half-million people. And even the good fences of partition could not bring peaceful coexistence to North and South Vietnam.

¹³ At present I have a book underway that addresses many dimensions of Nehru's complex decision-making here. Nehru is a free agent and is no one's Subaltern. To grasp many of his actions we need to consider at least seven dialectical tension points in his thinking. For example, there is his waning, originally intense commitment, to international socialist revolution (in his 1934 history lesson for Indira, he explains who Gandhi is, in Indian history, by calling him "the Lenin of India"). Second, there is his

his actions, to understand how clear and sustained the line of events was that consolidated the Indian nation-state and undermined sovereignty claims and other political claims at many locations in the highlands.

In Kashmir, on 22 October 1947, diplomat extraordinaire V.P. Menon (Source) tried to complete his exhausting diplomatic brief and arrange the political “accession,” as they called it, of one of the last of over 500 so-called “princely states” into union with the nation-state of India. Most had acceded on the promise of favorable terms before India’s own independence on 15 August 1947. But Kashmir resisted, the Maharaja long a rival of the Muslim-led Congress Party in his own electoral assembly, until the October “invasion” of Kashmir from its north-west by a large and unprecedentedly well-armed Pathan raiding party. Beyond doubt the new weaponry was courtesy of the new state of Pakistan; whether it was intended for border patrolling rather than the traditional raiding on the lowlands, let alone whether a war of conquest was chartered by the new Muslim state, are matters still murky and doubtful. But once Menon was in the capital on 26 October, the fearful Maharaja was immediately woken to sign a standard treaty of princely accession. While the Pathan raiders surprised the cities by turning back to their homelands, in no small part because their carts were already overladen from the abandoned towns in their path, it was the Indian Army that occupied the famous southern Kashmir valleys. Stanley Tambiah, in his modern classic study of violence, *Leveling Crowds* (1996), calls it “focalization” and “transvaluation,” paired processes, when events are stripped of their contingencies, here for example Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah’s leadership of the

Gandhian commitment to *satyagraha*, *swaraj* and *ahimsa*, i.e., insistence on the truth, self-disciplining self-rule, and nonviolence. Third, his anticolonialism, manifest for example in his efforts to negotiate on behalf of the Indian National Congress working committee the meaning of World War II as grounds for Indian participation: where, in September 1939, he and the congress pledged to join any war effort that genuinely supported democracy and freedom against fascism and imperialism (Zaidi 1985: 26), the king pledged of war of right against might (21) and viceroy, a struggle of reason, right, justice and human freedom (and not, independence) against the rule of force (and not, imperialism or colonialism) (21–23). Fourth, there is his statism, his commitment to one big union, which links to his faith in the United Nations as well as his many actions once in office that, for reasons of state, worked to consolidate central power at the expense of regional and foreign interests. Fifth, his anthropology, especially in his appointment of amateur anthropologist Verrier Elwin to a series of executive posts in control of various so-called tribal territories in newly independent India (see also his call for highlanders to sing, dance, and ignore the modern world, Nehru [1952] 2006). Sixth, his complex responses to America. While in prison during World War II, his writing *The Discovery of India* (Nehru 1946) in the end metamorphosed into a discovery of America, especially after he read Nicholas Spykman’s *The Geography of the Peace* (1944) from which he confronted the theory that the future of the world would be shaped in response to the two waxing “super powers,” leading Nehru to the chapter “Realism and Geopolitics, World Conquest or World Association: the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.” Seventh, and I think in sum, the influence on his vision of H.G. Wells’s version of benevolent, scientific, democratic socialism (see, e.g., Wells 1920). In the end it might be his commitment to scientific solutions and his Elwinian, essentially nineteenth-century evolutionary anthropology, as well as big-state geopolitics, that led Nehru to see self-ruling Highlanders as not only dangerous but “absurd,” despite his long experience of the politics of condescension.

Kashmir National Conference, closely allied with India's Congress Party. Focalization reduces complexity to a simple script, as when the complex ethnic and religious lines of Kashmir's many parts, only some of which are Muslim majority and one of which is mostly Tibetan Buddhist and Muslim, become a province with a Muslim majority and a Hindu raja. The politics of 1947 – when Mountbatten undertook personally to forestall Nehru and Jinnah, while Abdullah held out for an election to decide which country to join (which he clearly thought India would win easily), and while the Maharaja negotiated for a 'standstill' agreement in preference to an accession and merger in order to retain his title – all gets simplified to the story of a Hindu maharaja wanting the Hindu nation-state while the Muslim majority allegedly wanted the Muslim nation-state. Simplified and also falsified: that is the extreme in transvaluation, which unlike focalization is the adding of meaning, theme, and even detail to a story to render it intelligible and significant in a larger, more global narrative – here the story of Hindu-Muslim communalism which, by August 1947, was already traumatically saturated by the blood of a million and more dead.

But the transvaluation, and the real tragedy for peace, prosperity and freedom in Kashmir was yet to be locked into place. That happened in early 1948, when Nehru was stunned at the United Nations. Here, again, we need a bit of background. Michael Mazower (2009) has shown, vividly, in his book *No Enchanted Palace* about the utopian and realist diplomacy surrounding the establishment of the UN, that Nehru shocked the UN establishment with a remarkable victory in 1946. Nehru and the rest of the Indian delegation attacked South Africa for the racism of its emerging apartheid system, as another form of colonialism repugnant to global conscience. Jan Smuts, architect of the UN's original, permissive colonial policy and author of much of its black letter law on non-interference in internal affairs of member states, was correctly confident that he was on the right side of UN policy and procedure. But Nehru won the vote in the General Assembly to find instituted racism a matter of global concern and South Africa beyond the bounds of civility. That's where Mazower's story ends – as he sees it, the first glimmer of decolonized dominance in the General Assembly votes – and our story begins, the payback. In 1948, in short, Nehru was shocked when the Security Council accepted Pakistan's definition of the Kashmir issues, a malformed and incomplete border, rather than the case he himself had brought, the need to reverse an invasion. Nehru had hoped to use the UN prestige and escort to push Indian troops through the Pathan north without violence. Instead, he got a 'line of control' across the center of Kashmir at the limits of his own military occupation of the Southern and Eastern districts. This transvaluation had Cold War thematics. Both the British and Americans wanted Pakistan as an ally against the Soviets. But the payback dimension should not be discounted, as the Security Council takes back the UN from Nehru's nascent global south. And Kashmir became the irreconcilable territory, by UN deliberate choice. Pakistan, to increase pressure for a unification into Pakistan, built its ISI, Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence, notorious engine of jihadist insurrectionists, to sponsor the sorts of movements in southern Kashmir that would pressure for accession into Pakistan.

Democratically inclined Sheik Abdullah was the odd man out. And even a generation later, in the wake of 9/11, ISI would still be plotting how to manipulate presences and absences of global jihad in order to gain the rest of Kashmir, oblivious to the impact of the jihadist politics they fomented elsewhere, notably Afghanistan.

Thus the prospects for a Pathanistan, in northern Kashmir and Pakistan, were never part of any serious global diplomatic discussion. While Menon signed up over 500 princely states by getting *rajās* and *nawabs* to sign accession treaties, including Manipur, an Ahom satellite state in a major rice valley in Northeast India, no one undertook similar diplomacy with the so-called 'Hill Tribes,' even though their populations were, in many cases, in the multiple millions. Neither Mountbatten, Jinnah, Nehru, nor anyone from the Congress or Muslim league ever campaigned for accession arrangements among the Pathans or, in Northeast India, with the Nagas, Kuki, or any other upland group. The English speaking, American Baptist missionary-educated Naga elite was campaigning throughout the mid and late 1940s for a Nagalim, an independent Naga nation, more fiercely after Nehru's government banned the American missionaries. The leading Naga newspaper called for it with an elegant dialogic reworking of Lincoln at Gettysburg: the Nagas, at least one faction claimed, wanted government "of the Nagas, for the Nagas, by the Nagas" (Guha 2007: 268). Congress responded by appointing ex-missionary, ex-Gandhian amateur anthropologist Verrier Elwin to manage the tribal territories. When Nehru finally visited – not the Naga hills but the adjacent, plantation-rich and six-times more populous Assam valley, on a campaign swing in 1951 – Naga leader Angami Zapu Phizo was able to present the case for Nagalim directly. Nehru avowed no knowledge of the famous story that Gandhi, meeting with Phizo shortly before his death, had advised the Naga to stay in India but affirmed their right to depart, promising to stand with them against the Indian Army if necessary. And Nehru did not say yes or no to the Naga demand. He said, "absurd." Anthropologically inflected? Nehru suggested that the Naga should be protected from the modern world, that they were "Above all ... a people who sing and dance and try to enjoy life; not people who sit in stock exchanges, shout at one another and think themselves civilized" (Nehru 1952: 3). He blamed foreign missionaries, whom he thought unsympathetic to the Indian National Congress, for independence movements against India, and hoped, implicitly, that the hill tribes would abandon their Christianity. Focalization and transvaluation in the locality: since the 1950s, Christian conversion has galloped in Nagaland, and 71% of Naga adults are now registered members of the Baptist Church, which compares to Mississippi, the highest similar percentage among American states, at 51%. But finally, in justifying his hold on the hills, Nehru the statesman cited, above all, a heterogeneity of "security concerns," in one stew the problem of his Chinese and Burman borders, and also the prospect that if he acceded to independence for the Nagas, his troubles in Kashmir and even in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere would explode. Nehru was perfectly ready to override the political will of highlanders, especially when engagement with the central government would obviously be good for them – an astonishing social theory from the world leader of anticolonialism.

Finally, the clearest case of this trend is Burma, and Nehru's largely underestimated role in its history of civil war. Even the estimable historian Ramachandra Guha (2007) with his exemplary attention to Kashmir and Northeast India misses this key piece of the puzzle that is Nehru's highland policies and practices. In February 1949, the Burma highlanders came the closest to claiming sovereignty over a large state of any highland army in the postwar period – and Nehru deliberately sabotaged them. In Burma, the violence of World War II had never really ended. The Karen, the Kachin, the Shan and many other highland groups had been courted by the British and provoked to campaign against Japan's Coprosperity Sphere, which ruled lowland Burma for most of the war but never sought to penetrate the highlands except for its failed efforts to shut down the famous Burma Road. The British and even the Americans had good reason for a wartime highlands policy: the Japanese had cut off China's armies from all seaports, and 'flying the hump' was not practical as the sole means of provisioning China's army. The Allies not only managed to reopen the road connecting Mandalay to Kunming in Yunnan, but with remarkable engineering efforts they managed to build a new road from Assam through the mountains, the Ledo Road or Stillwell Road. This road connected the railhead in India with cities in reach of Chiang Kai-shek's army.

Ordinarily, military victors would remember who were their friends, and who their enemies, but other currents ran deeper in decolonizing Asia. Under pressure from both the Indian National Congress and their own wrecked finances to decolonize as quickly as possible, in 1948 the British gave the keys to Burma to the Burman government centered in Rangoon. The hills erupted in rebellion, and were vastly better prepared for actual fighting, especially Smith Dun's Karen National Union army with a long memory of continuous bloody skirmishing with Japanese and Burmans. By February, 1949, ten thousand Karen National Union soldiers surrounded Rangoon, and the nascent Burman state came to be called the 'Seven Mile Government.' The Burman Prime Minister U Nu appealed to Nehru for support and aid, and got it. U Nu's career is long and interesting. Foreign Minister in the Japanese sponsored occupation government, ally of Aung San and his successor when Aung San was assassinated in 1947, U Nu is the same Burman leader who helped Nehru and Zhou sponsor the Bandung Conference and was the third signatory to the deal between Nehru and Zhou securing the borders before that conference began. In 1962 he would lose power to Ne Win's military coup and in 1988 would fail to regain it for himself and Aung San's elected daughter Aung San Suu Kyi. But in February 1948 U Nu was desperate. And Nehru saved him. The means were subtle. Nehru brokered the ceasefire and offered to sponsor the negotiations between the sides. He then called in the British Commonwealth to mediate, for the first and only time in his career, with predictable results: gathering in Delhi, Commonwealth diplomats devised a power-sharing peace plan and declared publicly their willingness to lead the peace talks and orchestrate a plan for new government in Burma. U Nu and his leading general the future dictator Ne Win fiercely declined. By then they could afford to. Nehru had quietly but decisively rearmed and equipped the Burman

national army, requiring that the Burmans keep the military support entirely secret (Bayly and Harper 2007: 464–67). The Karen National Army was pushed back into its hills, where it still holds territory today, though few states recognize its claim to be the independent nation-state Kawthulee.

We need not conclude that highland nation-states are the Shangri-La lost to history by failures to recognize true nations. The history of Nepal is sufficient to suggest problems with that interpretation. (And Veblen, as we shall see, would point us in the opposite direction, toward a terrain of state military investments and their interests that precede, bound, inform, enable and delimit every venture in citizenly sentiment.) The highlands social history and political geography – even its historic economics of highland meat traded for lowland rice, its political economy of trading and raiding, hiding and seeking – create complexes that ill fit the nation-state model. These highlands gained their social contours while functioning for a millennium on the periphery of empires (and including two perduring highland empires: the Ahom galactic polity emanating from Assam until the 1820s, and the Lamaist Tibetan Buddhist theocracy, finally destroyed, not coincidentally, in 1956, the year after the Bandung Conference; see also McGranahan 2010: 67ff). More important to us is the reconfiguration of social relations, and social regard, in the highlands worked by the British Empire, and its consequences. In short, and to speak broadly, in British eyes the lowlanders became Orientals. The vast populations of lowlanders were seen, depicted and dealt with by way of all of the attendant stereotypic characteristics: as Orientals, imagined morally suspect, deceitful, and of uncertain masculinity but vast intelligence and resourcefulness. And the highlanders were generally seen as tribal: hill tribes, imagined to be primitive, emotional more than rational, fearful of the outside world, in need of moral guidance and protection, childlike, and hyper masculine. It never surprised the British when highlanders were adept at skirmishing warfare, from the Pathans to the Karen, though they ascribed it to race rather than history.¹⁴

The general point, here, is not about military intervention as a distortion of normal development of nation-states, but rather the opposite: that state power has, for a very long time, constituted and distributed the opportunities for states, and nations, to develop – with violence where necessary. Review of this reiterated history of coercive, military rejection of claims to sovereignty deemed ‘tribal’ makes the question of joining or resisting a national formation – the question, belonging to what? – less naïve. Ali Sastroamidjojo’s Conference-orienting question, “Where do we stand now, we the people of Asia, in this world of ours today?” better situates the matter, as one recognizes the opportunity for nation-building, and nation-joining, as a function of larger forces. And if, indeed, military conditions of possibility are the rule, and not

¹⁴ The fascinating story of the British Army’s own commitment to their fantasy, and turn to reliance on Gurkhas, and the attendant scramble in Nepal for increasing numbers of families, clans and villages to stake claims to Gurkha identity, has been well documented elsewhere (Des Chene 1991). A similar history makes ethnic Fijians valuable in the postcolonial British army (see May 2014).

the exception, for national prospects, we should neither neglect the colonial roots of most postcolonial situations, nor neglect the postcolonial appropriation – precisely, for Asia, at the Bandung Conference – of this precedent power. The British, fearful and respectful of highland warfare, but not highland politics, and no more respectful and equally fearful of lowland political aspirations, carved boundaries and built political and civil institutions according to their own anticipations and expediencies. Their empire set baseline contours and political preconditions that, at the Bandung Conference, new Asian powers deliberately locked into an order of allowed nation-states for Asia. Whether Nehru too was a racist is not the first question. He inherited an Assam already constituted, in British colonial capitalism, with an inner line sharply separating the populous lowland plantation zone from the so-called tribal highlands. While British courts carefully managed the investments and labor contracts for tens of millions of workers on myriad lowland Assam plantations, only Christian missionaries regularly entered the highlands, which knew little law of any kind, even Ahom. Thus, when Nehru called Phizo “absurd,” and couldn’t imagine a Pathanistan, nor allow a Burma ruled by highland groups, we need to track his own deliberate critique of colonial and postcolonial theories and realities. Nehru was highly influenced by Verrier Elwin’s romantic ethnography. Nehru enabled Elwin to impose a protectionist allochronic regime that led inexorably to fifty years of bloody counterinsurgency conflict in Northeast India. But this ‘anthropology,’ and Nehru’s own vision of progress and primitivism, owed more to nineteenth century anthropology than to the twentieth century Boasian cultural relativism, with its nostalgia for savage, natural men. Nehru’s source for this imagery was, I think, the same as his source for unalloyed, ultimate confidence in science, industry, and state-led benevolent planning as the foundation for all human progress: the British social democratic intellectual leader, H.G. Wells.

Most pertinent for us, why was Fiji so different? Let’s reconsider Fiji’s place within a British Empire becoming Commonwealth, to grasp the distinctive politics of its tribes in a world of nation-building.

Tribals and Orientals in British Imperial Fiji: From Gordon’s Vision to a Political Army State, and beyond It

One reason why the Japanese military swept through Malaysia, Singapore and the rest of British Southeast Asia was because, when it came to military affairs and techniques, the Japanese were unhesitant and state of the art. A British imperial army of 80,000 fell almost immediately to a Japanese invasion force of 20,000, because most of that British defense force was sepoys from India, whom the British refused to arm with modern weaponry or train in advanced tactics. The British rarely liked the idea of armed ‘Orientals,’ in Fiji no more than in Asia. The very last thing the British wanted, in Fiji, was Indo-Fijians seeking to express a military potential. Ironically, the recruits for Fiji’s plantations, especially the north Indian recruits, came

from precisely the towns and cities that were the cachement, for centuries before, of the military labor market (Kolff 1990). Far from the image of eternal peasants uprooted from soil and oriental tradition by the lies of recruitment, Fiji's South Asian plantation laborers came from towns and villages that for centuries had seen foreign service in caravan armies make boys into men, i.e., men with financial stakes and personal alliances capable of supporting independent households and thus ready for marriage. The British Raj disarmed the caravans, and put the military labor market out of business, creating the massive dislocation and underemployment that made this recruiting belt ripe for the lies of plantation recruitment, lies especially about hardship, distance, and types of work required. And in Fiji the state deliberately sustained its hostile distance from the lives of the *girmitiyas*, "a working population and nothing more" in the words of the colony's second Governor (Kelly and Kaplan 2001b: 149).

But this notwithstanding, Fiji's history is in other ways decisively different, specifically in its Pacific Romance that Martha Kaplan (1995), Brij Lal (2010, 2011, 2012) and others have delineated in their scholarship on colonial Fiji and its contours. The very history of resistance to recognition of the sovereignty of armed, multi-million strong highland societies should signal the extraordinariness of Gordon's legal and social policies for Fiji, above all his configuration of forms of aristocracy and even sovereignty for the ethnic Fijian chiefs. Fiji, too, has in its land policies an echo of the inner line, but almost in reverse: it is tribal lands that are protected, bounded, catalogued and reserved. Gordon's land settlement plans included a very important nuance: the ethnic Fijian land reserve policy did not stop him from cutting out and assigning to the Colonial Sugar Refining (CSR) company a vast amount of Fiji's best agricultural land, and in fact his promise to leave the rest in the Fijian reserves was crucial to his ability to entice CSR, Australia's leading sugar refiner, to invest in Fiji. The plan all along was simultaneously to secure Fijian chiefly right and CSR monopoly, a plan for which Gordon credited J.W.B. Money's critique of the causes of the Mutiny in India, and the need to keep races in their places (see also Kelly 2004).

Fiji too has its official deployments of ethnological theory: rather than Verrier Elwin's love of primitivism, it had the more sober and professional Rusiate Nayacakalou, student of Raymond Firth. Nayacakalou channeled by way of Firth the evolutionary vision of Henry Maine as he advised the Great Council of Chiefs about Native Administration and managed the Native Lands Trust Board through Fiji's decolonization to the end of his life in 1972. Nayacakalou explained Fiji's political dilemmas as ethnic Fijian problems with the culture of capitalist individualism and political democracy. Drawing on Maine's famous status-to-contract vision of social evolution, he influentially declared the ethnic Fijians people of "status" and not "contract."

Critics of British policy toward ethnic Fijians in Fiji deployed as many easy evolutionary assumptions as did the champions of the policy: ethnic Fijians were either kept backward, frozen away from progress, or else protected and shepherded more slowly. Leaving aside evolutionary tropes and allochronic judgments, something very

different took shape in the circuits of affection animating many British institutions in Fiji, notably the army and the Great Council of Chiefs. As the army in Fiji metamorphosed from white ('European') officers and enlisted men, to white leaders over ethnic Fijian men, to ethnic Fijian officers and men, to ethnic Fijians joining the British as well as Fijian armies, and favoring the former (see also May 2014), the army in Fiji increasingly became a nexus of ethnic Fijian sovereign expression. When its special forces led coups, its *mana* thus expressed made it the classic political army, vehicle of national self-determining by taking over the state. With no democratic give and take, Fiji then was neither a nation nor a state legitimated by contractual transaction among citizens. Nor was it a pre-emptive state, like Nehru's destroying Naga claims to sovereignty in order to protect them, a state pre-emptively protecting. Eventually, yes, the political army renewing Fijian sovereignty and ownership of Fiji would give way, in the latest, strangest coup, as the military destroyed even the Great Council of Chiefs, and ended the districting that privileged Fijian votes, in what its leader told the UN, in 2007, was the "coup to end all coups" (Fraenkel and Firth 2009: 455, 458n13). But until 2006, Fijian sovereignty, ownership, and political will asserted itself with extraordinary lack of limit, without balance of any alienation, without recognition of other right. Whereas the Wilsonian liberal nation-state paradigm relied on vast contractual rules, abjuration of all right of violence, and remade the nation from blood into law via the new being expressed by state, this Fijian nation was not alienated from kinship (especially, in Sahlins' sense of shared substance), not made in public, not even dependent on any larger justice than its own. The Indo-Fijians were not then invited to join it, could not become the *taukei* or owners of the land, nation, or state. And remarkably, despite the limited actions expected from them, they found powerful means of their own to resist, withdraw, object, and peacefully not cooperate.

"Belonging to what?" then, metamorphoses into "belonging or what?" After so many have asked what Fiji's ethnic landscape meant for prospects of postcolonial citizenship, let us ask instead about the implications, and options, for diasporic ex-Indians in the wake of Fiji's unique deployments of colonial and postcolonial state power, about the effects of Fiji's unique relations between 'tribe' and 'state,' and about the metamorphosing consequences of the vectors of sympathy ensconced in institutions of violence. We find in Fiji, from the first Governor to the last, from the already elegiac Sir Arthur Gordon of the 1870s to the unpleasantly sardonic Tim Hardy, "The Reluctant Imperialist" of the 1960s (see also Kaplan's comments), we find ensconced in the 1970 independence Constitution, a colonial and then post-colonial state remarkably different in the orientation of its implements of violence toward the relationship of state and tribe. Publishing in 2009, thus with the condescension, also, of hindsight, Hardy remembers shuttering most of the Special Branch offices uselessly probing for revolutionaries among the Indians and labor unions, and predicting that "the only serious threat facing Fiji for as long as it was possible to foresee was that, if provoked by the formation of a government perceived by Fijians to be dominated by non-indigenes, the Fiji military might stage a *coup d'etat*"

(2009: 338). But Hardy's British Empire was more concerned with whether the ethnic Fijians would accept independence, than with the limits of their commitment to democracy. In fact, he recalls a "blimpish junta" of British colonials, reveling in Fiji's imperial backwater.

That blimpish junta continually warned Fiji's Great Council of Chiefs that without the crown's protection the weak, 'backward' Fijians would fall under the domination of Indian 'immigrants,' resulting in the liquidation of the system of chieftainships and the end of Fijian culture. By nature conservative in the first place, the chiefs weren't hard to convince. Indeed, the blimps' propaganda terrified them. (ibid.: 353)

Almost no one in decolonizing Fiji protested the impropriety of an army built up entirely of ethnic Fijians – not because the asymmetry was ignored, but because it was a comfort for the chiefs.

Hardy served in British and then Malaysian Sarawak before Fiji, through much of the 1960s, through the tail-end of counter-insurgency against Chinese communists, integration of Sarawak into decolonized Malaysia, the failure of Indonesian pan-Malaysian political plans, even Indonesia's year of living dangerously. He assiduously tracked actual, and increasingly pathetic, Maoist rebels in Sarawak, especially after the slaughter in Indonesia, and in 1965 gathered evidence of mainland China's refusal to send arms or funds to them.

All were happy to hear of 'O's plight and of China's refusal to help but some of the heavies in KL, London, Labuan, Washington and Kuching were none too pleased to be shown proof that one of their articles of faith – that Mao handed guns to every third-world troublemaker who asked for them – was, simply, untrue. They had exploited the line that Mao was behind every gun pointed at Western interests in Asia to support their continuous – and successful – clamour for more weaponry for themselves. They didn't change their tune. (ibid.:300)

Hardy knew how far colonial state antipathy for both Chinese and Malay political agents could go, especially antipathy for Chinese communists. Serving in postcolonial Malaysia, "a foreigner in the service of a sovereign Asian nation ... I had to keep my opinions to myself" when a wrongheaded colonial identification of a Chinese village as communist led to a perimeter fence and curfew, a policy "vindictive, unjust, small-minded, politically daft and materially wasteful" (ibid.: 313). He was disgusted, more than surprised, he says, when "the Indonesian army turned its back on Malaysia and turned its weapons on its own people" (ibid.: 314).

Fiji, then, appalled Hardy differently, not especially for its state violence, since it was clearly more peaceful, but for the more complete absence of justification for it. "They spoke darkly of 'subversives' like the local Indian political leader, A.D. Patel"

(ibid.: 321), but there were no actual subversives. Like New York Times political reporter Henry Kamm (1988) in Fiji a generation later, observing after Fiji's second 1987 coup the many military checkpoints, and realizing that the military were deploying a technique learned in Middle Eastern peacekeeping, against a population bereft of insurgents to catch, Hardy quickly realized in decolonizing Fiji that the state's affections and contempt were generating both ritual pomp and widespread fear. Hardy did what he could to dismantle Special Branch, he says, and left, this time, at independence.

The distribution of power is remarkably different, clearly, in the vast India shaped by the Indian National Congress, and the comparatively tiny islands of Fiji ruled through several elections after 1970 by the increasingly chiefly Alliance Party. Consideration of sovereignty frustrations among Asian highland groups more than ten times more populous than ethnic Fijians can remind us of the unique benefits, not least in recognition of the political rights of ethnic Fijians, that Gordon's original legal system provided the islands. But, this comparison suggests, Fiji's problems stem from more than the failure of its colonial and then postcolonial governments to grant, in similar full measure, recognition of citizen rights and full participation in sovereign activities for the rest of the population of its new republics. Even the idea of coup culture does not fully fathom or locate the problematic principle in its roots, which is the willingness to deploy military force on missions of culturalist counterinsurgency. Sanjib Baruah, in his brilliant monograph on Northeast India's politics, *Durable Disorder*, quotes Mrinal Miri's "admonition that the idea of a nation having a 'policy' towards part of itself is odd" (Baruah 2005: xvii). Independent Fiji inherited not just a split population, but a long colonial history of very different kinds of policies towards parts of itself, ensconced deeply in its extant social institutions. While the unbalanced social roots and sympathies of the almost entirely ethnic Fijian army made the first four coups and their ethnic vectors clearly legible as interest group politics, we should not be distracted thereby from the fundamental strangeness of the deployment of military force on a mission of cultural protection and provision. In its latest coup, the military clearly seeks to use its tools politically against all claimants of right: it now has policy for, and after all against, everyone's political aspirations.

***Shanti* and *Mana*, Grace in Exile and Redemption from Alienation: Belonging to What? Belonging or What?**

"Man needs a master," Immanuel Kant famously concluded in thesis six of his critique of all philosophies of history (Kant [1784] 1991). The end of enlightenment required public control to establish the peace necessary for advance of private reason. Kant here accepted Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ([1762] 1968) commitment to the common will as condition of possibility for private reason, but not John Locke's ([1689] 1988) more sanguine location of natural laws and interests behind the necessary

violence of the state. Kant's student and trenchant critic Johann Gottfried Herder placed Kant's certitude, correctly, in the "Averroan" tradition, influenced not merely by Hobbes ([1651] 1982) but by the whole discussion of human nature renewed from Aristotelean roots by Ibn Rushd ([1178] 2017), Ibn Khaldun ([1379] 1989), and others on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. It was Herder, constituting a strong argument for constitution of society by human culture, not by political states, who declared that "man needs a master" was a pernicious and erroneous doctrine.¹⁵ A strong cultural approach (from Herder to Durkheim to Sahlins) locates the fundamental dynamics of society in cultural wholes precedent to and inclusive of the realms and reasons of state.

A very different critique of Hobbes begins with Montesquieu. Herder's simple reversal, that "man needs no master," rendered states, especially strong states like Rome and all future conquest empires simply evil. But Montesquieu worked a sea change, much like that wrought onto Sigmund Freud by Marcel Mauss (1973). It is thanks to society that an unconscious is possible, Mauss and his heir Michel Foucault ([1976] 1978) have shown, not thanks to unconscious needs that society was constituted. Similarly, Montesquieu ([1748] 1989) showed, war begins with states and their specific means and ends. States necessitate war, Montesquieu argued, far from the Hobbesian vision of a natural war of all against all as the thing necessitating states. Humans, then, do not so much need a master as inhabit a different world when they have one. Perhaps the most trenchant, and certainly the fiercest, critic of Kant in this light is Thorstein Veblen ([1917] 1998), present at the creation of the American century, and mordantly observing its roll-out. Precisely as Woodrow Wilson at Versailles began to articulate what has eventually become known as the 'end of history' doctrine – national sovereignty as the only legitimate form of sovereignty – Veblen observed realities at odds with the mandates of theory: states coming before nations. Where Wilson depicted self-determining nations expressing their political will via states of their own, Veblen observed states ascribing duties before awarding rights. States grant citizenship and other forms of representation sometimes for some, but tax any and all in blood and treasure, Veblen argued, according to the needs not of nation but of state. Anticipating the new American problematic of 'nation-building' not as global challenge but as global fraud, Veblen saw the deepest problem in all doctrines of political necessity, dialectical and otherwise, lumping Marx and Wilson into the Kantian basket as grand teleologists. Veblen saw a simpler world, not one composed of irreducible wholes with internal dialectics, but merely one of situations that evolve; Veblen resituated the state from a Kantian to a Darwinian universe. Thereby, Veblen also resituated citizenship, rights, and duties into problems inevitably to be negotiated with extant leviathans. Veblen's point of view moves dilemmas of belonging from special case to general question: how do any and all citizens seek peace effectively?

¹⁵ "The proposition ought to be reversed: 'The man who needs a master is a mere animal; as soon as he becomes a man, a master is no longer necessary for him.'" Herder ([1800] 1966: 447).

Observing trends globally, let us list many unintended outcomes of the UN era's global distribution of self-determination in reality. New forms of elite diasporic migration, a kind of self-determination by other means, join with many other unexpected global developments, from the rise of NGOs to many new kinds of low intensity and asymmetric warfare, peacekeeping interventions, and political armies of several kinds – all this despite the American premise that it would be democracy, and not the army, that in the first instance connected the nation to the state, and, as in Fiji, vice versa. To understand the contemporary geography of anger, it is useful to grasp the problems, even the bad faith, in the Wilsonian vision of self-determination as a global economic solution: everyone to set by their actions the terms of their own fate. Self-determination comes originally from John Locke's ([1689] 1988) Protestantism of free will, versus Calvinist predestination in which God decides who finds heaven or hell in their future. Only in the hands of Woodrow Wilson at Versailles did this Christian otherworldly moral doctrine become a vision of how to arrange, or at least imagine, this-worldly fates, and in fact, this-worldly fates not of individuals but of collectives, nations with their own states. The idea made decolonization imaginable, with limited liability to ex-colonizers. It reconfigured as aid and gift all assistance to those whose economic interdependence and even simple economic dependence could henceforth be occluded. Separate but equal, as the Americans once would say approvingly.

But while the American civil rights movement reconsidered the logic of separate but equal at home in the United States, and 'super power' Cold War transvaluations disrupted efforts at peaceful coexistence between nations and states more globally, new kinds of diaspora, after decolonization, have become the exceptions that disproved the rule. Their dilemmas of belonging are not moments of failure in the order of nations and states. They are the actual reality at the limits of all citizenship, in a world where states precede and delimit the structures of opportunity. Precisely where neither self-control nor peace can be taken for granted, such dilemmas are resolvable only by the profoundest value commitments.

As in Fiji: late colonial Fiji's chiefly leadership was famously ambivalent about independence, not surprising given the grounding of their power in the valorization of cultural difference and the protections and supports of Empire. Ironically, the more Fiji's coups restored privilege, and the more the *mana* of chiefs usurped civil order, the more the resulting instability again suggested threats to settled order and the need for more secure protections. Most recently, for Fiji's latest and strangest coup, New Caledonia's Noumea Accords have unfortunately provided an all too attractive military model. In New Caledonia (to finish, here, with a military governmentality closer in many ways to contemporary Fiji's) the perduring French colonial state enforces a policy against open politics in its civil space. The Noumea Accords create highly temporary peace between indigenes and settlers by banning elections, in order to break cycles of election tension and conflict. The states in both New Caledonia and Fiji hope that demography and new economies will transform political interests. But in fact, as in the closely kindred counterinsurgency occupations in Highland

Asia and elsewhere, such military suppression of democratic political activity almost inevitably generates, instead, a new and growing geography of anger. Thus Fiji has moved from the problem of Indian belonging, to the problem of anyone bearing actual rights. In quest for road maps, the military has traded the cartoons of the colonial blimpish junta for blank pieces of paper.

Compared to Burma, Tibet, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, most of Northeast India, and most of the rest of the Asian Highlands, Fiji today looks peaceful, prosperous, and even in some ways free. In Fiji, the demographics might well bring a happy ending if and when ethnic Fijians can accept democracy after all, and there is nothing like absence to make the heart grow fonder. Indo-Fijians have sustained their commitment to *shanti* – morally-uplifting peacefulness – and are already among the world's leaders in recognizing the emergent reality of global citizenship. Ethnic Fijians operate socially and politically by way of a volatile mixture of evangelism, nostalgia, rent-seeking, and cultural pride, interrupting the market models of self-interest more congruent with legitimacy for neo-liberal democracy, such as it is. That is why, for a long time now, the biggest conflicts in Fiji have not been between Indo-Fijians and ethnic Fijians but among ethnic Fijians, a trend that will continue.

This conclusion does not proffer for Fiji a general political solution, but instead observes the positive content that this postcolonial political history has rendered for Fiji's citizens and cultures, on many sides. Many ethnic Fijians, especially those not privileged in the capitalist economy, still treasure their heritage of self-definition with a tribal counter-concept, in a quest for life without alienation. This self-determination is of and for a culturally collective self, and it is as often committed to *loloma*, kindly love, as it is to the aggressions of *mana*. Indo-Fijians, meanwhile, still face the cardinal Maussian problematic of how to give without subordinating self to other, and feel existential risk regardless of whether they are staying or going. Continuing peace in Fiji depends still on whether those two goals can be reconciled, *mana* and *shanti*, regardless of how long the military keep all sides frozen via antipolitical strategies. Fiji's best hope is that anger against its antipolitical state will simultaneously be firm enough and yet moderate enough to provide the common ground on which not so much one nation as an acceptable interdependence can be realized. In fact, Fiji is ironically well positioned to pierce in practice the illusions of independence and purely self-determination, and in a shared cultural field of recognized and reconciled differences, to move toward a common future without the need, in the end, to build one nation or even to want one.

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7 **Guests without a Host: The Indian Diaspora(s) in Mauritius**

Burkhard Schnepel

Introduction

The ethnohistory and situation of the Indian diaspora in Mauritius today is not only well-documented in archives (see Carter 1996; Deerpalsingh and Carter 1996a, 1996b), it has also been thoroughly studied by a number of scholars.¹ Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to systematize and analyze the body of knowledge that already exists and situate it within the broader framework of the Indian diaspora. More concretely, I wish to identify seven characteristics particular to ‘Persons of Indian Origin’ (PIO) in Mauritius, especially in comparison with Indian diasporas elsewhere. These ‘particularities’ are closely linked with one another and/or build on one another. This is not to claim that one or the other cannot also be found in other Indian diasporas, but both individually and in combination they make the Mauritian case specific. Due to rather than despite this specificity, they may eventually also tell us something about the contestations and strategic maneuvers that individuals and groups in Indian diasporas engage in to make their lives possible, bearable, and even successful elsewhere in the world as well.

¹ See, among others, Beejadhur (1995), Benedict (1961), Bissoondoyal and Servansing (1986), Boodhoo (1999), Carter (1995, 1996, 2000), Hazareesingh (1966, 1977), Hollup (2000), Link (2002), Meisig (1999), and Nirsimloo-Anenden (1990).

First Particularity: The Indian Diaspora(s) in Mauritius Has (Have) Many Different Roots and Routes

The Indian diaspora in Mauritius is manifold and even heterogeneous in its social, caste, class, religious and linguistic respects, and, perhaps most importantly, in places of origin on the Indian subcontinent. Most of the ancestors of today's Indo-Mauritians came to the island as sugar plantation workers ('coolies') under the 'indentured labor' scheme. The scheme was introduced after 1834, when British abolished slavery.² The majority of the Indians shipped to Mauritius (mainly from Calcutta and Madras, but also from Bombay later in the nineteenth century) came from rural areas and belonged to the lowest and poorest castes and classes on the Indian subcontinent.³ Later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the 'coolies' were joined by clerks, priests, and merchants from the higher castes and better-off strata of Indian society.

As for their geographical roots, almost two thirds of immigrant laborers (today roughly 700,000 Indo-Mauritians of a total 1.2 million Mauritians) came from the north of India, mainly Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. These people were and are known in Mauritius as Biharis, and they spoke and sometimes speak Bhojपुरi, a local north Indian variant of Hindi. Approximately the remaining third came from the south of India, being further divided into Tamil- and Telugu-speaking groups of roughly equal size. The merchants mainly came from western India, so that today three to four percent of the Indo-Mauritians are Marathis and Gujaratis who retain their own group consciousness and language affiliation.⁴ Looking at religion, around 65 % of Mauritius's PIOs are Hindu, 25 % Muslim, and 10 % Christian, with many Tamils especially having converted to Christianity. Within these categories there are also various, sometimes quite important further sub-distinctions, such as between orthodox Hindus and Arya Samaj Hindus,⁵ Sunni and Shiite Muslims,⁶ and Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals. However, Hollup (1994: 300) prefers a categorization based on what he calls "ethnic populations." According to his estimates (based on the 1972 and 1983 censuses), Hindus make up 40.2 % of the total Mauritian population (58 % of PIO), Tamils 7.3 % (10.5 %), Telugus 3.0 % (4.3 %), Marathis 2.1 % (3.1 %), and Muslims 16.6 % (24 %). These various regional backgrounds, mother tongues and ethnic and religious identifications combine dynamically with other

² On indentured labor, see especially Tinker (1974). Carter (1996), who seeks to offer a balanced picture of indentured migration by discussing both the cruelties *and* the opportunities it offered, pointedly calls it "a rescue package for sugar plantations" (1996: 19).

³ On the situation in India, see Carter (1992) and Prakash (1992).

⁴ On Gujarati merchants in Mauritius, see Kalla (1987).

⁵ On the Arya-Samaj in Mauritius, see Hollup (1995) and Ramsurrun (2001).

⁶ On Muslims in Mauritius, see Donath (2009), Hollup (1996), and Jahangeer-Chojo (1997, 2002).

identity-making and identity-unmaking criteria, such as education, a rural-urban divide, and differences in economic success and professional standing.⁷

One should therefore be cautious in speaking of *the* Indian diaspora in Mauritius as a homogenous group. Rather, we should think of a plurality when it comes to describing and analyzing the *internal* socio-cultural, politico-economic, and religious aspects of the Indo-Mauritian diaspora(s). However, more important than these statistics is that Indo-Mauritians themselves often strategically emphasize and adopt different identities in different situations. Thus, in some situations – and in structural opposition to the other, non-Indian, inhabitants of Mauritius, as well as the island’s Indo-Muslims – some PIOs may stress that their ‘ancestral language’ is Sanskrit and their religion Hindu, while in other situations Hindus and Muslims may point to their common Indian origin as opposed to fellow Mauritian nationals with African, Chinese, or French roots. In yet other situations, when it comes to defending their social, educational and economic privileges, well-off or well-educated Indians may ally with *Gens-de-Couleurs* and/or Franco-Mauritians of similar standing, at the expense of solidarity with rural and poor Indo-Mauritians. In other situations, internal differences may fall away, not only within the community of Indo-Mauritians, but between all ethnic groups and other communities living on Mauritius, as when Mauritius has an important soccer match against Réunion, or when relations between Mauritians and tourists are at stake.⁸

In a nutshell, PIOs in Mauritius adopt multiple, overlapping, and situationally shifting ‘fusion-and-fission’ forms of identification, both within the category of Indo-Mauritian and when transcending this category, for example, when they see themselves as belonging to larger entities such as the Mauritian nation, or as Asians, or even as Creoles (e.g. when the southwest Indian Ocean is compared and aligned with the history and the state of affairs in the Caribbean). Some of these identifications, namely those derived from the region of origin on the Indian subcontinent, or those referring to the three main religions or language markers on Mauritius, are more important from the actors’ points of view than others, and therefore tend to be ‘essentialized’ more strongly.⁹

Second Particularity: Indo-Mauritians Have Established a New Life Relatively Close to ‘Home’

In the nineteenth century, ‘coolies’ were better off than African slaves, who were forcibly deported in chains, in terrible hygienic conditions, and under severe penal

⁷ In addition, an estimated 5% of Indian emigrants to Mauritius were *adivasis* or tribals. See Hollup (2000: 222).

⁸ On the socio-cultural and economic impact of tourism on Mauritius, see Schnepel and Schnepel (2008, 2009a) and Schnepel (2009).

⁹ Plantation owners did not hesitate to make use of inner-Indian ethnic cleavages to ‘divide and rule.’

regimes. The average death toll on vessels transporting Indian laborers was around three to five percent, while the death toll for slaves had been roughly ten percent. Certainly three to five percent is bad enough, and is therefore an advantage clearly to be understood in relative terms. Indian ‘coolies’ were also crammed into inhuman and unhygienic spaces on often old and unsafe vessels at risk of shipwreck, and were prone to the spread of epidemic diseases (see Carter 1996: 45–47). The disruptive journey through which family, neighborhood and friendship ties were severed for a long time, if not forever, as well the potentially bleak and insecure life in an unknown and often hostile world, placed a severe mental burden on those who journeyed across the ‘black waters’ (*kala pani*) to new shores.¹⁰ Once safely there, communication with and remittances to families back home in India were uncertain, and a return journey would only be possible, if at all, after the standard five-year contract had been completed.

A journey to Mauritius took around eight weeks from Calcutta and six weeks from Madras or Bombay (see Carter 1996: 32). The passage to Mauritius was therefore long and hard compared to that to Sri Lanka and Burma. Moreover, from Sri Lanka and Burma it was easier to return to India frequently and to maintain some ties with home, and there it was also possible to be joined by members of one’s family, caste, village, and sub-region on a larger scale. This made it possible to try and ‘copy’ one’s socio-cultural life at home, with all its established networks of solidarity and its traditional caste-based social organization. This socially more integrated system of migration was known as *kangani*.¹¹ In contrast, trips to Mauritius were by and large made by individuals, rather than being family, sub-caste or village affairs. While on board, one might meet neighbors or friends, or make new friends. These new relationships became known as *jehaji bhai* or ‘ship brothers,’ and later on the island, they could assume the character of quasi-kinship bonds.¹²

Nevertheless, compared to other destinations in the world-wide indentured labor scheme,¹³ Mauritius was still relatively close to home. South and East African destinations as well as Malaysia were just a week or two further away and may be

¹⁰ Moreover, Carter (1996: 51) estimates that around thirteen percent of immigrants died during their first five years on the island.

¹¹ On the *kangani* system of importing labor, see Jain (1993: 6–11).

¹² The issue of caste in Mauritius deserves a separate discussion that would go beyond the scope of this article. Here it suffices to state with Hollup: “Among the Hindus of Mauritius, there is no system of hierarchically ordered groups, but caste populations still exist as kinship groups, although the endogenous groups have undergone considerable change” (1994: 298). See also Hollup (2000).

¹³ In all, approximately 1.5 million Indians left India as contract laborers before 1914, according to Carter (1996: 20, 22) and Tinker (1974: 62, 114). These numbers are roughly distributed as follows: Kenya 32,000; Seychelles 6,315; Reunion 26,000; South Africa 152,184; Fiji 60,965; Mauritius 453,063; Jamaica 36,412; Guadeloupe 43,326; Martinique 25,509; Trinidad 143,939; British Guiana 238,909; Dutch Guiana 34,304; Grenada 3,200; St. Vincent 2,472; St. Lucia 4,350. In this scheme, Mauritius not only received the largest number of contract laborers, it was also the first such destination. In many ways, Mauritius was used as an experiment and model for other countries. See McPherson (2009).

comparable in this respect. Destinations in the Caribbean or Fiji were so much further away (19 to 20 weeks on board) that these longer distances made a significant qualitative difference.

Indo-Mauritians who had completed their time as contract laborers could return to India, and about a third did so. However, many of these returnees did not stay in India, but re-emigrated to Mauritius, this time bringing their wives and families with them. The relative proximity of Mauritius to the Indian homeland, accompanied by the gradual improvement of postal communications and maritime transport, therefore enabled a sort of circular or chain migration to develop. The significant number of those who stayed in Mauritius, the ever-increasing number of new arrivals (among them many re-emigrants with their wives and families), and the increasing number of female coolies (which resulted in marriages and island-born offspring)¹⁴ all gradually resulted in the establishment of more traditional forms of social cohesion among Indo-Mauritians and, as we shall see in the next ‘particularity,’ in the important numerical strength of PIOs on Mauritius.

Third Particularity: The Indian Diaspora in Mauritius is Substantial in Absolute Numbers, but Even More So in Relative Numbers

It is estimated that more than twenty million Indians live abroad today, as reflected in the statistics shown in the table next page. Two major historical waves of Indian emigration are largely responsible for these numbers.¹⁵ The first wave consisted of migration in the nineteenth century to the plantation economies in southern, subtropical parts of the world. The second wave, starting after 1945 and arguably still continuing, has brought Indians to the industrialized countries of North America and Europe, as well as to Australia and, for several decades now, to the oil-producing Arab world. By and large, the descendants of those who came with the first wave are today regarded as Persons of Indian origin or PIO, while substantial numbers of those who came with the second wave or their descendants are Non-Resident Indians or NRIs.

The Indian diaspora on Mauritius is substantial, and exceeded in absolute numbers only by those in Great Britain, Canada, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the USA, and the United Arab Emirates. However, only Malaysia and Myanmar – two countries with their very own special *kangani* histories –

¹⁴ Towards the 1870s, it was made obligatory to have at least 40% of women on coolie-ships. At the end of the century, Indians born locally on Mauritius started to outnumber new immigrants (Carter 1996: 149).

¹⁵ For overviews, see among others Jain (1993), Schnepel (2005), van der Veer (1995), and Vertovec (2000).

Table: Estimated Size of Overseas Indian Community

Land	Persons of Indian Origin (PIO)	Non-Resident Indians (NRI)	Total
Australia	160 000	30 000	190 000
Bahrain	nil	130 000	130 000
Canada	700 000	150 000	850 000
Fiji	337 000	nil	337 000
France	55 000	10 000	65 000
Germany	10 000	25 000	35 000
Great Britain			1 200 000
Guadeloupe	40 000	nil	40 000
Guyana	392 000	nil	392 000
Italy	36 000	36 000	72 000
Jamaica	60 000	1 500	61 500
Kenya	85 000	15 000	100 000
Kuwait	1 000	294 000	295 000
Malaysia	1 600 000	15 000	1 615 000
Mauritius	705 000	11 000	716 000
Myanmar	2 500 000	2 000	2 502 000
Netherlands	200 000	15 000	215 000
Oman	1 000	311 000	312 000
Qatar	1 000	130 000	131 000
Réunion	220 000	nil	220 000
Saudi Arabia	nil	1 500 000	1 500 000
Singapore	217 000	90 000	307 000
South Africa			1 000 000
Surinam	150 000	nil	150 000
Tanzania	85 000	5 000	90 000
Thailand	70 000	15 000	85 000
Trinidad & Tobago	500 000	nil	500 000
United Arab Emirates	50 000	900 000	950 000
USA			1 700 000
Yemen	100 000	1 000	101 000

These figures have been selected from the more detailed information "Estimated Size of Overseas Indian Community: Countrywise" found in Ministry of External Affairs (2002: xlvii–xlx).

had larger first wave immigration. Furthermore, in relation to the total population, the Indian diaspora in Mauritius holds *the* top position, with more than two-thirds of the population having an Indian background.

With the gradual democratization of Mauritian society from the first half of the twentieth century onwards, and the granting of full electoral and citizenship rights today,¹⁶ this demographic dominance has allowed Indians great political influence, and even assured their dominance within the Mauritian political system. Indeed, with the exception of Paul Berenger, a left-wing Franco-Mauritian who led the country for periods in the 1990s and 2000s, all Mauritian prime ministers have had an Indian background. This numerical and subsequent *political* superiority was accompanied, if not also decisively triggered and supported, by the gradual *economic* liberation and upward *social* mobility of PIOs in Mauritius. Today, substantial numbers of Indo-Mauritians are well-off and highly educated, and are thereby 'upwardly mobile' citizens. Therefore, the politico-economic and social standing of contemporary Indo-Mauritians has improved greatly when compared not only with their initial state of 'coolitude,' but also with the descendants of their former relatives and neighbors who chose to stay behind in India.¹⁷

Fourth Particularity: The Indian Diaspora in Mauritius Is Not the Only One There

According to the 1982 census (the last of its kind), the population of Mauritius totaled 1.2 million people, and was categorized as follows: Hindus 52%; Muslims 16%, Sino-Mauritians 3%, and General Population 29%. Even at first glance, therefore, it is obvious that Mauritius is a multi-ethnic and poly-religious society. This diversity is expressed by the 20 annual nationwide holidays which demonstrate that most religious and ethnic groups on the island are equally acknowledged and their interests and self-esteem are respected. Another symbol of plurality (and unity in diversity) is the national flag, which features an abstraction of the colors of the rainbow.¹⁸

If we look at the categorizations used in the census more carefully, some incongruities appear. The distinction between Hindus and Muslims is obviously a religious

¹⁶ On democratization processes and ethnic politics in Mauritius, see Bräutigam (1997), Carroll and Carroll (1999 and 2000), Mathur (1997), and Mukonoweshuro (1991).

¹⁷ For the economic development of Indo-Mauritians, see Allen (1999: chapter 6), Carter (2002), Carter, Deepalsingh and Govinden (2000), Metha (1995), and Srebrnik (1999).

¹⁸ For the demographic development of Mauritius, see Lutz (1994), Dinan (2003), and Royle (1995). The difficulty of categorizing sections of the Mauritian population into clearly defined and 'politically correct' groups is expressed by the fact that, during more than a century of state-run census activities, a number of different criteria were tested and rejected until, in 1982, all such endeavors were discarded. See Christopher (1992).

one, and we have already noted that the ancestors of both Hindus and Muslims in Mauritius today originally came from India, especially North India. However, given that various Muslim groups on the island have recently started to claim that they originate from the Arabian peninsula and to call Arabic (not Hindu or Urdu) their ‘ancestral language,’ these common local roots in India should again be emphasized. Hence, both Hindus and Muslims are *Indo*-Mauritians and were actually labelled as such in censuses until 1947, the year of India’s independence and the partition into India and Pakistan. However, the third largest census group, ‘Sino,’ was not a religious categorization but rather one based on region of origin, namely China or East Asia. This group could be subdivided into Hakka and Cantonese speaking Chinese. Subsumed under the ‘General Population’ label are such heterogeneous groups as white Franco-Mauritians (accounting for 2% of the population), ‘Creoles’ (in the Mauritian context the descendants of African slaves) and ‘Coloureds’ or ‘*Gens de couleur*’ (a hybrid category denoting the offspring of mixed, usually ‘black’ (female) and ‘white’ (male) unions who were barred from inheriting their father’s estates but often received better education and other privileges, allowing them to climb the social ladder).¹⁹ Strikingly, the descendants of former slaves and former masters now found themselves in the same demographic melting pot, one called ‘General.’ This indicates that, in post-colonial Mauritius, the descendants of indentured laborers had become such a majority that they could be split into two religious groups and also be distinguished from the East Asian ‘Sino-group.’ The unified category of ‘General Population,’ made up of the two distinct groups that first populated the island in the eighteenth century, can therefore be defined negatively, as all those who did not come from Asia.

Using other categorizations in the census would obviously have produced different figures. Taking regions of origin, for example, a census would have identified macro-groups as Indian, Chinese, French and African, or Europeans, who could be distinguished from Africans and Asians. If one took religion in all instances (and not only in the first two) as the criterion, the cards would have been substantially re-shuffled: not only are all sub-groups of the ‘General Population’ Christians, whether black, white or colored, but so are large numbers of Mauritians hailing from South India (probably subsumed under the label ‘Hindu’ in 1982), as well as most Sino-Mauritians.²⁰ Taking yet another criterion, namely that of language, would have made things both easier and more complicated. Officially, fifteen languages are spoken in Mauritius, including English, French, Kreol, Bhojpuri, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, Arabic, Hakka, and Cantonese. However, in almost all interactions, a French-based Kreol is spoken, and occasionally French. Indeed, many Mauritians speak excellent French, with most of the national media also communicating in French. The official national language, however, is neither French nor

¹⁹ Numerous ‘*Gens de Couleur*’ today are lawyers, teachers, surgeons, journalists, managers, or in similar ‘middle-class’ positions.

²⁰ On religion as an ‘identity marker,’ see especially Eriksen (1998: 90–97).

Kreol, but English, though (or perhaps precisely because) only a minority of educated Mauritians master the language and enjoy using it. If one looks at language less as a means of communication than as a symbolic marker of identification and belonging, another dimension is added. Asked about their ancestral language or mother tongue, Indo-Mauritians in particular tend to mention languages such as Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu and even Arabic, which their ancestors could barely have spoken when they arrived. This seems strange because few Indo-Mauritians have these as their native languages today, nor would have many of their ancestors or ‘mothers.’ While speaking Kreol in everyday life, some other Indo-Mauritians today also speak Hindi, Marathi, Bhojपुरi or Urdu at home and/or as a second language in community affairs. However, for reasons of identity politics, Indo-Mauritians would not call Kreol, the language of the Creoles, their ‘mother tongue.’²¹

In Mauritius then, we find multiple, sometimes overlapping, sometimes structurally opposed identities in action and motion. Hence, Mauritius represents a quite heterogeneous conglomeration of groups, which can be classified in a number of ways, according to country or continent of origin, phenotypical characteristics, (claimed) ancestral languages, religious denominations, and socio-cultural or economic characteristics. Among these various groups on the island, PIOs constitute the majority: about two-thirds when all Indo-Mauritians are considered, and still more than 50% when only Hindus are counted. As I pointed out in ‘Particularity Number One,’ these PIOs can be further differentiated or divided along various lines when different criteria are applied, not only analytically (from the point of view of an outside observer), but also by the actors themselves in their dynamic and strategic responses to various situations. This fluid and shifting situation applies not only to the PIOs, but also to other groups on the island. In Eriksen’s words: “The main theoretical point here is that ethnicity is, in practice, *not* an inert, categorical property of persons (although folk models tend to depict it as such), but a property of the relationship between agents acting in situations and contexts and as such, its meaning changes with the context” (1998: 98–99).²²

Fifth Particularity: All Mauritians Come from Elsewhere and Value Their Diasporic Links

The fifth particularity arises out of the fourth one, but it adds another particular dimension to the overall diasporic state of affairs in Mauritius discussed so far: each and every sector of the multi-ethnic Mauritian ‘rainbow’ population has come from elsewhere. This means that no single group living on Mauritius today can claim

²¹ Several studies discuss the importance of language identification in politics in contemporary Mauritius. See, among others, Eisenlohr (2001, 2002, 2004, 2009), Hookoomsing (1986), Eriksen (1990, 1998: 75–90), and Hookoomsing, Ludwig and Schnepel (2009), Ludwig and Schnepel (2009).

²² On the issues in this section, see especially Eriksen (1998: 14–21, 47–74, 97–101).

indigeneity and hence demand rights or privileges arising from such a claim. Some groups may have been there before others or even claim to have come first. However, today any such claim to have been 'earlier comers' or 'first settlers' is less important than sheer numbers, which eventually translate into political power. The absence of any aboriginal or officially acknowledged first-comer population makes present-day inter-ethnic negotiations and identity politics somewhat unique. On Mauritius, no group can make a native claim to possession or at least privileged access to land or a resource, as we may find in Australia, the United States, or (even more comparable to the Mauritian situation) in Fiji, where Fijian groups have sought to bar the descendants of coolies from acquiring land property on the basis that only ethnic Fijians are the 'sons of the soil,' or in Trinidad, where Afro-Trinidadians claim political privileges on account of having arrived on the island first.²³

Although, or maybe exactly because, everyone on the island originally came from elsewhere,²⁴ the idea and ideology of an original home elsewhere remains pertinent in most contemporary Mauritian lives, whether socially, politically, economically or religiously. In other words, apart from being Mauritians and Mauritian nationals (which they are and consider themselves to be), all sections of Mauritian society also consider themselves, sometimes quite significantly, as having diasporic roots and continuous diasporic links to their real and/or assumed 'homelands.' Consequently, in both ideology and practice they exhibit and are guided by a diasporic consciousness. This is complicated by the fact that, after several decades of secondary migrations starting *from* Mauritius, there are now also *Mauritian* diasporas, some of them Indo-Mauritian diasporas, most prominently in countries like Australia, South Africa, England, or France.

Sixth Particularity: The Mauritian Kind of Nationalism Can Be Called 'Ethnonationalism'

The diasporic consciousness and politics are supported by the state in both internal and external policies. In Mauritius, the idea of nationhood and the state differs radically from the nineteenth-century West European prototype of 'one culture/one language/one religion/one nation/one territory/one state.' While this 'ideal' nation was seldom if ever achieved elsewhere, after independence in 1968 Mauritius had to confront its racial, socio-cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. Attempts to build the nation and unify its elements into both a working unit and a sentimental entity had to be modelled on the well-known slogans 'unity in diversity' and the 'rainbow nation.'²⁵

²³ On this point, see Carroll (1994), Eriksen (1992) and Srebnik (2000: 10–11).

²⁴ This observation also applies to most of the species of flora and fauna to be found on the island today.

²⁵ The issue of nation-building in Mauritius against the background of ethnic plurality and strong eth-

In other words, the Mauritian nation-state had to harmonize two issues which often conflict in countries around the world. On the one hand, there was the great importance that Mauritians gave and still give to their ethnicity and roots. On the other hand, there has been an urgent need to build a unified nation in which divergent interests and identity markers are peacefully and effectively brought together under one umbrella, and with a number of 'common denominators' (Eriksen 1998). So far the goal of accommodating two (for many apparently contradictory) ideologies and community-building principles has been achieved with great success. In economic terms, Mauritius has had its up and downs and its inequalities, but by and large this neoliberal 'tiger state' can boast remarkable achievements, which are no longer based solely on sugar but on a cleverly diversified economy and a powerful 'hub strategy.' Furthermore, Mauritius has managed to establish and practice a rather consensual multiparty democracy (see Nave 2000), making it "one of the few stable democracies in the postcolonial world" (Eriksen 1998: 6). Socially, despite all the conflicts of interest and communal contestations around resources, there have been relatively few cases of violent unrest since 1968, with each of these ending within days. Furthermore, these upheavals were not necessarily based on and motivated by ethnic interests, and may be better understood as youth revolts,²⁶ or economic or class struggles.

While the Western European ideal of nationhood remains globally dominant today, Mauritius is certainly not alone in having to build the nation along other lines. In fact, the unity-in-diversity paradigm also guides other post-colonies like India and Indonesia. Indeed, after independence many other postcolonial nation-states have found either that their territorial borders had been drawn arbitrarily, cutting across ethnic and cultural groups, or that, within the framework of the new nations, a multitude of heterogeneous groups had found themselves mingled together in the new nation, or that their migrant populations had been 'shipped together' without any consideration of socio-cultural, linguistic, or religious characteristics.

The Mauritian state's policy of (multi)ethno-nationalism instead of mono-nationalism, therefore, only becomes unique if we add two other aspects to the mix. First, all ethnic identifications on the island are closely combined with and based on diasporic imaginations: ethnic discourses in Mauritius always emphasize links to other parts in the world, to other homelands. The second aspect, which makes this sixth particularity unique in a discussion of Indian diasporas, leads us directly to the last 'particularity.'

nic consciousness is exemplarily discussed in Eriksen (1998, especially pp. 137–166). See also Chazan-Gillig (2000).

²⁶ This was most obvious in the 1999 riots, the last serious riot in Mauritius, when there were clashes between young people of all ethnic backgrounds and the police after the famous reggae/seggae musician Kaya had died under suspicious circumstances in police custody.

Seventh Particularity: The Role Model for Ethnic-Cum-Diasporic Identity on Mauritius Is Provided by the Indian Diaspora, Especially Its Hindu Variant

To repeat, nation-building activities and national ideologies on Mauritius are based on the idea of the legitimate existence of a number of different ethnic groups, which are generally represented and ideally share power in proportion to their relative numerical strength. The diversity of origins of these ethnic groups means that they all share a diasporic consciousness (to some degree) and logic in which the following (interconnected) elements are given esteem and value:

- an established link to a homeland outside Mauritius
- an ancestral language
- an ancient and essentialized ‘ancestral culture’
- a religion, which is conceived as ‘traditional’ and regularly performed and expressed in major religious festivities
- a known history of one’s own, accompanied by markers of ‘cultural heritage.’

As I stated, all ethnic groups share these diasporic evaluations *more or less*. I must now stress, however, that these elements are best achieved by the Hindu diaspora in Mauritius, where a sacred dimension is attached to each element. To put it the other way round, perhaps more accurately, the Indo-Mauritian version of diaspora has become so dominant that it serves as the model and ideal for other ethnic groups as well. Let us look at these elements once again, this time with a focus on the Indian diaspora:

- Indo-Mauritians can clearly identify India – ‘Mother India,’ that is – as their original and sacred land of origin.
- Hindi and Sanskrit are conceived of and propagated as mother tongues, representing purity and even sacredness.
- Indian philosophy, literature, music, and dance are considered ancient and sacred, and there are various institutions in Mauritius, some of them sponsored from India, which offer venues and platforms for their performance.
- Hinduism, with its daily rituals and major religious festivals, plays an important role in Mauritian public life. Some festivals, like Divali in November or the Maha Sivaratri in February, are nationwide holidays.

In this Indo-Mauritian logic of diaspora, the Muslim part of the Indo-Mauritian community finds itself somewhat included or encompassed. In this ideal type and

model, the Indian diaspora – which I show in Particularity 2 to be manifold and even heterogeneous in itself – is a Hindu diaspora.

This Hindu model represents the ideal, but it is seldom achieved by all. This is evident, especially, in how Mauritians of African origin fare in these respects. As far as their country of origin is concerned, Africa is too large to qualify as a sentimental ‘home country.’ The violent abduction of their ancestors from concrete territorial roots, and the subsequent roots- and identity-extinguishing condition of slavery have severed any factual links to specific countries,²⁷ and have also dampened any emotional and ideational attachments to them. Moreover, in the media contemporary Africa is typically represented as a place of poverty, misery, corrupt regimes and war, making it even more difficult for Afro-Mauritians to attach positive evaluations to their ‘ancestral homes.’ In terms of language identity, slavery has also cut the ties to any mother tongue. Certainly, Mauritian Creole or ‘Morisyen,’ contains significant Bantu elements, but even its practitioners conceive of it (wrongly or not²⁸) as a derivative form of French rather than an ancestral language. Therefore, Creole hardly qualifies as an ethnic marker for Afro-Mauritians, let alone a sacred one. In religious matters, most Creoles are Christians today. There are few ‘African’ elements in the praxis of the religion, which was introduced by the colonists and the former slave masters. Culturally, Mauritians clearly identify the Segga dance as Creole rather than African in origin, and see it as a cultural product that only emerged in Mauritius under the harsh conditions of slavery.²⁹

From the point of view of Hindu nationalists and their dominant idea of diaspora, then, the Mauritian descendants of former African slaves serve as an example of how culture and cultural identity can be lost if one’s roots are severed and/or forgotten. So, all in all, the second largest group in Mauritius (around 25%), namely Mauritian Creoles, is generally seen as a deficient and incomplete version of the (Hindu) ideal of diaspora. This is strikingly expressed by the categorization of Creoles in past censuses under ‘General Population’ (as I pointed out above), rather than being recognized as an independent and clearly identifiable entity in their own right.³⁰

²⁷ Certainly, Afro-Mauritians are sometimes called *Malgas* or *Mozambik*, referring to an assumed origin from Madagascar and Mozambique, but these designations are meant pejoratively. It is estimated that about 45% of all slaves came from Madagascar, but many of these may have come first come to Madagascar from elsewhere. See Eriksen (1998: 52) and Allen (1999: 42).

²⁸ Linguists have investigated and discussed this point in great detail.

²⁹ On Mauritian Segga, see Schnepel and Schnepel (2009b, 2011).

³⁰ On this and other aspects of the so-called ‘Creole malaise,’ see especially Miles (1999).

Conclusion

Since the mid-1990s, India has shown an increasing interest in its diasporas spread across the world. This interest has been accompanied by a number of legal, fiscal, economic, political, and socio-cultural measures, which have substantially changed interactions and exchanges between 'Mother India' and her 'children.' Indo-Mauritians have also been affected by this new policy. The introduction of a 'Persons of Indian Origin Card' in particular – which is valid for twenty years and offers many advantages for PIO (making their status comparable to that of NRIs) – has succeeded in strengthening relations between Indo-Mauritians and India (see Kantowski 2002).

The numerical predominance of PIO in Mauritius, the opening of India to PIO and NRIs, and the ever-increasing economic power and attractiveness of India in a globalized world have led to 'Indian-ness,' especially in its dominant form 'Hindu-ness,' increasing in strength in Mauritius and in India. Consequently, Mauritius has strengthened its relationship with India on all levels, not just an economic one. The increasing interest of 'Mother India' in their NRI and PIO 'children' all over the world (and especially in their remittances) has been accompanied by Mauritian PIO's increasing interest in India and their roots there. This search for roots takes on many forms and manifestations, such as numerous individuals of Indian background visiting the Mahatma Gandhi Institute to search for archival documents relating to their ancestors.

All these particularities, individually and in sum, create a special position for the Indian diaspora in Mauritius. The Indian diaspora(s) in Mauritius, as well as the other diasporas (African, Chinese, French, English) on the island, could be called 'guests without a host.' However, if a diasporic group such as the Indian (especially the Hindu) one does manage to achieve numerical superiority, if no other group has traditional claims to land, resources or privileges, and if this diasporic group also achieves some kind of social and politico-economic standing and educational skills, then it can flourish. In a democratic environment it can even become so dominant that it turns from being a 'guest without a host' to becoming the 'host.' This process can be facilitated by the original home country, if it discovers the potential its diaspora(s) has to offer. All this was the case for the Indian diasporas in Mauritius, especially for the Hindu one.

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8 India Beyond India: The Indian Diaspora in East Africa

Roman Loimeier

Conceptual Framework

Issues of communitarian organization, identity, and belonging have long informed the history of the subcontinent (today India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka), and they continue to do so. Prominent examples include the *muhājirūn* in Karachi/Sindh, Hindu-Muslim strife in Gujarat, temple and mosque disputes in Uttar Pradesh and other regions, and ethnic conflict throughout the subcontinent.¹ Communitarian organization, identity and belonging are informed by variegated historical legacies, politics, religion, social and ethnic dynamics, questions of class, and respective modes of 'othering.' The question arises, however, if such dynamics have also influenced the development of the Indian diaspora, or if questions of 'belonging' have become paramount in the context of the rise of African national states. My contribution looks into this question by focusing on the development of the Indian diaspora in East Africa and Tanzania/Zanzibar in particular. Looking at a number of Indian diasporic communities in their historical context, I ask if these communities have reproduced metropolitan (i.e. Indian) communal disputes, or if they have rather sought to find a place for themselves in colonial and postcolonial East Africa.

¹ For a discussion of the term 'communalism' see Peter van der Veer (1994).

History of the Indian Diaspora in East Africa

Indians first arrived in East Africa in pre-recorded times, possibly more than a thousand years ago. Due to the monsoon wind system, traders who came to East Africa with the northeast monsoon (Swahili: *kazkazi*, from December to March), had to stay on the coast for several months until they could return to India or Arabia with the southwest monsoon (Swahili: *kusi*, from May to August). The monsoon wind system thus encouraged the establishment of a temporal Indian presence on the East African coast. In the 16th century, this presence was recorded by Portuguese sources and seems to have become more permanent around this time. Indeed, the pilot ‘Malemo Canaqua,’ who guided Vasco da Gama straight across the Indian Ocean to Calicut in 1498, was an Indian resident of Malindi (Sheriff 2010: 110). However, it was not until the early 19th century that Indian settlements in East Africa grew significantly and became more prominent.

The development of a permanent Indian presence in East Africa was connected to the expansion of the Sultanate of Oman in the 19th century. Although Oman had started to intervene on the East African coast in the mid-17th century, its position there remained marginal until the early 19th century, when the Bū Sa‘īdī dynasty in Masqat realized the coast’s economic value and shifted the seat of the government to Zanzibar in 1840 (see Sheriff 1987). In 1804, the Sultan of Oman had started to ‘farm out’ control of Zanzibar’s customs to, amongst others, Indians (‘Banians,’ i.e. Hindus), who paid the Sultan an annual fee for the license to collect customs fees.² In 1818/1819, the (Hindu) Indian trader Jairam Sewji took over the lucrative position. In 1837, the Jairam Sewji family also took control of customs on the Mrima coast opposite Zanzibar. Sewji’s company retained control over Zanzibar’s customs until 1886, when Sultan Barghash established a government customs department (Sheriff 1987: 84, 127).³

In 1839, a British-Omani commercial treaty allowed British subjects (including Indians from those parts of India already under British legislation) to enter Zanzibar, and to reside and trade within the Sultan’s dominions along the East African Coast (Oonk 2006: 254ff). Trade subsequently increased, as did the number of Indians on the coast, from 214 in 1819 to 2,500 in 1870, and to 6,000 in the early 1900s. The immigrants were mostly poor Muslims from Gujarat, especially from the Kutch peninsula, and were typically small shop owners, small scale traders, and craftsmen. Trading and entrepreneurial families such as the Topans, the Visrams and the Parroos even became financiers of Arab slavers. However, the major trade item was African

² As a result of this policy, the Indian community in Zanzibar had grown to 214 persons by 1819, “and they were already described as wealthy” (Sheriff 2016: 3).

³ In 1876 however, another wealthy Indian trading family, that of Tharia Topan, managed to outbid the Sewji Company by offering an annual fee of 450,000 Maria Theresien Thaler (MTT) for the right to collect custom duties. In 1880, the Jairam Sewji family was able to regain control over Zanzibar’s customs by outbidding the Topan family with an annual payment of 500,000 MTT (Bennett 1978: 106).

ivory, which was highly sought after in India, where it formed an important part of dowries. In addition, Indian traders bought spices, copal, cloves, goat skin, and dried fish. The major import from India was so-called ‘Surat cloth,’ various textiles which came primarily from Surat in Gujarat.

From the beginning, the Indian community in East Africa was characterized by social and religious fragmentation. Three criteria informed the formation of local communities: religion, regional origin, and occupation. Most Hindus, for instance, were Bhatias, Vanias and Lohanas,⁴ who came as merchants, traders, and brokers from Kutch, whereas Patels came from an agricultural background in central Gujarat. Other Gujarati Hindus belonged mainly to artisan groups, whereas Punjabi immigrants were less informed by social origin, forming a single community in East Africa. Community development was particularly informed by the development of different religious orientations in East Africa. Despite Hindu’s pioneering the early trade, Muslims soon came to dominate the Indian diaspora in East Africa. A first Khōja-Ismā‘īlī Jamā‘at Khāna (community center) was established as early as 1838 in the Forodhani ward in Zanzibar.⁵ The Khōja-Ismā‘īlī community included prominent members such as Tharia Topan (1823–1891) and the trader Allidina Visram (1851–1916), who all became important to funding the community’s social activities. The Khōja-Ismā‘īlīs mostly came from Kutch/Gujarat (like most other Indians in East Africa), as well as from Punjab and Sindh (Daftary and Hirji 2008: 204–206). The development of the Khōja-Ismā‘īlī group parallels that of the Bohora community⁶ and other Indian families that were dominated by rich traders, like those of Sewa Haji (1851–1897) and Nasser Veerjee (1865–1942). The most prominent Bohora family was the Karimji-Jivanji family, which came from the Kutchi seaport Mandvi to Zanzibar in 1818, and opened its first business in 1825.⁷ From modest beginnings, the Karimji family became one of the richest Indian families in East Africa, involved in all kinds of trade, as well as sisal and cashew production. Nearly 150 years later, the Karimji-Jivanji family would become the East African representatives for Toyota (and also for Tata and Chrysler). Like other wealthy Indian families, the Karimji family engaged in charitable activities.

From the 1890s, the number of Indian indentured workers or ‘coolies’ (who came primarily from Punjab) increased, while Goans started to be recruited as civil

⁴ Lohanas are a Kshatriya group, often administrators, and are also traders today. Most Khojas are Lohana by origin; Vanias and Bhatias are comparatively small high caste groups from Rajasthan.

⁵ The Khōja-Ismā‘īlīs represent the Nizāri-branch of the Ismā‘īliyya. The Ismā‘īliyya are the ‘severer’ branch of the Shī‘a in contrast to the 12‘er or Ithnā‘sharī branch. The present Aga Khan is the 49th religious leader of the Khōja-Ismā‘īlīs. For a history of the Khōja-Ismā‘īlī community see Daftary and Hirji (2008).

⁶ The Bohoras represent the Musta‘īlī-branch of the Ismā‘īlīs. The *dā‘ī al-muṭlaq* (supreme guide) of the Bohoras has been Sayyid Muḥammad Burhānuddīn since 1965. He is the 52nd *dā‘ī al-muṭlaq* of the Bohoras. His father, Sayyid Ṭāhir Saifuddīn directed the Bohora community from 1915 until his death in 1965. For a history of the Bohora community see Blank (2001).

⁷ The history of Karimji-Jivanji family has been recorded in great detail by Gijbert Oonk (2009).

Table 1: Indian population growth in four East African countries

Year	Kenya	Uganda	Tanganyika / Zanzibar	Total
1921	25,253	5,200	10,209 / 13,772	54,000
1931	43,623	14,150	25,144 / 15,247	98,000
1939	46,897	17,300	25,000 / 15,500	104,000
1962	175,000	77,500	92,000 / 20,000	362,000
1969	140,000	75,000	85,000	300,000
1972	105,000	1,000	52,000	158,000
1984	50,000	1,000	30,000	81,000
1995 / 2000	100,000	12,000	90,000	202,000

Source: Oonk (2006: 256)

servants. The indentured workers were employed mostly on the Mombasa–Uganda railway, which was built from 1895–1903. Indeed, 35,000 coolies were brought to East Africa for this project alone. By 1914, the number of Indians had grown to 38,000, and to 55,000 by 1921. Although most indentured laborers left East Africa when the Mombasa–Uganda railway was completed, around 7,000 remained (mostly in Kenya) and worked as railway personnel, drivers, stationmasters, foremen, linesmen, repairmen, upholsterers, carpenters, and other artisans, while others settled down as *dukka wallas* (small shop owners) (Oonk 2006: 255).

The next phase of immigration started during and after WWI and was linked with the British war effort, when tens of thousands of Indian soldiers and porters brought to East Africa to fight the Germans. After WWI, a growing number of Indians found employment in the colonial administration and economy. As a consequence of Indian mass emigration beginning in the late 19th century,⁸ the Brahmin idea that crossing the ocean (*kala pani*, ‘the black water’) would cause ritual impurity and even render Hindus ‘outcasts,’ became increasingly obsolete. A member of the Shree Shiv Shakti Mandir in Zanzibar and a Brahmin himself summarized this development in a conversation in 2010, when he told me that “the diaspora killed the idea of the black water, even Brahmins travel around the world today” (Joshi sr., 18 August 2010). By 1939, the number of Indians in East Africa had grown to 105,000. After WWII, the Indian population increased further, and by 1962, 362,000 Indians were living in the four East African countries (see Table 1 for an overview).

⁸ During this period of mass emigration, Indians not only immigrated to East Africa but also to the Caribbean, Mauritius and Fiji.

The Indian Communities in East Africa after Independence

After independence (Tanganyika in 1961, Uganda in 1962, Kenya and Zanzibar in 1963),⁹ East African governments gave those Indians who were not automatically citizens by birth an option to register within two years. As many Indians hesitated to apply for citizenship, administrations took “their procrastination as an expression of a lack of faith in these states” (Oonk 2006: 258) and started to introduce periodic embargoes, which again increased suspicion among Indians. However, some Indian group leaders, especially those from the Khōja and Bohora Ismā‘īlis, encouraged their members to apply for citizenship. In 1952, the Aga Khan (the religious leader of the Khōja Ismā‘īlis) advised his followers to regard East Africa as their permanent home, to speak English rather than Gujarati, and encouraged women to wear Western dress (Oonk 2006: 261).¹⁰

Despite the willingness of the Aga Khan to cooperate with East African governments, national politics quickly led to conflict. One of the first victims of Tanganyika (from 1964 Tanzania) President Nyerere’s policies to marginalize and even eliminate old elites was the East Africa Muslim Welfare Society (EAMWS), a supranational Muslim welfare organization dominated by Indians as well as some conservative African religious scholars such as Ḥasan b. ‘Ameir. The EAMWS had been founded in 1937 by the Aga Khan. Since 1961, its headquarters had been in Dar es Salaam. In the context of emerging nationalisms in East Africa, the EAMWS that had propagated Muslim unity became increasingly obsolete and was dissolved in 1968 (see Loimeier 2007). The 1967 Arusha declaration started a period of anti-‘Asian’ (i.e. anti-Indian) policies in all three East African countries. These policies included the nationalization and expropriation of Indian businesses, properties and houses, and triggered waves of Indian emigration from all East African countries. The most brutal policies were applied in Zanzibar, where many Indians were killed in the revolution of January 1964 or subsequently fled; and in Uganda in 1972, where 70,000 Indians had to leave the country within 90 days (see Oonk 2006: 259). In Tanzania, the Nationalization of Buildings Act of 22 April 1971 (Oonk 2009: 105) led to an Indian exodus, and to the effective expropriation of the Karimji and other wealthy ‘Asian’ families’ property. Between 1964 and 1972, 40–50% of all Indians in Kenya and Tanganyika emigrated to the USA, Canada, and Britain (Oonk 2006: 254ff), forming a diaspora of ‘twice displaced’ Indians. In the 1980s, governments across East Africa revised their anti-Indian policies. In Uganda, President Museveni even ordered the return of confiscated properties to their former Indian owners. Still,

⁹ In 1964, Zanzibar and Tanganyika united and formed the Federal Republic of Tanzania.

¹⁰ This policy was rejected by the *dā‘ī al-muṭṭlaq* of the Bohoras. The Bohoras opposition to integration backfired in 1968, when the Tanzanian government expelled the *dā‘ī al-muṭṭlaq* Sayyid Muḥammad Burhānuddīn for allegedly violating foreign exchange regulations. The *dā‘ī al-muṭṭlaq* had been visiting the Bohora communities in Tanzania to bring them into closer compliance with the policies of the Bohora *dā‘wat* (the ‘message’) (Blank 2001: 240).

anti-Indian sentiment remains vibrant, and anti-Indian riots and occasional protests occur in all East African countries, especially in Uganda and Kenya.

In Tanzania, governments from Ali Hassan Mwinyi (1985–1995) through Benjamin Mkapa (1995–2005) to Jakaya Kikwete (2005–2015) have encouraged Indians to return and presented them as the ‘saviors’ of the Tanzanian economy (Oonk 2006: 260). With economic liberalization starting in Tanzania in 1985, many Indian families indeed began to rebuild business, albeit cautiously. Yet by 2010, the Indian community in Tanzania had grown to about 200,000 (Kaid Lookmanji, 7 August 2010), and even small provincial towns such as Iringa again had their own Indian Muslim and Hindu communities. By 2010, Dar es Salaam alone had 15,000 Hindus and at least ten major Hindu temples, mostly situated in or near Kisutu Street (9 temples), i.e. in the center of the Uhindi (‘Indian’) ward of central Dar es Salaam, and in Upanga (1 temple). These temples catered for different religious orientations among the Hindus, as well as for Hindus from different regions of origin in India (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Konkan etc.). There were also temples devoted to specific gods such as Rama, Shiva, or Krishna. In addition, the Hindu community in Dar es Salaam managed one ‘Hindu’ hospital, the ‘Shree Shiv Shakti Hospital,’ as well as a library and a gym.¹¹

Indians in Pre-Colonial Zanzibar

In the 19th century, Zanzibar’s economy boomed under the Sultanate of Oman’s liberal trade policies. The boom led to considerable population growth. In 1819, Zanzibar Town had a population of about 5,000 inhabitants, but by 1835 it had doubled or even tripled. By 1846, it had grown to about 20–25,000, and by 1885 had reached about 80,000 (Bennett 1978: 57; Sheriff 1987: 138). Zanzibar’s population not only grew but also became increasingly diverse. By the 1840s, 5,000 Omanis and between 400 and 700 Indians had settled. By the 1870s there were about 3,000 Indians (mostly Gujaratis) living in Zanzibar, including 2,000 ‘Banians’ (Indians belonging to different Hindu orientations and occupational groups).¹² Most Indians settled in the Kiponda, Hamamni, and Kajificheni wards and built representative houses, whereas poor Indians settled in Ng’ambo, the ‘other side’ of the ‘creek’ that separated the old town from the rural areas (see Sheriff 1992 and 1995). In addition, there were Hadrami and Yemeni communities, immigrants from Madagascar, the

¹¹ Since 2005, an ‘Indian’ building boom has led to the destruction of many old buildings in the Uhindi quarter in Dar es Salaam. This building boom was linked with the fact that leases on plots of land in ‘Uhindi’ that had been granted by the British colonial administration in the mid-1930s expired in the mid-2000s. Indian lessees were thus able to buy ‘their’ plots and started to replace the old two- or three-storey buildings with new buildings that were much larger (my own observations, 11 August 2010).

¹² There were also some Zoroastrians, mostly from Bombay. They were allowed to establish their own ‘fire temple’ in Zanzibar in 1882 (Exhibition, House of Wonders).

Comoros and Somalia (particularly from the Brāwa region), indigenous Zanzibaris, Wapemba, Watumbatu, and the 'Hadimu' people from Zanzibar's east coast, as well as Africans from the hinterland stretching back as far as Manyema (Eastern Congo), Baluchis from south-eastern Iran, and a growing community of Europeans (Sheriff 1987: 147, 149).

The 19th century was thus characterized by the development of a polyphonic society in Zanzibar Town that stressed social criteria as markers of distinctness: being an aristocrat or a slave was more important than being 'white' or 'black.' Even the Sultan's family was divided into an 'Abyssinian' and a 'Circassian' line (see Ruete 1998: 85ff). Intermarriage and concubine (*suria*) relationships led to the emergence of a large group of 'black' Arabs (Africans who came to regard themselves as 'Arab' due to their affiliation with an Arab family). The Indians in Zanzibar, by contrast, mostly refused to intermarry with Africans, yet many men maintained *suria* relationships with African women. The refusal to intermarry thus became a major obstacle to Indian integration in East Africa. Indians not only refused to marry non-Indians, but maintained practices of exclusion and social avoidance among themselves. There were, however, a few exceptions: Ithnā'sharī communities' marriage practices were less exclusive; some early migrants from Surat mixed with the African population in Zanzibar in the early 19th century; and Hindu migrants, who were predominantly male until the late 19th century, seem to have had African concubines more frequently (see Sheriff 1987 and Issa 1995).

The emerging Indian community in Zanzibar was split into numerous different fractions. In 1870, the Indian Muslim community consisted of three major groups: the Khōja Ismā'īlis, the Bohoras and the Memons, a small Sunni (Ḥanafī) group. In 1870, there were less than 250 Memons, mostly from Gujarat (Kathiawar and Kutch regions), usually Surat and Porbandar, or from Lohanpur in Sindh (Martin 1978: 34–5). The Khōja-Ismā'īlī community was the largest group with 535 families in 1870, 422 of them originating from Kutch. About 2,100 people belonging to this group had their permanent residence in Zanzibar, while the other 450 members settled on the mainland. The Bohora community, another branch of Ismā'īlī orientation, was the second largest. Most of them originated from Rajkot and Kutch. In 1870 about 250 lived in Zanzibar, while about 600 lived on the coast. Most Bohoras made a living as craftsmen, artisans, locksmiths, petty traders and iron-mongers, while Khōjas were usually traders, or entrepreneurs in import-export and long-distance trade businesses. Later on, many became artisans. Memons, Bohoras and Khōjas were also marked by different social and occupational affiliations: they were either Kokni (traders from Konkan, although not all Koknis were Memon), Lohana (traders from Lohanpur, although not all Lohanas were Memon), or Bania (often regarded as Hindu traders, although some were Memon, and thus, Muslim).¹³ In addition, there was a small Muslim Khumbar ('Kumbaro') population of often

¹³ Zanzibar National Archive, ZNA AB 1/36: Reconstitution of the Committee of the Sir Euan Smith Madrasa.

itinerant petty traders who are today pot-makers in Makunduchi, as well as a small group of Catholic Indians from Portuguese Goa, and a group of about 300 Hindus (Martin 1978: 36).

This situation was further complicated by the fact that the terms ‘Bohora’ (as derived from the Gujarati term *vohorvun*, trader) and ‘Khōja’ as well as ‘Kokni,’ ‘Kumbaro,’ ‘Bania,’ or ‘Lohana’ did not necessarily denote religious affiliation, but could also mean an occupational and/or social group that might be Sunnī or Hindu rather than Shīʿī-Ismāʿīlī (Khōja or Bohora). Religious and/or occupational groups were finally divided by non-religious splits, sometimes seeking to legitimize these splits as socio-ethnic arguments. The Memon community in Zanzibar thus split into two communities between 1945 and 1956,¹⁴ namely the ‘Hindu Sunni Kokni Jamāʿat’ (which became Shāfiʿī) and the ‘Cutch Memon Association’ (which remained Ḥanafī). The Khōja group in Zanzibar equally split due to disputes over the political reforms started by the Aga Khan in India: the dissident Shīʿa Khōja-Ithnāʿshara community emerged in fact from the larger Khōja-Ismāʿīlī-group in the course of the 19th century, when the political and religious leader of this group (the ‘Aga Khan’) had to flee Iran and settled in Bombay in 1844. When he began to impose his authority over the Khōja-Ismāʿīlī community there, a number of Khōja-Ismāʿīlīs split and established the ‘Sunni-Khōja’ group (in India in 1869) and the Shīʿa Khōja-Ithnāʿshara group (in India and East Africa in 1877) (Sheriff 2016: 8).¹⁵ However, the new Ithnāʿshara Khōja group refused to mix with non-Khōja Ithnāʿshara Indian Muslims. Equally, the Bohora community (*dāʿwat*, lit. ‘cause’) has seen splits due to the fact that the community’s leadership tried to secure Bohora ‘orthodoxy’ with respect to other Ismāʿīlī-groups in both colonial and post-colonial times by practicing *baraat*, the social ostracism/exclusion of dissident members. *Baraat*, in fact, excludes dissident Bohoras from religious rituals performed by Bohora scholars, including the *dāʿī al-muṭlaq*. It can amount to exclusion from the complete spiritual and social sphere, as well as the economic, educational and welfare services of the *dāʿwat* (Blank 2001: 180f). In January 1979 and June 1981 Bohora orthodoxy was stressed in a number of pronouncements of the *dāʿī al-muṭlaq* regarding dress and personal comportment. Since then, Bohora women have switched to the ‘typical’ Bohora *burqa* and its *rida*, a bonnet which can be used as a facial veil, while men were compelled to wear a beard as a sign of Bohora identity and loyalty towards the *dāʿī al-muṭlaq* (Blank 2001: 184). Communities such as the Bohoras and the Khōjas, in addition, refused to pray with other Muslims in their respective mosques and had their own Jamāʿat Khānas.

¹⁴ Zanzibar National Archive, ZNA AB 22/51: Kokni Jamat.

¹⁵ Even today members of both communities refuse to talk about the reasons for the split.

British Economic Policies in Zanzibar

On 7 November 1890, Britain assumed full political control over the Sultanate of Zanzibar, making it a British Protectorate until 12 December 1963, when it became independent again (see Loimeier 2009). While Zanzibar underwent thorough political and administrative change in the colonial period, most Zanzibaris were preoccupied with economic development after 1890. Abolition in particular, which was implemented between 1890 and 1897, soon turned out to be a major problem for the British. They feared “that freed slaves would seek to be independent peasants, the clove industry would collapse, the already heavily indebted Arab landowners would become bankrupt, and the government would lose its main source of revenue” (Bakari 2001: 49). However, few slaves actually achieved emancipation. Most continued to work as contractors on the plantations of their former owners (Cooper 1980: 84ff). As tenants however, the former slaves were free to work part-time on their own plots of land, creating an increasing shortage of plantation labor. The contract system was soon abandoned in favor of a wage labor system that allowed former slaves to stay as squatters on the plantations while working. This system put increasing financial pressure on the plantation owners. Consequently, they started to hire seasonal pickers from the early 1900s. These migrant workers, often Nyamwesi from central Tanganyika, soon settled permanently (Flint 1965: 650; Cooper 1980: 92ff). The move from “slaves to squatters” (Cooper 1980), and later to wage laborers, was orchestrated by the British to prevent a shortage of labor threatening the plantation economy (Sheriff 1991: 117–123; Nisula 1999: 226).

Zanzibar’s Arab plantation owners not only had to survive the abolition of slavery, which led to increasing indebtedness since they had to pay now for labor, they also had to survive economic depression, with the clove price starting to drop in the late 1920s. As a result, mortgaging of trees and land increased (Cooper 1980: 139). Many farmers lost all their trees, while others could no longer maintain their plantations and their creditors, often Indians, began to take over their properties (Cooper 1980: 142). The British authorities tried to stop the demise of the Arab plantations and the rise of an Indian creditor and landowner class by establishing the Clove Growers’ Association (CGA) in 1927. The CGA provided low-interest harvesting loans, storage space and minimum selling prices to plantation owners, and was responsible for marketing the clove harvest. Its goal was to save ‘Arab’ plantations, as ‘Arabs’ and not Indians were seen as the major pillar of British rule (see Shao 1992 and Gilbert 2004). When the CGA loan-system was abolished in 1928, membership fell rapidly, and Indians continued to buy clove plantations. Consequently, Indian clove tree ownership grew from 5% in 1922 to almost 50% in 1933 (Turki 1987: 45). The abolition of slavery, the resulting shortage of labor, the world economic depression, and the fluctuation of the clove price, as well as the dispossession of Zanzibar’s mainland dominions were instrumental in the demise of the big plantation owners. Even colonial officials started to consider the big landlords a ‘spent force,’ with peasantization of the clove economy seen as an alternative (Bakari 2001: 50). To

stop the demise of the big ‘Arab’ plantations and the rise of Indian plantation owners, and ignoring the protests of the Indian National Association (INA), the British transformed the CGA into a government body in 1934, authorized to license clove dealers and to inspect produce. In 1937 the CGA became the sole buyer of cloves.

British Racial Policies in Zanzibar

From the late 19th century, race and skin color became increasingly paramount in Zanzibar. The British administration was particularly concerned with questions of how to identify and treat the different members of the Zanzibari population, and introduced the concept of a ‘natural hierarchy of races.’ Colonial history thus has to be seen as a history of framing: the framing of societies, regions, religions, and races. Such processes of framing informed ethnic classifications and led to the construction of races in Zanzibar in colonial times and a subsequent, distinct ‘racialization’ of Zanzibar’s public life (Purpura 1997: 163).¹⁶ Even in one of the last Department of Education (DoE) annual reports, the Protectorate was described as having been “ruled by Arab Sultans since the end of the 17th century. The Arab and the indigenous African population is exclusively Muslim, and Islam is the official religion.”¹⁷ The dynamics of racialization again touched both public and private lives, and had lasting effects on pro-independence politics, the 1964 revolution, and beyond. The British colonial view, namely that “Zanzibar was an Arab land,” for instance, was used by Zanzibar’s revolutionaries to legitimize the revolution in and beyond 1964. In their concept of colonial society, the British occupied the highest rank. As British colonial rule was based on indirect rule and consequently sought to instrumentalize the Omani ruling elite to implement its policies, Zanzibar’s Arab population was second in colonial racial hierarchies.¹⁸ In 1917, Zanzibar’s British Resident Pearce thus stated in his education report that the population of about 200,000 was divided into different ethnic groups. “For facility of reference,” these complex ethnic and religious structures were simplified by a division of the population into three ‘classes’:

¹⁶ British efforts to identify and frame Zanzibar’s populations also became apparent in the colonial-era censuses (1910, 1921, 1924, 1931, 1948, and 1958). From the 1930s on, census data become increasingly accurate, with the censuses of 1948 and 1958 the only two to present a detailed picture of Zanzibar’s population. Later census data was also increasingly detailed with respect to issues such as religious affiliation. The 1948 census (Zanzibar National Archive, ZNA AB 33/7) thus registered 21 different religions: ‘Roman-Catholic,’ ‘Christian,’ ‘protestant,’ ‘Hindu [so stated],’ ‘Brahimin,’ ‘Vaishya,’ ‘Sanatan Dharamist,’ ‘Ārya Samāj,’ ‘Islam [so stated],’ ‘Suni [sic] Shafi,’ ‘Suni [sic] Hanafi,’ ‘Suni [sic] Maliki,’ ‘Shia Ismaili Khoja,’ ‘Shia Ithnasherikhoja [sic],’ ‘Shia Bohora,’ ‘Shia Ibadhi,’ ‘Jains,’ ‘Sikhs,’ ‘Zoroastrians,’ ‘Buddhists,’ and ‘unspecified.’

¹⁷ Zanzibar National Archive, ZNA BA 5/34: Annual Report 1964.

¹⁸ For a general discussion about questions of ‘race’ and ‘identity’ in colonial times, see Glassman (2000 and 2004).

Zanzibar possesses a cosmopolitan population and rightly to deal with the problem of education, it is desirable to appreciate the varying interests of the races and communities involved. This diversity of population, concentrated as it is in a small area, tends to complicate the question. *The Asiatic and African populations of Zanzibar may be divided into three distinct races*, the members of which differ in mentality, in modes of life and in aspirations. With the exception of about 2,000 Hindus, all are Muslims, but with little religious coherence or regard for each other. The first class comprises the Arabs, who represent the aristocracy and the land owning community (c. 9,000); the second class includes the British Indian communities (c. 10,000). These people are almost exclusively commercial; they are town-dwellers, constitute the great shop keeping class, and represent powerful influences in Zanzibar; the third class comprises the 'Swahili' or the African 'negroes' settled in Zanzibar: He may or may not have a few drops of Arab blood in his veins. He represents 90% of the population, and both Arabs and Indians look down on him as an inferior person; but it should be understood *that he is far superior to the pagan Negro of the mainland.*¹⁹

Since the British regarded the Arabs as the ruling elite and were prepared to grant them a number of privileges, it became increasingly important for Zanzibaris to be counted and registered as Arab. This explains the rapid statistical growth of 'Arabs' in colonial times.²⁰ Many of these 'Arabs' were not plantation owners or members of the ruling family, but petty traders and small rural shopkeepers as well as small farmers (Purpura 1997: 160). Changes in perception or self-definition may have also contributed to the growth of the 'Arab' population, as did intermarriage between Arab landlords and former slaves, which became widespread. To rise socially, parents and offspring from these marriages tended to portray themselves as 'Arab.' Another major explanation for the growth of the Arab (and Indian) population was the food rationing system in WWII, which provided preferential treatment for Arabs and Indians (Asians). These groups were entitled to rice rations, while Africans received only maize and beans, a regulation that gave birth to the slogan *Njaa ndiyo ilizaa makabila haya hapa Zanzibar* (famine created these tribes here in Zanzibar) (Maliyamkono 2000: 5).

Ranking below the 'Arab' population, 'Indians' came second in colonial hierarchies. And like the Arab population, the Indian communities were represented by a number of associations. The largest, the Indian (National) Association, was established in 1914 (according to Mapuri in 1910; Mapuri 1996: 12), having emerged from the Indian Merchants' Association (est. 1905) (Turki 1987: 39). Under the

¹⁹ Zanzibar National Archive, ZNA AB 1/224: 1913 report on education; emphases in original.

²⁰ In fact, Zanzibar's Arab population grew rather out of proportion in the first decades of the 20th century. Between 1924 and 1931 the Arab share of the population rose by 38%, from 8.7% to 14.2%, and had risen to 16.9% by 1948 (see Prunier 1998).

leadership of Seth Yusufali A. Karimji, Sir Tayabali Karimji, Tayyibali Ismailji Jivanji, Mohammed N. Jindani, Jaffer Hassin Manji, and Mulji Mathuradas, it fought for the economic interests of Indian traders and businessmen, as in the clove boycott movement of the 1930s. In politics, Indians did not feature prominently until post-independence, with few exceptions, including members of the Karimji Jivanji and Hussaynali families, who were active in the Indian National Association (INA), and Rati Bulsara,²¹ the editor of *The 'Adal Inṣāf*, the major Indian paper aside from *The Samachar*.²² There were also smaller Indian associations, based on religious, ethnic, and occupational affiliations, but they were not politically active.

The British tried to understand and reproduce the heterogeneity of the Indian population in their racial policies. To do so, they organized the Indian communities into subgroups according to religious, ethnic, regional, and social patterns. In religious terms, the British registered Hindus, Muslims, 'Parsees' (Zoroastrians), and Catholics (from Goa). In regional terms, they identified immigrants from Gujarat, in particular Kutch and Kathiawar, as well as the town of Surat. There were also some Southern Indians, again divided into different groups. In political terms, there were the Hindoo Union, the Sikh community, the Goan community, the Zoroastrian ('Parsee') community, the Hindu Mandal (Hindu community), the Baharania Association, and the Cutch Memon Association, as well as the Kokni Jamat. This latter group was confusingly called 'Hindu Sunni,' yet, in reality was the Sunni-Shāfi'ī fraction of the Memon community from which it had split.²³ In 1945, the British administration registered seven 'Indian' religious communities (totaling 13,025 people): the 'Hindu community' (3452), the 'Khōja-Ismā'īli community' (2400), the 'Sunnī community' (i.e. Memon, the Kokni Jamat; 2313), the 'Ithnā'shara community' (2000, mostly Khōja-Ithnā'ashara), the 'Bohora community' (1377), the 'Goan community' (721, who were Portuguese subjects), and the 'Parsee community'

²¹ Rati Bulsara (also written Rutti Balsara) was one of the few politically active Indians, working as the Indian-Parsee editor of *The 'Adal Inṣāf*, which ran from 1948 to 1964. It was one of the leading 'Indian' papers in Zanzibar at the time, boasting Zanzibar's most sophisticated printing press. In 1957, Rati Bulsara won the 1957 Stone Town constituency seat in the first Legislative Council (LegCo) elections for the Zanzibar National Party (ZNP). He also was publicity secretary of the ZNP. In 1959, he was accused of anti-colonial propaganda and banned from publishing for 12 months (*Mwongozi*, 22 May 1959). In 1961, he stood again as the ZNP candidate for the Stone Town seat (see Barwani et al. 2003: 163, interview with Amani Thani). Rati Bulsara was related to Bomi and Jer Bulsara, both teachers and parents of Faruk Bulsara, who became famous as Freddie Mercury.

²² Most Indian newspapers published in East Africa since the early 20th century have been published in Gujarati. The Indian community in Zanzibar started publishing *Akbbār* ('News') in 1907, which later became the Sunday newspaper *The Samachar*, edited by Fazel J. Master. Like most papers, *The Samachar* stopped publishing after the 1968 revolution. In 1922, Biharlal N. Anantani founded another Sunday paper, the *Zanzibar Voice*, which also stopped publication in 1968. The second major paper for the Indian community was another Sunday paper, *The 'Adal Inṣāf* ('The Just and Fair'), established by Rati Bulsara in 1948.

²³ Zanzibar National Archive, ZNA AB 22/46: Shia Khoja Ithnasheri Community.

(212).²⁴ These communities tried to conserve their own identity and, for instance, insisted on their own schools for religious education (see Loimeier 2009).²⁵

The various Shī‘ī groups undoubtedly presented the most difficult task for the British in their efforts to compartmentalize the population. There were at least three major affiliations: the Shī‘a Khōja-Ithnā‘shara community; the Shī‘a Imāmī Ismā‘īliyya Supreme Council, i.e. those Khōja who were affiliated with the Aga Khan-led Khōja-Ismā‘īlī-(Nizārī)-group; and the Bohora-Ismā‘īlī community, which followed their own *dā‘ī al-muṭlaq*. Due to the unique character of some Indian communities, like the Ārya Samāj (‘Community of Nobles’),²⁶ the British were never certain how to deal with them. In a note of the Protectorate administration of 27 March 1930, Ārya Samāj was described as such:

The Arye Samaj [sic] is not a Sect but an assembly of believers of the Vedas (Ancient Hindoo Scriptures). It does not include any member of the traditional sects (Jains, Vaisnavas, Mahtais, Sikhs) for the reason that membership of the Arye Samaj implies renunciation in any belief of ‘caste.’ The Aryans stand to Hindooism as Protestantism stands to Roman Catholicism. It is a movement of reformation and return to simple ‘first doctrines.’ In her self-presentation, the Arye Samaj claimed to be a ‘Vedic Church’ that believed in the omni-presence of God, that propagates science (vidya) and that would fight against ignorance (avidya).²⁷

²⁴ Zanzibar National Archive, ZNA AD 7/20: Indian Education 1945.

²⁵ In 1963, Zanzibar’s ‘Stone Town’ had 48 mosques, four Hindu and one Buddhist temple, two churches, and a Zoroastrian place of worship (see Sheriff and Jafferji 1998).

²⁶ The Ārya Samāj movement was established by the Shivaite Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824–1883) in Gujarat in 1875. It became an important reform movement in Northern and Western India (see van der Veer 1994: 65ff), proposing a return to the ‘pure’ religion of the Vedas and the rejection of all post-Vedic texts. In fact, Dayananda wanted to create “a religion of the book” (van der Veer 1994: 65) like Christianity and Islam. He thus propagated the translation of the Vedic scriptures from Sanskrit into Hindi, and Ārya Samāj “discovered in Hinduism a monotheistic god, a book, and congregational worship.” This was “a substantial transformation of a set of polytheistic traditions (and led to the creation of modern Hinduism)” (van der Veer 2001: 27). Ārya Samāj became a religious community in which all religious power gravitated towards the laity (despite its stress on Brahmanical scripture and ritual). The Vedic religion was proclaimed as a rational religion of the Aryan people. Ārya Samāj also stressed the importance of modern education, fought against the Hindu pantheon and iconic worship, and even attacked the caste system: whatever caste one had, one could become a priest and officiate in the Vedic sacrifice of the Ārya Samāj (functions formerly restricted to the Brahmins) (van der Veer 2001: 52). The movement also defended the sacredness of the cow and initiated the ‘Cow Protection Movement,’ which had a distinct anti-Muslim undercurrent. In a structural parallel to Muslim reform movements, where reformers attacked established religious scholars’ hegemonic control of scriptural interpretation, Ārya Samāj attacked the Brahmins role as the central intermediaries between the texts and the pious population.

²⁷ Zanzibar National Archive, ZNA AB 82/683: Public holidays.

The Indians in Zanzibar after the Revolution of 1964

Peace in Zanzibar was disrupted in 1964. A revolutionary rising on the morning of 12 January ousted the Sultan and Muhammad Shamte's government, which had governed Zanzibar as an independent state for less than a month, having taken power on 10 December 1963.²⁸ Led by John Okello, the revolutionaries encountered little resistance and occupied all major strategic positions by 4 pm (see Clayton 1981; Petterson 2002; Mrina and Mattoke 1980; Wimmelbücker 2001; as well as Loimeier 2006 and 2009). Over the following days, the revolution assumed a more organized character, with the Afro Shirazi Party (ASP) Youth League and Umma cadres²⁹ together forming the Revolutionary Council (RC) on January 16. Nevertheless, anarchic killings in both urban and rural areas continued for some days, as did other acts of 'revolutionary violence' and abuse of power. Meanwhile, control over the revolution passed into Zanzibari hands. In Raha Leo, the new revolutionary center of Zanzibar, Karume, 'Babu,' and the other revolutionaries formed the leadership which proclaimed the first revolutionary government of Zanzibar on 24 January. By then it was clear that Okello and his group had lost their influence over the government and the Revolutionary Council. On 20 February 1964, Okello himself was deported to mainland Tanganyika (Clayton 1981: 93). Zanzibar was renamed the 'People's Republic of Zanzibar and Pemba' and a policy of nationalization was implemented. Nationalization would considerably change the social set-up of the country. The new regime soon changed established economic structures and, among other things, imposed a trade monopoly, a policy which hit Indian shop owners, who were forced to close as soon as their stock was exhausted. On 8 October 1964, the External Trade Corporation became the sole importer-exporter of all goods except cloves, which were marketed by the Zanzibar State Trading Company. On 1 November 1964, the first state shop was opened in Miembini (Martin 1978: 59, 61). The nationalization of trade and the economy, as symbolized by the creation of the Zanzibar State Trading Company, led to the collapse of the economy within a few years. From June 1971, Zanzibar relied on a system of food rationing for rice, flour and sugar, based on food cards and the central distribution of food through 27 state shops.

As a result of the revolution and its aftermath, Zanzibar's demographic structure changed decisively, not because thousands of Zanzibaris were killed in the first days of the revolution, but rather because many branded 'non-Zanzibaris' were either deported, forced to emigrate, or fled the islands as refugees over the coming years (Bakari 2001: 79). The harassment and arbitrary imprisonment of Arabs, Comorians and Indians continued into the 1970s (Clayton 1981: 124). In November 1964,

²⁸ For a history of the revolution and its aftermath see Loimeier (forthcoming).

²⁹ The Afro Shirazi Party (ASP, led by Abeid Amani Karume) and Umma (led by Abdurrahman 'Babu') parties formed in the late 1950s and early 1960s and represented a majority of the 'African' constituency in Zanzibar. Both ASP and Umma advocated radical reforms to Zanzibar's social and economic system.

350 civil servants of mostly Arab origin were detained, with similar waves of arrests following in May 1966, March 1968, and in the aftermath of an alleged coup attempt against Karume in 1969, as well as in April 1972, after Karume's assassination (see Kharusi 1967 and 1969; Lodhi, Rydström and Rydström 1979: 88). Moreover, the houses of the leading Arabs and Indians, in particular the al-Barwānī, al-Lamkī and Karimji families, were taken over by the government in February and March 1964.³⁰

The Indian population of Zanzibar, which had not supported the Afro Shirazi Party or the revolution, also suffered. Many Indians were killed or fled. Due to their hegemonic position in trade and business, Indians encountered widespread animosity in Zanzibar. In the countryside, Indian shop-owners and money-lenders had ruled supreme until the revolution, which African Zanzibaris used to wipe out the money-lenders and the debts they owed to them. Anti-Indian feeling had been rampant before the revolution, especially during the late 1950s *zama za siasa* (time of politics). In an account of life in Zanzibar, Abdul Sheriff wrote that his family often went on holiday to Jambiani on the East Coast, where he played with local children. However, when the *zama za siasa* came, the village children were told by their parents that they should stop playing with Indians (*msicheze na hawa Wahindi*) (Abdul Sheriff in Sauda Barwani et.al. 2003: 316).

In addition to massacres and harassment of 'non-Africans,' most Arabs and Indians (around 13,000) were expelled from Zanzibar in 1964. Around 8,000–10,000 Arabs eventually settled in Oman (Clayton 1981: 99), while those who stayed in Zanzibar started to redefine themselves as 'Africans.' In 1967/68 another exodus of Indians took place, as the stocks that had so far enabled the (mostly Indian) shopkeepers to sell goods on the black market were exhausted, and no change in the political or economic situation was in sight. The situation became even more precarious when Karume, who wanted to eradicate all non-African influence in Zanzibar, announced a plan to forcefully marry 'Asian' girls to Africans (Martin 1978: 70). On 6 September 1970, four girls from Indian (allegedly Persian, i.e. 'Parsee') families were taken from their families and married that day by member of the Revolutionary Council Qāḍī Hamid Ameir Ali (Clayton 1981: 124) to other elderly council members. At a meeting Karume declared: "In colonial times, the Arabs took African concubines without bothering to marry them. Now that we are in power the shoe is on the other foot" (Clayton 1981: 124). Those members of the girls' families who protested were beaten and deported, and a number of Indian families were forced to leave the country. Many of these families tried to flee with their daughters, and

³⁰ The expropriation of the Karimji family's property/wealth (not only in Zanzibar but also on the mainland) in the context of the Nyerere's 'nationalization' policies in the late 1960s is documented in detail in Oonk (2009: 162–167). In Zanzibar, the family villa of Sir Tayabali Karimji was taken over by the revolutionaries and became Zanzibar's 'State Guest House.' The Karimji Hospital which had also been built by Sir Tayabali Karimji was nationalized and became the V. I. Lenin Hospital, only to be renamed Mnazi Mmoja Hospital in the 1980s (Sheriff 2016: 9).

there were some cases of suicide among Indian girls (Clayton 1981: 124).³¹ Indeed, the forced marriages are still remembered by Indians as a traumatic time.³² The final blow for the Indian communities came on 16 March 1971, when Karume told all Asians that they had to leave Zanzibar within a year (Clayton 1981: 123). At the time, 6,000 Arabs and Asians were still living in Zanzibar. From 30 June 1971, these groups were no longer given licenses for their shops. By 1972, only 3,500 Arabs and Asians remained in Zanzibar. In total, 35,000 people had left Zanzibar between 1964 and 1972 (Martin 1978: 71). In the end, the revolution obviously led to a significant reduction of the different Indian communities. Today, Indian communities have not recovered from the revolution, the subsequent mass exodus and the restrictive economic policies of the revolutionary governments until the mid-1980s.

The Indian Communities in Zanzibar Today

Nevertheless, the Indian presence in Zanzibar continues in a number of places today. In religious terms, the two remaining temples of the Hindu community have to be mentioned, namely, the 'Shree Shiv Shakti Mandir' in Forodhani/Hurumzi (built in 1958 and opened in 1959 as a temple dedicated to Ram) and the Ārya Samāj Temple in Forodhani (completed 1906). The Jamā'at Khāna of the Khōja-Ismā'īlis in Forodhani (built in 1838, rebuilt and expanded in 1905) is still standing, as are three pre-1900 Jamā'at Khānas of the Bohoras in Soko Mohogo, Kajificheni/Mkunazini (Ismailji Jivanji) and Kiponda (Mulla Abdulali Walliji). There are also the Ithnā'sharī mosques in Kajificheni/Hamamni (Hujjatul Islam, built 1894/1895), Kiponda (Kuwatul Islam, 1878) and Malindi (Matemni, 1861 by Aḥmad b. Nu'man), as well as the Sunni-Ḥanafī-Memon community mosque and school in Kajificheni/Mkunazini (1870s). Catholic Goans also have a parish around St. Joseph's church. Finally, there are the cemeteries of the different religious communities, as well as the Hindu Crematory in Kiungani.³³ The Indian communities set up most cemeteries in Vuga and the adjacent areas of Ng'ambo: the Khōja-Ismā'īlī cemetery on the seashore in Mnazi Moja, which has been largely swallowed up by the Mnazi Moja hospital grounds; the Khōja-Ithnā'sharī cemetery in Vuga (including Sheriff Dewji's family vault just behind the Taasisi building), which was established after the split

³¹ See also Martin on forced marriages. He writes about four 'Persian' girls who were clandestinely taken away on 28 February 1973, a year after Karume's assassination. Their flight took them by dhow to the mainland, then across the Kenyan border to Mombasa, and from there via Karachi to Teheran (Martin 1978: 70–71).

³² Bohoras maintain they were particularly lucky, as they had expatriated their girls to the mainland in time. Bohoras also claim that Bohora women started to dress in a particularly unfashionable 'Bohora' style dress (*burqa* and *rida*). This is a false memory, though, as the *dā'ī al-muṭlaq* first introduced the new Bohora dress for women in 1979 (Blank 2001: 184).

³³ Hindus believe their dead have to be cremated and the ashes scattered in a river or the sea. Thus, they established their *ghat* (crematory) in Kiungani, which is close to the ocean (see Issa 1995: 75).

of the group from the Khōja-Ismā'īlīs in 1877; the Bohora cemetery situated in Kikwajuni, close to the former House of Representatives; the Sunni-Ḥanafī-Memon graveyard on the Kilimani Road, which is opposite the old Golf Course and near the 'Parsee' cemetery on Ziwani Road; the larger Khōja-Ithnā'sharī graveyard in Michenzani/Raha Leo (Issa 1995: 68/69); and the ('mainstream') Ithnā'sharī cemetery in Mwembeladu/Ng'ambo (Penrad 1995).

Indians also retain a significant economic presence, with a number of retail, textile, stationary, book and copy shops; major hotels, in particular, those linked with the Aga Khan Foundation (Serena); the Silk Road, Radha Food House, and Maharaja restaurants; at least one barber shop and one dhobi (laundry); antiques shops in Gizenga and Kenyatta Road (Zanzibar Gallery, Memories of Zanzibar, Lookmanji); Goan shops (photo-studios in particular, the Capital Arts Studio; tourist equipment, electronic); tour operators (such as Mitu), the Madrasa Resource Centre in Malindi;³⁴ and the derelict Shree Vanikmahajan Union Hall in Kajificheni, which was built in 1957. However, the communities remain relatively small. In 2010, there were around 1,400 Indians, including about 400 Bohoras, 300 Khōjas, 400 Hindus, 200 Ithnā'sharīs, 50 Goans, some Sikhs and Memons, as well as a few Zoroastrians. In 1964, Zanzibar's Indian population had been 17,000 (Kaid Lookmanji, 7 August 2010, Vishwas Joshi, 6 August 2010, Abdul Sheriff, 18 August 2010; Zahir Bhalloo and Iqbal Akhtar, 4 August 2010).

The contemporary home of the Hindu community in Zanzibar is the Shree Shiv Shakti Mandir in Hurumzi, which was built for a community of 4,000 Hindus in Zanzibar in the late 1950s. Between 1964 and 1968, however, most Hindus fled to Dar es Salaam (Joshi sr., 2 August 2010). In Zanzibar, the Hindu community remains linked with the group of the 'Shirdi' Sai Baba in India,³⁵ and can be called 'Shivaist' in orientation. Recently, the temple in Zanzibar was taken over by a new Brahmin priest from Mombasa, as the old priest had fled with the temple's money. The new priest introduced stricter temple discipline and excluded women from entering the inner sanctuary of the Shiva shrine. He also led the daily rituals and prayers which were recited in Gujarati. Gujarati and English were also the accepted languages in the Ārya Samāj temple, although prayers there were recited in Sanskrit. The Ārya Samāj group in Zanzibar was established in 1904 by Gokaldas Sunderji Robanath, who had come to Zanzibar at the age of nine, establishing the Ārya Samāj temple and the Ārya Kanya Vidyalaya (Girls' School) in 1906. He left Zanzibar after the revolution and died in Britain in 1967. In 2010, the Ārya Samāj community was rather small, with

³⁴ Like many other projects in Zanzibar, the Madrasa Resource Centre was also financed by the Aga Khan Foundation. The foundation can thus be seen as a transnational body seeking to exert influence on national policies by representing Khōja-Ismā'īlī interests.

³⁵ The Shirdi Sai Baba (the 'holy father from Shirdi,' c. 1838–1918) settled as a guru and yogi in Shirdi near Bombay in 1856. His true name is unknown, he refused to answer questions about it. He tried to reconcile Hindus and Muslims. Today, a number of gurus such as the Sathya Sai Baba (b. 1926) claim to be re-incarnations of the Shirdi Sai Baba.

ten to twenty members gathering for prayers on Saturday after 5.30 pm (my own observations, 20 August 2010).

Conclusion

The diaspora in East Africa illustrates that the four dominant issues of Indian communalism, namely, regional and social descent (caste, *jati*),³⁶ occupation and religion continue to define the development of the Indian communities. Gujaratis do not mingle with Punjabis, nor Goans with Sindhis; equally, Muslims keep their distance from Hindus and vice versa (as do Christians). Even among Muslims, 'sectarian' orientations prevail, especially among the different Shī'i groups. Finally, social origin and occupational background continue to inform everyday interaction and reinforce religious and regional identities. The divide between Khōjas and Bohoras – a divide even within the Ismā'īliyya – corresponds to a divide between higher-ranking Lohanas (Khōjas) and lower-ranking Bohoras, who were often craftsmen, artisans, locksmiths, petty traders, and ironmongers when they came to East Africa.³⁷ The longevity of communal divisions amongst Indians in East Africa is remarkable as it runs against an argument implicit in the academic literature on migration and diaspora: namely, that outside pressure, crisis and oppression directed against a specific ethnic/religious and/or social group reduces or even prevents conflict among minorities who wish to defend themselves in an inimical environment. The history and development of the Indian communities in East Africa shows, however, that fragmented communities may remain fragmented even under conditions of duress. At the same time, in postcolonial times Indian communities have come under serious pressure to either 'quit' or 'conform' by integrating themselves into East Africa's new nation states. However, the pressure on Indians to commit themselves completely to a new identity and to become exclusively 'Kenyan' or 'Tanzanian' was unacceptable to most, not only because it was linked with the forced nationalization of property, but also because it would have meant abandoning identification with two important 'cosmopolitan' legacies, namely the British Commonwealth³⁸ and the Indian diaspora worldwide and its roots in India (and, to a lesser degree, Pakistan).

³⁶ I define 'caste' here as a basic concept of social organization that is informed by occupational functions and a ritual division of work. 'Castes' unite persons and groups that are linked by bounds of blood and consequently stress endogamous marriage. The true character of a specific 'caste' can be identified only in relationship and contrast to other 'castes' that are linked to each other in social, political, religious and economic terms (see Michaels 2006: 176/177, 184).

³⁷ As the poorest Indian community in Zanzibar, the Bohoras suffered significantly less in the revolution and its aftermath than Ithnā'sharīs and Khōjas. Indeed, the Bohoras were even able to take over some of the business of the other Indian groups, especially the Khōjas, in the 1980s. As a result, many Bohoras have become traders and shop-owners and dominate these businesses today, even more than Khōjas did before 1964. To a certain degree, this is also true for the Tanzanian mainland.

³⁸ Most Indians in East Africa had a British passport and were rather unwilling to exchange these for

The fragmented character of the Indian diaspora in East Africa extends to Zanzibar, where duress has been even more severe than in other parts of East Africa (with the exception of Uganda in 1972). Despite virtually collapsing after the revolution and not having recovered today, Indian groups in Zanzibar still maintain communal exclusivities and refuse to intermarry with other Indian groups or non-Indians. Equally, political oppression has made integration into post-revolutionary Zanzibar virtually impossible for Indians, and has consequently prevented them from developing an idea of 'belonging' to the nation. The established patterns of non-intermarriage practiced in India thus remain current in both East Africa and Zanzibar. Clearly, communal issues prevail and are not about to be dissolved in the foreseeable future. Even in Zanzibar, which has a tiny Indian population today, there is nothing like a homogeneous Indian community. Indians are rather split into different fractions and distinct communities that reject intermarriage, even if there are no open conflicts.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to a number of Zanzibari 'Indian' friends and colleagues who have supported me in my research. In particular, Professor Abdul Sheriff, formerly of the Department of Archives, Museums and Archaeology in Zanzibar and former Director of the Zanzibar Indian Ocean Research Institute (ZIORI); Yunus Sameja, the owner of an Islamic bookshop in Darajani; the owner of the Capital Arts Photo-Studios; my *dhobi* (laundryman) in his Shree Ramji Laundry in Soko Mohogo; the new priest of the Shree Shiv Shakti Mandir (the 'Temple of the most respected Lord Shiva') in Hurumzi as well as Joshi sr. and his son Vishwas Joshi; Kaid Lookmanji, a Bohora trader and owner of an antiques shop in Gizenga who let me live in his old family house in Kajificheni; as well as Mufaddal A. Karimji, the owner of the Hatimi-copy shop in Mkunazini, where I have done most of my copying since 2001.

new Ugandan, Kenyan, or Tanzanian passports. When ethnic cleansing (as in Uganda and Zanzibar) or the nationalization of Indian properties (as in Kenya and Tanganyika) started, East Africa's Indians found it relatively easy to migrate to Commonwealth countries such as Great Britain and Canada. Canada, especially the federal states of Alberta (Edmonton) and Ontario (Toronto), became a new centre of 'twice displaced' Indians.

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Part III:
Politics of Belonging and Violence

9 Domestic Violence and the Implications of Belonging: Experiences of Indian Immigrant Women in North America

Swati Shirwadkar

This chapter explores the experiences of domestic abuse by female Indian immigrants in North America, who are caught between multiple layers of constraints emanating from the host community on the one hand, and from belonging to the homeland culture on the other. Deprived of access to a violence-free safe space in their private lives, these women attempt to pull off a delicate balancing act between life, family and culture in the western world.

Cultural diversities due to increased transnational migration have attracted the attention of researchers in recent years, bringing out the several dimensions of the process as well as the multiple challenges, including that of assimilation into the host society. The social cost of migration, particularly for women, is one area that still needs attention. Exclusion of immigrants from policies and programs, particularly in the case of women, remains an area of concern for both policy makers and activists. This is particularly true for domestic violence against women. Gender-based violence within the private area of the family household is a universally acknowledged problem in many societies the world over. However, developed nations, particularly North America and Europe, have taken substantial policy and programmatic steps to reduce violence against women, especially within the family. Given the recent trends of immigration to these countries, there is a growing concern whether these policies and programs are useful for accommodating the needs of immigrants, and indeed addressing the issue of cultural diversity. This perceived shortcoming espe-

cially warrants attention in the case of North America, i.e. Canada and the United States. What, therefore, are the experiences of Indian immigrant women that render it problematic for them to access the benefits of existing policies and programs?

To explore this issue, I will first present a review of studies on domestic violence and the Indian cultural context. With this general background in place, I contextualize domestic violence against immigrant Indian women living in Canada and the United States in terms of their belonging to the homeland culture. This will bring out the complexities of how Indian immigrant women experience domestic violence – first in the immediate family context, second in terms of general diasporic experience, and third in terms of belonging to a particular homeland culture. In a further step, I summarize this exploratory study of age-stratified immigrant Indian women, social service workers and the wider community, revealing the constraints preventing these women from accessing programs and policies that have been put in place to protect them. The conclusion suggests a need for further research into the problematic of what it means for an immigrant diaspora to belong to a homeland culture. The study highlights how immigrants struggle to become part of the host society, suggesting that full access to policies and programs designed to help has yet to be achieved.

The Issue of Domestic Abuse

Violence against women is indisputably a universal phenomenon, being firmly rooted in different societies and cultures all over the world. Most tragically, domestic abuse often goes unnoticed or occurs behind closed doors. The family perspective did not see domestic violence as a universal phenomenon perpetrated against women (Gelles 1993; Gelles and Straus 1988). However, other research suggests that violence is asymmetrical and that women are persistently abused in developed and less-developed countries alike (Dobash and Dobash 2005; Heise et al. 1994). The feminist perspective sees wife abuse as an extreme form of male domination as well as a socio-historical reality rooted in the structure of patriarchy, pointing to gender differences in patterns of domestic violence. Women are without power in social, economic or political spheres of life, rendering them dependent and vulnerable (Dobash and Dobash 2005).

Although the feminist perspective has highlighted both the complexities of domestic violence and the institutionalization of gender inequalities, it fails to adequately address other factors behind the subordination and entrapment of women (Fernandez 1997). Recent studies draw attention to factors transcending gender, which are of particular importance for the study of South Asian communities. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talapade Mohanty have emphasized the need to understand genealogies when analyzing women's experiences (Alexander and Mohanty 1997). The use of ethnicity and gender as significant analytical categories has been deemed necessary to contextualize domestic violence among immigrant communities (Abra-

ham 1999). Especially in the case of South Asian women, there is a need to be sensitive to the place of origin of immigrant communities. Yet this sensitivity is frequently either missing or downplayed by state policy. Analysis of the complicated nature of domestic violence in immigrant families points to the involvement of multiple interfacing factors like cultural conditioning, racial prejudice, isolation, and immigrant status (Abraham 2000). Thus it is imperative to move beyond a feminist perspective when exploring domestic abuse against South Asian immigrant women.

Method

This exploratory study was conducted to identify more specifically the experiences and needs of Indian immigrant women living in Canada (and to some extent in the United States as well) (Shirwadkar 2004). The current programmatic approaches and policy provisions are contrasted with the actual experience and culture of the abused women. I conducted in-depth interviews with a snowball sample of Indian immigrant women, in order to identify the issues, barriers, and problems they encounter when dealing with domestic violence in the Toronto area and the Southern United States; likewise, I conducted telephone interviews with women from other parts of the United States. Additional interviews with battered women advocates, activists, and prominent community social workers were also used to substantiate and elaborate on the interviews with the immigrant women. There were inevitable limitations, first of all due to the shortness of my in-country stay (however, after a gap of some ten years, I was able to add some more recent cases, interviewing respondents while on visit in India or else by phone), and secondly due to the small number of observations drawn on, which necessarily reflect only the perceptions and experiences of a small group of immigrants. Notwithstanding, the findings suffice to outline the main issues facing immigrant women.

One of the main challenges when researching immigrant communities is gaining access to its members and obtaining disclosure on sensitive issues. As I belong to India, I was more readily accepted by the immigrant community and could attend a variety of formal and informal community activities. I was able to contact community residents and social workers in connection with celebrating Indian festivals and informal family get-togethers. Discussions and observations with these parties helped me understand the cultural milieu of the immigrant community and the perception of domestic abuse within the immigrant community. These gatherings also helped me understand the attitude of the immigrant community to domestic abuse. The meaning the community attaches to the issue of wife abuse is different from mainstream society. Certain forms of abuse are not only tolerated but may be considered legitimate (Rao 1998). Though most immigrant women admitted that domestic violence was a problem, they tended to ascribe the problem to a regional Indian community other than their own, especially when we discussed the issue in a community setting or in a large group. Moreover, prominent community social

workers and activists privately elaborated actual cases of abuse among all the Indian communities. Some community members later privately approached me to narrate cases of abuse.

Information was sourced via a few domestic violence victims from immigrant communities in Toronto and the United States; respondents came from different parts of India and were chosen by snowball sampling. As already pointed out, I held an advantage in developing trust with these women by being from India myself. Also, the short period of my stay in Canada and the United States reduced their worry that I might leak their 'family problem' to the wider community. Thus, I benefited from being an 'outsider,' while gaining social access as an 'insider.' My interviews with the victims were unstructured and some were spread over time. Sometimes victims gave information about abuse on the telephone when their husband was not around, and sometimes they did it by email. In one case, the extended family of one victim found out that she was talking to someone about domestic abuse and put an end to her contacts.

In four cases, the abuse was physical, though combined with psychological, spatial, and financial abuse. Two cases involved severe physical abuse. In other cases, the abuse was more psychological and financial. However, it has to be noted that in the course of discussion most victims concurred that just a slap from the husband during an argument could be tolerated. None of these women had ever sought help from service providers. One of the physically abused victims eventually confided her problem to a community support group, while another was rescued by her maternal family members. Even among the physically abused, one victim did not want to end the marital relationship. (However, two of the victims had obtained a divorce.) In one case, the husband of the abused woman crosschecked if the wife was meeting with "the researcher."

Domestic Violence in India

Crime and violence against women in India has only recently attracted research attention, prompted in part by the Indian women's movement plus concern over issues like an increasing number of dowry deaths (Kumar 1993). In India, nearly two in five married women experience some form of violence from their husbands. The embedded (and structural) nature of violence against women has been captured by earlier studies of the status of women in India. These studies have also brought out the regional variations in women's status, reflecting local differences in social structure and institutions (Karve 1965; Madan 1975; Srinivas 1978; Committee on the Status of Women in India 1974). They have likewise exposed the impact of the patriarchal, joint family in imposing marriage customs and shaping the role of women.

An Indian woman traditionally faces a range of expectations associated with the principle of *sewa* (selfless service): proficiency in cooking elaborate Indian food, looking after in-laws, maintaining respectful and amicable relationships, entertain-

ing guests, and providing a flow of gifts (Dube 2001). The construct of femininity emphasizes submissiveness, inferiority, docility and dependency, plus the importance of the patriarchal family (Shirwadkar 1998). Deviation from these gender role expectations are likely to meet with different forms of abuse, and lend some justification to domestic abuse as an inevitable part of marriage (Busby 1999; Rao 1998). However, there also exists an age and role hierarchy within Indian families, affording some women space depending on their role status. With concern growing over this issue, recent research in India has highlighted several correlates of domestic violence, such as young age at marriage, family hierarchies, poverty, and economic independence (Ahuja 1987; Fernandez 1997; Karlekar 1998; Kelkar 1992; Kumari 1989; Mahajan 1990; Rao 1998). Gender studies have brought out the class-caste context and the rural-urban variations in domestic violence. The latter context helps to elucidate how and why such indicators as education or employment may or may not work to reduce violence or dowry demands in some regions, and also why strategies adopted by women to subvert domination in different communities are more or less effective (Deolalikar and Rao 1998; Liddle and Joshi 1986; Mukherjee, Rustagi and Krishnaji 2001; Raheja and Gold 1996).

Indian women, moreover, face another problem: the scarcity of policies and programs addressing domestic violence in India. Whereas counseling programs are court-mandated for men in North America, in India itself this is not the case – there the chief recourse for women is to seek help from family counseling cells, though they rarely in fact do so. There are also some government-sponsored housing facilities set aside for women fleeing violent relationships. A Supreme Court justice criticized that these facilities were being run like brothels (Sakal Daily 2001), supporting the impression that most state-sponsored programs are counterproductive. However, some policy improvement has materialized through recent legislative amendments and a proposed domestic violence bill. Women's organizations have, however, raised several reservations against the prospective bill. Apart from problems in defining domestic violence, the bill did not clearly give the women the crucial right to remain in her matrimonial home (The Lawyers Collective 2001). Finally, the Prevention of Domestic Violence against Women Act was passed in 2006 after many changes, yet on the level of implementation many hurdles remain.

This cultural context of domestic abuse in India may prove helpful for analyzing the abuse experienced by Indian immigrant women. Here violence within the family has to be situated within the larger context of womanhood in Indian culture generally – a culture undergoing turmoil, transition, and reassertion in the era of globalization. The experience of the Indian immigrant woman is complicated, however, not only by her homeland culture, but also by her immigrant community and the new nation where she resides (Bhattacharjee 1997). This social complexity and cultural specificity has led South Asian activists and researchers to voice their dissatisfaction with the mainstream battered women's movement, which tends to focus on only one dimension of these women's lives – the violent relationship (Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Bhattacharjee 1997).

Diaspora and Belonging: Immigrants and Culture

Immigrants who still see themselves as belonging to a homeland cultural context also see themselves as constituting a diaspora. The identity of diaspora ethnic groups is rendered more dynamic by increasing mobility in the present globalization context (Appadurai 1997). Globalization and increasing migration have brought into focus complexities in the notion of boundaries and loyalties, especially in terms of belonging and identity (Koh 2011). The new diaspora, now being lived out in western countries, reproduces its existence through the perceived fact of still belonging to the home culture on the plane of life practices, albeit in different circumstances. The impact of community is strong among these immigrants, even if it is an imagined community (Anderson [1983] 2006).

It is acknowledged that multiple identities coexist in the case of immigrant diasporas (Anthias 2006). In their working lives Indian Americans strive to be perfect professionals, instilling in their children the American values of competitiveness and hard work; but at the same time they are at pains to socialize their children in the traditional Indian culture to which they belong, through visits to temples, missions, voluntary community language schools, and – importantly for our present concern – they expect their daughters and wives to comply with traditional roles, as for example when entertaining guests with Indian food or taking part in festival rituals. Research studies show that there are shifts in beliefs and identity in the new context (Joshi 2006; Segady and Shirwadkar 2012); hence identity can be flexible. To belong to any collectivity, it is important to conform to the prevalent gender norms (Anthias 2006). The culture of the ethnic population is not a reified but a dynamic construct. In the Indian context for example, while the core beliefs and values may not be easily erased (Singh 2000), provision is made for new adaptations. Increasing entry of Indian immigrants into the western world does not necessarily mean that the cultural roots expressed in core institutions like family, kinship, marriage, and motherhood are forgotten. On the contrary, they are reconstituted and used from time to time, albeit for different purposes. The institutional impact remains strong, especially in the cases of the extended family, kin network, and marriage customs (Karve 1965; Madan 1975; Srinivas 1978). Sociocultural and family obligations, the norms and values of a particular culture, are significantly implicated in people's life cycles, and this applies no less to the immigrant context, with the difference that they now need to be reconstituted in a rather different situation to their place of origin.

In the altered circumstances of immigration, women may not necessarily be aware of the nuances of western legalities, especially those relating to the private sphere, which in most South Asian countries is usually treated as a sacrosanct area; as a result, legal measures are only considered as the last option; moreover, mediation through the larger family-kin network is preferred over social welfare services. Though welfare services are common in western countries, certainly compared to the South Asian scene, social service workers may be handicapped by a paucity of understanding or information about the situation of immigrant Indian women (Status

of Women Canada 2002). In the Indian context, issues relating to marital discord are considered personal and emotional, a stricture that also applies to the cultural socialization of women, which traditionally includes complex layers of family-kin networks along with ethnic community ties. Explicating the concept of belonging, Nira Yuval-Davis brings out its different levels, which include social locations, emotional attachments to collectivities, and also to a value system that helps judge others from the perspective of the collectivity (Yuval-Davis 2006). The complex interplay of these layers needs to be unraveled, if we are to understand the issue of abuse and the effort to overcome it.

Indian Immigrant Women in Canada and the United States

The presence of the Indian immigrant community is strongly felt in some parts of Canada and the United States. Especially Ontario or British Columbia and California or Texas are known to have skilled Indian IT professionals. Toronto, which is in Ontario province, possesses the largest population of Indian immigrants (554,900, or 4.9%, of Ontario's total population). An Indian woman usually comes to Canada in circumstances where she is totally dependent on her spouse; and in most cases, she is unaware of the immigration laws. Her usual close-knit kin and extended family network, along with her neighborhood support and community resources, are suddenly lost or substantially reduced (Bannerji 2000; METRAC 2001). Consequently, she becomes very isolated. In some cases, this isolation results in a compensating control exercised by her husband that has psychological, physical, financial and even spatial aspects. Studies indicate that enforced dependency can be predictive of intimate partner violence (Raj and Silverman 2007). Owing to cultural barriers, she cannot speak about her abuse in public or seek assistance elsewhere. Indian women, particularly those from middle-class backgrounds, are ashamed to admit to domestic abuse because of the social stigma attached to it and the fear of 'gossip,' especially within the community (Johnson and Johnson 2001; Raheja and Gold 1996). They do not seek help from shelter homes for abused women, because of the Indian woman's traditional preference for turning to her natal family for support rather than some outside agency (Desai & Krishnaraj 1987; Preisser 1999). Patriarchal family norms are predominant even in urban nuclear families in India, while in the immigrant context the community takes the place of the neighboring kin group (Pillai 2001; Segal 1999; Uberoi 2000).

An Indian middle-class woman is seldom educated about her legal rights as a 'wife.' Innumerable cultural symbols, such as the pan-Indian epic character of 'Sita' or 'Sati-Savitri' (idealizing the quiet suffering of women), ingrain the belief that the marital family home is a woman's only alternative (Epstein 1996; Kakar 1978; Segal 1999). Indian immigrant women often also stay in abusive relationships because of scant economic resources and language barriers; conversely, social service workers

generally do not have enough information or understanding of Indian immigrant women to effectively reach out to them (Status of Women Canada 2002).

Policy Provisions and Experiences of Immigrant Women in Canada and the United States

Canada and the United States have put in place several policies and programs to prevent domestic violence against women. In the case of immigrants, however, the legal situation for domestic abuse victims is rather more complex (Abraham 2005; Dasgupta and Warriar 1996). The data on transition houses in Ontario showed that the majority (80 %) of beneficiaries of subsidized housing are Canadian-born. It was observed that a shelter home in the Houston area did not have any South Asian victims. Moreover, the data showed that there was no separate category for South Asians. This reflects a need by Indian women to remain in a secure community network.

One Indian immigrant woman gave her impressions after visiting a shelter home. All her fears of 'loose' western morals, lesbianism, and racist discrimination surfaced, and she did not dare to even think of leaving her home again, even if her husband was an abuser. The immigrant culture was seen as too different and the western culture as too 'modern,' combined with a fear of race relations along the grid of power. Obviously, the subjectivities attached to the issue have been used to build a defense wall, where 'our' culture is constructed as superior, at least in terms of moral conduct, than 'theirs.' The identity of the 'other' may be an imagined one. In this case the generational difference also mattered, as the victim was an elderly person. She also commented that at her advanced age, interacting with the young social worker at the shelter seemed very odd and put her in the awkward situation of asking for help; besides, the social worker seemed 'so formal,' which might mean she was not genuinely interested in her problem.

Clearly, it is not easy for South Asian women to interact with members of the host community in these matters. Moreover, a Canadian social worker of South Asian origin admitted that racism existed even within the social service organizations dedicated to helping women. Subsidized housing in Canada was deemed inadequate, given the great demand and a 10-year waiting list.

The Tug of the Home Culture and Belonging to Family in India

It was observed among the immigrant Indian women interviewed for this study that there was a predominant feeling of belonging to the home culture and tradition. A woman's identity in India is constructed from several complex and dynamic factors. It is influenced by primordial loyalties such as religion, caste, language, and history, combined with such cultural specifics as particularized beliefs, customs, traditions, and values. All of which are ingrained in a process of socialization via local languages

and literature, Hindi movies, and the invasion of satellite TV (Chanana 1996; Derné 1999; Kishwar 1999; Segal 1999). On the one hand, there is the mystification of sexuality due to rigid segregation of the sexes in public life; on the other hand, there is the ensemble of marriage ceremony, dowry and gifts – all of which reinforce the subjugation of women within the Indian patriarchal social structure.

Browsing through the matrimonial columns of the major national daily ‘The Times of India’ elucidates the importance of marrying into a ‘status’ family, preferably ‘NRI’ (non-resident Indian). These practices pressure women into keeping their marriages intact. For example, two abused women interviewed in this study told of ‘telephone marriages’ with second-generation South Asian Canadians of a particular religious community, where the actual presence of the bridegroom at the wedding was not necessary. The young women said that they were happy with their family’s decision to have them marry a person whom they had not even seen at the time of the wedding. “If something unfortunate happens then that is my fate,” one of them said.

Some practices in India, such as the dowry, cross the boundaries of religion or caste. As an impact of consumerism, some castes and tribes are even adopting the dowry, although it was never a part of their tradition. The spread of education and women’s employment has not changed their dowry situation appreciably, although in some cases educated young men now carry a higher price tag. If a young man is already an immigrant, this will almost certainly cause an increase in his dowry price. Dowry has become a continuous source of cash extraction, with different forms of gifts answering to the need to acquire consumer goods, nor does this need for capital cease after marriage (Deolalikar & Rao 1998; Jejeebhoy 1998).

Ending such a marriage means returning to one’s family, not only with the shame and stigma of divorce, but with the added disgrace of having wasted all the money spent on the marriage. Usually Indian women do not want to leave a marital relationship because marriage is seen as a lifelong relationship, or as a *sanskar* or sacrament (Agnes 2000). Even in India, there is a tendency to encourage and almost force young women to suffer abuse in the marital family – anything but ceasing to live with their in-laws and husband. Divorce is usually discouraged as it amounts to a loss of family honor (Kallivayalil 2010). Canadian television telecast a Canadian Indian arranged marriage that was opulently celebrated, but ended sadly in the wife killing the husband in a scuffle. The woman’s in-laws’ attempted to control the son, provoking him to physically assault the wife, who then defended herself. Ending a marriage by divorce is not an easy option for Indian women, even when they are abroad. The common perception in developed countries concerning arranged marriages is that they are, in effect, a trap attached to a culture that is barbaric. That the menace of domestic violence is all pervasive is easily forgotten. Extreme cases such as of honor killings are also reported in the media of the United Kingdom and the United States. Such reports, where the talk is of killing the wife to preserve the family honor, serve to revive earlier images associated with Indian culture – such as *satee* – resulting in a media frenzy of ‘burning brides,’ ‘burning widows,’ or the like. Media coverage

and discourse problematizes incidents such as honor killing, so much so that even arranged marriages are portrayed as barbaric and ending in violence. However, if something similar happens in the host community (e.g., stalking and the killing of a partner on suspicion), it is not treated the same way. The binaries created by the discourse on ethnicized culture (seen as emotional and backward) and the culture of the host society (seen as rational and advanced) exclude immigrants and further accelerate the 'othering' process.

Shelter workers reported that while South Asian women do seek counseling, they are also reluctant to leave even a highly abusive situation and avail themselves of shelters. Acceptance of a failed marriage is hard enough, but far worse is speaking about it in public. This can degrade one's self-image of being a 'good wife' and daughter-in-law. Moreover, a 'failed marriage' is often accompanied by a loss of status and ties within the immigrant community, which, as has been pointed out already, serves as a support network for Indian immigrant women in an alien society. The fear of the losing one's immigrant status imposes an additional burden in the form of having to face one's community back home in India. An immigrant woman related how when she called one of her male colleagues, his wife had picked up the phone, since he was not at home at the time. In the course of the conversation the wife broke down and told the caller about the physical abuse she was enduring. But when given the contact details of a social worker as well as a shelter address, the victim blurted out the words: "*hamare me aisa nahi karte na ... log kya kahenge!*" ("but we don't do that, what will people say!"). The invisible idea of *log* (people) and the pressure of the invisible community clearly works, even in the new geographic locale. After this she never called back and avoided all contact. The sense of being a community member – adhering to its norms and not crossing red lines – seems strong among many immigrants. Besides, there is always community pressure coming from being part of a 'model minority' (Abraham 2005). Migration is often coupled with aspirations of upward mobility, hence immigrants need to balance awareness of how their actions will impact on the immigrant community with a wider awareness of how these same actions will be seen back in India, where immigrants enjoy the high status of 'NRI' (NRI, or 'non-resident Indians,' is the homeland term used in this connection). In such cases, identity must be constructed in relation to the imagined 'other' and by self-insulation, since one is also aware that getting help in the new social context is not easy. There may also be a role for the host community in constructing them as the 'other.' It was found that interaction with the host community in Canada and United States is mostly limited to the workplace. Family visits and community participation were almost absent. On the other hand, the Indian immigrant community is closely knit and interdependent, with a preference for engaging in collective leisure activities and community gatherings. There is also a lot of sharing of social capital via networks – e.g. accommodation for newcomers, monetary help, transport for visitors and children, or help with cooking. It is difficult for an Indian woman to cope without a community network of her own, especially when she knows that the kind of help she needs cannot be provided by the host community.

For an immigrant woman, employment does not necessarily ease her lot. Having a job does not mean that housework is shared by the husband, nor is there any reduction in her duties to relatives. One middle-aged interviewee related that she still observes the Indian dress code, because of her mother-in-law's dictates and her husband's disapproval of western culture. Another lady jokingly said something in a group that amounted to an interesting observation. She pointed out that when she visited India after a long gap, she found that her husband's younger sister was wearing sleeveless shirts and shorts in her mother-in-law's presence, but "their rules were different from when I was of that age!" In-laws can maintain control even if they are living in India. The husband, in such cases, becomes the agent carrying out their wishes. One divorced woman told of her mother-in-law writing to her husband not to let her "evade his control," acting on the incitement of her husband's sister, who was staying with the couple at the time. As a result, the husband isolated his wife and beat her. Moreover, the kind of act, the context and setting in which it occurs, also carries legitimacy at times. If the respectful relationship with any of the in-laws is felt to have been violated, even in terms of showing independence by wearing 'western' dress, this may invite a negative reaction. Depending on the seriousness of the violation, acts of physical violence may win approval, with the degree of legitimacy and social support varying with the social, historical, and interpersonal parameters (Dobash and Dobash 1979).

In another case, however – that of a highly skilled working couple – it was actually the mother-in-law who helped the abused wife. This respondent was a professional working woman and the couple was earning very well. No one knew that she had been physically abused by the husband for quite some time. He used to get angry over minor things, even over a minor argument, and would beat her up. He used to wake her up in the night and throw her against the wall; she couldn't sleep properly for fear he might start again. Even though her maternal family relatives were in the United States, she did not tell them about the abuse so as not to be a burden. On one occasion, when her in-laws arrived from India and were staying with the couple, the husband started beating the wife in the presence of her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law objected, but in spite of her efforts to stop him, the husband dragged the wife into another room and closed the door so he could continue beating her without interference. The mother-in-law wanted to call the police, but the father-in-law stopped her; instead, he called the wife's family to take her away for her own safety. With the support of her maternal family, this abused woman could finally obtain a divorce. She also changed her location and job, but it took quite a while to overcome depression.

Indian working women seldom kept separate bank accounts, though this is changing now among young professional immigrants. Earlier, women were not informed of financial matters, such as taxes, and as a result were more dependent on the husband. This can be observed particularly among women of the elder generation. The impact of role responsibilities from the home culture was strongest among them – with much time and attention devoted to performing the duties of a tradi-

tional Indian wife and maintaining the family image in the eyes of the community. Interestingly, the 'others' also contribute to the construction of this image by contrasting the ethnic community practices with their own. In one case of financial and emotional abuse, the husband was swindling the wife's money and pressing her to take out loans. In spite of her being highly educated and holding down a job, she remained ignorant about her financial status for a long time and was unable to resist. When she realized that she had lost everything, she was in a fix. The respondent stated that though divorce was an option, it was hard to go down that road. Any hint of marital discord could easily become 'talk of the town' in the Indian immigrant community. Moreover, for middle-class working wives in the United States, filing for divorce is very expensive; lawyers, according to her, charge exorbitant fees, which would have the effect of further eroding her financial situation and depriving her of the money she would need after the divorce.

In most cases, the immigrant woman earns less than her husband. The husband has control over her pay and spending. The funds for her in-laws' air travel are typically taken from the woman's resources. Women tend to accept such practices for fear of causing conflict with family-kin. Incurring the displeasure of in-laws may result in gossip and criticism within the immigrant communities. One agitated interviewee commented, "We are filling their [meaning her in-laws in India] *boriyans* [meaning food grain containers or coffers] with dollars, and I cannot even buy underwear for myself. It's not only that you invite the husband's hostility if you don't comply, but because of being a *badi-bahu* [meaning the eldest daughter-in-law], the whole family-kin network expects you to make all kinds of sacrifices." Sometimes it is a thankless sacrifice.

Isolation of Abused Migrant Women

One elderly and physically handicapped woman pointed to another major factor related to domestic violence, namely isolation and dependency. Even though her abuse continued for years, she could not speak out for several reasons. Her husband, who held a prestigious government post, threatened her with political reprisals if she did so. She believed that her husband, because of his high position, would be able to make good on this threat. So she put up with physical and financial abuse as well as the trauma of having to witness an illicit relationship by her abusive husband in her own house. When she found out about her husband's infidelity, he grew even more violent. She described her humiliation when her husband not only thrashed her in front of the other woman, but seized her with both hands and told the other woman to slap her. With tears in her eyes she continued: "...but being a woman, *bai-pan* [implying a sense of the common sufferings of women] was awakened in the other woman and, luckily for me, she could not go through with it, so that at least I was spared further humiliation, though both made a point of treating me as a mental case, so I still had to endure their taunts and derisive laughter." And yet she was not

ready to consider leaving her husband. "I can't drive a car ... so who can I depend on for even simple things like fetching groceries in this icy foreign land?" Here again it is apparent, despite the fact of her having lived in Canada for so many years, that there existed a construction of the 'other' in her mind. Dreamily, she expressed a wish that perhaps someday somebody would narrate her story in a film or a novel, and that after watching or reading it her husband would have a change of heart and come back to her! When this woman revealed her abuse to a small group of Indian immigrants involved in community social work, the husband became concerned about his own reputation in the community and at least stopped the physical part of the abuse. This brings out the potential for community pressure in stopping or reducing abuse. The Indian immigrant community in Canada has been observed to be more closely knit than in the United States, but this situation is slowly changing now due to the recent influx of well-off Indians from the Gulf states.

Another elderly woman, this time from an orthodox religious community, spoke out about her own abuse, and that of her daughters, at the hands of her husband. She reported that the community had advised her to go back to India because the abuser happened to be an important community leader and fundraiser for community causes. In this case, there was pressure coming from the community not to speak out about her problems because it was felt the community's reputation might suffer a setback. In some states of Northern India, extended family norms exert a controlling influence. Exposure of sexual abuse is still suppressed in some Indian immigrant communities. Many young men from these communities hold down security jobs that require night shifts. Under these circumstances, wives have to fear the father-in-law who stays at home with them. He may make sexual advances toward them. They feel helpless, face constant tension, and cannot speak out.

In extreme cases, Indian immigrant women prefer legal intervention to going to shelters, according to social workers and some of the victims. This is largely a result of rigid thinking about being middle class. The immigrants do, in fact, come primarily from the middle class, which is seen as having a caste-like status. Women face the dilemma of losing their community status and support network if they leave their husband's house. Going to shelters or transition houses and then moving into public housing means a woman has to move away from her community. This presents an additional setback for Indian women who, as we have seen, are heavily dependent on their community and on networking with other immigrants from their home country. Immigrant women, to reiterate, see social isolation as something very difficult to bear.

Conclusion

The policies of the North American countries, especially Canada, against domestic violence are generally more developed than in India. However, these policies do not appear to be meeting the complex needs of abused Indian immigrant women. Multiple layers of domination and other barriers keep these women in subjugation. It is essential to understand the dynamics of this subjugation process. The operant factors are family hierarchy, historical gender inequalities, plus the complexities and pressures that come from belonging to an ethnic community. However, in some cases at least, Indian immigrant women combine to prevent a further escalation of violence. Moreover, the role and impact of community cannot be ignored, even if it is imagined. Some studies have cautioned against strategies that directly challenge existing structures and beliefs, since these are likely to be regarded as culturally sensitive. Such strategies may even induce a backlash (Garg 2001; Kishwar 1999).

This research reinforces the important part played by belonging to family and community in the lives of Indian immigrants. The experiences of immigrant women show that they prefer intervention to come from within the family, rather than from state structures such as the police or shelter homes. Even back in India, a similar tendency is observed among abused women. For immigrants, there is a sense of belonging first to the family and then to the ethnic community. The problems facing immigrant Indian women need to be seen in this context. Therefore, the challenge for policymakers is to raise awareness of domestic violence within the immigrant communities themselves, and to establish networks of culturally specific institutions to support immigrant women. Strategies such as staging folk dramas during the Ganesh festival (a practice used earlier in India to subvert the colonial regime) or reviving the reformist tradition through community-based organizations (as has been done in Bengal or Maharashtra) can be useful in this regard. Active outreach by the Canadian and US governments to progressive elements within the immigrant community is also needed. More immediately, abused Indian women need to be linked up with facilities that provide social support and reduce isolation, rather than 'rescued' or removed from their abusive situation.

Implications

The gender roles of South Asian women and the barriers they face cannot be properly understood without unraveling the complex process of belonging to their own community and culture. As a result, Indian immigrant women find it difficult to access existing welfare benefits or to avail themselves of shelter and transition houses. There is a need to develop greater legal awareness and enlist community support when countering the domestic violence these women face. Existing accepted channels – such as those relating to community cultural activities – should be explored to ensure community support. This is essential in an era of increasing budget cuts to

domestic abuse programs. Even so, current policies may not be sensitive enough to address the welfare needs of immigrant Indian women.

Several advocacy groups and activists are pressing for more changes in policies to counter the problem of violence against women. South Asian groups and activists, as well as leading feminists, have all stressed the need to understand diversity within the feminist movement. While agreeing that North American and particularly Canadian domestic violence policies are, on the whole, laudable, there is still an outstanding need to address the varied cultural experiences of Indian immigrant women.

Future Research

This exploratory research is necessarily limited by its small sample size. Yet the need to press on with binational research to understand women's needs in both India and North America is underscored by the study. Future research needs to keep in view the increasing scale of transnational migration and the challenges facing immigrants, not just in terms of settling into and adapting to their host countries, but also in terms of belonging to a home culture and community. A gender-sensitive analysis of the domestic violence issue could benefit policymakers by allowing them to create secure zones within the private space of Indian immigrant women. In an era of increasing transnational migration, this challenge needs to be addressed by researchers and policymakers alike.

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10 The Call of Home and Violence of Belonging: Diasporic Hinduism and Tamils in Exile

Kamala Ganesh

Introduction

To escape the trauma of violence and civil war, more than a million ethnic Tamils have emigrated from Sri Lanka since 1983. Today, they live in different pockets of the globe, and are interlinked through a powerful transnational network. As a diaspora, they are defined by a shared commitment to the cause of Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka. The million-plus Tamils who have emigrated since 1983 constitute a distinct and influential niche within the four million strong Tamil diaspora.¹ Indeed, the broader Tamil diaspora dating from pre-colonial times is composed of several historical and cultural layers, with varying inclinations towards assuming a Tamil ethnicity. In the pre-colonial period, mercantile traders and financiers like the Nattukkottai Chettiars spread throughout Southeast Asia, merging and mingling with local cultures. As their numbers increased during the colonial period, so too did the intricacy of their enterprises, and the community flourished. People and money circulated through well-honed networks between South India and Malaya, Burma, Straits settlements, Siam, Java, and Indo-China, enabling considerable business success (Kudaisya 2006: 60–61). Due to their itinerant modes of business, these emigrant communities did not develop a strong diasporic consciousness, with Tamil

¹ Tamils across the globe number 70 million spread in 50 countries of the world of which 61 million are in Tamil Nadu, 5 million in Sri Lanka (Sivasupramaniam n.d.).

functioning as the mother tongue rather than as the ethnicity. At the same time, for the Tamil-speaking indentured labor migrants in Malaya, Fiji, Mauritius, the Caribbean, and South Africa, Tamil ethnicity would become an integral element of diasporic self-assertion. For the most part, this assertion of identity was either a response to host country policies and politics, as was the case in Malaysia, or to the dynamics of interaction with other diasporic Indian communities, as was the case in South Africa. Post-independence and post-liberalization Tamil migration from India to the West and to English-speaking countries like Australia and Singapore was mostly composed of upper and middle caste, highly qualified, professionals. For these migrants, being Tamil was more casual and functional than based on deep ethnic identification. Today, for example, spoken Tamil is interlaced with English, with many second generation migrants not speaking Tamil at all. In contrast to these previous waves of emigration, the post-1983 Tamil diaspora from Sri Lanka,² a language-based ethnicity has mutated into a powerful force expressed through the notion of biological species-hood, conveyed in the popular term *Tamil Inam*. Such an unusual evocation is not an assertion of citizenship rights in the adopted land, but rather invokes a politics of primordality and belongingness to the homeland from which they were forcibly displaced.

For a language to take on the mantle of ethnicity is a complicated process: for it to become an ethnicity in the Indian context, a language has to coincide with region, and bridge caste and religious divides. In the past hundred years, Tamil ethnicity has shaped two powerful movements on the subcontinent: the Dravidian movement in the Tamil region of India, and the Tamil nationalist movement in Sri Lanka. The continuation and offshoot of the latter in the diasporic context is the focus of this chapter. The Dravidian movement, which arose in Madras Presidency in the 1930s, was based on the perception that the Tamil region, with its ancient language, robust literary tradition, and distinctive cultural ethos of two millennia, had been sidelined by Sanskritic and Aryan domination from North India and by local Tamil Brahmins. Tamils were seen by the Dravidian movement as naturally constituting a separate nation. Even the canon and practice of Hinduism had a distinct lineage and markedly regional features.³

² Henceforth in this article, the 'Tamil diaspora' refers only to Sri Lankan Tamil migrants, unless otherwise specified.

³ The Dravidianism and Tamil exceptionalism propagated by Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker has been the root of subsequent politics in Madras state (current day Tamil Nadu) (Geetha and Rajadurai 1998). While even lay observers have noticed the vast dilution of Tamil exceptionalism (Krishna 2015), it continues as an ideological undercurrent. Over the course of time and in the dynamics of democratic politics, the secessionist agenda has evaporated. For pragmatic electoral reasons, many compromises have been made in the translation of Dravidian politico-cultural ideology into practice. Yet the founding principles, the antiquity, distinctness and distinction of Tamil language and literature has remained on the Dravidian agenda. The campaign for the Indian government to recognise Tamil as a classical language, which was successful in 2010, is a testimony to this (see for example Vasan 2004).

Dating back to 19th century colonial policy and orientalist invocations of the linguistic and cultural divide between Indo-Aryan Sinhalese and Dravidian Tamils, the Tamil nationalist movement in Sri Lanka has even deeper historical roots (for a concise history see Wilson 2000; for a detailed account see Kailasapathy 1985). The political manifestations of the Tamil nationalist movement in the mid-to-late 20th century drew some inspiration from South Indian Dravidianism, but also developed unique features in response to ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka. The growth of militant and terrorist organizations like the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the mass exodus of Tamils seeking refuge and asylum in other countries, and these diasporic waves' sympathy for the Tamil cause gave the relationship with the homeland a special emotional color, with Tamil surpassing the stage of mere ethnicity into what can be called 'Tamilism.'

The very condition of diaspora-ness triggers a complex relationship with the homeland, a relationship sometimes anchored only in the imagination, to paraphrase Anderson (1998). Even when it remains only a mythic or rhetoric motif, and even if it does not actually happen, return remains an ever present focus; so much so that diasporas may support the cause of the homeland, whether defined territorially or emotively, through concrete actions such as support to the state and its programs. For example, the Indian diaspora in the USA famously bailed out their home country during the 1990 foreign exchange crisis. Indeed, as the *Encyclopedia of the Indian Diaspora* (Lal, Reeves and Rai 2006) notes, this event triggered a radical turn around in the Indian government's hitherto lukewarm attitude towards its diasporas. The recent growth in diasporic philanthropy and development aid is another example of involvement in homeland welfare without actual 'return' (Kapur 2010: 84–161). Sections of the Indian diaspora's support for the Khalistan and Hindutva exclusivist, separatist movements are two recent and problematic examples of diasporic identification with the 'homeland.' In both cases, "long-distance nationalism" as formulated by Anderson (1998) has been articulated in terms of religious identity. In contrast, for the transnational Tamil diaspora, violently exiled from Sri Lanka during and after the civil war, Tamil language and culture, rather than religion, has been critical to the politics of homeland nationalism. Nevertheless, in the articulation of Tamilness, a prominent space is occupied by religion, specifically by what can be called 'Tamil Hinduism.' The flourishing network of temples built by the Tamil diaspora accommodates and, at times, propagates such a political assertion of Tamilness. Likewise, the devotion to classical Carnatic music is inflected with Tamil Hinduism.

This chapter explores the nature of belongingness among the Tamil diaspora. It is based on fieldwork in Germany and Switzerland, but also contains reflections on the diaspora in Europe as a whole. With the dispersal of emigrants during and after the civil war, members of the same family often found themselves settling in different countries. Nevertheless, Tamils throughout Europe have maintained close kinship, business, cultural, and community ties and form a cohesive transnational community. Tamil temples, in a sense, constitute the face of Hinduism in Europe, for reasons that will become evident later. The temples maintain links with diasporic Hinduism

at large, as well as with institutions and temples in South India, sourcing services and products, and seeking ideological collaboration and legitimation. Yet they have kept a distance from Hindutva, which focuses on the politicization of religion, and is specific to the Indian context.⁴

In this chapter, I also examine the Tamil diaspora's intense religiosity (based on Saivism) – a prominent component of Tamil devotionalism – which not only functions as a spiritual anchorage but also adds moral and ethical weight to the political engagements of Tamil nationalism. Despite being at the forefront of temple-centered Hinduism in Europe, this diaspora has no relationship to Hindutva. I also examine the role of classical music in promoting both Saiva devotionalism and Tamil nationalism. The incompatibility of Tamil Hinduism in the diaspora with Indian cultural nationalism illustrates the irreducibility of the many faceted diasporic Hinduism to Hindutva ideology. Like religious nationalism, linguistic ethnonationalism, even if it has valid claims to justice, can be violent, totalitarian and exclusive, as the examples of diasporic Tamils and diasporic Hindutva discussed in this chapter suggest. Against this background, and with its diverse expressions in the individual psyche, in the last section I explore the violence of belonging through the narrations of two Tamil women, one a music teacher in Münster, and the other a devout member of the religious community in Bonn.⁵ Before migrating to Germany, both suffered personally in the Sri Lankan civil war, yet their responses to the diasporic engagement with the homeland politics are in stark contrast to one another.

On Belonging, Return and Violence

Does belonging, in the domain of group or collective identity, even in its benign manifestations, inevitably entail exclusiveness and exclusions? And is it followed inevitably by a slide into violence? The homeland-diaspora relationship is one that has potential for illuminating the delicate line between passion and violence.

The existential situation of a migrant group forcibly separated from the homeland, yet emotionally attached to it, was seen by early scholars as critical to the development of a diasporic consciousness. Safran's (1991) article, which continues to be a reference point in diasporic studies, lists six necessary features of a diaspora, with five of these associated with the 'homeland': dispersal from the homeland; a collective memory or myth of 'home'; the idea of return; commitment to the homeland's well-being; and a continued relationship, be it personal or vicarious, to the homeland. Safran (1991: 83–84) concludes that even if emigration is voluntary, and individuals

⁴ Hindutva, a form of Hindu nationalism is a political ideology as distinct from Hinduism as religion. It was elaborated upon by prominent Hindu right wing ideologue V.D. Savarkar, who it is believed inspired Gandhi's assassination. It seeks to establish the hegemony of Hindus and the Hindu way of life.

⁵ The names and some of the personal details of persons (informants) in this chapter have been changed slightly to protect their identity.

or groups hold no plan to actually return, the diasporic consciousness rests on a real or imagined relationship with the homeland.

Later scholars have questioned whether all diasporas are so focused on a continuous connection to the homeland and a teleology of return. As Clifford (1994: 304) argues, exclusivist paradigms are difficult to maintain. Likewise, Cohen (2008: 6–8) argues against overemphasizing the homeland connection; the shared present may be more important than a common origin. The homeland relationship is, at the level of identity, about making a life in the host country, not about the real ‘back-home.’ In forging this identity, members of the diaspora seek to combat structural inequality and cultural unacceptance by asserting difference and claiming rights as citizens of the host country. Brah (1996) underlines the distinction between the ‘homing desire,’ a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination, and an actual desire to return. Some regional diasporas, despite being composed of people from different countries, share historic linkages as well as a rich high and popular material culture of consumption, with public arenas and economic channels for cooperation and communal enjoyment cutting across the national origins or religious beliefs of performers and participants (Werbner 2010: 76). The countries in the Indian subcontinent are a striking illustration of this point. Although members owe political allegiance to various homelands, the South Asian diaspora is an example of a ‘complex diaspora’ (ibid.) with a shared history and culture. Indeed, for double and triple diasporas (which have relocated from their first destination and may therefore have more than one homeland as a reference point), the concept of ‘homeland’ becomes even fuzzier.

Importantly, these arguments undermine the centrality given to the relationship with the homeland in the ideal-typical Jewish diaspora, which had initially been held up as a model in diaspora studies. In excluding a substantial segment of migration, especially voluntary migration for better opportunities in education or work, the classic definition of diaspora has been too narrow.

Nevertheless, there is a continuing case for discussing the specificities of forced migration as a special category of diaspora; this is not to portray forced diasporas as quintessential in some way, but rather to focus on the diasporas’ collective work of memory, commemoration, and mourning, processes which lead to multifarious forms of moral and material connection with the homeland. As Tölölyan argues, a diaspora born of catastrophe inflicted on the collective suffers trauma, which in turn shapes much of its cultural production and political commitment. As such, it is helpful to distinguish such diasporas from a dispersion that is the consequence of individual and chain migration motivated by economic reasons; for in such communities, nostalgia may be strong, but commemoration and collective mourning are less prominent (Tölölyan 2007: 649).

Traumatic expulsions of entire communities for political reasons have created several ‘stateless’ diasporas, such as Tamils, Kurds and Palestinians, for whom the homeland is not only symbolic, but also a political rallying point (Sheffer 2003: 154–59). To them, the homeland remains relevant in a substantive way: return may

not literally happen, yet re-turn – travel to the homeland, remittances, cultural exchange, political lobbying, and various contingent efforts to maintain other benign links with the homeland – does (Tölölyan 2007: 650). The experience of trauma, exile, and the relative economic and political security achieved in the new adopted land also triggers and enables a form of re-turn to the homeland through the financial and moral support and promotion of political violence.

This is indeed the case with the Tamil diaspora, which has two striking features: its extreme preoccupation with the issues of Tamil nationalism and justice back in Sri Lanka, and the harnessing of its own cultural capital to reinforce and propagate the Tamil cause through language, literature, art, and especially through religion.

Re-Turn to the Homeland: Overseas Hindutva

My fieldwork with Tamils exiled in Europe brought home to me how their religious fervor was suffused with devotion and piety anchored in the Tamil Saiva regional and cultural ethos. As both an insider and an observer in Tamil Nadu itself, this ethos was familiar to me, as there was hardly any difference in substance between the two, only minor stylistic differences. Yet Tamil Nadu as part of the Indian mainland has had a different relationship with political Hinduism than the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora. In fact, there are signs of a turn towards Hindutva in Tamil Nadu (see for instance Krishna 2015). This turn is taking place despite the dominance of Dravidianism in Tamil Nadu's recent history and politics, which has made it one of the Indian states least amenable to Hindutva.

In recent decades, with new channels of direct contact and communication opening up between emigrants and the homeland, the role of diasporas in bolstering violent ethnonationalist and communal conflicts in the homeland have become both more intense and more visible. Anderson's thesis on long-distance nationalism (1998) is often invoked as an explanatory framework for this phenomenon. One oft-cited example is the political right in India's (and its Hindutva ideology) powerful support amongst the large, politically articulate, and economically successful Hindu diasporas.

It is often assumed that diasporic Hinduism is deeply implicated in Hindutva, and that the relationship is embedded in the very structure of Hinduism, with its inherent hierarchies and othering mechanisms. Such a reductive equation of modes of belongingness to modes of communal politics is challenged by the chaotic multiplicity of diasporic Hinduism, both in its normative and performative dimensions. Indeed, the Tamil diaspora – both in Europe and elsewhere – challenges such reductive assumptions and raises piquant questions on the problems of conflating communalism with religion, on the violent dimensions of belongingness, and on the heterogeneities and contrasts within diasporic Hinduism.

Tamil Diaspora: Tamilness as Ideology and Strategy

Though it is relatively young, a number of scholars have written about the Tamil diaspora. I have also drawn on my own fieldwork in Europe (Ganesh 2013, 2014; Ganesh and McDowell 2013). Some key features of the community are common across locations, with most fleeing Sri Lanka following the turbulent ethnic conflict, seeking refuge and asylum, especially after the devastating Colombo riots of 1983. The long and complex history of ethnic conflict between the Sinhala government, civil society, and Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka is well documented. With the emergence of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a key player in the early 1980s, the conflict developed into a full-scale civil war.⁶ Powerful LTTE networks abroad mobilized the diaspora's empathy for the Tamil cause, raising money for humanitarian and military purposes, and it is widely believed that the diaspora played a role in keeping the civil war going as long as it did. While the majority in the diaspora were sympathetic to the cause, they were also ambivalent about or opposed to the violence.⁷ Nevertheless, by exerting moral pressure, playing on guilt and threatening relatives back home, the LTTE drew diasporic Tamils into its violent Eelam (nationalist) politics (see for instance Wayland 2004). The pressure the LTTE was able to exert within the diaspora must be understood in the context of a history of discrimination and suffering in Sri Lanka, with the loss of lives and property, the trauma of displacement and asylum, and the struggle to rebuild life from scratch. As such, Vimalarajah and Cheran (2010: 7) argue that the diaspora's commitment to Tamil nationalism went and goes beyond specific organizations like the LTTE.

The longing for homeland, the mythical Eelam, as well as the physical home, property and relatives left behind in Sri Lanka, have arguably affected the terms of the diaspora's engagement with its host countries. Tamils in Europe have developed a reputation for being 'good immigrants' (which is obviously also related to the current dynamics of immigration policy); they are seen as hard-working, reliable and resilient immigrants willing to take up low-paying jobs that others do not want. Moreover, they have 'integrated' well into the education, employment, and health systems, but have largely remained socially aloof, confining their interactions to fellow ethnics (Ganesh 2014: 237). Now young adults, the second generation, have integrated better, excelling in higher education. Nevertheless, they too engage with homeland politics, albeit differently.

⁶ The civil war fought between the LTTE and the state military ran between 1983 and 2009. There were phases when the LTTE scored military victories in specific locations and, for a period, ran a parallel administration in those areas. Eventually the violent excesses of the LTTE led to an international campaign against it, and it was declared a terrorist organization. In 2009, it was defeated and decimated.

⁷ In my fieldwork in Europe over five years from 2009 onwards, I came across this sentiment frequently. Whether such views were expressed only in the aftermath of defeat, I cannot prove. But there are studies (e.g. Vimalarajah and Cheran 2010) that do point out to various nuances in the diaspora's relationship with LTTE.

Diasporas everywhere are preoccupied with issues of cultural identity, with the mechanics and politics of survival and recognition in the host country often playing a primary role. For Tamils, this is intensified by the politics of the homeland. The mobilization of a purportedly unique Tamil identity has been a key strategy in ensuring, strengthening, and maintaining support from Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Tamil nationalist politics, ethnic conflict, and the civil war. These identity politics have meant that the highly religious Tamil diaspora has remained indifferent to the overtures of Hindutva's religio-cultural nationalism while making itself available to the political demands of Tamil linguistic ethno-nationalism. The result is an inward-looking diaspora with an unparalleled mobilization of what is considered to be authentic Tamil religion and culture. This Tamilness is invoked through language, literature, arts, marriage and food choices, and modes of dress, worship and behavior. What one may call a distinct Tamil Hinduism – as practiced traditionally in Jaffna and Tamil Nadu, as well as in the diaspora – provides symbolic capital. Moreover, a vigorous system of weekend schools (attended by the majority of children) which teach Tamil language, literature, and history, as well as philosophical, musical, and cultural traditions intertwined with Tamil Hinduism socializes them to Tamil nationalist goals. Spread across multilingual Europe, the diaspora retains Tamil as the language of communication in newspapers, on TV channels and websites, and during community gatherings. Tamil 'culture' is also performed through classical music and dance which focus on Tamil devotional compositions and are conducted in Tamil schools, temples or private homes (Ganesh 2014: 238–41).

In what follows, I will discuss two powerful cultural channels for Tamil nationalist politics in some detail, namely temple-centered devotional Saivism, and the teaching and performance of Carnatic music.

Tamil Hinduism and Temple Building

The heightened religious consciousness of immigrants as a category has been noted by many scholars (see e.g. van der Veer 1994 and Williams 1988: 11). Regardless of denomination, an elaborate and intense expression and performance of religiosity both on an everyday level and in public ceremonies is a striking feature of the Tamil diaspora.⁸ Even Tamilness itself, the core ideology of the diaspora, is articulated in religious terms.

The majority of Tamils in Europe are Hindus. The theological base of Sri Lankan Hinduism is the same as the dominant Saiva discourse in Tamil Nadu, expressed through the worship of Siva, Murugan, Amman, and Devi. Inspired by the *bhakti* poetry of the medieval Tamil saints, it draws on the non-Brahmin traditions of Saiva Siddhantam and Vira Saivam (Subramaniyam 1994). Saiva Siddhantam, one of the

⁸ Using quantitative data, Baumann and Salentin (2006: 306–310) have demonstrated Tamils' high levels of self-reported religiosity.

three major Saiva streams, derives its metaphysics not from Vedanta but from the Siva Agama and Siva Stotras. A cohesive, non-Vedic Tamil philosophy, metaphysics, and temple-based liturgy has been consolidated over more than a millennium, creating a powerful and regionally rooted devotional Hinduism. It is an allied, parallel tradition to Vedic Hinduism, with points of convergence and divergence. With its distinct identity, the Tamil Hindu tradition arguably provided fertile soil for the later political and social developments of Dravidianism. While in Tamil Nadu, Vaishnavism also flourished, in Sri Lanka, Saivism has held almost exclusive sway. Over the centuries, Vaishnava deities have also become (somewhat) accommodated within the Saiva tradition. Saivism has also been in amiable interaction with Catholicism, in the sense of devotees participating in each others' festivals. Diasporic Tamils have largely followed the pattern of Saiva worship in Sri Lanka, although interaction with pan-Hindu traditions and neo-Hindu sects and cults have made it adaptive, syncretic, and inclusive (Schalk 2004).

The Tamil diaspora in Europe not only worships in the home, but has also built a number of temples. Temples play an important role, acting as a rallying point in mobilizing and intensifying Tamil identity around politico-cultural issues. Indeed, in Germany alone, nearly 40 temples have been built, whereas Indians (who have a much longer presence there) have built only one temple – the Sri Ganesha Hindu Tempel, which is still under construction in Berlin. As such, Tamil temples are the face of diasporic Hinduism in Europe. Indeed, the efflorescence of temple-based Hinduism in Europe is directly attributable to Sri Lankan Tamil religiosity, which in turn can be seen as an existential as well as political response to ethnic conflict, war, loss and exile at 'home' (Ganesh and McDowell 2013; Ganesh 2014).

The LTTE was careful to remain neutral towards religion: Tamilness was constructed as binding people across and beyond religion. Yet the LTTE utilized religious channels, especially the temple as a forum for propaganda and mobilization. After all, the two major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka were largely polarized along religious lines: Tamil Hinduism and Sinhala Buddhism, with the latter playing a significant role in the conflict. Many temples maintain some concrete connection with homeland politics: several are known to be linked directly, as patrons or managing committee members, with LTTE sympathizers; some put up posters for National Heroes Day in remembrance of soldiers killed in war; and some even hold memorial functions in the temple (a contentious issue that has split temple committees). Swaminatha Kurukkal, a priest at the Durga temple on the outskirts of Zurich, told me that during the temple festival, donations for the war were collected outside the premises from the assembled devotees. He did not mind when special *pujas* were asked to be held in his temple for individuals who became 'martyrs' in the war, for in God's eyes, all who died were equally deserving of his grace. While he too was a sympathizer, he refused to hold a memorial function to collectively mourn the 'martyrs,' saying that it was an abuse of the temple's sanctity. This stance was not popular, and cost him significant patronage. Driving toward Zurich one morning in May 2009, at the height of the war, he heard on Tamil radio that LTTE chief Prabhakaran had

been killed. “Though I had grown to abhor the violence that he had unleashed,” he said, “at that moment I closed my eyes and shed tears for him and prayed for his soul. After all, he had brought the plight of the Tamils in Sri Lanka to the attention of the world.”

The transnational character of this diaspora extends to its religious life too. For example, temples in Germany are closely connected to those elsewhere in Europe. Priests circulate and participate in special festivals elsewhere, when large contingents of ritual specialists are needed. They also switch locations, taking up new assignments, while devotees undertake pilgrimages to the powerful temples across Europe. Temples are thus bound in a transnational network closely allied to the transnational community itself, whose character has been shaped by ethnic nationalism and which in turn, as Wayland (2004: 425) demonstrates, has shaped the course of the civil war. So it would not be off the mark to argue that temple-centered Saiva Tamil Hinduism has played a role in the continuation of the civil war.

Towards a Tamil Saiva music?

A striking feature of the Tamil Diaspora’s engagement with art and culture is its patronage of South Indian classical Carnatic music. This is remarkable because, both in South India and in the Indian diaspora at large, Carnatic music is an elite pursuit. Even though it is a creative source for a vast range of folk and popular musical genres, as a style in itself Carnatic is a niche genre, with few individuals learning, pursuing, or performing it. Before the reforms of the early 20th century, Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam dance had been patronized by the temple and court, and were the hereditary preserve of traditional Devadasi communities. After the reforms, Carnatic music became the domain of a different, primarily Brahmin, elite. Prior to reform, the dominant languages of the compositions had been Telugu and Sanskrit. In its home in the Tamil speaking regions, these factors added to Carnatic music’s aura of being difficult to learn, ‘not for everyone,’ and requiring long training. Even the move in the 1940s, spearheaded by the influential community leader and philanthropist Annamalai Chettiar, to propagate *Tamil Isai* – Carnatic music based compositions in Tamil – did not radically enhance the accessibility and popularity of the form. Terada (2008) documents the initial hostility to *Tamil Isai* from influential institutional centers like the Music Academy. Eventually, both sides retreated from their extreme positions, and compositions in Tamil became included in mainstream concerts. Still, the style, its teaching, and performative components arguably remain heavily influenced by Brahmanical culture (Krishna 2015).

Barring the small group of traditional priests who officiate at the temples, the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora is for the most part not Brahmin. Rather, the diaspora is composed of various castes, including the high-caste Vellalas, and a number of middle- and low-ranking castes, and Dalits. Indeed, due in part to the unifying power of the Tamil nationalist movement, the Tamil diaspora is not a highly caste-conscious

community. In practically all the towns where Tamils live, individual teachers provide lessons in Carnatic music classes, either at home or in institutional settings. Young girls and boys are encouraged, even compelled, by their families and communities to attend. In the courses, emphasis is laid on teaching compositions in Tamil, and more so, on devotional compositions in the name of Siva, Murugan, and Devi – all deities of the Saiva pantheon. A place to perform these songs is offered in the Saiva temples, where devotees sing Tamil devotional songs as part of liturgical ceremonies. As such, classical music teaching focuses on religious and devotional content, and discourages abstraction and improvisation.

The emphasis on classical music and dance in the diaspora traces back to Jaffna's cultural heritage and literary and artistic activities. Prior to the violent conflicts, members of the diaspora had maintained strong links with the classical arts scene in Tamil Nadu. Music teachers in the diaspora had usually trained at the Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts at the University of Jaffna, and some had undergone training in Chennai in the Adyar Music College or the Kalakshetra of music and dance. Senior musicians like Sattur Subramanian, Maharajapuram Santhanam and others from Chennai used to give performances in Jaffna. Culturally Jaffna and Chennai were in close interaction for a very long time, until the civil war disturbed the relationship. The links with both Jaffna and Chennai continue in the diaspora, but the emphasis is no longer on acquiring professional skills, and rather on maintaining links with cultural roots and community identity.

Belonging and Violence: Two responses

Miriam George's work (2009: 112–115) on psychological distress among Tamil refugees shows how they display a resilience to cope through self-healing, adopting perspectives that allow them to find meaning in their suffering. The sagas of fear, loss and sorrow that the refugees narrate are surely related to the displays of extreme piety during temple worship. Indeed, it is clear that healing and psychic reintegration into a stable personality spectrum are powerful needs that the temples meet.

The role of temples in healing was especially evident in the activities of Vimalakka, a deeply religious community leader in Bonn. A devotee engaged in temple-centered worship and activities, Vimalakka was also an activist for Tamil nationalism. "Without these temples here in this foreign land, we would have gone mad," she told me, referring to the struggle to survive and succeed in the new country. Her life story illuminates the role of women in war and peace, and more disquietingly, in supporting ethnic conflict. Vimalakka's childhood and young adulthood in Jaffna were steeped in the mythological lore, ritual and philanthropic practices of the Saiva Siddhanta sect. Her faith enabled her to negotiate heavy family responsibilities with fortitude, and imbued her life of personal sacrifice with meaning. Supporting extended family, feeding the poor, and performing rituals gave a fullness and grace to her life that her work at a textile mill could not. Following the unspeakable horrors of the 1983 riots,

in which Vimalakka lost close relatives and her home and livelihood were destroyed, she fled to Germany. Starting from scratch, first as an illegal immigrant, then by working as domestic help, school cleaner, kitchen assistant, and in other low paying jobs, she slowly built a stable life for herself and her extended family. Throughout, she remained anchored in the religious beliefs and ritual practices of the Saiva canon. Today, she is a pillar of the community in its temple building and philanthropic activities. This role has given her the strength to move on and leave the horrific past behind.

In Germany, Vimalakka has continued to provide food, shelter and succor to her family and friends, and her circle has expanded to include all Tamil migrants, including nationalists, militants, and terrorists. As we passed an acquaintance in the train station, she waved to him and told me that he had remained an active ‘Tiger’ until the end of the war; when the wife of a family friend died, she came back from the funeral and reported to me how many ‘Tigers’ had attended. Indeed, Vimalakka herself actively participated in the Tamil diaspora’s mobilization of support for the war, and her husband, a political activist, linked to the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE).⁹ Having always led a simple, pious life, she became increasingly politicized – a supporter of the LTTE who subscribed to its chauvinism, justifying its violent methods as a response to the cruelty and injustice meted out by the Sinhala army and government. In doing so, Vimalakka embodies the link between culture, gender, and violence and the way women become mobilized as participants and agents in identity-building. When victims of violence support retaliatory violence, how do we begin to understand it without contextualizing their perception (and facts) of historical wrongs?

Veni, a music teacher in Münster, responded to trauma in the opposite way. Throughout my conversations with her, she was consistently critical of the LTTE’s political style, and especially its attempts to mobilize support for the war. She confronted LTTE supporters whenever they interfered with her work. She too had experienced the trauma of the ethnic conflict and civil war in Sri Lanka. Her family was connected to some of the Tamil nationalist parties, but she abhorred the violent methods of the LTTE. Not restricting her stories to those of the Sinhala army, she also recounted atrocities perpetrated by the LTTE – how young men and women were forcibly drafted into the organization, how they were trained to kill their own kin who might support other Tamil organizations, and how they hunted out suspected informers and killed them and destroyed their properties. Her own mother and brothers had to face brutality from the LTTE and had barely escaped being shot. Here in Germany too, the LTTE had extorted money from Tamils, ostensibly for the rehabilitation of children orphaned in the war, but in reality to fund their violent activities and to buy arms.

⁹ The TGTE is a Tamil Diaspora organization which considers itself a government in exile and is devoted to keeping the idea of a separate state of Eelam for Tamils. Its numerous activities and campaigns can be followed on <http://www.tgte-us.org>.

Trained in Jaffna and Chennai, Veni teaches music to different groups of students in her home. Predominantly girls, the students go from five years old into their teens. During the evenings, parents coming in to drop and pick up children spend some time chatting with each other, exchanging community news and gossip.

Tamil compositions make up the majority of the lessons. Students also learn songs in other languages, such as Sanskrit and Telugu, and songs in praise of non Saiva gods; Veni herself is not an exclusive Saiva worshipper, having been influenced by her father's deep faith in Vaishnavism. Her students are trained to take examinations from the Academy of Fine Arts in London. The committee members/teachers of the institution, several of whom are Indian teachers based in London, make annual visits and evaluate the student performances and award certificates and diplomas.

Like other teachers in Germany, Veni's students perform a concert during the annual Navaratri festival. These performances are typically a 'Vani Vizha,' a celebration in honor of Saraswati, the presiding deity of the arts. The concert becomes a community occasion to parade her students' cultural accomplishments and also becomes an opportunity to perform and display their cultural belonging.

At the Vani Vizha in 2010, the proceedings started a good hour later than announced, with people trickling in slowly. By the time the show started, the hall was overflowing, with over 300 people in the audience. In public and work life in Germany, Tamils observe strict norms of punctuality. But here, the pace of the function was leisurely, the mood festive – one of community bonding. The formal inauguration was performed by the priest of the Mariamman temple, who invoked the blessings of the goddess Saraswati. To create an ambience of religious devotion, the hall and the stage were decorated with flowers and icons of various deities. The accompanying percussionist on the mridangam was Kausikan, a young man, born and brought up in Germany, an engineer by profession, pursuing music as a serious hobby. His mother had learnt music at the Ramanathan Academy in Sri Lanka. Like many other serious musicians in the diaspora, he had learnt Carnatic vocals and the mridangam from senior Chennai musicians during visits to India, while they were touring in Germany, and later through Skype lessons. Kausikan was also well-informed about the current Carnatic music scenario, the prominent musicians, their styles and strengths, their abilities and where they were performing. Despite the students and musicians associated with Veni being fiercely loyal to her, they did not all share her approach.

For Veni, Carnatic music was not exclusivist, rather it was a medium for a broad, eclectic Hinduism. She had an open and flexible approach to her music, her religion, and her nationalism. When I met Veni again in 2013, she said she had stopped holding Vani Vizha. The previous year, members of the community had threatened her because they found the style of music she taught and the function itself not sufficiently Saiva Tamil nationalist. Veni was disgusted more than frightened by their threats, and decided to stop the concerts rather than cave in to their demands.

Conclusion

These two examples of Vimalakka and Veni have been consciously invoked to represent opposite ends of the spectrum of Tamilist belongingness that fuels the identity of this diaspora. The widespread opinion that this diaspora entirely caved in to coercive pressure from the LTTE and contributed to the continuation of the civil war is not borne out even in the case of Vimalakka. Even though an LTTE sympathizer, she arrived at this position through her own experience of war, loss and migration, and has exercised considerable agency in rebuilding her life in Germany, creating a sense of community and reinventing the temple traditions of Sri Lanka in the new environment. In the case of Veni, an abhorrence of violence and a desire for more inclusive, universal values is prominent.

Such examples show us that while the Tamil Diaspora has been united in its quest for justice in Sri Lanka, there are internal differences and debates on the ways to achieve it. A community in toto cannot be slotted as supporting militancy and terrorists. Nor can a religion like Hinduism be equated with political forms like Hindutva. Diasporic Tamils in exile stand as a testimony to the difficulties of assuming homogenous approaches to issues of belonging.

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People's transnational mobilities, their activities to build homes in their countries of residence and their connectivities have resulted in multiplicities of belonging to encountered, imagined and represented communities operating within various political contexts. Migrants and their descendants labor to form and transform relations with their country of origin and of residence. People who see their origins in India but are now living elsewhere are a case in point. They have been establishing worldwide home places, whose growing number and vibrancy invite reconsideration of Indian diasporic communities and contexts in terms of 'India(s) beyond India.' Issues of belonging in Indian diasporas include questions of membership not only in the nation of previous and present residence and/or the nation of origin, but also in other communities and networks in political, economic, religious and social realms at local, regional or global levels. Yet, belonging – and especially simultaneous belonging – to various formations is rarely unambiguous. Rather, belonging in all its modes may entail dilemmas that arise from inclusions and exclusions. Bearing in mind such processes, the contributions to this volume endeavor to provide answers to the question of what kinds of difficulties members of Indian communities abroad encounter in connection with their identifications with and participation in specific collectivities. The underlying argument of all the essays collected is that members of Indian diasporas develop strategies to cope with the dilemmas they face in connection with their sense of belonging to particular communities, while they are subjected to specific power relationships. Thus, the volume sheds light on the ways in which dilemmas of belonging are being negotiated in intercultural fields.

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ISBN: 978-3-86395-361-4
eISSN: 2512-6881

Göttingen University Press