VEL VEL

CANADA

MALAYSIA

HAROHARA

DOUGLA

CHAUPAL

NATION, DIASPORA, TRANS-NATION

REFLECTIONS FROM INDIA

MAURITIUS

COOLITUDE

MATI CHOR

U.S.A.

AUSTRALIA MATI CHOR

BOLEH

BOLEH

BOLEHCHAROS

HAROHARA CHAROS

SINGAPORE BUSS-UP-SHUT

RAHITMARYADA **TRINIDAD&TOBAGO**

COOLITUDE LAYAM

KIRWAL MASSA

HOSSEY **HAWALA**

CALLALLOO **U.K.**

HOSSEY JAHAJI

CALLALLOO LOTA THARIYA

ORAI TASSA LIMING **HAWALA**

KIRANI HURGUAYAN JAHA BABHAN

AMRITDHARI LOTA THARIYA

JAHAJI **MALAYA** BABHAN

BUSS-UP-SHUT JAHAJI **KANGANI**

RAHITMARYADA LOTA THARIYA

COOLITUDE HAWALA

MASSA **CHHATH** **SOUTH AFRICA**

SOHAR

FIJI CHHATHI

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LOTA THARIYA

HAWALA

Ravindra K. Jain

Routledge

Nation, Diaspora, Trans-nation

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Reflections from India

Ravindra K. Jain

For Professor John Arundel Barnes

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Preface and Acknowledgements

The chapters of this volume were written as contributions at different times over two decades, between 1989 and 2009, mainly in response to invitations from various organizations the world over to present my perspective based on research in the Indian diaspora. There is a thematic and methodological continuity that links these chapters. Thematically, my discussion deals with Indian transmigrants in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean region, and the Caribbean. Methodologically, I have conducted ethnographic research in most of the countries dealt with in this volume and, further, I deal with the various sites of Indian diaspora comparatively. The accent on an empirical approach and comparative sociology/social anthropology in this book is based on my training in India and abroad, where a unity of micro and macro perspectives along with a simultaneous focus on the particularity and generality of sociocultural phenomena has been the major forte. It may not be out of place to record the immense debt of gratitude that I owe to my teachers of anthropology under the leadership of the late Professor D. N. Majumdar at Lucknow University and to Professor J. A. Barnes and his colleagues in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the Australian National University, Canberra. Subsequently, long stints of teaching sociology and social anthropology at the University of Oxford (1966–74) and at Jawaharlal Nehru University (1975–2002) provided me with the opportunity to travel, teach and undertake researches globally, and thus hone my skills to view both the forest and the trees of Indian diaspora. In this volume I present some of the results of that continuing journey.

I am thankful to the anonymous referee of this book who remarked that the global geographical reach and wide range of comparisons were major strengths of the work. The team at Routledge have contributed significantly to the making of this book through many constructive suggestions. Finally, words cannot express my gratitude to Shobhita, my wife and constant companion, yet I must mention something that

she suggested that has made this book more coherent than it would have been otherwise. It was her insistence of the particular way in which I include the methodological section on comparison; in this she has proved herself to be a true Oxonian anthropologist.

Introduction

A World on the Move

Although Indian traders, entrepreneurs, travelers, and religious missionaries have been traveling overseas since the beginning of the third century AD, especially to Southeast Asia and the east coast of Africa, the modern Indian diaspora begins to emerge in the third decade of the nineteenth century with Indian labor migrating to the plantation economies of Mauritius, South Africa, Malaya, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and the Anglophone, Francophone and Dutch colonies in the Caribbean. In the Pacific, migration to Fiji started in the 1870s and more recently, mid-twentieth century labor migration to the Gulf continues to this day. As contrasted with the old diaspora, the "new" diaspora dates from the 1950s and 1960s to UK, Canada, Australia, and USA (and more recently to other European countries). This diaspora, initially comprising economic migrants of working-class and white-collar occupations, really came into its own in the post-1960s period with an increasing number of professional migrants, including information technology specialists. The population of the modern Indian diaspora[1] is estimated to be about 30 million. It can be conveniently divided into six major geographical zones, though immigrants from India are found in nearly all parts of the world. The six major geographical zones are: Africa and Mauritius, West and Southeast Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean, North America, and Europe. Perhaps, in a more eco-geographical sense, the Indian Ocean

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[1] Modern Indian diaspora consists of non-resident Indians (NRIs) and persons of Indian origin (PIOs), as per Government of India categories. NRIs comprise Indian citizens who have migrated to another country, persons of Indian origin born outside India or persons of Indian origin residing outside India. A PIO is usually a person who is not a citizen of India. Anyone of Indian origin up to four generations removed is a PIO. As of January 2006, the Indian government has introduced the "Overseas Citizenship of India" (OCI) scheme in order to allow a limited form of dual citizenship to Indians, NRIs and PIOs for the first time since Independence in 1947.

zone and the Asia Pacific zone can be delineated. My own fieldwork experience refers to Malaysia, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, South Africa, Mauritius, and Australia, though I have liberally used primary and secondary sources of information relating to these countries as well as for comparative references to other parts of Indian diaspora, especially in UK, USA and Canada. My fieldwork among Indo-Fijians was carried out in Australia. I have not counted as fieldwork my brief stopovers or conference attendance in many other parts of the world. Before outlining my comparative approach to studying Indian diaspora, let me provide brief profiles of Indian communities in the countries that are the main focus of my research in this book. The sequence of listed research sites is broadly dependent on the time spent in each.

Research Sites

The Indian population of Malaysia and Singapore is roughly about 2,400,000 and 20,000 respectively. Indians constitute 8.7 per cent of Malaysia and 6.1 per cent of Singapore population. The sub-ethnic composition of the Indian population in both these countries consists of majority Tamils and minority communities of Telugus, Malayalis, Sikhs and other Punjabis, and Sindhis as well as a few hundred Gujaratis, Bengalis and Oriyas, etc. For census purposes Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans and Nepalis are included among "Indians".

The modern Indian diaspora in Singapore dates from 1819 and in the Federation of Malaya from the 1840s onwards. At a conservative estimate there are at least 90 community associations among Indians in Malaysia and a smaller number, but still active ones, in Singapore. The occupational structure in both these regions is changing fast; no longer is there occupational alignment by ethnic group. In Malaysia, though the majority of ethnic Indians are rural-based and working-class, there are also a sizeable number of urbanites and professionals, in proportion to their percentage in the total population. Lawyers, doctors, teachers, and civil servants are prominent among the professionals, while in the working class the proportion of blue-collar workers over semi-skilled and skilled workers has increased in recent years. My longitudinal study of Indian plantation labor (in the early 1960s and published in 1970) and ex-plantation workers in Malaysia (in 1998 and published in 2009) confirms this trend. Very recently the Indian minority in Malaysia has been in the vanguard of a movement of affirmative action for the socio-economic upliftment of the marginalized and poor. Known as the Hindu

Rights Action Force or HINDRAF (which held its first national rally on 25 November 2007), this movement is widely regarded by social science experts on Malaysia as having played a vital role in wresting from the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition five states for the opposition political parties in the Malaysian general elections held in March 2008 (R. K. Jain 2010).

The Indian community in Trinidad and Tobago dates back to the year 1845, when the ship Fatel Rozack, with 225 indentured Indian laborers, men and women, landed ashore. Along with the then majority Black population (ex-slaves) and their White masters — the British, French, Dutch, and Portuguese — this sparsely populated island was to see the burgeoning of East Indian[2] communities, mainly Bhojpuri-speaking North Indians who would attain an absolute demographic majority over the Blacks by the late nineteenth century. Today, Indo-Trinidadians and Afro-Trinidadians are almost 80 per cent of the population, with the former constituting the country's largest ethnic group (approximately 40 per cent), numbering 525,000 persons. In the Caribbean region as a whole though, the Blacks outnumber the Indians, except in Guyana and Suriname where the percentage of PIOs is 43.5 and 38.7 respectively. In contrast to the diaspora experience of South Indians in Malaysia, who have begun to gain some degree of mobility only recently through a partial dismantling of the plantation system, the East Indians of Trinidad gained mobility from the status of plantation labour to a class of cane farmers in the early twentieth century. Thus an incipient Indo-Trinidadian middle class (primarily comprising Christians and Muslims) had begun, at the turn of the twentieth century, to enter the higher echelons of society through education and business. But the majority of Indo-Trinidadians were rural, poor, and had little education before the oil boom (1974–83). The situation in the late 1980s was markedly different. In her analysis of social mobility experienced between 1960 and 1989, Rhoda Reddock concludes that according to the three indicators of occupation, education and employment, "Indians in general have been experiencing the most significant degrees of mobility overall" (1991: 223).

Most Asians in South Africa are descended from Indian indentured laborers who arrived in the nineteenth century to work in the sugar-cane plantations of what is now the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

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[2] Immigrants from the Indian sub-continent are referred to as East Indians to distinguish them from the older, predominantly Black population known as West Indians.

The first such batch of Indians came on board the Truro in 1860. A minority are descended from Indian traders who migrated to South Africa from the Gujarat region of India. The city of Durban is home to the largest Asian population in sub-Saharan Africa. Mahatma Gandhi worked as a lawyer in the city in the early 1900s. In fact, South Africa has the largest population of people of Indian descent, that is born in South Africa and not migrant, outside of India in the world. In contrast to Indians in USA, for example, most Indians in South Africa are of fourth or fifth generation descent. In relation to the total population of South Africa, though, Indians, numbering 1,300,000, constitute only 2.7 per cent. The majority of South African Indians are Hindus, but there are a significant number of Muslims and Christians as well. Perhaps the defining characteristic of South African Indians today is their skill and talent in business. A good proportion of Indians make their living in the business world, as entrepreneurs and traders. In fact, given the proportion of the Indian population, they are over-represented in the country's business community as compared to other ethnic groups.

Indo-Mauritians are people of Indian descent living on the island of Mauritius, where they represent a majority, comprising 68 per cent of the population. Their total population is estimated to be 855,000. A majority of Indo-Mauritians are of Bihari descent. There is a signifi-cant migrant population in Mauritius of Bhumihar Brahmins[3] who have made a mark for themselves in different walks of life. They are still in touch with family members in India and there are many instances of marital relations between them, maintained in order to keep their cultural heritage intact. The first of these Indians arrived at immigration depots in 1834 to work in sugarcane fields as indentured laborers. They were mostly from Bhojpuri-speaking areas (both Hindus and Muslims) and to a much lesser extent from Gujarat and Bombay. Tamils and Telugus came some decades ago, at the start of the nineteenth century,

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[3] Bhumihars claim to be three-*karma* Brahmins, which means they do not officiate as professional priests though they do so at the domestic level among themselves. They are landed peasantry in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and at one time most of the zamindars here were Bhumihars. In the regional caste hierarchy they are ranked second, below the Brahmins and above the Rajputs, and are addressed as Babuji, a term by which they are commonly known in Mauritius. In Bihar they are known as the Babhan (Professor A. C. Sinha, personal communication, 18 April 2010).

presumably brought by the French as skilled workers. They are the ones, having migrated to Mauritius especially from Pondicherry, who are responsible for construction of churches, mosques and *kovils* (temples) in the capital city of Port Louis. Most Indo-Mauritians speak Creole, the lingua franca, but a large number also speak Hindi, Urdu, Bhojpuri, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, and Telugu. Of the entire Indo-Mauritian population, North Indian Hindus comprise 52 per cent, South Indian Hindus another 25 per cent and Muslims (from all parts of India) form most of the remaining population. Indians have the largest impact on Mauritian life, dominating the economic and political domains of the island. Indo-Mauritian family life was portrayed in 2005 in the Hindi film "*Dil Jo Bhi Kahey*" with Amitabh Bachchan playing the lead role (see R. K. Jain 2009b: 192–96).

In the 2006 census, 147,106 Australian residents declared that they were born in India, and of these 79,025 held Australian citizenship. The states with the largest number of India-born residents were New South Wales (15,157), Victoria (52,853) and Western Australia (15,157). With respect to their religion, 64,968 declared they were Hindu and 49,975 declared they were Christian. Other minorities include Muslims and Sikhs. Also, 243,722 Australian residents declared they had Indian ancestry, either alone or in combination with another ancestry. In 2009 there were an additional 90,000 Indian students studying at Australian tertiary institutions.

The term Indo-Fijian refers to the people of Fiji who trace their ancestry to India. As per the 2007 census, they number 313,798 out of a total population of 827,900 Fijians. Forming 37.6 per cent of the population, Indo-Fijians are mostly descendants of indentured laborers that Fiji's British colonial rulers brought to the island between 1879 and 1916 to work on sugarcane plantations. The later arrival of Gujarati and Punjabi immigrants added to the population of Indo-Fijian sugarcane plantation workers. Adapting to the new environment, Indo-Fijians have changed their dress, language and culinary habits. At the same time, they have also preserved their distinct culture. They have fought for equal rights, though only with limited success. Many of Indo-Fijians have left Fiji in search of better living conditions and social justice. With a series of coups, starting in the late 1980s, their exodus from Fiji has gained pace and as a result the population of Indo-Fijians outside Fiji, as recorded in the 2006 census, is 48,141 in Australia and 37,746 in New Zealand. As per its 2000 census there were 30,890 Indo-Fijians in USA and according to the 2004 census Canada had 24,441 Indo-Fijians.

Comparative Approach

I would like to state at the outset the methodological approach that informs my analysis and binds together the various chapters in this book. The book covers a wide geographical area; its contents, though focusing on Indian diaspora, are thematically diverse and written over a long stretch of time. I adopt a comparative approach which, from the beginning of the discipline of socio-cultural anthropology, has been its hallmark. It would be a digression to summarize the various directions taken by the comparative method in socio-cultural anthropology, but two features of the manner in which I deploy this method in the present work need some elaboration. First, unlike typology-building exercises in much of the social sciences literature, including anthropology, I view comparison between societies, cultures, civilizations, and socio-cultural processes in general as an exercise in what E. E. Evans-Pritchard and his colleagues at Oxford famously described as "cultural translation" (cf. Evans-Pritchard 1962; Lienhardt 1954; critique by Asad 1968). The first step in this method consists of expressing the categories of an un-familiar society and culture, as in an inter-language translation, in terms familiar to the translator/anthropologist. However, this is not the end of the exercise. The next step is to make inter-societal comparisons, thus expanding and extending the range of comparisons to a point where the contours of any particular institution and related modes of thought become comprehensible in their generality. The classic example of social anthropological comparison as cultural translation is Evans-Pritchard's (1937) study of Azande witchcraft. In this book, the anthropologist, through empirical fieldwork, observes, questions and records many instances of events, modalities and native interpretations/explanations of the witchcraft phenomenon among an unfamiliar people, the Zande. His own interpretation rests on a comparison of the phenomenon in relation not only to his own culture but also to "other cultures". Thus, in relation to Azande practices, the most general question which the ethnographer/analyst poses is that of the causality of misfortune, which individuals in any society, including the ethnographer's own, try to answer. Thus, in Zande society when the roof of a granary propped up on wooden poles falls and kills a couple of persons sitting in its shade, the Zande ask the question of why this misfortune happened, not only in circumstantial terms (that the granary poles were old and white-ants eaten, that the men sitting under it were doing so to escape the hot sun) but more pointedly, why the ones who died were those particular men and at that particular time. The Zande explain it in terms witchcraft,

Christians in terms of divine providence and the Hindus because this was the *karma* (broadly, pre-destination) of the individuals involved. The central question is that of the explanation of misfortune; diverse cultures answer it in different ways. A simpler example: Muslims praying in the mosque take off their shoes, the Christians their hats, but these diverse signifiers address the same signified, namely, deference and respect for the Almighty. To pre-empt the possibility, which might well be present in many acts of cultural translation, that a particular interpretation is skewed predominantly in a special direction (that of the anthropologist's own culture, especially if it be a dominating political power, cf. Asad 1968), it would be salutary for the anthropologist to lay bare, as far as possible, his/ her own biases and value preferences. But for such reasons to throw away altogether the proven merits of comparison as cultural translation in anthropology would be the proverbial discarding of the baby with the bathwater. In other words, I advocate the deployment of cultural translation along with a thorough contextualization of the phenomenon being investigated whether it is witchcraft, diaspora, gift or social stratification or a concatenation of the same (see Conclusion in this book).

The second issue in anthropological comparisons that I wish to highlight, and which has been deployed throughout this book, is that the comparison may be either explicit or implicit. Both these modalities are the product of the same ontology and epistemology in the discipline of social anthropology. In explicit comparison, the societies or cultures being compared in relation to institutions or phenomena are specifically named and located. The first three chapters in this volume — the agency and creativity of indentured and post-indentured women in four societies of old Indian diaspora (PIOs); ethnicity, race relations, class, and culture in Malaysia and Trinidad; and the homogeneity and heterogeneity of Sikhs in Southeast Asia — belong to the modality of explicit comparison. The delineation of the diasporic constitution of Indians in South Africa and Australia on the other hand belongs to the genre of implicit comparison, by which I mean that the descriptions and analyses contained in these chapters would not be the same had they been written by a non-anthropologist, viz., a journalist or a political scientist. The anthropological specificity of implicit comparison in these chapters is, to revert to the end-point of generality in comparison as cultural translation, the grounding of these country-specific accounts in the cross-cultural training and perspective of the anthropological analyst. Indeed, the cross-cultural, global world of Indian diaspora is the interpretative frame of analysis in all these accounts. Finally, the last two

chapters (the discourse on governmentality, civilizational modernity) and the Conclusion (trans-nation versus the nation issues arising from a comparativist reading of the Indian diaspora) anchor this phenomenon back to its source, the Indian nation, the South Asian sub-continent and the Indic civilization. Here we have a combination of the explicit and implicit comparisons outlined earlier. To use another trope, while the first part of the book (chapters One to Five) looks at inter-diaspora connections, the second part (chapters Six to the Conclusion) deals with the intra-diaspora Indian anchorage of the same phenomenon. It may be useful to view the comparisons in the first part as horizontal and those in the second part as vertical modalities. A future perspective would be to ground diasporic comparisons transnationally. I have made a beginning in that direction by participating in a conference on "Comparative Diasporas"[4] and calling my paper, "Indian Notes and Chinese Queries" (see also, Vertovec, forthcoming, for "triadic comparisons").

Structure of the Book

Let me summarize for the benefit of the readers the contents of both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of these comparative studies.

The Horizontal Dimension

In Chapter One I compare women's agency in four post-indenture Indian communities. The data is contradictory in the sense that there is general exploitation including, and especially, that of Indian women, as well as sterling contributions to cultural life and stability by the same women. I argue that the adaptive persistence of the Indian identity during the transition can be postulated on the basis: (*i*) that the process of Indian "creolization" was largely in terms of an adapting core Indian culture, (*ii*) that in the immense work of cultural persistence, reproduction and "creolized" change the contribution of women deserves to be highlighted, and (*iii*) that the reflexivity of the diaspora-based scholars does not talk solely of exploitation but of challenge, response and innovations in their own communities. This is in contrast to the depiction of anomie in the works of Anglo-American scholars, ironically enough precisely those who frame their findings almost wholly in the exploitative nexus of colonialism and imperialism.

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[4] Institute of South East Asian Studies, Singapore, 27–29 January 2010.

In Chapter Two I compare dimensions of race relations, ethnicity, culture, and class among Indian diaspora communities in two geographically distant areas of Indian transmigration, namely Trinidad and Malaysia, where I have conducted anthropological fieldwork. A detailed comparison of Indian diasporic experiences in these two territories is the subject of my earlier book (R. K. Jain 2009b). The overall conclusion of the present ethnographic-cum-analytical comparative exercise is that while there is marginal retention of the Indian pattern of caste-based social stratification in the South Indian diaspora in Malaysia due to a number of structural-historical factors, in Trinidad on the other hand (and in the Caribbean region generally) overseas transmigrants, mainly from North India, have lost the caste system as a major institutional form of social stratification. In this latter case it would be more pertinent to consider the marginal influence of caste as a cultural modality rather than as a form of social stratification. The general conclusion is that, in macro terms, whereas race relations define the structural location of the East Indian group in Trinidad, it is the framework of ethnicity that typifies the position of Indians in the wider structure of Malaysian plural society. A salient finding of this comparative exercise is that one may hypothesize the "passing" of Indian caste into ethnicity in Malaysia and into race relations in Trinidad. Finally, given the socio-cultural complexity of racial and ethnic identities in the plural societies of Trinidad and Malaysia, in both cases the formation of class-based solidarities within and across Indian communities remains unrealized.

In Chapter Three again I attempt an explicit comparison of diasporic adaptation among the Sikhs in various countries of Southeast Asia. The Sikhs constitute a distinctive community of Indian diaspora in this region although no detailed ethnography about them exists to date. There is a sketchy depiction of the Sikh community in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Brunei in a volume edited by K. S. Sandhu and A. Mani (1993). Using that data and some other published and unpublished essays, and adopting an interpretative methodology spelt out in this chapter, I analyze the resilience among the Sikhs of the region in terms of a "thermostat effect". The effect is manifest in the community's economic well-being as well as moral and cultural cohesion in varying geo-political circumstances. While substantively the chapter provides a picture of socio-cultural continuity and change among the Sikhs, methodologically it advocates a study of processes (syndrome of social action over time) rather than product (an enumeration of static cultural traits) in the interpretation of the homogeneity and heterogeneity

of distinctive cultural minorities like the Sikhs in plural societies of
Southeast Asia.

In speaking about the diasporic integration of Indian South Africans
(ISAs) in Chapter Four, I mean that they have located themselves
both in their own perceptions (i.e., emically) and in terms of their
socio-legal status (i.e., etically) as people who have neither acculturated
towards assimilation (viz., divested of their cultural particularities)
nor remained patriotically Indian and isolated (viz., practicing a kind
of "long distance" nationalism). While they, surely, unlike the Blacks
and the Whites, never aspired to sovereign power in South Africa, they
have stuck to the guns of being nothing but South African citizens and
nationals. One manifestation of this integration is that in proportion to
their small percentage in the total South African population (somewhat
less than 3 per cent), there are many ISAs who are leaders in politics,
sports, entertainment, professions, and businesses in the host country.
Why should this be so?

A conventional answer to this question is given by highlighting the
entrepreneurial qualities of a minority that exploits a particular "niche"
of opportunity in the new setting. I argue, on the other hand, that no
such niche existed for the ISAs because of the apartheid policies of the
White rulers, including discriminatory legislation which sought to bar
the socio-economic mobility of Blacks and Indians alike. However,
both historically and contemporaneously, in South Africa the Indian
community has shown a remarkable capacity to take advantage of the
"interstices" existing in the rigid politico-economic system to advance
their cause. Starting from contradictory beginnings (socio-cultural
push towards enterprise combined with politico-jural suppression), it is
useful to delineate the mechanisms of diasporic integration of the ISAs
by working through the interstices of the system.

In the next part of my discussion I take issue with those South African
social scientists who define the ISA stratum in the country as constituting
a uniform middle class. Further, this "middle class" is seen to be hemmed
in, politically and socially, by conservative (even repressive) patriarchal
familial norms. According to these authors, it is these features of the ISA
social structure that would explain the direction of Indian vote favouring
the reactionary Nationalist Party rather than the liberal African National
Congress in the first democratic non-racial election on 27 April 1994.
In my view this is a highly "identitarian" view of ISA participation in
national politics and is also a "final cause" explanation. In conclusion I
suggest points of departure that may be informed by an anthropological

history approach in the study of social processes that avoids the excesses of a "great man" view of contemporary developments.

In Chapter Five my focus shifts to migration and adaptation of Indians in Australia where the European element, still 91 per cent of the Australian people and settled only about 200 years ago, continues to be numerically dominant. In recent years, however, the Asian connection has become much more important, both among visitors to and from Australia, and in the permanent settlement. The India-born and second-generation Indians born in Australia constituted in the early 1990s only a small proportion of the total population. However, their numbers in Australia are on a steep increase. Particularly the substantial exodus of Indo-Fijians (and some indigenous Fijians) in recent years has considerably swelled this number. In contrast to the settlement patterns in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the India-born in Australia today are a much urbanized population. Further, the recent Australian censuses also show the superior linguistic, educational and professional attainments of Indian immigrants in Australia compared to any other Asian group.

Though once in Australia, having migrated through the tough points-system, Indian immigrants did not face much adverse prejudice or discrimination, there was, to be sure, a certain fringe of the White Australian population, mainly farmers, who were vociferously racist and anti-Asian immigration, but general election results in October 1998 showed how marginal and ineffective they have been in national politics. There is yet another chestnut to be disposed of regarding immigration to Australia in general and from the neighbouring Asian countries in particular. It pertains to the huge land mass of Australia, nearly 3 million square miles (two times the size of India) supporting a very small population. In this chapter I show how very unusable for cultivation and human habitation the bulk of this land mass is and, further, that even the present cultivated land is in danger of massive bio-degradation.

A brief comparison is drawn in the quality of inter-ethnic relations between oil and tourism rich Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana which is a mono-crop economy and shares with Australia the ecological characteristic of a small coastal fertile region and a vast uncultivable hinterland. Since my account in this chapter belongs to the period of the late 1990s it is only in the Conclusion of this book that I touch upon the recent violence directed against Indian students in Australia.

Vertical Linkages

As stated earlier, Chapter Six through the Conclusion attempt comparisons between and among various Indian diasporas anchored to their originary source, the Indian sub-continent. The analytical thrust here is on the two-way intra-diaspora Indian dynamic or networks. I call these the vertical linkages. For example, an effort is made in Chapter Six to move beyond conventional descriptive and classificatory depictions to novel and innovative ways of comprehending the phenomenon of Indian diaspora. After touching very briefly on the historicity and geographical spread of modern Indian diaspora, the problem of the kind of social networks found among contemporary Indian transmigrants is raised. Here the reflexivity of public figures and diaspora scholars comes into play to determine the methodological perspective that is adopted to view diaspora–homeland relations (DHR). This is followed by a delineation of the major "fields" of DHR and the contemporary cultural commonality between the middle classes in India and NRIs. Examples are then given of call centers and outsourcing which constitute the widely neglected meso-cosmic arena of DHR relations. Finally, a somewhat more detailed inventory is provided of structured and informal arenas of DHR. The conclusion underscores the substantive and methodological gains for Indian social science through the study of DHR. The examples given in this chapter are from the entire global universe of DHR, inclusive of the old and the new Indian diaspora as well as the professional, business and laboring classes among them.

Continuing with the vertical modality of DHR, in Chapter Seven I take stock of the Indian government's internal policies related to Indian diaspora. The data for my analysis are provided by the demographic and social characteristics of the relatively recent Indian immigration to the industrially developed countries on the one hand, and the social, cultural and political representations made by the diaspora in recently-constituted Indian government fora such as the annual Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (the Day of the Indian Diaspora), on the other. My analysis focuses on the clear politico-economic hierarchy among the diaspora Indians of both "old" (PIO) and "new" (NRI) vintage and commensurate differences in their reception by the Indian government as well as in the nature of demands and expectations of the diasporics themselves. In conclusion, I raise four issues for debate and deliberation in this context, namely, a distinction between the mapping and monitoring of the diaspora scenario; considerations germane to decisions on matters such as dual citizenship for the diaspora as a whole (inclusive of PIOs and NRIs);

the balancing of perspectives between potential investments by big capitalist investors and small retail investors as has been done in the Peoples Republic of China; and, finally, greater governance sensitivity in the present era of globalization as to how we treat cultural minorities in our own country to expect, in reciprocation, positive response from foreign governments in countries where we ourselves are numerical and cultural minorities.

Chapter Eight brings together, not by summarizing what has been said earlier, but by adopting a comprehensive and synthesizing perspective the distinctive civilizational values and contemporary modernity that underlie India–diaspora relations. The argument proceeds in three steps. First, the indigenous roots of Indian modernity are spelt out and a zigzag rather than linear progression between the pre-modern, modern and post-modern temporal conjunctures is proposed. Second, the Eurocentric notion of civilization as merely "a plurality of inter-related political bodies acting upon one another" is discounted as also its corollary, the isomorphism between "a culture" and "a nation state". This demonstration leads, third, to the deployment of the dias-pora experiment — deterritorialized and multiple-territorialized by definition — for outlining a dialectical relationship between what I call "non modern" civilizations like the Indic one and "settlement societies" like the ones where Indian transmigrants went in large numbers. The cultural ambience of Indian diaspora societies based on this dialectic, it is pointed out in conclusion, shows up the integrative and disintegrative facets for the present and future prospects of global Indian modernity.

The Conclusion lifts the entire discourse to its widest macro level. It constitutes my reflections on the way the phenomenon of Indian diaspora, voyaging through the trans-nation, impacts the contemporary Indian nation-state institutionally and holistically. The comparative analysis of Indian diaspora culminates as a case-study of globalization in our times, just as it puts in bold relief the substantive and methodological spin-off that diaspora studies have for the sociology of India.

Chapter One

Reflexivity and the Diaspora: Indian Women in Post-indenture Caribbean, Fiji, South Africa, and Mauritius

In one of my recent writings on the Indian diaspora I have said:

> Beyond history, geography and government policy in relation to mother-land or fatherland societies on the one side and host countries, on the other, in comparative analytical terms the diaspora as a third space may also be constructed in terms of three parameters or contexts: the personal trajectory of the analyst, the national location or locations of the populations involved and the international setting which has affected the nature of diaspora throughout contemporary history. This is close to the reflexivity view. (R. K. Jain 2008: 154–55)

Here I wish to distance myself heuristically from the "objectifying reflexivity" contained in the latter two contexts — the national and international scenarios of discourse on diaspora — and focus instead on the "culturally subjective reflexivity" (although in a deeper sense, as we shall see, there is no dichotomy between the two forms of reflexivity). As such, the reflexivity that I am going to explore, initially besides my personal trajectory, is that of the diaspora-based "Indian" scholars and the non-Indian "others" who have broached the interpretation of diaspora. This is as a methodological prolegomena for the discussion of Indian women's agency in post-indenture Caribbean, Fiji, South Africa, and Mauritius. I have chosen these localities because they represent the "old" diaspora or the PIOs.

Variations in Reflexivity

To begin with my personal trajectory, the understanding of diaspora institutions and networks explored by me for nearly the last 45 years seems to be grounded in my school-boy fascination for Arnold J. Toynbee's (1946) theory of the rise and fall of civilizations in terms of challenge

and response. Later on, in the study of Indian communities abroad, one was interested initially in the processes and results of various categories of Indian population adapting to situations abroad which were multi-ethnic and multi-racial. As a student I was also interested in anthropological comparisons as cultural translation, viz., not only the socio-cultural adaptations abroad but the light that these "experiments in nature" — Indian communities abroad — shed on Indian social institutions themselves. To give only two examples, the way in which Hinduism and the caste system could be disjointed (contra Srinivas 1962: 70–76) and the manner in which "collapsing space" (Haraksingh 1988: 116) forged in the diaspora regional and religious differences and heterogeneity into a novel kaleidoscopic pattern. The other curiosity satisfied for me by globetrotting in the Indian diaspora was this: to demolish the facile distinction which some sociologists in my university (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) and elsewhere in India made between the sociological "bird's eye view" and the social anthropological "worm's eye view" — the latter in their estimation fit only for "tribal studies"! With due modesty, let me state that comparative, analytical and theory-based anthropological studies of the Indian diaspora require a "jet's eye view".[1]

Perhaps the best examples of diaspora-based Indian scholars are authors like Brij V. Lal and Vijay Mishra (Fiji), Kusha Haraksingh, Brinsley Samaroo and Patricia Mohammed (Trinidad and Tobago), the Gayan sisters — Surya and A. Devi — and Vinesh Hookoomsing (Mauritius) and Surendra Bhana and Anand Singh (South Africa). The list could be much longer if I did not confine myself to the PIOs who have written about the four locations discussed here and included NRIs as well. Contrasted with a lot of non-Indian scholars (cf. Tinker 1974 as the leading light), there is in this category of authors a certain common denominator of reflexivity. In a broad sense, they subscribe to the "challenge and response" paradigm that I mentioned earlier. Sample, for instance, the point-of-view of Brij V. Lal who is originally an Indo-Fijian academic, grandchild of an indentured laborer from eastern Uttar Pradesh, presently a senior academic at the Australian National University, Canberra. According to Lal (2005) the indenture experience among overseas Indians may have been one of suffering and privation at one level but at the same time it provided an opportunity and a challenge

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[1] Cf. the journal *Global Networks* that began publishing in 2000.

to thwart adversity with a mixture of adventure and fortitude. Similarly, quite a number of scholars in this category have deeply internalized the syntagm of the Ramayana and other religious texts which their forefathers brought from India to the extent that lord Rama's banishment from Ayodhya for 14 years provides a powerful metaphor for their own exile from the motherland (Mishra 1979). Furthermore, the ethical message of the Ramayana as religious and moral succor in adversity is a constant refrain both in their ideology and practice. Another "emic", internalized, bias here is the absence of a dichotomy (which objective "etic" analysis seems to uphold) between cultural persistence and "creolization" in the host societies. As Kusha Haraksingh succinctly puts it for Trinidad and Tobago, adjustment was a crucial part of the process of cultural reproduction and reconstruction, since "nothing could have lasted so long unless it was responsive to change" (1998: 118). The case for the coexistence of cultural persistence and creolization in the Trinidadian Indian community has been eloquently made by Viranjini Munasinghe (2001).

The third category, viz., non-Indian scholars of the Indian diaspora began their writings in the 1950s and a good representative example is a special issue of the *British Journal of Sociology* (1957) on "Factions in Indian and Overseas Indian Communities", edited by the doyen of British anthropologists of those times, Raymond Firth. The essays in that volume deal with the then transformation of colonially subjected "Indian" societies to newly-found independence and one can discern in these analyses the anxious concern of ex-colonials to figure out how political processes will shape up in societies without a deep rooting in parliamentary and other forms of constitutional democracy. This British angst echoes the parallel concerns of contemporary American analysts in books like *Old Societies and New States* (1963) edited by Clifford Geertz. It is my contention that this category of authors put the searchlight either on the shallow roots of democracy in the new nations or went further and (in a mood of breast-beating as it were) highlighted the adverse consequences of Western colonialism in the new nations, including those which contained a substantial population of overseas Indians. This is a methodological strand that continues from the immediate post-War writings of J.H. Furnivall (1948) and, ironically enough, persists unabated, though suitably updated, in writings like those of John D. Kelly (1991) for Fiji, Keith O. Laurence (1994) for Trinidad and Tobago or Hugh Tinker for the indentured Indian diaspora as a whole. In contrast to the upbeat and positive thrust of the second category of the Indian

diaspora authors that I mentioned above, the streak of reflexivity in this genre is characterized by nervousness, guilt and an aura of negativity.

Reflexivity and Diasporic Indian Women's Agency

I have so far commented very briefly on the nature of reflexivity in the analyses of anthropological and other social scientific writings on the Indian diaspora. However, this is hardly an adequate summation of what the reflexive movement (cf. Herzfeld 2001b) in social anthropology, particularly in ethnographic fieldwork, entails. And it is clearly related to the kind of comparisons we make. To quote Micahel Herzfeld (*ibid.*: 260–61) in some detail:

> Comparison is reflexive in so far as it recognizes that it always proceeds from the experience (Greek empeiria) of the fieldworking self. As one begins the daily round of fieldwork, questions inevitably arise from a sense of the difference between this field encounter and either previous research situations or the ethnographer's own familiar cultural context…what makes any fact stand out is this sense of contrast. And not infrequently it is the local informants who draw out that sense of contrast, by making the ethnographer self-conscious with the questioning of so much that the ethnographer takes for granted: why do you still have no children? Why do you spend so much time writing? Why are you unwilling to eat this food? Why do you wash your clothes in a visible place? As the ethnographer in town begins to reflect more analytically on the cultural differences thus highlighted, informant and ethnographer alike become signs of both the differences and the contrasts through which they become meaningful to each other….Knowledge of human affairs, as Vico (1744) taught, depends on the frail, embodied capacities of human selves. Comparison only works when it is sensitive to its own context of production: it must be reflexively reflexive.

As it will become clearer in what follows, anthropologists of the diaspora do not yet possess a body of data based on reflexive ethnography of the kind recommended by Herzfeld. In any case, when one is dealing with secondary and even primary historical archives, the data does not speak back to you as can happen in anthropological fieldwork. Yet if we analyze our archives as textual material open to symbolic interpretations — both paradigmatic and syntagmatic — at least a salutary, surrogate reflexivity may be attained. The rest of my chapter partakes of such endeavor, where I try to substitute formal comparison by the linkage between comparison and reflexivity in regard to diasporic Indian women that

appears increasingly central to an empirical (rather than "empiricist") understanding of social and cultural phenomena.

Before I record instances of reflexivity in the empirical depiction of post-indenture women in four diaspora settings, a brief mention of the recent social sciences' emphasis on actors' agency seems in order (Giddens 1979: 97, 112, 256–57; 1984: 3–14, 281–85, 289). The analyst needs to locate complex understandings of women's agency within their productive and reproductive roles, within and through structural constraints and in the construction of "culture". Thus problematized, our project takes a step towards being genuinely comparative in that the four moments of post-indenture Indian women are provided a framework where these instances can "speak" to each other. Agency is another name for the reflexive monitoring of action. There are enough similarities in our subjects' (indentured and post-indenture women) agency to attempt a comparative analysis. At the same time, of course, there are divergences in the analysts' perceptions as to the intended and unintended consequences of this agency. We shall encounter these convergences and divergences in what follows.

The Caribbean, mainly Trinidad and Tobago

Certain attempts to characterize "East Indian Women" in the Caribbean appear seriously flawed. For instance, Jeremy Poynting (1987: 231–64) starts the depiction of East Indian women's status in nineteenth-century Trinidad with the usual appeal to their scarcity, that throughout the period of indenture (1838–1917) the ratio of female to male immigrants always lagged well behind the ratio of 2:5 recommended by the immigration ordinances. He is aware that paradoxical arguments have been made about Indian women in the Caribbean being more free and less free as a consequence of their scarcity; however, citing certain colonial authorities like the missionary, H. V. P. Bronkhurst in British Guiana, Poynting plumps for female independence during indenture though at the same time "Indian women paid a heavy price in beatings and in loss of life at the hands of men" (*ibid.*: 233). Interestingly enough, the same author subscribes to the view that "towards the end of the indenture period the precarious independence of Indian women began to be curtailed" (*ibid.*: 236–37). He cites the evidence of statistics collected under colonial auspices to establish the frequency of an unbalanced sex ratio, wife murders and proportions of Indian population living in estate camps and in villages. However, the moot point is whether "this

process (the move from estate camps to settled villages) permitted a partial reconstitution of the traditional North Indian village culture" (*ibid.*: 234–35) where women were withdrawn from estate wage-labor to unpaid labor on the lands which Indians began acquiring, child marriage became the norm, and the wives of some of the high-caste men were returned to a state of domestic seclusion "as fitting their husbands' status" (*ibid.*: 234). These are extrapolations from stray observations of colonial authors, government officials and missionaries, with their hidden biases, making their use as source material intractably difficult (cf. R. K. Jain 1986b: 316). Of special relevance here are the criteria by which women's freedom or servitude is being judged and the precise nature of the grid of "tradition" which is being introduced from the outside as it were, in the argument. And yet, without any further discussion of these contentious characterizations, Poynting immediately jumps to further statistics concerning low levels of literacy, education and professional jobs among Indian women in the Caribbean. All this is grist to the mill of Poynting's conclusion that this outline of East Indian women's "backwardness" in experience serves to show why it has taken so long for any Indo-Caribbean women's voice to emerge. And when it comes to a discussion of the "voice", our author confines himself to the few contemporary East Indian women poets writing English verse. Lamentably, he mixes up judgements on the literary quality of the poetry with the message that they contain.

A much more persuasive track is adopted by those authors who base themselves literally on the recorded voices of indentured and post-indenture women in the Caribbean. Patricia Mohammed (1994) has pursued the subject of her doctoral dissertation, a study of community and gender politics in the Indo-Trinidadian community in the post-indenture period, with a number of articles based on interviews with Maharani and her daughter Mrs. Mahadaya Ramsewak.[2] The same lady, Maharani, was interviewed by Noor Kumar Mahabir (1985). These interviews were recorded in creole (i.e., African) English and interspersed with words from Indian languages like Bhojpuri and Hindi. Mahabir, who recorded the episodes of indentured laborers' arrival and settlement in Trinidad in his book *The Still Cry*, did little to alter the text and thus retained the authentic voices of his East Indian forebears and allowed them to speak for themselves for the first time. No one speaks for them. The text presents not only what transpired in the journey and

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[2] University of West Indies Oral History Project, St Augustine, Trinidad.

settlement but also their attempts to control language, to mash it up and break it up to fit the exigencies of their new situation. Today, more than 80 years since the last East Indians made their journey to Trinidad one can still discern the struggle to articulate a reality that is at once strange and distant and yet which must be grasped, controlled and explicated.

Sumitra Chatterjee (2001: 206–23) has utilized this archive to interpret "a gendered dialogue amongst Indo-Trinidadians, 1845–1917". Her analysis is based on official and non-official sources such as memoirs, newspapers, one female-authored biography, and oral interviews with Indian men and women. In her view historical scholarship studying aspects of community and identity-formation has tended to look at arenas of public-sphere activities, overlooking or simply ignoring the vitality of the domestic sphere which plays an important role in reinventing an imagined space, particularly in exile and resettlement. In highlighting the role women played in recreating a cultural dynamic in the domestic sphere — drawing and articulating remembered customs and rituals from their natal homes — it should also be stressed that this was not their sole signifier. They were not secluded in the domestic sphere in the period under study, but worked alongside fellow male workers on plantations and in peasant subsistence and surplus production. The majority of women were breadwinners as well as homemakers. Even the remembered rituals by women are to be studied not to outline how pure and originary they were but how they were articulated in nascent efforts to build a communitarian space in the new homeland. For example, the presence of Indian women created the most significant basis for the workers' ability to form families, set up nascent boundaries of social interactions and extended kinship networks and generally "recreate their ethnic hearths" (Mintz 1987: 54–55).

Oral testimonies such as those of Maharani, who came to Trinidad on an indentured contract in 1916, and the valuable autobiography *(My Mother's Daughter*, 1992*)* of Anna Mahase (Sr.), born in 1899 in Trinidad of Indian parents, give an intimate account of the background and role of early East Indian women. Whereas in the early colonial public sphere and public discourse Indian women who had traveled on independent contracts of work were often typecast as "immoral, streetwise prostitutes", the oral sources paint a very different picture. In these sources one sees contrary identities emerge — women as breadwinners, storytellers, singers, dancers, peasant proprietors, workers, milk sellers, grass cutters, writers, and worshippers. Oral communication remained the most powerful vehicle through which many remembered and imagined

rituals, social and sexual habits as well as languages (Bhojpuri and Tamil) continued to be transferred for at least the next three generations of settlers. Interestingly enough, women were also the more stubborn settlers in Trinidad rather than male returnees to their Indian villages. The reason was, as S. Chatterjee (2001: 210) puts it,

> just as pollution and caste impurities of travel played an inhibitive role in the workers' ability to relocate or "belong" once again in their natal home, so too the prescriptive gender ideologies operating in India made the female worker's return doubly problematic. In this context then, in the early period of uncertain settlement, female presence, female voices and the power dynamics of gender played a very critical role in shaping the spiritual and material ethos of an incipient home in an alien regime.

Madhaye Ramsewak, daughter of 102-year old Maharani at the time of the taping, speaking on behalf of her mother, said,

> I can remember when I was small, anywhere she going I had to go too, if she going *Hosay* and t'ing right, where they sing *Massiah* and t'ing.. From small I remember *Massiah* and t'ing.. *Massiah* is the hosay song — when the *hosay* coming out the ladies an' them sing and they will play *tassa*…when ladies had babies and t'ing, they singing for twelve days. Every night you are going and singing *sohar*….they do *chhatti* and *barahi* (when they do six and twelve days)….I knew plenty from she, because I go with she.

She explains at great length the significance of the songs of *sohar*, associated with birth, as well as *lava* (parched grain) and *maaticore* (clay drawings on wall) songs and customs performed during elaborate weddings that stretched over three nights. Contrary to Poynting's interpretation that exclusively feminine rituals of *maaticore*, with obscene and bawdy singing and dancing, were expressions of repressed sexuality of women, I would agree with S. Chatterjee (2001: 213–14) that "It was in this exclusively female world, largely undocumented by official and missionary scribes that women in all probability experienced the greatest degree of enjoyment and empowerment, establishing their own codes of social behaviour and definitions of femininity and masculinity".

Finally, while it is true that often, especially with a secure material and psychological base, the community's public spheres and patriarchal institutions impose on women the symbols and responsibilities of custodians of the group's "traditions" and culture, the evidence of female oral

sources in Trinidad suggests something else. Here women themselves actually shaped and articulated the arena of remembered rituals and practices, which in turn shaped certain communitarian identities. Male position and power in this early period was fragile, if not non-existent, and therefore these roles, "symbols" and "gatekeeperships", could not have been imposed on the women so easily. Slowly these arenas became more contested, but the earlier positions of empowerment were not necessarily wiped away. What occurred during this period of early settlement remained critical to future dialogues between the genders over issues of "space" and "identity".

With regard to the above interpretation, based largely on oral sources, I quote S. Chatterjee, who brings to bear the evidence of early indenture and post-indenture period on to the contemporary scene.

> While I have chosen to study the period of formal indentureship, which ended in 1917 in Trinidad, the year 1917 itself should not be seen as a historical watershed bringing any radical departures to the ways in which social relations of gender or the politics of gender were played out in the Indian immigrant group, but as an ongoing process begun decades ago when greater numbers of Indian workers decided to make Trinidad their new home. (S. Chatterjee 2001: 218)

Fiji

Fiji became a British colony in 1874 when, facing financial pressure and White-settler lawlessness, the Fijian chiefs ceded the country, then under the kingship of King Cakobau, to the British queen. The early 1880s witnessed a massive infusion of Australian capital and increasing growth of plantations for sugar production. Since state policies regarding native administration and a devastating measles epidemic had slowed down the flow of Fijian labor, the capitalists urged the government to find other sources of labor. Governor Gordon's solution to these labor problems was to import indentured laborers from India. He drew upon his previous experiences in Trinidad and Mauritius. Between 1879 and 1916, 60,965 people from India traveled to Fiji. Approximately 28 per cent of the labor force was female. The biggest employer of indentured labor was the Colonial Sugar Refining (CSR) Company of Australia.

Shaista Shameen (1998: 49–65) provides a succinct history of indentured Indian women labor in Fiji. Women, predominantly fieldworkers on sugar plantations, were paid at a lower rate of pay than men. The official discourse about these women, initiated by Christian Methodist

missionaries was concentrated heavily on their "immorality" in circumstances of their exploitation by European planters but widely believed to be due to the unfavorable sex-ratio. Shameen discusses women's status and authority as it was historically determined in the context of class and gender relations on Fiji's sugar plantations with a brief reference to the women's resistance both to capitalist exploitation and to male dominance as "evidence of the fact that women cannot be seen as passive victims, but as living, struggling beings, capable of making their own history" (1998: 52). Her writings challenge the commonly held view that Indian women were outside, or marginal to, the capitalist economy, both during and after indenture. They were, according to her, an intrinsic part of the capitalist mode of production. In regard specifically to the post-indenture period women became even more subservient to capitalist relations by both providing wage labor when they were needed (thus forming a reserve army) and by contributing to domestic and subsistence production. Women's changed status — from indentured laborers to domestic laborers — transformed the nature of their relations with Indian men. All in all, the outcomes for women were negative. To cite our author:

> In the case of Indian women, it is true that the possibility of emancipation came from their entry into social production. However, the fact that they were supposed to exist on less pay than men because they were women, undermined their chances of emancipation. They were forced to rely on men for their subsistence and for their children's needs. In addition, they faced male brutality (as predicted by Engels), which further reduced their chances of freedom....This situation has remained largely unchanged for the majority of rural Indian women in Fiji today. (Shameen 1998: 64)

The best-known academic work on the *interpretation* of East Indian women's predicament in Fiji is Kelly's book, *A Politics of Virtue: Hinduism, Sexuality and Countercolonial Discourse in Fiji* (1991). Unlike the oral sources referred to in the previous section on Trinidad, Kelly's discourse analysis is exclusively based on official documents composed by the male colonial civil servants. The theme of the representation of women in these documents during the narrow period 1929–32, is also narrated from the viewpoint of Hindu religious leaders, again exclusively male, who were active in the public space in Fiji. The question that Kelly tries to answer in this book is the how and why of the colonial and counter-colonial discourse in Fiji during this period, which was heavily and exclusively concerned with the sexual morality of Indian women

émigrés to Fiji and not the momentous politico-economic movements that were then at the forefront of national and international events. The author's anthropological use of official colonial documents of the period is commendable, and one appreciates the singular contribution of his scholarly effort to turn the searchlight on the colonialists in relation to the "virtue" of colonized Indian women. However, our principal unease with this exclusive gaze on the male representations of women is that there are no voices of women themselves whose virtue is being discussed by "powerful" men.

Unfortunately, the androcentric bias is endemic to the debates and analyses of Fijian Indian diaspora (and it would be interesting to probe the reasons as to why it should be so) and, yet, some male authors of our category of diasporic Indians in Fiji have shown remarkable sensitivity in the depiction, through intimate interaction with them, of their women-folk. Take, for instance, some of the "in-between" identitarian writing of Lal (2004, 2005). In relation to his visit to the ancestral village in the Bahraich District of eastern Uttar Pradesh, he comments (much like V. S. Naipaul from Trinidad), on the dirt, poverty and lack of hygiene in the village. And, yet, quite unlike the "Westernized" Naipaul, Lal's interactions with his "relatives" in the village — and especially with a woman in the relationship of his elder brother's wife (*bhauji*) — is an epitome of the typical North Indian joking relationship. It is obvious that Lal, though himself a third-generation Indo-Fijian (now settled in Australia), is imbued with typical Indian attitudes. His reflexivity in this semi-autobiographical memoir (2005) gives clear indications of the Indian "emotions" and verve which any North Indian, whether in a North Indian milieu or in Fijian "exile", would readily grasp and savor. An anthropologist would certainly comment that the "inner life" of being Indian and the expected behavior with a woman of a certain relationship goes a long way to establish what it means to be an "Indian" in an in-between condition of the diaspora. More than anything else, it reveals the historian's (Lal's) own history of socialization in Fiji where women role-models, young and old, have retained, sustained, nurtured and imparted (to the males) the "correct" attitudes for more than a century's existence in the diaspora.

Mauritius

Mauritius, as we know, has a long history of Indian immigration and Mauritian Indians constitute nearly 68 per cent of the population today.

It is one of those islands where the movement of the Indian population from estate camps to villages began in the third decade of the nineteenth century. The women's voices and contributions to making ethnic hearths are therefore pronounced in Mauritius. We are fortunate in possessing the impressions of a Mauritian Indian woman anthropologist, Ananda Nirsimloo-Anenden (1990) who made a field-study of Telugu ethnic identity in Mauritius. In what follows, I shall freely paraphrase from the field experiences among women narrated by the author.

> Sitting among busy ladies attending to huge *dekchis* [small cauldron] and *karhyes* [wok] of bubbling food, or cutting, cleaning, chopping or peeling mounds of vegetables, I did not have to elicit information. It came to me in chunks and splashes, in streams and downpours…. Women are a treasurehold of memories, having imprinted in their minds the ramifications of family ties. They gather and pass on information during these cooking sessions where words bubble as hotly as the delicious curries, and test their tremendous memories. It always started with either the wedding at hand or the most recent one. From there on, each family would be discussed in great detail, former alliances examined, ties with other families reviewed. Several generations would thus be reviewed with increasingly complex terminologies, mixing creole and Telugu terms.
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> As I was to discover, the very complexity of these descriptions satisfied very ancient rules of classification that had not changed for hundreds of years. It was important to remember, not that X was an uncle or an aunt, but what type of uncle or aunt he or she was…. The genealogy had to be precisely remembered in order to avoid flouting the rules — even if the original link dated back to several generations earlier.
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> The old ladies had a special function in society, as recipients of a type of knowledge that would never be put into writing. They were the original *griots*, the story-tellers, the living repositories of cultural artefacts…. (Nirsimloo-Anenden 1990: 14)

An extremely valuable source (and for us a "resource") to assess the reflexivity of the indentured laborers, both men and women, is Marina Carter and Khal Torabully's volume *Coolitude: An Anthology of the Indian Labour Diaspora* (2002). In the present context I use it to depict the agency and reflexivity of Mauritian Indian women of the indenture and post-indenture periods. Mauritius makes the perfect locale of this anthology both because Carter has an impressive track-record of fieldwork and archival research there and her co-author Torabully has written poetry on the Mauritian indenture experience in French which

remains to this day the *la langue* of Mauritius. An additional value of this collection resides in the fact that here for the first time sources in the French language, both literary and historical–ethnographic, have been extensively used. There are, in this repository, accounts in female voices which resonate with what we have mentioned in the context of Trinidad and Fiji. There is a strident and upbeat note in the expression of their experiences by Indo-Mauritian women. Although, as we have observed, there were circumstances in Mauritius too of social and sexual exploitation of women indentured on plantations, yet this "victimhood" of the women fails to shroud their inner strength and spirit. Carter and Torabully cite David Northrup (1995) to highlight the fact that indentured Indian women did rise above the disorientation of plantation camps in nineteenth-century Mauritius to reconstruct some kind of enduring family life. They used the resilience of their customs — culture and religion in particular — to successfully thwart androcentric attempts to subdue and cow them down whether by White planters and overseers or by the Indian *sirdars*. Significantly, the "othering" of the Indian in the face of a multi-cultural environment of White capitalist hegemony was successfully mediated by effective cultural resistance as becomes the perceptions of the coolies belonging to a long literate, religious and secular Indic civilization. The interface of the two civilizations, as between the Indic "self" and the multi-cultural "other", and vice versa, ushered in the processes of "coolitude". And the role of women in these processes deserves pointed recognition.

South Africa

> A study of the experience of Indian women under contract as indentured labourers serves not merely to write women back into that particular episode in Natal's and, indeed, South Africa's history, but illustrates how the materialist–feminist discourse can point to crucial issues in a broader analysis of relations not only of gender, but of race and class as well. (Beall 1990: 57)

While most analysts of the process of class formation in South Africa assume that the experience of proletarianization and racial oppression has been the same for men and women, there has been little recognition of gender relations arising not out of production but out of reproduction. For the indentured women themselves, life meant a struggle against two similar but culturally different constructs of gender roles and gender relations, determined also by class position. Under indenture

itself, Indian women devised a range of survival strategies and made a variety of choices. But these strategies and choices, far from indicating an unbridled independence, were made within certain structural constraints which need to be understood and which seriously curtailed their freedom and potential autonomy. This is the overall interpretation of "freedom under severe constraints" which another commentator on the afflictions of colonialism, Jo Beall, makes of the indentured Indian women in South Africa.

Rhoda Reddock (1984) in a paper on Indian women in Trinidad, which she subtitled "Freedom denied", argued that women derived benefits from indentured immigration. In it they found an escape from starvation or widowhood or a possible life of prostitution. Reddock (1984: 39) goes on to say that "the decision to emigrate itself was a sign of the independent character of these women and the decision to emigrate alone and as individuals was a sign of their strength". She sums up:

> This paper has sought…to return to Indian women their proud history of independence and struggle for some degree of autonomy over their lives. This history of struggle from the initial decision to migrate to the rigours of plantation is one which unites them with oppressed and exploited women the world over who when necessary and where possible have resisted their oppression and fought for their autonomy as women and as members of exploited classes. (*Ibid*.: 45)

Beall, while writing about the indentured Indian women in Natal, and comparing the lot of indentured Indian women in other parts of the world, rightly points out that Reddock exaggerates the level of resistance, and particularly *collective* resistance exercised by women under indenture (1990: 72). As she puts it, "it is difficult to conceive of women finding for themselves *independence* and *freedom* under conditions of forced labour!" (italics provided). Beall also expresses serious reservations about Reddock's imputation of the loss of freedom of the Indian women once they were "firmly under the control of the men through the reconstruction, albeit in a different setting, of the Indian patriarchal family system" (Reddock 1984: 39). We shall go further (cf. R. K. Jain 1986b) — and based on the comparative evidence of the experiences of indentured and post-indentured Indian women in the Caribbean, Fiji, Mauritius and Natal (South Africa) — urge a serious questioning of what freedom and subordination meant for them, especially in the context of the "transcreative" (S. Jain 2010) family, kinship and community relationships, through their long travail in the old diaspora.

Conclusion

The above discussion is an attempt to clear the conceptual ground for an assessment of the consequences of restored sex-ratio balance in the Indian diaspora of the post-indenture period. For me the debate started with Reddock's article about the emancipated Indian women immigrants to Trinidad & Tobago during the indenture period (1848–1917) and the fetters put on their freedom by male patriarchs when village communities came into existence (approximately 1870s onwards). Demographically, the former period is one of grossly imbalanced sex-ratio and the latter where male–female ratios gained a balance. One of the main questions I pose in this chapter is whether in the process of transition from the demographically male-dominant plantation camp life to a more "familial" village community living, the immigrant Indian woman lost her freedom? What view does one take of women's individuality, freedom and subservience? Isn't there a danger that the individual/community binary is being imposed from the outside (the objectifying reflexivity) rather than viewing their dovetailing (the culturally subjective reflexivity) in the reconfiguration of Indian identity in post-indenture Indian communities? To test my hypothesis I compare women's agency in four post-indenture Indian communities (South Africa, Mauritius, Fiji, and Trinidad and Tobago). No doubt the data is contradictory in the sense that there is general exploitation including, and especially, that of Indian women as well as sterling contributions to cultural life and stability by the same women. Based on the above brief comparative experiment, let me try and explain the nature of this contradiction.

When pronouncing that the data itself is contradictory, let us bear in mind that in this respect the ethnography and its interpretations cannot be strictly segregated. Broadly, Marxian scholars have focused on the data bearing on the changing relations of production and reproduction in which the indentured and post-indenture Indian women were involved. In analyzing and interpreting this data they have highlighted the processes and nature of women's resistance to their exploitation, sometimes tracing its ontology to the socio-cultural characteristics of the recruited women themselves followed by its regress into a patriarchal hubris in the post-indenture period (e.g., Reddock for Trinidad). Interestingly enough, using similar data for South Africa (specifically Natal), Beall seems much less sanguine about the positive outcomes of women's resistance. An analyst like Shameen on Indo-Fijian women also uses the "challenge and response" framework to delineate her subjects' pivotal

participation in the capitalist plantation social economy, but the outcome of their resistance (rather poorly sketched in her article) appears to be thwarted due to countervailing forces, including misogyny, as Engels had predicted. In the case of Mauritius, both Nirsimloo-Anenden and Carter and Torabully highlight the cultural aspects of Indian women's resilience, depicting it as basically a success story of resistance. This too is the refrain of S. Chatterjee's narrative for the Caribbean.

In our conclusion we do not take sides in this controversy; on the other hand, by extrapolating on the basis of such culturally reflexive data about indenture and post-indenture as is currently available and could be excavated more in the future, I wish to turn the contradictions of data and interpretation into a dialectical process. I argue that the adaptive persistence of the Indian identity during the transition can be postulated on the basis: (*i*) that the process of Indian "creolization" was largely in terms of an adapting core Indian culture (as demonstrated for Trinidad by Munasinghe 2001), (*ii*) that in the immense work of cultural persistence and reproduction as much as in that of "creolized" change the contribution of women deserves to be highlighted, and (*iii*) that the reflexivity of the diaspora-based scholars (e.g., Lal for Fiji, Haraksingh for Trinidad, Vinesh Hookoomsing for Mauritius, and Bhana and Anand Singh for South Africa) does not talk solely of exploitation but of challenge, response and innovations in their own communities. This is in contrast to the almost uniform depiction of anomie in the works of Anglo-American scholars, ironically enough precisely those who frame their findings almost wholly in the exploitative nexus of colonialism and imperialism (e.g., Tinker for the entire Indian diaspora, Kelly for Fiji and Laurence for Trinidad and Guiana). Even M. K. Gandhi, heavily influenced by the British in his formative years as a lawyer, spoke of South African Indian returnees to India as "social lepers" (see also the critique of his views on diaspora Indian women in Niranjana 1997).

Chapter Two

Race Relations, Ethnicity, Class and Culture: Indians in Trinidad and Malaysia

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: to provide a comparative analysis of the situation of Indians in two widely different national settings, namely, Malaysia and Trinidad, and to explore the interplay and the relative significance of such factors as race relations, ethnicity, class, and culture in defining the varying identity of the Indians in the two countries. In particular, the chapter seeks to answer the following questions:

i.   Why is it that a race relations framework is utilizable in Trinidad whereas ethnicity defines and locates the situation of Indians in Malaysia?
ii. What are the factors, which enable the Indian identity to be retained and activated in Trinidad and Malaysia? How may one juxtapose the variables of race, ethnicity and culture to arrive at the definition of Indian identity in "plural" contexts?
iii. What is the substantive status of defining the Indian community as a "middle class" in Trinidadian towns and as "proletarians" on Malaysian plantations? Does the class structure prove to be the determining framework of Indian identity overseas or is it the variables of race relations and ethnicity?

Race Relations

I agree with John Rex (1973) that there were three elements which were necessary and sufficient to characterize a situation as a race relations situation: (*i*) a situation of abnormally harsh exploitation, coercion or competition between groups; *(ii)* an individual in these groups could not simply choose to move himself or his children from one group to another; and *(iii)* that the system should be justified in terms of some kind of deterministic theory, usually of a biological sort.

The construction of a race relations situation in Trinidad necessitates our viewing the racial system there from a dual perspective: from the Indian (i.e., East Indian, in context of the West Indies) and from the Creole point of view.

West Indies scholars are agreed that from the Indian point of view, a category distinction is made between "*Kirwal*" (a Bhojpuri corruption of "Creole") and "coolie". The former is used by East Indians to refer to all African and African-descent influenced populations in Trinidad. The latter, in turn, are recognized by the former through the pejorative category term "coolie". This category distinction refers to the history of population settlement in Trinidad: the import of African slaves from 1777 onwards and their emancipation in 1833 and the import of indentured laborers from India from 1848 onwards, and their constituting nearly half the population of the island by the 1980s. This category distinction has had all the attributes of racial antipathy and bitterness and has been the main obstacle in the struggle for Afro-Indian solidarity in Trinidad and Tobago (cf. Ryan 1966; Samaroo 1985).

However, the Indian perspective has been distinct from as well as subsumed into a more powerful and enduring West Indian racial framework based on the socio-cultural evaluation of gradations of colour according to the polar contrast as well as intermixture between "Whites" and "Blacks". In the West Indies perspective, the term Creole has the connotation of the original Spanish term Criollo as "born in, native to, committed to the area of living" and it is used in relation to both White and Black, free and slave. In a structural–historical framework such as that provided by Rex, the category-term Creole in this perspective refers particularly to freed slaves, the offspring of mixed marriage and "poor Whites", namely, a "group in colonial society (which) is the germ of a new society developing in the womb of the old" (Rex 1978: 24).

There are two characteristics of the Creole model which should be noted at the outset. The East Indian group is not accommodated in this model; they are aliens and in an almost literal sense "outcaste" from the model. The consciousness and summation of history of the people of the West Indies severely exclude people of Indian origin from this model. Since this is ideologically the more powerful, transnational (Caribbean) model in Trinidad and Tobago it explains why all Creole and White authors (cf. Braithwaite 1975; Brereton 1981; Williams 1964) have given such short shrift to the demographically dominant East Indian group in the population of Trinidad and Tobago and of Guyana (cf. remarks to this effect by Smith 1984: Ch. 7). A second characteristic of this model

is that it answers to the imperatives of acculturation as contrasted with interculturation (discussed later in this chapter), namely, it provided to the Creoles what has been called the "Afro-Saxon" model of mobility. If during the Black power movement of the 1970s, Eric Williams was criticized and an (abortive) effort made to somehow seek alliance between the African and the East Indian groups, what was being run down was this "White-mask" aspect of the Creole model.

The East Indians of Trinidad and the Relevance of Race

Strictly speaking, then, the identity of the East Indian group in Trinidad is not expressed in terms of the racially-grounded framework of the Creole model.

To recapitulate, the Indian model expresses the distinction and antipathy between the Africans and East Indians while the Creole model, which is expressive of the truly color-based status distinctions in Trinidadian society, should be seen primarily in terms of the White–Black antipathy from which the East Indians are excluded. However, the demographic and historical coexistence of Africans and East Indians in Trinidad society for more than two generations has given rise to a process of "interculturation" (cf. R. K. Jain 1986a) between the Indian and Creole models. That, primarily, is the reason why East Indian–Creole relations in this society may be seen as a corollary of "race relations" rather than merely of "ethnicity", that is, the non-antagonistic co-existence of two structurally disparate cultural groups. The caste system of the East Indian group is, strictly speaking, ideologically a hierarchical system contrasted with system of individualism and equality such as the western class system (Dumont 1970: 239–58). However, through contamination with the Creole model, the hierarchical caste ideology of the Indian model has been transformed into a racist ideology. This transformation has come about through a process of interculturation and is manifest concretely in the racial endogamy of the East Indian group; caste having passed into race (cf. R. K. Jain 1988: 137). To be sure, this has happened largely due to the segmentary potential of the caste system itself having interpenetrated the "racial" system without its color connotation. But in this process the biological and ancestry aspects of East Indian identity are emphasized and the progeny of mixed African and East Indian unions are designated "*dougla*", which literally means "bastard" in Hindi.

In other words, we can say that in the macro-framework of Trinidadian (or even Caribbean) society, the identity of the East Indian group shows

an alignment between culture and race, namely, the Indian-derived culture of hierarchy and the West Indian model of a racial system. In that sense there is a straddling between race and ethnicity in the identity formation of the East Indian group. In postulating this we disagree with Pierre Van den Berghe's distinction (1967) between "race" and "ethnic group" where the former refers to "a group that is socially defined on the basis of physical criteria" and the latter as "socially defined…on the basis of cultural criteria". It seems, on the other hand, more reasonable to go along with Smith (1984:28):

> It is always necessary to distinguish first the biological stocks within a population on the basis of the relevant objective physical criteria; and then, secondly, to record and analyse the folk classification and criteria that relate to race, to ethnicity, and the other biological conditions, paying special attention to their relationship.

The former distinctions may or may not be emically significant; hence everything depends on the people's folk classification. This as we have seen, yields the two models — Indian and Creole — in Trinidad. Second, whether or not the importance of ethnicity or race is paramount will depend on whether or not the three indicators of race relations enunciated by Rex obtain in a particular situation. Of crucial relevance is criterion "(*i*)", namely, the existence of antagonistic relationships. By this test we are justified in locating the East Indian group in Trinidad within the framework of race relations rather than ethnicity per se.

Ethnicity in Malaysia

Despite the fact that, in a manner of speaking, both Trinidad and Malaysia are "plural societies", there are crucial differences between the macro-structures of the two countries. It is necessary to grasp the following factual contrasts in order to discern structural differences.

The situation of overseas Indians in Trinidad is, in many crucial respects, different from that of Indians in Malaysia. The obvious difference of geographical distance in the case of the former and of proximity from India in the case of the latter may be noted at the outset. Second, whereas Indians in Malaysia constitute a mere 10 per cent of the population, they are as much as half of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago. Third, whereas the majority of the recruits for Trinidad came from north India, the Malayan recruits were largely south Indians, mainly Tamils. Fourth, immigrant Indians were introduced in Trinidad

to work on the seasonal crop of sugarcane as indentured laborers whereas in Malaysia, after initial experimentation with large-scale sugarcane and coffee planting with indentured Indian labor (1840–1910), the bulk of Indian laborers was recruited to work for the perennial crop of rubber under the "Kangany system" from 1910 to 1938. The latter was markedly different from the former system in many respects; indenture implied an individual contract for a period of three to five years but the Kangany system was essentially geared to indefinite employment in the rubber estate sector on the basis of a gang member's loyalty to and supervision under a recruiter–foreman (Kangany), usually from the same village or region in India as the laborer himself. Family, kin and caste ties were preserved and respected much more in the Kangany system than under indenture. Similarly, patron–client ties between the Kangany and his recruits — even when they left one estate and took up employment on another under pressure of "crimping" during periods of high demand for labor — were an enduring feature of the latter system. In broad terms, therefore, the system of recruitment and settlement of immigrant Indian labor as it obtained in Trinidad and as was eventually established in Malaya could be distinguished as "individualistic" in the former and "communal" in the latter. Paradoxical as it may seem, in socio-cultural rather than politio-economic terms the indentured recruit in Trinidad had greater occupational freedom than his Kangany-recruited counterpart in Malaya. Combined with the fact that in Malaya there was an indigenous peasantry (the rural Malays) while the remaining Crown lands were progressively cornered by the large European-owned plantations under the highly profitable perennial crop of rubber, Indians in Malaya did not become peasants (for exceptions, see R. K. Jain 1966, [1963] 1969). In Trinidad, on the other hand, the lack of an indigenous peasantry in a "settlement society" (R. K. Jain 1986a), the exigencies of seasonal rather than the perennial crop of sugarcane and the imperative to cut costs following an early depression in sugar prices (1884), all conspired to create favorable conditions for the contract-expired or "free" Indian recruits to take up peasantry.

In terms of the macro-structure of Malaysia, the location of the Indian group and its identity maintenance is clearly influenced by the lack of a "colour–caste" system. Second, in particular reference to Indians in Malaysia, two of the three indicators of race relations are absent, namely, (*i*) there isn't a situation of abnormally harsh exploitation, coercion or competition between groups, and (*ii*) the system is not justified in terms of a deterministic theory of a biological sort. I realize that there is room

for disagreement here. Authors like Michael Stenson (1980) have isolated race, class and colonialism as forming the trinity of a framework within which the historical experience of Malaysian Indians should be interpreted and a similar argument is bound to be advanced by proponents of a "plantation mode of production" thesis (see Beckford 1972). However, we wish to counter these latter perspectives by an appeal to methodological arguments. First, a comparative analysis shows the cultural system of race relations such as found in Trinidad to be absent in Malaysia. For example, even though Maurice Freedman (1960: 159) went on to speak of the emergence of Malays, Indians and Chinese as "structural blocks" in post-independence Malaysia, he was careful to note that the plural society in Malaysia does not consist of "ethnic blocks" as J. H. Furnivall (as cited in Freedman) seemed to imply, but consists of "ethnic categories within which small groups emerged to form social ties inside and across ethnic boundaries" (see also Ali 1984: 14). Second, and positively, the Indians' plantation experience in Malaysia has been characterized by an "enclave" situation of their life-chances and expectations (R. K. Jain 1988). Unlike in Trinidad, they have looked upon themselves as an appendage to South India and on Malaysian plantations have been effectively isolated and insulated from the wider currents of society. Finally, the variable of culture, as we shall see in a later section, has taken predominance over that of class and, therefore, emically we are not justified in positing "a class for itself" emerging out of what is ostensibly and clearly a "class in itself" on Malaysian plantations (R. K. Jain 1984).

Caste as Culture

I begin with the vicissitudes experienced by Indians in Malaysia and Trinidad as regards the traditional institution of social distinction and inequality in India, the caste system. To be able to appreciate the Indian caste system in dynamic terms it is useful to view it as a segmentary structure, that is, recognizing its potential for fission and fusion in ascribing identities and positions to individuals, categories and groups according to context. Among South Indians resident on rubber plantations in Malaysia, *jati* exists as a framework for ascribed identity and distinction on various levels of the segmentary scale. For carrying out traditionally ascribed functions — those of priests, drummers, washermen, etc., for example — a distinction and hierarchy is maintained between the non-Brahmin and Adi Dravida (roughly, ritually "clean" and "unclean" respectively). It is a fact, for Malaysia as a whole, that Brahmins did not

migrate to work as estate laborers and are, therefore, conspicuous by their absence in labor lines. Marital ties, increasingly but yet thinly, are formed right across the board of the caste structure, for example, there are reported cases of marriages between Adi Dravida men and non-Brahmin women (see Rajoo 1985). However, there are two especially dense points of distribution: the Vanniar, a sub-category of the non-Brahmin but in itself a "fusion" of several endogamous non-Brahmin *jatis* of Tamil Nadu, and the "kindred-around-Kangany" or "micro-caste", given the traditional preference for cross-cousin marriage among South Indians. The Vanniar level is located in the middle ranges of the segmentary caste structure and the "micro-caste" at the lower end. This system of caste stratification is cut across by the common status of labour-line residents as wage laborers on the plantation, but only imperfectly. The system of Kangany recruitment and supervision and the formation of "kindreds-aound-Kanganies" among both the non-Brahmin and the Adi Dravida had led to the marginal retention of caste, by and large, in marriage, in the distribution of informal power and social control and even in the settlement pattern of a typical large European-owned rubber estate in Malaysia.

It is significant to note that the particular articulation of the labour-line residents' caste identities and their common identity as a "plantation proletariat" found cultural expression in the 1950s and 1960s in and through collective mobilization as "Tamilians", that is, a sub-ethnic categorization. I am not here concerned with the historical origins, manifestations and organizational vehicles in South India and Malaysia of this populist ideology, but its salient features were:

(i) It cut across castes without being specifically anti-caste but by being anti-Brahmin. Thus its target of attack conveniently were the Brahmins who were existentially not part of the "lived in" experience of estate workers.

(ii) It was derived from India, hearkened back to another mythical target for Malaysian Indians, the South Indians' rebellion against the dominant North Indians.

(iii) It marginally reflected the knowledge and the overall structural significance of sub-ethnicity in this population of Malaysian Indians.

It was a "false consciousness" (that is, counter-factual to their potential "class" consciousness as plantation proletariat), which functioned to

legitimize symbolically their particular station in life as an Indian plantation proletariat in Malaysia.

Unlike in Malaysia, the recruitment and settlement of Indian immigrants to Trinidad from 1845 to 1917 as individual laborers struck a deathblow to caste as the traditional functional system of social stratification in the new setting. Neither the recruitment procedures, nor the long journey and least of all the patterns of life and labor on the sugar estates, were favorable to the recreation of mutually interdependent and clearly hierachized functioning groups to which the immigrants belonged in rural North India. The historical delineation of this change has been done ad nauseam in Caribbean scholarship; the anthropological contributors to this topic also usually sketch in the historical background before reporting their field data of the 1950s and 1960s. By comparing various anthropological reports on caste among overseas Indian communities (including those from the Caribbean areas) and placing them in relation to research on caste in South Asia, A. C. Mayer (1967: 18) draws out an empirical generalization:

> within the pan-Indian sphere, there is a continuum of situations: at one end may be placed the Pathan pattern, in which the ideological elements of Hindu caste are at a minimum; and at the other end are overseas Indian communities, in which caste's structural characteristics are of less importance than is a caste ideology which is then applied to relations within the new society.

With some theoretical reservations about being able to distinguish sharply between "structural characteristics" (better read "structural–functional") and "ideology", I take this view to be a succinct statement of the nature of significance of Hindu caste in the Caribbean. It can serve as a point of departure for our exploration of the culture of caste in shaping the experiences of stratification and mobility for the East Indian population in Trinidad. Let me note at the outset that the "disintegration" thesis for caste in overseas Indian communities to which I subscribe for Trinidad is sometimes associated with an effort to mark out historically specific phases of "deinstitutionalisation" and "reinstitutionalisation" (Sharma n.d.). I believe such a view to be theoretically mistaken since destructuration and restructuration are coeval social processes. Mayer's conclusion about the endurance of a caste ideology in overseas Indian populations provides a corrective. In following up the implications of caste ideology for the case at hand we shall also explore a phenomenon to which the Malaysian case has already alerted us, namely, that this

ideology and its fragmented structured manifestations can bear an altogether different practical relationship with Hinduism than reported for India.

In a situation like that of Indians in Trinidad what obtains of caste as a segmentary structure? It is worth emphasizing that a conceptualization of caste in segmentary terms does not predispose us to a sociology of groups but is geared more to a relational perspective among individual, categorical and also, potentially, group or quasi-group identities, as well as coalitions of agents.

Whereas in the case of Trinidad Indians, the functions of caste groups — internal cohesion (e.g., largely through endogamy), interdependence (e.g., through *jajmani* relationships) and hierarchy (through a precise attribution of ritual purity and pollution) — are largely removed, caste ideology of inclusion and exclusion operates at a high level of segmentation, incorporating the similarly-circumstanced non-Indian population, namely, the Creole.

Following the implications of the segmentary caste model for the internal structure of the East Indian population in Trinidad it may fairly accurately be said that there are no distinct levels above the *jati* of the individual. The North Indian hierarchical classification between the *dwija* (the twice-born) and the rest is not operational, nor for that matter, the fourfold *varna* scheme. Although attempts have been made by scholars to provide statistical models of endogamous and exogamous marriages in East Indian communities using the criteria of *jati* and *varna* — identities which, with varying frequencies, the investigators claim are known to individual agents — none of these is anywhere near being mechanical models. The distinction between these two types of models closely follows Levi-Strauss (1963: 277–345), including the proposition that models of frequency distribution in class societies practicing homogamy and hypergamy remain statistical rather than mechanical. There remains a "bonus of esteem" for members of the highest caste, that is, the Brahmin, and a corresponding heritage of social obloquy for those of the lowest caste, that is the Chamar. The former is centrally associated with the Brahmins' continuing role as the high priests of Hinduism in Trinidad, representing a structural transformation over their corresponding status in North India. As to the latter, when a person is abused as being "Chamar", the reference is to his or her "nation", a Caribbean designation that is more ethnic and racist than caste, and certainly not translatable directly as *jati*. There is a lingering folk form of

earth-worship among the Chamar,[1] but that seems to me to be related to a particular sectarian symbolization of land possession by families who call themselves Chamar, rather than a symbolic representation of *jati* identity. That hierarchical distinctions of relative purity and impurity between the Chamar and the higher castes — including the Brahmin — are completely obliterated is more than amply borne out by free exchange of labor and of food and drinks among members of teams of agricultural operations (*guayap* groups) reported for rural Trinidad as early as 1890s (Johnson 1972: 57) and, again, as recently as the 1960s. Morton Klass (1961) gives the name *hur* for this arrangement and B. M. Schwartz (1967: 130–37) provides details. It is noteworthy that such mutual cooperation in manual labor tasks — especially for house construction — still takes place irrespective of caste even among largely urban and suburban East Indians.

The disintegration of caste as a functional system and the attempted transformation and incorporation of race at the higher margins of its segmentary structure were two conditions — internal and external respectively — for the East Indian population in Trinidad delimiting the social space for positions defining stratification and mobility in the new setting. In the initial stages, the repository of symbolic capital for this population was Indian culture. The basis for economic and social capital presented themselves in the material or embodied forms of owning land and house and the diversification of occupations on the one hand, and opportunities for education on the other. Profits in the form of institutionalized relative socio-economic positions were to be derived through symbolic struggles.

Class Variables

We have portrayed the institution of caste among Indians in Malaysia and Trinidad as a cultural variable. The reason for so doing, and not discussing caste as an aspect of social stratification, is that in the overseas Indian situation the ideological rather than the structural functional dimension of caste takes precedence (see, for instance, the quote from Mayer in the previous section). Furthermore, caste "passes" into ethnicity in Malaysia and into race in Trinidad. And, again, precisely due to the

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[1] Personal communication from Steven Vertovec (Trinidad, 1986).

function of caste as a cultural variable in the context of ethnicity and race relations cutting across socio-economic strata in Malaysia and Trinidad, respectively, we are alerted to the possibility that social stratification — comprising the dimensions of class, status and power — may not be the determinant framework on Indian identity in the overseas context. More specifically, through a socio-historical sketch of the Indian community in Trinidad and Malaysia (see R. K. Jain 1988) we have shown that the typification of the Indian community as a "middle class" in Trinidad towns and as "proletarians" on Malaysian estates is sociologically inaccurate. Nor, for that matter, in a context of change can the Trinidad Indians be regarded as proletarians and the Malaysian Indians (contrary to rhetoric) present themselves as a burgeoning middles class. As Smith (1984) has shown in his extended review "Culture, race and class in the Commonwealth Caribbean", neither the dichotomous class distinctions not the trichotomous class-cum-color divisions of these plural societies provide a sound analytical framework of their structure and dynamics. To be sure, the class structure of these societies deserves to be taken into account as an important variable, but in so doing we shall have to reckon with the historical colonial situation and end up with a long list of strata (cf. Rex 1978: 29–30) which are not based solely on the relations of this group to the means of production. As Rex (1982: 208) has recently recognized with regard to racially divided societies,

> the sociology of stratification in colonial societies is as yet far from subtle enough to be able to distinguish the differences in class and status which coincide with the colour distinction. One point worth noting is that this distinction on colour lines occurs between groups of men who have something like the same economic position and cannot therefore be derivative from relation to the means of production.

What is true of class and color-based societies is undoubtedly true for societies based on ethnic distinctions also.

Conclusion

In an important article comparing culture and ethnicity in Guyana and Fiji, C. Jayawardena stated, "I have explored three main factors in the production of ethnicity: class, social status and power. Political processes arising from these fields of action transform ethnic identity into that self-conscious phenomenon one may term 'ethnicity'" (1980: 448). What Jayawardena never discusses is why in Guyana the collective

interests of class, status and power should generate or be associated with "ethnic identity" in the first place, since in his argument "ethnicity" evidently presupposes the former in order to exist. The answer to this conundrum lies in the obvious fact that identity is closely related to culture. The mutual dependence of race and culture in Trinidad and of ethnicity and culture in Malaysia is crucial in defining the collective identity of Indians in the two countries. This correlation also explains why religion is a strong diacritic of identity maintenance among Indians in Trinidad and language the prime indicator of ethnic and sub-ethnic identities among Indians in Malaysia.

Chapter Three

From Product to Process:
Sikh Diaspora in Southeast Asia

In order to characterize the sociological homogeneity and heterogeneity of the Sikh population in Southeast Asia it is necessary to build on detailed ethnographies. Unfortunately, to date only brief and fragmentary information is available on Sikh communities in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Brunei, et al., and even this data is encapsulated within the rubric of "Indian communities" (cf. Sandhu and Mani 1993). Sikhs in other parts of the world, especially in the United Kingdom, Canada and USA have been studied in greater detail and over a longer period of time with the result that a book on the Sikh diaspora (Axel 2001), based on multi-sited ethnography, is able to cover "four kinds of Sikh subjects or, more precisely, four sites of Sikh", namely, the colonial Sikh subject, the Sikh subject constituted by the nation-state, the "khalistani" Sikh subject, and the Sikh subject constituted by Sikh Studies. The author, Brian K. Axel, is careful to point out that these four sites cannot be neatly separated since they indicate the complex historical interrelations of the Sikh diaspora to formations of empire and nation. To indicate the complexity and occasional intractability of using these diverse but interrelated sources let me point out, to take one example from many, the geographer late Kernial Singh Sandhu's contribution in the anthology mentioned above. His chapter, entitled, "Sikhs in Malaysia: A Society in Transition", gives virtually no information on the fission and fusion aspects of Sikh community formation in Malaysia which, as we shall presently see, is a salutary feature for sociological analysis of many other contributions about diasporic Sikhs in Southeast Asia. Uncharacteristically, his piece ends with a lament on the lack of unity among Malaysian Sikhs and some dark speculation on what forces might weld them together (Sandhu 1993a: 558–67).

It is obvious that the author, a Sikh himself, is depicting the historical origins of the Sikh community in Malaysia in an unacknowledged but largely subconscious perspective of Sikh Studies. At first sight the

scholarly dilution consequent upon a such mixture of narrative genres is patently unhelpful in the socio-anthropological profiling of the Sikh community in Malaysia, but we shall assess its unique value later. In what follows I shall first delineate my methodological stance in dealing with the country-wide profiles of Sikhs in Southeast Asia. Second, I shall attempt an interpretation of socio-cultural processes in the Sikh community of this region.

A Methodological Note

While basing myself on country-wide profiles of Sikh diaspora in Southeast Asia, I am only too conscious of the reservations recently pointed out by scholars of the diaspora, viz., Brian Keith Axel and Arjun Appadurai. To quote Axel (2001: 22),

> My discussion has demonstrated how most studies of diaspora ultimately say very little about the diaspora as a form of belonging and peoplehood but end up offering analyses of the nation-state in which either diaspora reside or their places of origin are located. The challenge then is not to recuperate the older essentialisms of diaspora studies or of work on overseas Indians, but rather to interrogate precisely how colonialism, the nation-state, and the diaspora are related. It is to interrogate how the homeland has been constituted as a reality for which people are willing to live and die. And it is to generate an understanding of how the diaspora and the homeland are related.

Let me here insert, in the spirit of Axel, a personal remark. I refer back to Sandhu's article on Sikhs in Malaysia which ends with the sentence, "Without a firm unity of purpose and the resolve to see it through, the future of Sikhs as an *effective and functioning community* in Malaysia would indeed be bleak" (Sandhu 1993b: 567, italics provided). When I read this sentence, I added in my hand the query: "Doesn't khalistan provide such a focus?" And I should now add, "if not for Sikhs in Malaysia then why not?" Axel engages precisely in the khalistani reverberations of the Sikh diaspora form when he epitomizes it as "the nation's tortured body". The nation's body, tortured or not, engages Appadurai's discourse also (Appadurai 2000). His argument to demolish "a false opposition" between globalization and area-studies also rests on the supra-and-infra erasure of the nation-state; negatively, in the trans-national diasporic movements under globalization no longer confined to the parameters of the nation-state (and thus providing a new lease of life to the area-studies

paradigm) and, positively, the variety of NGOs (non-governmental organizations), including those of the diaspora genre cutting loose from the nation-state framework. Be that as it may, and bearing in mind the contemporary evocations of the globalization project, let me state that critical studies of the Sikh diaspora like Axel's alert us to a new problematic-formulation in our thinking about the theme at hand. It casts a dark shadow over our naïve construction of heuristic categories as analytical ones. While the binaries, homeland and host society, old and new diaspora, the nation-state vs. linguistic-regional communities, professional and trade vs. labor diaspora, single-move vs. twice-thrice migrants (and many others) are in grave danger of being treated as Procrustean categories, these are superseded by even more universal ones: global vs. local, politico-economic vs. cultural and, ultimately, generalities vs. particularities. Some diaspora scholars have opted for the "in-between" nature of the diaspora phenomenon (Lal 2004). I think that to cut across the binaries, in our analysis, we may have to resort to what scholars have termed "historical anthropology" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Axel 2001; also Bates 2001), "flows" and disjuntcture (Appadurai 1997) and representation (Shukla 2001). The tensions, contradictions as well as the interfaces revealed in our empirical (rather than *empiricist*) and archival data, collected through well-known processual bearing on the lives of our subjects/objects of study, would be conceived as discourses. As to what might constitute discourses for field-anthropologists, I cite Oivind Fuglerud (1999: 15–16):

> I see discourses as linguistically mediated configurations of meaning, systematically constructing and reconstructing the objects, which they speak of. Seen against our traditional understanding of "Culture", the concept of "discourse" has two characteristics, which should be emphasised. The first is that it helps overcome the timelessness, which has been part and parcel of our anthropological concept of culture. Discourse is something, which by nature is always changing and any outline given should openly admit only to be a freezing of history at a particular moment in time. The second is that it questions the distinction, built into the culture concept, between a realm of ideas and material realities. Discourses are never totally coherent, they are not closed universes of meaning, but always strive towards tantalisation by aligning themselves with aspects of reality — demarcations, regulations, institutions, practices, which also legitimate non-linguistic means of control. They are in other words intrinsically linked with the exercise of power.

Sikh Ethnography for Southeast Asia

Sikh communities in Southeast Asian countries have shown the normal processes of fission and fusion of their component parts, and have partaken of the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion both internally and in relation to the host society. Among the factors generating these processes have been language, region, caste, and sub-sect affiliations, besides rural, urban and cosmopolitan habitats, interaction with adjacent "Indian" ethnic communities, e.g., Sindhis and Tamils, and with non-Indian ethnics, viz., Malays, Thais and Chinese. Before outlining these processes, it is essential to bear in mind a feature noted about the Sikhs in Southeast Asia generally (A. Kaur 2008), namely, the lack of augmentation in numbers and variety through continuing fresh immigration, as has happened in North America, Europe and Australia–New Zealand. As regards regional derivation, Sikhs in Singapore and Malaya came largely from Malwa and Majha regions of Punjab, not particularly from the Doaba, since immigrants from the latter area were mainly agriculturists whereas those who first came to Singapore and Malaya were recruited for service occupations such as police, military and watchman jobs. There is evidence too that many Sikhs migrated from Malaya and Singapore to Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, thus reinforcing the ancestral regional derivation from Punjab. Caste identities such as Jat, Saini and Ghummar, etc. (Rye 1993: 715) were adhered to in matters of endogamy and patrilineal inheritance and succession, although in the diaspora (e.g., in the Philippines) village ties seem to have cut across the ties of caste. Social divisions *in situ* in the host countries were often based on rural/urban domicile; thus our authors remark that Indonesia-based Sikhs in Medan and Jakarta formed exclusive endogamous marital communities. There seems to have been continuity here from homeland regional derivation.

Our authors do not attach so much importance to class factors as they do to regional derivation and caste. But even historically, both internal and external factors of class and socio-economic mobility seem to have affected social processes of division and solidarity among Southeast Asian Sikhs. For instance, there is clear evidence for Malaya and Singapore of mobility among the service-occupation Sikhs from being "political" middlemen to economic entrepreneurs (Kukreja 1997). There is evidence also that businessmen Sikhs and Sindhis did have, to begin with, common gurdwaras but as economic differentiation and hierarchy

appeared among the Sikhs, they formed religious schisms, emphasised sub-sect affiliations and at the same time distinguished themselves socio-religiously from the Hindu Sindhis who built their own temples. This involutionary dynamics of the Sikh community — given the relative lack of augmentation from fresh immigration — led to a kind of network tie-up between the governmental powers-that-be and Sikh community leaders (at least in Singapore) of a somewhat "comprador" complexion,[1] which suggests that class and "recognition" (Dusenbery 1997) of the minority Sikh community often go hand in hand. This is patently clear in the contrast drawn by Dusenbery between Sikh politics in Singapore and in Canada. However, the governmental recognition of Sikhs in Singapore and the high-profile participation of some Sikh leaders in the national politics of Canada seem to have been possible, as I argue later, because of the general "well being" and economic stability of the Sikhs in global diaspora.

Before ending this section let me note a few more points of the ethnographic desiderata concerning the Sikhs in Southeast Asia. Obviously, it is nobody's case that Sikh identity in Southeast Asia was not multiple — at the very least it was religious and secular — but the *panthic* (sectarian) transformation of Sikh socio-religious identity in the diaspora and the post-1984 further transformation of the globally dispersed Sikh *panth* as a *quam* (ethnic group) should not lure us into an essentialist reading of Sikh identity abroad. Nor should the multiple identities of the Sikhs lead us to build nihilistically on the shifting sands of group or individual psychology. Speaking sociologically, the fluidity of Sikh identity and identification, which is well documented for Southeast Asia, is better captured by the concept of process, i.e., a syndrome of social action over time, especially when it is used conjointly with two other syntagmatic terms beginning with "p", namely practice and power (Dube 2007). Let me give some examples.

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[1] I use the term "comprador" somewhat hesitatingly and in a special sense. It has relevance for the wooing of wealthy diasporic Indians both by the neoliberal receiving states (e.g., Singapore) and the sending nation-states (e.g., India). See in this connection my comments on the experience of celebrating Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (the day of the people of Indian origin) annually by the Indian government (R. K. Jain 2007a).

(in Thailand) most early settlers were Sydhari Sikhs, meaning those who accepted the Sikh religious precepts but were not Sikhs in the full sense. They were described as being on the way to becoming full Sikhs. Thus the Punjabi Hindus, Sindhis and other believers of the Sikh saints comprised a single entity in terms of social interaction centred around the gurdwara. (Mani 1993e: 925)

The case illustrates both the internal fluidity of the Sikh "becoming" and the external homogenization of the Sikhs with Sindhis and Hindu Punjabis including, in Thailand, Pushtu-speaking Hindus from Pakistan (*ibid.*: 925). The structural fluidity of Sikh identity thus revolves around inclusion in the early history of their settlement in Thailand and splinters into exclusion in later years. The fluidity of this community is aptly summed up in the ethnography reported by Mani (*ibid.*: 928):

The first part of this section will describe the processes of boundary maintenance and sub-ethnic identity orientation in the Indian community. The second part will describe the integrative processes that are continuing to provide the "Indian identity" to Indians. The third part will describe the assimilative processes that affect the Indian community as a result of living in Thai society.

Sikh Communities in a Processual Frame

The fluidity of Sikh identity in Thailand and its fluctuating dynamics is repeated in the Philippines. In the Philippine context the interface between colonialism and Sikh identity shows a marked contrast to the situation in Singapore and Malaya. In the latter context, many authors have commented on the valorization and conferring of prestige by colonial British authorities of the Sikh visibility and body language for drafting them into the roles of policemen, security guards and watchmen. For example, A. Kaur (2008) mentions the British insistence and support of the *amritdhari* Sikh (one who carries on his body emblems of Sikh identity) and the code of *rahit maryada* (ethical code of conduct) for their Sikh employees. In the Philippines, on the other hand, it is precisely the visible Sikh characteristics of being hirsute and carrying other bodily marks of Sikh status that came for banter and ridicule. This too was related to colonialism not of the British variety but the laissez faire colonialism of the Spanish and American types in the Philippines. To quote Rye (1993: 731),

The Punjabi Sikh, particularly, found out to his dismay that he was looked upon as a "freak". His ethnic distinctiveness was heightened by his countenance, his beard, and turban — and he was made the butt of jokes and laughter by the people in general, and the street urchins in Manila in particular.

As a variation, consider the identity assertion as Sikhs in another Southeast Asian colonial and post-colonial national context. Mani (1993b: 122) writing on the Sikhs in Jakarta provides the following quote from Rajkumar Singh, "the most controversial Indonesian Indian":

As long as Indians in Indonesia do not bow to the wishes of the Indian Government via the Indian embassy here, then they have become Indonesian. There is nothing wrong in retaining one's culture and remaining a Sikh. It is part and parcel of Indonesian identity. To become an Indonesian, it is enough to be totally divorced from India.[2]

The economic stability and mobility of the Sikhs in Southeast Asian diaspora is remarkable. Even in Brunei, where there were about 32 Sikh families (Mani 1993a: 23) "most of the Sikhs are in business. They specialize mainly in sports goods, textiles, ready-made garments and carpets. The rest work as drivers, doctors, teachers and engineers". In North Sumatra, "Sikhs…entered the scene in a variety of occupations, as money-lenders, traders, goldsmiths, dairy-farmers and so forth" (Mani 1993c: 58). The same author goes on to say that the Sikhs have attained greater economic mobility than the Tamils, in part because of their closer ongoing contacts with India and because of their earlier interest in establishing educational institutions. As milk vendors they experienced low income, but as they switched from rearing cattle for milk products to meat production, in circa 1982, their income increased tremendously. In 1982 a litre of milk earned only 100 rupiahs but each cattle raised for slaughter earned about 300,000 to 400,000 rupiahs. So also goes the story of Sikh enterprise in Jakarta — moving from work as salesmen and clerks in shops run by Sikhs to becoming chain store-owners. During the Japanese occupation of Indonesia during World War II "many watchmen used the war years to become employers and businessmen" (Mani 1993c: 105). "Rags to riches" stories are common

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[2] Similar sentiments of a Sikh identity, separate and exclusive of Indian identity, have been expressed ad infinitum by Southeast Asian Sikhs even today.

among the Sikhs of Jakarta. They established a foothold in shipping and the furniture business. Malayan Sikhs, as we have seen, rose from the ranks of military and police services to become money-lenders and went into insurance, banking and wholesale or retail and other small-scale enterprises. According to Sandhu (1993a: 561), "Sikhs today are found in almost every major sphere of the country's (Malaysia's) economy, being particularly prominent in the professional groups. For instance…on a per capita population basis, there are more Sikh doctors in Malaysia than in any other community of similar size". We have earlier had occasion to comment on the somewhat bleak reception of Sikhs in the Philippines. While we would firmly hold on to the view (to be elaborated later), that the redistributive mechanisms through food and services in the gurdwaras was *not* to cater to the needs of the destitute and poor Sikhs (since there were hardly any Sikhs in these categories in Southeast Asia), the Sikh community in the Philippines, perhaps only in the early days, seems to be an exception. According to Rye (1993: 735):

> As a religious sanctuary the gurdwara from its very inception offers shelter to the jobless and the destitute in the community. Besides free boarding and lodging at the guest rooms, it often arranges financial assistance to the needy and the sick. The langar (free kitchen) has been a regular feature of the gurdwara from the day it was inaugurated.

Also in the Philippines, as contrasted with the more affluent and self-possessed Sindhis, the Sikhs are content with small business enterprises, such as small retail stores or door-to-door sale of textiles and household appliances, and money-lending. Our authors are agreed that in Singapore too the Sikhs carried out money-lending activities though on a smaller scale than the Chettiars, and they extended "small-scale loans mainly to civil servants" (Evers and Pavadarayan 1993: 864). A profile of Punjabi (including a majority Sikh component) businesses in Thailand is provided by Mani (1993e: 992). About 60 per cent of the Sikh community is economically engaged as vendors selling textile and electrical equipment. To this has been added the selling of commercial products on hire–purchase terms. The vendors are wealthy by Thai middle-class standards. Another 15 per cent of the Punjabi population can be described as shop-owners. The remaining 25 per cent can be described as having average income, but definitely well-off compared to the average Thai.

Provisional Interpretation: Sikh Economy, Internalized Logic and the "Thermostat Effect"

Although at this stage I do not have many sources to understand the "Sikh Studies" point-of-view to comment on the social economy of diaspora Sikhs, I shall use the Sandhu and Mani volume (1993) to venture a provisional interpretation. I would like to call it the "Sikh thermostat" with the gurdwara as the self-adjusting thermometer. That the Sikhs are an enterprising people and respond heroically to many and varied ecological, political and economic challenges seems to me an interpretation that is neither here nor there; it is like saying that adaptation, integration and assimilation have been the strategies used by the Sikhs to come to terms with the diaspora. Among our reasons to discount such interpretation is the effort to advance "a destructive analysis of the familiar" (Sapir 1921: 94, cited in Handler 1985: 171). Talking in terms of adjustment and adaptation would be nothing short of reinscribing and imbricating as explanation what Sikh intellectuals and leaders (the Sikh Studies troupe) also say, especially in contemporary circumstances where "they" (the subjects) read and absorb what "we" (the analysts) say.[3] On the other hand, the canvas spread before us by a comparative ethnography of Sikhs in Southeast Asia opens up a vista for an unfamiliar and dissimilar interpretation of Sikh dynamics in the diaspora. One strand of this explanation is that the well-being and economic resilience of the Sikhs emerges clearly as an immanent presence of their life-ways whatever may be their own perceptions as a persecuted minority.[4] (Here the persecution in Sikh perceptions is, interestingly, both political and economic.) The analyst, on the other hand, including and especially the Sikh Studies avatar of K. S. Sandhu (1993a: 566–67, emphasis added), the academician, hints at this resilience and I quote his own words:

> the Sikhs in Malaysia are not only a community in transition but are also at a critical societal cross-roads. A wrong turning or inappropriate action could lead to disastrous consequences. Therefore, the need

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[3] That such "agreement" between the subjects and the analyst furthering the cause of "familiar commonsense" fuels a feeling of paralyzing interpretation of activism is a subject we shall not go into.

[4] Generalizing the economic and political status of Sikhs overseas as "the New Patrons", La Brack (1989: 297) writes, "As a group, they have monetary clout. They make decisions abroad which affect financial and familial affairs in half a dozen countries around the world as well as within India itself."

for astute and stout-hearted guides is all the more pressing. It is also important for all concerned to curb personal predilections and ambitions, and instead to come together to forge a common front dedicated to the common weal and long-term survival and progress of the community as a whole. *Moreover, this is not unachievable as Sikhs in the past have demonstrated the capacity to get together and cooperate in a time of crisis.* This is surely one such time, as spiritual disharmony and decline, familial disaffection and dissolution, and leadership dissension and disputes are as virulent a cancer as any threatening the longer-term viability of the Sikhs as a community.

I think Sandhu's words, especially the italicized sentence, provide an excellent summing up of the consequences of Sikh resilience in the socio-economic processes of their diaspora.

What about the spiritual, familial and leadership healing which should follow Sandhu's diagnosis? Here I take a cue from Sandhya Shukla's analysis (2001) of colonial and post-colonial conjunctures where newly independent third-world nations like India carried on, at one hand, their critique of world domination through anti-colonialism, non-alignment and, eventually, neo-liberalism and, on the other hand, faced progressive critiques of domination by majorities in the newly-found nation-states of "minority" positionalities. In relation to the diaspora form the latter kind of oppositionality assumed global dimensions where space and time were telescoped. Shukla talks of Islamic and Tamilian minority positionalities in relation to India and Sri Lanka respectively. Significantly, she includes the Sikhs among these global positionality/oppositionalities and is intrigued by the similarity between the Tamil and Sikh cases where "highly internalized logic to the social experience of refugees in a variety of places such that the formations seem to be almost untouched by their appearance in specific locales, such as Norway or Canada, or for that matter, Sri Lanka" (Shukla 2001: 562). To be sure, Shukla's primary index is Fuglerud's intensive study of Tamil diaspora (1999); furthermore, it is a point of contention among Sikh scholars whether the militancy in the Sikh diaspora was triggered by Operation Blue Star in 1984 (Tatla 1999) or had roots deeper into the contemporary history of Punjab (G. Singh 2000). Be as it may, my main point of interest here is the erasure and transformation of territoriality (deterritorialization, multiple-territorialization and reterritorialization) or what we have called the telescoping of space. Thus, for her book on Sikh militants, in fact, Mahmood (1996) conducted her fieldwork entirely among subjects living in North America noting that geography and culture

are effectively decoupled through the extraordinary transplantation of Sikh households or communities in the United States and Canada that seems to reproduce what is from home. As regards the telescoping of time in relation to the Sikhs in Asia Pacific region, Shukla refers to the (contemporary) "fascinating claiming of west coast gurdwara*s* from the Ghadar movement originally directed at Indian national independence by activists for Sikh independence" (2001: 562).

Getting back to the Sikh diaspora in Southeast Asia, we are not sure if Sikh oppositionality to the Indian nation-state was ever an issue.[5] But the telescoping of time and space — construction in Southeast Asia of Sikh communities exactly in the image of homeland — "the internalized logic to the social experience" of diaspora from Punjab is the other key, in addition to the economic resilience detailed earlier, to the working of the "thermostat". And here we must inscribe the importance of the Sikh gurdwara, the omnipresent icon of the internalized logic of their social experience answering to the needs of spiritual, familial and leadership restitution of the Sikhs that Sandhu speaks of. Let us not forget that the critical event called Operation Blue Star had its Sikh garrison in the Golden Temple — the holiest of holy gurdwara of the Sikhs — in Amritsar.

Three Case Studies

The history of Sikhs in Southeast Asia is dotted with the establishment of gurdwaras and the huge communitarian role that they have played. This institution is the focal point of inclusion (Sikhs, Hindu Punjabis and Sindhis all together being members of the congregation) and exclusion (separate gurdwaras emerging with sectarian fission among the Sikhs). To take one example out of many, Mani (1993e: 933) speaks of six affiliated organizations in a single gurdwara for the entire Akali Sikh community in Bangkok. These are:

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[5] In Sandhu and Mani (1993) it is mentioned in two places only that in Malaysia the Hindu–Sikh conflict following Indira Gandhi's assassination gave the Malays a handle to doubt the Malaysian, rather than Indian, loyalties of the Sikhs and that in the Philippines the prestige-stock of the Sikhs plummeted after the news of Mrs Gandhi's assassination by her Sikh guards.

i. Young Thai-Sikh Association which involves young Sikhs, mainly in their twenties and thirties, in maintaining their identity as Sikhs. The members help put out fires in the city.
ii. Sikh Vidyalaya, a regular school having classes upto high-school level. About 400 pupils are enrolled in it.
iii. Guru Nanak Mission. Its aim is to spread Sikh religion, and it operates a medical clinic for the poor.
iv. The library contains books in Punjabi and English for use by gurdwara members.
v. Guru Nanak Foundation, set up to raise funds for scholarships awarded to needy students in Thai universities.
vi. Old age home.

The same author states categorically that there has been an increased emphasis on preserving the Sikh way of life in Bangkok.

> There is general agreement that a Sydhari Sikh who has since birth maintained faith in Sikhism can be a Sikh, while a Sikh who is shorn of the external symbolism of Sikhism cannot be a true Sikh. In the past, such a rigorous definition of a Sikh in Bangkok might have provoked discussion, but now debates on such topics are avoided for fear of violating religious sentiments. This is further testified by many Sikhs in their twenties and thirties, who feel a sense of pride in the adornment of the external symbols of Sikhism in Bangkok society. (Mani 1993e: 933)

The above may be taken as a case-study of Punjabi Sikhs in Thailand (Bangkok), but here lies the rub. I have also available to me Arunajeet Kaur's case study of Punjabi Sikhs in Singapore (2008) and Jeswant Kaur's paper on "Sikhs in Malaysia: Then and Now" (J. Kaur 2008). The differences of data and analysis in these three exercises call for a methodological probe, primarily keyed to the questions of generation and class both among the analysts and their subjects. Second, none of these authors speak of transnationalism among their Sikh subjects except that both A. Kaur and J. Kaur comment on the total lack of constant links or augmentation of numbers and culture through fresh migration from Punjab or elsewhere (unlike the situation for Punjabi Sikhs in UK and North America). Some of the divergences in the three accounts are real, and it would be unwise to attribute these differences solely to the methodological lens through which the cases have been observed. Whether the variations that are reported are a construction

of the tools of study employed or have resulted from variations in the context (national or transnational) of the location of Sikh communities, only further ethnographic fieldwork will tell. However, it is worth looking at the possible "biases in construction" as I perceive them. For Sikhs in Bangkok, Mani claims that "the Sikh community of Bangkok being economic equals rather than a community of varying economic status, the Bangkok Sikhs have avoided internal conflicts" (1993e: 932–33). Further, "with most members enjoying higher standards of living compared to Thais and others, all the affiliated organizations of the *gurudwara* are geared to helping others, which in turn help to add prestige to the Sikh identity in Bangkok and rest of the country" (*ibid.*: 933).

In A. Kaur's paper the beginnings of the settlement of Punjabi Sikhs in Singapore are traced to the arrival of the first convicts of the British empire in 1850 and thereafter, following protests by Europeans in the Straits Settlements, the recruitment of Sikhs (designated a "Martial Class") as policemen, watchmen and caretakers. In the early twentieth century, Sikhs from the Majha, Malwa and Doaba regions of Punjab established their own gurdwaras. A. Kaur notes how the Khalsa Sikh identity in Singapore was maintained by the British officers through an enforced compliance of Khalsa Sikhs with *rahit maryada* and *amritdhari* characteristics. Singapore Sikhs at this stage also received constant support from religious organizations in Punjab. However, with the waning of the British era, there was isolation of the Singaporean Sikhs from Punjab and the post-War period saw many other changes. A. Kaur (2008) cites from Kernial Singh Sandhu's address to the Sikhs on 19 March 1989: "… the Sikhs in Singapore, like many of their brethren elsewhere, are a community undergoing serious erosion of values and spiritual life, and in the danger of slipping into cultural anomie if the current trend of the largely mindless change among them persists." Notable numbers of Sikh men took to either being clean-shaven or "grooming" by trimming their facial hair to have a more presentable appearance. Many interviewees of the age group affected by the social challenges of the 1960s and 1970s were to admit that even if they did manage to endure these social challenges it was largely out of familial pressure to "remain Sikh" or out of respect to their aged parents who had been first generation migrants. Sikh women, particularly the second generation descendents of the Sikh migrants had attained sufficient education to allow them to join the work force and wage work brought attendant changes such as discarding the traditional dress, *salwar kameez*, and asserting their own lifestyle choices as financially independent persons. Extended families

gave way to nuclear ones. With the diminishing influence of grandparents and the wider kin, attendance in gurdwaras and compliance with Sikh religious and social values declined sharply. As interactions with non-Sikhs accelerated, cultural hybridity replaced traditional lifestyles. Among the concerned leaders of the Singaporean Sikhs there was an upsurge to revive community values through religious education and the introduction of Punjabi as a second language in public schools.

A. Kaur fails to put the Sikhs of Singapore into a relative class framework, though in absolute terms her interviewees belong to the middle- and upper-middle classes since she refers to working couples, living in flats, membership of clubs and the availability of entertainment domestically, through movies, videos, cable, and the internet. According to her, therefore, this lifestyle reflecting status (rather than explicitly or implicitly defined life-chances reflecting class) is responsible for the indifference of Singapore's Sikh youths towards their religious culture, including repulsion from the conventional bodily markings and adornment as well as the congregational practices of Amritdhari Sikh Khalsa. Rather than "class", her accent is on the radical differences of value and lifestyle between Sikhs of the first and subsequent generations. This is a valuable methodological angle, one attuned to the "destructive analysis" of a blanket ethnic or sub-ethnic identity, as we shall see. The cosmopolitan cultural environment of Singapore may be one of the defining factors in the dilution of Sikh religiosity, but if we are to go by a parallel study of Hindu religion in Singapore (Sinha 2005), a cosmopolitan style of living may well coexist with innovations on religiosity derived from one's root culture. Further, in the public arena, ameliorative moves made by Sikh organizations such as the Sikh Advisory Board (towards the inclusion of Sikh studies as part of the Religious Studies programme in private schools) and the Sikh Education Foundation (pushing for Punjabi as a second language in schools) fit in very well with Dusenbery's (1997) analysis of organizational Sikh successes with the corporate-style governmentality of Singapore.

J. Kaur provides a sketch of Sikhs in Malaysia, much like A. Kaur's account for Singapore, but with lesser contemporary details. She too gives a history of Malaysian Sikhs and focuses on the contemporary changes between the immigrant generation and their descendents. She notes that the identity of the Malaysian Sikhs today is "very loosely coupled" (*sic*). According to her, in the present Malaysian context anyone of a Punjabi Sikh parentage and professing to the Sikh faith is a Sikh, whether or not his physical appearance and concept of religion adheres

to the principles of Sikhism. There is the language dilemma (English, Malay and Punjabi), problem of Sikh youths converting to Islam or Christianity, and the increased frequency of mixed marriages. There is the additional problem of internal divisions in the Sikh community as the traditional gurdwara affiliations based on regional derivations from Punjab are being replaced by mutually antagonistic factions for the control of leadership and resources in the community.

Despite the present disharmony and disorientation, J. Kaur's optimistic diagnosis and remedy for the Sikh crisis in Malaysia can be quoted here verbatim:

> We are recognized as a race (*sic*) on its own apart from other Indians. Therefore, it is but our own battle to keep Sikhism alive. A good start would be to get youth to understand the religion. For this gurudwaras should make English and Malay the language of discourse when explaining practices and verses of the Granth Sahib. Coming to the gurudwara should be appealing to the young. Less emphasis should be placed on physical appearance. Once enlightened on the beauty of the religion, many may then see the importance of knowing and reading language. The pride of sporting the five Ks (the khalsa roop) may also become appealing. (J. Kaur 2008: 13)

Whereas J. Kaur does not deal at all with the economic status and problems of Sikhs in Malaysia, in the case of A. Kaur there seems to be a bias in favor of talking about young men and women of her own class background. This is a fairly common feature of the endogenous views of the diaspora.[6] Mani's views on the economic stratification, or a lack thereof, among the Sikhs of Bangkok correspond much better with the "thermostatic" nature of the Southeast Asian Sikh economy advanced here. Though not explicitly stated, it seems that A. Kaur's depiction of Sikhs in Singapore as a middle class also reflects a situation similar to that of Sikhs in Thailand.

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[6] Though not necessarily the case with A. Kaur's study, it is salutary to bear in mind a caution noted by Shukla (2001: 558): "a certain financially successful, upper-caste and India-centric image of South Asians abroad can only be destabilized by a juxtaposition with stories and experiences that do not contain such privilege".

Conclusion

In emphasizing gender, generation and class rather than the omnibus ethnicity or sub-ethnicity as indexing the identity/identification of diasporics we operate at a level where the difference and sameness of our subjects is not isomorphic with commonly held views. As mentioned earlier, at a descriptive level the attention given to the gender and generation dimensions of contemporary Sikh personhood in Singapore and Malaysia is a valuable sociological contribution by young Sikh scholars. At the level of interpretation of Sikh "identity", however, such accounts need to be augmented by a focus on the class dimension, not only the lifestyles but the also the life chances (*à la* Max Weber). In so doing, we also probe through a "destructive analysis of the familiar", a process whereby the nation-state might try to manipulate a minority "ethnicity" or sub-ethnicity. In Singapore, for example, the sub-ethnic and middle-class identities of the Sikhs are grist to the mill of a capitalist state declaring this community a model minority, as having contributed more than others (typically other minorities) to the common patrimony of the nation-state (Williams 1989). Therefore, they deserve to be rewarded through "recognition". This is the interpretation that I would like to advance by deepening Dusenbery's interpretation (1997) of Sikh success in getting recognition from the Singapore corporate state. This patently is not the case with Sikhs in Canada where the internal hierarchy is more developed and therefore the process of the formation of a state-sponsored "comprador" Sikh sub-ethnicity is somewhat thwarted.

It is not possible within the purview of this chapter to fully undertake a destructive analysis of the trope of "identity". It seems to me that ascension to a model minority status is the common platform for Sikhs and the representatives of a neo-liberal capitalist state, at least in Singapore but possibly also in Canada. This would leave the numerous "proletariat", with its internal differences, at the mercy of the state and its comprador elites. We thus come a full circle. Left to itself the notion "identity" is either an essentialist one or is contextually built on the shifting sands of psychology. A sociological analysis demands a move away from "product" (or *culture* as commonly perceived) to "process" (or *discourse* as conceptualized in current anthropological practice). This research strategy and, particularly, the processual concept of "Sikh thermostat" might also help us discern the pattern of fluctuations in Sikh militancy in Punjab and the diaspora. That, however, is the subject of another discourse.

Chapter Four

Indian Diasporic Integration in South Africa

The story of the adaptation of Indian South Africans to the economy and society in the host country has often been told in terms of their social stratification, ethnic identity and racial discrimination in a multicultural, multiracial milieu. In terms of success and failure, pitfalls and achievements, gains and losses, it has been a complex and very mixed story:

> neither…simply one of political progressiveness in the struggle for a non-racial democracy, nor one of enviable and exemplary economic success in the face of massive racial odds. While each of these versions may contain some element of the truth, neither adequately captures the complex role and history of this community of some one million people in the making of modern South Africa. For there were amongst them heroes and villains, resistance fighters and collaborators, rich and poor, winners and losers, and many who chose to sit it out on the sidelines. But then, anything else, surely, would have been highly unusual indeed. (Padayachee 1999: 395)

My principal focus in this chapter is to try and work out — on the basis of a critical look at some of the historical and sociological/ anthropological literature on the subject — the underlying mechanisms that may account for the particular trajectory of the Indian South African (ISA) development. When I speak of the India–South Africa interface my concern is with the vicissitudes of the Indian diaspora in South Africa; how I imagine the discipline of anthropology in the context of the ISA diaspora will become clearer as we go along and in the conclusion. This presents us with the problematic of "diasporic integration", by which I mean that ISAs have located themselves both in their own perceptions (i.e., emically) and in terms of their objective socio-legal status (i.e., etically) as people who have neither acculturated towards assimilation (viz. divested of their cultural particularities) nor remained patriotically Indian and isolated (viz. practicing a kind of "long distance" nationalism). While they, surely, unlike the Blacks and the

Whites, never aspired to sovereign power in South Africa, they have stuck to the guns of being nothing but South African citizens.

Allow me to comment here that while the present Government of India was listing countries that could qualify for the status of dual citizenship, among NRIs, the candidature of ISAs, though eminently suitable on all criteria of socio-economic development, was sidetracked precisely on the grounds of what I would call their "diasporic integration" in the host country. It was said, diplomatically, that ISAs would not want dual citizenship with India on account of the problems they would then have with the regime in South Africa. One manifestation of this integration is that in proportion to their percentage in the total population of South Africa (a little less than 3 per cent), there are many ISAs who are leaders and prominent figures in the realms of politics, sports, entertainment, and different professions and businesses in the host country. Why should this be so?

"Niche" and "Interstice"

One direction from which light may be cast on this question is the path of entrepreneurship. In standard anthropological literature on entrepreneurship, a broker or the middleman is understood as the one who successfully exploits the "niche" of opportunity (Barth 1963). The *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1980: 768) defines a "niche" as "a place, employment or activity for which a person is best fitted". And, from the standpoint of the environment, a "niche" "is a habitat supplying the factors necessary for the existence of an organism or species" (*ibid.*). However, both these meanings of "niche" take a naturalistic or what one may call jurally open and unfettered view of the arena, field or habitat for the entrepreneur. This precisely was not the case for the ISA actor/entrepreneur in South Africa. As pointed out by V. Padayachee and R. Morrell (1991), in their seminal article on this subject, while the first wave of merchants found a niche mainly in the market for trade, credit and moneylending within the colony's Indian community, the potential and possibilities for breaking out beyond these limits remained alive, if only the battles for full political rights, which the early merchants fought for so tenaciously, could be won. However, by the end of the nineteenth century things began to change. Europe seized Africa and a new conservative attitude set in; rivals were regarded with suspicion. White interests were shamelessly championed. Capitalists throughout the world have found state patronage or at least its forbearance essential

in order to prosper. By 1914, this patronage or forebearance no longer existed for Indian merchants in South Africa. Although they continued to enjoy some economic success, it was in the role, politically, of second-class citizens. If this foreclosing of the "niche" was for the merchants, one can only imagine how difficult and closed would be the entrepreneurial arena for the ordinary ISA. This was the state of affairs at the beginning of the twentieth century, and we know only too well the series of disabling legislations aimed at ISAs that were introduced throughout that century, culminating in the apartheid regime of the mid-1940s.

Rather than the notion of a "niche" we need another, different set of ideas in order to be able to capture and frame the struggle, resistance and resilience of ISAs in their bid to adapt to and settle down in the host society. Let us note at once that, while avoiding the pitfalls of presentism, what one is seeking ultimately is an anchor into the modernity and cosmopolitanism of ISAs as South Africans at the turn of *this* century. However, I believe that the notion of diasporic integration signals a process that may lead us to discern the beginnings of modernity and cosmopolitanism among the peoples of South Africa as a whole, including the ISAs. Given the stringent statist regime under which the ISAs struggled, survived and at times flourished, we may be able to analyze their adaptation not so much through the concept of a "niche" of opportunity but through the notion of them working their way up, down and laterally, into the "interstices" of the South African politico-economic system. The choice of this new term is not simply a matter of semantics; it has conceptual significance. According to the *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1980: 600), an interstice is "a space that intervenes between things". Another meaning given is "interval: especially between closely spaced things". The aptness in choosing this spatial metaphor is two-fold. On the one hand, for immigrants adjustment was a crucial and necessary part of the process of cultural reorientation and reconstruction, since no immigrant community could have lasted this long unless it was open and responsive to change. The migration process threw together people who normally would not have met and lived in such close proximity in their homeland, a process that one may term as the "collapsing of space" (Haraksingh 1988: 118–19), which resulted in a new construct where the diversities of gender, language and religion, traditional occupation, etc., among the immigrants were retained but in their interpersonal and community relationships, migrants, as "Indians", moved closer to one another, creating the grounds for an Indian self-identity and to be identified as such by others. On the other hand, there was territorial

integration of ISAs, wherein their cultural heterogeneity was retained but a common identity as middle-class Indians was forged. The latter process was especially marked in Durban, home to 75 per cent of the 1,045,596 Indians living in South Africa. These 650,000 Indians in Durban are a very heterogeneous group, but the community does share a common spatial framework because most Indians live in urban areas.

Homogeneity and Heterogeneity: Interstitial Mobility

The characteristically South African mix of heterogeneity and (one kind of) homogeneity — urban and territorial — that is visible among ISAs has created room for interstitial mobility. There is some indirect evidence for this, although more could be found fruitfully if an anthropological–historical study of the community were to be undertaken. In tracking down this process, applying the conventional historical distinction between indentured workers and independent "passenger" Indians cannot provide an exhaustive explanation. The class tapestry of Indians became more complex as indentured workers became "free" and began to diversify into a range of occupations. Through trade and enterprise, a small number of ex-indentured Indians along with other skilled persons were able to soon establish themselves as an urban middle class. While it is true that *stereotypically* the trading class comprised mainly Gujarati Muslims and the majority of the working people were Tamil Hindus but, thanks to the dynamics of interstitial mobility, the "free" Indian population also produced the first Indian petty bourgeoisie in the form of shopkeepers, hawkers and traders engaged in business with local Africans and Indians employed on estates, peasant farmers and skilled artisans (cf. Thiara 2001). Additionally, the first decade of the twentieth century saw the emergence of what M. Swan (1985) terms the "new elite". This was made up of the descendants of indentured and ex-indentured labourers, who had acquired through western education a distinct position in the occupational hierarchy. As S. Bhana and J. Brain (1990: 17) have pointed out, large numbers of Indians took up wage labor in factories, heavy industries and sugar mills, while others became employees or shop assistants in private and public establishments. Those possessing traditional skills, such as jewelry making, carpentry, basket weaving, tinsmiths, trading and peddling, became independent entrepreneurs.

Although I have not done any extended fieldwork in Durban, during my earlier visits I stayed on several occasions at beach-hotels in the city. In an interview with the owner of one such hotel, a Tamil Hindu, I was

given a fascinating and telling account of the family's history, where the grandparents' generation had worked on a sugar plantation, the parents' generation had moved to the inner city as car mechanics and the present generation had succeeded in investing in hotel ownership. One can already see how a strait-jacketed historical depiction of the enduring and persisting distinction between descendants of indentured workers and "passenger" Indians may lead a researcher into a blind alley unless anthropological case studies of contemporary ISA entrepreneurs are undertaken as a corrective. At a more general level, such anthropologically oriented historical research might also bear out the truth of a viewpoint advanced by Lal (2005)[1], that the indenture experience among overseas Indians may have been one of suffering and privation at one level but at the same time it provided an opportunity and challenge to thwart adversity using a mix of adventure and fortitude.

There are indications of interstitial transactions among ISAs from a fairly early time. Links between indentured and ex-indentured Indians and the Indian commercial elite were undoubtedly minimal and well defined, but Padayachee and Morrell (1991) provide an invaluable insight into the use of informal credit and money lending systems, central to Indian systems of finance and trade and utilized by a disparate Indian community in South Africa. The extension of credit from larger Indian merchants to smaller traders facilitated the success and autonomy of the Indian commercial community. It is another matter that, as we saw earlier, the political rights of Indians were withdrawn through a spate of legislative measures that sought to curb their success and growth.

With such contradictory beginnings — a socio-cultural push towards enterprise faced with politico-jural suppression — it would be useful to delineate other mechanisms of diasporic integration of the ISAs who gained mobility by working through the interstices of the systems. It may not seem such a big leap from the early part of the twentieth century to the middle of the century if we keep these processes in sight, if only as hypotheses to guide our future investigations. Padayachee has summed up the macro-economic dimension of this continuity through the post-war period using these words:

> The government's post-war economic strategy, which coupled import-substitution industrialization with racial oppression, stimulated a burst

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[1] Brij Lal, a senior academic at the Australian National University, Canberra, is himself the descendant of a sugar estate worker in Fiji.

of economic growth in the 1960s and early 1970s. Although the major beneficiaries of this growth were whites, Indian South Africans were able to use their relatively better education, English language proficiency and experience in a skill-starved labour market to some good effect. Indian unemployment all but disappeared in the 1960s and 1970s; a growing number of Indians rapidly moved up the occupational structure to become doctors, lawyers, accountants, academics and engineers; many Indians joined the ranks of the racially-divided public service; and *Indian entrepreneurship flourished in the narrow, racially-defined interstices of the South African economy*. But the majority still remained working class and lower-middle class, albeit under marginally more secure conditions than the African majority. (Padayachee 1999: 394, emphasis added)

Taking a cue from Padayachee's summary what I am trying to do here is to widen the use of the concept of "interstices": (*i*) from the economy to the socio-political system as a whole, and (*ii*) from intra-Indian processes to the larger racially divided socio-political system.

Social Stratification, Identity and Action

Padayachee says that at the end of the twentieth century the majority of ISAs belong to the working class and lower-middle class. According to Thiara (2001: 128) too, 60 per cent of the Indians in South Africa belong to the working class. Of course, much depends on how one defines the working class and middle class in a given context. In technologically developed countries like USA, or even Singapore, the IT specialists emigrating from India tend to be classified as "knowledge workers" (see for instance, Gopinathan and Sarvanan 2003; Khadria 1999) and hence, working class. There is also the point about the self-referentiality of class being a function of relative deprivation. I can state with some puzzlement, though not entirely facetiously, that one working-class ISA resident of government-provided housing in Chatsworth, Durban, ruefully mentioned how bad their housing was — "there is not even a swimming pool in the house!" But, setting all this aside, there are the privileged and the underprivileged among ISAs as well, and the latter, like minorities anywhere else, derive strength from their membership of ethnic and sub-ethnic communal associations. Any horizontal solidarity that exists within the multiracial and multicultural working class is also strongly crosscut by ethnic and racial divisions. The South African census recognizes four discrete racial blocks: Whites, Asians, Coloreds, and Africans. In this scenario the application of the "Middle Class Minority

Theory", viz. the ISAs, seen as being sandwiched between the privileged White minority on the one hand and the poor, underprivileged, African majority on the other, makes some sense, especially in view of the fact that compared to the Coloureds in South Africa, the ISAs are much more mobile economically speaking and score higher on all other criteria of advancement such as education, housing and the possession of modern gadgets. However, is the scapegoating of ISAs by the Whites and the Blacks a function of their "middle class" or "middling" "status-gap" (Rinder 1958–59)? Further, is this middling a function of identity or of action? I find that Desai and Maharaj (1996) in their article explaining the direction of the Indian vote in South Africa's first democratic non-racial election (held on 27 April 1994) succumb sociologically to an exclusively identitarian view. It would take far too long to spell out here how their claim that the ISAs, irrespective of their objective class "identify and are identified with middle- and high-income earners" is unsustainable. It should suffice to say that, methodologically speaking, while an objectively unspecified "identity" perception or feeling among the ISAs may be a starting point to explore the social action on which it may be based, it cannot be a "final cause" explanation (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Further, although in stereotypes ISAs may be identified as "middle class" by the others, but the authors of this thesis would be hard put to prove that the ISAs identify themselves as uniformly middle class. Similarly, and this is my next point, to explain the conservative voting pattern of the ISAs by the *deux ex machina* of patriarchal and authoritarian Indian families is another variant of a mono-causal "finalist" explanation. This, like the *cul de sac* of a middle-class "identity", cries out for a processual, action-oriented analysis — certainly in terms of interstitial mobility — rather than reducing the family institution and the kinship networks it engenders to the status of a dysfunctional, if not pernicious, element of the social structure.[2]

Conclusion

In the foregoing discussion I have tried to make a case for an anthropologically informed history to capture the processes of the ISA diaspora

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[2] See, for example, Mainet-Valleix (2002), who shows how, positively, household and family are the main bases of Indian identity in Durban. For examples of other communities of South Asian diasporics, see Ballard (2006).

so as to prevent us from remaining stuck with certain conventional historical dichotomies. Isabel Hofmeyr (2005) has initiated a healthy trend in the historiography of ISA diaspora by focusing on the returnes to India. One is attracted to her research especially on account of being able to read in the above process the seeds of modernism and, particularly, the manipulative actions used by ordinary immigrants to negotiate between sub-systems, viz., the South African state, authorities in India overseeing immigration and the seat of imperial power in Britain. An analysis of this kind is in keeping with the abandoning of the "great man" view of history; there are striking parallels between Gandhi's negotiations on behalf of the ISAs with the modus operandi adopted by an ordinary and relatively unknown returnee A. B. Naidu. Through archival data Hofmeyer (2005) has uncovered experiences of a number of Indian returnees from South Africa to India. This research is an excellent example of protagonists acting through the interstices in the system, a conceptual construct that I have used centrally in reconstructing the ISA's adaptation in their host society. In my writing I have sought to juxtapose the *roots* of Mr A. B. Naidu (and Gandhi) in India to the ISAs' *routes* in South Africa. An interpretation such as this not only relocates text in its context but also signals novel leads of rapprochement between anthropology and history. Methodologically speaking, instead of framing our explanations within the Procrustean mould of a Durkheimian social science, based on an imagined isomorphism between cognitive structures and social structures, we can begin to celebrate human agency. Particularly in the highly mobile world — both virtual and locomotionary — of our globalized existence, the circulation and differentiation produced by diaspora create exemplary conditions for disciplinary innovations. Rendered in these terms, the South Africa–India interface augurs well for a renewed collaboration between the social sciences.

Chapter Five

Indians in Australia:
Culture, Ecology and Economy

This chapter deals with aspects of Australian society and, more specifically, the ecological and demographic base of societal trends. My discussion is in terms of programmes, policies and projections for immigration and multiculturism with reference to Australia's neighboring Asian populations.

Viewed from an Indian perspective, Australia is a "new society" (Hartz 1964) and, as such, is a nation of immigrants.[1] The European element of the Australian population settled here only about 200 years ago but constitutes 91 per cent of the people and is therefore numerically dominant. In recent years, however, Australia's Asian connection has become much more important and visible. Though four times as far from Asia compared to the US and receiving far fewer Asian visitors and settlers (one-fifth the number of visitors), Australia's small population (16.8 million in 1991) has meant that the Asian impact has been relatively much greater. In 1994, nearly 50 per cent of all visitors to Australia were from Asia, compared with 30 per cent from the US, while 40 per cent of all Australians travelling abroad spent most of their time in Asian countries (Price 1995). Charles Price predicts that in the near future, Australians visiting Asian countries will cross the million a year mark, which means that on average one Australian in 18 will visit Asia every year.

If the above is a picture of Australian contacts with the Asian world through temporary movements, what of the Asian impact on Australia through permanent settlement? The gradual withdrawal of the White Australia policy (1956–74), led to a marked increase in Australia's Asian

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[1] I do not wish to belittle the importance of the Australian aboriginal community, which in numerical terms comprises only 1.47 per cent of the country's population but socio-legally speaking constitutes a significant presence.

population, from 0.5 per cent in 1947, by nearly 2 per cent in 1976 to approximately 7.4 per cent in mid-1995. If settler immigration continues to take place at the rates witnessed in the last 10 years then by 2025 the Asian element of Australia's populace will be approximately 19.5 per cent, that is 4.3 million in a total population of 22 million.

India-born immigrants and second-generation Indians born in Australia constitute only a small proportion of the Australian population. According to the 1991 Census, the former number 60,958 persons and the latter 36,968 persons. The latter, along with many thousand overseas-born persons of Indian ethnic origin who emigrated from places other than India (for instance, from Fiji, Singapore, Malaysia, East Africa, and South Africa) have been designated "Ethnic Indians" for census purposes. Thus, as per the 1986 Census, approximately 71,200 persons had indicated that they were of "Indian ancestry", and it has been further estimated that in 1988, 0.41 per cent of all Australians were of Indian origin. These numbers and proportions have been steadily increasing. At the time of the 1991 Census the total number of India-born persons in Australia was 60,958. Two years later this number had grown to around 72,500. Another significant source of the increase in the population of ethnic Indians has been the influx of Indo-Fijians after the coups d'état of 1987. According to a report in *Canberra Times* (11 October 1995), based on data provided by the Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, Australia's Fiji-born population had doubled from about 15,000 in 1986 to 30,000 in 1991, and stood at more than 36,000 in 1995. Most of those seeking to immigrate have been Indo-Fijians, although others, including indigenous Fijians, have also left Fiji.

Three salient points emerge from the above about the Australian demography. First, it is a nation of immigrants. Second, Asian immigration has become very significant in the past two or three decades and it will continue to grow and assume greater proportions in the early decades of the new millennium. Third, the Indian component of Asian immigration and settlement in Australia though numerically small is growing at a fast pace; the proportion of ethnic Indians has increased manifold thanks to emigration from Fiji in particular. In 1991 nearly 7 million Australians, 42 per cent of the population, were born overseas or had one or both parents who were born abroad. The Asia-born constituted 4.6 per cent of the total population, Britain- and Ireland-born were 7 per cent, Europe-born 6.5 per cent, and Middle East-born numbered 1.2 per cent. The percentage of Asians in the population as a whole (including those born in Australia) had increased to 7.4 per cent by mid-1995.

Upto two-thirds of all second-generation immigrants were marrying outside their ethnic group so that by the year 2000, 40 per cent of the Australian population had become ethnically mixed. These projections certainly include South Asians, although the exact quantum of South Asian ethnics in this melting pot[2] is not easily ascertained.

In relation to the non-Indian Asian population in Australia, a few sociological characteristics of the India-born population should be noted. Compared to their settlement patterns in the nineteenth century, the India-born in Australia are today a very urbanized population. In 1991 only 8 per cent lived outside the major cities. However, their level of urban concentration is not as high as some of the more recently established Asian groups. Overall, the India-born have one of the highest levels of educational training and qualifications of any ethnic group in Australia. Given this, it is not surprising that many of them are employed in professional, technical and white-collar occupations, with the annual median income for the India-born population of Australia being 31 per cent above that median income for the total Australian population at AUS$ 18,600 (the conversion rate in 1998 being AU$ 1 = INR 25.50). It goes without saying that whereas learning the English language was one of the most urgent and difficult tasks for Asian immigrants in Australia, about Indians it was acknowledged "almost all have a good knowledge of English" (BIPR 1995: 5). The superior linguistic, educational and professional attainments of Indian immigrants in Australia have paid rich and, at times, unexpected dividends towards their social adaptation. Thus, in an interview with Dr Margaret J. Secombe of the Graduate School of Education, the University of Adelaide, I learnt that Indian women, mostly those accompanying their immigrant husbands to Australia, constituted an overwhelming number of secondary school trainee teachers in her institution.

The general point that emerges from this profile of Indian Australians is that contrary to the generalization made about the "untranslatability" of Indian culture in the diaspora (cf. Niranjana 1994), cultural translation in a multicultural milieu is subject to the history and socioeconomic background of the migrants and the policies of the host society. Two further implications follow. First, while entry for Indians at the immigration gate was tough, until recently, once in Australia the India-born faced little or no prejudice. The conditions for sociocultural adaptation were

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[2] As someone once put it, the Australian population can be characterized as consisting of "melds rather than celts".

highly favorable. Thus, the famous egalitarian social milieu of Australia is a historical datum of considerable importance. Second, the generalization of "deterriorialization" in relation to the Indian diaspora as a whole (cf. Appadurai 1997) should be replaced by what I designate "multiple territorialization" in the case of Indian Australians. The advantages of the latter perspective are that through it (*i*) the economic dimension of immigration and settlement, e.g., the class background and diasporic investment in India can be studied, and (*ii*) the policies of the host society and the nation-state dimensions of the status of the diasporics can become clearer. Thus, for example, in Australia, multiculturalism, immigration quotas, English- versus non-English-speaking backgrounds and the steps taken by people to remedy the latter would be within the scope of one's study and (*iii*) the distinctive politics of the settlement society diasporics — their ethnic politics, perception of the "niche" of opportunity, etc., — would become clearer (R. K. Jain 1998b).

The Eco-Demographic Context

There is no doubt that present-day emigration to Australia by Indians is not very easy, in the sense that they have to qualify according to a points system. Yet, as I pointed out earlier, once in Australia there is hardly any adverse prejudice or discrimination. There is, to be sure, a certain fringe of the White Australian population that belongs to the conservative, right-wing, farming community which is vociferously racist and anti-Asian immigration. But, as the results of Australian general elections held in early October 1998 clearly showed, this right-wing racist fringe is largely unpopular with the Australian electorate.

There is another chestnut that needs to be disposed of while considering Australian policies regarding immigration in general and from neighboring Asian countries in particular. This pertains to the huge landmass of Australia — more than 3 million sq. miles, double the size of India — supporting a very small population. Common sense (and a good measure of ignorance) has often prompted Asians to ask why this large territory cannot be made to carry a much greater population than it does at present, thus relieving to some extent the intense population pressure faced by most Asian countries. This matter needs careful scrutiny. First of all, one needs to remember that Australia is an autonomous and sovereign nation-state which has every right, like any other independent nation, to formulate and implement policies geared toward its own enlightened self-interest. Second, at the outer limit, when

one begins to explore universalistic humane principles at work, we find that the human rights record of Australia has been satisfactory by any measuring rod. The Australian government's policies with respect to providing asylum to refugees from East Europe, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and, more recently, from Fiji leaves little to be desired. At the same time, however, Australian environmentalists have begun a concentrated campaign to educate and activate Australians and their neighbors about the dismal carrying capacity of much of the land mass available to the population. Movements such as the National Landcare Program (cf. Campbell and Siepen 1994) have not only diagnosed the acute problems facing farming systems in Australia but have initiated nation-wide, decentralized community-based projects for the amelioration of these costly dysfunctions. To quote from Campbell and Siepen (*ibid*.: 9):

> Northern Territory pastoralists trying to combat infestations of the noxious weed *mimosa pigra* on the flood plains east of Darwin; rural communities in Tasmania concerned about stream water quality and river bank erosion; part-time farmers in Victoria organizing coordinated rabbit control programs; Coastal communities in New South Wales stabilizing sand dunes; Western Australian wheat belt farmers surveying and mapping their district to develop catchment plans to coordinate salinity, drainage and erosion control works; land care committees in Queensland combining local and scientific knowledge to produce land management manuals for their district; school children measuring salinity levels, producing maps, investigating environmental indicators such as frog and worm populations; rural land care groups planting trees, helped by visiting bus loads of city people; bridging the Great Divide between urban and rural Australia; farmers working jointly with researchers to define and investigate more sustainable farming practices — all of these activities are threads which make up the rich pattern of land care.

The "costly dysfunctions" that I spoke of earlier should be seen against the backdrop of Australia being an incredibly old land and the current society having developed in the blink of an ecological eye. Agricultural and pastoral uses claim more than 60 per cent of the physical area of Australia. Farming practices and means of maintaining soil fertility which had been developed over centuries in the young fertile soils and gentle climate of England proved disastrous in Australia's ancient soils, hot sun, drying winds, unpredictable rains and long, energy-sapping dry spells (it is still customary to refer to long dry spells as "drought" or "natural disaster" rather than considering them an innate characteristic of the region). Land degradation and rural decline characterize the history of

Australian farming. The problem in Australia, thus, has not been that of living off the land as much as of living with the land. In other words, the dysfunctional ecology of the Australian landmass itself poses problems for human habitation. As Australian farmers have pointed out, "How can we afford to go green when we are in the red?". Let us note, therefore, that the problems of recession in the so-called affluent nations can be as severe as that of inflation in underdeveloped economies.

Multiculturalism

It would seem that multiculturalism in different nation-states of the modern world cannot be understood as a single universally applicable model or paradigm. In fact, the need to understand it as a public policy imperative, specifically contextulized to the particular polity, economy and society of that nation, seems to be a way out of the predicament of "cultural racialism" or even culturalism as such (Vertovec 1996). Not only does cultural relativism provide no answer, as the American, Australian and, to a lesser extent, Canadian experiments with multiculturalism have shown, but all universalistic distinctions, such as the "two domains thesis" — equality of opportunity and a shared culture of a public sphere and cultural diversity in the private and communal domains — prove futile (cf. Rex 1987, 1991). As John Rex has remarked,

> The important point to be made in a democratic critique of multicultural-ism is not merely to assert that malevolent governments and ruling classes create ascribed ethnicity for their own purposes, but to consider whether those who see themselves as members of ethnic groups should and can attain their objectives within society. (quoted in Vertovec 1996: 68)

The vital question, therefore, is about "their objectives" and the local "society".

Australian scholar James Jupp (1996) points out that for Australian multiculturalism a desirable meeting ground for "them" and "us" can be "social cohesion". In considering this objective one will have to prepare a balance sheet of sociocultural conditions in Australia — apropos our plea for a thorough contextualization — which promote or obstruct social cohesion. Let us note the plus factors: "apart from the Indochinese refugees, most "Asians" in Australia are Christians, most are well educated and middle class and many speak English at home" (*ibid.*: 3). Second, one needs to distinguish between stereotypical perceptions and objective reality. As Jupp (*ibid.*: 2–3) correctly points out,

the prevailing stereotype in opinion polls and some media reports is that all "European" cultures are alike while "non-Europeans" are being subsidized, encouraging them to maintain much of their exotic culture and homeland loyalties. This is dangerously close to pure nonsense. There is virtually no "subsidization" of cultures (in contrast to Canadian policy) and preservation of "homeland loyalties" has been much more marked for many eastern and southern European migrant organizations than for many from elsewhere. The European/non–European dichotomy is quite false. It would be closer to the truth if Asian immigrants to Australia were a cross-section of traditional peasant society, but they are not.

Take another stereotype: the most common sentiment feeding social disharmony is the feeling that minority cultures are incompatible with those of the majority, that they congregate in ghettos where they preserve their differences and adhere to foreign political practices, which are un-acceptable, and that their numbers may increase to the point where the former majority is swamped by "strangers in their own country". All these perceptions have surfaced in opinion polls over the past 50 years, but have rarely been manifest in the form of physical violence or political mobilization in Australia, especially when compared to the situation in many other societies (Holton 1991). The situation seems to be drastically different in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Furthermore, though it must be conceded that very little sociological research has been done on the compatibility/incompatibility of differ-ent cultures in Australia, there is no reason to disagree with Jupp that "the motivation of immigrants and Australian selection processes often cause those settling in Australia to be already closer to 'our' values and beliefs than many imagine" (Jupp 1996: 4).

Among other positive features, one of the measures of non-conformity used in American studies, the willingness to take up citizenship, almost does not apply in Australia. Naturalization is most common for refugees, normal for non-English-speaking immigrants and uncommon for those from English-speaking countries. Put simply, those most willing to become legal Australians are those often thought to be least able to assimilate. According to Jupp (*ibid.*: 5) opinion polls suggest that "Arabs", Vietnamese and Muslims are seen as the most distinctive and are the least liked communities. There appears to be a general feeling that some ethnic groups are less able to assimilate than others, which can become the basis of social tension. But that is in no way the same as saying that members of these less accepted immigrant populations are consciously and deliberately refusing to accept "the Australian way of

life". As Jupp concludes, "Essentially, we do not know in any scientific sense whether that is their attitude or not because no one has studied them" (*ibid.*).

There are, nevertheless, some "real" problems. One of these — as we have amply demonstrated above — is the existence of prejudice. "Majority prejudice" is a problem. The majority constitutes a very large part of the population and its prejudices, compared to those of the minorities, have an impact on more people than only the minorities. In a market economy the media is likely to appeal to what it considers to be majority views, often damaging ethnic relations by doing so. Besides prejudice there also exist areas of real social deprivation among immigrants. The Commission of Inquiry into Poverty 1975, chaired by Professor Ronald Henderson, found that there were signs of entrenched disadvantage among non-English speakers, who were overwhelmingly Europeans. No participant in the various debates that have followed since denies that the bulk of non-English-speaking immigrants is concentrated in manual employment and the manufacturing industry, more than the Australian average. But in conditions of full employment and arbitrated wages, this need not necessarily lead to permanent social and economic hardship. The successful second-generation children of immigrants in the education system are making an entry into a variety of professions available to a wider ethnic range than hitherto. There has also been considerable immigrant success in private business enterprise, especially in such individual entrepreneurial areas as property development and catering.

Conclusion

One could go on multiplying examples of the positive and negative features that demonstrate the viability or otherwise of the Australian multicultural experiment. Furthermore, a full scale discussion of the particular agencies and policies deployed for the promotion of multiculturalism in Australia is also outside the scope of this book. What has been said here so far should suffice to make the crucial point that social scientific academic research and policy-making/implementation go hand in hand. If there is a conclusion to our discussion it must be that it is precisely in those fora where economy, polity and society are talked about conjointly that immigration, settlement and adaptation to an Australian milieu can be satisfactorily visualized. Contextualization is of

the economic essence in these matters. Empirical evidence suggests that the economic fulcrum of much of the Asian immigration to Australia is of utmost significance. The selection process for Asian immigrants to Australia may appear tough and stringent but, as the case of Indian immigration amply demonstrates, these processes have contributed to the overall social cohesion and ease of adaptation found among Indian Australians and most other Asians. Some critics of Australian multiculturalism, such as Geoffrey Blainey (1994), have argued that multicultural nations "often fall apart" and the same risk faces Australia. But given that most nation-states in the world are "multicultural" this is not saying much. It would be more reasonable to adopt the position long held not only by analysts of social development but even by literary authors like Chinua Achebe (1994) that "poor nations fall apart". Even anti-Asian prejudice, as seen in a section of the Australian farming community, is directly related to the ecological problems of land degradation and rural decline. There does seem to be an inverse correlation between healthy inter-ethnic relations and impending threats of economic decline. A comparison of inter-ethnic relations between oil- and tourism-rich Trinidad and Tobago *vs* mono-crop Guyana tends to support such a generalization. And let us also remember that like Australia, the developmental ecology of Guyana depended on small prosperous coastlands and a large barren hinterland. The eco-demographic parameters of contemporary Australian development and the urgent steps being taken to monitor and control the declining ecology are firm indicators of the problems and prospects for sustainable development. These plans and priorities impinge crucially on problems of population, immigration and multiculturalism.

Chapter Six

Home and Abroad in the New Millennium

In geographical terms, the overall design for the Indian diaspora in relation to India, the homeland, seems to have been delineated most accurately by C. Voigt-Graf (2004). Her systematic patterning supercedes the design offered by Shinder S. Thandi (2006) of multilayered and multi-directional ties and their classification, as also the distinction posed by S. J. Tambiah (2000) between two sets of networks. According to Tambiah,

> vertical networks are formed within "host" societies when "communities" are constituted either voluntarily or forcefully in order to devise conscious strategies to fight discrimination as well as to succeed economically. The second set of networks, i.e., "lateral" may be subdivided further (a) between host society and society of origin/homeland, and (b) trans-national global networks where diasporas across the world communicate with each other and maintain transnational links especially through media and travel. (*Ibid*.: 170)

Let us note that the above characterizations have been offered by scholars located in the diaspora and therefore represent their reflexivity. If, on the other hand, the analyst's reflexivity is anchored in the Indic society and culture, then even the "transnationality" of diasporic ties and networks cannot be divorced from his/her location that may be simultaneously national, cultural and ethnic. For the typification of the "national" examples there are the Nehruvian and Gandhian perspectives on the diaspora, the former being strictly "nation" oriented while the latter is more civilizational and merges with the cultural (see Khilnani 1997: 167). In this framework, unlike Oswald Spengler's deracination of the Western civilization, culture may be seen as the motor of civilization.[1]

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[1] The notion of civilization — the term and its definition — has been used in a variety of ways, including the very opposite of the sense in which I have used it, as a creative process fuelled by culture. For these variations see Braudel (1980: 179ff); for the anti-thesis between culture and civilization, the former as creative and fertilizing and the latter as repetitious, empty mechanism, see Spengler (*ibid*.: 182).

In the Tagorean view of the ethnic and the cultural, civilization takes on a universal dimension, and thus goes beyond even the "Eastern" and "Western" dichotomy (Nandy 1994). That, incidentally, is also the converging point between the Poet and the Mahatma, whereas Nehru is still under the siege of conceiving culture in the Eurocentric frame of the nation-state and further, of implicitly or explicitly reading civilization in the narrative of "internationalism". In today's intellectual vocabulary this Eurocentric frame is most vividly stated in Samuel Huntington's thesis of the "clash of civilizations" (1996).

Besides the Eurocentric reflexivity of many academic analysts of the diaspora and the political and universalistic reflexivity of Indian public personalities cited above, there exists the reflexivity of those diaspora analysts who typify the postmodern, non-teleological, transitional, in-between and in-flux contradictions of the present and future conjunctures. Take, for instance, an offshoot of the World Systems approach, wherein the asymmetries between the centre and the periphery, the North and the South, have been taken into account centrally in our analysis. Let it also be noted, as stated by Partha Chatterjee (1997b), that in the analysis of global modernization one is constrained to make use of a "within the nation" rather than "beyond the nation" perspective since the politico-economic and sociocultural asymmetries are between nation-states, viz., India and Australia (R. K. Jain 2007a; Xiang 2001) or the US and India (Upadhya 2004). Interest-oriented networks of Indians in the IT sector are inter-class or "vertical" in the former instance and intra-class or "lateral" in the latter. Each instance has its own "ideology" and economy but both are encompassed by the class equation, viz., the ethnic transnational middle class (ETMC) in the former and an emerging transnational capitalist class (TCC) in the latter. Further, while all these networks cumulatively exist in a "third space" and hence are not confined to the homeland–host society configuration, they are instantiated in multi-sited locations. At a descriptive level, therefore, the trope of vertical and horizontal ties (as distinct from analytically salient, interest-oriented networks) sums up homeland–host society interactions (vertical ties) and interactions among the diaspora (horizontal ties). Beyond history, geography and government policy in relation to motherland or fatherland societies on the one side and host countries on the other, in comparative analytical terms the diaspora as a third space may also be constructed in terms of three parameters or contexts: the personal trajectory of the analyst, the national location or locations of the populations involved and the international setting which has affected the nature of diasporas

throughout contemporary history (cf. Helweg 1986; R. K. Jain 2003a; Wang 1999). This is close to the reflexivity view stated earlier.

"Fields" of Diaspora–Homeland Relations

It is difficult to spell out the diasporics' connections and/or impact on the homeland without specifying three things:

(*a*) their overall situation in the diaspora itself, viz., both in the 'host' country or countries that they are connected with apart from

(*b*) the homeland as they conceive it to be, primarily the sub-national locale to which they are linked, and finally,

(*c*) the pattern of circulation among the locations (*a*) and (*b*) that they are enmeshed with. This backdrop alone would enable the analyst to approach the diaspora holistically and not merely configure facets of the homeland and host nation-states in relation to diaspora (cf. for a critique along these lines, Axel 2001). If one were to delineate the sociocultural "fields" in which the dynamics of diaspora are being played out, as for example in relation to the homeland, the following may be listed:

(*i*) Transhumant (a term I have borrowed from Carol Upadhya): relatively short-term living in either the host or homeland locations but intense circulation, both locomotionary and virtual.

(*ii*) Business and philanthropy: closely related to religion.

(*iii*) Tourism and pilgrimage: again having a religious orientation.

(*iv*) Social networks: with a heavy bearing on family, kinship and marriage ties

(*v*) Diasporic imaginary: cuisine, fashion, films, literature and a pronounced middle-class lifestyle and consumption patterns.

Each of these overlapping fields can be described, and have been described, in the literature on the Indian diaspora with the help of qualitative, lifestyle-related and actual lived-in experiences of the diasporics. The descriptions thus attempted would be mainly microcosmic (based on families and communities, for example) though there are "meso-cosmic" arenas to supplement and frame these

experiences[2]. And this would involve looking at sites like call centers and all that is involved in outsourcing, as we shall presently see. A point to remember in this connection is the demonstration effect, reciprocally, of the lifestyle of the burgeoning middle class in India itself and what they perceive to be the average lifestyle of the bulk of the population in Western countries. While it is true that in terms of their proportion in the population, the middle class in India, which in matters relating to tastes, perceptions and even acquisitions has the Western developed societies as their reference model, is still pretty small, they are getting more and more culturally entrenched (television advertising and media-generated hype in general has given this process a tremendous boost). This entrenchment is manifest in owning cars, living in "flats condominia", shopping in malls, the uneasy hiring of servants — and all this being contrasted with not only the poor majority of the population but also with the rich, high-/ upper-class minority. The web of developed countries whose transplantation, in terms of perceptions and acquisitions, in urban (especially cosmopolitan) India is growing now includes not only the ex-colonial Western developed countries but besides Japan and Korea also other East Asian countries like the Peoples Republic of China and Singapore as well as Hong Kong. It is this commonality of a middle class lifestyle between the Indian urbanite and the developed countries' population in general — Indian NRIs and PIOs included — which leads to the popular consumption of such notional paradigms as "cutting across", "crossover" and "the world is flat", etc. and in behavioral terms, the "model minority" images not only of the second- and third-generation Indian but also Chinese and Korean immigrants in the US (cf. Park 2005).

In contrast to the microcosmic and meso-cosmic paradigms, race relations, multiculturalism, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism, etc., are the macro-level ideological and public policy paradigms. That I shall not be discussing at present. Nor will I discuss the citizenship legislation and other governmental measures to regulate the India–diaspora relations (cf. R. K. Jain 2007a).

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[2] To use the term "institution" may take away from their fluidity; indeed Appadurai's (1997) "flows" is a more appropriate trope.

Call Centers and Outsourcing: the Meso-cosmic Arena

The literature on Indian diaspora while prolific concerning the emigration of Indian population abroad says little about the relatively recent transplants in India from overseas, roughly since 1980s, viz., offshore outsourcing establishments in the form of call centers and the like in Indian metropolitan cities. In contrast to the microcosmic home-base of emigrants and the macrocosmic host destinations, I would designate these transplanted locations as the meso-cosmic arena of Indian diaspora. In what follows I borrow heavily from an article by Shashi Tharoor, entitled "The Coolies are Scheduling the Trains".[3] The article is about the success of India's business process outsourcing (BPO) industry — call centers and the like — "which have become the visible face of globalization in our formerly protectionist land". Some 700,000 Indians work in the BPO business, which contributes an estimated $ 17 billion to the burgeoning Indian economy. The call centre has become the symbol of India's newly globalized workforce; while traditional India sleeps, a dynamic young cohort of highly skilled and articulate professionals works through the night, functioning on US time under made-up American aliases, pretending familiarity with a culture and climate they may have never actually experienced, earning salaries that were undreamt of by their elders (but a fraction of what an American would make) and enjoying a lifestyle that is "a cocktail of premature affluence and ersatz westernization transplanted to an Indian setting". It has been a major breakthrough for India and Indians, one that Anglophone countries in Africa, like Ghana and Kenya, are striving to emulate. But many in India see call centers as soul-destroying sweatshops that are soaking up the talents and energies of young Indians who could and should be doing better for themselves and their country. Chetan Bhagat's bestseller *One Night @ the Call Centre* (2005) is representative of this critique. As one educated, non-IT Indian professional put it, "all we are doing is providing coolie labor — carrying the excess baggage of globalization that's too clunky for the West to bother to lift".

According to Tharoor this is a harsh judgment, one that is genuinely unfair to the talent, dedication and creativity of the young people who make the call centers work. He further points out that this judgment is out of date. As he puts it, "If what India is doing is providing coolie

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[3] *Sunday Times of India* (Nagpur edition), 15 April 2007.

labor, then today the coolies are scheduling the trains". According to him the business processes that are being outsourced are not just the airline reservations or customer billing or even minor technical trouble-shooting that earlier made up the call centers' work. Today Indians are reading MRIs for American hospitals, running consulting services for global US firms, handling actuarial works for British insurance companies, analyzing US and European company stocks for Western institutional investors, and writing software that will prevent Boeing and Airbus planes from colliding in mid-air. This is not just back-office work; it is the sort of fundamental responsibility that Western firms tradition-ally carried out in their national headquarters, on the assumption that that was the only way they could guarantee quality. Today, they see India as a country that can provide the same quality — and a lot cheaper.

The million dollar question, however, is that while doing outsourced work for the US and Europe is all very well, what more could we be doing for India and for Indians? How can we provide answers, using the same technology, for the problems of Indians and not just Americans and the British? Tharoor concludes with an over-optimistic scenario: "Perhaps the next level of outsourcing will come when smart scientists in Bangalore farm out processes to young engineers in Dharwar to cater to the needs of consumers in Hubli".

Other Structures of Interaction between the Diaspora and the Homeland

In describing the meso-cosmic arena of call centers and outsourcing issues, I have given the instance of US transplants in India and, impli-citly, of transplants in the opposite direction. However, the very fast and simultaneous compression of space and time (geography and tem-porality) is reciprocal; in an earlier publication (R. K. Jain 2002), I have called it "the cyber model" of interaction between the diasporas and the homeland. The manner in which huge Hindu temples (e.g., the Swaminarayan temples) are being financed and built in the UK and US and similar sprawling Hindu temples like the Aksharadham com-plex in Delhi shows the two-way transplants taking place between the diaspora and the homeland. Of course, less visually spectacular but finely imbricated in the lifestyles of populations at home and abroad are situations like those that I have metaphorically called a "caste war" among Indian Malaysians consequent upon occasional reversals in the caste order. As for example, the lowly Adi Dravida (untouchable caste)

are sometimes able to snatch leadership positions from the higher non-Brahmins in temple committees of immigrants urban Tamil communities (cf. R. K. Jain 2003b). Many of these processes have been captured by ethnographic studies and re-studies of the microcosm in Malaysia and India (cf. Ramachandran 1994; Nagarajan 2000; R. K. Jain 2010). Just as finance and management are the contemporary frames for Malaysian Tamil socio-religious mobility today, pilgrimage merges with tourism (as do the traditional menarche ceremonies for girls, known as *tiratti*, with parties celebrating their 21st birthday) in the Malaysian Tamil travels to south India. Fine-grained ethnographies of these transnational journeys reveal interesting facets of the relationship between religion and economy.

In an earlier section of this chapter I mentioned the convergence in aspirations, consumption cultures and lifestyles between the middle class in India and in technologically developed countries. A more recent example from the perspective of middle-class aspirations and consumption-moves from Western countries to India is the "new front in outsourcing" (MacErlean 2007) where old and ailing persons from the US and UK are actually finding a base in the country for medical and recuperative purposes, not only in the metropolitan centers but also in smaller towns and regions where excellent but cheap medical facilities and care-services are available. Sooner or later, says Neasa MacErlean, the health needs of an exponentially increasing old and disabled population will have to be met at a European or global level.[4] Undoubtedly, the large and increasing Indian diaspora in the Western countries is a tremendous catalyst in this process. At a more "fun level", the introduction of an Indian character (Rajan or Raju) in the international comic series, Archie, is another evidence of the working out of the "cyber model" in the transnational setting of contemporary India and its diaspora.

More structured examples of NRI philanthropy helping rural development come from the state of Punjab (Thandi 2005). It is difficult to identify the driving force behind these remittances, though civic duty, loyalty to village kith and kin, gratitude, etc., are often used by migrants themselves to justify such donations. Often there are deeper cultural factors that are involved. Among the Sikh religious community the philosophy of *rahit maryada* places important emphasis on philanthropy

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[4] As mentioned by MacErlean (2000), the world population of 80-plus-year-olds is set to soar from 90 million now to 400 million by 2050 according to the World Demographic Association.

and altruism. Certain cultural values emphasize egalitarianism, the importance of *daswandh* (donating 10 per cent of one's earned income) and *sewa* (selfless service) in seeking funds for gurudwaras and other religious institutions, in extending help towards the *parivar*, in village improvement and community facilities and in extending help towards other deprived and underprivileged communities. Table 6.1 identifies the main types of activities currently being undertaken by village associations, with their counterparts in the diaspora, in Punjab.

Table 6.1: Range of Activities of Punjabi Migrant Communities in their Home Village/Region

Category	Kind of activity
Charity	Gurudwara donations, clothes, computers
Infrastructure	Hospitals, nursing colleges, parks, sports complexes, street paving and lighting, mortuaries, sewerage and water treatment, vehicles
Human Development and Recreation	Scholarships, sports facilities and tournaments, libraries, IT equipment, health equipment
Investment	Income-generating programs for the community
Other	General fund-raising

Source: Thandi (2005: 8).

Shinder S. Thandi provides three informative case-studies of such diaspora-initiated development programs in the villages of districts Nawanshehr (since 1979), Kapurthala (since 1922) and Hoshiarpur (since 1999) in Punjab. Incidentally, in all three cases, donations and leadership was provided by the Punjabi diaspora in Canada.

I have not yet had the benefit of reading Peggy Levitt's (2001) study of the relationship between the US-based Gujarati diaspora with villages in Gujarat, but developments similar to those in Punjab appear to have taken place in Gujarat as well. NRI doctors in Hyderabad, similarly, have an impressive reputation of providing the latest health services and hospital facilities.[5] The Kerala scenario seems to be very mixed. While remittances from migrants to West Asia and the Middle East do seem to have materially benefited individual families, the social costs borne by the community as a result of a principally male migration, that too

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[5] Aparna Rayaprol, Reader in the Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad (personal communication).

for a few years at a time, and the lack of concerted investment of this money in productive technological activities in the state and elsewhere are striking.

Some Exemplary Anecdotal Records

Finally I would like to mention a few instances where the credibility/ credulity gap between Indian Indians and diasporic Indians is wide; I record these instances specifically to highlight, if only in an anecdotal manner, the qualitative ethnographic insights that may not be easily available to the non-Indian researches of the diaspora.

Taking the case of Gujarat first, there is evidence (see Patel and Rutten 1999), that while villagers welcome fellow Gujarati visitors from abroad, there is also considerable criticism once they leave of their high and mighty attitudes and condescending behavior. They are seen to be flaunting their wealth and refined manners, in opposition to the folksy and "inferior" ways of the villagers. An interesting area for further study in the villages of Gujarat would be the extent to which these new-found distinctions affect the traditionally hypergamous structure of marriages between the local and immigrant Gujarati families.

Evidence from South Africa suggests further that there exists a wide status gulf between those who call themselves FBIs (full-blooded Indians) who have been settled in Durban and other South African cities for several generations and recent migrants from India and Pakistan (known collectively and pejoratively as "India papas"). There is both a class and a race dimension to this discrimination. While the former (the FBIs) are wealthier than the latter, the discrimination takes on racial overtones in that the FBIs are almost amnesic of any political solidarity that had existed between their parents' generation and the Black-dominated African National Congress and that led to the dismantling of the hated apartheid regime in South Africa. Moreover, contrary to a widespread popular belief that the Hindus of South Africa are powerfully drawn towards the *hindutva* ideologies espoused by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) of India, Thomas Blom Hansen (2002) has pointed out that there is complete cold-shouldering of these movements and a commensurate reaffirmation of their roots in citizenship and political affiliation as South Africans. This attitude also seems to be related to the Indians' encounter and (perhaps unconscious) acceptance of White racism in South Africa. The situation seems similar to that among the East Indians in Trinidad where, I have

argued (R. K. Jain 1989), the transformation of caste endogamy into racial endogamy seems to be a result of the impact of the racial ideology in the Caribbean milieu.

I give two examples from Trinidad where for the East Indians, or PIOs as they are known in India, the "myth" of India remains stronger, even in contemporary times, than the reality. A middle-aged couple of Indian origin, both of whom were my students at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus, Trinidad, returned from a trip to north India. I asked them where they had stayed in Delhi and pat came the reply: "In Emperor Ashoka's palace". What they were actually referring to was the Ashoka Hotel in New Delhi, named after the ancient Indian emperor!

I have also been told about the incredulous reaction of Indo-Caribbean students from Trinidad who had been given scholarships to study Sanskrit in Varanasi, in north India. They had felt quite cheated and frustrated to have been taken to their teacher's house through the narrow winding lanes of Varanasi city, for what they had expected all along was to be taken into a hermitage deep in the woods to study at the feet of a bearded old teacher!

A close friend of mine, an Indian South African, a professor of anthropology in a university in South Africa, has ancillary family business as a butcher. This friend of mine uses the surname 'Singh' and proudly proclaims himself to be a Rajput of the Kshatriya or warrior caste-category. It was ironical that he justified his family business in traditional caste terms claiming that, as Kshatriyas, their occupation was, of course, "to kill". Little did he realize that the rank of a Kshatriya, that of a ruler who has the right to kill in a battle for *dharma* (moral righteousness) is second highest in the caste hierarchy, while that of a butcher who makes a living by killing animals and selling meat is the among the lowest!

Let me reiterate that if the examples cited above appear trivial and inconsequential, I should cite the example of a scholarly article in the journal *Diaspora* (Lamb 2002: 299–330), which begins with the observation of an old Indian father visiting his son and daughter-in-law in Silicon Valley, California, US. The old gentleman, used to get up early in the morning, remarked that he could make for himself as many cups of morning tea as he liked. In fact, the uncomfortable truth was that there was nobody here, unlike in his house in the small south Indian town, to make and serve the morning cup of tea to him! This is qualitative data in global anthropology for you!

Conclusion

In this narrative so far I have synthesized ethnographic examples of the India–diaspora relations with conceptual anchor-points in social science approaches to the subject at hand. Let me, in conclusion, sum up the principal conceptual advances in social science research on the Indian diaspora. First, the universe of discourse is marked by a continuum among three frames of reference, namely, the national, transnational and civilizational. This tripartite schema is congruent with the spurt in globalization being witnessed in our day and age. Second, in an analysis of the diaspora, which increasingly is a prominent global movement of our times, we take into account the reflexivity of the stakeholders in the process, namely, the public personalities and opinion-leaders, the common people who constitute the bulk of participants in the process, and the analysts who stand at the crossroads of vertical and horizontal ties that crisscross the global phenomenon of diaspora. A methodological bonus, so to speak, is that simple everyday experiences also become a part of our narrative of the microcosm. The accent on reflexivity as well as on the everyday (and the commonplace) is an important indicator of current trends in social scientific analysis. Third, these research emphases bear the hallmarks of the twin strategic moves of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in social science, namely, an empirical rather than *empiricist* methodology (Herzfeld 2001a: 21, 46, 62) and an encapsulation of micro, meso and macro dimensions of our universe of discourse. With regard to the ethnography of diaspora as a case in point, there is a further, analytically heuristic distinction between the diasporic imaginary on the one hand, and the diasporic networks on the other. In as much as the diasporic imaginary continually harks back to the search for a homeland and the diasporic networks to the existential context of activities and transactions, we are able to trace the interaction between deterritorialisation and multiple-territorialisation in the construction of the diasporic 'third space'. Allow me to place through this conclusion the resolution of a dichotomy that I had myself posed in an earlier publication. Regarding the perspective of diaspora-based Indian academics, I had written:

> We do not here wish to contest the subjective preferences of the (diasporic) author/authors concerned, but let us say that depending on the vantage point of the 'intellectual' concerned, if the U.S.A. or Australia-based (our Pole A), the glass looks half-empty, and if India or counter-diaspora based

(our Pole B), the glass looks half-full. For instance, from the vantage point of an Indian academic, an equally plausible case can be made for multiple-territorialisation rather than deterritorialisation. (R. K. Jain 1998b: 350)

Implicit in this contrast is the Indian proclivity to focus on networks and the diasporic Indians' enchantment with the imaginary. This, then, is my take on the India–diaspora relations in the debate on the indigenization of social science.

Chapter Seven

The Indian Diaspora and its Governance

What are the salient characteristics of globalization as it affects social processes in the present conjuncture of political economy in multicultural societies? I shall focus on India as the major example of such societies but extend my analysis with reference to what I have elsewhere called "settlement societies" as contrasted with "non-modern" civilizations like India (R. K. Jain 1998b). Settlement societies evolving into modern, technologically advanced civilizations are the prime recipients of "new" diasporas[1] from South Asia, and my purpose in what follows is to examine the interface (linkages and roles) between the Indian diaspora and the governance problematic related to the overall development — economic, political and sociocultural — of the Indian nation.[2]

Labour Flows in the New Indian Diaspora

We are fortunate to possess an ethnographic account of the Indian diaspora constituted by IT specialists in Australia (see R. K. Jain 2009b: 169–74; Xiang 2007), since that was a desideratum (along with the

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[1] The distinction between old and new diasporics may be made in terms of the nineteenth-century predominantly labor migration from India in the former and the twentieth-century migration of educated and largely professional migrants in the latter, although there are occupational overlaps in both the cases. Indian migration to the Middle East constitutes a sub-category by itself of twentieth-century diaspora.

[2] Some observers of globalization and diaspora have spoken of "post-nation" as the category most relevant in the study of 'flows' in the present conjuncture (Appadurai 1997). However, I am in complete agreement with Partha Chatterjee (1997b: 30–34) that in the debate between 'beyond the nation' or within India, one veers towards a nationalist rather than "beyond the nation" point of view for Indian socio-economic development.

continuing lack of information on Western Europe) in the study of the new Indian diaspora. For the US, UK and Canada we have the demographic and economic profiling done by Deepak Nayyar (1994), whose work also goes into the labor flows and remittances from the modern Indian diaspora in the Middle East.

Let me first summarize his findings about the dimensions and the composition of emigration to industrialized countries. Nayyar points out that there are three basic characteristics of emigration from India to the industrialized world in the period since Independence. First, such labor outflows are made up almost entirely of permanent migrants in so far as the population of emigrants who return to India after a finite period is almost negligible.[3] Second, a good proportion of these migrants are persons with professional expertise, technical qualifications and/or other skills perceived to be scarce and needed in labor-importing countries, and they would be at the upper end of the spectrum of incomes in India even before migration. Third, for an overwhelming proportion of these migrants, the destinations are the US, UK and Canada, possibly because of common ties with the English language.

Nayyar himself admits that the data on the basis of which these generalizations are made is rather slender and that, surprisingly, no governmental records are available within India to augment this lack of data. We may add to this the fact that this profiling is a little out of date. In recent decades, emigration from India — especially from the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu — to industrially advanced countries has multiplied many times over. Nayyar's discussion is based on immigration statistics of the countries of destination. The difference in his estimate of aggregate immigration from India to industrialized countries (the US, UK and Canada) from 1951 to 1990 and in the Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora (GoI 2001), although not strictly comparable, may be seen from Table 7.1. It also gives a rough idea of the tremendous increase in the overall numbers. This is attributable mainly to phenomenal increase in migration in the decade of the 1990s.

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[3] From the 1990s this situation changed drastically. There is an increasing tendency towards a larger number of persons who migrate to the industrialized countries, especially IT professionals, returning after a finite period. This could be attributed mainly to the high turnover rates prevalent in the IT industry and the altered demographics in the industrialised countries (an ageing host population).

Table 7.1: Immigration from India in Industrialized Countries

Immigration to	1951–90	2001
US	467,255	1,678,765
Canada	180,731	851,000
UK	260,120	2,200,000

Source: Figures for 1951–90 from Nayyar (1994) and for 2001 from GoI (2001).

Note: The sources of the figures presented in the Report of High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora have not been made public. Also, the figures of the Report do not distinguish between immigrants and natural population growth. Further, they would also include Indian migrants of the colonial era (and other such twice-thrice migrants, viz., Indo-Fijians) who moved from countries such as Uganda and Kenya to the UK and other industrialized countries.

Immigration statistics in the selected industrialized countries provide information on the skills composition of migrants going from India to North America but not to the UK. The available evidence on immigration from India to the US (1971–2001) and Canada (1971–1990), by major occupation group is set out in Tables 7.2a and 7.2b. The tables show certain unmistakable trends. First, among diasporics in the affluent countries of North America migration has increasingly shown a trend for the proportion of non-working dependants to exceed that of workers. The figures for non-workers also include persons whose occupation is not recorded; an omission that is significant. As recorded in a recent study of the Asian Indian community in New York city (Khandelwal 2002), the occupational distribution in the borough of Queens is as follows: construction 1,042; manufacturing 3,342; retail 8,845; professional 1,553; health services 1,082 and *others* 12,605 (italics mine). As it is, the very small percentage of professional and health services employees shows the poorer status of the bulk of Indian residents in Queens; what is even more indicative of the poor status of Indian employees is the huge figure of 12,605 (44.3 per cent of all employees) in the category "other". This evidence supports the macro-figures provided by Nayyar: there has been a progressive increase not only in the proportion of non-working immigrants (dependents) but also in the progressive employment of working diasporas in poorer occupations. It leads one to suspect a bracketing of the latter with persons whose occupations are not recorded. Further, rather inexplicably, in the occupational profile of Indian immigrants entering the US in 1991–93 (Table 7.2a) there is a large quantum of those whose occupation is given as "farming, forestry and fishing" (15.8 per cent of all immigrants).

Table 7.2a: Immigration from India to North America (US) by Major Occupation Group, 1971–2001

Occupation group	1971–75	1976–79	1982–85	1986–90	1991–93	1994–96
	Number of persons (percentage)					
Professional and technical	31,623 (43.4)	20,586 (26.9)	15,461 (15.7)	19,160 (13.5)	20,395 (16.7)	19,603 (17.1)
Executive, administrative and managerial	1,503 (2.1)	3,574 (4.7)	5,059 (5.2)	8,292 (5.8)	6,174 (5.1)	6,246 (5.5)
Clerical and administrative support	1,620 (2.2)	2,491 (3.3)	2,326 (2.4)	3,982 (2.8)	2,719 (2.0)	2,390 (2.1)
Sales	375 (0.5)	704 (0.9)	1,317 (1.3)	1,989 (1.4)	975 (0.8)	1,489 (1.3)
Service	800 (1.1)	788 (1.0)	2,115 (2.2)	6,453 (4.5)	2,965 (2.4)	3,487 (3.0)
Farming, forestry and fishing	214 (0.3)	1,311 (1.7)	2,675 (2.7)	4,646 (3.3)	18,875 (15.8)	3,567 (3.1)
Skilled workers	1,637 (2.2)	2,512 (3.3)	2,823 (2.9)	3,583 (2.5)	1,263 (1.0)	1,613 (1.4)
Total above with occupation	37,772 (51.8)	31,966 (41.8)	31,776 (32.4)	48,105 (33.8)	53,366 (44.0)	38,395 (33.5)
No occupation or occupations not reported	35,140 (48.2)	44,595 (58.2)	66,403 (67.6)	94,035 (66.2)	68,574 (56.0)	76,133 (66.5)
Total immigration	**72,912 (100.0)**	**76,561 (100.0)**	**98,179 (100.0)**	**142,140 (100.0)**	**121,940 (100.0)**	**114,528 (100.0)**

Occupational profile	1997	1998	1999	Total (1997–99)	Percentage
Professional and technical	6,776	5,979	3,492	16,247	15.50
Executive, administrative and managerial	2,065	1,398	1,112	4,575	4.37
Clerical	819	520	576	1,915	1.83
Sales	703	544	648	1,895	1.81
Service	1,224	573	559	2,356	2.25
Farming, etc.	1,558	1,447	1,328	4,333	4.13
Skilled workers	694	434	301	1,429	1.36
Total with occupation	13,859	10,895	8,016	32,770	31.27
Occupation not specified	24,212	25,587	22,221	72,020	68.73
Total immigrants	**38,071**	**36,482**	**30,237**	**104,790**	**100.00**

Occupational profile	2000	2001	Total (2000–01)	Percentage
Professional and technical	8,632	19,935	28,567	25.43
Executive, administrative and managerial	1,644	3,062	4,706	4.19
Clerical	573	643	1,216	1.08
Sales	689	842	1,531	1.36
Service	798	1,041	1,839	1.64
Farming, etc.	1,080	1,161	2,241	1.99
Skilled workers	308	389	697	0.62
Total with occupation	13,724	27,073	40,797	36.32
Occupation not specified	28,322	43,217	71,539	63.68
Total immigrants	**42,046**	**70,290**	**112,336**	**100.00**

Source: *Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service,* US Department of Homeland Security, respective annual issues.

Note: Data are not available for fiscal years 1980 and 1981.

Table 7.2b: Immigration from India to North America (Canada) by Major Occupation Group, 1971–90

Occupation group	1971–75	1976–80	1981–85	1986–90
	Number of persons (percentage)			
Professional and technical	4,721	1,070	914	974
	(11.1)	(3.5)	(2.8)	(2.1)
Entrepreneurs, managers and administrators	567	210	221	687
	(1.3)	(0.7)	(0.7)	(1.5)
Clerical and sales	2,337	800	484	774
	(5.5)	(2.6)	(1.5)	(1.7)
Services	549	179	236	432
	(1.3)	(0.6)	(0.7)	(0.9)
Farming, horticulture and animal husbandry	2,063	454	1,225	2,208
	(4.8)	(1.5)	(3.7)	(4.7)
Skilled workers	5,956	955	790	1,899
	(14.0)	(3.2)	(2.4)	(4.1)
Occupational not classified	1,814	3,694	6,139	9,430
	(4.2)	(12.2)	(18..8)	(20.2)
Total workers	18,007	7,362	10,009	16,404
	(42.3)	(24.3)	(30.6)	(35.2)
Total non-workers not reported	24,625	22,909	22,648	30,243
	(57.8)	(75.7)	(69.4)	(64.8)
Total immigration	**42,632**	**30,271**	**32,657**	**46,647**
	(100.0)	**(100.0)**	**(100.0)**	**(100.0)**

Source: Canadian Employment and Immigration Centre, Ottawa (cited in Nayyar 1994: 20).

Even subsequently, a certain proportion of immigrants in this category is indicated, viz., 4.13 per cent in 1997–99 and 1.99 per cent in 2000–01. Who are these people? And, finally, while the proportion of immigrants in the category "professional and technical" registers an overall progressive increase, even in very recent years the proportion of those with "occupation not specified" registers high percentages of 68.73 and 63.68 in the years 1997–99 and 2000–01 respectively. Since this category includes persons with "no occupation or occupation not reported" could it not cover a large number of persons in poorer occupations?

In a publication subsequent to the one used above, Nayyar (2002) has discussed the causes and consequences of the recent rise in demand of immigrant skilled labor from India. However, one should note three contrary trends in the twenty-first century that militate against permanent migration. First, the advent of outsourcing, the process of turning over part or all of an organization's service functions to external service providers. While it is technological progress that has replaced unskilled migration to skilled migration, it is the same imperative but it is the work rather than the persons that migrates. Secondly, there is an increasing trend of return migration. A few studies make the point that cultural factors and rising incomes for skilled professionals in developing countries like India are encouraging return migration. Places like Bangalore and Hyderabad are becoming hubs of returned *desis*. Third, the World Trade Organization (WTO) plays a crucial role in today's globalized world with provisions that do not allow permanent migration. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which is an integral part of WTO, propounds temporary migration of people (through Mode 4 of the GATS Document). It basically facilitates intra-company transferees.

These trends provide a corrective to the rather rose-tinted and celebratory depiction of the affluent status of the Asian Indian community in North America. As we shall see later, a realistic picture of the present status and future life-chances of Indian diasporics in these countries furnishes the background to the kind of expectations they have from their country of origin, more particularly from the Government of India.

No information is available on the occupational distribution or skills composition of emigration from India to the UK. It is plausible to argue, though impossible to prove, that until the early 1960s a large proportion of emigration from India to the UK was made up of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers. This was attributable in part to the post-War labor shortage and in part to the absence of immigration controls

on Commonwealth citizens. Post-colonial ties and the associated bonds with the English language perhaps reinforced the patterns of immigration, as also the underlying factors. It is possible that the same pattern continued for some time in the 1960s, although the mix may have changed somewhat to encompass persons with professional experience or technical qualifications. However, as immigration laws became progressively more restrictive, it is almost certain that during the 1970s and 1980s the occupational distribution of immigrants from India was determined by those skills or expertise that were perceived to be scarce in the UK. Thus, it is reasonable to infer that after 1970 the skills composition of emigration from India to the UK was similar to the skills composition of emigration from India to North America, even if the occupational distribution was dissimilar in so far as the agricultural sector in the UK was probably not a destination for emigrants.

It is ironical indeed that the Indian labor migration to the Middle East can be characterized in terms that are almost the reverse of those for North America and UK, whereas the expectations that this diaspora has from the Government of India are even more importunate and vociferos. First, the Indian diasporics to the Middle East are sojourners rather than permanent settlers. It follows that the number of dependents of these immigrants in the host countries is almost negligible. Second, it is unskilled and skilled workers who constitute the bulk of these migrants while the number of white-collar workers and high-skill workers is very small (Table 7.3). Although our figures are a little out-of-date it would seem that the above characteristics of Indian migrants to the Middle East have endured.[4] It is also on record that the diasporic's adaptation in these countries is marked by relatively restrictive, stringent and even hostile policies on the part of host governments. The representations made by these migrants to the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora and their statements at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas congregations in 2003 and 2004 bear this out. I now turn to that evidence.

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[4] The 1990s witnessed a structural shift in the market for expatriate labor in a majority of the Middle East economies. There was a marked change in demand for skills, away from construction towards operations and maintenance, transport and communications, and services. A recent field survey conducted among Indian migrants in UAE shows that more than 40 per cent of the people migrating to the Middle East are those in skilled/professional categories (Zachariah et al. 2004).

Table 7.3: Skills Composition of Labor Outflows from India to the Middle East, 1984–86

Skills composition	1984		1985		1986	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1. Unskilled workers	88,575	43.0	55,710	34.2	45,577	40.1
a. Construction labor	85,797	41.7	51,330	31.5	39,314	34.6
b. Farm labor and household workers	2,778	1.3	4,380	2.7	6,263	5.5
2. Skilled workers	86,014	41.8	86,037	52.8	53,432	47.0
a. Construction sector	45,882	22.3	46,318	28.4	24,485	21.5
b. Other activities and services	40,132	19.5	39,719	24.4	28,947	25.5
3. White-collar workers	7,477	3.6	5,753	3.5	7,351	6.5
4. High-skill workers	6,495	3.2	7,378	4.5	5,958	5.2
a. Paramedical staff	2,630	1.3	1,205	0.7	1,175	1.0
b. Technical and supervisory personnel	3,865	1.9	6,173	3.8	4,783	4.2
5. Others	17,361	8.4	8,157	5.0	1,331	1.2
Total	**205,922**	**100.0**	**163,035**	**100.0**	**113,649**	**100.0**

Source: Ministry of Labour, Government of India, New Delhi.

Expectations

Based on the criterion of economic affluence and political leverage vis-à-vis the governments in country of origin as well as host countries, Indian diasporics — both new and old — can be placed in a rough socio-economic hierarchy. Whenever Indian diasporic commonality is at issue, a gradation appears along the history of colonialism and capitalism within which the different countries of immigration are located; the hierarchy from top to bottom runs somewhat like this: US and Canada, Australia, UK, other European countries, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Mauritius, Malaysia, and Nepal. At least this was my firm impression while listening to the deliberations under the aegis of umbrella organizations like the Global Organization of the People of Indian Origin (GOPIO)[5] about common diasporic Indian matters, such as the issue and pricing of PIO cards by the Indian government. This is further confirmed by an analysis of the Proceedings of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) for 2003 and 2004. It is no coincidence that the countries to which overseas citizenship has been granted by the Government of India happen to be at the top of this hierarchy. (The statutory position of these countries having dual citizenship provision was, of course, the deciding factor.) These 16 countries, in the alphabetical order, include: (1) Australia (2) Canada (3) Finland (4) France (5) Greece (6) Ireland (7) Israel (8) Italy (9) the Netherlands (10) New Zealand (11) Portugal (12) Republic of Cyprus (13) Sweden (14) Switzerland (15) UK (16) US.

I report a sampling of the views expressed by the diasporics according to this hierarchy. I first outline some of the views presented by representatives from the UK, USA, Canada and other European countries.

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[5] The First Global Convention of People of Indian Origin was held in New York from 27 August to 3 September 1989 at the Sheraton Centre. Among the American dignitaries present at the Convention was the 2004 Democrat contender for the White House, Senator John Kerry. The National Federation of Indian American Associations sponsored the Convention. Since its inception GOPIO has grown steadily into a global organization with a permanent International Secretariat in Mauritius and many active chapters across the world. The last GOPIO International Convention was held in Mauritius in 2003, and the next, Eighth International Convention will be held in Singapore. Progressively, in the 14 years of its existence, GOPIO has come to be an organization exclusively of the PIOs, to the exclusion of NRIs.

According to Bhikhu Parekh from the UK:

> Not cultural nationalism, but cultural universalism is really at the heart of our identity and I think what the diaspora does is constantly to remind India that a part of it lies outside. India will be untrue to its history, untrue to its destiny if it ever forgot that it was an inherently open and outgoing society….It is very important that India should have a systematic policy on the diaspora. The Government of India alone cannot design this policy because policy relates to us in the diaspora. And therefore, there must be a systematic dialogue…we bring with us certain sensibilities. And if India is going to reassess its place in the world at large, it would need to know what the world at large thinks about itself, as well as about India. And we, whether we are in the United Kingdom or United States or wherever, can bring regularly to the Government of India our insight into how the world is changing and how India needs to change with it. We can be a remarkable pool of ideas, attitudes, information, knowledge and sensibilities. And the kind of forum that I am proposing would be a useful institutional space where this kind of dialogue can take place…. I have seen in our deliberations today the second and third generations have been almost entirely ignored….The suggestion of 9th January cannot be entirely innocent. Is it your suggestion that we in the diaspora should emulate the example of the greatest Indian of our generation, Mahatma Gandhi, and return to India for good? If that is your intention, then I don't think it will be in the interest of either of us. (GoI 2003: 30–32)

The same message of the openness of India — not only as learnt from the earlier democratic transformation of Britain — but that was and has been part of Indian tradition since ancient times was the main theme of the speech by the distinguished NRI, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen (GoI 2003: 42–45). Academics from the US have been more down-to-earth and outspoken. According to Devesh Kapoor of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University, five principles ought to be maintained in diaspora related policies.

(i) The overall policies regime should not create an incentive structure whereby it is easier to gain recognition in India by leaving India than by staying here.

(ii) On economic issues the diaspora should be treated at par with foreigners and only marginally different from residents. Else, it will simply create opportunities for arbitrage that will benefit the diaspora much more than it will benefit India.

(*iii*) In sharper contrast, in matters involving social, cultural and civil rights, the diaspora should be treated on par with residents here. This is specially the case in the right to work. The first barrier comes from professional associations here. The second is a problem with the shortsighted policies of the public sector. The third concerns higher education, which Indian liberalization has bypassed. The diaspora can contribute the most by setting up institutions of higher education which are an asset not only to residents here, but also provide a mechanism for second generation Indians to come and spend a semester or a year, and that too very cheaply.

(*iv*) On political rights, unless there is a tax obligation, dual citizenship should not carry with it the right to vote.

(*v*) Finally, India's diaspora is usually a minority in the country of settlements. Both the Indian state and the diaspora must realize that claims of perfection of the diaspora in the countries of settlement are weakened if minorities here are not protected. One might also add that this has been the burden of "deterritorialized Indianness" in the reflections of many of the representatives of the diaspora.

Coming to the mid-point in the diasporic hierarchy, Mewa Ramgobin, Member of Parliament in South Africa, noted that:

> this conference has an obligation to engage its diaspora to find out whether we as a group, so-called, are indeed making South Africa livable for all who live in it. Are we helping to push back the frontiers of poverty, disease and homelessness? Are we an integral part of the African Renaissance? Whether special dispensations by India to the people of Indian origin in South Africa lead to political integration with cultural diversity? (GoI 2003: 35)

This attitude shows what I have earlier called "multiple territorialization" (R. K. Jain 1998b) or better still, "re-territorialization" of the Indian diaspora. In a similar vein, Dato Seri S. Samy Vellu, Minister of Works, Goverment of Malaysia spoke as a Malaysian with a stake in India, again not a deterritorialized but a multiple-and-reterritorialized agent:

> There is a large pool of talent to share with the world. Fostering partnership between India and the Indian diaspora is a two-way process. The key dimension is how can there be a win-win situation from multiple

players….Malaysians had been successful in investing and partici-
pating in infrastructure projects in India. We could further facilitate
these through collaboration partnerships, which will be beneficial for
both India and Malaysia. (GoI 2003: 33)

As we come down the hierarchical ladder, there are speeches from
Mauritius, Fiji and Dubai. Dhundev Bauhadoor, Chairman of GOPIO
International, Mauritius had the following to say:

> We feel that the emphasis in this conference is more on NRIs than PIOs.
> NRIs are Indians, but residing in the UK, USA, and all these countries.
> PIOs are not Indians, but the people of Indian origin living in the South
> of the world. We have been observing the change in the attitude of the
> Indian government and the Indian officials. The emphasis is towards
> those who hold Dollars, Pounds, Rials and all these things. Those people
> who hold a Rupee are not considered to be real Indians. They have nothing
> to do with the people in Fiji. When Mahendra Chaudhary was held host-
> age for 20 days, India refused to comment. She opened her mouth only
> when a small country like Mauritius intervened with the United Nations.
> This cannot continue. If India is to play her role as a mother, she must
> protect her children wherever they are. (GoI 2003: 55)

Bauhadoor went on to criticize the Government of India for an exorbitant
fee of US$1000 for those seeking PIO status, for its eligibility being
extended only upto the fifth generation, and the harassment suffered
by PIOs at airports, shops and in holy places.

Given the troubled background of Indo-Fijian community, former
Prime Minister of Fiji Mahendra Chaudhry made a special appeal to the
Government of India to help this impoverishedand embattled com-
munity. He too, like the representative from Mauritius, made a dis-
tinction between the immigrants who went to affluent Western societies,
"who left India as emigrants to seek greener pastures" and "others who
were taken often by force as indentured labour to the British colonies".
He went on to say:

> Given those two very different scenarios, focusing too much on how
> India and those in the affluent sectors of the diaspora can benefit from
> forging relationships with each other with little concerns for the needs
> of those members of the diaspora who are suffering and whose rights are
> under assault. That will indeed be a pity. (GoI 2003: 38)

He concluded by saying that India cannot abandon PIOs to their
own fate.

Similarly disgruntled was the representative from Dubai, Bharat Kumar J. Shah, Chairman of Al Mustaneer Trading Co., who spoke mainly in Hindi. He said:

> Our resident brothers think we are the pampered children. Unfortunately, because of our bureaucratic hurdles these concessions, these facilities do not reach the medium and low-level bureaucracy. If it reaches, they do not read it. If they read, they don't understand it. If they understand, they don't digest it. If they digest, they don't implement it. (GoI 2003: 54)

Amelioration

Responding to the problems and issues raised by the diaspora representatives at the first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, as well as to the problems presented before the High Level Committee, the Government of India announced several measures for the amelioration of the *pravasis* (expatriate). These constituted the main burden of then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's inaugural address at the second Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, 9–11 January 2004. We may note the salient provisions announced by him. First, Indian corporates were freely permitted to make overseas investments upto 100 per cent of their net worth, whether through an overseas joint venture or a wholly owned subsidiary. The hitherto existing restrictions, including a ceiling of US$ 200 million, were being lifted. Second, Indian corporates were not only permitted but also encouraged to go global in the agricultural sector. This, said the prime minister, will enable Indian corporates to take advantage of global opportunities and also to acquire technological and other skills for adoption in India. Third, the enhancement of Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2003 was announced, which provides overseas Indians in 16 countries (mentioned above) the possibility of applying for dual citizenship. The prime minister clarified that these 16 countries were chosen because their legal systems were compatible with the concept of dual citizenship and there was strong representation of people of Indian origin in these nations. Fourth, as a sop for those Indian workers who travel to distant shores in search of higher remuneration, namely, migrants to the Gulf and Southeast Asia a compulsory insurance scheme called Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana was introduced since December 2003. Fifth, a provision was being made for the same category of diasporics as above (migrants to the Gulf region and Southeast Asia) who have had to leave their children behind in India, allowing the facility of one-third reservation in the 15 supernumerary seats across different disciplines in educational institutions. Further, the

children of NRIs in the Gulf would not be required to pay NRI fees. They would be treated at par with resident citizens. Sixth, the government decided to set up a Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi for which a suitable plot of land has been provided along with a seed grant of Rs 25 crore. The responsibility of running it will be entrusted to an autonomous body, which shall also raise additional resources from members of the diaspora. The Kendra will be a permanent center to deal with the multifarious needs of the diasporic community. Finally, expressing his faith in the abilities of the young people of Indian origin all over the world, the prime minister announced a scheme whereby each year a group of 50 second- or third-generation Indian youth from different countries will be invited to visit India for two weeks.[6]

Following the Indian General Elections in May 2004, the new UPA government took over and almost immediately announced the formation of a new Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with Jagdish Tytler as Minister-in-Charge. The formation of this ministry has followed the celebrations of the Second Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi from 9 to 11 January 2004. The Proceedings of this celebration, sponsored jointly by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), are not as voluminous as the first PBD, but they contain speeches by the ministers of the last NDA government which are no less celebratory and self-congratulatory as the previous ones. Yashwant Sinha, then Minister of External Affairs, spoke in a characteristically buoyant tone, hailing "the feel good factor" and "Brand India". The rhetoric of his statement deserves to be quoted in his own words:

> It is true that we have a long way to go. Benefits of economic growth have to percolate down to the lowest rungs of our society. The "feel good" factor has to reach every corner of our country. But slowly and steadily, Brand India is making its presence felt. Instead of being associated with poverty, social turmoil and backwardness, India is today perceived as an emerging power, a highly successful democracy, an economy destined to become the third-largest in the world, a center of science and technology, and a land that can boast of people known for their talent,

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[6] Besides these concrete steps, the Government of India has also instituted Pravasi Bharatiya Awards, "search your roots" programme, and has proposed distance education capsules for the diaspora youth. If one may divide the ameliorative programmes into instrumental and expressive ones, those mentioned here are largely of the latter variety.

intelligence, hard work and extraordinary creativity. Yoga and the art of living, computer geeks and IITs, fashion and food, Bollywood and Bangalore—these are the symbols and images of the new India. (GoI 2004: 4)

The story comes full circle when the government of the day becomes a handmaiden of the consumerist culture of the middle classes.

Recent Trends

Among other signals that a dialogue between researchers and the controlling agencies may be in the offing is a small beginning that the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs made by organizing a round table discussion on 20 December 2004 at the India International Centre, New Delhi. In a theme-note prepared for this meeting, I raised a sampling of the issues that confront us.

The overall context of this brainstorming exercise are the expectations that Indian diasporics have of the Government of India and vice versa. Examples of the former orientation are vociferous demands being made by NRIs in the Middle East to ameliorate problems in recruitment and conditions of work, and the educational rehabilitation of their wards during the guardians' absence overseas, and so on. Similarly, there is demand in the global Indian diaspora for dual citizenship and its pros and cons from the viewpoint of the GoI. There is the politically charged issue of loyalty to the host countries vis-à-vis attachment and patriotism towards the mother country. Sociologically too, the cultural gap between the first generation and subsequent generations of the diasporics creates problems of adaptation. There is also the question of how successful the provision of PIO cards has been in trying to rehabilitate and attract diasporic interests in India. Is the distinction between NRIs and PIOs relevant and useful now and in the future? Important too are the economic questions arising out of remittances from overseas Indians on the one hand, and diasporic participation and leadership in FDI and portfolio investments in India. We may also examine the character and upshot of the sterling contributions of India to the diaspora in the field of ICT (information and communication technology). How insightful, in the economic and sociocultural planning for the Indian diaspora, can the experience of another Asian giant be, namely, the Peoples Republic of China?

Subsequent to the round table discussions, we have reports of the Third Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, held in Mumbai between 7 and 9 January

2005. In his inaugural speech, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh concluded with the exhortation that we hold a vision of an "open economy and inclusive society". I take cue from this excellent summing up by noting the following:

(*i*)   Let us analytically distinguish between the mapping and monitoring of issues and perspectives as was suggested at the round table discussion. In mapping the field, from a sociological point-of-view, it should be emphasized that the Indian communities overseas are not a monolith. According to their respective histories and economies, there is not only a hierarchy and variation as among the various communities in different countries but also internal variation. The latter are often conflictual in the sense that, for example, in South Africa the older South Africa born Indians and their progeny in many instances regard themselves as "foreign born Indians" (they use for themselves the acronym "FBI") claiming sociocultural and economic superiority over the newly-arrived, often poorer and disempowered, recent immigrants from India and Pakistan (R. K. Jain 2001). Similarly, there is an asymmetry between Indians (mainly Hindus) who have migrated to the Netherlands from Surinam and those Indians arriving recently direct from India. There is pervasive misunderstanding and antagonism between these groups. In Sri Lanka, although both the Jaffna Tamils and the plantation Tamils are ethnically homogeneous, there are acute differences of perception and life-chances in the circumstances of the two sub-communities. It has been noted in the literature on overseas Indians as well as in the High Level Committee's Report that there exists heterogeneity in the Indian communities based on region, language and religion not only among the PIOs but even in the NRI population of industrially advanced countries. Often enough this lack of unity gives rise to parochial associations and cultural organizations. Usually, in government documents, including the High Level Committee's Report this diversity is decried as making for disunity and discord. My point of view, which is in accord with the Human Development Report (2004), is that such cultural variety is inevitable among diasporics from such a vast and culturally diverse country as India. It may actually be judicially and tactically supported as positive cultural freedom. At the same time, however, steps should be taken to minimize this

diversity's potential for conflict despite its somewhat inevitable expressions in day-to-day life. There can be no uniform formula for achieving mitigation of conflict, but its recognition and policies designed to handle it should be part of what we call "monitoring" in addition to mapping.

(*ii*)   I think that the monitoring aspect comes into operation when we consider our policies towards the PIOs and NRIs in relation to issues such as dual citizenship. The prime minister's announcement that all overseas Indians who migrated after 26 January 1950 will be eligible for dual citizenship is an important step in the direction of "inclusion". Of course, the application of this provision would be subject to the laws of the host societies and the fact that those migrating before the Republic of India came into being would be treated as per the law. A question was raised at the round table whether there was a conceptual reason why PIOs should be made eligible for dual citizenship. (Much would depend on what special benefits this status would bring as distinct from a PIO card only.) My submission is that in view of (a) the current spread of globalization, and (b) the socio-economic mobility gained by PIOs *in situ* in the host societies, their potential for contributing to India, socially and economically, should not be underestimated. Thus, *eventually*, as the prime minister stated, all overseas Indians should be welcome to enjoy a legal status in their country of origin. Whether the PIO cards should continue or not is in some ways an empirical question. My own impression is that there have not been as many takers of the card as was originally estimated and, also, that if selected PIO countries (those which have a provision for dual citizenship) too were offered dual citizenship by India, the prospect would be much more welcome.

In general, then, I do not subscribe to the view expressed in some quarters that the dual citizenship debate has been hijacked in favour of the PIOs. Of course, its application and extension to the recent NRIs (as has actually been done now) is a valid priority, but all in all, the drift of contemporary times does not validate an enduring distinction from the viewpoint of the government between NRIs and PIOs.

(*iii*) This brings me to another major point about the mapping and monitoring of the diaspora in so far as an academic perspective

is concerned. The repeated incantation of the names of very big and successful Indian entrepreneurs abroad, such as Swaraj Paul and Lakshmi Mittal in the UK or the dot.com billionaires of the US is to my mind, succumbing to a media-created hype. As far as I know, this is not the way China seduces its overseas benefactors to the mainland. There is, on the other hand, in China, a largely decentralized, eco-geographically demarcated and localized approach to tap into the investment potential of countrymen settled abroad (see for example, Woon 1997). And, whereas, from a macro policy point of view we do need the expertise, goodwill and lobbying (and even money!) of the Swaraj Pauls and Lakshmi Mittals for investments in India, let us not forget — as Shri Krishna Kumar, secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, pointed out at the round table discussion — small towns, medium-sized businesses and, if I may add, even retailers having direct trading links with manufacturers and buyers abroad (for some suggestive leads, see Baru 2000). And in this activity networking would be crucial. I have already talked of vertical (inter-class) and lateral (intra-class) networks traversing India and its diaspora. These can be charted out and mobilized if regional businesses are informed and encouraged. On a slightly different track, our institutions of higher learning (like some universities and institutes in Gujarat) may become socio-economic centers of Diaspora Studies, which can then be nodal points for passing on information and skills between diasporics and their Indian counterparts.

(*iv*) The question of loyalty has been raised. Whenever there are migrants more or less permanently settled abroad, especially if they enjoy dual citizenship, the question of conflicting loyalties is bound to arise. The individuals concerned have both rights and duties in the two countries. The host society, in particular, is within its sovereign rights to expect the loyalty of all its citizens. At the same time, the very reason for retaining or obtaining citizenship of the country of origin by diasporics is to avail of the entailed opportunities. The Human Development Report of 2004 discusses the subject of legal pluralism. It is argued that if the legal system of the larger society respects human rights norms, the problem of divided loyalties may be mitigated. However, there is another important issue at stake. The host society would, directly or indirectly, look to the society of origin

to see whether or not it respects the cultural freedoms of its minorities (numerical or sociopolitical) and would reciprocally treat its own minorities (which the diasporics normally are). During the last political regime in India, the kowtowing of the state to Hindu fundamentalist ideology raised serious questions about the ill treatment of the Muslim minority by the NDA government, especially in relation to the diaspora-oriented state of Gujarat. When an Indian ambassador at large (Bhishma K. Agnihotri) was — extra-legally — appointed as the spokesperson for Indian minorities in the US and beyond, there was popular and academic questioning of his role bestowed upon by a government which itself had failed to protect its Muslim minority back home (van der Veer 2002). Therefore, one of the important policy imperatives for governance in India with respect to the welfare of its diaspora would be that its own policies and practices vis-a-vis national minorities would be closely watched. This is a specific instance of what, among other items, the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh possibly means by an "inclusive" society at home for a healthy diaspora.

Conclusion

It would have become clear by now that the post-Independence governments of India have awakened to the needs, aspirations and contributions of the diaspora only recently. In its work of social engineering, the role of academics may be defined as that of diagnosis and prediction, in a limited way, if those responsible for diaspora's governance wish to consult them. As part of a conclusion in the burgeoning field of diaspora studies and governance, the following observations, arising from my recent comparative essay on Indian immigrants to Malaysia, Trinidad and Australia (R. K. Jain 2004: 1–26), may have some relevance. First, ethnic networks and agent-chains have been in evidence for the whole gamut of Indian diasporics abroad. Second, there has been a pattern of "circulation"(Markovits 2000) rather than a one-way passage between the region of origin in India and a number of diaspora nodes (Voigt-Graf 2004). Even with regard to labor diaspora, as distinct from traders such as Sindhis and Chettiars, Marina Carter (1995) has shown the impact of returnees from amongst indentured recruits traveling again from India to Mauritius as far back as during 1834–74. Similarly, even in old and distant locales such as Trinidad and Tobago the "to-ing and fro-ing"

of Indian cultural specialists, like religious leaders and missionaries, is very much in evidence. So also is the impact of Indian nationalism. Third, whether it is the high rate of suicides among plantation workers in Trinidad during the nineteenth century or the high incidence of domestic violence in the present-day professional Indian diaspora in the US, we learn that the human and social costs of overseas migration have been very high. Fourth, the internal socio-economic disparities and, externally, a hierarchical structure in the diaspora universe have been commonly found in the old and new diasporas. M. S. Khandelwal (2002) has argued about the stratification existing between the well-to-do older immigrants from India in New York and the taxi driving, restaurant and other service-industry migrants. She writes:

> In 1987 the Wall Street Journal extolled the Indian "immigrant saga" with more success stories. But it also reported that "for every rising entrepreneur there are poor Indians scrubbing restaurant kitchens". According to the 1980 census, 9.9% Asian Indians were below the poverty line, a figure approaching the 12.4% poverty rate for all Americans. (Khandelwal 2002: 104)

Fifth, as I have argued in relation to Khandelwal's depiction of the internal disparities among Indians as coming close to "blaming the victims" (R. K. Jain 2003b), the overall structure of "receiving" societies, whether in Malaysia, Trinidad and Tobago or in developed countries like Australia and the US, has carried the stain of discrimination and disparity between the local and the global. In terms of external influences, what was caused by colonialism and imperialism in the old diaspora has been highlighted in the new diaspora through the consequences of globalization.

Yet the situation of the Indian diaspora now and in the future is not a gloomy one. In the foregoing it has been argued that the governance of this diaspora from the Indian end (as compared to the Chinese diaspora, for example) has been tardy and delayed. I have also argued that, numerically, perhaps the bulk of this diaspora does not merit being painted in very bright colours; in fact, there have been problems and grievances that both governmental and other public agencies controlling and regulating the Indian diaspora should be acutely aware of.[7]

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[7] One reason why in this chapter I have focused equally on the poorer and not only on the rich diasporics from India is, perhaps, my own long-term research on the labour diaspora in Malaysia (R. K. Jain 1970, 2003c, 2010).

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Chapter Eight

**Indian Modernity and the Diaspora:
A Civilizational Discourse**

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Indian Modernity

Indian modernity is not exclusively a product of westernization. Tarabai Shinde, the veteran social worker of early twentieth century Maharashtra, tells us about the dress code for women and men in her times (O'Hanlon 1994). While the women always wore *saris*, the men took to wearing shirts and trousers while going out to work. Tarabai told her husband in no uncertain terms that he would not be served food at home unless he changed into the traditional *dhoti*. Tarabai Shinde was a modern Indian woman though obviously not a westernized one. Another woman, even more unfamiliar with the English language and with English ways was the Bengali novelist and Jnanapitha award winner Ashapurna Devi, who wrote a trilogy about three generations of women in a Bengali family where the mother of a maiden turns against her own mother's wish to arrange a match for her granddaughter at a young age before she had completed her secondary education. These were precisely the kind of opportunities that had been denied to her (the mother) when she was married.

These are but two instances of an indigenous Indian modernity which exemplify one of the dominant modernist/postmodernist currents of feminism sans westernization. Consider also the examples of medieval Indian architecture of *havelis* in Rajasthan, where the principles of air-conditioning through cross-ventilation and wall structure were incorporated in house construction ages before modern contraptions came to be deployed to beat the heat of arid region. The step-wells of Gujarat (Jain-Neubauer 1981) provide another illustrative example of the combining of aesthetics with environment-friendly devices that owe nothing to westernization. Similarly, one may look at traditional Indian book-keeping practices and instruments of credit and exchange that pre-empt the latest trends of forward trading and the massive hawala

economy of the current Indian diaspora (Ballard 2005) or the protected and preserved libraries of palm-leaf manuscripts, to speak nothing of handicrafts and paintings (including intricately illustrated manuscripts) as repositories of knowledge, literacy, trading, and the arts. Let me also mention, while we are on the subject, the ancient Indian discovery of the zero in mathematics and their manuals of love-making. All these find resonance in the ideas and values of a postmodernist civilization. Add to them the tremendous contemporary upsurge in inventing herbal medicines of the traditional Indian kind and devices that aid environmental conservation and you have a whole range of contemporary themes foreshadowed in the modernity of Indian tradition. Solutions are at hand in these traditions for gender relations, sustainable environmental planning, medical innovation, the conservation of knowledge and the aesthetics of living. If this does not add up to modernity what does? The Hindi word for "new" (as used in modern Hindi literature) harks back to the roots; the term is "*maulik*" (of the roots).

Two distinctions need to be introduced here, one substantive and the other conceptual. These would be grist to the mill of my subsequent discussion of "non–modern" civilizations, particularly the Indic civilization. The substantive distinction is between civilizations, on the one hand, and so-called "primitive societies" on the other. The latter show a tendency of breakdown and fragmentation upon cultural contact, whereas civilizations sustain the impact of such contact through a process akin to "palimpsest" (Lannoy 1971) or what Irawati Karve (1961) has termed "agglomeration". The conceptual distinction is between modernity and modernization. Modernity, as I see it, is an aspect of interculturation — the normal give and take in cultural dynamics that happens over space and time. The adoption of traditional Indian heat-resistant, cross-ventilating architectural principles in building the bungalows in which Europeans and others lived in India and the use of "sola topees" by the urban population, which the British introduced in the country, are examples of this. This intercultural modernity took on many interesting forms, for instance, the historical introduction of indigenous herbal medicines into the western pharmacopoeia and the contemporary export of herbal medicines from the West to us. Thus, as I pointed out before, modernity in India is not constituted exclusively by western or Japanese modes and techniques of modern culture. The Indian modernity, as contrasted with "modernization", has been a product of a symmetrical process of cultural change and adaptation. Modernization, on the other hand, as a corollary of a teleological model of sociocultural

change, manifests acculturation rather than interculturation. It posits the inevitability, nay desirability, of certain culturally specific forms of change, usually those unleashed by the post-Enlightenment and post-Industrial Revolution transformations that took place in the West. It is, therefore, an asymmetrical model of sociocultural change.

The Zigzag History

In the foregoing I have taken a *longue durée* or long-term (cf. Braudel 1980) view of Indian society and culture that points to the civilizational background of Indian modernity. I should clarify here how history (i.e., the time-dimension) constitutes itself in this view and how it squares up with civil society and the nation-state, and what they in turn imply (e.g., citizenship). The view of history one takes in the context of civilizational modernity is neither linear nor is it a universal history of the western type. In order to explicate our departure from a linear view of history to what may be seen as a "zigzag" understanding (not to be confused with the cyclical configurations favored by Orientalists, cf. Pocock 1964), I use the concept of "genealogies" — both in the anthropological and Foucauldian senses. Anthropological readings of genealogies the world over show: (a) that they look backwards to an origin but, simultaneously. (b) they justify the present and the future through what R. G. Collingwood has called "incapsulated history" (cf. Beattie 1964: 24). A genealogical (and in that sense dialectical) view of history would show that the past, the present and the future mediate one another. As the poet T.S. Eliot ([1935] 1943) expressed it,

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future.
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable.

Let me illustrate, with some concrete examples, the trajectories taken between, on the one hand, the pre-modern to the modern and back to the pre-modern and, on the other, from the modern to the post-modern and back to the modern in the present conjuncture of temporality.

With regard to the notion of "community" in India, political scientists like Sudipto Kaviraj (1994), as endorsed by Partha Chatterjee (1997), have pointed out how there was a transition from pre-modern to modern thought — from "fuzziness" to "enumeration". Their argument finds

support in the labors of British census-takers in India. In his detailed work titled *Castes of Mind* (2001), Nicholas B. Dirks painstakingly documents the process of conducting censuses as part of the colonial social history of India. There is more than just a passing symmetry between this demonstration of British enumeration, especially vis-a-vis the regime of castes, and the oft-quoted history of the transition from Indian "status" to British "contract" in the writings of Sir Henry Maine (cited in Cohn 1987: 463–82).. However, as a concerted search for "on the ground" formulations both in pre-British India (cf. Lath 1981) and in contemporary ethnographies (cf. Dumont 1970; R. K. Jain 1975; Banks 1992) reveal, there appears to be at work a poetics of enumerative holism in traditional Indian representations of the caste system. This is a subject that is traditionally handled by the genealogist and mythographer castes. Thus we have, for instance, intra-caste divisions, namely, the three *ghar* (houses), the 13 ghar and 125,000 ghar among the Saryuparee Brahmins of UP; the Navnat (nine divisions) among the Banias of Gujarat; the three *kuri* (parts or fragments), the 13 *kuri* and the 36 *kuri* among the Rajputs of Bundelkhand; the *nabashakhas* (nine branches) among the artisan castes of Bengal (Gupta 1992); and the 36 *pauni* (castes of the Sudra varna who receive remuneration in kind) in Jaunpur in the seventeenth century. While traditionally these holistic divisions referred to endogamy and hypergamy as well as to Jajmani (service castes receiving remuneration from their high caste patrons) relationships, it should not be a matter of surprise that the politics of this traditional poetics has once again come to the fore in caste-majoritarianism in the shape of the values and ideology of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), the vanguard of Dalit politics in north India (R. K. Jain 1996). Why must majoritarianism in contemporary Indian politics refer only to a religious/communal reckoning, viz., Hindus vs Muslims (ala the Bharatiya Janata Party or BJP) and not to the demographic majority of the Shudra and *acchut* (Dalit Bahujan, the OBCs and the Dalits; cf. Lohia 1964) politically espoused today by the BSP? Here then we have an illustration of the zigzag history from the pre-modern to the modern and back to the pre-modern.

The transitions from modernism to post-modernism and back to modernism tell a similar story. In western modernity, claims were being made on behalf of the citizen as a rational individual, transacting public business in accordance with calculations of rational self-interest. In this system, of which the Parsonian social system of pattern variables (Parsons 1961: 101–12) was the prototype, there were clear dichotomies between modern and traditional or pre-modern. In a tabular form, Talcott Parsons provided the following dichotomous model:

Table 8.1: Dichotomous Model after Talcot Parsons

Theoretical focus	Modern	Traditional
Motivation	Affectively neutral (self-orientation)	Affectively rewarding (collectivity orientation)
Value standard	Universalistic definition	Particularistic definition
Criteria of evaluation	Achievement	Ascription
Scope	Functionally specific	Functionally diffuse

Source: Based on Parsons (101–12).

This is not the place to go into a detailed critique of this dichotomous paradigm. Suffice it would to mention that, first, the "world system" critique, in terms of the centre and the periphery, launched by Gunder Frank (1967), Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) and Samir Amin (1976), for instance, took the wind out of the sails of the spurious universalistic pretensions of this particular model. Second, and more substantively, the need to distinguish between politics and ethnicity and politics and religion as implications of this model has been belied by developments the world over. The disenchantment with such an understanding of modernism set in its trail post-modernism, globalization and the "clash of civilizations" thesis of Samuel Huntington (1996). While post-modernism (a principally European movement) eschewed all forms of teleology in prospective human development, the version of globalization that we see in today's unipolar US-dominated world, buttressed by forebodings of a clash rather than dialogue between civilizations, has swung the pendulum back towards modernism. In this avatar modernization reappears in the shape of civil society and the nation-state, as counters to and in conflict with the notion of community. While, as P. Chatterjee rightly points out, there is "this suppression in modern European theory of an independent narrative of community" (1997: 234), in the present era of market globalization (conjoint with the unipolarism backed by US military power), the narrative of *politicized* civilization has become a possibility. I return to this conjuncture in the following remarks on the notion of civilization.

The Civilizational Backdrop

By viewing pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity as a series of mediations in a genealogical framework we are brought back to the

civilizational process, which is now seen as one of "becoming". Thus, we have a combination of synchronic–diachronic interpretations, in terms of Great and Little Traditions (Redfield and Singer 1956: 161–94) interaction and the processes of "universalization" and "parochialization" (Marriott 1955: 171–222). It stands to reason why the dynamics of the Indic civilization as conceptualized by the Chicago School lack the dimension of politics — "the strategic dimension of theoretical practice" according to Michel Foucault — that enters only implicitly, as a critique of the above paradigm would show (see for instance critical appraisals of M. N. Srinivas's "sanskritization"; cf. Barnabas 1961; Srinivas 1962; Berreman 1993; Sheth 1999; Jaffrelot 2000). However, this critique may be subsumed in our observation that although lip service is paid to the interaction between the literati and the common folk and between the universal and the particular, the balance is undoubtedly tipped in favor of the asymmetrical (i.e., acculturational) rather than the symmetrical (i.e., interculturational) processes of sociocultural change. In other words the telos of the processes lies in the higher culture. Yet, when all is said and done, the civilizational rendition of Indian society and culture by the Chicago School has a point to it, and in the remainder of this chapter I shall illustrate its validity contra Huntington's politicized notion of civilization by roping in, as an experimental social field, the experience of the Indian diaspora.

One of the early seminal writings on the notion of civilization was an article written jointly by E. Durkheim and M. Mauss ([1913] 1971). I argue that Durkheim and Mauss, though making some far-reaching pronouncements on the nature of civilizations, are nevertheless caught in a structural dilemma. On the one hand there is an attempt to break away from the Durkheimian notion of the social fact as being external, constraining and general for a society (see Anderson 1983 on "the nation state"), and civilization is thus seen as a broader, transnational entity that interiorizes both orthogenetic and heterogenetic tendencies. It is prone to possessing the "non–political" aspects of culture, which have "symbolic rather than political frontiers", comprising "myths, tales, money, commerce, fine arts, techniques, tools, language, words, scientific knowledge, literary forms and ideas" (Durkheim and Mauss 1913: 812). What is specifically excluded since they "constitute part of the specific character of each people (are) political institutions, juridical institutions and phenomena of social morphology" (*ibid.*). Notice how the *L'Année Sociologique* authors (Durkheim and Mauss) cannot avoid falling into

the trap of a racist and national character discourse while discussing the political character of "a people".[1] Eventually Durkheim and Mauss become more explicit, betraying almost unconsciously the Eurocentric nation-state framework of their thinking on the nature of civilization; and this constitutes the other horn of their (unresolved) dilemma. They say, and I quote, "civilization may be seen as expansion and internationalization…. It expresses a collective life of a special genre, the substratum of which is a plurality of interrelated political bodies acting upon one another" (*ibid.*: 813). To simplify, their writing implicitly equates society with a nation-state. As a result what remains implicit and underdeveloped are the transnational and sub-national levels of the civilization as a cultural process. To be fair to Durkheim and Mauss, with regard to culture, when viewed as a process, the kind of facets pointed out by them as the first horn of the dilemma echo Pitrim Sorokin's (1947: 317; 1950: 147) distinction between "pure systems" (language, science, philosophy, religion, fine arts, and ethics) — the "values" dimension as A. L. Kroeber (1956) put it — and "mixed or derivative" ones (technology, economics and politics). Incidentally, a similar tendency is present in British social anthropology (Beattie 1964) and in some theoretical writing on the diaspora (Brah 1996). However, in trying to address the unresolved dilemma on culture and civilization authors have either conflated culture and the nation-state or accorded primacy to the nation-state while trying to determine the contours of culture. The ability to view culture as different from the nation-state, though not in juxtaposition to it (something we discern in the Chicago School), brings us to the crux of the civilizational understanding. The primacy of a certain kind of western universalist notion of nation-state in the cultural politics of civilizations thus stands discounted. A case in point is the deterritorialized and multiple- territorialized politics of Indian diasporics.

The Cultural Politics of the Indian Diaspora

The overseas South Asian communities constitute an instructive arena for an experimental study of Indic society, culture and civilization as it

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[1] In this context see also D. N. Majumdar's critical pronouncements on the dangers of the fascist implications of national character studies in anthropology as reported in the volume *An Appraisal of Anthropology Today* (see Tax 1953).

adapts to environments that are variously constituted — ecologically, historically and ethnically speaking. The most outstanding example of cultural politics in the Indian diaspora is the Gandhian politics of *satyagraha* (lit. "truth force", refers to the politics of non-violent resistance) in South Africa. I have elsewhere (R. K. Jain 2002: 9) called it a civilizational moment in the settlement society of South Africa. Other contemporary examples of such politics — not all as salutary — are the support for "Khalistan" among the Sikh diasporics of Canada, UK and USA, the Hindutva movement of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad among NRIs and PIOs; the *eelam* movement among Tamilians worldwide, having begun with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka.

In a theoretical interlude, let me explain what I mean by "non-modern" civilization and settlement society, two terms that I have used extensively in my writing. My reading of the Indic civilization as a "non-modern" civilization is a heuristic adaptation of Dumont's (1975) work. For me the contrast between the two terms, historically speaking, is between the point of emigration of South Asian diasporics, that is, their home territories and that of immigration, that is, host societies which I have designated as "settlement societies". Ontologically and epistemologically speaking, using the term "non-modern" to characterize the Indic civilization enables us to posit a kind of neutral ground[2] from which to distinguish between processes of modernity and modernization, as outlined above. Also, from this vantage point we can incorporate instances of the so-called "modernization of tradition" (Y. Singh 1973) and "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) in contemporary modernity. Further, a neutral starting point remains sensitive to the non-teleological perspective in contrast to most modernist formulations of social change.[3] Settlement societies, viz., societies of immigration for South Asian diasporics, constitute a polythetic category (Needham 1975) in the sense

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[2] Note the parallel between Levi-Strauss's (1964: 24; 1986: 15–16) mention of myths in primitive societies as "machines for the suppression of time" and my proposal to call non-modern civilizations "warm" societies, in-between what Levi-Strauss called "cold" (primitive) and "hot" (technologically advanced) societies (R. K. Jain 1986c).

[3] Let me also add an important caveat here: besides the play of the cognitive factors unleashed by it there is also the impact of the politico-economic forces of globalization, which account for the why and how of contemporary sociocultural transformations.

that not all instances of such societies have every characteristic which can be conceived as belonging to this type. In other words, in actual instances there may be some characteristics present in one case but not in another. Among the characteristics of settlement societies are: (*i*) a brief history (basically post-1492 in North America) marked by recent massive immigration; (*ii*) the presence of native populations, variable in numbers; (*iii*) colonial or dependent status of one kind or another, involving asymmetries of power between ethnic groups; (*iv*) a correlation between the economy and ethnic relations in such a way that if the economy is buoyant, ethnic relations are better and vice versa; (*v*) the settlement society is a geopolitical entity, in the sense that in the New World for instance, Mexico and Latin America can be contrasted with the Caribbean, the US and Canada. The former provide examples of non-modern civilizations and the latter of settlement societies. In the Old World, India, China, pre-Meiji Japan, much of pre-Renaissance Europe and parts of Africa can be contrasted with plantation societies (e.g., Mauritius, Fiji, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia) and what Louis Hartz (1964) calls "new societies" such as South Africa and Australia (the list could also include New Zealand). The former are seats of civilization and the latter are settlement societies.

There has always been two-way interaction between civilizations and settlement societies. Also, and this is methodologically important, the distinction and relationship between the two notions is heuristic. Empirically, the past history of civilizations would be marked by a settlement society's configuration and the present as well as the future evolution of settlement societies, as we all know, is characterized by a modern, technologically advanced and post-industrial civilization. In terms of cultural dynamics, neither of the types is stuck at the historical dividing line (say AD 1492, as mentioned in the case of North America). And yet the settlement society concept is also a device to control the entropy of the civilizational ideal often expressed in the reincarnation of the antiquated nineteenth-century evolutionist belief that contemporary civilizations represent the acme of all human development and progress. The grandiose concept of civilization is thus moderated and restrained by the notion of settlement society.[4] At the same time, however, the

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[4] I may be able to illustrate this dialectical relationship by taking recourse to a fable. Someone wanted to buy chicken and one of his acquaintances referred him to a place where he indicated you could get 'this big chicken' (by raising his

aggrandizement of settlement societies that have grown into modern civilizations, as opposed to the "non modern" ones, also cries out for justice; sample George W. Bush's neo-colonialism (ironically, in precisely the areas — Iraq and Iran — that were the cradle of non-modern civilizations).

Now that we have a pair of concepts to frame the discussion of Indian modernity in the context of the diaspora, let us look a little more closely, if only anecdotally in the space of this chapter at the historical and contemporary trajectories of the interaction between the Indic non-modern civilization and the settlement societies of South Asian diasporics. I mentioned that the emergence and shaping up of the satyagraha philosophy and method among the diasporic Indians of South Africa from 1906 to 1914 (cf. Gandhi 1950) constitutes a civilizational moment in the settlement society of South Africa. A few features of the civilizational ambience introduced by Gandhi into the South African Indian struggle are remarkable. First, the influence of the syncretic teachings of civilizational saints and philosophers, ranging from Socrates and Surdas to Mirabai, have been explicitly acknowledged in fashioning the instrument of satyagraha. Second, the absorptive capacity of civilization, viz., in its encountering a new problematic situation like the legal disabilities facing free as well as indentured Indians in the State of Natal in South Africa, the moral restraint and pacificity of the instrument of satyagraha is patently revealed. This was the secret behind the future success of that instrument, initially forged in the laboratory of South Africa, in the great freedom struggle of India itself. Third, one finds here the beginnings of what one may call the culturalization of politics rather than the politicization of culture, in circumstances where the "deterritorialization" (Appadurai 1997) and "multiple territorialization" (R. K. Jain 1998b) of diasporic South Asian communities enable an encounter between nation and culture in a framework that transcends the conventional limits of power politics as delimited by nation-state sovereignty. The transnational aspects of

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right hand to the waist, palm facing downwards). The buyer went to the market but found chickens only of the normal size. When he complained to the acquaintance about the absence of the big chicken, the latter replied: 'Oh! I forgot to put the left hand palm (face upwards) underneath the right hand (to relativize the size). I think this is a very useful analogy to explain the relationship between civilizations (the right-hand palm) and settlement societies (the left-hand palm).

this interface of settlement societies with civilizations continued in the visits, discourses and wide dissemination of ideas of spokespersons from the motherland to the host societies (Vertovec 1989; Kelly 1991). In South Africa itself, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up under Bishop Desmond Tutu's inspiration, for the confession and reparation of apartheid crimes is part of that legacy. The growth of New Age religions in contemporary western societies represents an echo of the same process.

Culture and Class in the Diaspora Space: The Flipside of Modernity

Unfortunately not all developments in the contemporary interaction between non-modern civilizations and settlement societies have been salutary. For one, religious fundamentalism, whether Hindu, Sikh or Islamic have had their seed-beds in these civilizations and have been transmitted to the diaspora through bigoted spokespersons. Frequently, South Asian communities, whether in South Africa, Malaysia, UK, US or in Canada have been fragmented along the lines of birth, religion, region, language, and finally, class.

In the sociology of the South Asian diaspora there is a largely unattended issue or a series of issues that pertain to the culture of diasporics, vis-à-vis that of the home country and of non-South Asian ethnic groups in the host societies. At its most general level a framework for considering this matter would be provided by the notion of the confluence of cultural persistence, i.e., continuities in the customs and practices brought by immigrants from their homelands and their sociocultural adaptation to host countries. But the question warrants a closer ethnographic probe because the cultural stereotypes and attitudes involved here have structural consequences for the diasporic space. It may help to consider this with a few examples.

It is a common complaint that homeland Indians flaunt their cultural superiority over Indians in the diaspora. It is often remarked how the culture of the nineteenth-century South Asian diaspora in the Caribbean, Mauritius or Fiji, for example, has remained "frozen" since the time of the initial immigration in matters of cuisine, modes of greeting, the particularity and profusion of ritual performances, socio-religious practices in general, etc. These sociocultural features, interestingly enough, are subject to diametrically opposed interpretation by homeland Indians and Indians in the diaspora. As suggested above,

the former consider these practices in the diaspora as anachronistic — folksy (*ganwaar*) and inferior (*ghatiya*). Their continuance signifies the perpetuation of "little" traditions brought from the homeland, without the nurturance and flowering afforded by linkages with the tap-roots of the "great" traditions. These negative attitudes of homeland Indians extend in particular to their perception of languages and dialects that are spoken in the diaspora, especially, the setting and context of their usage, which are often regarded as incongruous and absurd. Thus homeland Indians often remark how ludicrous it seems for Mauritian Indians to engage in a discussion in Bhojpuri dialect on the television in the sophisticated decor of a studio wearing suits, neckties and shoes. For them the right setting for folks conversing in Bhojpuri is the village *chaupal* (roughly, the "village square") where they sit cross-legged on the floor or on *charpayis* (cots) wearing loose and comfortable *dhoti-kurtas* or *pyjamas*. For the homeland Indian the incongruity arises because, to use a popular classification in India itself, the diasporics of this mixed culture are neither fish nor fowl, inhabitants neither of India nor Bharat but of a third space. The very same reaction prevails when one sees South African Indian teenage girls in the university in Durban wearing jeans but uniformly displaying prominent red *bindis* on their foreheads.

Contrast the above stereotypes and reactions of homelanders with those which South Asian diasporics have in some of the same countries. The best exemplars of this contrasting tendency are the self-styled FBIs of South Africa. These are the third- and fourth generation diasporics who regard themselves as more Indian or Pakistani than the homelanders. It is quite revealing how many generations of living in a racist society has given rise to this unconscious trait in the diasporic Indian youth. These are people aggressively proud of Indian traditions of a particular type: praying twice or thrice a day, touching the feet of the elders, scrupulously performing rituals, contributing large sums of money towards the building of temples, etc. The more exclusive of inter-ethnic contamination and the "purer" these traditions, the more laudable and valued they are considered. To the extent that there is systematic amnesia of any inclusive or hybrid new traditions; the FBIs either brush aside or ridicule such facts of contemporary South African history as the considerable Indian contribution to the joint struggle against apartheid by the blacks and the browns under the aegis of political organizations like the African National Congress (ANC). There is evidence that these hardened purist and exclusivist attitudes have been imbibed via the route and in imitation of white superiority in racist South Africa. In his

prison memoir *Island in Chains*, Indres Naidoo (1982: 41) gives this quote from his conversation with a white policeman in pre-democratic South Africa: "What is the matter with you Indians? You've got a long history of civilization, you wore silk long before the white man, and here you are jumping from tree to tree with these barbarians, what's wrong with you, man?"

Unfortunately there is also a class dimension to what seems to be exclusively racial prejudice and racist purism. The FBIs are the well-entrenched and rather well-to-do South African Indians who look down upon the recent legal and illegal Indian and Pakistani immigrants who continue to pour in despite the dismal record of crime and insecurity in that country. The latter — Urdu- and Hindi-speaking men and women run small kebab shops that line the streets of Johannesburg. Tar drums, sawed in half and filled with cinder, serve as ovens. Smoke and the smell of spiced meat fills the air. These newer immigrants, selling kebabs and working menial jobs in shopping malls, are often called "India Papas". As it is, the problem of overt and covert conflict between South African diasporics and black indigenes and immigrants in all multi-racial multi-cultural societies is acute; the racially slanted class antagonisms within the immigrant South Asian communities lend further edge to these ethnic, sub-ethnic and class hostilities. The tendency in most social science writings on Indian diasporics has been to explain the rightist postures, viz., building of temples and mosques, financing visits from the homeland of religious personages, collecting funds for Hindutva or Jamat-e-Islami or Khalsa causes as manifestations of identitarian and minority politics in plural societies. But the structural outcome of these cultural stereotypes and reactions is not at all as innocuous as the surface reality may suggest. The alignment between racist and class factors is cleverly disguised in religious and cultural terms. Here the official policies of the host societies of multiculturalism and rightist politics go hand in hand. The ambivalence between, on the one hand, the purity and exclusivity of FBIs in South Africa and their counterparts in the Caribbean, North America or Europe, and, on the other the chauvinist appeal of "pure" Hinduism, Islam or Sikhism in the homeland communities make for an explosive mixture in the globalized world. There is little wonder then that highly trained professional Indian immigrants in North America and Europe cling doggedly to cyber-endogamous marriages and an exclusivist transnational religiosity. For the "chosen ones" the purity of their culture in the diaspora serves their rooted class interests well. The rooting is in a double sense: in the "great" traditions of South Asia and

in the status quo resulting from the difference, say, between Indian dot. com millionaires and their own countrymen who work on the assembly lines of the unionless electronics industry of the selfsame Silicon Valley in California, USA. The expectation that there would be a trickle-down effect or that nirvana is possible through the establishment as re-presented both by the corporations and the developed nation-state is largely a chimera. Mobility and creativity can, however, be attained if the diaspora is conceived as a third space: harbinger of a new civilization, imbibing the currents of dynamism and change in both the homeland and in diasporic contexts. What would be the elements of that conscientisation can only be a sequel to the above analysis.

<center>**Conclusion**</center>

<center>**Diaspora, Trans-nation and Nation**</center>

In this concluding chapter, from the vantage point of the process of the creation of the modern diaspora and its sociocultural impact on transmigrants, I focus on the tension between the nation[1] and trans-nation in our globalized world. An analysis of this kind of the Indian diaspora reveals, ironically, the strengthening of the power of those nation-states where transmigrants settle. I shall conclude my study with lessons learnt from this specific discourse of globalization for a sociological and social anthropological probe from the perspective of the diaspora and its implications into the institutions of tribe and caste in India, embroiled as they are in the fast-changing political processes of the nation-state. In the following I have taken up both the empirical and methodological dimensions of this subject.

Diaspora

The Indian case belongs to the wider class of diasporas (e.g., Jewish, Chinese, Armenian, etc.). Until its 1993 edition, the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defined the term "diaspora" as "the dispersion of the Jews among the Gentile nations" and as "all those Jews who live outside the biblical land of Israel". Yet, for the first time in its long history, in 1993 the dictionary added that the term also refers to "the situation of people living outside their traditional homeland". The term has Greek origins and refers, allegorically, to the scattering of seeds as they are sown over a wide area. G. Sheffer (2003: 9) is right in noting that, already at a

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[1] Throughout this book, I have used the terms "nation", "state" and even "civil society", either separately or in combination, interchangeably according to the context. My inclusive or holistic conception of India is that of a democratic "welfare" nation-state that encompasses civil society. Conversely, India is an ideal/typical referent for the concepts and entities designated nation and nation-state.

very early period, the term has been applied to two of the oldest ethno-national transmigrations — the Jewish and the Greek — that had been established outside of their homelands as a result of both voluntary and forced migrations.

There has been frequent criticism of the usage of the terms "diaspora", "diasporic", "diasporism", etc., on the grounds that the generalisation and universalisation of culturally specific, viz., Jewish or Greek, processes is illegitimate. More particularly, it has been argued that the persecution of diasporics either in the home or in host societies, which is a recurrent feature of Jewish transmigration, is absent or even reversed in the case of ruling Anglo-Saxon minority settler societies, viz., in Australia and South Africa. This critique is legitimate but the use of the term "diaspora" as a concept in the social sciences and the humanities is justified if we bear in mind its "polythetic" character (cf. Needham 1975: 349–69). Even empirically, the majority of diasporics worldwide constitute minority groups in their societies of settlement and, therefore, remain disprivileged and embattled. We will therefore continue to use "diaspora" and its derivatives as terms of art, more like the anthropological terms "totem" or "taboo".

William Safran's (1991: 83–84) six-point model laying down the features of diaspora includes the following: dispersal from the original homeland; retention of collective memory, vision or myth of the original homeland; partial (never complete) assimilation in host society; idealised wish to return to original homeland; desirable commitment to restoration of homeland; and continually renewed linkages with homeland.

The debate on qualifying criteria for diaspora continues with some scholars offering wide, inclusivist definitions that contain "immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community and ethnic community in the semantic domain of transmigration" (Tololian 1991: 4–5).

Others have proposed a more minimal working definition for diaspora, which includes "dispersal from original homeland to two or more places; movement between the homeland and the new host and; social, cultural or economic exchange between or among the diaspora community" (Van Hear 1998: 6).

This last definition covers the criterion of "circulation" as suggested by C. Markovits (2000), although he would argue further that "diaspora" in the Indian instance is something of a misnomer, given the extensive, ongoing circulation and exchange that has historically characterised the trajectories of many overseas Indians. Interestingly, scholars like Thomas Blom Hansen (2002) claim the unsuitability of the notion "diaspora"

for South African Indians for precisely the opposite reason. According to him, the nostalgia for Indian roots and any engagement with what is authentically Indian is belied by the experiences of present-day third- and fourth-generation South African Indians, amongst whom the propaganda of patriotism about being "Indian" was being drummed in (rather unsuccessfully) by the erstwhile BJP-led Indian government and organisations like the VHP and GOPIO. This may well be the experience of many other PIOs, as contrasted with the commodified nostalgia of the kind that is visible among first- and second-generation NRIs in Europe or North America, who belong to more recent waves of migration.

Analysts of diaspora have argued that the phenomenon of transmigration covered by the concept may usefully be conceived as occurring in "space" rather than a "place" (e.g., the nation-state). This is patently so in the case of twice-thrice migrants, e.g., Gujarati migrants from East Africa to the UK, US and Canada; Sikh migrants who have made several moves from one country to another; Indo-Fijians now settled in Australia, New Zealand and the US; and the transmigration of Tamilians worldwide following political upheavals in the territories of their settlement. These transmigrants may or may not retain ties with the original homeland; Indo-Fijians, for example, are an interesting case in this regard where neither India nor Fiji as nation-states may be part of their "belonging" (in terms of citizenship status) but these lands are etched in their minds, in their sense of "longing" for a home — what Vijay Mishra (1995) has called their "diasporic imaginary". In this we recognize the relevance of the last of Safran's (1991: 84) characteristics of diaspora: "they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to the homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship". And, interestingly, as analysts relating diaspora to global movements have shown, though severed or cut loose from what we have called "belonging" (in a juridical or legal sense) to any single nation-state or other "referent origin" (Dufoix 2008), the diasporic immigrant may become an active agent in an ethnic, linguistic, regional and/or political movement of a transnational character (see for examples, Sokefeld 2006). These networks in "diaspora space" (Brah 1996) have both a vertical (homeland–"host" societies) and horizontal (inter-"host" societies) spread.[2]

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[2] For more detailed and graphic models of relationships between diaspora and space, see Dufoix (2008: 59–69) and Voigt-Graf (2004: 25-50).

Trans-nation

It would have already become clear that modern diasporas, including the Indian diaspora, cannot be understood except in the context of transmigration, trans-nation and trans-state frameworks. We retain the pre-fix "trans" instead of the usual "inter" (e.g., international or inter-state) in order to signal, to use the more current and fashionable terms, "multilateral" rather than "bilateral" (to speak nothing of the critique of the "unilateral" imperialistic hegemonic by the global left), relation-ships *among* rather than *between* nation-states. Further, "trans" signi-fies networks among transmigrants that transcend the boundaries of nation-states altogether. For conventional scholars of international re-lations this particular characteristic of trans-national relationships is counter-intuitive; they have been vanguards of the study of state-to-state phenomena whereas these networks demand *qualitative analysis,* which lies outside their area of expertise and demands collaboration with other social scientists, sociologists and anthropologists in particular, in the context of globalization. We shall pursue this aspect later, and focus for the moment on the methodological issue involved. The work of political scientists who have studied diaspora, such as Sheffer (1986, 2003), although pioneering have been mainly descriptive and classificatory. Their work, if we may echo the critique of another diaspora scholar, an anthropologist, Brian Keith Axel (2001), often tell us a good deal about the sending and receiving nation-states of migrants (and "international" relations between them), but, more often than not, the characteristics of the diaspora phenomena *sui generis* escape their analytical net. This is because, as Dufoix (2008) explains and Axel (2001) too argues in detail, the political processes imbricated in defining international and trans-national relations of nation-states and their actors are not only volatile and constantly changing but often remain hidden on account of their extremely sensitive and contentious character. Thus, if we consider some of the better known examples of trans-national migrants — typically refugees and asylum-seekers —Tamils, Sikhs, Indo-Fijians, Muhajirs, Kurds, Afghans, Burmese, Nepalese and Tibetans, to name only a few, their status as diasporics defies a cut-and-dried categorization into "types" or even "ideal types",' so caught up are they in the vicissitudes of their existential dilemmas (see, for empirical details, Leclerc, *forthcoming).*

Glick Schiller (1999: 96) describes trans-national migration as "a pattern of migration in which persons, although they move across international borders and settle and establish social relations in a new

state, maintain social connections with the polity from which they originated…they live across international borders in trans-national social fields". In what follows I shall treat trans-nationalism as a subset of globalization.

Globalization entails global markets, global communications and global networks. Globalization, as the very term implies, covers societies at all phases of development, viz., in this case the nation-state of India as well as the countries to which Indian diasporics have migrated. The process of globalization is driven by three major imperatives: the market, new technology and trans-national networks, which in turn are inter-connected. Market forces are in theory based on free and fair competition but protectionist policies in trade, volatility and the negative effects of short-term capital flows and biases in international investment agree-ments, permeate and vitiate the field to widen the hiatus between devel-oped and developing countries. While this is the macro-level picture, closer to our concerns are the phenomena of speculators manipulating financial markets and cartels from nation-states of the North making policy decisions in institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation to the disadvantage of countries of the South and cornering outstanding advantages in what should otherwise, in theory, be a level playing field (cf. Khor 2001). As to the local effects of these forces, there is conspicuous increment in what has been called "the consumption of modernity" (Brackenridge 1995), which in a poor country may be termed as "unbridled consumerism" (R. K. Jain 1998a). Although market forces are, theoretically speaking, determined through the balancing of demand and supply, the propensity towards heavy consumption (as compared to production) in an underdeveloped country like India may be explained by what one of my informants (an Indian petroleum engineer settled in Houston, Texas) put it as the excess of down-streaming (distribution and consumption or, in other words, buying) as against upstreaming (production and selling) in the flows of world markets. These processes of participation in the market and marketplace characterise particularly middle class behavior in both urban India and in the new diaspora.

Let us look at the technological revolution, which constitutes the second major dimension of the sociocultural impact of globalization in India and the diaspora. In both its real (locomotionary) and virtual (tele-communication) senses, transmigration is about travel (Clifford 1997). And it is travel in various forms — the capacity to physically travel very fast and repeatedly and the capacity to travel virtually through "works

of the imagination" (Appadurai 1997), which has made transmigration a compelling theme today. However, it is technology that has played a catalytic role in all this. Especially information technology (IT), which is leading to a new form of capital accumulation as is evident in the IT industry itself. Regardless of its origin and quantum, capital can be circulated and accumulated on a global scale, at an unprecedented speed and, therefore, is extremely volatile. An urgent task in the study of globalization and migration is to understand the international labor system of the "new economy". In this context, unlike in the colonial past, it is capital chasing labor rather than the other way around. The structure and dynamics of this "chase" have been admirably delineated in a recent ethnographic study of the principal agents by which Indian IT professionals, or instance, move globally (Xiang 2001: 23–90). Biao Xiang studied Indian IT professionals migrating to Australia through spells of fieldwork done in Sydney and Hyderabad. He later theorized this trans-national stratum of Indian migrants to Australia as being an "ethnic trans-national middle class in formation" (Xiang 2002). This exercise reveals not only the spatio-temporal discontinuity but also, more interestingly, certain ethno-practical continuities between the old and new diaspora of Indians.

The third major imperative of globalization are the trans-national networks. According to S. J. Tambiah (2000: 140) two broad sets of networks may be differentiated for purposes of analysis. "Vertical" networks, which are formed within "host" societies when "communities" are constituted, either voluntarily or forcefully, in order to devise conscious strategies to fight discrimination as well as to succeed economically. The second set of networks, i.e., "lateral" networks are in turn of two types: (*i*) between host society and society of origin/homeland, and (*ii*) trans-national global networks where transmigrants across the world communicate with each other and maintain trans-national links, especially through media and travel. What is lacking in Tambiah's concept of networks, however, is the dimension of social stratification, which we may analyze in terms of class, culture and mobility in both the old and new diasporas (R. K. Jain 2004). To generalise then, from my perspective, vertical networks are those which have ramifications across classes — these are inter-class, asymmetrical networks — while horizontal and symmetrical networks rest on the intra-class solidarity. As regards their embeddedness, diasporic networks cut across locations because, as pointed out earlier, these are configured in "space" rather than fixed "places" (de Certeau 1984), though locations are created

(cf. Bhabha 1994 on "location of culture" and "social space" in Henri Lefebvre's sense) in the process of social life. In concrete terms, then, transmigration constitutes a space *sui generis*. As we shall see, Xiang's empirical demonstration of the formation of an "ethnic trans-national middle class" supports my conceptualisation.[3] To cautiously generalise further, a network analysis of the globalization process enables one to look at it from both "below" and "above"; the exhortation, therefore, to "think global and act local" from the perspective of underdeveloped societies is not innocent of a class connotation.

Contemporaneously, trans-nation exists in tension with the nation, and this impinges on the opportunity-horizons of the transmigrants, their advantages and disadvantages. As Stéphane Dufoix has argued perceptively, being far from home is often a rupture, and for the last two centuries state authorities and those living far from the referent-origin — state, nation or territory — have been trying to fight this. Put simply, from the viewpoint of the transmigrants and their referent-origin, particularly the nation-state, there is a simultaneously and reciprocal dynamic of "holding on and letting go". To understand this dynamic, let us examine a little closely the governmental context of transmigration, namely, the management of democracy and cultural difference in a nation-state. In the trans-nation (or, more precisely, trans-state) arena this implies finding solutions to the xenophobic sentiment of the native population vis-à-vis migrants, and the liberal democratic state persuading its citizenry as a whole to embrace the legal and moral consensus known as multiculturalism. Ironically, the governmental solution in these circumstances, namely the finding of a consensus on multiculturalism, is hamstrung by the very characteristics of trans-nationalism. As Katherine Verdery (1993: 43–44), admittedly writing from the vantage point of developed, western nation-states, puts it:

> In the world of today...a given empirical case realizes the classic nation-state form only imperfectly. Scholars and others have begun to suspect that the modern state form is, if not dying out, undergoing a major reconfiguration. The international weapons trade has made a mockery of the state's monopoly on the means of violence. Capital's extraordinary mobility means that as it moves from areas of higher to areas of lower taxation, many states lose some of their revenue and industrial base, and this constrains their ability to attract capital or shape its flow.

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[3] For a recent analysis of Indian IT workers' horizontal or intra-class networks, see Upadhya (2004).

The increased flow of capital — and of populations, in its wake, producing the much commented phenomenon of trans-nationalism — calls into question in an unprecedented way all these arbitrary, taken-for-granted nation-state boundaries.

Is it any wonder, then, that faced with such overarching contradictions between the nation-state and the trans-nation, the developed nation-state reinforces itself and capitulates, in terms of its own ideology of liberal democratic capitalism and self-interest, to the imperatives of a seriously compromised policy of "multiculturalism" towards transmigrants? There are clear examples of how the threshold of tolerance and support for transmigrants from culturally different societies in these nation-states (US, Canada and Australia, for example) becomes limited, and the ethnic difference of immigrant populations gets irrevocably embroiled in the class, gender and racial discriminations and prejudices of "host" societies.[4] While indirect governmental complicity in unbridled commercial interests is one side of the story, it would be a gross oversimplification to treat Indian transmigrants in their new locale simply as "victims" of an alien hegemonic order. As I have suggested in some of my other writings (R. K. Jain 2008; also Niranjana 2006), it is useful to explore how the Indian "caste" consciousness has transformed itself into a "racial" one through generations of living in the "old" diaspora of South Africa and Trinidad. And, if we were to learn from the methodological device of Marcel Mauss's ([1922] 1990) "total social fact" as applied to the phenomenon of diaspora, a similar impulse is discernible in post-Obama US (Shah 2009). The last named of these instances is also entwined with the "model minority" image of Indian immigrants in the US (Prashad 2000). It is a matter of singular irony that the new identities of Indian transmigrants abroad, cut across and transcend their "inherited" identities and differentiations based on religion, region, caste, language and even supposedly conservative ("identity bolstering") political affiliations to fundamentalist religious organizations.[5] That these

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[4] See, for example, analyses along these lines of recent violence against Indian students in Australia in Baas (2009) and the capitulation to racial and class hegemonies of the US by second-generation Indian transmigrants in Shah (2009).

[5] On this point, see Shah (2009), also Hansen (2002) for South Africa; for a somewhat essentialist analytical valorization of traditional Indian social institutions in the diaspora, to the neglect of historical and contextual changes in the societies of both origin and settlement, see Dufoix (2008: 45).

"primordial" identities and identifications are retained in the diaspora as diversities without being conflictual or counterproductive for societal integration, while as politicized ethnicities they are so in India itself, is something that the Indian government's representatives abroad (see R. K. Jain 2007a: 391) as well as analysts searching for "ideal" Indian unity and solidarity in the diaspora would do well to heed. If anything, it is likely that if handled properly the sociopolitical influence of the global, sub-ethnic linguistic and regional associations of Indian transmigrants (e.g., Bhat 1993) — emphasizing "difference" rather than hierarchy (for an early intimation of this, see Pocock 1957) — may lead to something like the "liberalization" of ethnic antagonisms within India itself, something resembling the co-existence of "nationalities" within China being accepted (legitimized?) by the state.[6]

In some of the writing, with particular reference to the overarching themes of globalization and trans-nationalism, there is an implicit critique of the celebratory focus on these in the academia and in journalistic writing. Steven Vertovec's timely review, "Conceiving and Researching Trans-nationalism" (1999) contains valuable insights into the present and future shape of researches in this direction. He mentions, for instance, the emphasis on networks calling into question the traditional definition of the state, which I have elsewhere (R. K. Jain 2002) shown to be the case as regards the Tamil diaspora in Malaysia. Also, Robin Cohen's (1995: 13) formulation, endorsed by Vertovec, that trans-national bonds no longer have to be cemented by exclusive territorial claims is reflected in my highlighting of the processes of "circulation". I am also in sympathy with Vertovec's observation that fractured memories of diaspora consciousness produce a multiplicity of histories, "communities" and selves, and, as he puts it, "a refusal of fixity often serving as a valuable resource for resisting repressive local or global situations" (Vertovec 1999: 451). My slight disagreement here would be that in certain situations of abject penury, such as that of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in camps in Sri Lanka, it is not so much the exercise of resistance as much as "coming to terms with" a crisis situation, thus implying a more reactive

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[6] Whether in China itself they are largely conflict-free or not is an open question, and if the former, is it because the nationalities are kept under the thumb of the peculiar autocratic-democratic regime and/or show-cased as such to the non-China world? In turn, is this on account of a historical feature of the Chinese political system where the dominant Han nationality has been the fulcrum of centralization around which other nationalities coalesced?

than proactive agency for the diasporics. Similarly, while it is alright for Appadurai and Breckenridge (1989) to think about a contest between "the politics of desire and imagination and politics of heritage and nostalgia" (cited in Vertovec 1999: 451), in the diasporics' response to the media in a trans-national field, there are national and nationalistic images in the mass media of films in India where precisely the accoutrements of mass technology — cellphones and FM radio — are used to create and simulate a "crossover" imagery. In this field of simulacrum I may refer to certain recent Bollywood films, such as *Rang de Basanti* and *Lage Raho Munna Bhai*, where a potentially trans-national media message impacts initially and powerfully national and nationalistic audiences. These media products render somewhat trite observations about complex ways in which these media are consumed by targeting specific ethnic or religious diasporas through Zee TV for instance (Vertovec 1999).

Nation

Let me sum up some of the methodological and strategic lessons that emerge from the foregoing discussion of diaspora and trans-nation and that are relevant to an understanding of the briefest but the most vital of the three sections in this Conclusion, namely, the nation. Studying the Indian diaspora not only helps reveal the nature of specific social institutions in India (the covariation between caste and Hinduism, for example; see R. K. Jain 2009) but the nature of the Indian nation-state, "holistically" speaking. The "horizons" of trans-nation in our times, both its limits and potentialities, discussed above in relation to transmigrants, have a salutary message for what we think about India as a nation-state, particularly regarding the building up of a welfare state and its cultural diplomacy. Two crucial observations made by Amartya Sen in his seminal (1982) and more recent (2009) contributions to politico-economic philosophy and practice are germane to the idea of the nation as stated by me at the outset. First, in contrast to the utopian and transcendent philosophies of thinkers such as Kant and Hegel, we pay more attention to the "pragmatic" thought of Adam Smith, J.S. Mills and Marx. As I see it, in relation to our stance towards the nation-state, it would disabuse our minds from the extreme rightist or leftist views on the withering away of the state. Importantly, our recognition of the welfare state in practical terms would also test and implement Sen's long-standing idea of the citizens' "entitlement". After all we do need a viable and tangible "state" to respond to the entitlements of the

citizenry in a civil society. This stands at odds with Partha Chatterjee's (2001) negativistic conceptualization of post-colonial "political society" in India where the Indian "population" in the absence and in violation of an orientation towards modernity (defined by Chatterjee in terms of a model of "pure" civil society) is doomed to a chaotic democracy in which ties between the state and the citizen are reduced to patron–client ties. The positive stance of Sen, on the other hand, speaks of the welfare nation-state's (normative) capacity to ameliorate injustice and reduce inequities in society. Similar anti-utopian arguments have been advanced by eminent Indian sociologists and anthropologists (Beteille 2008; Roy Burman 2008).

To put the matter for the Indian nation-state in perspective, let me return to the overarching contradiction between trans-nation and nation in Western Europe and other territories under the dominance of a neoliberal state system. As we have seen, the obliteration of boundaries between nation-states is at one level an empirical fact — the trans-state movement of arms, capital, population, and even sovereignty (Ong 1999) — is witness to it. And yet, in response to the assault from the trans-nation, the constraints of the nation-state in terms of law and order and policy remain intact, if not strengthened. Thus immigration laws, protectionism in trade, policies of outsourcing, environment and energy utilization, etc., have become more stringent. So let us be under no illusion: trans-state (popularly known as trans-nationalist) pressures lead not to the dilution but to the reinforcement of the state.[7] Let us also note that pluralism and multiculturalism are not unmediated by state power and national self-interest. This is starting to become a feature of political systems globally. There has for long been intellectual advocacy of what I would call an "evolutionary deficit" in conceiving the making of the nation-state in the Third World. In fact, much of the ideology of nation-building, so-called, in the Third World is built on an assumption of "not yet", namely, a stage in the evolution of civil society yet to be reached by the third world countries (Chakrabarty 2000). This pervasive myth of a valorized nexus between a nation-state and civil society in developed countries as the final stage for all others to aspire for and reach must be given a real hard look. For it is one thing to philosophize the "deficit" idea in terms of different concepts of historiography, as does Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) by philosophizing "the difference" which is

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[7] See, for a somewhat different take on the subject, particularly relating transnationalism to civil society, Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004).

at once cultural and politico-economic no less — but it is quite another matter to follow the track we are pursuing here, viz., to diagnose the discontent with the trans-nation phenomenon and reaction to it in terms of policies and supporting ideologies of governance within "developed" nation-states themselves. The "governmentality" of here and now in the long-established nation-states, viz., Australia or the US, with its covert and perhaps reluctant support to class and race discrimination of and among transmigrants, gives the lie to the application of the theory of "evolutionary deficit" to the Third World alone. It has the danger of degenerating into a kind of dogmatic and reactionary rationalization of theory and practice in social sciences.

Conclusion

What am I doing here, in an anthropological and sociological universe of discourse, speaking mostly of political science, philosophy, history or international relations? Let me begin with the trite observation that there is now a unity of the social sciences, for this is an age where the globalization of infrastructures has to be accompanied by — if not already there — a globalization of the mind. Second, the old chestnut of a disjunction between theory and application in the social sciences (not to speak of a heuristic separation) has to be discarded. Third, agency, subjectivity, reflexivity and proactivity have come to stay in our apprehension of social reality. Bearing on these matters, there is a pithy observation made by my social anthropological mentors at the Australian National University: "Description is analysis in yesterday's categories and analysis is description in tomorrow's categories" (Barnes and Epstein 1961). Fourth, and though this is a point in sociology as old as the hills, we must look at dynamics and change; both cohesion and conflict; thus avoiding reifications and essentialisms. Fifth and finally, I would like to say a few words on the necessity of *problematization* to move beyond defining phenomena for the sake of definitions (often purportedly of universal application).

Let me, as illustration, take two eternals in the sociology of India, namely, tribe and caste. I need not expostulate at length on the sociologists' need of doing some history, both backwards (so-called "presentist" history) and linear. Setting up some kind of "ideal types" is also a useful methodological device (for example, the idea of multiple modernities; see Tambiah 2000). But beyond these steps, there is also a need to weave something normative or ideal into our problematization.

Here, surely, the ideology of the researcher will play an important role and we shall have to confront it frontally by doing what Gunnar Myrdal (1944) suggested years ago, namely, making our implicit assumptions and biases open and explicit. To give one famous example, when Louis Dumont (1970) spoke of hierarchy and holism in Indian society and contrasted it with individualism in the West, he did not *openly* advocate his value preference for the former over the latter. In the event, while he is perceptive and sharp in his understanding of possessive individualism in the West (see Verdery 1993), his reading and characterization of the Indian hierarchies, e.g., the hand-in-glove relationship between jati and the pure and the impure in Hinduism; the absence of the individual in India except for the renouncer; the complete undermining of power and economic relationships in the Indian social structure (not even delineating the different cultural moulds into which these were cast), etc., remained sorely deficient because they were based on dominant *unstated* assumptions and value preferences. The second maneuver that I recommend for taking ideology on board along with our methodology is a thorough contextualization of the problem at hand. This too is nothing new but merits iteration because the parameters of this preliminary step have changed — our contextualization today demands "glocalization" to use a somewhat inelegant but useful term.

That this "local" in our contextualized problematique would have the "nation-state" as the important limiting case needs to be demonstrated. Fortunately, a recent example is available. In his report on "Human Ecology and Statutory Status of Ethnic Entities in Sikkim" (2008), Roy Burman (2008: viii) states, "I have long held the view that social science pursuit without commitment to social action is like carrying a dead body without life in it". Also, at a more philosophical level, I would like to quote his holistic ideology: "Two severe malaises haunt modern humans. The first is ecological crisis….The second crisis…is self-quarantined egoism parading as freely chosen individualism". Based on this vision, Roy Burman (*ibid.*: ix), using a perceptive methodological framework for his task points out the vulnerability of all communities (which he designates scheduled tribes), their communitarian character (and hence the need for the investigator to be sensitive to their collective self-perceptions), and, functionally, to carefully examine the communities' relations, both ecological and socio-economic, among themselves and with the outside world. It is not my purpose here to further expand on the epistemological basis of the task that Roy Burman set for himself, one that was carried out at the request of the Government

of Sikkim (and whose epistemology, I am told, the state sponsors found, unsurprisingly, somewhat incomprehensible!). Nor is it relevant to note the substantive criticisms made of the findings of the report, viz., the conventional ethnographic summaries of various communities without heeding the theoretically sophisticated emphasis Roy Burman had placed on their environmental adaptation and change. Similarly in this report there is the absence of a full and meaningful application by his anthropological collaborators of the practically useful contrast that he made between a diagnostic definition and functional implications and instrumentalities. An understanding of these contrasts was needed to devise measures for countering the communities' vulnerability. But one criticism that I would vehemently oppose is that the report was written under state patronage. In the published report itself Roy Burman gives a straightforward, blow-by-blow account of the circumstances and conditions on which he undertook and executed the task, including his intransigence on points where his autonomy and integrity as a scientist was sought to be compromised by state authorities. What stands out is this anthropologist's total commitment to a mission that was state spon-sored all the same.

This brings me back to the issue of problematization that I raised at the beginning of this section and to the anthropological and sociological focus on tribe and caste. As stated above, both philosophically and pragmatically speaking, neither the nation-state nor the bureaucracy (à la Weber) is to be wished away and an openly stated ideological stand combined with a critical and vigilant rapprochement with the welfare nation-state has to be factored into our research undertakings. If this is done then I can clearly see two pivotal areas where sociologists and social anthropologists can make an invaluable contribution to what has commonly been called nation-building, and this in their very own stomping ground. I refer, first, to tribal insurgency in the North East and the entire tribal belt of middle India infested by the "menace" of naxalism. Second, a serious and committed probe could be made into the problems and amelioration of the socially backward sections of our population, into what has hitherto been regarded narrowly as a jati or casteist phenomenon, a Dalit phenomenon or, at best, a subaltern stirring. As it appears now, both these issues are related to nation-state hegemony. Thus problematised, the phenomena of tribe and caste in India today need sociological investigation. It would require the study of situationally defined minority politics as "the art of the possible" (see, for an early foray, R. K. Jain 1996) under debilitating conditions

for vulnerable minorities of what Antonio Gramsci conceptualized as "transformist hegemony" (see Williams 1989) in a wayward welfare state. I shall dwell on this theme a little later, but this would be the diagnostic part (to use the Roy Burman approach), of which the functional counterpart would be to devise mechanisms (and to use the ones already in place more efficiently and holistically) to build a firm democratic welfare state energized by a progressively enlightened, responsive, and not too iniquitous civil society. In this we have no need to either jettison, or *imitate* from elsewhere, the practice of democracy in India. We may examine contextually and with a view to its feasibility what one of the prominent leaders of the disempowered communities of our nation-state has called the political act of "social engineering". And yet, as George Orwell (1953: 253–65) wrote more than half-a-century ago: "The worst thing one can do with words is to surrender to them". If language is to be "an instrument of expressing and not for concealing thought", he continued, one must "let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way about" (*ibid.*). This, then, is the task before us as social scientists.

Epilogue: On Nationalism

With my resurrection of the concept and practicality of the nation as the sociologists' limiting framework in a globalized world, it may be assumed that I take a *nationalist* position. But that would be a mistake. In most known empirical instances, hegemonic nationalism perverts the functions of each of the "nation-state" copula: on the one hand, it pushes the law and order machinery of the state in a repressive direction thus impeding its welfare functions. On the other hand, the homogenizing cultural telos of the nation thwarts the enriching diversities of its constituent nationalities. Both these constraints stifle the nation-state's organic linkages with civil society. The regress of extreme nationalism into fascism in recent European history continues to ring loud and clear in our ears. It would take me far outside the present brief were I to spell out in detail the distinction I would make as a sociologist and social anthropologist between *patriotism* and nationalism. Suffice it to say that for me the exemplar of patriotism (*contra* nationalism) is Rabindranath Tagore, whose rootedness in Bengali culture and the vernacular was perfectly compatible, indeed significantly contributive, to his bilingualism and intellectual multilingualism in a trans-national arena. To my mind the poet and visionary Tagore could never be fitted

into a model of modernity filiated to an imprint of British colonialism alone, viz., the "pure" civil society of Partha Chatterjee's conception. That precisely is the reason why the "nationalism" of his historical conjuncture was an anathema to Tagore (see Nandy 1994).

As social scientists, a more powerful reason for not regressing into national*ism* is, as I mentioned earlier, to avoid the pitfalls of a closed mindset; indeed, to seek globalization of the mind. In this process I would like to underscore that in my discussion of the "trans-nation" I have discussed certain discontents with the phenomenon but also its inevitability and its redeeming features. If as Indians we wish to learn from the experiences of others, especially the experience that diaspora has highlighted about the nature of the nation-state and trans-state in juxtaposition and contradiction to each other, then we stand to gain from the study of both the strength and weaknesses of this conjuncture.

Finally, nationalism, in most of its accepted senses, masquerading as the mainstream, is a propeller or motor of what I have referred to earlier as Gramsci's notion of the "transformist hegemony" of the nation-state. It debilitates and vitiates the goals of the welfare state, particularly with regard to the minorities and "substantialized ethnicities" that tribal and caste entities really are. As fractionalized minorities these entities experience a double-bind, identitarian as well as pragmatic. On the one hand, the burgeoning nationalism of the hegemonic modern state controlled by the dominant majority demands from them a contribution to the imaginary common patrimony of a single, unified and homogeneous nation. On the other hand, their heterogeneous and ethnically conceived "root" identities and identifications repulse them from hanging on to the coat-tails of an alien entity called the nation. This dilemma of the minorities in the nation-state too is a lesson we learn forcefully from the predicament of Indian transmigrant minorities settled in multicultural nation-states globally.

I also wish to incorporate here a disclaimer by way of a note. The subject I have chosen is vast and within the scope of this book I could have hardly hoped to do it complete justice. Were I to integrate more fully in my discourse the perspectives of international relations and political science, for example, I should have dealt with international organizations (both governmental and non-governmental), border issues and what is sometimes called a trans-national civil society, especially by the human rights activists, in greater detail. That, however, will have to await a more extended treatment.

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