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# Beyond Multiculturalism

Views from Anthropology

Edited by Giuliana B. Prato



# BEYOND MULTICULTURALISM

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Views from Anthropology

*Edited by*

GIULIANA B. PRATO  
*University of Kent, UK*

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction – Beyond Multiculturalism: Anthropology at the Intersections Between the Local, the National and the Global

Giuliana B. Prato

In an article written in 2004, titled *Beyond the Multicultural Ghetto*, Ali Hossaini expresses his uneasiness with multiculturalism by briefly describing his family origin. He was born, he says, in West Virginia to *American* parents. His father was originally from Iraq, and his father's mother came from Iran. Hossaini's mother is from Ohio but his mother's mother was from a Slovakian mountain village, where her Serb father had migrated from Croatia. Hossaini's father's family were Shi'a Muslims and her mother's were Baptists. His mother's sister married a Jew. Hossaini describes himself as an American citizen and in the attempt to define his identity he refers to a dialogue from the film *The Deer Hunter*; having been asked about the Russian origin of his surname, the soldier in question replies that it is American. Hossaini's article, raises fundamental questions on the meaning of being American and on the 'multicultural' nature of the US. It also reopens a long-forgotten window from which to look at the 'uniqueness' of cultures, leading to the need to revisit and unpack the meaning of multiculturalism itself.

With the aim of grappling with the complexity of the current debate on this problematic issue, this volume brings together revised and expanded versions of selected papers discussed at the XV International Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, held in Florence in 2003. This event stimulated in-depth and lively debate,<sup>1</sup> which continued through exchanges of correspondence involving scholars who had not participated in the Congress. One of them, Jerome Krase, has written a chapter that enhances the ethnographic and intellectual scope and strength of this collective effort, contributing substantially to the complexity of an anthropological analysis of 'multiculturalism'. As an integrated whole, this collection of essays offers empirically-based insights in what is reasonably identified as an increasingly complex, and comparably ambiguous, 'concept'. It encourages sobering reflection on the need to clarify key aspects of the concept of 'multiculturalism' and its varied intellectual uses in our study

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1 I would like to acknowledge the contribution given by Jonathan Parry, Alex Weingrod, Marietta Ortega Perrier and Freek Colombijn, who fully engaged in the discussions offering informed criticism and feedback.

of diversified societies. It also alerts us to worrying dangers engendered by its application as an undisputedly benign political principle.

### **Multiculturalism: A Category?**

Multiculturalism has been passionately defended, criticized, defined and redefined. Those who support the project of multiculturalism do so in the name of equality and civil rights, stressing its positive value for a tolerant society and for the construction of social harmony. However, even among those who in principle advocate multiculturalism, criticism has been expressed of policies that continue to exoticize 'otherness' (see, for example, Grillo 1998). These critical supporters have identified such policies as mere 'tokenism'. Significantly, distinguishing between 'difference multiculturalism' and 'critical multiculturalism', Turner (1994) points out that the political goal of difference multiculturalism is a reductionist celebration of diversity (see also Grillo 1998), while the challenges posed by critical multiculturalism would provide the basis for a more vital and 'democratic common culture' (1994, p. 408). Stronger critics argue that multiculturalism is a basically divisive concept that ultimately favours one community over another, fuelling competition and conflict. In their view, it exacerbates ethnic differences, essentializing them and limiting the individual's scope for the definition of self-identity; they therefore identify multiculturalism as a radical form of political correctness that runs counter to the very liberal principles that its supporters advocate in its defence. Kymlicka (1996), a multiculturalist, raises a challenging point when he argues that multiculturalism (both as a concept and as a political project) is above all confusing as it draws on the ambiguity between 'multinationalism' and 'polyethnicity', which he associates respectively to the coexistence within a political unit of previously self-governing societies and to immigration. He also suggests (2001) that the minority rights claims of indigenous people are necessarily different from those of immigrants; consequently, different policies are needed to ensure justice.<sup>2</sup>

Here, it will be useful to remind the reader that different disciplinary approaches have influenced the direction of this debate, addressing different aspects of multiculturalism such as education, tolerance, liberal principles, individual freedom and choice, group identity, minority rights, preservation of cultural diversity and so on. Surprisingly, however, anthropologists have largely ignored the initial debate (but see Gupta and Ferguson 1992). At the same time, the anthropological tradition has virtually been ignored by the other disciplines engaged in such a debate.

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2 The collection of essays edited by Goldberg (1994) provides an articulated overview in this line. More recently, Tariq Modood (2007) has argued that, although multicultural recognition might have its limits, multiculturalism provides the basis for democratic citizenship and civic equality.

As Watson (2000) points out, a fundamental problem with the word multiculturalism is that different scholars (and policy-makers) appear to apply different meanings to it. Most important, it is increasingly recognized that this word often embraces a view of ‘closed’, self-perpetuating cultures. In this sense, culture is treated as a ‘thing’, an object to be possessed and shared by a strictly defined group of people and which sets the group apart from other groups. Anthropological studies have demonstrated the methodological and theoretical weaknesses of such an interpretation of cultures, and have challenged the association of the distinctiveness of each culture with cultural closure.<sup>3</sup> They have also pointed out that cultural boundaries do not set cultures apart; instead they are permeable, thus promoting change.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the notion of the closed uniqueness of cultures would appear basically to conflict with individual choice and with the freedom to define one’s own identity, sometimes even leading to ‘rejection’ of one’s inherited cultural identity (Gutmann 1994). Significantly, as Gross (1999) points out, modern democracies need to maintain the right balance between individual and collective spheres. According to him, central to a democratic multi-ethnic state is the direct association of individuals, not groups or corporations. In such a society, citizens carry at least two identities; universal and particular, the latter takes most often the form of ethnic identity. However, particular, ethnic identity can acquire a positive value only if it does not shadow the universal identity of the citizen who shares society’s common norms and values. Later, I shall expand on issues of citizenship that are raised by the politics of multiculturalism and on the conflict between cultural identity and individual choice. For now, let me address the issue of the distinctiveness of cultures and the contribution of anthropology to an informed approach to multiculturalism.

### **Multiculturalism, or the Triumph of Relativism?**

Nineteenth century anthropological definitions of culture have included morals, custom, law, arts, belief, knowledge and religion. Anthropologists have generally agreed that these characteristics are shared by all cultures, though they are expressed in different ways in different societies, and individuals’ ‘interpretations of culture’ are not identical. This line of thought has led to the analytical distinction between people’s actual behaviour and their abstract beliefs and values. From an anthropological point of view, culture has usually been identified as a set of rules, standards of behaviour and values (a sort of Weberian ideal-type) which are shared

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3 The anthropological literature on this issue is, of course, vast. As an example of the complexity of anthropological analysis of culture and ethnic boundaries, see Barth (1995).

4 In anthropology, this aspect has been masterfully addressed by Edmund Leach (1954) in his analysis of the Katchin; in particular, Leach has shown how individual choices may bring about changes that promote the continuity of the social structure, rather than subversive structural changes.



and accepted as proper by the members of a society, or of a specific social group. Such rules and standards make the actions of the individual intelligible to the other members of that society or group of individuals.<sup>5</sup> Baumann (1999) argues that this view of culture as a catalogue of ideas and practices is an essentialist concept. He suggests that a processual concept should be added, whereby culture, as a constantly changing entity, only exists in the act of being performed. Referring to the anthropological tradition, Joppke and Lukes (1999) spell out the key distinction between culture (in the singular) as a 'context-transcending' product of symbol specialists and the social practices that take place within the collectivity. Quite significantly, they go on to say that, drawing on the historical notion of cultures in the plural, the anti-élitist and relativist approach of some anthropologists has provided the bedrock of multiculturalism.

Of course, reality is more complex than ideal-typical definitions would lead us to believe. The anthropological debate does indeed bring to light two interrelated questions that are of particular significance to the study of multiculturalism. One regards the 'equality' between cultures, leading to debates on the political recognition of minorities and their culture (Taylor 1994). The other relates to the cultural variations that exist in a given society, raising the issue of *cultural pluralism*. In an attempt to disentangle the complexity of this framework, it is now necessary to expand on the development of the anthropological concept of culture.

I shall start by bringing to mind the intellectual trajectory, in anthropology, from an evolutionist approach – according to which some cultures are inferior to others – to the position that all cultures are of equal value. Theorized in the late nineteenth century by Boas (1911), and further developed by his students (see, especially Benedict 1934), this egalitarian principle led many anthropologists to embrace *cultural relativism*. According to Marcus and Fisher (1986), cultural relativism was in part a response to Western ethnocentrism, against which many anthropologists reacted by investing themselves with the duty to salvage those cultural forms that they saw threatened by global Westernization.<sup>6</sup> More generally, such an approach brought about a self-destructive attack on anthropology's commitment to ethnographic fieldwork and analysis, whereby the possibility of objective knowledge was thoroughly dismissed and universalism was labelled as 'the ethnocentrism of the dominant group' (Joppke and Lukes 1999, p. 5).<sup>7</sup> It must be pointed out, however, that cultural relativism was initially elaborated as a

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5 To complicate the debate further, in the 1990s anthropologists began to question whether such a concept as society still had theoretical relevance (see, for example, Strathern et al. 1996). Needless to say, such a challenge to the concept of society implicitly denies relevance to the aforementioned definitions of culture.

6 Charles Taylor (1994) argues that multiculturalism has inherited such an anti-Western anti-colonial disposition (see also Sahlins 1993).

7 In a seminal work Gellner (1992) vigorously castigated such a post-modernist approach as a destabilizing turn. Ardner (1985) linked the decline of Modernism in social

methodological concept. According to Boas, being of equal value, cultures should be studied from a neutral point of view. He rejected the evolutionary classifications of cultures and their attendant ethnocentric value judgements. However well intentioned, the popularization of cultural relativism, especially after World War II, led to the erroneous association of ‘cultural’ relativism to ‘moral’ relativism. The implications of such a misconception are particularly relevant to the contemporary debate on multiculturalism.

The popularization of cultural relativism after World War II was somehow a reaction to such historical events as Nazism, and to colonialism, ethnocentrism and racism more generally. However, if, on the one hand, the intention of relativism was to avoid justification of humanitarian crimes (such as genocide), on the other hand, its underlying principle that people’s behaviour should be understood in the context of a given cultural and social system raised fundamental ethical dilemmas which became particularly obvious when attempts were made to influence the UN’s Declaration of Human Rights. There is indeed a fundamental flaw to moral relativism, tellingly encapsulated by the conundrum, should liberal democratic societies condone everything – including conquest, genocide, discrimination, denial of freedom and civil rights – because of their underlying cultural values, or should they fight such events on the basis of their liberal principles of tolerance, justice and civil rights?<sup>8</sup> It is precisely the combination of the aforementioned flaw and the correspondingly flawed ways in which a methodological ‘tool’ (that is, cultural relativism) for understanding cultural diversity is translated into policies that raises concerns about the contemporary political project of multiculturalism.

Echoing political criticism of cultural relativism,<sup>9</sup> the political commentator Matthew Parris addressed the potential dangers of multiculturalism in an article published in *Times Online* in January 2004. In his view, multiculturalism could lead to a disguised form of apartheid. He especially questioned the validity of *particularist* multiculturalism and its approach to the alleged preservation of cultural differences. Particularistic multiculturalism is represented by the idea of the ‘melting pot’ (the US are usually singled out as an example) and aims at recognizing the contribution of each culture, or subculture, to the whole culture of a country. This is different from *pluralist* multiculturalism, which encourages the preservation of cultural diversity within the context of overarching values; different cultures would thus interact peacefully, while maintaining their cultural diversity – Canada and Australia are usually cited as examples of such a ‘cultural

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anthropology to the renewed debate on rationality that put an end to the optimistic faith in ‘scientific’ reason and technology that followed the Enlightenment.

8 Gellner (1995) noted that there is an inevitable paradox in the liberal tradition in so far as it embraces tolerance for diversity while elevating liberalism itself to the status of universal transcendental value. Bhikhu Parekh (1994) has argued that liberalism is intolerant of non-Western cultures.

9 See, in particular, Stocking’s observation that, though cultural relativism aimed at attacking racialism, it can be seen as a sort of ‘neo-racialism’ (1982).

mosaic' (Ravitch 1990). According to Parris, particularistic multiculturalism could dangerously lead to the radicalization of cultural differences and the creation of cultural ghettos, as opposed to encouraging true political recognition. Similarly, in April 2005, Trevor Phillips, the Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality raised controversy as he was widely reported saying that the term multiculturalism should be scrapped (*BBC News*); he further argued that tolerance for diversity has led to the further isolation of some communities and has identified multiculturalism as a reason for the lack of integration of some minority groups in British society. Moreover, many fundamental rights – civil, minority, ethnic and human, to name just a few – seem to clash under its umbrella; the protection of the rights of a specific group is received as a tyrannical dictate by others. Does this mean that after all multiculturalism is a disguised form of dictatorship; specifically, the dictatorship of relativism?

### **Multiculturalism and Substantive Citizenship**

Multiculturalism is above all a descriptive concept. The expression 'multicultural society' was first applied in the 1950s to Switzerland, where cultural pluralism had been translated into policy.<sup>10</sup> Swiss cultural pluralism has been traditionally associated to the federation of different language-speaking Cantons (German, French and Italian) and their attendant cultural traditions, rather than to immigration. To this extent, Italy, perhaps more than France or Britain, could be regarded as traditionally a culturally pluralist country, where administrative districts like the province of Bolzano (South Tyrol) are granted a special statute in order to preserve linguistic diversity.<sup>11</sup> However, the Italian case also shows that the definition of linguistic minority is in itself contentious.

The contributions offered in this volume address from different ethnographic viewpoints the intellectual challenges that I have outlined. Drawing on historical and contemporary data on Albanian migrations in Italy, Prato's chapter examines a major limitation of multiculturalism, specifically the implication that culturally homogeneous minority groups, rigidly bound, co-exist in an equally homogeneous majority society. The Arbëresh case shows that not always linguistic minorities are culturally or socially homogeneous. In the past, their integration into Italian society was made possible by the host society's tolerance of diversity within the context of common shared values. Bringing to mind Pardo's analysis of the present situation involving native Italians and immigrants (Chapter 6), when discrimination occurred, the Arbëresh shared the same predicament with significant sections of

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10 At the time, a distinction was not clearly made between multiculturalism and cultural pluralism. I shall discuss this sociologically significant distinction in a later section.

11 On contemporary multicultural policies in Italy, see Pardo's chapter (see also Grillo and Pratt (eds) 2002).

the Italian autochthonous population. In contrast, recent legislation has stirred up a resurgence of ethnicity, which is fostering the creation of new social boundaries. The positive discrimination engendered by such legislation creates new forms of inequality, as it gives access to privileges (social, cultural, political and economic) to selected minorities. In line with the point made by Joppke and Lukes (1999), this ethnography shows that granting special rights or privileged treatment to minority groups not only may fuel inter-minority competition and resentment from members of the majority; more crucially, such course of action can seriously undermine the integrative function of citizenship.

In his study of the Naples situation, Pardo shows how the contradictions that emerge from these new forms of inequalities tend to be expediently glossed over in what he describes as a problematic economic and political environment. Pardo examines the interaction between native people and legal and illegal immigrants in the context of a substantially weak relationship between citizenship and governance. Stressing the need for further empirical research into the legitimacy and morality of governance and legislation, his ethnographic analysis brings out both the existing inequalities among native people and the impact of immigration on the tension between tolerance and toleration. Pardo's chapter shows how mutually beneficial and productive relationships between native people and immigrants develop in the absence of relevant conflict in terms of culture and value-systems, whereas the stances and actions of radicalized immigrant groups often engender conflict. Some immigrants' commitment to integration clearly emerges to be directly dependent on strategies that not only involve gaining formal employment but also, more crucially, a commitment to socializing with the native population and learning about and more generally getting on with their way of life. Significantly, Pardo shows that the failed integration of immigrants must be understood in a broader sociological framework that is marked by the failed full integration of a large proportion of the native population.

We should ask, therefore, whether multiculturalism (not only as a theory but, more crucially, as a political practice) does promote equality of opportunity. In other words, we should ask whether the protection of minorities or, more generally, of cultural diversity alone eliminate discrimination. Wieviorka argues that multiculturalism 'celebrates and seeks to protect cultural variety – for example, minority languages' (1998, p. 881) – but he also acknowledges that the cultural aspect cannot be separated from social and economic aspects. Crucially, taking into account the social, political and economic integration of all groups in any given society raises fundamental issues of substantive citizenship.<sup>12</sup>

Even in countries such as Canada, a traditionally 'multicultural' society, protection of cultural diversity no longer appears to guarantee equal opportunity,

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12 See Brubaker (1992) on the distinction between formal and substantive citizenship. As I argue elsewhere (2006), citizenship not only defines legal and social status but also the standard parameters for political identity and the requirements of duties and the expectations of rights.

especially regarding access to employment or promotion. Indeed, Canada makes a particularly enlightening case in the study of contemporary multiculturalism. There, multiculturalism was applied in the late 1960s to guarantee the ‘peaceful’ co-existence of the Francophone and Anglophone communities and, later, of these communities and the indigenous populations. Initially set up to deal with the French-speaking minority, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism soon realized that any Government Act could not ignore the grievances of indigenous people and of those Canadians of neither English or French descent (at the time, these were mainly immigrants from Western and Southern Europe). Thus, following the first Multicultural Act of 1971, Canada abandoned its vision of hyphenated bilingual and bicultural society, and was officially declared an unhyphenated multicultural society. At the same time, native ethnic groups successfully claimed economic privileges.<sup>13</sup> However, as Fong’s chapter demonstrates, new immigrants, mainly from Eastern Europe and non-European countries, are finding it difficult to integrate in Canadian society. In a situation of strong urban economic competition, these new ‘visible’ immigrants face poverty, segregation, racial discrimination and exploitation even from their own ethnic groups. Fong suggests that the existing legislation is incapable of accommodating both the needs of the new immigrants and the needs of Canadian society as a whole. His discussion of contemporary urban Canada enlighteningly expands Wieviorka’s description of Canada as a form of ‘relatively integrated multiculturalism’ (1998, p. 884), in so far as the cultural question appears to be currently separated from the economic question. According to Wieviorka, the active participation of minorities in the economic life of the country is a key aspect to their inclusion, leading to the recognition of their cultural differences and, possibly, to ‘multicultural citizenship’ à la Castles (1994), whereby a country’s Constitution and its laws are accepted by all citizens alongside respect for cultural diversity, civic equality and economic cohesion. Castles sees multicultural citizenship as a ‘state-building’ project that guarantees civic equality of indigenous people *as well as* immigrants. In contrast, Kymlicka (1995) appears to restrict multicultural citizenship to territorial homeland minorities; non-territorial groups, which inevitably include immigrants, would have no place in such a multicultural vision.

While Canada is described as an example of relatively integrated multiculturalism, Wieviorka (1998) describes the US as an example of ‘disintegrated multiculturalism’. Martin Luther King’s campaign for civil rights is misleadingly presented as the trigger of multicultural policies in the US. Based on equal and individual citizenship, that campaign for civil rights advocated equality for all members of the US, regardless of race, religion or colour. However, Baumann (1999) points to two transformations of the underlying logic of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, both of which run counter to individual citizenship rights;

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13 As exemplified by the cases of Australia, India, China and many South American countries, the principle of establishing policies of economic support to or privileges for indigenous ethnic minorities has been applied in different ways in different countries. Very often, such policies are seen as unfair discrimination against the ethnic majority.

they are, the promotion of ethnic rights and the promotion of community rights for religious groups. Apart from excluding so-called non- or half-ethnic individuals and non-believers, these two transformations have brought about various forms of positive discrimination, whereby people are accorded rights solely because of their religion or ethnicity. Baumann argues that such positive discrimination has led to the separation of the ethnic communities from the state as a whole. These communities are consequently thought of as ‘a social body with its own political rights’ (Baumann 1999, p. 10). Consequently, they risk being seen as either problem groups or pampered minorities. Apart from leading to a new form of ghettoization reminiscent of Parris’ point outlined earlier, this situation inevitably breeds resentment and suspicion between groups.

Marked by a mixture of affirmative action and recognition of and respect for any form of diversity, the US contemporary situation is complicated by the process of transnationalism.<sup>14</sup> Such a complication is explored in depth by Rubel and Rossman, focusing on the nature of transnational families and their integration in the host communities. In their chapter, they persuasively argue that the transnational family is a most significant aspect of diaspora populations; because of increasing globalization and migration for economic reasons, it has become much more important than it was in the past. Rubel and Rossman examine families that have experienced a diaspora and the various kinds of ties that migrants maintain with their kinsmen in the homeland. Among Tongans, Dominicans, Sikhs, Chinese, Pakistanis and Indians, the nature of the transnational family is found to vary in relation to the nature of the social structure characteristic of the homeland. Addressing a key issue in anthropology, Rubel and Rossman demonstrate that kinship structure plays an important role in determining the nature and degree of integration of these ethnic groups.

The impact of transnationalism is also addressed by Fong, who suggests that this form of migration, which implies that individuals or groups have chosen to live only partly in the host country, demands policies other than those inspired by the ‘concept’ of multiculturalism. Linking to Pardo’s discussion, Fong shows that the ties established within the ethnic community raise significant issues on the practical, political and economic meaning of integration, on the contribution of migrants to the host country and on the opposition between individual identity and group identity.

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14 In the US, recognition of diversity materialized in the introduction of a multicultural curriculum in education, which generated a heated debate among academics, intellectuals and the media. Such a policy is now widely adopted in many Western countries, including Britain. However, even those who initially welcomed such an initiative have subsequently pointed out its limitations (Grillo 1998). In particular, it is noted that the emphasis on recognition of diversity has pushed forward a vaguely defined policy of ‘differentiation’ that de facto perpetuates institutionalized disadvantages. Moreover, such an emphasis has produced a dumbed-down culture (in the etymological sense of ‘cultivating’) in so far as it has attempted to appeal to the broadest possible audience. Of course, the broader the appeal the lower the common denominator.

## **Individualism and Group Identity in Multi-Ethnic Societies**

Wiewiorka (1998) has argued that the individualism of modern society maintains a 'paradoxical relationship' with collective identities, particularly cultural identities. On the one hand, individuals wish to maintain a sense of belonging, of a collective identity and, most significantly, they do not want to be stigmatized for this. On the other hand, they also seek to achieve a degree of personal freedom and do not want to be restricted in their choices by some superimposed obligation. Burnier indirectly addresses this problematic in the discussion of her Brazilian ethnography, pointing out how focusing on oneself – or a few others who are regarded as similar – may lead to isolation and intolerance. Rather than focusing on indigenous rights,<sup>15</sup> Burnier offers a case study of a group of technicians with a working-class rural background and examines the ways in which they interact with the values and practices found in the urban world of late modernity. She investigates the extent to which these rural migrants remain faithful to the cultural tradition of their group of origin and describes how, faced with the rationality of late modernity and its emphasis on individualism and instrumental reasoning directed to productivity, they go through a cultural transition that bears significant consequences for the ways in which they represent themselves, the other and the world. Such a process leads to the formation of multiple identities that are frequently fragmented and contradictory. Other traditionally multi-ethnic societies, such as China, appear to present a different scenario.

Contemporary China makes an intriguing case of ethnic interaction and multi-ethnic policies. Gladney (1997) suggests that historically, and more forcefully following the Communist revolution, the Chinese state's policy has been characterized by a drive to 'educate' ethnic minorities to the superior culture of the dominant Han ethnic group. He goes on to say that such a policy of assimilation led to the myth of ethnic homogeneity, which encouraged ethnic minorities to pass themselves off as Han in order to claim superior status. Recently, however, the Chinese government has implemented policies of economic support for ethnic minorities; accordingly, people are redefining their ethnic identity in order to gain access to privileges and resources. Although Zhang Jijiao's chapter does not address directly the state's policies on ethnic minorities, it provides an interesting description of imbalanced competition among ethnic groups. Jijiao examines changing patterns of widespread migration from rural to urban areas. He focuses on stereotypes that the ethnic groups hold about each other and on the ways in which such stereotypes affect both the relations between the majority population and ethnic minorities and the relations between different ethnic minorities. However,

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15 It is worth noting that most studies of South American Countries have addressed local movements of indigenous people, linking such movements to historical processes of colonization (see, for example, Whitten 1996 and Ortega Perrier 2006). Whitten argues that the claims of these local groups have found a sympathetic international response thanks to their ability to link up with other indigenous groups worldwide.



Jijiao suggests that when ethnic conflict occurs, ethnic stereotypes provide only a partial explanation. He argues that the 'root of conflict' rests on the imbalance of power between different groups, especially in economic transactions. His main point is that in the contemporary reality of urban China universally-accepted rules of market competition have replaced cultural and religious elements in defining ethnic identity. The questions remain, of course, open as to what extent the Chinese government's new policies of distribution of resources are affecting such market competition and as to the ways in which 'multicultural' policies are applied, and received, at local government level.

It is obvious that the official endorsement of ethnic minorities cannot be taken as an endorsement of multiculturalism, for China, as other Asian countries that are culturally diverse, seems to be multicultural only in a descriptive sense. While Jijiao discusses China as a diverse and multicultural society, Chaudhuri suggests that distinct cultural patterns are maintained in urban India. Her chapter studies the residential patterns of ethnic communities, linking rural migration to urban growth and economic opportunities. She argues that in cities like Kolkata religious and linguistic background and geographical origin play a crucial role in the choice of residence. Patterns of spatial distribution promote in-group interaction rather than inter-ethnic exchanges, thus strengthening distinct socio-cultural traditions. Chaudhuri states that the persistence of traditional social cleavages such as caste, religion and language perpetuates community identity even when people interact in the work place or when they belong to the same political party. Parry (2000) notes that in India the roots of economic failure are political, at the same time pointing to 'the menace of the tyranny of the religious majority' (2000, p. 27). Moreover, when we contextualize 'community identity' in the pluralist self-image of Indian society, such social cleavages acquire a more analytically significant dimension. As Kapila (2008) says, pluralism, equity (rather than equality) and redistributive justice are key principles of India's Constitution. In a situation in which, as Parry indicates (2000), the state has not delivered the prosperity it promised, these principles rest upon a policy of positive discrimination that, though designed to integrate into the modern independent state groups that have experienced exploitation and discrimination, has in fact led to the classificatory definition of 'scheduled castes' and 'scheduled tribes'.

The Chinese and the Indian cases discussed in this volume would suggest that multi-ethnic interaction leads to the entrenchment of group identity, leaving little room for individual negotiation. Interestingly, in the Chinese case, the pursuit of economic interest is not linked to individual achievement; it is linked instead to the attempt to change the status of one's ethnic group in a situation of 'imbalanced competition', suggesting that communalism continues to prevail over individualism. Of course, the case made by traditionally multi-ethnic societies is significantly different from that made by societies that experience external migration. The case of young immigrants in Vienna studied by Mayer in her chapter, offers interesting stimuli for comparison. Mayer describes how young immigrants move between their families' 'back home' approach and the Viennese urban society, where they



feel they are economically and culturally marginalized. She examines their culture and the strategies developed by peer groups in their attempt to define their identity and find their place in the wider society. Group members support each other against what they see as repressive institutions; in particular, the school, the police and the welfare system, but also their own families and the culture that they represent. In the process of adjustment, they try to bring together aspects from different cultures and thus create a new way of life that includes a specific group structure and organization. Mayer suggests that the formation of peer groups, and peer-group identity, may constitute an emotional and intellectual resource for its members, but this can also become an obstacle to integration and access to mainstream society.

Vázquez and Rodríguez offer an alternative view on this issue of individual and collective identity from the standpoint that the concept of identity conveys a meaning of immutability and crystallization. They suggest the alternative concept of identity process as part of a critical reflection on the concept of multiculturalism as opposed to pluri-culturalism. Through a descriptive analysis of ethnographic material that combines ethno-linguistic and an historical anthropological approach, their chapter confutes the immutable view of ethnic identity, pointing to the significance of the dynamics of change in our understanding of cultural processes. They suggest that ethnic identity should be regarded as a 'provisional form' of identity which is adopted in a particular historical and social context and at a particular time in socio-ethnic relationships. More generally, they argue that, in a continuous process of change, 'identity must stand on its own contradictions'. In such a context, tradition itself is a process of re-elaboration of the past, through acculturation, migration, religious syncretism and linguistic and cultural interference. Identity is thus centred on the construction, reproduction and re-elaboration of the processes of symbolic interaction and cultural syncretism.

The ethnographies discussed so far should alert us to the fact that different historical, social, economic and political conditions demand different forms of coexistence of cultural and ethnic diversity. Of course, this would by no means justify advocating some unrestrained form of relativism, for I would suggest that peaceful coexistence itself is a fundamental moral principle that should guide policy within the broad framework that, imposition of law apart, for any policy to enjoy acceptance at the grassroots it must be and seen to enjoy legitimacy – including moral legitimacy (Pardo 2000). We have seen how, developed as a Western political project, multiculturalism raises fundamental questions on the tension between individualism and collectivism (Rubel and Rossman, Jijiao, Burnier), substantial citizenship (Pardo, Fong, Prato) and definition of identity (Vázquez and Rodríguez, Mayer, Chaudhuri, Krase). A key underlying issue would appear to be that the ways in which different societies are trying to put into practice the multiculturalist project resurrect old issues that have been addressed in past debates; in particular, the implicit aim of preserving cultures as if 'they were endangered species' (Gutmann 1994, p. x). It could be argued that, by doing so, not only does multiculturalism tend to deprive cultures of their vitality; it also tends to deprive individuals of their freedom of choice and negotiation of their identity. To put

it in a nutshell, the theoretical challenge raised by the aforementioned questions lies at the core of the debate on the project of multiculturalism and its practical applications. As I shall argue more fully in the following section, a key contention is that in order to deal with such a challenge our analysis must be both empirically grounded and unencumbered by political doctrine or intellectual preconception.

### **Multiculturalism as a Challenge to Individual Freedom**

The project of multiculturalism poses serious challenges to liberal democracies, to their fundamental aim to protect the freedom and equality of individuals. Gutmann (1994) asks whether the demands of recognition by particular groups are illiberal demands, in so far as a collective identity is thus imposed upon the individual. She adds that it is worrying when respect for individual rights becomes respect for ‘individuals as they identify with particular cultural groups’ (1994, p. 9). Similarly, Tamir (1999) rejects in principle the notion of collective rights because it implies that rights are bestowed on groups, not on individuals who make up a group; therefore, in this line, collective rights constitute a threat to the individual rights of both the members and the non-members of a group.<sup>16</sup> Both arguments reinforce the view that liberal democracies cannot defend a particularist perspective; instead, the defence of diversity should draw upon universalistic values. Moreover, as Gutmann points out, not every aspect of cultural diversity is worthy of respect. She significantly refers to racism and anti-Semitism as obvious examples; should these particularistic perspectives be respected? Liberal democracies often tend to tolerate them. However, there is a difference between ‘tolerating and respecting differences’ (Gutmann 1994, pp. 22–23; see also Walzer 1997) or, broadly to paraphrase Pardo, between *tolerance* and *toleration*.<sup>17</sup>

The critical opposition between tolerance and toleration is graphically illustrated in this volume by detailed ethnographic examples that spell out how such an opposition is often strengthened by the activities of vociferous lobbies which, having organized themselves into political groups, become self-elected champions of immigrants’ interests while, at the same time, fuelling contempt for the host country’s culture and institutions. The remarks of one of Pardo’s informants are revealing and worth quoting here. She accepts tolerance of diversity in the sense of respecting other people’s viewpoints and beliefs. However, she also stresses that tolerance should be a two-way process. Instead, she is expected to respect the opinions, beliefs and way of life of people who are ‘intolerant’ of her beliefs

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16 The philosopher Brian Barry argues that we live under the control of the ‘Politically Correct Thought Police’ (2001, p. 271). However, staunch supporters of multiculturalism, such as Iris Young, welcome an even greater such control through the politicization of every aspect of life, including ‘feelings and expressions of fantasy and desire’ (1990, p. 152).

17 Walzer (1997) defines tolerance as the ‘attitude’ and toleration as the ‘practice’. I agree with Pardo that the distinction is much deeper and far-reaching.

and way of life and, above all, of her ‘hard-earned freedom as a woman and a citizen’. The approach of ordinary people acquires sociological significance in situations, like that studied by Pardo, that are marked by ideological intolerance of a significant part of the native population and instrumentally selective legislation. As Pardo points out, political choices that lack legitimacy make the coexistence of different cultures more difficult. He suggests that three processes are critical for such a coexistence: bridging the gap between citizenship and governance; drafting legislation that is and is seen to be legitimate; and encouraging suitable integration across the board.

Given the shortcomings of the politics of multiculturalism, it would appear compelling to suggest that the coexistence of diversity might be possible in a context of ‘cultural pluralism’ based on tolerance, not toleration. The fundamental distinction between multiculturalism and cultural pluralism is addressed by Krase in his chapter. Krase powerfully alerts us to the distinction between assimilationism, multiculturalism and cultural pluralism. Through careful comparative analysis, he makes the convincing argument that these concepts should not be addressed simply in terms of theoretical elaborations; they should be examined in the context of the historical and ideological set up in which they develop.<sup>18</sup> While assimilationism and multiculturalism appear to be opposite ideologies, cultural pluralism falls somewhere in the middle, for it recognizes the positive values of diversity but it does so in conjunction with overarching common values that connect different groups. Bringing to bear the graphic insights offered by selected images, Krase argues that such middle ground can be better understood considering the distinction between ‘authentic’ and ‘symbolic’ ethnicity, whereby the former is significant in everyday life (it would apply, for example, to a member of a group), while the latter provides a source of psychological satisfaction. He gradually builds towards structuring a new approach to ethnic diversity. A combined reading of his argument, of that developed by Pardo and of the analytical insights brought out by the discussions of Fong, Prato and Rubel and Rossman makes it encouragingly less daunting to address the challenges posed by the ambiguity, confusion and risks that mar the project of multiculturalism.

## **Representations of Cultural Diversity**

Multi-ethnic environments marked by cultural heterogeneity, once associated to such societies as the US, have now become commonplace across the world. Krase shows how contemporary cityscapes display the contradictions of the globalization of capital, in so far as immigrant/ethnic neighbourhoods reflect national and global systems. Distancing himself from the visual approach that

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18 Walzer (1997) makes a similar point. He, however, develops his argument in support of the US form of multiculturalism, which, in his view, allows for pluralism of groups alongside pluralism of individuals.

employs images as ‘decorations for words’, he aims at demonstrating how the ‘visual’ is clearly connected to structural and cultural theorizations about society. Thus, in his discussion of how ethnic diversity is expressed in ethnic vernacular landscapes, Krase endeavours to understand how the meaning of urban space is changed through negotiations of identity. He convincingly argues that the meanings of space are changed by city dwellers, who are both products and producers of space.

From a different perspective, Surrenti focuses on ‘management’ of space as a way of selling the experience of otherness. Her chapter addresses multiculturalism in terms of consumption, linking it to a new idea of cosmopolitanism and to the creation of plural identities. Surrenti’s approach offers an opportunity to ask whether cultural contact expressed in terms of tasting other peoples’ food makes a society multicultural. This appears, instead, to be another form of the tokenism widely criticized by many advocates of multiculturalism. Significantly, the places of consumption described by Surrenti are built by native Florentines for the native population. From such a perspective multiculturalism seems to have become a self-serving, hypocritical fig leaf for the politically correct, in blatant disregard of true tolerance and integration.

Following Joppke and Lukes (1999), multiculturalism could be described as a new cultural production controlled by specialist managers that transcends reality. Such an abstract production is neither ‘authentic’ nor ‘symbolic’ expression of ethnic identity, in the sense described by Krase. Expanding Krase’s analysis further, I would suggest that the significance of ‘authentic’ ethnicity in everyday life makes it possible for individuals from different ethnic groups to participate actively in the process of creating new cultural meanings that link the diversity of the local to the inclusiveness of the national. In other words, it allows understanding and respect of other cultures without destroying one’s own culture, thus contributing to building a truly tolerant society.

## **Conclusion: Beyond Multiculturalism**

The graded and diversified criticism of multiculturalism expressed by scholars is matched by that voiced by politicians of the Left and the Right. More importantly, ‘ordinary’ people have grown increasingly disillusioned with the ideals purported by the project of multiculturalism and with its applications. Moreover, even when sizeable sections of the wider society embrace the political correctness demanded by multiculturalism, very rarely does the underlying philosophical goodwill translate into policies that truly promote pluralism, the peaceful coexistence of diverse cultures and equal citizenship.

A common theme that emerges from the contributions offered in this volume is that the multicultural recognition of diversity appears to bring about an irreducible dilemma between individual and collective rights. In emphasizing group rights multiculturalism presents itself as a form of cultural determinism that curtails

citizens' freedom of choice. In particular, in bestowing rights to collectivities, the state also empowers them with the authority of restricting the individual freedom of their members. Thus, indirectly, multiculturalism limits the freedom of minority members, confining them to cultural, and sometimes geographical, ghettos, instead of providing them with equality of opportunity. This becomes particularly evident when some cultural groups see individual freedom as a threat to their cultural identity and to the boundaries they have set up to protect it. By celebrating diversity in the form of group membership, multiculturalism does not break down cultural barriers; it reinforces both these barriers and the attendant cultural stereotypes, creating suspicion and hostility between minority groups and between them and members of the majority. As we have seen, hostility is further fuelled by the positive discrimination that grants privileges to selected minorities, thus creating new forms of inequality. This situation is found both in countries of immigration (such as the US, Canada and Western European countries) and in historically multi-ethnic and postcolonial countries (such as China, India and many South American countries).

Multicultural recognition is inherently limited in two other interrelated ways. First, it aims to protect diversity regardless of cultural practices. The anthropological debate on culture suggests that rather than focusing on culture as an abstract set of values we should focus on cultural practices. From this point of view, we should therefore ask which practices allow the conditions within which different ways of living can peacefully coexist, and where to draw the line between liberal rights and cultural practices that infringe on fundamental human rights. Second, multiculturalism wants to preserve minority cultures as if they were immutable, while at the same time demanding dramatic changes in the majority culture; that is, in a reversed form of imperialism, it demands that (especially Western) societies learn and respect other cultures while destroying their own. In other words, multicultural policies aim at promoting an allegedly democratic pluralist integration not on the basis of reciprocal respect and *tolerance*, but on the basis of *toleration*. In this regard, if we cared to look at historical examples, we might rediscover that it is precisely this kind of reciprocity that in many cases has made possible the coexistence of different cultures, and the integration of the 'others', in a given society. We may learn that cultural pluralism is not a new phenomenon. Of course societies change, and changes happen faster than politicians can regulate and legislate on. Contemporary demographic movement around the world is different too, both in terms of quality and quantity. Not only has travel become easier and more affordable for many, but new technologies also allow faster and constant communication between immigrants and their home country. Both factors have facilitated a new form of 'migration', transnationalism, whereby individuals chose to live only partly in the host country while they engage in the process of gaining double, and in many cases multiple, citizenship. It needs to be reiterated that, inevitably, this situation raises key issues of social, political and economic integration, not to mention the contribution of migrants to the host country. Contemporary policies of multiculturalism cannot therefore ignore the

significance of the links established at the intersection between the local, the national and the global.

In spite of protracted academic and political debate, a fundamental question remains unanswered. Does the political correctness demanded by multiculturalism really imply open-mindedness, or is it rather a disguised patronizing attitude that allows contemporary politicians and presumed do-gooders to by-pass the real dilemma of contemporary Western and non-Western societies; that is, not simply the more or less successful integration of minority groups but, more fundamentally, the increasing gap between citizenship and legitimate governance.

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## Chapter 2

# A Visual Approach to Multiculturalism<sup>1</sup>

Jerome Krase

### Introduction

There are undoubtedly many ways by which one can approach multiculturalism and its many intersections at the local, national and global levels. Each different perspective on the subject adds another dimension to our understanding of this complex and changing phenomena. Offered here is a visual approach to one of its more ubiquitous versions, ethnic diversity, as it is expressed in the appearance of vernacular landscapes. It is argued that there is something about ethnic vernacular landscapes that can be best grasped via the use of image-based research. It is also suggested that such an approach might provide some needed focus to the inter- and intra-disciplinary debates over cultural diversity in its many scientific and related ideological forms.

The United States of America, because of its long history of immigration, has long been considered by many as a paradigmatic site for the study of multi-ethnic environments. Globalization in recent decades however has made that once unique experience almost commonplace today in many of the world's urban spaces. In this chapter, examples of how multiculturalism and other historical treatments of ethnic diversity are visually expressed in the United States, Europe and China will be shown and discussed. According to Roseman, Laux, and Thieme (1996), 'EthniCities' have emerged as a consequence of the political and economic restructuring that has increased and diversified labour and capital mobility. Major migration systems include 'internal migration; regional international migration; global migration; illegal migration; and refugee migration' (1996, p. xviii). For Sassen (2001; also 1998), place continues to be important in that contemporary cities display the contradictions of the globalization of capital. In them both the powerful and powerless are concentrated and diversity is increased by migration and immigration. Even marginalized groups can make claims on the city's 'contested terrains,' and despite the domination of corporate culture, indicators of

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1 Acknowledgement is made to the Rector's Committee for Scientific Research, to the Department of Sociology, University of Rome, *La Sapienza* for support of photographic research on the 'New Immigrants to Rome,' 1998, to The Center for Italian Studies at State University of New York at Stony Brook for a follow up study in 2003, to the Macaulay Honors College of The City University of New York and to the University of Technology in Darmstadt for a travel grant to Frankfurt am Main in 2005.

‘otherness’ are present everywhere. Ethnic vernacular streetscapes are excellent examples of this clash between what Bourdieu (1984) might call expressions of tastes of necessity as opposed to tastes of luxury. Taste is a mechanism by which subtle distinctions between things take on much more resonance in terms of social class divisions (Bourdieu 1984, pp. 174–5). ‘As can be seen whenever a change in social position puts the *habitus* into new conditions, so that its specific efficacy can be isolated, it is taste – the taste of necessity or the taste of luxury – and not high or low income which commands the practices objectively adjusted to these resources. Through taste, an agent has what he likes because he likes what he has, that is, the properties actually given to him in the distributions and legitimately assigned to him in the classifications’ (1984, p. 175).

### **Assimilationism, Cultural Pluralism and Multiculturalism**

Before we can proceed to consider how multicultural environments might be visualized in different societies, some foundations must be established. The first regards terminology and its related theoretical groundings. In the American paradigm of ethnic diversity there have been three major themes: Assimilationism, Cultural Pluralism and Multiculturalism. These themes also conform in this temporal order and in gross terms to the historical experience of immigration and migration in the US. It is easy to overlook the fact that these themes are not only historical but ideological as well. As ideologies, Assimilationism and Multiculturalism are at opposite ends of a theoretical spectrum, whereas most of the real world falls somewhere in the middle – in Cultural Pluralism.

The systematic study of race and ethnicity has a very long tradition in American sociology. In the early twentieth century Chicago School of Sociology, Robert Ezra Park (Park et al. 1925) and Louis Wirth (1928) looked at how millions of poor and working-class, primarily European were adjusting to impacting on American society. This influx between 1880 and 1920 and their more or less assimilated descendants have made the United States perhaps the most diverse country in the world. The less numerous, but also much less white European, immigration of the late twentieth century has increased this cultural and racial diversity. As forcefully expressed by Ruben G. Rumbaut, the ‘unequal destinies of American racial and ethnic groups reflect their diverse origin’ (1996, p. xvi) and so the development of social and economic inequities based on race and ethnicity has been a central theme and dilemma in the history of America. I might add that it continues to be so.

### **Assimilationism**

Perhaps the most important thinker about ethnic assimilation in the United States has been Milton Gordon (1964). An important aspect of his theory was that assimilation, or the absorption of new groups into the dominant society, has both

cultural as well as structural dimensions. For most groups cultural adjustments and adaptations, such as language, have been the easiest and most rapid. His theory helps to explain how people can take on American cultural values and behaviours and yet still remain outside the mainstream as represented in ethnic occupational niches and territorial ethnic enclaves. It is in this regard that physical or cultural difference with the dominant White Anglo Saxon society is crucial. For example, non-white and non-Protestant Christians have been especially likely to be seen as less assimilated members of ethnic (ethno-racial) collectivities. Assimilation theorists argue that when immigrants are no more likely to live and work with one another than with other 'Americans' then they have become another dissolved ingredient in the 'Melting Pot.' This implies that, for example, when ethnic enclaves are gone so is ethnicity itself. For Euro-Americans, Richard D. Alba (1985) has termed this process the 'Twilight of Ethnicity'. Assimilationism is also an ideology that argues that immigrant groups 'ought to' melt into, and become indistinguishable from the whole. In this regard Assimilation (sometimes referred to as Anglo conformity) and its metaphor, the amalgam-producing Melting Pot, is often misunderstood. Both the theory and the metaphor imply that the host, dominant society is also changed in degree by the process.

### **Cultural Pluralism**

Assimilation and Assimilationism are not value-neutral ideas. For example, the idea that hyphenated nineteenth and early twentieth century white European-Americans were indistinguishable from each other was vigorously attacked in and outside of academe by Michael Novak in 'The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics' (1971). He and others argued that although groups such as European-Americans had largely adopted general American values they were still unique and recognizable within a wide spectrum of relatively assimilated groups. This 'Cultural Pluralism' also became a social movement that became regarded by many in the social sciences and humanities as a 'defensive ethnicity.' 'White Ethnics' especially were viewed in the liberal mass media as hostile to a rising tide of Black nationalism and Afro-American cultural revival (Gans 1991). Ironically, a similar critique is made by Rumbaut about 'One size fits all pan ethnic labels – "Asian," "Hispanic," "Black," "White" are imposed by the society at large to pigeon hole people who hail from the Philippines, Vietnam, South Korea, India, Cambodia, China, Mexico, Cuba, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Nigeria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Israel and scores of other nations and how differ widely in class origins, phenotypes, languages, cultures, generations, migration histories and modes of incorporation into the United States' (1996, p. xvi). As an ideology, Cultural Pluralism recognizes the positive value of diversity for democratic societies but only in tandem with overarching common values that connect the disparate groups. In America today, social commentators and researchers have been moved, because of the extreme generational, racial and cultural diversity, to distinguish

between ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ as opposed to ‘symbolic ethnicity.’ At its extreme, what is meant by real or authentic is that the ethnic identity makes a concrete and significant difference in the everyday life, and ultimately the life chances, of a group member as opposed to being merely a source of psychological satisfaction or nostalgia. As expected, such public observations have provoked much debate in the general society as well as in the various academic communities.

## **Multiculturalism**

On the other end of the spectrum from Assimilationism is Multiculturalism (and related transnationalism). This ideology argues that not only do distinct cultural groups exist in American society, but that their distinctiveness ‘ought to be’ preserved. George M. Fredrickson, commenting on race and citizenship in the US stated that: ‘The growth of ethnic consciousness among blacks and the desire of Latino and Asian immigrants to preserve aspects of their culture have made “multiculturalism”, rather than simple integrationism, the dominant anti-racist ideology in the United States today’ (Fredrickson 2002, p. 5). It is suggested that Frederickson should have used the term ‘assimilationism’ in this regard. One can easily argue that the rise of Multiculturalism as the *au courant* ideology is a response to what is referred to most often as ‘Post-1965’ immigration. At that time, and subsequently, new American immigrant laws have made possible the entry into the country of a spectrum of peoples that reflected the diversity of the world population. Prior to that time, quotas favoured immigrants who reflected the US population, with few exceptions, circa 1920. Other, practical, globalizing factors that favour retention of immigrant cultures are advanced communication and transportation technologies that make it possible to stay connected to places of origin. In this context the current dynamics of large-scale immigration and ethnic change in post-industrial Europe, as well as the US, can be noted.

## **Understanding Vernacular Landscape**

Paying close attention to the wide array of vernacular ethnic landscapes that we find in our rapidly globalizing world is especially important for both the new and old urban sciences. The esteemed architectural historian John Brinckerhoff Jackson encourages us to look for what ‘...lies underneath below the symbols of permanent power expressed in the “Political Landscape”’ (1984, p. 6). His perceptive work neatly complements Sociology’s interest in how and why groups are where they are in the city, and how space affects their social interactions and opportunities. For example, writing about gentrification in eighteenth and nineteenth century England, he noted that ‘in brief, much of the traditional play, popular with working class citizens, located at the centre of town where the players lived and worded, was driven out, either by the shortage of space or by police

decisions to improve traffic circulation and promote order' (1984, p. 11). He also brings attention to new forms of the vernacular 'such as the factory, the shopping centre, the gas station, and so on' which are important for understanding social history, and I might add, contemporary society (1984, pp. 118–19). Of special value for the present discourse, Jackson drew attention to the visual competition of commercial streets that he believed represented 'a new and valid form of what can be called commercial vernacular' (1984, p. 246). David Harvey adds support for this micro-level scrutiny by arguing that: 'Different classes construct their sense of territory and community in radically different ways. This elemental fact is often overlooked by those theorists who presume a priori that there is some ideal-typical and universal tendency for all human beings to construct a human community of roughly similar sort, no matter what the political or economic circumstances' (1989, p. 265).

Another useful tool for deciphering the complex metropolis is 'spatial semiotics', defined by Mark Gottdiener as 'the study of culture which links symbols to objects' (1994, pp. 15–16). For Gottdiener, the streetscape of an immigrant neighbourhood reflects national and global systems having been '... built by people who have followed some meaningful plan for the purposes of containing economic, political, and cultural activities' (1994, p. 16). In conjunction with an understanding of vernacular landscapes, such socio-spatial analysis helps one to recognize even the least powerful urbanites as social 'agents' in the localized reproduction of regional, national and global affairs. Some think of migrant areas as 'Third Spaces' where ethnic identity are created and then negotiated, demonstrating in this way the agency of ordinary people (Gutiérrez 1999). Whereas much of Third Space as well as Hybrid discourses concern the negotiation of identities of persons within real and imagined spaces, my own special interest has been on how those identities change the meaning of the space in which the identity is acted out or practiced.

### **Visual Sociology and Anthropology**

For most, a visual approach in the Humanities and Social Sciences is taking or showing pictures as an adjunct to the 'regular' process of research. Visual Sociology is much more than that. In my own work it is both a theoretical and methodological practice for '...producing and decoding images which can be used to empirically investigate social organization, cultural meaning and psychological processes' (Grady 1996, 14). Here the techniques, methodologies and concerns of Visual Sociology are the best known and where the camera and other techniques of representation play crucial roles in the analytic process (Grady 1996, p. 14). Lyn H. Lofland adds another dimension of visualizing urban spaces by noting that: 'The city, because of its size, is the locus of a peculiar social situation: the people found within its boundaries at any given moment know nothing personally about the vast majority of others with whom they share this space' (1985, p. 3). Urban life is made

possible by ‘ordering’ the populace in terms of appearance and spatial location so that people ‘could know a great deal about one another by simply looking’ (1985, p. 22). Douglas Harper divided Visual Sociology into two types: ‘Visual Methods, where researchers “take” photographs in order to study social worlds’, and ‘Visual Studies’ in which researchers ‘analyze images that are produced by the culture’. In this second approach, ‘sociologists typically explore the semiotics, or sign systems, of different visual communication systems’ (Harper 1988).

According to Marcus Banks, ‘Visual anthropology is coming to be understood as the study of visible cultural form, regardless of who produced them or why. In one sense this throws open the floodgates – visual anthropologists are those who create film, photography, maps, drawings, diagrams, and those who study film, photography, cinema, television, the plastic arts – and could threaten to swamp the (sub)discipline’ (1988, p. 11). Significantly, Banks alerts us to some constraints in this subfield. He points out that,

the study of the visible cultural forms is only visual anthropology if it is informed by the concerns and understandings of anthropology more generally. If anthropology, defined very crudely, is an exercise in cross-cultural translation and interpretation that seeks to understand other cultural thought and action in its own terms before going on to render these in terms accessible to a (largely) Euro-American audience, if anthropology seeks to mediate the gap between the ‘big picture’ (global capitalism say) and local forms (small-town market trading, say), if anthropology takes long-term participant observation and local language proficiency as axiomatic prerequisites for ethnographic investigation, then visual studies must engage with this if they wish to be taken seriously as visual anthropology (1998, p. 11).

In the closely related sub-disciplines of Visual Anthropology and Visual Sociology there is a pre- versus post-modernist dispute regarding not only the uses of images but the objective scientific status of the disciplines themselves. Douglas Harper (1988), commenting on Howard S. Becker (1974), John Grady (1996) and other seminal pieces in the establishment of the field of Visual Sociology, extends the vision of visual sociology taking into account post-modern and other critiques but at base he argues that visual sociology should begin with traditional assumptions of sociological field work and sociological analysis. The photograph can be thought of as ‘data’; in fact, the unique character of photographic images forces us to rethink many of our assumptions about how we move from observation to analysis in all forms of sociological research. But note that I suggested that in image making an analysis begins with these and other traditional assumptions and practices. It does not end there! (Krase 1997, pp. 34–35).

On the other hand, Sarah Pink, a leader in the field of Visual Ethnography, rejects this objective-scientific approach, and argues for greater attention to the reflexivity and experience by which visual and ethnographic materials are produced and interpreted. She states,

In this book I take the contrasting view, that to incorporate the visual appropriately, social science should, as MacDougall [1997] has suggested, ‘develop alternative objectives and methodologies’. This means abandoning the possibility of a purely objective social science and rejecting the idea that the written word is essentially a superior medium of ethnographic representation. While images should not necessarily replace words as the dominant mode of research or representation, they should be regarded as meaningful element of ethnographic work. Thus visual images, objects, descriptions should be incorporated when it is appropriate, opportune or enlightening to do so (2007, p. 6).

My own work falls on the pre-post modern side; therefore, the images I present are clearly connected to structural and cultural theorizing about society. In order for visual sociology or anthropology to be of value it must be securely embedded in the theories and methods of the disciplines themselves as well as not merely employing images as decorations for words.

### **Visualizing Theories and Ideologies of Ethnic Diversity**

We turn now to a consideration of images which show how ethnic diversity is visually expressed in ethnic vernacular landscapes in the United States, Europe and China. These images represent only a small, and ultimately inadequate, sample from within the broad spectrum of visual expressions explained or produced by the theories and ideologies of Assimilationism, Cultural Pluralism and Multiculturalism.

### **Litchfield and Torrington, Connecticut, The United States of America**

Assimilation is probably the most difficult of diversity outcomes to visualize as the consequence of total assimilation is the disappearance of original ethnic difference. Therefore I have chosen to use the image of a restaurant in Litchfield to represent assimilation. Litchfield is a town of about 9,000 residents located in the mostly rural northwest corner of Litchfield County in the state of Connecticut. It was founded in 1721 and has gone through several stages of economic development over the centuries. Today it is an affluent town in which 97 per cent of its generally affluent 9,000 residents are white. The dominant architecture of the town is American Colonial and Colonial Revival indicated for example by white paint and black shutters seen on most buildings. The town authorities also enforce strictly the requirement that buildings not be visibly out of character with this very American location. Below we see Francesco’s Restaurant and Pizzeria with little visible difference between its store front and all the other restaurants on the street which serve a varied but essentially ‘American’ menu. Also not visible is the fact that Francesco’s was owned and operated by immigrants from Italy. At the time





**Figure 2.1** Francesco's Restaurant and Pizzeria, Litchfield, Connecticut, 2007

the photograph was taken, all the numerous signs in Francesco's windows were in English and none announced Italian ethnic events or issues.

Only a few miles east of the affluent town of Litchfield is the post-industrial city of Torrington. It is the largest city in Litchfield County with a population of about



**Figure 2.2** *El Rey de la Tijera #4, Barber Shop, Main Street, Torrington, Connecticut, 2007*

37,000. Torrington was also settled early in the eighteenth century but has been best known as a ‘mill town’. The city’s many factories once produced a variety of metal products that at first attracted English, Irish and German immigrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Between 1880 and 1920 the population was ethnically enhanced by numerous Polish, Czech, Slovak, Italian and Lebanese immigrants all of whom made vernacular imprints on the city. Today more than 90 per cent of the residents are of white European descent but there are a growing number of Latino migrants and immigrants who are filling the spaces left by white Europeans in the city’s struggling centre. There we can see expressions of both Multiculturalism and Cultural Pluralism in what has become a small hub of Latino entrepreneurship along Torrington’s Main Street. The multicultural is best represented by storefronts where virtually all of the signage is in Spanish and advertise Hispanic products, as well as services which help maintain connections to Latin American origins and also facilitate transnationalism. The transition to Cultural Pluralism is exemplified in Figure 2.2; the photograph of *El Rey de la Tijera #4, Barber Shop*. Less visible in this photo, in the adjacent grocery store window, is the signage mostly Spanish but also in English, which states: *Con toda clases de productos hispano y americano* (with all kinds of Hispanic and American products).



**Figure 2.3** Folk-style Korean house, Chinese folk villages, Shenzhen, China, 2005



Figure 2.4 Muslim-Chinese restaurant store front, Xi' An, China, 2005

## **Shenzhen and Xi'an, China**

For those, like myself, who are not expert in recognizing less than obvious ethnic differences within the vast population of China, providing examples of ethnic vernacular is a challenge. Therefore, this section will diverge somewhat from the previous one. In 2005 I was the guest of the government of Shenzhen on one leg of a project to conduct visual research in China. Shenzhen's population had exploded via internal, national migration from a few hundred thousand in 1980 to more than twelve million at the end of 2005. Among those, less than two million had legal residence while the rest were considered migrants. Officially, despite considerable genetic, linguistic and cultural diversity, China is home to only 56 recognized ethnic groups. The largest group, the Han, make up over 92 per cent of China's more than one and third billion people. It is this common core of Han culture that is the essence of 'Chinese culture.' We visited several 'ethnic' sites in this southern Chinese city which neighbours Hong Kong, but the centre of such attraction was 'Splendid China' where the history, culture, art, ancient architecture and customs and habits of various nationalities in China were on display. Figure 2.3 above of the interior of a Folk-style Korean house is drawn from a collection of 24 Chinese Folk Culture Villages 'inhabited by real ethnic people who present their traditional arts, customs, languages and cuisines. Traditional culture performances are held there every day' (Shenzhen Government 2007). The preservation, perhaps even ossification, of these ethnic differences is an example of official multiculturalism in Shenzhen.

More than 60,000 Muslims currently live in Xi'an. The city of almost nine million is at the end of the historical Silk Road in central China. The photo of the Muslim-Chinese Restaurant Store Front (Figure 2.4 above) is clearly in the hyphenated, cultural pluralism mode that is equally visible in the US and Europe. Even without understanding Chinese characters or Arabic for that matter, one can see the co-existence of two cultures in the ethnic vernacular landscape. These were taken in a commercial and residential neighbourhood which surrounds the Grand Mosque at Hua Jue which is also a major tourist attraction.

## **Rome, Italy**

As in many other major European urban centres, the area adjacent to the *Stazione Centrale*, which includes the well-know 'Chinatown' of *L'Esquilino*, has been for many years a multi-ethnic, if not multicultural centre in Rome. As I have written elsewhere (Krase and Hum 2006), the local administration has struggled unsuccessfully to prevent the development of visible ethnic immigrant districts. It is important to note in this discussion of ideologies about ethnic diversity that the motivation for preservation of the 'Eternal City' of Rome is similar to that of the small town of Litchfield, Connecticut that was previously discussed. Both seek to preserve the historical and cultural 'character' of the community by controlling the appearance of residences and businesses.





**Figure 2.5** Ethnic diversity on the streets of *L'Esquilino*, Rome, Italy, 1998

### **London, England**

Due in large part to the extent of the once global British Empire, London has long been a multi-ethnic city. In recent years however that variety and size of the ethnically and religiously diverse population has greatly increased. One recent aspect of the change has been the development and enlargement of the European Union, which has made it possible for less economically developed, but still 'European' nations to export more easily their excess labour force. One country that has taken advantage of this has been Poland. Polish migrants seemed to have 'flooded' many parts of Great Britain. Indications of more and less recent Polish influence can be found on the streetscapes of several London neighbourhoods. For example, Hammersmith has long been the home of a well-established Polish population, where one finds many examples of hybrid Polish-English food purveyors and services on King Street in the middle of the neighbourhood near the Polish Cultural Centre. On the corner near an Underground station in ethnically diverse Islington is located a different kind of visible indicator of local cultural diversity. Figure 2.6 below shows a newspaper box for Polish newspapers. Underneath the *Polska Gazeta* is what might be an ideological multicultural dictum. There, written in English, is 'Polish language only. Don't bother if you can't read Polish.'



Figure 2.6 Polish newspapers, Islington, London, England, 2007

### Frankfurt am Main, Germany

The area adjacent to the *Hauptbahnhof* in Frankfurt am Main is a multi-ethnic residential and commercial centre that shares many social and physical characteristics with Rome's *L'Esquilino*. Both central city districts have undergone stages of abandonment, deterioration, immigrant influx and are today showing signs of gentrification and urban regeneration. Despite upscale change in and around Frankfurt's rail centre, a wide variety of immigrant or otherwise non indigenous 'German' groups live, work and shop. Signs in the vernacular landscape such as *Orientalische Lebensmittel* imply that here at least unique cultural food-ways of groups as varied as Pakistanis and Moroccans are subsumed as 'Asian Food' and are sold with German beer. German food-ways have also changed in response to immigration. Figure 2.7 shows a shop advertising both *Doener Kebap* and *Pizza* which are probably as popular in Germany as *bratwurst* as essential food for 'take away' (*auch zum mitnehmen*). Further in the background of the photograph one finds both signs for ethnically specific Turkish food as well as a multilingual directional sign for a Mosque.



**Figure 2.7** *Doener and Moschee, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 2005*



## Conclusion

Anthony D. King (1996) speaks of cities as ‘text’ to be read. Ethnic Vernacular Landscapes are crucial, yet often ignored parts of that complex and rapidly changing text. In order to better appreciate and understand that which is taking place, often unseen, yet in plain sight, I have briefly discussed both the theories as well as the ideologies of Assimilationism, Cultural Pluralism and Multiculturalism. It has been strongly suggested that, despite significant intra-disciplinary disagreements, Visual Sociology and Visual Anthropology can help us to document how Vernacular Landscapes reflect these competing theories and ideologies of ethnic diversity in a variety of cities and towns. The images from the Muslims of Xi’an, China to the Latinos of Torrington, Connecticut have been chosen to show what they might have in common and how they might differ from the wide angle of the whole streetscape to the close-up of signs in windows. Some aspects were not possible to visualize here with images in black and white. Colours provide another visual cultural dimension such as the red and white stripes signifying Americanization on the Latino Barber shop in Torrington, the green of Islam in the Arabic symbols on shop signs in Xi’an, the prominence of red and gold on Chinese store signs in Rome, and the red and white of the *Polska Gazeta* in London.

This illustrated chapter on how one might visualize societal responses to ethnic diversity in the United States, Europe and China is based on the most recent research which I have conducted about how the meanings of spaces are changed by the agency of ordinary city dwellers (Krase 1993, 1997, 2002, 2004 and 2007). I have developed this approach over the course of a decade in the presentation and publication of a series of papers. In general, the Visual Sociology of the Vernacular Landscapes allows us to ‘see’ how people are both products and producers of space. Regardless of perspective, one cannot fail to recognize the agency and symbolic life of ordinary people, while at the same time see the greater power of others to determine their ultimate fate.

One final note must be made; the preponderance of images which imply the hegemony of Cultural Pluralism as opposed to either Assimilationism or the Multiculturalism presented here should not be taken as the result of a random or otherwise statistical sampling. Despite the argument presented here that most of the social and cultural reality experienced in ethnically diverse urban societies falls between the extremes of Assimilationism and Multiculturalism, these images are not presented as quantitative proof of that assertion. A much larger scale quantitative study would be necessary for such an effort.

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# Chapter 3

## Immigration and its Impacts on Canadian Cities

Eric Fong

### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

Any study of race and ethnic diversity in Canadian cities should begin with Canada's immigration history. Canada is a nation composed largely of immigrants who arrived in different periods. In the 1870s, the majority of ethnic groups were French and British. They composed 92 per cent of the total Canadian population at that time. In the next few decades, large numbers of Northern and Western Europeans arrived. By the middle of the twentieth century, the majority of arrivals were from Eastern and Southern Europe. These immigrants from different European countries have gradually integrated into the social fabric of Canadian society.

With changes in immigration policy after the Second World War, a new wave of immigrants, largely from non-European countries, moved to Canada, making Canadian cities increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. These changes have posed new challenges, especially to these cities, and it is these challenges that are the subject of this chapter. First, as background information, the characteristics of these recent immigrants will be described, following which the integration process of immigrants with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and the impact that they have had on Canadian cities will be outlined.

### **Characteristics of Recent Immigrants in Canada**

The study of a population group can be approached from various perspectives. Here, I focus on the social, economic and spatial dimensions, all three of which are important aspects of the recent immigrant populations and play a crucial role in this attempt to understand their impact on Canadian cities.

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*Racial Diversity of Recent Immigrants*

In the late 1960s Canadian immigration policy introduced a points system.<sup>2</sup> The socio-economic backgrounds of immigrants arriving since then have changed considerably. The bulk of new immigrants has shifted from being Europeans to non-Europeans. The magnitude of change is reflected in the fact that between 1994 and 2000, the top five countries from which immigrants were arriving were consistently Asian (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2002). Such a major influx of immigrants from non-European countries made the Canadian demographic landscape more racially diverse. In 1871, less than 1 per cent of the Canadian population was either Asian or Black (Kalbach 1987). By 1996, Asians accounted for 7 per cent and Blacks 2 per cent of the total population (Statistics Canada 2002a).<sup>3</sup>

In 1996, approximately 58 per cent of Blacks and 73 per cent of Asians in Canada were immigrants (Statistics Canada 2002c);<sup>4</sup> of these, 64 per cent of Blacks and 70 per cent of Asians had arrived after 1980. In contrast, only 16 per cent of Northern and Western Europeans and 15 per cent of Southern Europeans had arrived in Canada after 1980 (Statistics Canada 2002b). Despite the changes in the political context of Eastern Europe in the last two decades, about 45 per cent of Eastern European immigrants arrived after 1980, a percentage much lower than the corresponding statistic for Black or Asian immigrants. These Eastern European immigrants accounted for only 9 per cent of total immigration during the same period. Thus, recent immigrants are largely Blacks and Asians with a moderate percentage of Eastern Europeans and have settled mainly in major cities; for example, about 72 per cent of Asians and 65 per cent of Blacks settled in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

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2 The points system attempts to evaluate objectively how well a potential immigrant could be integrated into Canadian society by assigning points based on his/her skills and socioeconomic background. Successful applicants are those who obtain a certain points value set by the government.

3 Information was obtained from the table 'Population by ethnic origin, 1996 census' (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Population/demo28a.htm>). 'Asians' included South Asians and East and Southeast Asians. 'Blacks' were of African and Caribbean origins.

4 Information about Asians was obtained from the table 'Population by ethnic origin, 1996 census' (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/People/Population/demo28a.htm>). Information on Blacks was gathered from the table 'Selected demographic, cultural, educational, labour force and income characteristics (207) of the total population by age groups (6) and sex (3), showing visible minority population (14) (20 per cent sample)' (94F0009XDB96003).

### *Human Capital of Recent Immigrants*

A series of publications by Borjas in the United States during the 1980s addressed the relationship between the economic integration of immigrants and their skill levels at their time of arrival (Borjas 1999, 1989, 1985 and 1982). These studies showed a decline in skills among recent Hispanic immigrants. Consequently these immigrants suffer a disadvantage in terms of their economic integration and a limit in respect of economic advancement compared to their earlier immigrant cohorts.

The important findings of this series of publications led Canadian academics and policy makers to examine the qualities of immigrants under the points system. Although Borjas expected that Canadian immigration policies based on the points system would be able to attract immigrants with higher levels of human capital (Borjas 1990, p. 9), results of analyses of Canadian immigration data suggested that over the decades Canada had experienced a decline in the level of human capital among immigrants.

Coulson and Devoretz (1993) showed the decline in human capital of immigrants that had arrived in Canada in 1967 and 1987. Later, the observation was confirmed by a number of other researchers (Reitz 1998; Fong and Shibuya 2001). Using census data from 1971 to 1996, Reitz observed that while the average education level of immigrants is still higher than that of the Canadian-born population, the difference is not as salient as before.<sup>5</sup> Using 1996 census data from Toronto, Fong and Shibuya (2001) even showed that immigrants in general have lower levels of education than the Canadian born. About 29 per cent of immigrants have not completed high school, compared to 24 per cent of the Canadian-born population, and only 19 per cent of immigrants have completed university, in contrast to 22 per cent of native born Canadians.

Not only has the human capital of recent immigrants declined, it also varies considerably. Pendakur (2000) shows that those who arrived between 1961 and 1970 included both highly and poorly educated groups. Based on the recent 1996 census data of Toronto, Fong and Shibuya (2001) show that a considerable proportion of immigrants have high levels of education despite variations among groups. This pattern echoes Reitz's (1998) argument that immigration selection may have a limited effect on the recruitment of immigrants with high levels of human capital.

### *Uneven Distribution in Major Cities*

Recent immigrants do not settle evenly throughout the country: the majority settle in urban Canadian cities. According to the 1996 census, approximately 97 per cent of those who arrived in Canada between 1991 and 1996 settled in the 27 census metropolitan areas, while about 78 per cent of the Canadian population is living in urban areas.

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5 'Canadian-born' population does not include the indigenous population. One of the major reasons for this is that the percentage of indigenous population in cities is small. This is consistent with the conventional classification of Canadian-born population.

According to Immigration Canada, about 42 per cent of immigrants arriving in 1998 settled in Toronto, 17 per cent in Vancouver and 12 per cent in Montreal. Hence, these three cities alone accounted for the settlement of over 70 per cent of immigrants who arrived that year (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2002). Immigrant representation in Canadian cities is varied. These three major cities stand out as having populations with the largest immigrant proportions in the country. For Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, the immigrant population is 42 per cent, 18 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. In smaller cities, the immigrant representation is far less dramatic. For example, only 8 per cent of the Saskatoon population and 4 per cent of the Sherbrooke population is immigrant.

### **Implications of Recent Immigration to Canadian Cities**

Drawing on previous studies, recent immigrants are characterized as largely arriving from non-European countries, having lower human capital than those born in Canada and being heavily clustered in urban areas, all of which can have unique implications for Canadian cities. The following discussion of these implications will highlight how these characteristics affect the adaptation of immigrants, which in turn changes the spatial, demographic and social dimensions of these cities.

#### *Immigration Adaptation is an Urban Issue*

As mentioned above, recent immigrants have settled mostly in cities. Thus, immigrant issues are largely urban issues. Moreover, these issues are confronted in individual cities in differing magnitudes as some cities have received more recent immigrants than others. Of all immigrants to arrive in 2000 that settled in cities, a total of 82 per cent settled in just five cities – Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Ottawa-Hull and Calgary. As a consequence, resources for developing services for settling immigrants would be best distributed to provinces and cities according to the number of immigrants in the relevant cities.

#### *Divergent Paths of Economic Integration*

Globalization has transformed the urban economy in various ways, having a tremendous impact on the integration of immigrants. First, the growth in the banking, financial and business industries of the past few decades has had a considerable effect on the economic integration of immigrants. The increasing importance of these industries is a consequence of the increased flow of international capital as a result of the consolidation of the global financial market. As these industries expand, individuals with the relevant qualifications become well sought after, and their human capital is highly valued and well rewarded in the local market. Immigrants in general usually suffer from ‘queuing’ in the labour market, however, immigrants with qualifications can benefit from the globalized economy, increasing

their employment opportunities (Ooka and Fong forthcoming). Furthermore, the local labour market benefits from the supply of such immigrants with high levels of skill and education.

While jobs requiring high levels of skill and education are plentiful, manufacturing jobs have been lost in urban Canada, partly the result of factories moving from developed countries, such as Canada, to developing countries that offer cheaper labour and operating costs. For example, between 1975 and 1980, in urban Canada the proportion of manufacturing jobs dropped from 22 per cent to 17 per cent (Norcliffe, Goldrick and Muszynski 1986). Since manufacturing jobs usually require lower levels of education, the loss of these jobs can have a detrimental impact on immigrants with limited education and skills. Consequently, the local labour market may not be able to absorb all these low-skilled workers. Such a situation will naturally create more competition in the local labour market among local and newly immigrated low-skilled workers. In such a context, the earnings and employment opportunities for immigrants will be adversely affected.

Since human capital is varied among recent immigrants, the new urban economy fosters the development of divergent paths of economic integration (Nee and Sanders 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993). In turn, the local labour market experiences divergent effects. Those with skills and education are well sought after and well paid, and the demand for highly-skilled workers suggests that the labour market can easily absorb these newcomers. The integration of such workers into society will be smooth. However, those with low skills and limited education suffer from urban economic restructuring.

Reitz (1998) points out that while the human capital of immigrants has declined over the years, the educational achievement of Canadians has increased. Given that Canada is moving towards a knowledge-based economy and experiencing an increase in jobs requiring education and skills, cities in general may encounter more hurdles to accommodate and integrate newly arrived immigrants who are less competitive in the labour market.

### *Empirical Findings: Unemployment and Earnings*

Studies of unemployment levels among immigrants in general support Reitz's observation. Baker and Benjamin (1994) show that unemployment rates among different cohorts of immigrants are higher for recent immigrants (those who have been in Canada for one to five years) than for the Canadian-born population, and that the gap was growing between 1971 and 1986. However, they have found that unemployment rates among earlier immigrants (those who have been in Canada between 16 and 25 years) are also consistently lower than for the Canadian-born population. Siklos and Marr (1998) further show that earlier cohorts are less likely than recent immigrants to claim unemployment insurance. Baker and Benjamin (1994) attribute the difference to the declining human capital resources of recent immigrants.



Voluminous research has documented the lower earnings of immigrants in comparison to the Canadian-born population. For example, early studies by Li (1988) based on the 1981 census showed that immigrants in general have lower earnings than the Canadian-born population. Christofides and Swidinsky (1994) studied the wages of visible minority groups, demonstrating that immigrant status always reduces earning potential. Using the 1990 census, Verma and Chan (2000) have reported similar results.

Despite studies showing differences between the immigrant and Canadian-born populations, research has also found that the earnings of immigrants improve the longer they stay in the country (DeSilva 1996; Pendakur and Pendakur 1998). However, these studies have been criticized for not taking into account the differences in human capital resources between earlier and recent cohorts. Recent findings suggest a more complicated picture. While the earnings of earlier immigrants were higher than those of the Canadian-born population, as they stayed in the country longer, earnings of recent immigrants were much less than the Canadian-born population after 1986 (Baker and Benjamin 1994). Similarly, recent studies have documented the decline in earnings potential of recent cohorts. Reitz and Lum's (2006) recent study of immigrants in Toronto shows a similar trend.

In short, the highest proportion of unemployment among immigrants, especially among recent immigrant cohorts with low levels of human capital, is usually found in Canada's major cities. This pattern can have considerable implications for government programmes and services. Those recent immigrants with a low level of human capital may have difficulty in maintaining financial stability, which in turn can have an effect on their social and psychological well beings. They may also be more likely to use various social services.

### *Racial and Ethnic Economic Stratification*

As the number of racial and ethnic immigrants in major Canadian cities increases, so does racial and ethnic awareness among urban residents.<sup>6</sup> Decisions and actions

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6 In Canada, studies of group relations usually focus on either racial groups (such as Blacks or Asians) or ethnic groups (such as Portuguese or Chinese). Europeans are typically grouped according to their arrival period in Canada. These groups include Charter groups, referring to the British and French. Because of their early arrival, they have been strongly represented in political, economic and cultural arenas. The British and French were followed by large numbers of immigrants from Western and Northern Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. Large numbers of eastern and southern Europeans arrived before and after the Second World War. Based on the 2001 Canadian census definition, 'Western Europeans' refers to Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, Flemish, Frisian, German, Luxembourger and Swiss; 'Northern Europeans' includes Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish and Scandinavian; 'Eastern Europeans' consists of Byelorussian, Czech, Czechoslovakian, Estonian, Hungarian (Magyar), Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Slovak and Ukrainian; and 'Southern Europeans' refers to Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Cypriot, Greek, Italian, Kosovar, Macedonian, Maltese, Montenegrin, Portuguese, Serbian, Sicilian, Slovenian and Spanish.

are more likely to be made along racial and ethnic lines, which can then affect the economic contributions of immigrants to the wider society. Additionally, the decline in human capital and the majority representation of visible minority groups among recent immigrants further reinforce the economic stratification along racial and ethnic lines.

Studies have also documented that, as well as differences in unemployment rates between earlier and recent immigrant cohorts, there are substantial variations among immigrants of different racial and ethnic groups. Using the 1991 census, Verma and Chan (2000) point out that the unemployment rate among immigrants ranged from 4.8 per cent among immigrants from the Netherlands to 19 per cent among immigrants from Lebanon, while the unemployment rate among the Canadian-born population was 11 per cent. Patterns of varied unemployment rates among immigrant groups were seen to have persisted in Gilmore's study (2008) based on the 2006 Labour Force Survey data.

Although existing studies highlight the significant effect of human capital on the earnings of immigrants, they also document the differences between immigrant and Canadian-born populations, but with substantial variations in earnings according to the immigrants' countries of origin (Reitz 1998; Verma and Chan 2000; Li 1988). According to Verma and Chan (2000), immigrants from Northern and Western European countries have higher earnings than the Canadian-born population, while Asian and Southern European immigrants have lower earnings. Based on the 1981 census, Reitz (1998) also documented that recent Asian and Black immigrants earned less than the White Canadian-born population, but found that the earnings of White immigrant males did not show much difference from their Canadian-born counterparts. Pooling census data from 1971, 1981 and 1986, Bloom, Grenier and Gunderson (1995) found similar results.

Other studies have documented that earnings differences are related to the differential returns of human capital resources among immigrants of various racial groups (Richmond and Kalbach 1980; Goldlust and Richmond 1973; Richmond and Verma 1978). Li's (1988) work demonstrates that immigrants from visible minority groups are less able than immigrants of other groups to convert their education levels to earnings.<sup>7</sup> The patterns reveal two mechanisms in the labour market that may affect the economic integration of visible minority immigrants. First, research has suggested that, among minority immigrants, those who are in managerial or administrative positions tend to experience a glass ceiling that limits their income attainment. Thus, despite having acquired a high level of skill and work experience, their income attainment is limited. Second, immigrants with foreign credentials are associated with a penalty to their market value (Li 2001). This penalty for having foreign educational credentials is especially strong for visible minority groups (Basran and Zong 1998).

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7 'Visible minorities' in Canada refers to non-Europeans, such as Asians and Blacks. 'Asians' include East and Southeast Asians and South Asians.

The racial and ethnic earnings differentials among recent immigrants suggest that local labour markets cannot fully utilize the human capital resources found within these groups. Furthermore, this pattern of earnings partly contributes to social stratification in Canadian cities (Li 1988; Reitz and Lum 2006), which perpetuates economic inequality among racial and ethnic groups in Canada. Thus, policies are needed to minimize the systemic bias against recent visible minority immigrants.

### **The Emergence of Ethnic Communities**

As the numbers of racial and ethnic members increase in the city, ethnic communities develop and these ethnic communities generate jobs for their ethnic members who have low skills and limited language ability. Research has suggested that these jobs can provide an alternative avenue to economic success for immigrants. Furthermore, it has been documented that the economic returns of those working in these ethnic businesses are comparable to those working outside the ethnic communities. However, later studies have questioned the validity of these results, showing lower returns for those working in ethnic businesses (Zhou and Logan 1989; Sanders and Nee 1989). Their jobs are not necessarily desirable and because of their limited skills and language ability, ethnic members working in the ethnic economy are frequently subjected to exploitation by co-ethnic employers or supervisors.

Only a few Canadian studies have investigated the earnings of jobs related to ethnic communities. Pendakur and Pendakur (2002) analyse the negative effects on the earnings of minority members who know their ethnic languages diminish when the size of the ethnic population increases. However, the comparison of earnings between those working inside and outside the ethnic communities as well as the working environments in the ethnic economy of various immigrant communities in Canada remain virtually unstudied.

As well as creating job opportunities, ethnic communities also provide social entertainment through various means, including the ethnic media (Zhou 1992). Consequently immigrants have ample opportunity to participate in ethnic social activities, as well as keep close contact with events in their home country (Levitt 2001; Sanfran 1991).

Previous understanding suggests that higher levels of social integration of immigrants can be attained through a higher income level, staying in the country for a longer period of time, a higher educational level and intermarriage (Fong and Ooka 2002; Fong and Isajiw 2000). All these factors are related to the structural obstacles that immigrants have to overcome in order to increase their interaction with other groups. Staying in the country longer increases opportunities of interaction with other groups. A higher level of education implies an individual is more competitive in the mainstream market, which provides ample opportunities to interact and to develop relations with other groups. However, although immigrants may extend their social networks and make friends from other groups over time,

they do not reduce their participation in ethnic social activities (Glick-Schiller et al. 1992; Guarnizo 1994; Zhou and Logan 1989).

Maintaining social networks within an ethnic community of immigrants that has been coming to Canada over a longer period implies the continued flourishing of the community with the support of a critical mass of immigrants, some of whom may have arrived recently and others long before. Ethnic activities organized by such communities no longer reflect merely the need of recent immigrants to adjust, but also the efforts of immigrants who arrived earlier to lay down roots. In addition, the transnational character of social integration among immigrants implies that immigrants, no matter how long they have been in the country, are more likely to rely on ethnic networks and ethnic communities when they face challenges and problems. Of further significance is the fact that the delivery of services to ethnic groups relies heavily on ethnic social services agencies.

There are other effects a well developed ethnic community can have on the social integration of its immigrant members (Alba, Logan and Crowder 1997; Waters 1980). Immigrants in an enclosed environment usually interact less with people outside. They simply have less time and opportunity to do so. Similarly, the ethnic community can limit the flow of information from the larger society. Primarily this is because the ethnic community is usually characterized by dense networks which can be inefficient and provide less diverse information as compared to a sparse network. This is especially true for immigrants living in poor ethnic communities where there are limited resources available and where those working in jobs related to the ethnic communities can affect the social integration patterns of immigrants (Fong and Ooka 2002; Fong and Isajiw 2000). It should be noted, however, that most of the studies on this are based on data collected in US cities.

### *Consolidation of Racial and Ethnic Residential Segregation*

Immigrant populations cluster in cities, and visible minority immigrant groups are heavily concentrated in major cities. As economic resources among immigrants vary, so do their racial and ethnic residential patterns. Since most studies of racial and ethnic residential patterns do not differentiate between immigrant and Canadian-born populations, I shall here compare the patterns of different racial and ethnic groups. Recent immigrants are heavily represented in a number of groups, especially visible minority groups and moderately Eastern Europeans. Hence, findings for visible minority groups and Eastern Europeans can provide a glimpse of the spatial integration of immigrants.

Levels of racial and ethnic residential segregation are moderate in Canadian cities (Fong and Wilkes 2001; Fong 1996; Balakrishnan and Kralt 1987; Balakrishnan 1982).<sup>8</sup> There are no extremely high levels of residential segregation as are commonly observed in major US cities. However, a closer look at the

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<sup>8</sup> Segregation level is usually measured by the dissimilarity index. The index measures the percentage of a group that would have to move to obtain an even distribution of the

data suggests different residential segregation patterns among groups. First, the Charter groups – that is, Northern and Western European groups – are more likely to live in the same residential neighbourhoods. Segregation levels among these groups are relatively low. Second, Northern and Western European groups have higher segregation levels with Eastern and Southern European groups than among themselves. Third, the levels of residential segregation among visible minority groups with the Charter groups (Northern and Western Europeans) are similar to the levels of segregation among the Eastern and Southern European groups with the Charter groups. Finally, visible minority groups experience similar levels of residential segregation among themselves.

These patterns reflect the differential economic resources of immigrant groups compared with other racial and ethnic groups. They also suggest the effects of larger contextual factors, such as racial and ethnic awareness, which affects the ability of immigrant groups, especially visible minorities, to translate economic resources into spatial integration with other racial and ethnic groups and other older immigrant groups.

Taken together, these findings imply that racial and ethnic groups do not have similar levels of interaction opportunities through neighbourhoods. While Western and Northern Europeans (the Charter groups) have more occasions to interact informally as neighbours, newly arrived European immigrant groups and visible minority groups have less opportunity to interact with the Charter groups and older immigrant groups in neighbourhoods where they can develop informal networks through daily interactions and common neighbourhood concerns. Lack of informal interaction opportunities will consequently hinder mutual understandings among these groups and reinforce racial and ethnic stereotyping. In such a context, race and ethnic relations in the city will suffer.

### *Differences in Racial and Ethnic Neighbourhood Qualities*<sup>9</sup>

The concentration of immigrant groups in cities and the considerable increase in the population of visible minorities in major cities due to immigration not only affects racial and ethnic residential patterns, it also has a considerable impact on neighbourhood qualities among racial and ethnic groups.

British, Northern Europeans and Western Europeans in general tend to live in neighbourhoods with better social and physical environments than do other

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population in the local area according to its proportion in the city. The index ranges from 0 to 1. A higher value suggests a higher level of uneven distribution.

9 Most studies of neighbourhood qualities are based on census data. These studies usually focus on the social and physical neighbourhood characteristics. Typical social neighbourhood characteristics included in the analysis are average household income, proportion of residents who completed university and proportion of those knowing any official language. Physical neighbourhood characteristics usually consist of housing values, residential density and the average year in which houses are built.

groups (Fong and Wilkes 1999; Fong and Gulia 1999). However, they do not pay a higher housing price for living in such neighbourhoods (Fong 1997). In contrast, Southern Europeans and visible minority groups live in neighbourhoods with less desirable social environments, and among all visible minorities, Blacks live in the most socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Their neighbourhoods have higher percentages of low income families, higher percentages of unemployed residents and lower percentages of university graduates.

Research has further suggested that period of immigration and level of education do not account for the differences in neighbourhood qualities experienced by different racial and ethnic groups. Though differences in neighbourhood qualities among groups narrow slightly when only the Canadian born of various racial and ethnic groups are considered, the hierarchy of differences remains (Fong and Gulia 1999). In short, these results imply that a pattern of immigrant groups clustering in less desirable neighbourhoods is emerging in large Canadian cities.

### *Spatial Concentration of Poverty*

The decline in human capital of and consequent lower economic returns of recent immigrants combined with growing inequalities in urban cities in recent years has had a tremendous impact on the spatial concentration of poverty among recent immigrant groups. To approach the question of spatial concentration of poverty among groups, I address two related questions: to what extent are racial and ethnic groups clustered in poor neighbourhoods and at what levels are groups spatially separated from other groups?

*Spatial clustering of racial and ethnic groups in poor neighbourhoods* Not only do racial and ethnic groups have different proportions of members who are poor, they are not equally distributed in poor neighbourhoods in Canadian cities. Research based on the 1991 census showed that visible minority groups with substantial proportions of immigrants, such as Blacks, Vietnamese and new European immigrant groups, such as Spanish and Greek, have higher proportions of members living in poor neighbourhoods (Kazemipur and Halli 2000).<sup>10</sup> A study on major racial groups reached a similar conclusion (Fong and Shibuya 2000), finding that neighbourhoods with more poor residents are usually associated with higher proportions of Asians and Blacks. The findings echo the study of Ley and Smith's (2000) on social deprivation and immigration, which shows recent immigrants clustered in socially deprived neighbourhoods. Taken together, these studies demonstrate that visible minority groups with a larger proportion of immigrants have a higher proportion of their members clustered in poor neighbourhoods.

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<sup>10</sup> Analysts use different criteria to define poor neighbourhoods. Kazemipur and Halli (2000) describe poor neighbourhoods as having 40 per cent of households below the poverty line.

*Spatial separation of the poor* Having a high level of residential clustering does not necessarily imply that a group's poor members experience a high level of spatial separation from others. Nevertheless, using the 1991 census data, a study exploring the spatial separation of the poor in Canadian cities has shown that the spatial separation of the poor from the general non-poor population is confined largely to visible minorities (Blacks and Asians). Both groups have a large proportion of immigrants (Fong and Shibuya 2000; Kazemipur and Halli 2000). In the case of poor Blacks, they are highly segregated from the non-poor population in the cities. In about half of the 38 cities included in the study, the dissimilarity index for poor Blacks is over 0.6, which suggests a high level of segregation (Fong and Shibuya 2000). In the case of poor Asians, in most cities they are only moderately segregated from the non-poor population; the mean dissimilarity index of poor Asians from the non-poor population is 0.486. However, like poor Blacks, poor Asians experience a high level of segregation from the non-poor population in some cities in the Atlantic and Quebec regions. In contrast, the level of segregation of poor Europeans from the non-poor population is generally low.

These results highlight the pattern of an increasingly high concentration of recent immigrant groups, especially Blacks, in poor neighbourhoods of major Canadian cities. Wilson (1987), drawing on data from Chicago, has argued that people living in poor neighbourhoods have become isolated from mainstream institutions, role models and job information. Although levels of poverty concentration among Blacks in Canadian cities are far below the levels in US cities, the emerging pattern should be a warning for Canada.

## **Conclusion**

Recent immigrants to Canada are largely visible minorities settled in the nation's major cities. As a result, Canadian cities are increasingly becoming racially and ethnically diversified. With substantial variation in their levels of human capital and with generally less human capital than that of previous immigrant groups, recent immigrants to Canada have experienced divergent paths of integration based on their socioeconomic resources. The integration process for immigrants with low levels of human capital is more difficult, whereas the process for immigrants with high levels is smooth and their human capital resources are highly rewarded in the knowledge-based economy.

Findings in general also show that the integration process for visible minority groups, which have large proportions of recent immigrants, is not as smooth as that for immigrants of other groups or the Canadian-born population. Compounding the decline in human capital of recent immigrants, the majority of which are visible minority groups, economic stratification has emerged along racial and ethnic lines.

Research has also documented the emergence of ethnic communities as the number of racial and ethnic immigrants increases. Ethnic communities generate



jobs for ethnic members with low skills and limited language ability. However, the research findings suggest the possible exploitation of those working in the ethnic economy. Ethnic communities also provide ethnic activities for ethnic members and ethnic members maintain ties with ethnic communities even if they have been in the country for a longer period. Therefore, activities of ethnic communities no longer reflect only the adjustment needs of recent immigrants, but also the efforts of earlier immigrants to lay down roots.

As the numbers of visible minorities increase in urban cities, racial and ethnic residential segregation persists. Newly arrived European immigrant groups and visible minority groups have less opportunity to interact with the Charter groups and older immigrant groups in their neighbourhoods. Furthermore, even when taking into account the period of immigration and the level of education, differences in neighbourhood qualities are experienced by different racial and ethnic groups. Results point to a pattern of an increasingly high concentration of recent immigrant groups, especially Blacks, in poor neighbourhoods of major Canadian cities.

Having outlined the major implications of the high concentration of immigrants from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to our understanding of cities, a review of the evidence suggests that effective immigrant settlement policies are urgently needed in Canada's major cities to enable 'successful' immigrant adaptation. This could be beneficial to society in general and could enhance the economic competitiveness of the cities in question. However, such policy interventions require an unprecedented commitment by all levels of government, backed by the people.

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## Chapter 4

# The Transnational Family Among Urban Diaspora Populations

Paula Rubel and Abraham Rosman

Migration from one place to another has always been characteristic of human populations. The usual assumption has been that since such populations left because of persecution or dissatisfaction with their lives in the countries of their origins, they assimilated to the host society within one or two generations. This involved changing aspects of their culture such as kinship and family structure to conform to those of the host society. In some cases, populations have retained their ethnic identity and their religion over long periods of time, like the ‘Overseas Chinese’ and ‘Overseas Indians’. These people migrated primarily for economic reasons, either because of poverty in their homelands or in search of trade opportunities.

In recent years, such populations have come to be known as *diasporas*. The term had been used earlier primarily for Jews who retained an emotional connection with their original homeland over many centuries as well as for other persecuted populations like the Armenians, who have the same type of connection with Armenia. The term diaspora now has a much wider usage, covering African people brought to the New World as slaves and groups like the Overseas Indians and Overseas Chinese. With the globalization of production and consumption, in the postcolonial period after World War II, there has been a great increase in international migration, creating many ‘diasporas’. People, coming from rural areas in their homelands, have emigrated to urban areas in other countries in the industrialized world. These people are also referred to as transnationals since they are ‘...persons who sustain their home culture away from home. They build around themselves surrogate cultural worlds which serve to shield them from the local culture into which migration or forced exile has inserted them’ (Werbner 2002, p. 6). In such transnational communities, kinship ties within the diaspora population, as well as with the homeland, have always been very important. Today, the continued contact between those abroad and those at home has created what anthropologists refer to as the *transnational* family. Air travel, Email and the telephone have enabled migrants in these diasporas to be in very frequent contact with their kinsmen back home, in contrast to an earlier period when this was not the case and ties would wither.

In this chapter we intend to explore the nature of the transnational family, among different diaspora populations in several different cultural contexts, both historically and comparatively. What kinds of relationships characterize it, what

are its functions? In what ways does family structure in the diaspora differ from family structure in the homeland? What happens to the transnational family over several generations? Do the generations after the first migration, who have been born and raised in the host society, continue to be a part of transnational families or do kin relations between migrants and their kin in their homeland become attenuated, as occurred in the past for so many groups? Have globalization and the ease of travel and communication really produced a new social form or did such 'transnational' families also exist in the past when connections would seem to have been more difficult to maintain. The several diaspora populations whom we shall examine, including the Chinese and Indians who have been migrating from their homelands over a long period of time and the Dominicans and people from Tonga whose history of migration is relatively recent, vary in a number of ways including the nature of their kinship structure. This factor would seem to play an important role in determining the nature of the 'transnational family'.

### **The Dominicans**

Unlike other immigrant groups, who came to America to escape religious persecution or poverty in their homelands, Dominicans saw themselves as temporary residents, who would eventually return to their homeland, the Dominican Republic. They were 'birds of passage', transient workers in new homes (Hernandez and Torres-Saillant 1996, p. 35). While other immigrant groups like the Poles, Italians, Irish and Jews came to their new country intent on becoming Americans, Dominicans were different, since 'Upon leaving their country, a good many had the clear intention of returning home someday to build a house of their own or to open a small business' (Grassmuck in Hernandez and Torres-Saillant 1996, p. 35). This difference in motivation resulted in the development of the transnational family among the Dominicans.

Dominican migration to the United States, primarily to New York City, first began in 1916, when US Marines occupied the Republic for eight years. However, it did not reach significant proportions until the 1960s. Dominicans speak of the *cadena* or chain, since the first migrants, true pioneers, were followed by others, as part of a chain which linked migrants to those who followed. This chain migration is based on kinship, real as well as fictive (Pessar 1995, pp. 11–13). Family structure in the Dominican Republic is characterized by independent nuclear families with neo-local post-marital residence. The same structure was retained by migrant families in New York. Though families were quite patriarchal in the Dominican Republic, with formal authority resting in the senior male, significant changes in gender relationships occurred when they settled in New York City (Pessar 1995, p. 48). It was easier for women, who had not previously worked back home, to find jobs in the garment industry, than it was for their spouses, who could only find marginal employment as dish-washers, janitors or in the hotel industry. Women were also earning more than their spouses. As a result, many wives challenged



their husbands' authority as heads of household and demanded a voice in how household money was spent, introducing new strains within the immigrant family (Pessar 1995, pp. 49–62). In some families, it led to divorce; in others, it resulted in new adaptations.

With wives and mothers working in New York, there was a need for child care. Where a grandmother, aunt or other female relative was living nearby, they filled this need. In other cases, the husband adapted his work schedule to assist, or even take over many of the child-care functions, as, for example, when a husband became a full-time janitor in the apartment house where his family lived so he could be there when his children returned home from school (Pessar 1995, pp. 53–59).

Another solution, adopted by many Dominican families in New York, was to send their children back to the Dominican Republic. Hendricks points out that 'The migration process increases the probability that a child will have to live with a variety of relatives, especially at the beginning of a family's exodus to New York. In other cases the child is shuttled back and forth between the village and New York as the circumstances of the family changed' (1974, p. 103). For Dominican transnational families, with continual movement back and forth, the inculcation of Dominican culture in children was sometimes performed by relatives in the Dominican Republic.

Though most Dominicans talk about returning to the Dominican Republic, Georges points out that only 12 per cent of the villagers whom she studied in both the Dominican Republic and in New York City returned to live in the Republic (1990, p. 216). Some of these returnees were originally undocumented aliens, who had experienced difficulty in finding decent jobs in New York, and they returned to the Dominican Republic without significant savings. They returned to their natal villages to live as peasants, unable to demonstrate the social mobility that their dream of migration had promised. Others, however, and these were invariable legal resident aliens, returned from the US with savings ranging from \$35,000 to \$80,000. Savings on this order almost always came from investing in a small business like a *bodega* or neighbourhood grocery store. Opportunities for investments for others came when an individual, who had been successful and accumulated savings, returned to the Republic and offered a kinsman in New York a chance to become a partner and take over the running of the store.

Returnees to the Dominican Republic coming back with money, which was about 40 per cent of the 12 per cent that returned, chose to settle in urban areas like Santiago and Santo Domingo, where they opened small businesses and lived middle-class lives, separate from their relatives in the village (Georges 1990, pp. 216–224). Their dream of being temporary workers in New York City and saving enough to eventually return to live a better life in the Dominican Republic had been fulfilled. This group, who had come to the United States on resident visas, constantly sought to renew these visas. They regularly returned to the US once or twice a year, husband and wife going independently, leaving the care of children in the hands of the spouse who remained at home in the Dominican Republic. Most would come back to New York for a month or two to supplement their



income, move in with members of their transnational families and often to work at jobs held for them in New York by relatives. They continue to maintain close relationships with their relatives, who have remained in New York. The structure of the transnational family had been central in enabling them to accomplish their ideal and it continued to be reinforced in this group by their movement back and forth. Many Dominicans remained as part of the larger Dominican community in New York City, though their original intention in migrating there had been to be transients. Among those who remain in the United States, the strength and maintenance of the transnational family will depend upon the nature of kin relationships which the second generation of Dominicans, born in New York, maintains with kinsmen back in the Dominican Republic.

### **The Tongans**

In many respects, Tongans who migrated to the United States are similar to Dominicans. Migration to the United States was not viewed as leaving Tonga. Rather, Tongans viewed emigration as a way of helping one's family in Tonga, as well as to seek opportunities for the future (Small 1997, p. 172; Lee 2004, p. 135). According to Small, '...most migrants believed their move was temporary. Even after twenty-five or thirty years, some still do' (1997, p. 186). Tongans in America follow the 'Tongan way', and this involves maintaining one's kinship obligations especially in the area of ceremonial exchange. Tongans abroad all send remittances back home to their families in Tonga, creating a structure of transnational families constantly in touch with other family members, and returning home often to visit. Small's Tongan-American informants asserted that '...the Tongan-American branch of the family was, if anything, "more traditional" than the islanders' (1997, p. 172). They are 'more traditional' because they feel the pressure of kinship obligations even more than do those back home. Of course, this creates a contradiction, in that those abroad, who have left the island, remain more traditional than those at home, in order to maintain their Tongan identity. However, both at home and abroad, the 'Tongan way' is undergoing significant change.

Tongans have migrated to New Zealand, Australia, other parts of the Pacific, as well as the United States, primarily to California and to Hawaii. In each instance, this began as a chain migration in the 1960s. One member of a family would migrate and then help to bring his parents, siblings and eventually more distant relatives to the place where he had established himself, resulting in networks of relatives and extended families living close by (Small 1997, p. 62; Lee 2003, p. 17). One of the reasons for this emigration was land shortage on the island of Tonga. Only one third of the islanders themselves owned land in 1983, though two thirds belonged to a household which had land (Small 1997, p. 28). At present, there are as many Tongans living overseas as living in Tonga, and in most communities there are more overseas born Tongans than those who were born in Tonga (Lee 2004, p. 134 and p. 35).

Households in Tonga consisted primarily of extended families based on cognatic descent. As a consequence, an individual could be a member of either the father's or the mother's kin group. In the village that Small studied in Tonga, the average household had seven to eight people (1997, p. 18). Both wives and husbands may work. The Tongan family she focused on in the United States were living in San Mateo, California, and consisted of seven people ranging in age from seven to eighty-two. The average size of Tongan-American households was between five and six, with two or more wage earners (Small 1997, p. 66). According to Small, 'As we saw in the Tongan village, almost every household belongs to a transnational family, and in the 1990s, the same thing can be said about almost every Tongan-American household' (1997, p. 194).

Many Tongan children are sent back home to their parents' village in Tonga to be cared for by grandparents, or an uncle or aunt. This pattern is, in effect, the traditional pattern of fostering common in Tonga and many other parts of the Pacific. Some children are born out of wedlock in the US, others are sent back because of disciplinary problems (Small 1997, p. 65). Many of these returned children feel quite different from their Tongan-reared peers, despite having been brought up according to the 'Tongan way' in the United States. Their accents, their clothing and small customs they have picked up signal them out as American and different from children raised in Tonga (Small 1997, pp. 154–156). This is also true of Tongan children sent back from New Zealand. The parents who send these children back hope that they will be able to learn the Tongan language and 'the Tongan Way'. Rebellious children may also be sent to another diaspora community to get them away from the bad influence of their friends (Lee 2004, p. 141).

Remittances sent back to family members in Tonga effectively tie together Tongan transnational families. Since the original motivation for migrating was to help one's family, overseas Tongans are expected to send back cash and manufactured goods such as clothing, furniture and appliances (Small 1997, p. 64). Tongan migrants living in America pay school fees for younger relatives, fees for church maintenance and for village projects like building and maintaining a water system for the village. In exchange, Tongans who remain at home send kava root to relatives in America. They manufacture wealth items (fine mats and tapa cloth) and send them to American relatives who need these items to fulfil kinship obligations (see also James 1997). They also tend the land and houses of those who have migrated. In 1984, 10 per cent of the registered land-holders in Tonga were living overseas (Small 1997, p. 232, note 28). Lastly, they receive and care for Tongan children, born overseas, who are sent home. These exchanges between Tongans who have migrated and their relatives at home are not without strains. Small predicts that remittances from overseas will decline over time, especially when a second generation of migrants grows in size and importance. The term 'corporations of kin' has been used to reflect the corporate nature of these economic connections between Tongans at home and overseas. However, in describing the Tongan population of Melbourne, Lee notes, '...some people operate as members of "corporations of kin" while others maintain their connections with Tongans elsewhere as individuals or nuclear family units' (2004, p. 136).

Besides remittances, fundraising in overseas communities is another means by which the diaspora supports the home community economically. Groups which represent churches, schools, youth groups, and so on travel from one location to another to raise money for projects such as building, new band uniforms and instruments or educational material. As Lee notes, ‘...the frequency of these events can constitute a significant drain on migrant families’ incomes, especially as they are also called on to give money for local projects’ (2004, pp. 137–138).

Members of transnational families often take their holidays in Tonga, most of them staying with their relatives. However, a growing number of them, particularly those married to non-Tongan spouses, choose to stay at holiday resorts (Eva 1998). In addition, those who contribute to family events often come in person to attend and celebrate the birth of a grandchild, weddings, funerals and graduation (Lee 2004, p. 143). Interestingly, because Tongans at home depend on remittances, an ambivalent relationship has developed between those Tongans who remain at home and the Tongans in the diaspora who send them remittances. The latter, who see themselves as full-fledged members of the transnational family, want to know more details about how their money is being spent. Sometimes this ambivalence results in the diaspora family choosing to put the needs of their own immediate family first (Lee 2004, p. 143).

Today, Tongans living in diaspora communities are tied to Tonga and to one another by means of the Internet, whether it is people interested in Tongan history who connect through the Kava Bowl web site devoted to Tongan history or the many other Tongan-oriented sites devoted to Tongan news or to the sharing of experiences by young Tongans living in different overseas communities (Lee 2004, pp. 133,139). There are Tongan internet sites which provide live coverage of festivals in Tonga, like the birthday of the king. Lee talks about young people whose interest in Tonga was sparked by the discovery of ‘Tongan-oriented Internet sites’ (Lee 2004, p. 139). As more and more Tongans have migrated overseas and the means of communication by Internet have become important, ‘cross-diaspora’ ties have become more significant. Lee talks about the importance of ‘...factoring in the ties that form *across* the diaspora; for example between Tongans in the United States, New Zealand and Australia’ (2004, p. 136). Clearly these also impact on their relationships in Tonga. Another means of communication between kin in different places is the use of the video camera. Videos of weddings, sporting events and celebrations ‘...are often circulated among extended family members in Tonga and overseas’ (Lee 2004, p. 139). They are a means of reinforcing kinship connections as well as Tongan identity. However, sometimes the use of the Tongan language on these videos deters some young people from watching.

American-Tongans profess to live according to what they see as the ‘Tongan way’. They urge their daughters to marry Tongan men in America and to join Tongan groups. However, Lee notes that for the Tongans in Melbourne, half of the couples she studied represented intermarriages. The extent to which they follow the Tongan Way, send remittances and maintain transnational ties varies (Lee 2004, p. 145).

Small states that for Tongans in America, 'The message they have sent to other Tongans is that even though they have left Tonga, they and their children have stayed Tongan' (1997, p. 172–173). Nevertheless, Tongan-American culture has changed over time, and Tongan culture on the island has changed as well. These differences are demonstrated in the cool distance between Tongan-American children sent home and their age-mates on the island (Small 1997, p. 197). Very few Tongan-Americans seem to return permanently to Tonga, either to go into business there or to retire there. They also do not seem to import spouses from Tonga. If, like the Dominicans, a greater number chose to return to Tonga, there might be more consistency between Tongan culture in Tonga and what the Tongan Americans think of as the 'Tongan way'. On the other hand, the Tongans in Tonga do not agree that the Tongans in America are the only preservers of tradition. In the meantime, the Tongan transnational family seems to be continuing since both sides see the continuation of kin relationship as the underlying motif of the Tongan way which they wish to preserve in some form. Most children learn the importance of kinship, and the ideals of togetherness and closeness (Lee 2003, p. 99). Whether the second generation of Tongans in the United States, even those who were returned to Tonga as children, will maintain transnational families remains to be seen. However, younger Tongans, born overseas with the citizenship of their country of birth, have affective ties to Tonga which is seen as an imagined homeland. The emotional ties are reinforced by frequent visits of members of the Tongan royal family to cities with populations of overseas Tongans. But remittance levels do seem to decline with the second generation (Lee 2003, p. 34). Older Tongans and more recent migrants still see themselves as retaining membership in the Tongan nation-state though they do not vote in its elections (Lee 2003, pp. 143–144). This is in contrast to the Dominicans in New York who are very active in Dominican politics back home.

Interestingly, in similar fashion to South Asians, as we shall see below, within the Tongan diaspora, 'pan-ethnic' ties in which people identify themselves as Pacific Islander or Polynesian are beginning to appear. The outside world sometimes imposes this identity as in the case of the Melbourne Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs which '...directs funding only to associations that cover the category of "Pacific Islanders", not to specific Island groups. These groups are particularly attractive to young people, especially those from mixed families, because lacking the language and cultural knowledge of older members of the transnational family it gives them a more secure identity' (Lee 2004, p. 145). However, in the long run, Lee believes that transnational ties at least those between Tongans settled in Australia and those at home will 'diminish' because of factors like the high rate of intermarriage, decrease in knowledge of the Tongan language and culture, the high cost of travelling to Tonga and the increasingly ambivalent relationship between migrants and those who remain at home. They may be replaced by a reinforcement of the pan-ethnic identity (Lee 2004, pp. 145–146). Such identities can be ephemeral as was the case with 'pan-Indian' identity for American Indians in the United States in the 1960s.

## The Sikhs

Migrating is part of the heritage of Punjabis from India. Punjabi Sikh populations are to be found in East Africa, Myanmar, Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia as well as in Britain, Canada and the United States. The Punjabi Sikh Jats are a rural people whose migration overseas increased greatly after World War II. The people from the village of Jandiali, studied by Helweg, provide an excellent example of the nature of migration and the development and maintenance of the transnational family. For example, as Helweg notes (1986, p. 26), Mohindar Singh went to Manila in 1950, under the auspices of his wife's family. He developed a clothing factory there, sending some of the proceeds back to his village to build a house for his family. When he retired, his son and family left for Manila to take over his profitable business.

During this period, people from Jandiali also began to migrate to England. At the time, the village was crowded with refugees and economic conditions were very bad there. Poverty and the exaggerated positive portrayal of conditions abroad made migration an attractive strategy since remittances from relatives abroad could alleviate the situation for members of the family remaining at home. The family of Kavinder Singh pooled their resources to send him to England where he contacted a man from his wife's village who helped him to find a job. He was able to save enough money for his father's passage to England. After the father's arrival, the women of the family were sent for and the family was reconstituted in England. In other cases the women of the family remained behind. The ties with the family at home in the Punjab remained strong. In another case, Sohan Singh remained in the village to maintain the family land while his father and two brothers went to England. Katar Singh, the father, and his two sons migrated to Gravesend leaving their land in the care of a cousin. When the cousin claimed squatters' rights, Katar Singh returned to the village but developed a system whereby every two years there would be a rotation and a son in England would go back to the village to farm the family land. These examples illustrate the great variety of arrangements which Sikh families utilized.

One of the important areas of concentration of Sikh settlement in England is Gravesend. Its early residents were primarily men who saw themselves as 'sojourners' who would return home to India with enough money to pursue a life of ease. Kin loyalty was of extreme importance (Helweg 1986, p. 43). The 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, which restricted immigration, caused an upsurge in immigration just before these restrictions were put in place. With the arrival of wives and children, families established themselves in houses with or near relatives so that '...entire kin groups lived on the same street and dominated the neighborhood' (Helweg 1986, p. 53). The reconstitution of the family in Gravesend recreated a life close to that of the home village. The women maintained the communication network between Gravesend and the village. As Helweg notes, 'Although the two groups [in Britain and in the Punjab] were geographically separated, they were socially united, mutually affecting,

controlling and supporting one another' (Helweg 1986, p. 63). Even more so after wives and children came to England, 'The home village for the Gravesindians increasingly became the group to imitate and evaluate themselves by; village principles were reintroduced [into what had formerly been a primarily male society] and enforced' (Helweg 1986, p. 70).

The village became the positive reference group, and English society the negative reference group. Families tried to live according to Punjabi precepts maintaining separateness from the host society. Sending children back to the Punjab for schooling and trying to set up separate Sikh schools were ways in which Punjabi culture and values could be inculcated in the second generation and Sikh Jat culture glorified. Despite the fact that they planned to return to their homes in the Punjab, English material cultural items became part of their cultural repertoire to some extent. However, their backyards were miniature versions of Punjabi fields with irrigation ditches and dirt dikes, in which vegetables, herbs and spices were grown, not the flowers to which the English give elaborate attention.

Arranged marriages continued to be the pattern. They frequently occurred between individuals living in different areas; that is, marriages of boys in England were arranged with girls from the Punjab and vice versa. Often this resulted in problems of adjustment because of differing attitudes, perceptions and expectations of boys and girls raised in England as compared to those raised in the Punjab. Parents sometimes tried to marry their children off at an early age before they became too independent. Though there were exceptions elsewhere in England, most Punjabi Sikh boys and girls in Gravesend generally continued to rely on their parents to arrange their marriages (Helweg 1986, p. 126). The family remaining in the Punjab may also continue to have a say in the choice of spouse.

Though almost all Punjabis in England aspire to return eventually to the Punjab and have been saying this since they arrived, only a few of them have actually returned to India to stay. Sikhs are in a kind of intermediate category. That is, though more than half are technically English by birth, they are not recognized culturally as Englishmen and an ethnic boundary is maintained. Though they may never return to their homeland, they identify as Punjabi or Indian but are culturally different from their kinsmen who have remained at home. The Punjab continues to be home for the next few generations and the glorification of the homeland is strong particularly for those who have not returned to the area (Helweg 1986, p. 146). Second generation Punjabis '...adopt a behavioural pattern that lies somewhere between complete rejection or complete acceptance of village norms and goals' (Helweg 1986, p. 141). Ties of the kin group remain strong since they alone can provide financial and emotional support when needed and Sikhs do not see themselves as being accepted by English society.

Because of the ease of travel and communication, the migrant community continues interaction and contact with the homeland. Though the Punjabis came to England as temporary sojourners with the village as their point of reference, events in the Punjab changed the attitudes of some towards their Indian homeland. The attack of the Indian army in Amritsar in 1984 altered the attitudes of many.



Some Punjabis feel betrayed by India, some younger people talk of returning home to lead a revolution to obtain a Sikh homeland, while others support some kind of accord with India.

Agnihotri's socio-linguistic study of Sikhs in Leeds (1987) seems to indicate that Sikh settlement there by means of chain migration followed the same pattern as that described for Gravesend, though the former group included some urban educated individuals as well as Sikhs who migrated from East Africa.

It would appear that the Punjabi Sikh kinship system of patrilocal (virilocal) post-marital residence and patrilineal extended families was a motive force in the development of the Punjabi transnational family. The establishment of patrilineal joint and extended families in England was hastened when restrictive legislation, which threatened future Asian immigration, led to the emigration to England of wives and children. One of the important functions of such transnational families is the maintenance of joint property. Members of the family and kin group in England still hold property in common with those members remaining in the Punjab and are involved in decision-making in regard to that property. The remittances of émigrés enables the enhancement of family property and even the expansion of family enterprises back in the Punjab.

### **The Pakistanis**

There are many significant parallels between Sikh and Pakistani settlement in England. In the city of Manchester, for example, the initial Pakistani settlers were single men, who started to bring over their families in the 1950s when their businesses began to prosper (Werbner 1990, p. 17). The patrilineal extended family was the preferred household form constituting a joint economic unit with each member making a contribution (Werbner 1990, p. 58). Often the family ran a business, with father and brothers as partners, intensely exploiting family labour to cut costs and maximize profit.

In some cases, families were scattered in several countries beyond their homeland, Pakistan. Werbner's informants reported close relatives in Canada, the United States, Denmark, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Libya and the Gulf States. Only one of her informants had relatives in Britain alone, outside of Pakistan (Werbner 1990, p. 6). The home village constituted a temporary base and centre for communication for this widely dispersed group of kin. In a very interesting chart, Werbner notes that the temporal pattern for migrants, processually, was from single male migrants to young families to complex three generation families who lived together with internal divisions into conjugal units. Financial contributions to Pakistan start when single men send home remittances, progressing to the investment in housing, land and tractors, all clearly geared to improving the familial domain at home, and later to investment in other business ventures in Pakistan (Werbner 1990, p. 21). The joint family is a single group with common interest in land and other familial properties. All this time, there is a flow back to Pakistan,

not only of funds for capital investment, but also of gifts and of marriage partners. Pakistanis continue to be embedded in networks which span Pakistan and Britain. Women play a significant role in maintaining these networks of relationship and they are central to the system of ceremonial exchange in Britain, as they were in Pakistan. The *biradari* or extended kin group continues to have an important influence over the activities and expectations of individuals in Britain (Shaw 1988, p. 3). The unit may be divided by migration overseas, but absent members maintain strong links with the family members remaining in the village (Shaw 1988, p. 3). Remittances used for marriage payments, house rebuilding, enhancing agricultural land, starting new business and short or lengthy visits home serve to maintain kin relationships. The kin group itself is perpetuated by the continuation of arranged marriages.

Among Pakistanis both at home and abroad, marriage with patrilineal parallel cousin is favoured. The pattern in genealogies, gathered from families in Manchester, was a high rate of first and second parallel cousin marriage, as well as cross-cousin marriage, all of which supported a high level of endogamy among Pakistanis (Werbner 1990, p. 84; see also Shaw 1988, p. 98ff.). With reference to the Pakistani community of Oxford which she studied, Shaw (1988, p. 168–169) presents a table illustrating how frequent arranged marriages with cousins from Pakistan were. As Werbner notes, 'As families become scattered through labour migration, marriage between cousins, the children of widely dispersed siblings, become important for sustaining the kinship connection...' (Werbner 1990, p. 96). Weddings become the focal point for the 'mobilization' of the kin network, and kinsmen from Pakistan, the Middle East and America would come to Manchester to attend weddings. Trips back to Pakistan are often for the purpose of attending weddings of kinsmen. The extended family also participates by contributing to the dowry and to payments to the groom's family.

Kinship terminology is a sensitive indicator of the interaction between a kinship system of Urdu terms which the Pakistanis brought from the Punjab, and a kinship system evolving in Manchester or Oxford, England. English terms and usage have directly influenced the system brought over from the 'homeland'. A generation ago, American ethnographers like Fred Eggan, working with American Indian populations, analyzed the effect of English usage on indigenous 'Crow' terminologies. Of the many ethnographers who have investigated diaspora populations, only Allison Shaw, who worked with a Pakistani who migrated from the 'Punjab' to Oxford, provides data on this topic. She observes the following:

...within the family biological relationships are often played down. A mother-in-law may have more influence over how her grandchildren are brought up than their mother may have. Children may refer to both their biological mother and their father's mother as 'mother' (*ammi*), sometimes saying 'I have two mothers'. In large households, it may be difficult to tell exactly whose child is which, or whether siblings are 'real' brothers and sisters or first cousins. Cousins



will generally refer to each other as brother (*bhai*) or sister (*bahin*)... In England, adapting the English word cousin to Urdu usage, children sometimes say 'he's my cousin-brother' (Shaw 2000, p. 95).

The Punjabi transnational family in England is an extended virilocal family. The Urdu kinship terminology in use in Pakistan is consistent with this, in that it exhibits bifurcate-merging characteristics. That is, parallel cousins are called by the same term as siblings, and cross-cousins by other terms. As a result, there are no separate terms for 'aunt', 'uncle', or 'cousin' in their terminology, as Shaw observes above. As in most virilocal extended families living together, a young wife who bears a child lives under the thumb of her mother-in-law, and her child calls both women, since they are living in the same household, 'mother'. Since diaspora populations and transnational families exist in bilingual situations, we see the powerful effect of English on kinship usage in this migrant population.

Funerals are also important rituals. Individuals in Britain will fly home to Pakistan for the funeral of a close relative. Continued connection to the homeland is also evidenced by where individuals are buried. Despite the great expense, families do not hesitate to send bodies of kinsmen home to Pakistan for burial, though at times individuals are buried in Manchester (Werbner 1990, p. 170; see also Shaw 1988, p. 79). Where one is buried is a very visible symbol of one's continued connectedness. In recent years, formal burial associations have been organized, to which individuals contribute to defray the cost of transporting bodies back to Pakistan. There is no indication yet as to whether this will continue in future generations. It is symbolically significant that bodies continue to be returned to Pakistan and this obviously has meaning in terms of maintaining a continuing connection between the diaspora population and the homeland.

Clearly, the continuation of arranged marriages for the second generation is important to the maintenance of familial entities. A more recent study of African-Asians and Indians, showed that arranged marriages which had been negotiated, but where the individuals could veto parental choice, was acceptable to members of the second generation (Beishon, Modood and Virdee 1998, p. 32). The subjects of the study also still saw the extended family as the ideal, living together in one household or in close but separate houses if disagreements arose.

For a somewhat earlier period, the 1970s, Jeffrey describes the way in which Pakistani Muslim families remained part of the social system in Pakistan despite the geographic distances involved, contacts being maintained through letters and visits (1976). Sending remittances, helping relatives to migrate, arranging marriages with the children of parents' siblings remaining at home and of, course, frequent visits especially at times of crisis in the family are the ways in which Pakistanis in Bristol continue to be part of a larger social system which includes their homeland (Jeffrey 1976, pp. 134 and 138). Relatives in Pakistan were obliged to care for the families of men when those men first migrated, to provide hospitality when they returned home and to supervise the family investments in land, agricultural enterprises or other economic enterprises like transport businesses.

In a general study of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims who have settled in various parts of Britain, Stopes-Roe et al. point out how most marriages still are arranged, either in a traditional manner where the young people are not consulted at all or in a more modified version where the parents make the selection, but the young people have the final say (1990, p. 30). In terms of the future, Stopes-Roe et al. note that though most of the present younger (second) generation have not really thought about it. When pressed, they seem to feel that they would not support mixed marriages for their children (the third generation).

In America, Indians represent a much more recent migration, most of them having arrived in the past 30 years, settling primarily in the Metropolitan New York area, California, Illinois and Texas. The pattern of transnationalism which we have been delineating also characterizes their social life. They maintain social relationships and networks, and move back and forth between societies, being very '...transnational in their behavior and outlook' (Lessinger 1995, p. 89). Families may be spread over several nations with siblings living and working in the United States, countries in the Middle East as well as Europe. They invest in business ventures in India and may even run for political office there (Lessinger 1995, p. 90). Since Indians migrating to the United States do not seem to come from rural areas, maintenance of family lands at home does not seem to be an issue.

Though arranged marriages continue to prevail since they represent a means of maintaining family unity, many second generation Indians are beginning to reject the idea, though family pressure makes many submit reluctantly to such marriages (Lessinger 1995, p. 120). Marriages may be arranged with Indian men or women in Canada or elsewhere in the Indian diaspora, or with individuals in India to reinforce ties with the family there. Indian women raised in the United States prefer to marry men also raised in the United States rather than in India because the latter demand subservience. On the other hand, in contrast, some Indian men raised in the United States prefer women from India who will cater to them as their mothers did (Lessinger 1995, p. 123). Leonard's study also seems to support the continuation of arranged marriages for South Asians in the United States (1997, p. 161). Weddings clearly reveal the pattern of continued transnational kin connections. Leonard gives an example of an Indian Muslim man living in Phoenix, Arizona, who married an Indian woman from Kuwait. The wedding was held in Karachi, where both families had relatives (1997, p. 166).

In terms of postmarital residence, the traditional multigenerational joint households are no longer numerous in India itself, since most middle class Indians live in nuclear families. Families are more flexible in composition since they sometimes include an elderly parent or unmarried sibling of one of the spouses. However, they are closely linked to households of siblings and parents' siblings, interdependent though spatially dispersed. Many Indians come to the United States as individuals, and later they try to bring over relatives through chain migration, though households seem to be composed primarily of nuclear families (Lessinger 1995, p. 106). Relatives frequently assist one another financially.

## **The Chinese**

The Chinese have been migrating overseas for a thousand years. Migration was interwoven with the overseas expansion of Chinese trade. For example, in the thirteenth century, after a Mongol–Chinese force invaded Java, the Chinese set up communities which remained in Java after the army retreated. When the Dutch and English expanded into the Pacific in 1600, they encountered colonies of Chinese in many Asian ports as well as in Manila. The Chinese were also part of the labour migration, which was a consequence of the West European commercial-industrial and colonial expansion of the nineteenth century into Asia. At this same time, Chinese migration began to move beyond Asia. The most recent migratory wave coincided with the modern post-war globalization and the movement of population to urban centres all over the world. There are important parallels between the Chinese family ‘sojourning’ overseas in the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century. A son would seek work in another country, return to marry in China and leave his wife and children behind with his family, which he visited frequently and to whom he sent remittances. He maintained a claim to an equal share of the familial patrimony. When his sons grew up they might join him overseas. When men married non-Chinese women overseas, by and large the children were brought up Chinese and frequently went back to the village to be schooled (Keong 1999, p. 77 and p. 78). In an interesting reversal today, sometimes the wife and family migrate overseas with the husband who may then return to China or Hong Kong for business reasons and visit his family in the diaspora periodically.

Remittances back home were an important obligation of overseas Chinese. It was a way of maintaining their places in their families. It enabled families back home to achieve a higher standard of living, paid for conspicuous consumption at weddings and funerals and was intended to secure a comfortable retirement when they returned home. Emigrants continued to be members of their families in rural China (Douw 1999, p. 110).

Besides remittances and visits home, overseas Chinese during the nineteenth century organized native-place associations to cover the cost of sending coffins or bones to the home villages of individuals for internment. As late as 1970, coffins were being sent home from Southeast Asia.

It has been said about the Chinese that the pre-World War II period was characterized by a ‘sojourner mentality’. Racial restrictions and prejudice against them in many countries certainly was a contributory fact to this viewpoint. Chinese marginality was institutionally perpetuated. This is said to have been succeeded by the age of ‘Chinese descendants’ who are not rooted to the place where they live (Wickberg 1994, p. 11).

Chinese migration was renewed after the 1970s and fostered by a variety of factors. In a study of the overseas Chinese in Kolkata, Oxfeld illustrates the ways in which kinship ties may be maintained by Chinese resident in areas widely separated geographically. It has been noted that Chinese family structure is a significant

element in Chinese entrepreneurship and this is illustrated in the trajectory of Chinese families in Kolkata and their kin in Toronto. There were Chinese people in Kolkata in the eighteenth century, though their numbers remained low during the nineteenth century. For the tanning industry community, which was the focus of Oxfield's research, poor economic conditions in China forced men to migrate to Kolkata in a pattern of chain migration during the World War I period. At that point the sex ratio of migrants changed, for men began to return to China for brides, bringing them back to Kolkata.

The tanning business was an economic lacunae that Indians did not want to occupy. In India, businesses considered polluting were always run by marginalized Indians or outsiders like the Chinese. A family tanning business was often established by brothers or sometimes even with affines (Oxfield 1993, p. 141). After the death of the father, division of the family business often occurred since, frequently, brothers could not run a single business together. Family division, however, might be postponed for long periods even if brothers were running separate businesses. The Sino-Indian conflict of the early 1960s marked a change in the attitude of Indians towards the overseas Chinese. This may have been the motivation for the members of some Chinese families in Kolkata to migrate to Canada. For those Kolkata Chinese in Toronto, kin ties are maintained with India by travel back and forth between Toronto and India, especially on important family occasions such as weddings, funerals and the celebration of elders' birthdays. Oxfield reports that in some cases young women have returned to China to have marriages arranged for them (Oxfield 1993, p. 265). Whether these ties will continue into the next generation is not clear.

The Chinese began coming to America in the 1850s, settling mainly on the West Coast. Initially, the migrants were primarily men who left their families in China (since the entry of Chinese women was prevented prior to 1945). They came as sojourners via chain migration, mainly for economic reasons. Since passage of a new immigration act in 1965, the migration pattern and the nature of the Chinese community in the United States have dramatically changed. Political instability in China fuelled this new migration of individuals whose aim was to remain in the US. Though this is a shift from the 'sojourner' mentality, as we shall see below, it has not meant the cessation of transnational kin connections. Many Chinese are from Hong Kong and come with financial resources. Family-owned businesses are quite common since the family provides a labour pool willing to put in long hours and they '...offer the flexibility needed for business survival' (Wong 1998, p. 66). In the United States, among recent immigrant families, large and extended households are fairly typical (Tong 2000, p. 176). However, in the San Francisco Bay area there are firms run by nuclear families or by siblings or by a core of related individuals. There are some Chinese people who moved to the United States with their families, where subsequently the husband found business opportunities or employment back in Hong Kong, in Taiwan, or even in Nepal and Thailand. He moved there to work, leaving his family in the United States, visiting them periodically. Wong indicates that the Chinese in the Bay area refer to

these people as 'astronauts' (Wong 1998, p. 87). Some Chinese come to America from elsewhere in the Chinese diaspora. For example, Mr. Pak left China and first went to Madagascar. With the help of other Chinese kinsmen, who had settled in Madagascar over many generations, he started a garment business there. When that proved not to be lucrative, he began an import-export business travelling to different parts of the world. He moved to California and, when business proved not lucrative there, he moved back to Madagascar (Wong 1998, p. 66). Continued maintenance of familial connections has enabled many individuals to find and exploit economic opportunities in many places in the world. These transnational business men and migrant workers, who maintain residency or citizenship in the United States, are using family, kinship, friendship and hometown connections to make transnationalism an adaptive strategy (Wong 1998, p. 87).

In the study of one 'emigrant village' in the New Territories, Hong Kong, Watson demonstrates the continuity and importance of ties maintained between the people of this village and those who have emigrated from it to Britain and other parts of Western Europe, primarily to work in the restaurant business (Watson 1975). The term 'emigrant village' is used to refer to a place from which many have migrated, where remittances are a significant element in the economy of the village. He describes the way in which the bonds of agnatic kinship play a decisive role in the organization of the emigration from the village. Funds to migrate are obtained from relatives and job introductions also come from relatives who have established themselves abroad. The lineage seems well suited to the needs of large scale chain migration (Watson 1975, p. 100). Emigrant involvement with and concern for the home community is evident in the remittances that have been used to renovate homes and finance important public structures like temples. Before the advent of commercial air travel, men might not return to the village until their retirement. With cheaper, faster means of transportation, emigrants now return every few years. Younger emigrants return to marry. Lavish gifts are brought back and elaborate banquets held. Married migrants return to direct the affairs of their families; important decisions are often deferred until their return (Watson 1975, p. 144 and p. 145). Though earlier men who migrated left their families in the village with the assumption that they would return to their ancestral homes upon retirement, more recently some have moved together with their families. Emigration, however, continued to be an economic venture characterized by the 'sojourner' mentality, even if families accompanied the migrant.

Many overseas Chinese fit Ong's category of 'flexible citizenship'. This term refers to managers, technocrats and professionals who, as a diasporic managerial class, may invest in one country, work in another, and have their families in still another (1998, p. 136). The Chinese family enterprises in this postcolonial era have been integrated into a global economy. Ong describes the way in which well-to-do families may '...accumulate passports not only from Canada, Australia, Singapore and the United States, but also from revenue-poor Fiji, the Philippines, Panama and Tonga' (Ong 1998, p. 146). 'Big business families' often distribute their sons across different geographic sites. In one wealthy family, the eldest son

with a Tongan passport runs the hotel chain owned by the family in the Pacific region, another brother in San Francisco oversees North American and European hotels, while the youngest brother runs a family business in Southern California (Ong 1998, pp. 147–148). Thus, we can see that for the overseas Chinese the transnational family is an important operative structure whether the individuals are waiters in the West End of London or global cosmopolitans with financial interests on several continents.

## **Conclusion**

There are a number of generalizations which our comparison has revealed. Families which think of themselves as ‘sojourners’, whether they are Chinese, Indian, Tongan or Dominican, have features in common. The diaspora populations we have discussed in this chapter thought of themselves as temporary sojourners, in contrast to other populations who migrated permanently and did not intend to return to their homelands. The intention of these ‘sojourners’ was to return to their homeland after they made their fortunes. However, most do not. They spend the rest of their lives in the countries to which they have migrated. The purpose of the migration of these people was usually to improve the economic situation for their families. Frequently, migrants already had kin in the countries to which they went, who assisted them in finding employment. Chain migration is therefore an important factor in the process (chain migration is characteristic of all populations, migrating with the intention of returning to the homeland they left behind, as well as those who have no desire to return). After finding gainful employment, the migrants send back remittances. These payments continue to be sent back to kin at home, even if the immediate family of the migrant joins him in the diaspora. The migrant family abroad continues to fulfill its kinship obligations to the kinsmen who have remained at home or who are resident in other countries. Modern modes of communication and the ease of transcontinental air travel have made these obligations easier to fulfill today than they were in the past. However, the transnational family, the maintenance of such kin ties and the fulfillment of kinship obligations was also characteristic of migrant populations such as the overseas Chinese who were ‘sojourners’ at an earlier period.

The transnational family, including members at home and abroad, operates as a corporate unit, maintaining property in common, usually in the homeland and acts ritually as a unit. This is seen most clearly in the Tongan, Pakistani and Sikh cases but is also characteristic of the Chinese. Those who remain back home manage the land and agricultural production, though decisions about corporate property involve both those at home and those abroad. Remittances from overseas are often used to expand the agricultural enterprise or start new family businesses. In the case of the overseas Chinese, we have seen the way in which the transnational family, operating as a family firm, can constitute a successful economic entity over several continents. The Dominican transnational family, in contrast to our



other examples, does not usually have economic functions. This may be because the Dominicans have a nuclear family structure, and nuclear families are primarily independent economic units, since men and women separate themselves from the family when they marry. The maintenance of corporate property, such as land, or of a family business by the family in the diaspora, as well as those at home, would seem to be another factor which serves to perpetuate the transnational family.

In several of our examples, arranged marriages were characteristic, though not for the Dominicans and Tongans. Diaspora Indians, Pakistanis and Sikhs, seeking to maintain endogamy, search for spouses for their children both at home and abroad. The Pakistani preference for parallel cousin marriage is the means by which this structure is maintained. In these groups, the second generation seems to be acquiescing to a modified version of arranged marriages, whereby the parents select the spouse, but the younger generation have a final veto. Arranged marriages are also another means by which ties with the family at home are reinforced or renewed. The Chinese during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, who went home to arrange marriages with local women, returned periodically to father children but left their families at home to be supported by remittances from abroad. If the group does not remain endogamous and begins to intermarry with members of the host society, there is the danger that the transnational family might not be able to reproduce itself. However, among the Chinese in some parts of Southeast Asia, intermarriage with local women did not spell the end of the transnational family there, especially when sons were sent home to China to be educated. This is because the Chinese had a patrilineal descent system in which men perpetuated the family and the line, and the familial connections and ethnic identity of in-marrying women were unimportant. Families that can control the marriages of their young people can more easily maintain themselves transnationally. Marriage rituals themselves have always been occasions for the reunion of members of the transnational family, often from all over the world.

Sending children back to members of the transnational family, who have remained at home for enculturation and schooling, is another means of reinforcing ties within the transnational family, as well as strengthening connections to the culture of the homeland in the second generation. This was found to be the case for the Dominicans, Tongans and Chinese.

Another manifestation of the transnational family is the burial at home of individuals who die in the diaspora. The Chinese were sending remains back to China as late as 1970. The Sikhs and Pakistanis continue to do so today, bearing the great cost by forming burial associations. Sending bodies back home is a reiteration of the sacred ties of a diaspora population to their ancestral land. The process entailed is further evidence of the unity of the transnational family among these populations.

Another factor which seems to be operative in the maintenance of the transnational family are the attitudes of the host society towards the diaspora group. For the Sikhs and Pakistanis, the negative attitude of the English population towards them was certainly important in the maintenance of the transnational

family and the perpetuation of these groups as separate cultural entities beyond the first generation. The restrictive anti-Chinese legislation and the negative attitude of Americans towards the Chinese throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century was one of the factors which maintained the Chinese 'transnational family' during this period. This was true even when the assimilationist idea of America as a 'melting pot' was operative. Because of the racist attitude towards Asians in the United States, the melting pot idea did not apply to the Chinese. The persistence of anti-Chinese attitudes in many Southeast Asian countries served to maintain the Overseas Chinese as a separate population in these areas as well.

Sources dealing with diaspora populations do not provide a great deal of information about the cultural attitudes towards ancestors and towards the homeland of those who go overseas, but these would seem to play an important role in the maintenance of transnational ties to kin and the homeland. For the Chinese there is no doubt that this is an important factor in the maintenance of such connections, even if they become 'cosmopolitans' with connections to several countries. As we have seen above, diaspora populations try to reproduce the culture of their homeland to the extent that they are able. In a recent volume, Werbner focuses on the loci of cultural identification for the Pakistani Muslim diaspora in Manchester, as well as on the dialogical and heterogeneous complexity of that identity since Pakistanis belong to 'not a single diaspora but to several different *diasporas* – Asian, Muslim, nationalist Pakistani, Punjabi – to a *hybrid* diaspora... which is imagined and performed rhetorically through cultural events' (Werbner 2002, p. 17). It is in public performances, ceremonials and 'cultural works' that the fables of this varied identity are reiterated. However, this hybrid cultural identity is being reproduced on foreign soil rather than in the 'sacred homeland' with which connections continue to be maintained. Globalization has also meant that for Pakistanis, Indians and Sikhs the mass cultural production of South Asian packaged culture is yet another element in the hybrid diaspora which is culturally enacted (Werbner 2002, p. 17). The culture reproduced on foreign soil inevitably undergoes changes which mark members of diaspora populations as different. In this respect, Tongans show a great similarity to Pakistanis. Ceremonial gift exchanges are central to Tongan identity and to the 'the Tongan Way' at home and abroad. These ceremonial exchanges are an integral part of a larger structure which includes Tongan mythology and the Tongan kinship and political structure. Kava root, fine mats and tapa cloth are sent to America so that Tongans there can fulfill their kinship obligations. Though Tongans in America feel that they are practicing a more authentic version of 'the Tongan Way' than those who have remained at home, like the case of the Pakistanis, theirs is really a hybrid culture reproduced on foreign soil.

While the globalization of production and consumption, with the attendant ease of travel and communication, has made the maintenance of the transnational family easier, there is no question that 'transnational families' existed prior to these developments. This research has raised several further questions. When the host society has an assimilationist conceptualization of itself, do transnational



families continue to exist? Does the presence of ideas about multiculturalism in a host society, facilitate the maintenance of the transnational family? As people move toward a cosmopolitan viewpoint, in which the world as a whole is the point of reference rather than the nation, is the transnational family, an entity that moves beyond national borders, more easily sustained?

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# Chapter 5

## Minorities in Italy: The Cases of Arbëresh and Albanian Migrations

Giuliana B. Prato

### Introduction

This chapter draws on historical research and on fieldwork carried out in Albania and among Albanians living in Italy to address minorities' rights, with particular reference to aspects of integration of historically established linguistic minorities. The first part of the discussion focuses on the case of the Arbëresh, who migrated to Italy between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> The social and economic conditions are analysed in the context of the so-called Southern Question to stimulate a new approach on contemporary issues of integration beyond multiculturalism. A major limitation of the idea of multiculturalism is its implication of culturally homogeneous minority groups, rigidly bounded, that exist within an equally homogeneous majority society (see, for example, Wessendorf 2008, 198). However, as historical and contemporary data show, not always linguistic minorities are culturally or socially homogeneous.

In the second part of the chapter, the analysis moves on to the contemporary Albanian migrations looking at the relationship between these new migrants and the historically established communities, on the one hand, and between Albanians and Italian society, on the other.<sup>2</sup> The analysis points to the political and economic nature of both historical and contemporary migrations and their transnational character, taking into account the relevance of broader geopolitical interests that affect political debates on integration and the ideological nature of the project of multiculturalism. Relevant to the contemporary situation is the new Italian Law on linguistic minorities of 1999 (Law 482). The Arbëresh are one of the twelve officially recognized historical linguistic minorities in Italy (Italian

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1 The word Arbëresh refers to Albanians of Italy, Greece, or Dalmatia who descend from Albanians who migrated in the Middle Ages.

2 I carried out historical research between 1998 and 2006, through the study of historical documents held at the Provincial Library in Brindisi, the National Library in Naples, the Historical Archives in Lecce and the National Museum in Krujë (Albania). I carried out anthropological research in Apulia and Albania between 1999 and 2006 through participant observation, interviews and case studies. I wish to thank the British Academy for funding a preliminary stage of the fieldwork in 1999; Research Grant No. SG-29740.

Constitution, Art. 6). Law 482 resurrected old issues on the necessity for Italy to adopt a national language, while at the same time stimulating a renewed interest in the cultural heritage of historically established linguistic minorities and a political debate, widely reported in the media (Mai 2002), on the integration of new immigrants. Before addressing the contemporary situation, it will be useful to look at the establishment of the Arbëresh communities in Italy and their status in Italian society.

### **Political Relations and Economic Migrations: The Establishment of Arbëresh Communities in Italy**

Arbëresh migrations to Italy are set in a complex framework of national and international political and economic relations. Historical records, scattered and sometimes contradictory, suggest that military and economic reasons, alongside international geopolitical events, were major factors in these demographic movements.<sup>3</sup> The degree and the nature of the integration of different groups of migrants vary significantly, depending on such factors as the reasons for migrating, the social status of the migrants and the specific conditions of the host communities. There seems to be little doubt, however, on the transnational nature of these migrations, especially those occurring between the mid-fifteenth to the mid-sixteenth century; migrants maintained close relations with their country of origin and continued to be engaged in the Albanian fight against the expanding Ottoman empire.

According to Pedio (1944), fifteenth century Arbëresh migrations were mainly a consequence of the foreign policy adopted by Gjeorgj Kastriot Skanderberg, the Albanian chieftain who unified the Albanian tribes against the Ottoman invasion. Skanderberg aimed at establishing alliances with West European countries, who, in turn, regarded such alliances as instrumental in the opposition of Christian Europe to Islamic expansion. In Italy, over the years, primary points of reference became the Kingdom of Naples, the Republic of Venice and the Papal State (Manardo 1591; Serra 1957). Following the intervention of Pope Paul II, Skanderberg was promised asylum for his people, should the country fall to the Ottoman invasion. Albanians were granted hospitality, protection and the means to making a living in

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3 The first recorded Albanian migrations to Italy occurred in 1385, following the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans. Some historical sources claim that most of the relationship between Albanian chieftains and Italian states were established during the Crusades, as a few Albanian families lived in South Italy in 1053. Most historical records seem to agree that the most significant demographic movement of Arbëresh to Italy occurred in the mid-fifteenth century. Several waves of migrations were recorded between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The last recorded migration, in 1756, involved 45 families from Shkodër and was encouraged by the Apostolic Chamber of the Papal State with the aim of repopulating some of its abandoned rural hamlets (Serra 1947).

the aforementioned states. It is not surprising, therefore, that Arbëresh settlements were established along the Adriatic coast of the Papal State, in the territories of Venice (including its Southern Mediterranean colonies) and, especially, in the Kingdom of Naples.

Skanderberg's military intervention in support of Ferdinand I, the Aragonese king of Naples, against the Angevins played a crucial role in the establishment of Arbëresh settlements in the Kingdom territory. In exchange for his intervention, Skanderberg also obtained financial support for his campaign against the Ottomans and feudal land for his military leaders. Albanian settlements were initially established in Apulia; some historians refer to them as 'colonies' (see Blanco 1852; Serra 1947). One of these military leaders, Demetrius Reres, later became governor of Calabria (in southwest Italy) and his brother founded several Albanian settlements in the island of Sicily.

Following the death of Skanderberg in 1468, the flux of migration momentarily decreased. New waves of migrations occurred in the sixteenth century, especially after the fall of the Southern Mediterranean Venetian cities to the Ottomans. These new migrants arrived in Italy without possessions or money and hoped to find a better life in the established Arbëresh settlements.

In order to encourage their integration in Italian society, Arbëresh settlers were granted many privileges, particularly tax relief, for populating (in some cases re-populating) abandoned or economically poor areas. Some historical studies focus on this issue, suggesting that the Albanian migrations of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries should be seen as a consequence of pan-European policies encouraging the movement of labour force. For instance, following a demographic decline, the crisis of agricultural production and the inevitable depopulation of rural towns, the Kingdom of Naples issued a decennial tax exemption to Albanian settlers who established themselves on abandoned feudal land. According to Klapish-Zuber and Day (1965), Albanian settlements contributed significantly to the economic and social transformation of South Italy. Most Albanian migrants were initially peasants or shepherds, between the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries the expanding Italian mercantile towns attracted more qualified workers, especially artisans and sailors. These skilled migrants became fully integrated in the local communities. In contrast, in the poorer agricultural areas, the Arbëresh had to compete with the autochthonous population over the few available resources. Most of the land consisted of abandoned hamlets and the main activities were linked to sheep herding and agriculture. However, in spite of adverse conditions, Albanians continued to establish new settlements. Again, the aforementioned feudal privileges that were granted to the Albanians played a key role, partly as a consequence of the political alliances established between Albanian chieftains and the Italian aristocracy.<sup>4</sup>

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4 Such alliances are exemplified by the marriage in 1540 between Skanderberg's granddaughter, Irene Kastriot, and the Prince of Bisignano. Following the wedding, many Arbëresh from Apulia moved to Prince's feudal lands in Calabria and Basilicata (Pedio 1944).

## The Expansion of Arbëresh Communities: Between Integration and Civil Rights

In the sixteenth century, changes in the Kingdom of Naples played a key role in Albanian migration. After the Aragonese and the Angevins, the Kingdom of Naples was now ruled by the Bourbons, and new special policies were adopted by local princes and barons and by the local Church. Changes regarding the use of the land and further tax relief facilitated the establishment of new Albanian settlements, in some cases founded by the descendants of previous migrants. One such case is represented by the town *S. Cristina di Gela*, in Sicily, which was founded in 1691 by 82 Albanians descending from early settlers in the nearby *Piana*, which later took the denomination of *Piana degli Albanesi*. They were granted land from the Archbishop of Palermo under a contract known as *enfiteusi*, which allowed them to build private houses for themselves and their families but not public buildings.<sup>5</sup> Although they did benefit from tax relief, Albanian settlers still had to pay, as it was common norm, feudal rights to the Archbishop of Palermo for the use of some public services. In other parts of the Kingdom, the Arbëresh's refusal to pay feudal rights lead to rebellion and, in some cases, to the destruction of their hamlets.

The Arbëresh were also granted the 'privilege' to speak their language and to follow their religion according to either the Latin or Greek rites. On their arrival to Italy, only a few had converted to Islam, and those who had were encouraged to re-convert to Christianity. Serra (1947) maps the religious affiliation of the 196,760 Arbëresh living in Italy in 1886; 51 communities followed the Latin rite, while 26 communities followed the Greek rite. Today, the Greek rite continues to be practiced by some communities of Arbëresh descent across Italy.

Later migrants, however, did not always enjoy such a favourable situation. Their living conditions were initially very poor (Masci 1847); they lived in huts and their staple mainly included wild fruit and the game that they hunted. Following the intervention of Pope Paul II, many local barons granted them land under the rule known as *potestas coaduvandi et affidandi*, which meant that feudal barons could take under their protection free men, who could then live on feudal land and cultivate it. They were called *affidati*. Most Arbëresh, however, chose to live in the ecclesiastic feudal estates because as vassals of the Church they would have a higher social status than as vassals of a Baron.

Interestingly, the terms of these contracts were considerably better than the terms granted to the autochthonous Italian population. Under these contracts, the Arbëresh were granted an initial *licentia populandi*, that is a regular authorization

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5 This seems to contrast with the widespread rule that, when funding new settlements, the Arbëresh were encouraged to build the necessary infrastructures and buildings of public service; for instance, butchery, a mill, the hospital, the town hall, the prison. In such cases, urbanization followed the natural landscape and the resulting villages lacked a proper urban structure. In contrast, when moving to established villages, the migrant community accepted to submit to the existing political, ecclesiastic, economic and social authorities.

to populate specific areas. These licenses were followed by legal contracts, known as *capitoli di fondazione* (chapters of foundation), which detailed the rights and duties on both sides.<sup>6</sup> They make interesting reading.

According to a *capitolo* dated 1482, the Arbëresh living in *Palazzo Adriano* were granted free movement in the land ‘donated’ to them; they could sell their houses and their vineyards and build a church for the Greek rite; the clergy was exempt from taxation.<sup>7</sup> The *capitolo* also indicated the obligation for the feudal baron to build a watermill though, following common practice, the settlers had to pay for this service. In another *capitolo*, the land was donated by a monastery with the clause that the Arbëresh would build within two, or at most three, years their houses with proper walls and a roof, in which they would live and work.

A collective reading of these *capitoli* suggests that, although the Albanians became vassals of feudal lords, they enjoyed the privilege of not having to provide free work or other services for them. In some cases, military leaders were allowed the ‘honour’ of carrying their weapons in the house of the feudal lord. Over the years, however, the situation changed and often both religious and feudal lords broke the contractual agreements (Masci 1847). In some cases, Albanians had limited access to what were considered fundamental civil rights, such as the use of the mill, burning wood, drinking water and right of passage through feudal land. It must be pointed out that, when this occurred, they shared their predicament with the autochthonous Italian population. There were, however, cases of clear discrimination against Arbëresh settlers. For instance, in some cases, they were forbidden to ride a saddled horse or to enter town wearing a hat; both prohibitions symbolized the inferior status of the Arbëresh. In other cases, because of the tax relief granted by the Church to the Orthodox clergy, feudal barons forced the Arbëresh communities to abandon the Greek rite in favour of the Latin one. More generally, however, the main reason for the transition to the Latin rite appeared to be a consequence of the Counter-Reform policy to establish the supremacy of the Latin Catholic Church.<sup>8</sup>

The conditions of the Arbëresh communities in Italy have of course changed over the centuries, following changes in the Italian political situation. Significantly, not only have these communities endeavoured to become fully integrated in Italian

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6 Serra (1947) studied some of the *capitoli* of the Arbëresh settlements in Sicily and Calabria, based on records kept in various municipal archives and libraries.

7 Although they had to submit to the authority of the Catholic Church, Byzantine dioceses were granted protection and could follow the Greek Orthodox rites and form their own ecclesiastic hierarchy.

8 In 1564, Pope Pius IV, in the *Breve Romanus Pontifex*, declared that the Arbëresh religious communities had to submit to the authority of the Latin Bishops. Similarly, in 1572, Benedict XIV, in his *Etsi Pastoralis* established the supremacy of the Latin rites over the Greek one (Rodotà 1763). Nowadays, most Greek dioceses follow the Greek Catholic rite (see also note 22).



society; as I shall argue later, historical evidence shows that they have significantly contributed to the political events of the country.

In spite of historical evidence, some contemporary studies (see, Resta 1991) have suggested that over the centuries the Italian Arbëresh communities have preserved their language and traditional customs and, above all, have practiced ethnic endogamy, thus remaining isolated from the wider Italian society. In contrast, I suggest not only that the preservation of traditional customs does not necessarily conflict with their integration,<sup>9</sup> but that these communities are an integral part of Southern Italian history. More precisely, I shall argue that the Arbëresh have shared their predicament with the autochthonous Italian population to such an extent that their social and economic conditions can indeed be better understood in the context of the so-called Southern Question.<sup>10</sup> Before addressing this issue further, it is sociological critical to examine some of these traditional customs and their social and economic significance.

### A Questioned Integration? Marriages Customs in South Italy

Resta (1991) has attempted to analyse the nature of marriage rules of an Arbëresh community in South Italy by referring to traditional Albanian customs codified in the *Kanun* (the traditional Albanian Canon of Customary Law). She claims that this is not a unique situation and that her findings could be generalized to all Italian Arbëresh communities. Her work is, however, methodologically flawed. Not only does she take for granted that such traditional customs are relevant in contemporary Albania;<sup>11</sup> she also does not consider the significance of different

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9 An interesting comparative ethnographic example is provided by Wessendorf's discussion (2008) of the '*Secondo Movimento*' in Switzerland. Members of this movement are well-educated, successful professionals of migrant origins who have made a point of showing that they are 'the same' as Swiss-born nationals, but at the same time they are 'different'.

10 A vast literature exists on the 'Southern Question', which assumes a duality in Italian society between a civilized, and civic, industrialized North and a backward, clientelistic-oriented, agricultural South. Intellectuals across the political spectrum, known as *Meridionalisti*, have put their knowledge at the service of different governments. Notably, the *politica meridionalista* (policies for the South) has been strongly influenced by Gramsci's work (1973). For an analysis of this literature and of how it has influenced anthropological research, see Pardo (1996) and Prato (2007).

11 Resta draws on the records published by Father Valentini, who visited Albania during the Fascist occupation as a member of the Jesuit mission (Valentini 1945; 1969). Valentini refers specifically to the Kanun of Lekë Ducagjini. There are different regional variations, and local variations within the same region, of this normative system. The Kanun of Lekë Ducagjini is mainly adopted across the north-eastern mountain regions; local variations include the Kanun of Mirditë, of Pukë, of Kosovë, and so on. Noteworthy, many Arbëresh migrants who settled in the Pollino, the area studied by Resta, were of

Kanuns to the customs under examination. Major problems with her analysis seem to lie in how she handles the way in which kin relations are defined.

All Kanuns there clearly distinguish between matrilineal relations (*lisi i gjinisë*, the descent of the milk) and patrilineal relations (*lisi i gjakut*, the descent of the blood). Usually, only the latter appear to be relevant in social relations; while matrilineal relations do not carry social obligations. Contrary to such a tradition, it appears that in the village studied by Resta most social obligations and rights are derived from matrilineal relations; only inheritance of immovable properties is passed on to the male members of the household.<sup>12</sup> Most important, Resta seems to be unaware of the complexity of Albanian marriage rules.

During my previous fieldwork in Albania, my Albanian informants have often emphasized that, even in contemporary Albania, marriage customs are by no means universal (see note 11). It is not unusual that neighbouring villages follow different customs, very often depending on how Clan (*fis*) or Brotherhood (*vëllazëri*) boundaries are defined.<sup>13</sup> Depending on complex variables that deserve a separate analysis, the definition of such boundaries may lead to either relatively flexible village endogamy or to strict village exogamy. Here, it suffices to say that, when the *fis* represents a territorial unit, exogamic marriage seems to be the preferred rule. Villagers do say that they belong to different kin groups, but they also say that they do not marry within the village because they recognize each other *as brothers*. In such a case, the categories of *fis* and of *vëllazëri* seem to overlap and it is not unusual for the word *fis* to be used as a synonymous of *vëllazëri*. The use of the word *fis* is, thus, context-bound and depends on the nature of the social relations described by the speakers. When my informants wanted to indicate weak solidarity among the families of *vëllazëni* (brothers), they would use the word *fis*. In contrast, when indicating strong social relations, they would talk about the *fis* by using words such as *dere*, or *bark*, *shtëpi*, *tym* (family, or generation, household and fire, in the sense of fireplace of the household, where men sit in a hierarchical order). To complicate matters further, the *fis* can include newcomers who, once accepted into it, will be considered brothers by all male members. These newcomers, in turn, will respect the women of the *fis* as sisters and daughters and will not see

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Arvanite Greek origins and would have followed different marriage customs than those adopted in the north-eastern mountains.

12 Although this contravenes Italian family law, this custom is fairly widespread in some Italian villages. However, family law is applied when one of the heirs insists in claiming her (usually it is a woman) legal rights.

13 Elsewhere, I discuss the traditional Albanian tribal system (Prato 2004). Here, it is relevant to mention that the word *fis* carries various meanings, which refer to different types of social relations. For instance, in the North-Western regions, the *fis* may coincide with the territorial boundaries of a village. In such a case, it theoretically corresponds to the village *social group* and includes different brotherhoods who claim common (real or fictitious) descent. In the same regions, however, it is not unusual for the *fis* to extend to different groups of families who, though claiming common origins, live in different villages of the same region or even in different regions.

them as potential spouses.<sup>14</sup> Nowadays, marriage rules have become less rigid, even in mountain areas. People prefer to think of them as *norms* rather than rigid *rules* (Prato 2004, 69–70). They nevertheless become central in cases of property disputes.<sup>15</sup>

On the basis of the marriage customs and definition of social boundaries outlined so far, it could be argued that village, rather than ethnic endogamy could have been the Arbëresh's priority. As I shall expand later, such a village endogamy does not appear to be different from the customs found among the neighbouring autochthonous Italians. In a situation of scarcity of resources, village endogamy, together with traditional rules of inheritance, would have guaranteed control of the land; in particular, right of access to communal property and, in the past, the continuity of economic (such as tax relief) and social privileges. At the same time, if we accept that such an endogamic system followed traditional customary law, it could be explained in terms of preservation of the group solidarity and the strengthening, or establishment, of new alliances between families or groups of families.<sup>16</sup>

Physical anthropologists (Fiorini et al. 2007) have analysed biodemographic data collected in the Pollino area, where Resta carried out her research, to address the alleged endogamy of the Arbëresh communities. They suggest that the geographic isolation of the mountain villages and socio-economic factors could have led to 'social' endogamy, bringing about the permeability of ethnic boundaries. They argue that the history of the Arbëresh and their culture and identity are the product of continuous interaction with the autochthonous Italian population. Their study also shows no difference between ethnic minorities and autochthonous Italians in terms of inbreeding and of subdivision into subpopulation. Drawing on their study of isonymic patterns, Fiorini and his colleagues have also argued 'the neutrality of ethnic consciousness or differences' (2007, 742), as they have found that such patterns are dominated by geography

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14 Significantly, though the majority of the population are Muslim, the norm allowing marriage between parallel cousins is not applied. What is fundamental here is the sharing of communal property, especially water. As Bardhoshi (2007) points out, in Albania water has symbolic meanings that convey strong social relations.

15 On traditional rules of inheritance, see Valentini (1945). On contemporary property relations and their social implication, see Bardhoshi (2007).

16 In a personal communication, Nebi Bardhoshi explained that in the village of the Has region where he is carrying out his fieldwork, male members of a family (say, Family A) may choose to become 'brothers' with members of another family (Family B) or with a group of families from the same village with whom they do not claim common descent. In such a case, Family A takes the surname of Family B. Strong solidarity and reciprocity is expected among the male members, who would share collective responsibilities and would have the same rights, including property rights. One wonders whether the village endogamy of Italian Arbëresh might include cases of 'chosen' brotherhood, leading to the acquisition of the other family's surname. On the analysis of Arbëresh surnames in South Italy, see Fiorini et al. (2007).

rather than by socio-cultural differences. They suggest that ‘social’ endogamy seems to be confirmed by the fact that Arbëresh élite families actively sought integration in Italian society through intermarriage, mainly involving members of the Italian élite.<sup>17</sup> They reject the isolation hypothesis also on evidence of the Arbëresh’s contribution to Italy’s historical events, such as the *Risorgimento* and the military campaign that led to the country’s Unification in 1861. Their commitment to these political causes is reflected in their popular songs, in which they compare the Italian hero Garibaldi to the Albanian hero Skandenberg (Serra 1947). Their integration and political participation intensified during the Fascist period and the annexation of Albania to Italy.

Finally, it is significant that, in Italy, marriage with co-villagers has traditionally been a widespread custom. Both in the Arbëresh and Italian cases, individuals’ and their family’s reputation and trustworthiness are fundamental in terms of social integration; of course, family’s reputation and trustworthiness can be more easily assessed if the bride and groom are from the same village. This is graphically reflected in the Italian say, ‘*mogli e buoi dei paesi tuoi*’ (wives and cattle from your own village). Nowadays, in some areas across Italy there continues to be a strong sense of *campanilismo* (attachment to one’s village), which feeds on and translates into stereotypes about neighbouring villages (see Pettener 1985). Similarly, Arbëresh from different villages tend to emphasize the differences between them, often talking derogatively about other villages (for instance, claiming that women in neighbouring villages practise magic), stressing the point that the Arbëresh communities are less internally homogeneous than it might appear from a superficial viewpoint.

Resta also does not fully account for the impact of migration to large cities, which has affected most Southern Italians. In particular, during the sixteenth century, expanding cities, such as Lecce, Brindisi, Cosenza, Palermo and Naples attracted major movements of people in search of better job opportunities. Further significant migrations followed at the end of the nineteenth century to the Americas and, in the 1950s and 1960s, to the industrial cities of northern Italy and to North-European countries. Arbëresh village or social endogamy does not seem to differ from marriage patterns among southern Italians who migrated to Italy’s North-Eastern regions. Such an internal migration was a consequence of the mobilization of labour force for the development of Northern industries, in particular the Piedmontese car industry, FIAT. Especially during the 1960s and mid-1970s, marriages among people from the same village did not occur just

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17 Francesco Crispi, who was Italian prime Minister at the turn of the nineteenth century, was of Albanian descent. Previous significant examples include Giovanni Castrita – a son of Skandenberg, who became Duke of Galatina, in Apulia; he was a most powerful member of the local nobility and the military leader in the fight against the Turkish invasion of South Apulia – and Giorgio Basta, mentioned by Gramsci (1975) as one of the ‘Italian military geniuses’ of the late sixteenth century during the campaign against the Spaniards in the Flandres.

among migrants of Arbëresh descent, but were very common among all migrant Southerners, finding key explanation in the discrimination faced by *all* Southerners in the North. They were branded as backward and superstitious, altogether an inferior ‘race’ (dark-skinned, dirty peasants, with barbaric customs) with whom Northerners advised their children not to mingle. Only with time, third-generation Southerners began to be considered suitable spouses, though ‘mixed’ marriages usually involved Northern men and Southern women, very rarely the other way around (Alberoni and Baglioni 1965).

In other words, the Arbëresh situation does seem to be inseparable from the Italian Southern Question. Not substantially different from other Southern Italians, the Arbëresh have been affected by the economic underdevelopment of the South. Marriage patterns among them did not simply define their ‘ethnic’ identity, they were part of a strategy in coping with a situation marked by scarce resources and marginality.

### Linguistic Minorities’ Rights and the Southern Question

Until the late twentieth century, the integration, or isolation, of the Arbëresh and of most linguistic minorities in Italy did not engage public debate.<sup>18</sup> Their historical presence in the Peninsula was acknowledged by referring to linguistic influences on variations of local dialects, on the name of villages or of specific quarters in towns, or on family surnames.<sup>19</sup>

The renewed interest towards the Arbëresh communities has been stirred up by new geopolitical events, in particular the Albanian mass immigration of the early 1990s, but it is also an expression of the recent political debate on the new law on linguistic minorities. Such a debate reached its peak in 1991 with the proposed Bill on the ‘protection of linguistic minorities’ (Bill No. 612). This Bill was the outcome of a fifteen-year long debate, to which the resolution of October 1981 of the European Parliament on linguistic and ethnic minorities added fire. Bill 612 was approved by the Chamber of Deputies, with the opposition of the then Centre-Left Republican party (PRI) and the Right-wing Italian Social Movement (MSI). The Bill never reached the Senate because of the governmental crises and the call for new elections in March 1992. A new law, to which I have referred earlier, was eventually ratified in 1999 (Law 482), leading some enthusiastic

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18 With reference to the Arbëresh, past interest was stimulated by Italy’s colonial expansion, especially in the late nineteenth century and during Fascism, leading to numerous publications.

19 The similarity between *Arbërisht* and some Apulian dialects are revealing. For example, *rrunqoj* (Ar.) and *rrunchiare* (Ap.), meaning to squat, or to bend (in Italian, *accovacciarsi*, *piegarsi*); *sengë* (Ar.) and *singa* (Ap.), for line of incision (It., *linea incisa*); *çentrë* (Ar.), *centra* (Ap.), for nail (It., *chiodo*). Surnames of Arbëresh origins include, Arianiti, Basta, Castriota (and the variant *Castrista*), De Rada, Musachi, and so on.

supporters to propose bilingual teaching in all areas where linguistic minorities lived. Intellectuals from the post-Communist Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) and from the Socialist Party (PSI) started a campaign in major national newspapers against the proposal. Their argument can be summarized in three main points. First, the question of linguistic minorities and cultural diversity is neither serious nor important. Secondly, dialects and minority languages have no proper rules and therefore cannot be taught. Thirdly, raising this kind of expectations jeopardizes Italy's national unity. According to these intellectuals, who were soon called the 'Jacobean club', the Italian political system was slowly killing the cultural identity of the country in order to appease and win the support of the Northern Leagues, who were encouraging federalism and, in some cases, the separation of the North from the rest of the country. They were joined by intellectuals across the political spectrum who feared that the new law might bring about the legal acknowledgment of the linguistic and cultural rights of new immigrants, most of whom came from non-EU countries (the so-called *extracomunitari*) and who were unwilling to accept Italian laws and cultural values.

In order to understand the political debate and the implications of Law 482 for Italian society, it is essential to outline some Constitutional, historical and social issues.

Article 1 of the Italian Constitution states that 'the official language of the Italian Republic is Italian'. However, in agreement with Article 6, Law 482 envisages the protection of linguistic minorities (in particular, Art. 2); that is, of historically established groups whose primary language is other than Italian. Law 482 recognizes as linguistic minorities 'people of Albanian, Catalan, German, Greek, Slovene and Croatian descent and those who speak French, French-Portuguese, Friulan, Romansh, Occitan and Sardinian'. In the past, the definition of 'linguistic minorities' has been highly contentious and mainly applied to groups living in border areas; many groups living across Italy, and which are today included in Law 482, were not granted such a status. For instance, as it emerges from the population census of 1861 (carried out soon after the Unification of Italy) and the census of 1921, Sardinians were not classified as linguistic minorities. Similarly, although the Arbëresh constituted the biggest ethnic group in Italy at the time of the Unification, they were not considered as a separate homogeneous unit because they were spread in several small hamlets across the national territory. Most of the settlements were in the Centre and in the South. The census of 1861 reports that 'The Albanians...if they had inhabited one single province, they could have perpetuated their language and their customs but, because they are scattered in different areas of Apulia, Calabria and Sicily, they cannot think, or wish to constitute a separate unit...the Albanian population of [historical] refugees...is the largest, including 55,453 people' (*Direzione della statistica generale del Regno* 1867).<sup>20</sup> Significantly, although Law 482 recognizes Albanians (meaning

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20 Serra (1947) reports 196,760 Arbëresh living in Italy in 1886, a significant demographic increase in just 25 years. During this period, the Arbëresh would appear to

Arbëresh) as a linguistic minority, it also emphasizes the ‘territorial delimitation’ of the linguistic minorities, raising the opposition of individual rights to community (group) rights. Law 482 links linguistic minorities to the specific territories where they historically established themselves (a ‘territory that has been historically inhabited by the linguistic group’). Therefore, it does not seem to apply to people who have migrated to other regions of the country; as it is the case, for example, of the Arbëresh who migrated from the rural South to the industrial North. Protection of individual rights falls within the responsibility of the provincial council in which individuals from minority groups live and work.

The unity of the Arbëresh language (*Arbërisht*) has also been disputed. There are indeed different variations of Arbëresh dialects and, as I mentioned earlier, there has been a reciprocal influence between them and local Italian dialects.

The linguistic situation in Italy is notoriously characterized by a variety of local dialects. Very often, these dialects differ significantly within the same region. Most contemporary linguistic minorities (Arbëresh, Slovene, Romansh, Franco-Provençale and Provençale) appear to coincide with the original neo-Latin local variations. In the areas hosting linguistic minorities, bi-linguism, even tri-linguism, is very common. This is by no means a unique situation, for bi-linguism is widespread throughout Italy (Doxa 1992; ISTAT 1989). The use of dialect is usually limited to conversations among friends and family members, and nowadays its use is no longer associated with illiteracy.

The use of dialect is part of the complex dynamics of social relations. Local and national media have played a significant role in the revival of dialects especially among the younger generations, who regard dialects as the best means of social interaction; for them, the use of dialect opens up a channel of communication from which non-dialect speakers are excluded. Moreover they enjoy the fact that the dialect-speakers have the advantage of understanding the ‘official’ language (Italian), which they share with ‘the others’, while for the latter it is difficult, if not impossible, to grasp fully the semantics and the metaphoric meanings of the communication. Significantly, young people do not share the sense of shame of their parents or grandparents, who, under pressure from governmental educational policies, stopped using the dialect with their children. They had been led to believe that if children did not learn proper Italian, they would fail at school and in life. This issue deserves expansion.

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have more than doubled. In such a case, one wonders how this could have happened. Three issues must be pointed out. First, there are no records of new immigrations and such a natural demographic increase would be unlikely at the end of the nineteenth century, given the high rate of infant mortality and the adverse socioeconomic conditions. Second, only Apulia, Sicily and Calabria are mentioned in the 1861 census; the census did not take into account Arbëresh communities living elsewhere in Italy. Third, intermarriage with non-Arbëresh, or even changes of surname through ‘chosen’ brotherhood might have occurred (see, note 16).



Since the Unification, Italian governments have carried out a pedagogic policy to discourage people's habit of using the local dialect in informal speech. Reflecting the belief that the education process is a means to develop the 'social and cognitive skills' of an individual (according to the view that there is a strong link between language and thought), dialects, and their 'poor' grammar, have been regarded as improper means for such a social, intellectual and cognitive development. Rosmini's work (1930 [1857]) exemplifies such an approach as he argues that, because it is through language that people construct ideas, perfection of language equals perfection of thoughts.

Such pedagogism has been basically inspired by the philosophy of the Enlightenment and by the Jacobean project of the French Revolution, which aimed at implementing a common national language that would promote equality among citizens (Brunot 1927). The issue of a national 'unifying' language has long been central in Italian intellectual debates and policies. In 1797, the Jacobean Bocalosi encouraged Italians to follow the example of the French, whom he described as 'teachers of freedom', pointing to the necessity of adopting a 'national language... common to everybody and cleansed of dialects, which do not allow neighbouring people to understand each other' (1964 [1797], 158). Similarly, Galeani Napione (1824 [1791]) claimed that the mother language of the nation brings citizens together and alerts them to a common heritage. Cattaneo (1972 [1841]) goes further, stressing the role of schools in the accomplishment of such a project. According to him, it is essential that at school the Italians 'learn to forget' the language that they have learned at home and that has 'stained' them since birth. In his view, this is fundamental because the 'secret of the national genius' is not in the blood of the people, but it is intrinsic in the language they speak (1972 [1841], 200). Notably, however, up to the post-WWII period, state education was not widely available; there was a high level of illiteracy and most people only knew dialect.

Thus, in the nineteenth century, two main aspects emerge, which are common to scholars from different perspectives and across the political spectrum: the theory of a correspondence between language and thought and the need to achieve true communication among citizens. The two are regarded as intrinsically linked.

This approach was espoused by Gramsci, the most influential among post-WWII intellectuals, and is reflected in the national policies not only on education, but on socio-economic issues. In Gramsci's work (1975), a common, 'educated' language is described as *the* means to overcome the social and economic backwardness of some Italian regions, namely the South. According to Gramsci, the establishment of a common, educated, national language is necessary to overcome social and cultural barriers and to transform radically the cultural conditions of Southern peasants (1973). Dialects correspond to a subaltern (inferior) and limited knowledge. In his own words, 'those who only speak dialect, or partially understand the national language, share a knowledge of the world that is inevitably restricted and provincial, in other words, a fossilised vision' (1975, 137). Gramsci was also vehemently against literature written in dialect, which is strongly reminiscent of Giordani's view (1856) that, apart from being dangerous



to civilization, literature, especially poetry, written in dialect threatens the ‘honour of the nation’; adding that dialects make people speak as idiots (1856, 370–71). The Sicilian writer Sciascia follows Gramsci when he argues that, ‘no work of art can be written in dialect’ (1992, 4).<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, such an attitude was at the basis of the Fascist policy against dialects.

Recent political debate reflects the old controversy on the need to establish a ‘unifying’ Italian language as the essential means to overcome the alleged social and cultural backwardness of some regions and to guarantee the unity of the state. Both on the Right and on the Left of the political spectrum, pluri-linguism has been traditionally regarded as divisive in a situation in which, many argue, the sense of national unity is historically fragile. As I have mentioned, in the contemporary situation of mass immigration, many Leftist and Centre-Right politicians regard the aforementioned Law 142 as a particularly dangerous threat to Italian culture and identity. They emphasize that linguistic minorities have always been protected by the Italian Constitution to the extent that, for instance, in the Northern province of Bolzano, where people mostly speak German and Romansh, school teachers are required to be fluent in both Italian and German.

To sum up, the recognition of the rights of linguistic minorities should be contextualized in the broader commitment of Italian rulers to marginalize dialects in favour of a national ‘unifying’ language and it is significant that, as the Bolzano case shows, minority languages have often enjoyed greater recognition than regional Italian dialects.

### **‘New’ Albanians and the Contemporary Arbëresh: Between Cultural Colonialism and Transnationalism?**

Given the historical presence of Arbëresh settlements in Italy and past economic and political exchanges between Italy and Albania, one would expect that the ‘new’ migrants that arrived in Italy in the early 1990s would be welcomed by the local population. Indeed, the first reaction of ordinary Italians was more than welcoming. Between January and March 1991 thousands of Albanians arrived in the Southern city of Brindisi. It was a situation of emergency to which, in the absence of a prompt response from central government, the local authorities responded by setting up refugees camps and encouraging local families to give hospitality to those ‘unfortunate’ people. A strong sense of solidarity soon developed, which local newspapers attributed to Brindisi citizens’ memory of their own forefathers’ emigration to the industrial North or to foreign countries. Over

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21 It should be mentioned that, *pace* Sciascia (whose novels I do enjoy), quite a few literary masterpieces have been written in dialect. Among others, the Neapolitan play writer E. De Filippo was made life senator of the Italian Parliament for his contribution to the arts and his works have been translated and performed in several languages, including English.

the years, such an initial enthusiasm has been replaced by the entrenchment of stereotypes and, eventually, by hostility towards all Albanians. There is no simple explanation for such a dramatic shift in local people's attitude, which requires a separate analysis. Here, it will be interesting to point out that some themes recur in the statements of my Albanian informants and my informants among the autochthonous population.

Many 'new' Albanian immigrants are very cautious when interacting among themselves and generally try to avoid each other. In order to understand what is actually going on and the different forms of discrimination that appear to be occurring even among Albanians, we must distinguish between different immigrants, who could be tentatively grouped into four broad ideal types. These are 'ordinary' Albanians, who have chosen to 'blend' into Italian society; Albanians who engage in illegal activities; 'transnational' Albanians, often acting as mediators/facilitators; and 'identity managers'. Of course, as we shall see, these ideal types are internally diversified and at times overlap.

First, there are those who live permanently in Italy and who moved there for different reasons. The first waves of migration were also internally diversified; those who arrived in the early 1990s included unskilled workers, without money or connections, and educated professionals, who first arrived on their own and then brought their families. Case studies have shed light on some internal dynamics among these immigrants and on their relationships with native Italians.

Lindita, a graduate from Tirana University, arrived in Italy in 1991. She was accompanied by her father in what she describes as her nightmare clandestine journey. They had borrowed money from relatives to pay for their passage and to support them during their initial stay in Italy. Lindita's father had no intention to stay, he only wanted to make sure that his daughter found suitable accommodation and a decent job in Italy. As Lindita's Albanian degree was not recognized in Italy, she found a job as a secretary and after a few months, during which she managed to save some money, she enrolled at an Italian University, where she met her future Italian husband. She is now happily married with two children and is training to become a lawyer. Her children, who study at a private Catholic school, regard themselves and are perceived by the local community as *Italians*. Lindita herself is often described by her Italian friends as an Italian citizen of Albanian origins. When I asked her why she had not tried to befriend other Albanians who lived locally, she said that, although many Albanians living locally were honest people and came from good families, she felt uneasy in dealing with them for various reasons. First, there is still a sense of secrecy among Albanians, which she describes as legacy of the Communist regime; they avoid talking about themselves and listeners are left with the feeling that the speaker is always hiding something. Second, she reckons that hard times may lead people to make 'unhealthy' choices, which links to a third reason. All Albanians living in Italy maintain close relations with their families in Albania and those who have legal status often go there to visit relatives and friends. It is not unusual for them to be asked to carry packages to be delivered to a friend of a friend in Italy or to be asked by an acquaintance to take

a 'gift' to a relative in Albania. The content of the package is usually unknown to them. Lindita points out that, apart from the risk of being directly involved in these exchanges, with all the implicit responsibilities and obligations, there is the risk of being indirectly associated with someone involved in shadowy transactions.

Other Albanians with whom I spoke say that they simply do not socialize with other Albanians because they are 'different'. These informants seem to have embraced significant prejudices against a broad second category of Albanian immigrants, the so-called 'Albanian criminals'; as it is broadly the case among the native population, such prejudices are fuelled by frequent media reports of robberies, street peddling, rapes, prostitution and trafficking in drugs, arms and human beings (see also Mai 2002). Consequently, people like Elsa, who also moved to Italy in 1991, prefer to do menial but honest jobs instead of using the resources that the Albanian ethnic network might offer. A highly educated woman, on her own with three children, Elsa has worked first as a cleaner, then as a shop assistant and eventually as a translator. She also sent her children to a Catholic school, regarded as the best in the area, and two of them are now attending university.

A third category, marked by a focus on economic activities, includes those Albanians who arrived in the early 1990s but eventually decided to go back home. In most cases, these 'transnational migrants' have established contacts in Italy, on whom they draw to develop their activities in Albania. Met and Agim, who are now in their mid-thirties, exemplify such strategies. On their arrival in Italy, they became involved in an Italian NGO, working for free and providing assistance to immigrants of different nationalities. During the Kosovo crises of the late 1990s, this NGO set up a branch in Albania, where Met and Agim worked on a voluntary basis. Since then, Agim has expanded the activity of the NGO in Albania, including development projects, and works full time there, while continuing to travel to Italy. Met has used the contacts established while working for the NGO to set up a travel agency in Italy, organizing holiday-packages to Albania. He regularly visits Albania to check the quality of the services provided by his associates. Met says that initially he was ashamed of being Albanian and even used the Italianized version of his name, but later realized that if all Albanians would behave as he did then the only Albanians Italians would know would be criminals and illegal immigrants. He now wants people to learn about Albania and the Albanians and feels that by doing his job he is contributing to the rebirth of his country (other similarly significant ethnographic cases are reported in Prato 2004).

Albanians studying at Italian universities could be described as a kind of *sui generis* transnational migrants. Unless they marry in Italy (generally women), they usually return to Albania but keep resident status in Italy and continue to use the Italian national services, such as the health service. Some have acquired Italian citizenship. While in Italy, most Albanian students endeavour to establish contacts also outside the university network and usually become involved in lay or religious charities. Regarding themselves as 'cosmopolitan' Albanians, they say that they 'want to get rid of provincialism and narrow vision of the world'. Most are fluent in Italian and are fast learners of the host country's culture, society and

politics. Above all, as Kostantin, a university student in his mid-twenties, said, 'one soon becomes aware that by remaining closed in one's way of being Albanian, the Italians would reject them, or at most would be patronizing; instead, we want to be treated as equals, though we know that we have much to learn.' Kostantin is confident that the Italian university training and the contacts that he would meanwhile establish in the wider society will be advantageous assets for his future position in Albania. He concedes that he is thinking of his own betterment, but he also believes that thus he will contribute to improve the position and reputation of his family and to de-provincialize his country and his co-nationals.

Of course not all immigrants are successfully integrated into Italian society. In spite of many successful examples, the majority of ordinary Italians continue to hold a negative view. Once again, it is the most educated immigrants that have managed to integrate in the host community, whether they live permanently there or are transnationals. Significantly, these successful migrants avoid socializing with the wider immigrant communities; at most, they are willing to become mediators between immigrants and the institutions of the host country, or to act on behalf of their country of origin in maintaining relationships with, and influence upon, the diaspora population. These two roles of mediation need further discussion.

Many Albanians who act as mediators between immigrants and the Italian institutions acquire an articulated knowledge of both EU policies and Italian laws on immigration. In the anthropological literature they are often described as 'specialists and facilitators', a new category of workers in the 'industry of multiculturalism' (Grillo 2002). Some of them openly say that it is critical that they should learn how laws are actually applied, sometimes through informal rules that only apparently border illegality. They feel that by 'exporting' such knowledge to their country they can help it to become a full member of the EU. According to Kostantin, knowledge of the law and its application is as essential as proper knowledge of 'Western' codes of communication. Above all, by showing that it is possible to advance one's position by acting within the law, he hopes to become a role model for young co-nationals both in Italy and in Albania.

A less straightforward kind of mediation takes place through informal channels. Aware that their country needs remittances from immigrants, some integrated expatriates encourage their fellow Albanians who legally live in Italy to invest back home and to establish contacts with potential Italian investors. To a certain extent, and in different ways, people like Met and Agim appear to fulfil this role. Other helpful contacts are provided by Italian men married to Albanian women, who decided to live in Albania.

Many 'facilitators' exploit their knowledge of Italian immigration laws, especially the 1998 Law, known as 'Turco-Napolitano', which emphasize 'intercultural education'. According to this law, the introduction of linguistic and cultural differences in education is regarded as a fundamental value on which to build 'reciprocal respect, exchanges among culture and tolerance' (Article 36). The 'facilitators' together with the minorities and the relevant Italian institutions usually organize events that should promote true 'multiculturalism'. They can be

described as 'identity managers'; a crucial aspect of their strategy is to establish links with the Arbëresh communities.

Since the mass migration of the early 1990s, many Apulian towns of Arbëresh origins have emphasized their ethnic heritage and pushed forward the institutionalization of their language. San Marzano makes an interesting case. When in 1999 I visited the town with Met and Agim, road signs greeted visitors both in Italian and in *Arbërisht*; a school was named after Giorgio Castriota, the Italianized name of the Albanian national hero; and attempts were made to introduce the Arbëresh language in the primary school curriculum, so that children could acquire a historical memory of their origin long lost to the majority of the inhabitants. It was apparently a new revival. However, I found that the town had established cultural exchanges with Albania since the late 1970s, when it was still a Communist country completely closed to the Western world; a closure symbolized, among other things, by the statue of a marine in the port of Durrës pointing a gun towards Italy. Further investigation revealed that in 1978 a folk group of dancers and singers from San Marzano participated in the Folk National Festival in Albania. In the same period a group of Albanian immigrants had settled in Tuscany, one of Italy's so-called 'red strongholds'. Although it was beyond the aim of my research to enquire into Albania's foreign policy in the 1970s, I found interesting that since the participation of San Marzano people in the Albanian Festival, cultural exchanges were actively promoted between the Albania Academy of Science, the University of Tirana and some local Italian scholars with the aim of establishing a strong link between Albanian institutions and foreign intellectuals who wanted to promote the rights of Albanian linguistic and cultural minorities abroad. Some scholars emphasized how, in spite of being Italian citizens, the Arbëresh in Apulia had created a 'little Albanian world' in the midst of Italian culture (Shkurtaj 1979). Referring to the fact that the southernmost part of Apulia (the *Salento*) was in the past known as *Albania Salentina*, they argued that the Arbëresh diaspora had *de facto* established an Albanian colony in Italian territory.

Cultural 'co-operation' continued to increase (see, De Padova 1987), reaching another successful phase in 1989—1991 with a more active involvement of the Albanian Embassy in Rome. Publications flourished both in Albanian and in Italian, emphasizing not only the importance of the revival of *Arbërisht* for reaffirming the cultural roots of the Arbëresh diaspora, but also the contribution of *Arbërisht* dialects to research into the history and evolution of the Albanian language, especially considering that very few historical documents appear to have been written in that language (Demiraj 1994). Above all, these intellectuals claim that language unifies Italian Albanians and Albanians living in Albania, encouraging the rediscovery of their common ethnic identity. Seminars and round tables on these themes continue to multiply, a website is dedicated to the Arbëresh (BESA), and the *Italian League for the Protection of the Arbëresh Minority*, which was funded in the early 1980s, is more active than ever, encouraging the introduction

of *Arbërisht* (actually, its local variations) in the school curriculum and the revival of religious traditions, especially of the Orthodox rite.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

The Italian debate on linguistic minorities and their integration in Italian society brings to light key ideological bases of the project of multiculturalism. Historical and contemporary evidence suggests that in order to understand such a project we must address the underlying complex web of political and economic interests, which in turn interlink with cultural and national identity. Three main issues have emerged from the discussion offered here: the relevance of the historical context; the necessity of a sound methodology in addressing the alleged lack of integration of ethnic minorities; the relevance for the contemporary migrations of the more or less explicit interests of the migrants' country of origin. All these issues link directly to assessing the exact meaning of 'multiculturalism'.

The Arbëresh case shows that mass migrations are not a new phenomenon. What may be new are the political and social context and the interests of both the host communities and the countries of origin. In the past, when Christian Europe was faced by economic crisis and the threat of Islamic expansion, some migrant groups appeared to have been instrumental in protecting Western cultural values and interests. Policies were implemented to facilitate the integration of newly formed communities and, when discrimination occurred, they shared their predicament with the autochthonous Italian population. Integration was made possible by mutual acceptance; of the host country's rules and values, on the one hand, and of a relative cultural diversity, on the other.

As I mentioned in my introductory remarks, integration does not mean rigid homogeneity. It means tolerance of diversity within the context of common values that connect, because they are shared by, different groups. This does not imply that Italy is a 'multicultural' society. The Italian nation state, as most European countries, is the outcome of changing geopolitical interests and shifting international and national alliances. Furthermore, Italy's uneven economic development has affected in a very similar way the Arbëresh and autochthonous Southern Italians. Similarly, the Italian debate on the new law on linguistic minorities reflects old issues on the marginalization of Southern Italians, through the ideologically hijacked rhetoric of a unifying language. It goes without saying that a common national language is one of the most powerful means of symbolic integration in the nation and that perhaps more attention should be paid to the argument of the 'Jacobean Club' that the new law may lead to claims of diversity rights among the new immigrants.

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22 Apart from individuals of Arbëresh origins, the churches were the orthodox rite is celebrated attract immigrants from different nationalities; some contemporary Albanians, Slavs, Ukrainians, Romanians, even Ethiopians, Copts and Eritreans, though the languages used are often *Arbërisht* and Greek.

However, as we have seen, the nineteenth century Italian debate was mainly directed against Southern dialects, which were represented as embodiments of an inferior, backward culture (Gramsci 1973, 1975); the Arbëresh culture was just part of such inferiority, not a special separate case.

In this scenario, the late-twentieth century rediscovery of the Arbëresh's 'diversity' and the attendant reasons raise potentially worrying questions. I suggest that the twenty-first century Arbëresh identity should be viewed in relation to the 'resurgence of ethnicity' that is occurring even in traditionally 'multicultural' countries, such as for instance Canada. As Palmer (1976) suggests, such resurgence took hold in the 1970s as a consequence of changing social and political conditions. The present international situation of religious terrorism and mass migration and the false ideology of political correctness complicate matters further. I have suggested that the renewed consciousness of the Arbëresh identity has been influenced by several factors; most prominent, the EU directives on cultural and linguistic minorities and the changes that have occurred in former Communist countries. Further research should perhaps be carried out on the interest of these countries in supporting 'ethnic resurgence'. One wonders, for instance, how it was possible for the people of San Marzano to visit freely Albania in the late 1970s, when it was an inaccessible country marred by what the international community regarded as perhaps the most inhumane form of real Socialism.

Rather than asking whether Italy, or any other democratic country, is a multicultural society, we should perhaps ask what degree of tolerance is acceptable. As Pardo (see Chapter 6 in this volume) argues, there is a distinct difference between tolerance and toleration. Case material on the contemporary Albanian immigrants shows that even among them, particularly those who have accepted the values and rules of the host community, toleration is clearly rejected, even opposed; Lindita is widely perceived as an Italian citizen of Albanian origins and refuses to get involved in shadowy dealings, Kostantint and Met want to be the same as the Italians and they maintain a certain degree of diversity without feeling patronized or marginalized.

It would appear that political correctness and the ideology of multiculturalism are fostering a new rhetoric of exclusion, inevitably leading to the creation of new social boundaries; whereby those who embrace such ideologies are rewarded with privileges and a 'superior' status. The positive discrimination that stems from these ideologies opens up access to social, cultural, political and economic privileges for selected minorities, thus creating new forms of inequality that absurdly transform tolerance into toleration. Such absurdity breeds conflict and, more worryingly, the kind of populist political fanaticism that, throughout history, has been so dangerous for democracy.



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## Chapter 6

# Dynamics of Exclusion and Integration: A Sobering View from Italy

Italo Pardo

In this chapter I draw on recent anthropological research in Naples and its province,<sup>1</sup> where I carried out sixteen-months fieldwork between 2004 and 2006. My aim was to investigate empirically the complex relationship between the formal and the informal sectors of the economy<sup>2</sup> and the role played in such a relationship by legal and illegal immigrants from countries that have recently joined the European Union (from now on, EU) and from countries outside the EU; specifically, China, Latin America, the Indian Sub-Continent, North- and Sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe.<sup>3</sup> My informants were mainly entrepreneurs who ran licensed or unlicensed businesses of various kinds and sizes, local development agents, politicians, foreign immigrants<sup>4</sup> and professionals (health workers, lawyers and operatives in various associations) and officials who dealt with them.

Over the past 20 years the E.U. and national and local governments have gradually recognized the gap between citizenship and governance. At the same time, there has generally appeared to be an inability (or unwillingness) to deal with the attending difficulties. Key corollaries of such a gap are gradations of

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1 Fieldwork was based on participant observation and case-studies of individuals, situations and relevant events. I extracted contextual information from official statistics and documents, judicial inquiries, newspaper articles and selected available literature. My reading of the present situation benefits from past research in Naples and elsewhere in South Italy.

2 The nature of the informal sector makes a quantitative assessment extremely difficult. However, it may be useful to mention that, according to the report published in 2005 by Svimez, in Campania the informal sector accounts for 23 per cent of the economy.

3 According to Caritas' 2006 Report on Immigration, there are 136,359 legal immigrants in Campania; 8 per cent more than in 2005. Such an annual increment is marginally higher than in the rest of Southern Italy (7.6 per cent) but significantly lower than the national average (11.2 per cent). A large proportion (12 per cent) now reside in the South. In Campania legal immigrants are 2.5 per cent of the population (a total of 5,791,000). In contrast with the national average, in Campania, legal immigrants are prevalently female (53,000; there are 39,000 male immigrants). In a recent essay (Pardo 2007) I offer an overview of this situation.

4 As I had no knowledge of immigrants' native languages, I conducted interviews in Italian, English or French. In some cases, I used interpreters.

distrust between rulers and the ruled and of mismanagement of responsibility in the exercise of power and slanted approaches to the legitimacy of law and politics. The necessary task of researching this complex issue has been marred by substantial theoretical and methodological limitations and by misdirected funding. Thus, we still know little about what is actually going on.

Two important contentions are relevant to the present discussion and need to be addressed. First, key dynamics of legitimacy and morality in the relationship between those who rule and make laws and those who have to deal with such governance and legislation in their practical lives have been left largely unexplored; what little is known has been produced by mainly unfunded research. Second, in the face of ever-growing, and largely unchecked, foreign immigration, the project of multiculturalism has long dominated international politics. With rare exceptions (see, for example, Wiewiorka 1998), this project, basically advocating the recognition of ethnic, cultural and religious differences in the public arena, has been hailed as an unquestionably good thing. However, much ambiguity, empty clichés and unfounded abstraction mark such a viewpoint (see, for example, Alund 1999; Castles 1994; Martiniello 1995; Miles and Thranhardt 1995; Brusa 1997; Modood and Werbner 1997). The ensuing problems are many. Obvious contradictions tend to be glossed over, such as those implicit to the application of such a project to the production of law in Western democracies – among whose founding principles there is, of course, the precise distinction between religion and the state – where minorities are committed to religious law. Problematic issues tend to be left unaddressed, such as those raised by existing inequalities among native people and by the impact of immigration on the tension between tolerance and toleration. These problems are highlighted in the ethnography that I examine here, where the culture and approach of immigrants of different origins play an important role in such a tension, highlighting how some ethnic groups shun integration while for most others integration is a primary goal that can be achieved.

In a forthcoming work, I discuss more fully the social, cultural and political issues raised by the increasingly large presence of foreign immigrants in urban Italy. Within the limited space of this chapter, I focus on aspects of immigration that are relevant to the dynamics regulating local activities that fall in the ‘informal’ and illegal sectors of the economy and in the interstices between the informal and the formal. I examine the interactions of native people from various walks of life with legal and illegal immigrants in these arenas. Here, these processes carry ramified significance. Compounding on the heavy historical load engendered by the North-South divide and the attendant discriminations (Pardo 1996), the nature of such processes and the way in which they are received among ordinary Southerners are influenced by a traditionally problematic relationship between citizenship and governance, defined, particularly in recent years (Pardo 2001), by rulers’ authoritarian management of power and engagement in the politics of double standards. Neapolitans feel justified to say that they are treated as second-class Italians, untrustworthy bearers of a backward culture who lack civic sense (*à la* Putnam 1993) and are bent to corruption and criminality. Such treatment defies

fundamental principles of representation (Prato 2000), obligation and entitlement, serving the selective interests of a few to the disadvantage of the many (Pardo 1996, 1999, 2001).

The descriptive analysis offered here suggests an understanding of the complex ways in which these processes articulate at the grassroots. My contention is that this is a necessary condition to grasping the broader sociological relevance of the problematic of both legitimacy and tolerance in the context of the degrees of exclusion and commitment to integration of native people and of foreign immigrants.

### **Citizenship and Governance: A Problematic Setting**

Naples and its province are notoriously characterized by weak industrial development, organized crime, unholy alliances between legal and illegal powers (found across Italy; see, for example, Donati 1997), a large informal sector and high official unemployment.<sup>5</sup> Huge funds, recently also from the EU, have been used to implement weak development schemes through clientelism and corruption, systematically practised by the Christian Democrats in the 1960s and 1970s and later perfected by Leftist administrators (see Della Corte 2007; also Di Feo 2008 and Damilano 2008).

Openly committed to a stereotypical misreading of ordinary Southerners' entrepreneurialism as predatory, corrupt individualism, the powerful élite who have ruled Naples since the early 1990s, and its Region – Campania – for most of the last decade, have set a morally problematic and politically worrying precedent in the relationships between public powers and ordinary citizens, as they have failed to fulfil their administrative obligations while systematically pursuing selective policies. To cite one telling example, they have largely failed to repay debts contracted by their predecessors with local (mainly small) entrepreneurs who contracted work for what they thought was a financially reliable public body (Pardo 2000a). Claiming that these entrepreneurs must have known that they were dealing with corrupt rulers, they have employed a combination of strong-arm tactics, soothing language, red tape, bureaucratic buck-passing and legal wrangling that brings out much that can go wrong in the relationship between bureaucracy and politics in contemporary democratic society (Smith 1987; Beetham 1987; Herzfeld 1992; Pardo 1996, Ch. 6). They, however, have gone further. Testing the very limits of tolerance at the grassroots, they have lobbied central government into passing *ad hoc* legislation that emphasizes the moral relativism of law (Fuller 1964; Saltman 1985) as a coercive apparatus that regulates the partial control of a partial order (Moore 1978; Starr and Collier 1989). Such legislation seriously

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5 In Naples, unemployment is 24 per cent (11 per cent in Italy). Groups of formally unemployed Southerners and their instances have been repeatedly used by various politicians for electoral gain (see, e.g., Pardo 1996, esp. Ch. 3).



weakens ordinary people's right to justice, a fundamental of citizenship (Marshall 1950; Dahrendorf 1996, pp. 37 ff.; Rees 1996), making rulers not responsible for the debts contracted by their predecessors. Such legislation substantially restricts the definition of punishable abuse of office and transfers a large part of legal responsibility from politicians to special committees of non-elected experts (Miller 2004; Pardo 2004b). At the same time, these ruling élite show an entrenched tendency to allocate public contracts to 'trusted' companies based in their parties' traditional constituencies of the Centre-North; such non-local contractors then systematically sub-contract the actual work to local companies (Pardo 2001).

Such interfering with the law and its production, such distortion of the difficult relationship between legal responsibility and moral and political responsibility in the exercise of power widen the existing gap between the actual distribution of rights and access and their ideal distribution (Pardo 2006). The attendant exclusion that determines factually weak membership of society appears to be particularly problematic in the Naples situation because, here, far from being caught in a culture of short-term moves and immediate goals, the ruled are actively engaged in negotiating the redefinition of their citizenship (Bulmer and Rees (eds) 1996). Their entrepreneurialism, highlighted by the case-material that I examine later, radically challenges rulers' distrust of citizenship and their mismanagement of power and responsibility in government.

### **Native Entrepreneurialism: *Strong Continuous Interaction Between the 'Material' and the 'Non-Material'***

Elsewhere I have discussed in detail and at length the varied range of informal, illegal and 'semi-legal' activities that take place here (see, for example, Pardo 1996). The relationship between credit and entrepreneurship is further distorted by exceeding difficulties in gaining formal access to capital – a fundamental right of citizenship in Western society – by interest rates that are between 2.5 and 5 per cent higher than in the Centre-North, and by overpriced banking, bureaucratic complication and inefficiency, arbitrary procedural demands<sup>6</sup> and sometimes dubious dealings.<sup>7</sup> Such restrictions combine with the more ordinary difficulties that generally characterize the process of starting, carrying out or expanding a business, encouraging informal ways to raise capital.

People cope as best as they can. When they cannot buy money officially, they use their personal networks, borrowing at low interest from friends and family.

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6 For example, in order secure a bank loan, entrepreneurs must prove ownership of private property, the value of which is set against the loan.

7 Some bank officials refer unsuccessful applicants to private credit agencies that grant credit easily and at high interest (Pardo 2000a). Entrepreneurs describe the various schemes aimed at addressing this situation as weakly drafted and badly implemented (*Il Denaro* 16 February 2008, p. 9).

Only as a last resort do they borrow from moneylenders, for here the considerable risks implicit to usury, intended as credit transactions that carry excessive charges (Salin 1949, pp. 193), are recognized across the social spectrum. An outline of the background situation and a brief summary of my findings on native people's entrepreneurialism will help us to understand what is going on right now, what changes have occurred and how.

The empirical knowledge that I originally acquired through prolonged involvement in the flow of local life (Pardo 1996) led me firmly to reject the misleading distinction between employment and work and to identify the weakness of regarding informal work activities as a separate mode of production, as argued by Pahl (1980), or as belonging to a 'casual economy' in which organized criminals (Camorristi) are powerful employers, as argued by several observers (see, for example, Allum 1973; Becchi-Collidà 1984). This is set against the background of the graded relationships between the legal and the illegal sectors that colour many dealings at various levels and in various sectors of local society and of a strongly entrepreneurial approach informed by Neapolitan resourcefulness encapsulated by the culture of *sapè fa* (literally, cleverness)<sup>8</sup> and by the principle, *aiutat' ca Dio t'aiut* (God helps those who help themselves). The economic expressions of such an approach are exemplified by small businesses that are often rooted in the informal sector, at the limits or beyond the limits of the strictly legal, but that generally address the market as a whole. A variety of small- to medium-range businesses rely on workshops that produce goods illegally (evading tax on the purchase of raw materials and the sale of finished products, as well as employment tax and other welfare state contributions). A proportion of such products finds its way into the legal market.

It would be unforgivably simplistic, or expedient, to view such an approach as evidence of predatory individualism, fostering the degeneration of civil society. Nonetheless, from such a culturally deterministic (and morally bogus) high ground local rulers have appeared determined to implement the Gramscian project (Gramsci 1966, chapters 2 and 3), eradicating ordinary people's culture and replacing it with 'superior' values and practices that are resented as alien, intolerant (morally and politically) and illegitimate at the grassroots. With graded sophistication, informants from all walks of life reckon that such a misreading

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8 As I have fully explained elsewhere (Pardo 1996), this culture of *sapè fa* is basically informed by a strong emphasis on pooling *all* personal resources (monetary and non-monetary) in the pursuit of goals and of betterment. In many cases it translates into establishing or expanding *independent* enterprises. Of course, people's actions do not always fall into this category. However, such a concept invariably informs their distinction between *lavoro* (work; work activities that are rewarding and promising for the future) and *fatica* (toil; unrewarding and unpromising work activities).

begs critical questions of entitlement, further weakening their citizenship. Later fieldwork among local élite groups both strengthened and expanded such a view.<sup>9</sup>

In my analysis of the Naples situation in the 1980s and 1990s I took Jonathan Parry's point (1989) that intentional and purposeful action concerns much more than maximization of profit, sharing his and Maurice Bloch's view (1989, Ch. 1) that an interaction exists between the moral and the monetary aspects. I also recognized the importance of resources such as contacts, information, time and identity (Wallman 1984). However, ethnographic evidence pointed to the need to take such concepts a step further, steering away from – unhelpful (Wilk 1996, pp. 36 ff.) – categorical assumptions. With reference to the entrepreneurialism of the *popolino* (populace, used as a plural)<sup>10</sup> and to a lesser extent of the petty-bourgeois, I suggested that the blurring of boundaries that I have outlined was profoundly informed by a *strong continuous interaction* between tangible and non-tangible aspects of existence; that is, between different kinds or resources and domains – material (money, possessions, the body itself) and non-material (encompassing the moral and the spiritual, the mundane and the supra-mundane, the living and the dead) – that marked the social, cultural and political makeup of local life. Here, in line with the principle of 'heterogeneity of morality' (Lukes 1991, Ch. 1), moral values and spiritual requirements are negotiable and changing – within identifiable ethical limits that are profoundly informed by Christian (particularly Catholic) values, notwithstanding obvious and less obvious tensions with the official line of the Church (Pardo 1996 and 2001, esp. Ch. 3).

In short, taking on such an empirical challenge required coming to terms with the complexity and far-reaching sociological and economic significance of local people's culture of work and entrepreneurship, based on the morality and ramifications of a blurring of boundaries between the categories of the modern organization of labour – between the formal and the informal, the legal and the illegal and between the material and the non-material. To be more precise, the dynamics of strong continuous interaction point to the key fact that, here, morality and interest are not dichotomous; that their relationship is negotiated. Of course, a reasonably accurate analysis must address the material considerations and social belonging or actors' formal position in terms of production and consumption and the role that such elements play in the rationality of their choices in *negotiated conjunction* with other aspects of their lives, such as religious belief and practice, moral and ethical values, spiritual fulfilment, etc. Such an understanding has helped substantially to grasp the significance of individual action in the economic sphere and beyond.

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9 Research on the Italian élite, which is continuing, started in 1991. I have discussed some of my findings in key domains (such as the judiciary, politics, bureaucracy, banking, enterprise, the health sector, trade unions, the academia and the Church) and the approach of dominant élite groups (e.g., Pardo 2000 and 2001).

10 In the literature and political debate this word has been largely used in a derogatory fashion, meaning *misera plebs*. Many informants thus describe themselves, implying no negative or particularly positive meanings.

## Native and Foreign Entrepreneurialism: Between the Formal and the Informal

Over the years, I have kept in touch with my socially diversified informants and their networks, in many cases reaching outside Naples. My recent case-studies of small and medium businesses focus on the process of establishing and expanding an enterprise, on access to credit, on the dynamics of production and distribution, on personnel management and on the relationships between private enterprise, trade unions and public bodies (local and regional administration, EU funding, EU-sponsored development programmes, politics and so on). A collective reading of my field-notes brings out a classical theme in economic anthropology (Smith 1989, pp. 309 ff.), as entrepreneurs increasingly find it convenient mainly to operate ‘in the sunlight’ because, they reckon, operating informally (therefore, ‘semi-legally’ or illegally) is too costly, monetarily (the necessity of engaging in bribery was recurrently cited as a considerable drawback), morally and in time and worry (Pardo 2004a). In some cases, the informal aspect is limited to fiscal matters; in others, it extends to a proportion of employees, some of whom are foreign immigrants.

Pietro’s firm exemplifies important aspects of this situation. Now in his early thirties, he belongs to a family rooted into the Neapolitan sartorial tradition. His grand-father was a bespoke tailor who ran a workshop in central Naples. His sons worked under him. Following his death, they expanded the business and also started a shop selling good-quality clothes. As big fashion designers began to sub-contract some of their work to smaller business, Pietro’s father saw an opportunity to branch out. He sold his share in the business and used that capital and a small bank loan to establish a workshop working for high fashion firms. As the business expanded, so did the work force, only a proportion of which operated in the workshop itself. The cut was made in the official workshop by skilled tailors. Some workers assembled parts of the clothes in the workshop. Others did this job informally in their own homes, were paid in cash and did not enjoy the benefits of formal employment or trade-union protection. Pietro’s father, his informal employees and many of his clients evaded taxes. Still a young boy, Pietro spent his free time in the workshop, learning the ropes and on graduation became fully involved in the business.

Pietro put into practice his culture of *sapè fà* planning a strategy that has allowed him both to expand and almost entirely phase the informal element out of his business. With the help of three friends – one is a local politician, the second is an accountant, the third specializes in business law – he obtained the necessary support and information to buy large premises auctioned by a local authority at the periphery of Naples. Pietro failed to obtain a bank loan because he did not have sufficient ‘patrimonial guarantees’ (see n. 6). Having ruled out moneylenders, he used his savings and loans from family members. Later, the politician helped him to obtain EU funding aimed at encouraging local development and to secure grants from the Regional authority to employ immigrants and train local young people. Pietro has recently decided to take additional commissions, which, he said, ‘has involved some risk-taking but, fingers crossed, so far it has paid off’.

Most of Pietro's workers are formally employed full-time, including legal immigrants. A minority works part-time. Pietro expresses high praise particularly of two Indian employees who have worked for him for some years.<sup>11</sup> 'They', he says, 'are highly skilled, loyal and, like all my employees, never miss a day work and get on very well with the rest of the work-force.' Aniello, a part-time worker has started a small workshop in his home, where he works in the evenings and through the weekends. He has trained family members and friends to operate the machines that he has purchased using savings and money borrowed from his social network. Aniello employs part-time three immigrants. Two are the skilled tailors of Indian origin, who work there in the evenings and over the week-ends; the third is a Ukrainian who delivers to Pietro's clients. When the latter, who is engaged to an Italian woman, started delivering for these informal workshops, he used Pietro's lorry but, bringing graphically to mind similar entrepreneurial strategies employed by local people, he has recently purchased a van and is considering hiring the help of a fellow Ukrainian.

Aniello produces clothes for the informal market roughly copying the original designs given to Pietro by the fashion designers. This new entrepreneur stresses that he is not interested in the low-end of the market. A seamstress in her forties who works for him typically remarked, 'the market for cheap, low-quality clothes has been completely taken over by Chinese products. Moreover, I am proud of my craftsmanship and of the quality of what I make'. The first part of her remarks tallies with what I have been repeatedly told during the fieldwork. Regardless of the kind of merchandise that they produce or distribute, most informants say with obvious, if grudging, admiration that Chinese entrepreneurs have successfully forced a radical change in the dynamics and nature of the local economy. Neapolitan-produced cheap, low-quality goods have almost completely disappeared from the market because, as Chinese entrepreneurs have increasingly moved in, similar merchandise has become available at considerably lower prices. Local entrepreneurs with the necessary funds, skills and contacts have specialized in better-quality products, benefiting from a tradition of skilled work, fashionable design and good-quality materials. As in the case of Aniello's production, these goods sell in Naples and elsewhere in Italy, at a fraction of the price charged by the high-street brands.

The activities of Lello, a local shop-keeper in his fifties whose career I have followed ever since we met years ago, will help to clarify key dynamics at the distribution and sales end of this grey area between the formal and the informal sectors. Lello was thirteen when he left school and started contributing to the meagre family income by working (illegally) as an all-round assistant in a local clothes shop. Later, he found regular employment in one of a chain of large shops

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11 One of them has recently married and is waiting for his Indian wife's work permit to be processed; she will then join him in Italy and will be employed full-time in Pietro's workshop. The other is engaged to an Italian woman who works as a secretary for a local accountant.

and was soon noted by the management for his remarkable sales skills and good relationships with suppliers. In his free time, Lello used the contacts he had made through his job to start a small business selling ever larger quantities of informally produced, good-quality clothes to shop- and stall-keepers across Campania. Most of the profit from this activity fell in the category ‘black economy’, as he dealt in cash and did not pay taxes on most transactions, which suited both him and his suppliers and clients. Within five years, he opened his own shop in central Naples. There, he sold clothes produced in local formal workshops, keeping the informal part of his business sufficiently small to escape the attention of the law. About thirteen years ago, Lello invested his savings in larger premises and involved his wife in the expanded business. All along, he continued to travel throughout Campania and, gradually, elsewhere in South and Central Italy. As he raised sufficient capital, he decided to invest in a second shop in a tourist resort, which he entrusted to his grown-up children who speak several languages. Lello has recently employed assistants in the Naples shop, thus becoming free to invest time and money in starting a new shop in a wealthy area of the city, specializing in luxury clothes. It has taken him a little over three years to raise the necessary capital, for he could not borrow from banks (he and his wife do not own property; see n. 6) and refused resorting to loan sharks. The increasing presence of foreign immigrants and some of the changes in the market that I have outlined, encouraging an increase in informal production of good-quality merchandise, have played a key role in his strategy. A less obvious role has been played by Chinese products.

Lello’s business sense, contacts and knowledge of the market made him quickly aware of what was going on. He saw an opportunity to raise money by developing his second, almost totally informal, activity. Having met what he describes as ‘reliable and hard-working immigrants’, Lello bought several vans and employed (informally) two immigrants from the Ukraine and one from Poland for loading, unloading and delivering to his expanding custom of shops and stalls. Having diversified both his suppliers and his custom, Lello now meets the demand of two different sections of the market. He continues to sell good-quality clothes in his Naples shops but, having found that especially stall-keepers struggle with keeping up with the demand for cheap clothes, he has also established profitable relationships with a number of Chinese entrepreneurs who run workshops at the periphery of Naples.<sup>12</sup> Modified versions of the better quality Chinese-produced merchandise find their way in the shop outside Naples.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Lello managed to accumulate the sufficient funds to start his new up-market shop.

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12 Official statistics apart, to a worm’s eye the huge presence of Chinese enterprises is undisputable. As examples, I cite the case of San Giuseppe Vesuviano, a small town in the Naples province that has been almost completely taken over by Chinese immigrants and is teeming with workshops producing all sorts of merchandise, and the large number of distribution centres in the city centre and in the immediate periphery.

13 Like other entrepreneurs, Lello has part of this merchandise opportunely modified in a local workshop in order to meet customers’ tastes.



## **Immigrants and Natives: Toleration vs Tolerance**

While caught in ambiguous policies and frequent shifts in such policies, over the past 20 years Italy has increasingly imported workers, thus experiencing a substantial change from being almost exclusively a country of emigration.<sup>14</sup> Alongside the formal influx, a large number of illegal immigrants have profited from a kind of ‘open door’ approach (leading to the view that Italy is the ‘soft underbelly’ of the EU) that, confusingly, has made much of the plight of foreign economic immigrants *as an undiversified category*, while glossing over what actually happens on the ground. Over time, such an approach has been strengthened by the activities of small but vociferous lobbies that fall into two main categories. On the one hand, there are well organized groups of political militants that draw heavily on the support, sometimes unspoken, of powerful mainstream politicians and enjoy strong links with organized groups of immigrants; perhaps worryingly, championing the interests of immigrants is largely left to these groups. On the other hand, there are lay or religious associations that specialize in providing assistance to immigrants. These associations, many of which exist only on paper (Pardo 2007), benefit from substantial grants and in some cases their representatives operate also in the immigrants’ countries of origin, ‘assisting’ those who wish to emigrate to Italy. Moreover, once immigrants’ permits expire,<sup>15</sup> they simply disappear from the official lists of these associations, which often dodge their statutory follow-up duties. Many of such immigrants join the existing mass of illegal residents.

Such a situation raises problems fuelled by the critical opposition of tolerance to toleration, which finds graphical illustration in aspects of Lello’s strategy that have caused a rift in his family. One evening, over dinner at Lello’s house with him, his wife and their children and their partners, the conversation focused on what they called ‘the invasion of foreign immigrants’. Both generations described how certain immigrants, particularly from African countries, posed worrying challenges to their and their significant others’ daily lives; there was, it emerged, considerable friction in dealing with their Islamic culture and approach which, I have found, local people collectively regard as sharply in conflict with their moral values and way of life. As I objected that they were perhaps generalizing too harshly, Lello’s children replied, ‘that is easy for you to say; you don’t have to

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14 In Italy, until the early 1980s, migration was primarily an internal phenomenon mainly involving Italians migrating from the South to the North. With the exception of wealthy foreign expatriates and very few economic immigrants, foreign immigration was an unknown phenomenon, particularly in the South. This process has been the object of numerous studies (see, e.g., Hellman 1997; King 1999 and, with specific reference to Naples and Campania, Spagnuolo 2005).

15 Legal permits have steadily increased. In Campania 54,530 permits were granted in 1996; 128,049 were granted in 2004 (in Italy 986,020 were granted in 1996; 2,786,340 were granted in 2004). In the Naples province, 33,229 permits were granted in 1996; 70,134 were granted in 2004.



deal with those people on a daily basis. We are not being racist or narrow-minded, here; like most people we know, we generally get on very well with immigrants. Some have culture and religious beliefs that look strange to us but, as long as they are respectful of us and of our ways, we welcome them and appreciate what they have to offer. The people we are talking about, however, make no secret, in words and actions, that they despise us, our culture and our way of life.’ Lello added, ‘that applies to us all, but they particularly regard women as a kind of sub-species. Moreover, every day the papers report their involvement in armed aggression, violent burglary and gang rapes. Even if we did not want to believe the papers, we still would have direct experience of their contempt, bullying and violence.’<sup>16</sup>

I put to them that some people would call them intolerant. From a certain perspective, I explained, tolerance means recognizing difference – respecting other people’s viewpoints, holding them on an equal level with yours and avoiding being judgemental of their beliefs and behaviours. While agreeing that one should respect the right of other people to believe what they desire, they had their own views on tolerance, raising interesting issues on the idea of multiculturalism. The remarks of Lello’s daughter, Rosaria (a non-practising lawyer), encapsulate a concern voiced by most local people. ‘Of course not everyone believes the same thing,’ she said, ‘but I do not have to put what another person believes on the same level as what I believe. If a terrorist blows up innocent people in a bus, I shouldn’t be expected to respect his beliefs, values and behaviour and to hold them on the same level as mine, when I think that life is sacred. If someone wants to take away my hard-earned freedoms as a woman and a citizen, not only I don’t have to comply but I better fight. Does this seriously mean that I am judgemental and intolerant? Tolerance and political correctness have become twisted.’ She added, ‘Disagreement with someone’s beliefs and behaviours is not intolerance, it is discernment and conviction. If we are to hold everyone’s beliefs and behaviours on the same level and become accepting of them, why do these people would not hold my opinions on the same level as theirs? Why should they be intolerant of them? Why must I give up what I believe and approve what they believe in? Why should I integrate to *them*? Do you not see a double standard here? Surely, having values, opinions, beliefs and moral standards does not equal fanaticism.’

It was when discussing Lello’s dealings with his Chinese suppliers that disagreement among his family come to a head. Lello’s wife, Assunta, objected to such dealings. In line with a point repeatedly raised by other informants, she argued that Chinese-produced merchandise was driving Italian entrepreneurs out of business and that it was therefore wrong to buy Chinese; people should make every effort to buy Italian products. She added, ‘the poor people who toil in those sweatshops are hugely exploited and treated worse than animals. That is immoral.’ Lello noted, ‘illegal immigrants are cheap, plentiful and don’t complain or cause

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16 With particular reference to the ways in which Islam has become a privileged vehicle of anti-modernism, Winfield (2007) has recently offered a sobering analysis of the opposition of religion to modernity and to the attendant values.

trouble. But it is not simply that immigrants do jobs that Italians won't do. Pay honest wages and more local people would do those jobs. Then, the market would dictate prices. Anyway, exploitation is disgusting but my approach does make good business sense; customers want good value for money and so do I.' He went on to say, 'legal immigrants should oppose illegal immigration just because all immigrants end up being painted with the same racist brush, diminishing all efforts legal immigrants have made to come into this country legally.' While his sons and their partners endorsed his views, Assunta, Rosaria and her husband angrily accused him of complacency with the immorality of exploitation and, predictably, tempers flared.

The local context of work and employment, particularly but not exclusively concerning immigrants (legal and illegal), is of course more complex than Lello appears to believe, but there is an aspect of his argument that needs attention. We know that, in their different activities, Pietro and Lello have not experienced problems with their employees (formal or informal). However, most local entrepreneurs complain that the combination of aggressive trade-unionism and over-regulation adds to the restrictions that I have outlined earlier. 'Today', they say, 'it is almost impossible to fire unproductive workers; once you have employed someone formally, you are stuck with them.' The case of Vittorio and Cristiano, two local brothers in their late thirties, will help to clarify this issue, which is at the core of problematic industrial relations and of the attendant legislation.

### **The Empirical Complexity of Integration**

Vittorio and Cristiano run a small business, sub-contracting the production of high-quality silk ties from top Italian designers. When I met them in their workshop, they introduced me to the other eight workers, five women and three men, all formally employed relatives of theirs. Vittorio and Cristiano showed me the premises, taking pride in explaining the various hand-made phases of tie-production. As I wondered why only some work-stations were manned, they said that the firm had been full-sized until recently, formally employing 25 workers. Two months earlier they had completed a down-sizing process that had lasted almost three years and had involved industrial dispute, lawsuits and much acrimony.

The dispute started when a group of workers (belonging to two local families) started demanding higher pay, reduced working hours and longer holidays. Vittorio and Cristiano argued, in vain, that accommodating such demands would irreparably damage the business. In response, these employees used 'informal' boycotting tactics (decreased productivity, repeated absences from work, all of course backed by medical certificates, and so on), eventually leading to the involvement of trade-union protection and full-blown industrial action. 'Following a prolonged strike and much personal hassle to us and our families,' Vittorio and Cristiano said,

we began having serious problems fulfilling our contracts, which in this highly competitive section of the market we simply could not afford. This is a small business and much depends on the goodwill of all involved. We started from scratch, using our own savings and those of many relatives, some of whom work here and share the profits. It took us a long time to establish our reputation and to secure profitable commissions, which we know we will keep only as long as we produce at the required standard and on time. So, we had to get rid of the bad wood. Of course we felt bad about the situation, considering both the high level of unemployment and the fact that several families would suffer the consequences, but also knew that it would not do to abide by the values of 'good heart' and 'helping each other', in which we strongly believe.<sup>17</sup> Besides, those workers obviously didn't care about such values. In short, if we didn't act quickly both us and the productive workers' families would suffer. Now, having strived to keep all the commissions, we all work longer hours, including week-ends. We struggle, but even manage to keep producing some good-quality, cheaper ties of our own which we distribute kind of 'informally', you know, through people we trust.

They meant that those cheaper ties were sold for cash and were fiscally unaccounted for.

I asked Vittorio and Cristiano whether they had considered employing immigrants. Having heard, they said, that other local entrepreneurs had found such an arrangement profitable, they had decided to try. 'Immigrants', they added,

make hard-working employees who have no interest in trouble-making and miss work only when they are truly ill. Most are here to make a decent living and to send some money home. We now only need to find the right connections into 'that world' and will approach a local development agency that runs training schemes involving foreign immigrants.

The descriptive analysis of the relationships between immigrants and the autochthonous population developed thus far has highlighted degrees of exclusion and integration that need expansion.

### **Further Degrees of Exclusion and Integration**

A recurrent theme among many immigrant informants is their slow or failed entry in the formal job market. In spite of ethnographic and contextual evidence pointing to a potential for expansion of their role in this sector, only a minority

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<sup>17</sup> In previous works (see, e.g., Pardo 1996), I have examined the morality of 'goodheartedness' and 'helping each other' and the complex ways in which such concepts translate in local social, economic and political life.

of non-EU immigrants that I have met operate in the formal sector of the local economy.<sup>18</sup> Most operate illegally or, as indicated earlier, in the interstices between the legal and the illegal sectors. In some cases their role is substantial. A large proportion of African immigrants, mainly males, work long hours in the building or agricultural industries for small amounts of cash. Many sell ethnic or fake high-fashion merchandise from stalls (usually unlicensed) or from rugs set on the walk side, or just walk the streets peddling their wares – a current, better organized and numerically larger version of the street peddlers who, in the 1980s, became in Italy a fixture derogatively known as ‘*vu cumprà*’ (literally, do you want to buy). Some work (illegally) in garages, bars, shops, supermarkets, and so on. According to police and judicial files, immigrants from various ethnic groups, with a prevalence of Africans and East-Europeans (particularly Albanians and Romanians), are involved in criminal activities, ranging from the sex trade to theft and burglary to drug trafficking and gang rapes. Many foreign immigrants live in cramped, illegally rented flats.

Work- and life-histories indicate that for some ethnic groups integration in the host society is a priority. Immigrants from Islamic countries (mainly of African origin) and from China appear to be exceptions, though for very different reasons. In-depth interviews suggest that the former generally find it difficult or unappealing to integrate, mainly on religious and cultural grounds, while for the latter integration does not seem to be an issue; they appear to be happy to live exclusively in their own community, limiting to trading their interactions with the autochthonous population. For most foreign immigrants, ethnic networks, often reaching outside Naples, are crucial in the initial phase; particularly in finding accommodation and work and socializing. Informants from East-Europe, Latin-America and the Indian Sub-Continent have described their commitment to what they call ‘the process of integration’ as directly dependent on strategies that involve gaining formal employment and socializing with native Italians, learning about and getting on with their way of life. In some cases, moving into the formal market has involved working for local families or starting small businesses, such as stalls, shops, delivery firms, import-export (in which they exploit their contacts in their home countries), janitorial services and so on. The case of Maria, a South-American graduate in economics in her late thirties who emigrated to Italy fifteen years ago, both illuminates key strategies and exemplifies a common pattern whereby the process of integration involves the passage from informal or illegal activities to entry in the formal market through Italian-based qualifications and individual entrepreneurship.<sup>19</sup>

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18 This finding tallies with official statistics. For example, according to Caritas’ 2005 Report on Immigration, in 2004 immigrants accounted for one per cent of the formally employed in Naples.

19 On this issue, see the general outline offered by Reyneri (1996). According to a study carried out by Caritas and CNEL (Consiglio Nazionale dell’Economia e del Lavoro) in 2005, since 2000 small businesses started by immigrants have steadily increased. This

Like many others, Maria initially entered the country on a tourist visa. A girlfriend from back home worked legally as a maid for a well-to-do Neapolitan family and lived in the periphery;<sup>20</sup> there rents are cheaper and the centre is easily (and cheaply) reached through the metro system. Maria moved in with her friend, who also helped her to find work through her employers' connections. Maria's work-history bears remarkable similarities to Galina's – a 45 year old Russian graduate in literature who also emigrated to Italy for economic reasons. As both Maria's and Galina's tourist visas did not allow them to gain formal employment, they settled for illegal jobs for local professional families, the former as a nanny and the latter as a maid. They were paid cash and received no benefits. The two women have never met, however Maria echoed Galina's remarks as she said, 'that arrangement was a blessing because I only had to do my job; no one in that family made a pass or humiliate me, and they all behaved kindly. I know what happens to many foreign girls who work for families, especially when they have no legal status: if they are lucky they are *asked* to perform sexual services for the men, but rapes are not uncommon and they go necessarily unreported.'

On that occasion we were taking a coffee break with some of Maria's girlfriends, who told their own stories. Some had experienced the kind of plight which Maria had avoided but had so graphically described, which is an important aspect of female immigration that fuels organized crime, both native and foreign. These accounts are mirrored in judicial files on organized criminal gangs involving local people and foreign nationals. Typically, the latter attract women in their own countries promising jobs and a passage to Italy; the fee, they are told, will be deducted from their future salaries. At the border, the gangs collect the women's passports for customs control and then hold on to them. Once in Naples, the women are accommodated in cramped flats provided by the local members of the gang, are overcharged for rent and food and, as they find no work and their tourist visas expire, are frightened into straight prostitution or into house-keeping jobs that fall just short of slavery and involve sexual services.

Having avoided this dark side of immigration, Maria has used her resources to establish herself in Naples. Initially the informal arrangement between her and her employers suited both parties. However, as they all felt uncomfortable with the deception and feared possible legal consequences (Maria could be arrested and deported and her employers could be prosecuted), they agreed that her position should be legalized as soon as possible. Once Maria obtained a work permit, she

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appears to be particularly the case with small businesses run by immigrant women, especially of Chinese origin (Iasevoli 2009, p. 27). Lack of Italian-based educational qualifications appears to be a major barrier to entry into the formal labour market and entrepreneurship.

20 Legal and illegal immigrants from Latin-America, and in a smaller proportion from East-Europe, are mainly employed as nannies and home-helpers (who often look after the elderly). Most of these jobs are short-term and informal. According to Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale, in 2002, there were 30,244 immigrants formally employed in this sector in the Naples province (40,791 in Campania).

moved to her own flat in the periphery, where she often accommodates women from her country. With some she goes back a long time; others she has met in Naples or on her periodical trips to her country. Such generosity involves risks, for some of Maria's house-sharers are or become illegal, but it meets her sense of self-worth and helps her with her bills. Five years later, Maria used her savings to start an unlicensed hairdressing business in a basement in the centre of Naples. Her Neapolitan boyfriend negotiated the illegal rent with the landlord.<sup>21</sup> Her custom included her Latin-American friends and their networks.

As the children she was looking after grew up, Maria realized that she would have to move on. She mentioned to her employers that she wished to upgrade her business and make it legal. The couple used their contacts to get her on a hairdressing training course organized by the local government. Vocational courses in various fields have been established by the local authority and can be attended for a small fee. However, native Neapolitans' and immigrants' reports endorse Maria's belief that contacts are necessary to get on a course, for demand vastly outstrips offer. For instance, Galina became a hairdresser only thanks, she stresses, to her former employers who secured both her enrolment on a course and a small loan, which allowed her to move into the formal sector more quickly than Maria, who failed to secure a loan. Galina employs formally two Russian friends and, informally, a young Pole. Her customers are mainly East-European but, as in the case of Maria's, Italian women are beginning to patronize the shop.

## **Conclusion**

Urban Europe is a testing ground for key dynamics of negotiation of citizenship, of redefinition of the democratic process and, by extension, of integration versus exclusion and tolerance versus toleration, both at official level and at grassroots level. The empirical situation that I have examined points to the centrality of this issue of integration, regarding both native people and foreign immigrants. The weak citizenship of a significant proportion of native people is explained, here, by a market distorted by misguided ideological intolerance, slanted financial and economic policies, aggressive trade-unionism and instrumentally selective legislation. It is in such a context of failed full integration of native people that the integration or failed integration of many non-EU immigrants is cast. The politics of economic and social development must address fully this empirical situation for there to be hope of a better quality of life. Three processes are critical; bridging the gap between citizenship and governance, drafting legislation that is and is seen to be legitimate and implementing sustainable integration across the board.

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21 They have since separated. Maria 'would like to marry and start a family but when I had no permanent permit, I wouldn't marry just to get citizenship. I want to marry for love'. Mixed marriages between older natives (usually, but not exclusively, men) and young immigrants are becoming increasingly common.

Governance must enjoy legitimacy in the broader society. In the Naples region, repeated transgressions of this *condition sine qua non* of responsibility in the exercise of power have engendered marginality and exclusion among a large part of the native population. The gap between citizenship and governance has consequently widened, worryingly weakening the democratic process. The demographic changes brought about by growing immigration have compounded on this problem. Criminal gangs have benefited from certain aspects of immigration and illegal dealings do occur that involve immigrants, often in partnership with native people. More importantly, although conflict does arise between the culture and interests of native people and those of radicalized immigrant groups, mutually beneficial and productive relationships between native people and most immigrants mark this ethnography.

The analysis of ordinary Neapolitans' material and non-material interests and commitment to moral and normative order has built towards the argument that responsible governance must heed their underlying motivations and that, in doing so, it may contribute to bring about both their full citizenship and the integration of immigrants into the host society. Such a task at once encompasses and goes beyond efficient policy, for it links strongly and directly to establishing, *and* maintaining, the kind of working, solid relationship between governance and citizenship that is critical to the democratic contract. This ethnography offers little comfort. Political choices that lack legitimacy make more difficult the coexistence of different cultures, as they *de facto* underpin exclusion instead of encouraging integration both of significant sections of the native population and of those immigrants who show a commitment to such a goal. Current events illustrate the problem that it is not enough for rulers to declare a commitment to encourage local development, entrepreneurship and integration. However well meant, when compared with the punishing reality that we have examined, such declarations are received at the grassroots as hypocritical and dishonest; experienced in everyday life as attempts by 'the powerful' to ride roughshod over grassroots moralities, culture and interests. On the other hand, when there is no relevant conflict in terms of culture and value-systems, graded forms of *de facto* integration do occur. It is sadly paradoxical that such integration should develop in an entrenched context of exclusion – of both native and non-native people – from the formal sector of the economy, from security (of employment, and the attendant benefits), from fundamental rights of citizenship.

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# Chapter 7

## Socio-Ethnic Interaction and Identity Formation Among the Qom-Toba in Rosario

Héctor Vázquez and Graciela Rodríguez

### Introduction

Kymlicka (1995) contends that the concept of multiculturalism is defined by the ethnic mark and that as a consequence it is only applicable to ethnic groups. We share this view and consider as excluded from this concept social collectives such as religious minorities, gays, lesbians, feminist groups, and so on; that is, the so-called ‘new minorities’ – because they refer to ways of living that break through ethnic and cultural borders.

In this chapter, we refer to the different forms taken by the processes of ethnic identity formation of the Qom (Toba), who settled in the Argentine city of Rosario,<sup>1</sup> a multicultural society. At the end of the chapter, we reflect critically on this concept, contrasting it to the concept of pluri-culturalism. It should be made clear that the concept of multiculturalism that we use differs from the standard use in North America and in Europe.

From the historical-critical perspective which we endorse, anthropology is seen as a node of interdisciplinary convergence. From that point of view, the interdisciplinary approach refers not only to the research process; it is understood as a point of convergence that makes it possible to build a common frame of reference. Those convergences must necessarily be established at different levels, forming interdisciplinary nodes.

As we disagree with the research strategies derived from different paradigms and facing the need of giving logical coherence to our research work of validating the results attained and of enlarging our ‘visual field’, we have chosen to position ourselves within a theoretical framework that we have called historical-critical. Such a framework has been critically built relying – among others – on certain aspects of the line of thought called ‘dynamistic anthropology’ (Vázquez 1988).

With the purpose of studying the process of ethnic identity building among the Qom (Toba) settled in Rosario, we worked out mediating categories that

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1 Rosario has approximately a population of 1,200,000 inhabitants living in an area of 172 square kilometres. It has been the nodal centre of an important industrial corridor, now in the decline, developed through a policy of imports’ substitution that came to an end in the 1980–1990 decade.

were applied by the members of the interdisciplinary research team under our direction. In the following pages we shall quote some of their observations and interpretations. The research programme required combining an ethnolinguistic approach and a historico-anthropological approach. The ethnolinguistic approach has involved an analysis of the interactions among language-society-culture-perception. The historical-anthropological approach has emphasized two main issues. First, the sociolinguistic situation of the Toba-speaking people, whose orally transmitted language is suffering the pressures of the language spoken in the hegemonic environment – the regional Río de la Plata Spanish – with the result of a functional differentiation of language: the Qom language is used for intra-ethnic communication, and the language of the dominant society is employed, usually with great deficiencies, in communicating with the social segments of the regional/national society with which the Qom interact. Second, the processes of religious syncretism, the behaviour related to kinship and of other intra and inter-ethnic relationships.

Our research strategy, then, considers three main issues. First, we examine the existence of a socio-ethnic field of interaction, characterized as ‘The area where frictions among differentiated ethnic groups take place. These frictions reveal a pattern of relationships based on conflicts and contradictions, where the fact of one group imposing on the others produces a situation of domination/subalternity’ (Rodríguez 1991). This category is used when dealing with the interrelationship between the members of the domestic Toba resident groups in each society with which they interact, without excluding their connections and solidarity and exchange networks with the Toba remaining in Chaco.<sup>2</sup>

Second, we address the processes of constitution and the dynamics of change of the psycho-cultural referent (P.R.) or socio-cognitive structures (Vázquez 1988). If every perception of reality, of the ‘images or the world and life’ is built on the basis of a psycho-linguistic reference system and is socio-culturally situated, the importance of its internalization in each member of a human group (taking into account levels, grades and shades) becomes crucial in every process of knowledge. These socio-cognitive structures are understood as the most general conceptual frameworks on the basis of which thoughts are articulated. On the one hand, the disruption and reorganization of the Qom language as a spoken language (linguistic interference, mixed speech) produced as a result of the incidence of the surrounding world and its linguistic expression (the regional Spanish) result in a modification of the grammatical-semantic structure of the Qom language, in correlation with changes in the perception of experience. On the other hand, the phenomena of linguistic resistance and conservation of ethno-linguistic vitality, studied by Margot Bigot (1992), coordinator of the sub-team of ethno-linguists,

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2 The difference between the concepts of opposition and contradiction is relevant at the theoretical level, because it makes it clear that not every relationship of opposition implies the concept of dialectical contradiction, a concept which, in turn, allows the emergence of the concept of synthesis.

not only do they have linguistic relevance but they also project themselves into the realm of the analysis of ethnic protest and formal legality.

Third, we study the strategy of economic and social production and reproduction of the different ethnic groups in the regional society; the solidarity and exchange networks; the differentiated processes of religious syncretism in each ethnic partiality; the values that regulate both inward and outward behaviour patterns in each partiality; and the intra-ethnic conflicts and the conflicts produced with the social segments with whom they interact.

It should be pointed out that if the classic concept of identity (to which it is impossible not to ascribe the concept of ethnic identity) becomes an obstacle for theoretical development as a consequence of its connotations of immutability and crystallization, it is more precise and clarifying to replace it with the concept of ethnic identity processes. In this way, we do not accept the perspectives that postulate an ontology of culture and derive from it an immutable view of ethnic identity. We also distance ourselves from those views that, considering ethnic identity as a mere social or political ascription, or an attribution by another agent (conferred identity), tend to ignore the dynamics of change of cultural processes.

Elsewhere (Vázquez 1988), I have argued that ethnic identity (a particular expression of identity) reveals itself as the provisional form adopted by the material and symbolic contradictions (at both an individual and a collective level and in the relatively limited field of socio-ethnic interaction) within a historical-social formation and in a certain moment of the inter-ethnic relationships. This situation does not produce asymmetric relationships but, rather, unequal relationships, because the point is that there is not a logical imbalance in the concept, but there is an imbalance in the domination/submission relationships. At a logical level, this process shows itself as the point where the concept becomes contradictory in itself: the nucleus of a dialectic reversion where it recognizes itself in its own negation. Thus, in a permanent process of change, identity must stand on its own contradiction, transforming (by means of the suppression of cultural traits and syncretism) its relationship with the current social order and producing – at qualitatively differentiated levels – deep intra-ethnic contradictions.

Finally, here we shall only mention Barth's (1976) classic position concerning the topic of ethnic identity, as well as some more recent Latin American authors who deal with the same subject. We do so with the sole purpose of outlining our own point of view vis-à-vis theirs. A detailed treatment of this topic cannot be included in this chapter, where we want to focus on a descriptive analysis of ethnographic material.

### **The Historic-Socio-Cultural Context**

The first group of Toba arrived to the city of in Rosario in 1968. These urban settlements did not intend to break away with the cultural patterns typical of the members of the Toba families living in Chaco. On the one hand, there was

a tendency to readjust the migratory aspects of the annual cycle of traditional cultural patterns to the new conditions (returning to Chaco for the cotton and tobacco harvest, visiting relatives, joining in the group collection of fish during the fishing season or attending hunting expeditions); on the other hand, there was a tendency to develop a survival strategy that demanded the assimilation – through a process of syncretism – of urban cultural patterns. The Toba family organization is an extended one.

Migrant groups from Chaco settled in Santa Fe, Rosario, Buenos Aires and La Plata during the last three decades. The repeated crises of the regional economy, particularly of the cotton industry, of low capitalization and very heavy dependency on the national market, as well as the persistent flooding of a very extensive area that severely devastated its productive capacity, contributed to the depopulation of the Chaco province.

The great number of Chaco migrants to Rosario has provoked discussions and disputes between the municipal authorities and the government of the province of Chaco about whether the latter encourages migration with the purpose of alleviating the socio-ethnic and economic problems of that province.

The most conflictual field of socio-ethnic interaction lies around the settlement of Toba domestic groups in the area known as Empalme Graneros. The principal conflicts arise in connection with the modalities of economic and social reproduction, the health/illness/care process, the educational situation, the contradictions derived from the religious syncretism – where the different protestant denominations are relevant – the protestant/catholic antagonism and, of course, the ethnic mark and the discriminatory attitude of most of the neighbours, who have to face ways of behaving and cultural values (and also anomic processes) alien to their ways of living. Such neighbours adopt a speech characterized by a semantic difference that produces ‘stereotypes of the strange’ and consolidates an ideology of inequality that betrays a biological, racial, ethnic and religious character that ‘substantiates’ each party’s own identity.

### **Redefinition of the Socio-Ethnic Fields of Interaction**

The relocation of many of these domestic groups in Rosario during 1992, 1993 and 1994, and the continuing migrations have modified and redefined the structure of the different fields of socio-ethnic interaction.

The Villa Banana settlement<sup>3</sup> is in the south of the city and has between 7,500 and 8,000 inhabitants, of which, until 1992, 142 were Toba.<sup>4</sup> Until 1992, 92 per cent

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3 This denomination originates in the way in which the settlement was formed: the distribution of the precarious dwellings follows the laying out of the rails of the General Belgrano Railway which, in this stretch, takes the approximate form of a semicircle.

4 These data, as well as all those without an explicit reference, have been obtained by our interdisciplinary research team.



of the Toba population who settled in Villa Banana came from Colonia Aborigene (Machagai, province of Chaco). Twenty-eight per cent of the population was between 30 and 65 years of age, mostly males. Knowledge of Spanish (the Castilla, as they call it) was high: 80.7 per cent in males and 79.2 per cent in females, although only some could write Spanish. They preserved their mother tongue and made efforts to pass it on to their children. The young (between the ages of 20 and 30) were, in their greater number, from the province of Chaco. Among them, 60 per cent (males and females) had not completed their primary school. This accounts for their inadequate use of the Río de la Plata Spanish. In 1992, of the 225 domestic groups settled in the area limited by the streets J.J. Paso, Cerrito and Gutemberg, and the Belgrano railway rails, 46 were Toba. The percentages of competence in Spanish were similar to those given above, but the group that had left their primary school before completing it reached 72 per cent. Up to 1992, when the systematic relocation of Toba families began, there was a high percentage of endogamy in these two settlements, and mixed marriages tended to take place in the aboriginal ethnic groups: Toba and Guaraní, for example.

J.J. Paso, Génova and Carrasco streets and the Mitre and Belgrano railways limit the Empalme Granero settlement. Until 1992, about 660 Criollo families and about 300 Toba families lived there. The latter occupied three sectors:

1. An eight-year-old sector, made up by migrants from the urban localities of Resistencia, Colonia Aborigene, Roque Sáenz Peña and Las Palmas.
2. A sector called Las Moras, where migrant groups from rural localities near Castelli and Miraflores lived.
3. A sector populated by migrants from different urban localities of the Chaco province.

While in sectors 1 and 2 percentages of bilingualism are similar to those found in Villa Banana and Cerrito, in Las Moras the percentage of those able to use a rudimentary Spanish is greater. Many of the Toba speakers have no competence in Spanish at all; they are monolingual.

A very clear characteristic among these domestic groups, still prevalent, is their strong identification with the Toba cultural lore and their commitment to transmitting it to their descendants. The control of cultural behaviour – that is the capacity for coercion exerted by each member of the ethnic Toba group on other members with the purpose of keeping them within the framework of the shared and accepted customs, behaviour and meanings – is performed in an unconscious way and is stronger in the other two sectors of the Empalme Graneros settlement than in Villa Banana and Cerrito.

The implementation of the 'Project for the Relocation of the Toba Community of Empalme Graneros' by the Public Service of Housing, an agency of the Secretary of Social Promotion of the Municipality of Rosario, was the principal cause of the transformations related to the socio-ethnic interaction fields.

**Table 7.1 Distribution of the Toba domestic groups in five socio-ethnic interaction fields**

Villa Banana	Empalme Graneros	Los Pumitas	Cerrito
4 Toba domestic groups	200 Toba domestic groups	150 Toba domestic groups	11 Toba domestic groups
Rosario City Hall relocation; Barrio Toba: 254 Toba domestic groups; 46 Mocovi domestic groups; 20 Criollo domestic groups.			

### Homogeneity and Heterogeneity of the Ethnic Identity Process of the Qom

The Toba domestic groups alternate *changas* (occasional jobs), scavenging and handicraft street-selling, with *golondrina* (swallow) migrations; temporary migration aimed at participating in seasonal crop collection, particularly the harvest of cotton and sugar cane. They have built solidarity and exchange networks (especially concerning services) among the Toba residents in the different settlements and these networks also incorporate Toba individuals still living in the localities where they came from, as well as individuals dwelling in settlements in other cities, such as Resistencia (province of Chaco), Santa Fe (province of Santa Fe), Capital Federal and La Plata (province of Buenos Aires).

The socio-ethnic communication context is marked by asymmetrical relationships between the Toba minority and the majority society, which exerts a strong dominance (non-deliberate pressure) because of its linguistic and cultural prestige and because of the unequal relationships prevailing between a politically and economically dominant society and the excluded aboriginal groups.

In the Toba settlements of Rosario the leaving school index is impressively high: about 87 per cent have not attended or finished primary school. The lack of an education fit for the needs and expectations of the Toba schoolchildren in the context of the present situation of contact and socio-ethnic interaction is the main cause of this extremely high percentage of school-absenteeism. This tendency is reinforced by the exceedingly high degree of illiteracy. Among the Toba aborigines, learning Spanish implies contrasting the referents conditioned by the mother tongue with the referential system conditioned by the Spanish language, an operation that implies a typological change of language – the Spanish language is analytic; the Toba is synthetic (agglutinant; see Bigot and Vázquez 1987, p. 12).

The building-up and reconstruction of the cognitive framework are very strongly conditioned by the new demands of linguistic expression originating in the modalities of linguistic-cultural interactions.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the reproduction

<sup>5</sup> In this sense, Bigot (1992) develops the concept of linguistic resistance, referring to the effort to compensate the incidence of the language of the dominant society on the dominated language and to guarantee its functionality.

of the language is conditioned by the relationships with the prevailing system of values and attitudes and, through the latter, by the social control patterns that linguistic usage contributes to produce.

If the Council of the Elder appears to be – almost symbolically – as the institution that regulates ethnic law, there are also individuals considered as the organizers of social interaction, whom we call ‘leaders’. The concept of leader is merely operative and refers to the capacity conferred to a peer with the purpose that he operates (intra and inter-ethnically) to satisfy different expectations prevailing among the Toba in the different settlements. We have defined the following kinds of ‘leadership’:

- a) Leadership linked to ancestral socio-cultural practices and partially related to the figure of the pastor. This is an intra-ethnic kind of leadership and it has to do with the characteristics that, after a process of re-functionalization of meaning, is conferred to *PjoGonáq*. It concerns the resolution of family conflicts and intra-community frictions, and it is very closely linked to the concepts of punishment and revenge. For example, penalizing those who have caused a damage.
- b) Leadership linked to the figure of the pastor, to whom authority is granted because of his contact with (and knowledge of) the divine word. He is in possession of powers. The Christian notion of *evil* is substituted with the traditional concept of *damage*; the concept of *pardon* is replaced by the concept of *revenge*. This kind of leader neutralizes evil and mediates in many conflicts within the community. The biblical message becomes a criterion of authority and the patterns of behaviour that derive from it, reinterpreted on the basis of a complex syncretism, facilitate the regulation of behaviour.
- c) Leadership linked to the concept of representative or delegate. These are people who can organize social interaction, producing ethno-political strategies; their domain is interethnic and extra-communitarian. They have the ability to establish efficient relationships through the legal and political channels of the dominating society (Bigot, Rodríguez and Vázquez 1995, pp. 13, 14 and 15).

These aspects are important, because, although it is not possible to say that there exists today a customary Toba law in the classic meaning of the word, there are nevertheless certain rules of behaviour with a compelling power that point at what ‘must be’ and are connected with the processes of ethnic resistance and build-up of a Qom ethnicity. These rules are, to a certain degree, alternative to the positive legal system of the Argentine state (Rodríguez and Gardella 1997, p. 99).

Such rules are always in a permanent process of reconstruction as a consequence of a selective attitude of acceptance/rejection vis-à-vis the ‘white society’. They are not applied by the Council of Elders, which tends to play a symbolic role, but

by those persons who are recognized as leaders; mainly by the Toba pastor, the usual mediator in case of conflict.

The perception that these (Toba) families have of Aborigines Law results from a double judgement: on one hand, it is 'the law made by the white men' (negative judgement) and on the other hand, the law gives them a legal basis for the defence of their rights (positive judgement). The written word is considered to be indispensable in the case of disputes with non-aboriginal social segments, although the legal discussion remains permeated with religious speech. The resolution of conflicts through oral agreement is confined to the limits of the endo-group (Rodríguez and Gardella 1997, p. 111).

The behavioural patterns that we have mentioned become effectively enforced as a result of the degree of integration of an individual with his or her group and with the network of social relationships that provide a system of solidarity and exchange with other individuals or groups, located either in the settlement zone or in the localities where they migrated from or in nearby localities. At the same time, these phenomena help to make social control more effective. Although they very seldom verbalize it, all the members of the settlements know what kind of behaviour should be expected and observed and the corresponding moral sanction – moral sanctions are sometimes associated to punishment and services based on a customary law, which are considerably disintegrated and subordinated to a behaviour code (involving sanctions, when it is broken) and derived from the interpretation that each Toba pastor makes of the Bible. The prohibition of alcoholic intake, of children and women abuse, of accumulation of wealth (and, as a consequence, the requirement of sharing goods), of stealing and killing, helps to conform to behavioural rules that bring about the application of sanctions, taken from a syncretism that brings together aspects of the customary law, of the magic-religious sphere and the moral factor.

### **The Process of Religious Syncretism**

The ancestral view of the world of the Qom is articulated through a hierarchical organization of powers, the balance of which guarantees the existence of an ecologic system that includes men, animals, plants and atmospheric phenomena. The ambivalence good/evil referred to the members of this system has an ecologic function, and the norms and arrangement of this function hold a magical character. Of course, this arrangement establishes rules of behaviour regarding interpersonal relationships and, especially, the taboos linked to shamanism. It should be kept in mind that the Qom view of power refers to shamanism, spiritual companions and a social organization of the phenomenal world.

The opposition sacred/profane, proper of Western views, does not seem to exist in the ancestral view of the world of the Qom. It seems to have been introduced as a result of conquest and colonization. The production of symbolic representations (myths and legends) expresses the efforts of the members of a

society to preserve their physical and social existence. Because of this, the variety of symbolic expressions should be understood by relating them to the historical and social transformations of each community. In this sense, the 'social memory' encapsulated by the oral tradition of the community should be understood as a transformation of the past performed from the present. Thus, tradition stems from the process of re-elaborating the past. This process is performed through a series of complex mediations; relations of domination/submission, migrations, processes of acculturation, religious syncretism, linguistic-cultural interferences that introduce very deep modifications in the social structure and the worldview dominant in the group and that, at an individual level, cause deep alterations in the self-consciousness processes and personality structure.

The manifold Protestant interpretation of the Bible and varied rituals adopted by their different cults converge with basic aspects of the Toba traditional view of the world. Trances, miraculous cure of illnesses, an apocalyptic view, abiding by the law, the sacred world and Salvationist interpretations coincide with the Toba beliefs that emphasize shamanic ability, millenarian views and rituals related to ecstasy, singing and dancing as means to obtain a mystic trance that allows each individual to contact a transcendent reality.

Miller (1979, p. 131) suggests that the re-adaptation of the traditional religion by means of syncretism made it possible to reformulate the Toba system of values that had been dismembered as an effect of the deep social transformations due to conquest and submission.

Most of the about 700 Toba who settled on private grounds in the sector known as Los Pumitas in Empalme Graneros adhere to the Pentecostal cult.

### **Distinctive Traits of Symbolic Heterogeneity**

The Toba families that migrated from rural areas associate the idea of earth to *monte* (low, shrubby forest typical of their original habitat), a notion that they associate with the loss of territory, having natural resources at one's disposal and a feeling of economic dispossession. On the other hand, in families coming from the outskirts of urban settings, these evocations are not permanently present; they have more the character of a historical reference (Rodríguez and Vázquez 1992, p. 90). In the various fields of socio-ethnic interaction in Rosario, the Toba migrants coming from Chaco rural areas (and the *monte*) claim the property of the land of their original places of provenance. After a certain time of permanence, the dispute for the land is shifted to the municipality (an attitude that is typical of the Toba domestic groups that have migrated from the outskirts of towns). The claim for dwellings with title deeds and possibilities of access to work, health care and education appear as ways of resisting in the context of a town where the index of poverty rises in growing sectors of the population and are, for the moment, more notorious in the settlements of Empalme Graneros and Los Pumitas.

If the oral literature of the Toba is still present and alive among the domestic groups of Toba, this is especially so among the families that migrated from rural areas (and particularly among the ones dwelling in the Las Moras sector), who adjust their every day behaviour to beliefs in mythical figures and use, preferably, traditional ethno-medical procedures. They believe, for example in *gòmoGonaló*, the big serpent that dwells in the underground and appears in the sky in the form of the rainbow. It punishes transgressions of the rules of hunting and prohibitions concerning menstruation and birth-giving with rain, tornados and earthquakes. During menstruation, women cannot eat red food (meat, *sangría* [red wine mixed with lemon juice, water and sugar], and so on), nor leave the house; men should not go hunting (or go to work when in town) and must stay at home.

In each of the different socio-ethnic interaction fields formed in Rosario there are significant varieties in the interaction patterns between the Toba domestic groups and the individuals who belong to the different segments of the regional/national society. Apart from the nature and differential intensity of the socio-ethnic conflicts, the years passed since each settlement was established, sex, age and the level of education attained, there are other variables in operation, such as the intensity of the social control that the ethnic groups impose on their members in situations of domination/subalternity. We refer here to the degree of rigour of the vigilance exerted, consciously or unconsciously, among the members of the ethnic groups and to the behavioural patterns, values, attitudes and beliefs that each of them should respect and that rule the socio-cultural relationships inside and outside such groups.

As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is more accurate to use the concept of identity process than the concept of identity, because the latter conveys a meaning of immutability and crystallization (Bigot, Rodríguez and Vázquez 1991, p. 218). One of the aspects discussed in the scientific community concerns the nature of the 'logic' of the dynamics of the socio-cultural and socio-linguistic changes that are being produced in a multiplicity of levels and at different rhythms. Elsewhere (Vázquez 1988, p. 87), we have proposed a dynamic based on a dialectic-constructivist view, according to which the approach to the processes through which ethnic identities are formed is centred on the analysis of the building-up, reproduction and re-elaboration of the processes of symbolic interaction and cultural syncretism. Of course, this concept does not ignore the social conditions that affect the changes in cognition patterns and behaviour (at individual and group levels) in the context delimited by the concept of socio-ethnic interaction field. We share Barth's view (1976, p. 18) that the building-up of identity processes takes place on the basis of oppositions that result in a relationship of relative asymmetry between opposed ethnic groups, and not on the basis of contradictions. For Barth, even though the cultural characteristics are not altered and the cultural aspects establishing limits are modified, the determinant aspects in maintaining the identity of the group as such will be, on one hand, the rules of ascription, of filiation and those pertaining the group and, on the other hand, the rules of exclusion. It is, then, ethnic interaction that determines

the persistence of differences. Such interaction establishes, in each ethnic group, a system of behaviour and values that regulates interethnic relationships and that every member of the group is bound to accept. An individual's identity is maintained through a double play of acceptance/rejection of ethnic relationships in different domains of social activity.

In agreement with Carnehiro Da Cunha (1987, p. 102), we contend that ethnic interaction builds-up a process of selection of elements belonging to a certain cultural tradition. Thus, a sort of polysemia of meanings operates, and here the cultural element is constitutive of the ethnic element, although this latter concept transcends the concept of culture.

Getting close to the concept of 'cultural matrix' developed by Bonfil-Batalla in the early 1980s, Giménez (1994) proposes a concept of cultural identity based on a matrix capable of producing emblems of contrast. However, for Bonfil-Batalla this is a matter of a 'cultural capacity of autonomous social production', and the culture specific to each ethnic group has a hard nucleus that never changes and on the basis of which it is possible to discriminate what of 'the alien' will be accepted and what will be rejected. For Giménez, the identity nucleus is built up by the socio-cultural traits and patterns internalized in each society through the socialization of individuals and groups. In this way the identity matrix seems to acquire greater flexibility. There is a dichotomy between identity and culture, on one hand, and tradition and modernization, on the other. There are also different attitudes towards modernity in the different cultural traditions. This may cause a tendency to the dissolution of identity or, on the contrary, a reactivation through 'processes of re-aggregation' of the social identities inherent to each cultural matrix (Giménez 1994, p. 267).

As Smith suggests (1997, p. 34), 'the fundamental paradox of ethnicity' lies in the 'combination of changing elements and durable elements'. One of the aspects discussed among the scientific community concerns the nature of the 'logic' of the dynamics of these changes produced in a multiplicity of domains and at different rhythms. On one hand, we must consider the objective structural conditions that make up the historical, social and cultural context in which the members of the Toba ethnic group elaborate specific modalities of ethnic ascription in a socio-ethnic field of interaction. Among these, as Rodríguez points out (1991, p. 38), there are some significant modalities that should not be overlooked, such as the relationships built on the basis of kinship bonds and of the 'brotherhood' relationships encouraged by the Pentecostal cult, both of which constitute powerful factors of socio-ethnic cohesion. On the other hand, we should also consider the subjective conditions specific to each individual, on the basis of which he or she assumes or rejects the Toba ethnic belonging.

Among the Toba of Rosario, as among any other ethnic group, there are different domains (and levels) in which the individuals identify as Qom. As a consequence, ethnic ascription is, among them, heterogeneous, not homogeneous. It is, therefore, possible to distinguish:



1. A first group formed by representatives and leaders, many of whom are Evangelic pastors (the figure of the Toba cacique used to incorporate both religious and political-military functions). This group assumes their aboriginal condition by means of:

- a) The use of the Toba language and of a system of loyalties derived from kinship networks. They communicate frequently with the members of the Toba groups of the Province of El Chaco, generally of the same dialectal variety, as well as with the representatives and leaders of the other settlements of Rosario and other large Argentine towns.
- b) A process of cultural syncretism that makes them live the condition of pastor in a biased way, because their Christian beliefs are contained within a referential framework that connects them with cultural patterns and symbols that are still alive in the wealth of the Toba cultural repository.
- c) A political manipulation of 'identity', linked to ethnic-political claims.

2. A second group, the most numerous, made up of men and women of more than 25 years of age, where the following characteristics are noticeable:

- a) The integrating character (in spite of the different dialects) of the Qom settlements as agglutinating nuclei, in opposition to the Criollo and other social segments of the regional/national society with which they interact.
- b) The conservation of kinship networks and close communication networks connecting them with the Qom groups in the localities they have migrated from.
- c) The habit of communicating in their native language (which they value highly and tend to transmit to the new generations), which maintains the functionality of the Qom language. Here, it is necessary to differentiate between those who have had some schooling (who have rapidly appropriated new concepts of the Río de la Plata Spanish at lexical level) from those with no schooling at all, in whose case lexical innovations are more limited and develop at a slower rhythm.
- d) 'Brotherhood' derived from the Pentecostal cult. A strong mutual socio-cultural control among the members is perceived.

3. A third group, is made up by people who under certain circumstances assert their aboriginal condition (when, for instance, demonstrating for ethno-political rights such as Bilingual and Intercultural Education; land or houses title deeds) and under other circumstances deny it (when looking for jobs or using health services). These are people between 20 and 25 years of age approximately, with a good competence in Spanish, who were born in the Rosario settlements or have lived there longer than 15 years.

4. A fourth group includes people who tend to deny, under any circumstances, their aboriginal condition, as it brings about contradictions. Their most obvious notorious characteristic is their youth. Although many young people below 20-years-of-age ascribe to the Toba condition, there are also many who deny their ethnicity. Rooted in the uncertainty produced by their self-perception and by others' perception, the identity processes of the Qom seems to develop through contradictions. If the members of the social segments of the regional/national society with whom they interact consider them Indians (with the negative meanings that the word implies), then the hegemonic society induces a multiplicity of modalities of ethnic ascription, delimited by 'what you are not', besides and beyond the conditions imposed by 'the other, the white man'.

### **The Limits of Multicultural Dialogue and the Pluri-Cultural Proposal**

The particular character of socio-ethnic friction exemplified by the aboriginal family groups and the different segments of the regional society described above encourages a critical reflection on the concept of multiculturalism.

It is true, on the one hand, that originally the expression 'multiculturalism' appeared as an improvement as compared to the mono-cultural view, and the attendant mono-cultural policies pursued from the very beginning by the Latin-American national states in relation to the aborigines. Such mono-cultural view excludes any possibility of a dialogue with those who are different. From this point of view, the public policies concerning the aboriginal population were consolidated through a cruel process of forced assimilation to the values of the Western culture of European roots. On the other hand, in attempting to overcome this situation, the multicultural approach opened a way to the recognition of the other, the different. From our perspective, such recognition implies serious contradictions. For example, if we consider the liberal view on the rights of minorities argued by Kymlicka (1995) regarding citizenship rights, some questions become unavoidable. Kymlicka assumes that belonging to a nation should have as a basis the acceptance of democratic political principles and rights. Within this order of ideas, the great challenge of multiculturalism lies in the accommodation or adjustment of the national and ethnic differences through the recognition, and defence, of the civic and political rights of individuals, extending these rights of citizenship to the members of different minority communities. If this kind of accommodation is to take place in a stable and morally acceptable manner, as the author proposes, it is not possible to understand clearly the intrinsic logic of these adjustment mechanisms. Do they refer, perhaps, to a necessary adjustment of minorities or minor communities to the values legitimated by the majority society of which they are a part? Does this adjustment take, perhaps, the character of a covert assimilation to the dominant powers; an assimilation that dilutes diversity, an assimilation that the multicultural model itself tried to overcome? From our point of view, even the concept of

tolerance should be questioned. Tolerance of difference through its recognition, as a way to approach the problem of diversity, covers the superiority stand taken by the person who tolerates. To tolerate difference does not mean accepting it, nor valuing it positively, and even less considering it as a possibility of personal enrichment.

Within this order of ideas, Hamel (1998), drawing on his experience with Mexican aboriginal communities, strongly stresses the limitations of the multicultural model of society. According to him, multiculturalism is based on the theory of cultural inclusion, which is built – although not always explicitly – through a hierarchical order among cultures. Hamel stresses that the Latin-American aboriginal cultures are still being seen as a problem, the *aboriginal problem*, to be solved through their successful integration into Western values, while the attributes that are left to them as of their own become part of the folklore of peoples. From this point of view, in spite of its recognition of diversity, multiculturalism does not escape the mono-cultural framework of cultural inclusion. Keeping at a distance from the multicultural model, Hamel proposes a pluri-cultural model of society, considered to be a superior standpoint, compared to the assimilative and integrationist policies of the previous orientations. The pluri-cultural standpoint not only recognizes the multicultural character of societies, but it considers it to be a driving force for the enrichment of society as a whole (Bigot 2002). For this viewpoint, the aboriginal problem ceases to be such and becomes an advantage for all the social segments. The presence of the aborigines and other migrant groups is valued as a source of enhancement and development that may even facilitate new cultural hybridizations, to push forward the most positive aspects of civil society as a whole.

Another important characteristic of the pluri-cultural model of society is the formulation of specific policies derived from it. In this sense, the struggles of the American aboriginal peoples for the recognition of their lands, of their political systems, of their consuetudinary law and for an intercultural education that includes their own language without subordinating it to other languages must be recognized in the public policies of the States to set the groundwork for proper pluri-cultural societies. The most remarkable progress has taken place in the field of education. Countries such as Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Guatemala have made progress both in legislation and in administrative matters within a model of bilingual and intercultural education addressed to the aboriginal component of these societies. The Argentine situation is still deficient. Although the letter of the law contemplates an aboriginal education that guarantees equality of conditions to these populations as compared to the rest of society, its implementation does not follow. We refer to the National Constitution, Article 75, clause 17, 1994 Reform and to the national legislation on aboriginal matters, as well as provincial laws and international legal documents (Bigot 2004). In agreement with Bigot, we emphasize the importance of preparing teachers and producing teaching materials especially designed for the aboriginal population. This implies the preparation of texts, as part of intercultural bilingual programmes aimed at facilitating understanding within the context of the semantic differences and similarities between the different views inherent to both languages, the aboriginal mother tongue and the language of the majority society.

## Conclusion

The conditions of the Toba families settled in Rosario which we have analysed here is one of many examples of the dynamics pertaining the new aboriginal settlements in large Latin-American cities. The forced emigration of the aboriginal family groups from their original settings, rural places in the great majority of cases, becomes a great challenge for the cities that receive them; particularly if they did not previously have an aboriginal component in their social composition.

As we have seen, the Toba family groups in Rosario use different strategies to achieve a better and greater inclusion in the new urban environment. In this respect, we have analysed their ways of organizing themselves in defence of their ethnic interests within the conceptual field that we have called 'socio-ethnic field of interaction'. In this field of frictions and conflicts among the different segments of the regional society, we have underlined the ethno-political strategies displayed by the aboriginal families with the purpose of obtaining recognition of the lands where they are settled; respect for their ethnic identity and their own view of the world; recognition of their traditional medicinal practices, involving the presence of aboriginal medical personnel in the public hospitals and the creation of health centres in their settlements; the appropriate implementation of bilingual and intercultural education; and recognition of customary Toba law.

In view of the conceptual categories discussed in the last section, Rosario has not yet abandoned a political model of assimilation framed in the pattern of subordinate group/majority regional society. Although there is gradual progress in the recognition and acceptance of the differences raised by the settlement of the aboriginal groups, there is still a long way to go to build up a pluri-cultural model of society that values this presence as an enriching resource for society as a whole.

Finally, from a Latin-American standpoint, we must say that the concept of multiculturalism is not as pre-eminent as in the United States and Europe. In this, we share Jameson's and Žižek's opinion (1998) that, although the multicultural view makes it possible to account for differences, it does not escape the globalized logic of capitalism that generates hegemonic processes to respond to diversity. Because of this, we believe that the pluri-cultural model offers a better way of living together between or among different cultures and guarantees, through the repertoire of public policies derived from it, a greater defence of the ethnic rights of minority groups, local and migrant, living within majority societies.

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## Chapter 8

# Workers in Late Modernity: Traditional Working-Class Culture in Capitalist Globalization<sup>1</sup>

Suzana Burnier

The analysis presented here is based on field research carried out over three years in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, the capital of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais. Fieldwork was carried out mainly through interviews, observation and various types of contact (telephone and electronic and traditional mail) with 20 technicians from different social and cultural backgrounds. I deal with the cases of several of these technicians, who come from rural migrant families or are themselves first-generation migrants. I am especially interested in the way in which these people become involved in the rationality of late modernity with particular reference to: a) the predominance of instrumental reasoning directed to productivity; b) the emphasis on individualism; c) the implications of multiculturalism in terms of the social insertion of the individual and the formation of multiple identities that are frequently fragmented and contradictory; d) the space–time compression and the attendant increase in circulation, contact, access to different languages and acceleration of the rhythm of social life; e) the mercantilization of relationships, in which an excluding and competitive logic that restricts access to goods and rights is predominant. The analysis of the process by which my informants become involved in such a rationality will pay special attention to the role of the work environment and of technical training schools.

The technicians' families originate from rural areas. They migrated to Belo Horizonte in the 1960s and 1970s. Belo Horizonte is the third largest city in Brazil, with a population of 5 million inhabitants and reasonably large industrial and commercial development. It is interesting to note that in the 1940s, 70 per cent of Brazil's total population resided in rural areas. Today in the region where these technicians live, more than 80 per cent of the population resides in urban areas. It is in the context of the accelerated urbanization and industrialization of Brazil that these technicians and their families have implemented their projects of social insertion and life improvement; such projects are usually collective, involving the whole family, and are implemented through insertion in the urban and industrial world.

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1 The present discussion is a revised and expanded version of a paper presented at the XV International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Florence, 4–12 July 2003.

## **In Search of Insertion**

Obtaining a technical qualification is a traditional means to life improvement used by the Brazilian working classes. This can be achieved in several ways: the worker can learn on the job and be classified in his or her work permit as a technician, or she or he can pursue a technical qualification certificate through a technical training education agency. However, in the latter case, the worker is only recognized in the market when registered by an employer, on the work permit, as a technician. The certificate, therefore, helps towards, but does not guarantee, recognition in the job market.

Gaining qualifications through the attendance of training courses is a much valued strategy, for such qualifications confer status and, until recently, guaranteed recognition in a market that is now in decline. However, the Brazilian school system only became substantially universal after 1980, and millions of adults have not completed their primary school education. Moreover, the technical training courses that are available do not meet the great demand. Because such courses require specialist equipment and instructors, they are few and places are limited. Generally, in order to qualify, students must have completed at least sixth grade education. For a significant proportion this is a great challenge, for many students are expelled from school before they even reach the sixth grade. In some cases, enrolment is even more difficult. Some technical training schools require eighth grade qualification and candidates must pass a highly disputed admission examination; the technicians I examine here attended such schools.

## **Life Histories and Constructed Meanings**

What I have said above suggests that we are dealing with people who have a school history that has become relatively significant in the Brazilian working class. They have managed to complete eighth grade education and then enter and complete a demanding technical training course. They graduated as technicians from a famous technical training school, which I shall call Technical Institute (from now on, TI).

My informants spent their childhood either in a country town, with parents working in the rural area (where all of them came from) or, because the family had already moved to the capital, lived in relative isolation in neighbourhoods on the outskirts, where the values and habits of a rural culture were still strong: family, community, prizing manual labour over mental labour, Catholicism, low citizen participation and a certain conformism. Some of these characteristics take a more systemized format if associated with what Louis Dumont (1992) has called hierarchical conceptions, as opposed to the egalitarian or individualistic conceptions that are predominant in the West.<sup>2</sup> As it is in the midst of a tension between these

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<sup>2</sup> I use the notion of hierarchy as in Dumont (1992), which differentiates the holistic or hierarchical (traditional) model from the egalitarian or individualistic (modern) model.

two traditions that we find the technicians under investigation, my main questions are, how much and by what mechanisms have they managed to insert themselves in the urban world of late modernity in the context of a developing country? How do they manage to interact with the values and practices, the *habitus* of such a world? To what extent do they find themselves acculturated in that world? Alternatively, do they remain faithful to the cultural traditions of their groups of origin? If they have undergone a process of insertion, totally or in part, what consequences does this type of cultural transition have for their identities and for the ways in which they represent themselves, others and the world?

Most interviewees had some experience in the formal work market, because they had worked since they were 12 or 13, thus becoming accustomed to the rules of the wider, industrial, modern society. Some worked in factories or in large shopping centres. Others had no previous experience of the formal market and came from the country to the capital with the intention of taking a technical training course. Generally, for most of them, work and family were the basic environments of their socialization process since their early childhood, and they were used to seeing themselves as part of extended families which, in addition to parents and siblings, include all personal relations and neighbours. Thus, as in other cases explored in the present discussion, they gave continuity to the community culture of the working class, where life improvement has a different meaning from getting on with life because the latter project is individual and frequently requires severing links with the group of origin. These people very often delay achieving individual goals, instead prioritizing relationships and rising collectively with mutual support. Although this is obviously not an invariable rule, it is nonetheless a tendency among the Brazilian working classes that has been identified in the relevant literature (see, for example, Colbari 1995), which draws on aspects of Elizabeth Both's work on social networks (1971).

Work is a constant aspect in their socialization, both directly, through participation in domestic tasks and in activities (small jobs or door-to-door sales, for example, of fruit) that produce some income which is shared with the family, and indirectly, through the experience of the constant concern of parents with the future survival of their children, which they visualize as dependent on their insertion in the job market. Work values were particularly important in a situation in which,

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The hierarchical model differs from the distinctive linear logic of the Aristotelian tradition, because it substitutes the opposition that considers all the elements equivalent among each other, by a hierarchical logic that articulates the totalities and their component elements. Thus the various elements in a set are only appreciable by reference to the set to which they belong and further to the relationship this establishes simultaneously among them and with a set that is characterized by inequality and by the consequent complementariness among the elements. The hierarchical theory identifies further a distinction among the levels, that is a higher level encompassing unity, and an inferior level where there is distinction in the sense of complementariness or reciprocity. 'All is based on the hierarchical and necessary co-existence of two opposites' (Dumont 1992).

as recent immigrants in an urban setting, they came into contact with a culture that prioritizes the possession of goods over physical effort and strength. A greater emphasis on the possession of goods seems to me to be more common among poorer immigrants who have lived longer in urban areas.<sup>3</sup> For those originating from rural areas, 'effort', sometimes mainly physical effort, is the greatest value that confers dignity to the individual; particularly to the male.

That these young people from the working classes managed to pass the disputed TI selection examination can be explained in several ways. Perhaps the most curious is that several of them were shy children who experienced difficulties in socializing with their peers and ended up dedicating their time to books, thus achieving some status, if not among their peers, at least among adults, parents and teachers. Others, understanding from an early age the hard rules of the market, came to value studying as the only identifiable way to improve their chances for betterment. Still others were forced by their parents to take, and pass, the TI exam and thus obtain a free quality education that gave them a technical qualification, leading to a good job shortly after completion of secondary education.

As these young people arrived in the big city, they entered TI, the largest public technical training school in the state, with about 5,000 students, 13 different mid-level technical courses, engineering courses and master programmes in technology and technical education. On the strength of this school's tradition and prestigious reputation, graduates experience little difficulty in entering the formal market and obtaining relatively stable and well-paid jobs, a not so common achievement in the present situation. They also have a good chance of acquiring lighter technical jobs. Obtaining a good job (Laurens 1992) means being successful in the project of improving in life. Of course, all this confers enormous significance to the technical training schools and to the ascetic habits imposed there, resulting in a powerful acculturation process for the students. However, these young people found themselves in an unfamiliar urban environment, in a large school that was attended by so many students, that imposed strict performance requirements and where they experienced relationships over which they had little personal control. Such a combination had a significant impact. Such a standard of life, typical of modern industrial society, was very different from that to which they were used in the small community schools in the county towns where they came from, where control is more personal and less regulated. At the TI they found themselves in a cultural world that makes great demands on students and imposes academic rhythms and habits at a level and intensity unknown to them.

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3 Some authors, such as Bajoit and Fransen (1997), point to a fall in the value attached to work among young people in urban settings during the 1980s and 1990s, in many cases caused by disappointments imposed by the markets on young people regarding the type of employment and the amount of income that they were able to access. At the same time, a society marked both by the crisis of industrial employment and by the valorization of leisure and of identity based on cultural fashion also favoured the disqualification of work as a future project and as a key aspect of people's identity.

The children of rural migrants who have been raised in cities, also experience a certain impact when they enter TI. They are away, often for the first time in their lives, from their neighbourhood, where they have lived among families whose backgrounds were similar to their own. On joining TI, they meet people (students and teachers) from other social and cultural backgrounds, bearers of different values, habits and languages.

My informants described how they had to re-learn how to speak and relate to people and how to insert themselves in the urban patterns. One of them, Olacir, said, 'I had always lived in the neighbourhood, and never left it. So leaving to study at the TI made me aware of another world. I experienced new things...even the danger of taking a bus at midnight, after class.'

Social relationships in the school are tense and intense for those who study during the day, whereas they are tense and few for those who study at night. The diurnal timetable involves a workday of eight hours, with an interval for lunch and two breaks. During the intervals, many conversations take place among classmates and with students from other classes or courses, widening significantly the students' field of experience. However, according to my informants, these relationships were punctuated by tensions often caused by the great cultural diversity among the groups. Those that studied at night generally worked for companies during the day, arrived tired at school and did not have time to chat. More generally, the testimonies that I have collected make it clear that the potential for socialization offered by a school of such a size and social and cultural diversity was not even remotely exploited, at least not institutionally, for teachers were mainly concerned with teaching and considered the number of hours allowed for the courses to be insufficient to accommodate other activities.

I also found that a strangely high number of technicians considered themselves to be shy and, in line with an issue that I have raised earlier, appeared to have better chances of academic progress because they dedicated more time to studying. These 'shy' students underestimated their academic abilities, as they met middle-class young people at the TI. As there was no institutional culture supporting the construction of significant social relationships, these shy individuals felt the cultural conflicts more strongly, became withdrawn and, they now say, lost an opportunity to learn how to relate to and interact with different social and cultural groups. This situation continued as they attended university. Today, as adults inserted in the job market, many still complain of difficulties in their relationships and feel that they need to seek ways to develop this kind of skill. They identify attendance of courses and social activities, such as engaging in sports or attending churches, as good ways to do so; the latter option is considered extremely effective. The weight of the absence of socialization at school appears fully when we compare the testimonies of those who describe themselves as shy with those that do not and who describe their experiences at the TI, at university and in the job market quite differently, in positive terms.

However, although the technical training school did not greatly encourage personal development in the field of social relationships, in spite of the great

potential provided by the cultural diversity existing there, it is thanks to the TI that these people acquired mid-term planning skills and habits, such as time rationalization and definition of priorities, incorporating the 'modern disciplines' identified by Foucault (1975). The question arises whether we are dealing with submission, with conformism to the industrial ideology of the employers, or with an opportunity for inclusion in the modern trans-national and technological society.

### **Adult Life and the Job Market: Challenges and Choices**

After graduating, the technicians slowly entered adult life. What challenges did they identify in their life stories? With what instruments and based on what values did they face it?

The technicians who graduated from the TI during the 1980s went on to achieve managing positions in the job market. They were faced with the challenge of managing people and teams, for which they did not originally judge themselves to be prepared. However, they quickly progressed to earn salaries that they considered reasonable and that motivated many of them not to pursue a university degree. At least one of them did not take the opportunity to start his own business because he did not have the necessary knowledge for such an undertaking. He had been trained to be employed, not to become an employer; thus he lost out.

Those who graduated in the 1990s found a much more selective job market, following a generalized downsizing at the end of the 1980s. They still managed to enter the formal market, but did so in positions much inferior to those achieved by the technicians who graduated in the 1980s. It could be said that a kind of chain reaction, generated both by the reduction in the number of vacancies and by the increase in more qualified workers, pushed engineers to apply for positions previously held by technicians and the latter to apply for positions previously occupied by the more experienced manual workers. In some automobile assembly plants there are now trained technicians working as machine operators, the lowest position in the productive process.

However, whether or not they occupied management positions, these technicians soon had to deal with the social contradictions that mark labour relations, including constant dismissals, the growing tension generated by the ever-greater demands for productivity, low salaries, authoritarian relationships, employers' banning union membership in their companies, peer disputes over better positions and strong management repression of those who continued to study. In the face of such tension, and of the permanent threat of dismissal, the technicians invested in two main projects: self-development, typical of late modernity (Giddens 1991), and solidarity with the humble – those who, as themselves, came from the bottom. The way in which social relationships are conceived outside the work environment, according to the technicians' classification system, is an observable result of such projects. They move among three different hierarchical levels, according

to native categories: the workers (*peões*), the bosses (*chefes*) and the engineers (*engenheiros*). A further level includes the company owners: the capitalists, also called the shareholders. The technicians identify themselves with the workers, the manual workers, a position that some occupied before they graduated. Now working as technicians or intermediary managers, they sympathize with the manual workers and try to soften the social discrimination to which these are frequently subjected. Manual workers are usually treated as subhuman even in large multinational companies. The technicians strongly oppose such a treatment and try to compensate with words of encouragement and friendly attitudes during lunch breaks and on entering and leaving the premises, when there is less control over personal exchanges and therefore an opportunity to talk. However, the technicians also want to differentiate themselves from the manual workers, looking for lighter, more intellectual jobs and striving to raise their cultural level and to learn how to discuss diversified subjects, beyond women and football.

The technicians also differentiate themselves from the engineers, and even when they achieve this position they consider themselves different from other engineers who have never suffered in life, who got everything easily, who joined the company as engineers. For the technicians, these engineers are like human machines, without compassion for the other workers. They also consider them to be unbalanced because, they believe, having it easy corrupts one's personality and makes one not value anything and live unsatisfied.

Even when they raise their social and cultural level, for these technicians the family remains the basic point of reference. Unlike other groups of popular origin, they retain a strong class identity, perhaps because they come from families of rural manual workers, where the ethos is strongly centred on effort and on self-worth and on overcoming difficulties, always in the collective context of the extended family. Another possible explanation for their normative code lies in their position in the industrial world, where they maintain contact with workers of similar origin and where they regard themselves to be very different from their middle-class colleagues. Thus, while other groups of popular origin seek to distance themselves from such origin and even break with their families and move to middle-class neighbourhoods adopting the attendant lifestyle, my informants remain very close to their families and even delay the pursuit of personal objectives, giving priority to supporting needy members of the family group. Some delayed completion of their university courses in order to help younger brothers, or spent their savings to renovate their parents' house. Unlike their middle-class peers, almost all married before finishing university.

## Final Considerations

If we think of the socialization processes in Western industrial societies as mechanisms of insertion of the population into the modern disciplines of time, space and body control, of social relationships and of knowledge as a guarantee to



their productivity, it is important to see that insertion in such a modern rationality means more than this. Productivity is not the exclusive benefit of the business world and of the accumulation of capital. As with any social process, modern socialization (or disciplining) also produces *agents* with their own objectives and strategies, derived from their life experiences and cultural universe.

Thus, even when the values of people of rural origin, such as ‘activity’, ‘don’t stand still or the path will close’ (an allusion to rural paths that if not hoed are taken over by weeds and are lost), are linked to a productivist conception of capital, they do not necessarily constitute submissive and dominated habits and visions of the world. As Alain Touraine (1994) warned, rationality penetrating the subject is not the exclusive factor of submission, although the sense conferred on it, the use that is made of it, may or may not constitute a form of subordination of the other or of oneself. Rationality, as the basic element of modernity, not exclusively of capitalism, is also the constituting element of Giddens’s (1991) reflexive subject or, as Touraine suggests, ‘It is not even the individual, nor the it-self constructed by the social organization, but the work by which an individual transforms himself into an actor, that is, an agent capable of transforming his situation instead of reproducing it by his behaviours’ (1994, p. 393). Touraine draws attention to the fact that modernity is not based exclusively on rationalization, but that it is defined by the permanent tension between reason and subject, between rationalization and subjectivization. Each pole and this opposition have virtues and dangers. On the one hand, the individual focuses only on himself or herself (and on a few others who are regarded as similar), leading to isolation and intolerance. On the other hand, social coercion seeks to rule and guarantee cohesion at any cost, which can lead to various forms of totalitarianism.

We have seen that, in the process of constructing themselves, the technicians discussed here counted in a special way on the cultural tradition derived from their rural origins – a culture that is strongly hierarchical and that, even when they entered the egalitarian and individualistic system of modern manufacturing, allowed them to continue to prioritize values referring to the collectives of which they regard themselves to be members: family and social class. This strongly affects their relationships in the work environment and, more generally, in the social life in which they are inserted. Do these people personify islands of modernity in post-modern times? Are they backward segments of post-modern working classes? Are they manifestations of a bricolage, whereby they act according to multiple points of references but without allowing such a diversity to turn them into aliens in their own world, as happens with so many individuals and groups that live in frontier spaces? When they manage to operate rationally in such a context, these workers appear to avoid such a tragic predicament and constitute themselves as social subjects who bring to mind the concept of cultural mediators (Kuschnir 2001), whose mediating space is obviously defined institutionally. They are placed ‘in the eye of the storm’, that is, at the heart of the globalized international world of capitalist production, in the form of large multinational companies. However, even in a context defined by the social processes of global dimensions, they find options

and construct meanings for their experiences that stimulate reflection on the role played by the different instances that make up the wild field of socialization in which they move.

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# Chapter 9

## Young Urban Migrants Between Two Cultures

Danila Mayer

### Prologue

Scene #7: Murat and Osman meet in the park

Place: Football cage in the park

Time: Early evening

Light: Daylight

Camera: Fixed

Osman puts his rucksack aside and is wearing clothes in which he can easily move. He is alone in the cage, walking to and fro.

Murat comes into the cage. He asks, walking towards Osman, what the earlier telephone call meant.

Osman: *'Agzina sicacagim senin, sen zaten beni hep dövme istiyordun, gel şimdi'* ('I will hit you, you always wanted to hit me anyway, I know that, come here ...')

Murat: *'Ben seninle hic düğüsmek istemedim ve simdide istemiyorum'* ('never wanted to hit you, and don't want to hit you now')

Osman starts attacking Murat while he is talking, hits him with the first blow, Murat tries to block Osman's fists, yelling at him to stop, feels that he cannot talk to him. He manages to place a blow in Osman's stomach who goes down and murmurs, 'I knew you wanted to hit me'.

Murat: *'Arkadaslik dövüserek mi olur lan? Birisine düvmek için saldırdığında, dayak yiyeceğin aklına gelmedimi? Nedir derdin senin? Neden bugün herkes bana saldiriyor?'* ('Is this friendship? Do you not know you will be hit if you attack someone? What is your problem? Why does everybody attack me today?')

Silence.

Murat takes out a spliff and lights it. Osman has calmed down, still holding his stomach.

Murat hands over the joint and asks, '*Iyimisin?*' ('Are you ok?'), Osman signals 'yes' with his head. He inhales.

Osman: '*Kusura bakma, bugün moralim çok bozuk, sende telefonu kaldırmayınca, moralim iyice bozuldu ve herseye gıcık oldum*' ('I am sorry, my morals are down today, and after you did not pick up the phone, I got really mad')

Murat: 'What happened?'

Osman: '*Evdekilerle yine tartistim*' ('I had stress at home again')

Murat: '*Ben acıktım, sende acmisin?*' ('I am hungry, what about you?')

Osman: 'Me too, yes'

Murat: 'Let's go and have a schnitzel, and you can tell me all about that'

They turn around and walk slowly towards the cage door, their voices fade out, picture fades slowly into black.

Taken from: *The Friend*. Drafted script for a short film by Muzaffer Hasaltay.

## Introduction

The 'Multicultural City' seems to be a descriptive label which raises a number of questions, especially regarding the underlying implications of the term 'culture'.

One direction in which the 'multi-cultural' sign points, certainly in post-war north and west European cities (in Scandinavia, England, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain and Austria), is towards the new population structure produced by labour immigration, especially in the cheap housing districts which were at the 'front line of the culture clash' between migrant and non-migrant working-class populations.<sup>1</sup>

The urban processes connected to immigration and interaction among population groups have long been the subject of analysis by urban anthropologists.<sup>2</sup> Vienna, for example, has a post-war history of labour immigration, mainly from Yugoslavia and Turkey, starting from the 1960s. The analysis of migrant populations

1 See, for example, the description of Jamaican immigration to England, as in the work of Phillips and Phillips (1998), Sewell (1998) and Gilroy (2000).

2 See the critical discussion of 'The Domain of Urban Anthropology' in Eames and Granich Goode (1977, pp. 19–29).

– migration as experience, social and economic structures, political backgrounds – reveals a variety of developments and dynamics in adaptation to Viennese urban life, as well as the migrants' active shaping of the city. *Assimilation*, the migrants' blending or melting into the host society, and *integration*, the opening-up of the host society which, taking in the migrants, changes into a new, mutually influenced society, are socio-political concepts that can be perceived in this regard.

The newer concept of 'diversity',<sup>3</sup> meaning *all equal – all different*, seems now to take into account several, previously neglected, important identity-formation features, such as gender, sexual orientation, political standpoints, occupation and education, thus broadening and individualizing the concept of 'culture' which, in the socio-political context of the 'Multicultural City', in the past probably meant mostly language and religion.

This chapter addresses young urban migrants between two cultures,<sup>4</sup> the second and third generations of labour migrants.<sup>5</sup> The chapter's title refers to Watson's edited volume, *Between Two Cultures: Migrants and Minorities in Britain* (1979), which collects essential urban anthropological studies carried out at 'both ends of the migration chain'. The experiences of the adolescents studied take place mainly in Vienna, but they nevertheless include such from 'back home', thus combining two cultures. In our contribution, the adolescents' views are seen as specific and differing from those of other family members. Adolescence itself – as a time of possibilities which brings with it a special approach to life – inserts a second meaning into the analysis: the adolescents are positioned between two age cultures as well – youth culture and the world of grown-ups.

The discussion draws on the findings of my work as an ambulant youth advisor from 1992 to 2007, working with adolescents, including young people who spend most of their (leisure) time in public places. Fieldwork was based on participant observation, interviews with young people and with experts, 159 survey questionnaires (July 1997) and on the analysis of street-work diaries and informal talks with hundreds of 12–24-year-olds. I spent a large amount of time with children in the public places where they would meet (football cages, parks, shopping malls, clubs, youth centres), and spoke to young people before and after court trials and at crisis intervention centres. The analysis and interpretation of quantitative material (frequency in public space, age, gender) forms the background of this chapter. The empirical material has a strong male bias, due to their overwhelming presence in parks (roughly 70 per cent are boys and young men) and the exclusively male football cage groups.

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3 I refer to a concept of social youth work which aims at de-stigmatizing migrants (see, Schröer and Böhnisch, 2006, pp. 29–32).

4 The between-cultures approach has been critically discussed by Yildiz (1999).

5 This chapter deals with those only who spend their time in the parks. Due to differentiation and diversification processes, many other adolescents with similar backgrounds might be living in completely different surroundings and circumstances.

The main fieldwork was conducted in Margareten, Vienna's fifth district. There are roughly 40 groups totalling approximately 300 adolescents in the district who regularly spend most of their time in the district's ten parks and eight football cages, plus the three additional cages (football, beach-ball) at the district's margins. The overwhelming majority of these young people hail from families of migrant workers – that is, former Yugoslavian and Turkish backgrounds; many people from these countries have been arriving in Austria as (recruited) 'guest workers' since the middle of the 1960s.

Margareten is a typical example of a Viennese inner-city, working-class district, with a foreign population in 2006 amounting to 26.4 per cent of the 52,296 population. Of these, 3,485 were of Serbian-Montenegrin citizenship, and 1,677 of Turkish citizenship. In 2006 Vienna's total population was 1,664,146, 19.1 per cent of whom were foreigners (Magistrat der Stadt Wien 2007).

Other working-class districts with a similar population structure are Vienna's second, third, tenth, eleventh, fifteenth, sixteenth and twentieth districts as well as parts of the twelfth and seventeenth. The old buildings with small, cheaply-equipped flats have attracted the labour migration populations; better-off families have moved on to newly built, better housing, often communally funded and situated on the city's margins. These families include an ever-growing share of migrants as the migrant communities diversify, and some move on in Viennese society.

Marginalization is a fact for adolescents in general, but even more so for those from lower social strata, and most of all for those with a migration background. Problems created by such a marginalized position include language deficits, lack of education, shortages of (financial) support from families and society, lack of political representation and participation and difficulties in gaining access to higher education, all of which also re-create and consolidate marginalization.

Most of these young people have Austrian citizenship; adolescents without citizenship, if they have attended school in Austria, are entitled to unlimited access to the labour market. In spite of that, estimations of officials from unemployment agencies show that two thirds of all adolescents seeking jobs are of either (former) Yugoslavian or Turkish *background* (not necessarily citizenship).

Most adolescents with a migrant background attend general high schools until the age of 14, or special pedagogic centres (where up to 100 per cent are of non-Austrian origin); many 'quit' school at a much earlier age. The number of adolescents with a labour migration background in higher education is very small. Motivation to achieve good marks is low, as jobs connected to vocational training with the option of a career as a skilled worker (good marks required) are hardly offered. The only (legal) option left is a career as an unskilled worker, most likely in a modern, 'flexible' employment scheme.

The changing structure of work in post-industrial countries like Austria shows a decrease in unskilled and low-skilled jobs following globalization and rationalization processes. The work force of more and more people has become superfluous and unnecessary. This is especially harsh for those adolescents who



come from the lower strata of Viennese urban society, many of whom have a migration background. Growing unemployment hits them – and their families, often unskilled workers themselves – hardest.

Although there are special training programmes devoted to fighting youth unemployment; following training, those enrolled in the programmes have to look for a ‘real’ job, which often is impossible. Consequently, motivation within these courses is quite low, and due to the strict regulations the programmes experience a high drop-out rate, which further marginalizes and isolates the ‘problem kids’, cutting them off even more from mainstream society’s communication and information, making it virtually impossible to turn them into ‘solution kids’.

Connected to increasing unemployment, ‘leisure’ time activities in the parks and cages become even more important for these groups, and are prolonged far into adulthood. But while these groups are highly visible they are also quite inaccessible.

It is these adolescents’ views, activities, peer group structures and youth cultures that form the content of this chapter. The setting in which they are coming of age – families, the Viennese urban surroundings – will be described, as well as their experiences ‘back home’. Seeing their youth and group cultures as ways of adapting to Viennese urban life, between park and cage, peers, families and the reality of society, will show how the multiple experiences of these young urban migrants are reflected and integrated, and how they struggle to develop strategies to come to terms with society at large. Forming their own park youth culture, they try to find their position as grown-ups in Viennese society.

### **Park Group Structures**

Among the groups in question many variations can be found. There is a considerable amount of ‘ethnically uniform’ male groups, but many of the groups and cliques are ethnically mixed and include girls and boys: Bosnian and Macedonian girls and boys; Turkish, Pakistani and Sri Lankan boys with Austrian girls; Roma groups from various former-Yugoslavian countries with different religions; Iraqi, Kurdish and Serbian boys.<sup>6</sup> The groups form around a neighbourhood, a basketball court or football playground, or the park.

A strong contributory factor for group formation processes is kinship. Several groups are formed by brothers and/or sisters, or cousins. Often elder brothers are in one group, and their younger brothers form another. Such two groups are likely to keep social distance; the elder brothers are respected, but not necessarily

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6 There are additional groups of adolescent refugees. These, coming from Africa, Chechnya and Afghanistan, cannot obtain access to the labour market at all. Most of them, heavily traumatized and with no financial means at hand, are also increasingly using the public spaces where clashes with other groups are likely if they try to gain access, for example, to a football cage.

persons of trust for the younger boys. Likewise, the older boys/men tend to view the younger ones as strange, 'they do not know how to behave'.

These park groups could be arranged along a scale from 'open' to 'closed'. The more 'mixed' the group, the more 'open' it is, while the most 'uniform' groups are more 'closed'. This corresponds to a political world view. While the open groups have a principally permeable world-view, the closed groups tend to use national and religious frames. Thus open groups are inclusive towards others if they share the open view, and exclude or tend to exclude others who seem 'closed'; closed groups exclude, or tend to exclude, others based on language, descent, religion (and sex) differences, but are ready to take in people who share these 'ethnic' features.

From this an image of groups being open or closed can be constructed in terms of their ability to 'move'. Open groups have 'air' and 'space' between their members, they float easily through Vienna, take in others, communicate in all directions, and bring together a variety of views from their various backgrounds (boys and girls, languages, religions, nationalities and so on), all of which gives them a broad spectrum of possibilities through which they might integrate new experiences. In contrast, closed groups' members are strongly linked together, forming a 'ball' which, when it tries to move, meets more resistance in society. Experiences, often of repression and violence, must be understood or explained in the closed system; with nationalism and religion being the main frames of reference, the generalized rejection of 'others' is a quick response. Closed groups often react with violence, and tend to stay local, in their neighbourhood, also to avoid confrontations. The cage-based groups stay in or around the cage until their grown-up years (see 'Boys in the Cage', p. 159).

A special kind of group, also mostly formed in parks and often developing out of cage groups, is the (incipient) gang. While often evolving from closed groups, ethnic, religious and political backgrounds become less important in favour of a violent approach and 'criminal intent', and fusion with other groups or individuals with 'experience' are frequent. Although gangs are often stigmatized due to their ethnic backgrounds, we assume that gang formation processes are quite independent of ethnic backgrounds and follow other social dynamics (see Southall 2000, pp. 393–5).

Interaction with other adolescents and groups, and with grown-ups and society at large (mainstream society) is strongly defined by peer groups and their experiences and outlooks.

Open groups – while also targeted by discrimination and racism – interact more easily and come to a differentiated view in their group discussions. They refrain from generalized defamation (for example, of mainstream society), and tend to regard offensive people as following their individual (for example, racist) world view.

Closed groups have more experience with repression – from family, school, police and other social institutions – and tend to interact less openly with mainstream society and other groups and adolescents. They also reflect in their

group discussions and share their experiences with each other, coming to a generalized rejection of ‘others’. These groups also tend to have language deficits, often both in the mother tongue and in German, which further hinders their interaction outside their groups.

## **Fusion and Fission Processes, Some Examples**

### *Fusion*

A Muslim Macedonian Roma group from the fifth district became involved in troubles with a Turkish group from the trans-Danubian twenty-first district. Before long, other groups from the districts and also elder male relatives and weapons became involved. The resulting fights took place over a period of weeks, with unpredictable outbursts in one or other of the groups’ meeting points (parks, youth centres).

A group of Serbian Roma moved from their very small park to another park. The move was slow, and started with them playing cards on a ‘free’ table in the new park. This continued throughout the summer; the group was rather large and mixed: boys and girls, smaller children and dogs. As they knew the resident groups in the new park and did not challenge the cage groups, things went smoothly and with mutual acceptance and exchange.

A cage group, based on twin boys, whose cage had been rebuilt and opened up in order to break up the typical all-male football-playing groups and give girls a chance to play, moved – after years of considerable frustration with the new cage – to another park with a proper football cage. This development took at least two years. Now the groups of two cages are intermingled, and some boys go to both parks and cages, others to only one. But they all form a large group which is not as closed as the former groups used to be. The new group is an all-male group, Turkish with one Serbian boy.

Fusion processes can also take place when a younger cage group, as its members grow up, slowly replaces an older group that maybe no longer frequents the park as much. For example, one older, all-male, culturally mixed cage group (two Kurds, a Shiite Iraqi boy, several Turkish boys, one Albanian from Skopje) in time left their cage, but returned sometimes to play football, always welcomed and respected by the new all Turkish and rather closed cage group.

### *Fusion and Fission Processes*

The groups mentioned in the last fusion example were challenged, threatened and hurt by a closed boy group of Chechen refugees who acted quite violently. This led to several big fights and considerable anxiety for the two resident cage groups who were quick to ask for police support. Part of the Chechen group moved on to form a gang who faced trial in June 2007 for a number of violent offences, theft

and robbery all over Vienna; others of their original group now go to the cage to play together with the resident group. However, members of the older mixed group do not come to the cage any more as one of them was badly hurt, and since this group was not a violent one, they were shocked and confused.

Another group, cage-based but not closed, included two Pakistani brothers, three Turkish boys, two Serbian brothers, one boy from Sri Lanka, two Austrian sisters and another Austrian girl. The group was stable in their park and cage for years, especially the boys. As they grew older, they started going out together, opening up more. The Serbian brothers moved to another district and slowly contact became less frequent. New girls joined the group. The Pakistanis also moved away, but stayed in contact. By and by, the group left the park and cage altogether and started meeting in clubs. However, fusion and fission processes were at work throughout; some members spoke critically about the conduct of others: questioning why he/she didn't do this or that; 'he became strange'; 'he doesn't care about us any more'; 'she goes to different places now'. The group members have moved on, finding their way into society. Still, they meet each other now and then, and know about the others.

### *Fission*

In one cage group, K. began to smoke more marijuana than the others, hanging out with people who also smoked a lot. The rest of the group (one of them his brother) became worried and tried to hold him back, but he seemed to like his new life better. Slowly, because they did not stop hassling him, he moved out of the group altogether.

In a cage group in the third district, M. started questioning the nationalism and Islamism of the closed Turkish group (who had let him into the group on account of his Turkishness, religion and football talents) after meeting Kurdish Alevites whose more open access he preferred. A number of discussions followed in which he accused the others of racism. Eventually he stopped frequenting the cage and moved on, into open groups and towards cultural production in mainstream Austrian society.

Two boys aged 15 talked a third into joining them in robbing a woman's handbag in a fairly well-frequented road in the early evening. The woman, however, did not let go of her bag. The three boys returned to the park, very excited and anxious that they might have been watched (one of them had been wearing a very white jacket). Other members of their group in the cage did not approve of the attempt and looked on mischievously. Consequently, the boys have given up this 'career' path; had they not, fission would have resulted.

Fusion processes may involve offenders, and may also lead to fusion with older relatives. If cage groups or other closed groups leave their local surroundings and frequent more open public spaces they are bound to wind up in conflict with others. Weapons might well be involved, and fights, fuelled by fusion processes which enlarge and radicalize the groups, can easily get out of hand, giving them

a war-like appearance. Other fusion processes involve peaceful intermingling according to mutual interests and/or non-violent or non-threatening behaviour.

Fission processes may take place over a longer period of time, with people moving away or finding new social and cultural surroundings. In all-male groups – which are very often also closed groups (for example, cage groups) – fission processes can be tough and a big issue, often connected to physical violence. While the groups are constantly engaged in discussion and debates on everyday life, football, the cage, the park, group structures, the personal conduct of members and outsiders, and so on, all of which may lead to a considerable amount of hassle and disagreement, the general aim is to keep the group together. Leaving the group is almost always connected to having to leave the cage and the park altogether, thus leading to the loss of friendship, emotional support and group activity.

Crime and drug use are major causes of fusion and fission processes. Groups, especially closed groups, might enter into drug use or crime together. But if part of the group does not want to join in, fission processes will start after much debate and discussion. If members start to take hard drugs, they move out of their groups and cages, leaving the district altogether to frequent the drug scenes, which are less local and open to everybody. Others return to the district and the parks in order to sell drugs to their former peers. This also leads to fusion and fission processes, depending on who becomes an addict and/or a pusher, and who does not.

### **Boys in the Cage**

A football cage is a plastered area in a Viennese park. Such a park is neither beautiful nor botanically interesting, but pragmatic, a sheer necessity in the densely populated lower- and working-class districts. Each park is on average about 200 metres long and 150 metres wide (though there are considerably larger and smaller ones), equipped with a children's playground, some benches and tables; there are litter-bins, dog-zones, trees and shrubs. The fenced-in 'cages' (official name), of which there are more than 200 in Vienna, are equipped for playing football, with goals and high chain-link-type wire fencing. Park and cage users, who have often lived in the neighbourhood for many years, know each other well. Most cages are closed during the night, with special security service personnel in charge (more or less violent conflicts between the security personnel and the cage boys do occur).

Cages are spaces of retreat for boys and young men, most with migration backgrounds. Although the groups that gather in the cages can differ in their ethnic composition, many of the boys and young men have a Turkish background. Spending a lot much time in the cage is also connected to a strong interest in football. Becoming a professional football player seems a likely preoccupation for the boys; some even play in professional clubs.

Cages are defended against outsiders; the in-group, those in charge, those who manage to become the cage-gang, see to it that no outsiders enter. At certain times smaller boys' groups can also play in the cages – often younger brothers are a part

of these groups. At other times no-one uses the cage. However, this does not mean that at those times the space becomes available to others: as soon as outsiders enter the cage, somebody from the cage group shows up; the 'others' either leave or start a fight (as described, for example, in the section on fusion and fission processes above).

Social skills and physical strength are necessary assets if one is to get on within a group. Cage members stick together and meet frequently (daily) in their cages, which are also meeting points from where other activities and excursions begin. Such groups generally have around 30 members, including the tolerated younger boys, who, if they are especially clever and/or talented, can already be part of the group even below ten years of age.

Group members share their general life circumstances. They also support each other against the 'outside world', that is, society at large, which they experience mainly as repressive institutions: family, school, police, social welfare, the boss. One problem with jobs in mainstream society, as experienced by these adolescents, is they isolate them from their group.<sup>7</sup> They long to be with (their) peers and friends, but instead have to go to work and will hence be separated from the group – which gives them support, security, emotions, love – having moved into 'enemy territory' where they feel badly treated by their bosses and mean colleagues. Consequently, any problem at work can lead to violent behaviour, making a return to the cage group easy and welcome. Such a return can even feel like a victorious one, especially if the youngster was fired after standing up to an older colleague – which would make a great story to be told on park benches.

All matters of everyday life (especially confrontations and conflicts) become the subjects of discussion in the cage groups. This communication – which can be loud, controversial, with everybody speaking and listening at the same time, and standpoints declared and adjusted constantly – is very important; the views of the boys and young men are formed in these discussions.

Each cage gang encompasses smaller, friendship-based units. These sub-groups consist of cage group members who maybe spend more time together, might be related to each other (brothers, cousins, other family members), or who perhaps live closer together. Some boys are connected by typical boys' friendships that are very strong, may be formed at a very young age – even at four or five years of age – and might last for some time, even for life. These close relationships that form within the smaller groups enable the discussion of more discreet and secret topics, for example about sexual relationships, or about stressful situations with parents, especially with fathers and older brothers.

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7 See also Plomb (2001, pp. 54–69), who analyses the adaptations necessary for young people in order to integrate work into their daily lives – a brilliant and vivid presentation which we found very accurate and useful, and reflects our own impressions and findings.

Another manifestation of these youngsters' situation is juvenile delinquency, which is on the rise.<sup>8</sup> A precarious life situation, the lack of opportunities and their position in society at large can make the world of illegal activities seem highly attractive. For the children in the parks and cages, the 'racketeers' (who they all know and might be well acquainted with) may become idols. More experienced individuals in criminal or semi-legal businesses know where to find recruits if they need them, and some youngsters' (bad) reputations can bring them – and their group – into contact very quickly. Hence, although a group member's violence and aggression may lead to expulsion from their current peer group, there is often a more violent group ready to take them in.

Failing to enter, or leaving, mainstream society and heading towards the ever broader margins, including by engaging in criminal activities, can for some individuals and groups start at a very early age, even before the age of ten. Many boys have a police record before the age of 14, and get busted for their first offence after their fourteenth birthday. Most adolescents' sentences are for robbery and other violent offences, sometimes homicide, often in connection with forming gangs.

The draft film script by Vienna-born filmmaker Muzaffer Hasalty – born in 1979 and himself a former cage boy – quoted at the beginning of this chapter reflects how the cage in the park continues to serve as a meeting point for young men even years after they have gone on to lead different lives. Evoking the 'old cage days' is used to call upon togetherness and solidarity. The conflict between the two men, Murat and Osman, is a very common one: the use and consequences of violence. The short film *The Friend* also puts into perspective the experiences of cage group life: unemployment, violence, jail.

The cage is a very powerful identity-forming place. Consequently, it is very hard to 'leave the cage'. Cage groups are very often 'closed groups' (see 'Park Group Structures' above) and cage boys are generally the most deprived in terms of economy and access to mainstream society. The repressions they experience are often played back and reflected in their defence of 'their' cage against intruders; if they cannot go anywhere else, then at the very least nobody else should enter their cage. Conflicts with and violence against 'intruders' are often highlighted in the yellow press. Many cage groups share a nationalistic political view, and it seems that in some cases the cage functions as a 'national unit', a territory to be defended. If the group is challenged by another powerful groups, violence might get out of hand and, obtaining a war-like momentum, result in severe damage.

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8 This is especially true for young urban migrants. On attending trials and visiting detention centres, I found the overwhelming majority of adolescents with a migration background striking.



## **Girls in Parks and Public Spaces**

Girls make up around one third of park users, their numbers decreasing the older they are, the later the day, and the colder the weather. Only the toughest ones are to be found in the park in winter, especially after the age of 12 or 13. Early afternoon – after school – is the time when many girls frequent the parks, usually those close to their school and on their way home. As the boys are in the park, it is important for the girls to see and meet them; park boys are also prospective boyfriends.

While girls might not spend their leisure time in the parks – and never in the cages as boys do – they still have a need to go out to ‘see and be seen’. Generally, girls have less freedom than boys; parents are more likely to be afraid and consequently seek to control their daughters. Still, girls want to go out and stay out (longer), so they have to find ways to do so (unlike boys, who just leave without being questioned). For example, girls will say they are meeting a (known) friend, and at the very least, they must give a destination. As well as parents being much stricter with girls, a great deal of social control is conducted by neighbours, family and other community members. The park is not perceived as a fitting environment for a girl.

Girls’ strategies to go or stay out(side) are mainly connected to running errands for their mothers. Therefore they frequent shops, malls and high streets. Girls use these opportunities to socialize. In parks – if they go there at all – girls use the less accessible areas, for example at the back of the park, or behind shrubs or hedges; they also often frequent the smaller children’s playgrounds to meet and chat.

It is easier for a girl to spend time outside if she has a boyfriend who is accepted by her family. A girl will usually follow her boyfriend to his group, but leave the group when the relationship is over. Girl groups (girls often form very strong relationships with one or two female friends) tend to be less stable than boy groups. But it is in this environment where girls reflect on their situations and try to get a grip on their lives. Nevertheless, finding and/or having a boyfriend is important for status and greater independence from familial ties. However, this might also bring on new problems and conflicts. Thus the park often becomes a stage for teenage love dramas, be they connected to finding or to losing a partner.

Girls vanish from the job market rather quicker than boys. After leaving school, they tend not to consult the Job Centres (which are crowded by young boys), and only a few park girls try to find vocational training or apprenticeships. Instead they stay at home and help around the house. They are obviously under less pressure from their families to find a job, and there are no ‘incentives’ as there are for boys (such as a father promising to pay for a driving licence if the son finds a job). Staying at home also means the loosening of social ties with ‘outside’, reduced access to mainstream society – however limited this might be in the parks – and less contact with peers; a girl’s opportunities to reflect on and discuss her situation and to express her opinions become scarce.

For girls not to have/seek a job appears to be socially acceptable. Unlike boys, they are not so much in need of money – if they go out, the boys have to pay for

their drinks. This is an additional reason why boys need money more urgently, inspiring them to engage in robbery or theft, especially if the boys are from cage-based (that is, economically deprived) groups.

Most of these girls do not see their future connected to their own job, work, career, car, but rather to those of their boyfriend or future husband. Finding a husband or at least a boyfriend also seems the only way of escaping familial repression, household chores and restrictions. If these girls do seek a job it is usually for a limited time, and their ambitions in this area are rather conventional: most want to be a hairdresser or a beautician, and many take jobs as vendors. In some cases, the incentive for a young woman to find work could be provided by having to support a jobless husband who might be drawn to less-than-legal occupations or who could be languishing in jail.

Some park girls get married quite young – in these cases, usually to a member of a cage group – and have children quickly. They return to the parks with their children who socialize with the other small children; these are the future cage and park generations. Still, a few girls – while coming from the same social-cultural backgrounds as the cage and park boys (sisters, cousins) – are oriented towards higher education. If they enjoy school and see the value in achieving good marks, they might leave the park groups to form bonds with their new peers at school, thus managing to find a way into new social surroundings. However, the desire to make such a move will often be argued against by their families and former peers, and may result in serious family fights, especially with brothers from cage groups.

Some girls, from less restrictive families, as well as ‘native’ Austrian girls, seek friendship with adolescents from the ‘open’ and mixed park groups. These groups serve as a vehicle to communication and interaction with other groups and also with mainstream society, thus enabling development. Such groups need not be restricted to people from the home district; once such a group has established itself in a park, it may become a magnet for adolescents from all over Vienna, and up to 40 or more young people might meet, especially on warmer spring nights.

Park girls are the female counterparts of the park and cage boys. They come from the same backgrounds/families but tend to spend their leisure time not so much in the park proper as in socially more acceptable or more anonymous places in public, like high streets and shopping malls. However, they are well acquainted with the boys in the parks and cages. Their communication and reflection mainly take place within their friendship groups, which appear smaller and less stable than boys’ groups. Girls’ interests might often be focused on finding a suitable boyfriend/husband who they think can promise a grown-up life and an escape from the (repressive) family, a belief which might result in the girl’s double-bind. Should a girl wish to, finding a way out of these structures – for example by seeking higher education – requires considerable psychological strength, and the fortitude to stand up to many counter-forces. Finding a like-minded group (‘open’ and ‘mixed’), however, may be of great value and has sometimes had substantial influence on girls’ (and boys’) development.

## Youth Cultures

### *Rap*

Rap – rhyming over hip-hop beats – is an art form that encompasses the reflection of oneself in society. By reflecting their position in society and analysing their migrant background through improvised rhymes those who engage in rapping create texts which become sources for our description of young urban migrants' culture. The topics mirror the whole spectrum of their lives, from sexuality and friendship to politics and global issues, from war and peace to Iraq and the US, from families to bosses and unemployment. The refinement of rap and rhyming has led to it taking on the form of a communication medium as rapping groups meet at contests and battles, further expanding their styles and topics. Rappers are to an overwhelming majority male adolescents.

Some rap groups, usually evolved from 'closed' groups, strive to defend their space; a nationalistic background that features violence and chauvinism places them close to gangsta rap and gang formation processes.

### *Music*

Music is a very important source of identification for adolescents. While the music itself influences the emotions directly, the lyrics are a form of poetry that opens up new worlds. Many listen to globalized African American music, like hip-hop, r'n'b and soul. Such Black music has the advantage of providing a frame of identification for young urban migrants in Austria who are also discriminated against due to 'ethnicity' and/or colour.

Depending on the ethnic background, people also listen to Turkish pop and Arabesk,<sup>9</sup> Yugo and turbo pop from Yugoslavia, Bhangra and Bollywood film music. Especially in the mixed peer groups (girls and boys, different ethnic backgrounds), members are acquainted with many different forms of music, thus offering them a wider range of identification and a broader (musical) horizon. Some groups of Muslim adolescents might favour more militant, anti-US rap and hip-hop music by Black American artists, a tendency fostered somewhat by the US-led war in Iraq.

### *Clubs and Cafés*

Clubs frequented by young people tend regularly to change, close down, open up again, and go in and out of fashion. The younger children have many of their first experiences in clubs, be it of sex/love and drugs, or more generally of parties and good times. Indeed, young people's situations often change dramatically in one

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9 A very sad and romantic traditionalist form of music, which up to the 1980s focused on people's suffering, has shrunk to mere songs of lovesickness.

night: love lost or found, first contact with drugs, fights and violence, new friends or foes – common teenage dramas.

There are many places to go to in the city centre. Being allowed into these clubs, however, depends on civil conduct, and access is often denied to or restricted for the ‘lower strata’ of urban adolescents who thus become ‘ethnicized’. Closed groups, cage groups are often denied entry. For the clubs’ owners, such decisions are based on experiences with violent groups on the one hand, and with discrimination proper on the other. Many male teenagers’ court appointments and even jail sentences result from violent ‘meetings’ in or outside clubs, especially for those from closed groups. Being excluded again, by not being able to access the better clubs (where the ‘good’ girls go), the closed groups stay closer to ‘home’, stay local – another factor in their limited access to mainstream society. However, an increasing number of ‘ethnic’ club owners also provide places for these adolescents; nevertheless, similar processes of exclusion or eviction because of violent behaviour are likely to arise.

### *The Turkish Coffeehouse – Kahve Hane*

Found in the neighbourhood of parks and cages, Turkish coffeehouses are where older Turkish boys go to meet. They meet their peers, sit together and drink beer or cay or coffee; there is a television with Turkish programmes, often football games. A Turkish café is a focal meeting point for men and serves as an identity-producing unit, sometimes with a strong political and/or religious backdrop. The groups who meet there usually share the owner’s political view. Park peers find ‘their’ *kahve hane* and frequent it regularly. It provides a location and an opportunity to come into contact with grown-up males (often fathers and uncles, though sometimes a different *kahve hane* is deliberately chosen), and a chance for the boys to watch the older men, to discuss with them, and to mould their political viewpoints – always reflecting their experiences in the peer group. Further, any number of fusion and fission processes are found to be in motion in the *kahve hane*, usually following (political, but also more trivial) arguments. Card games are also an important part of *kahve hane* life, as is *tavli* (backgammon).

### *Gambling*

Betting shops, bookmakers, casinos and amusement arcades are also attended by young males. These are open only to people over 18 years of age, though this law is not strictly observed. A number of young men have built up debts as a result of betting and using slot machines. This is, according to our observations, most often the case for Turkish boys. Yugoslavian and/or Roma groups (including girls) also like to play cards in the park, where they win and lose considerable sums of money.

*Young Urban Migrants in their Families*<sup>10</sup>

Adolescent park and cage groups' families range from single unemployed parents to rather well-off entrepreneurs. The diversification and differentiation among the migrant communities along various lines of development (economic, political, religious) forms an important background. These various class structures, also connected to certain political views and attitudes, are mirrored in the adolescents' lives and in their outlook and future perspectives. Families, like the peer groups described above, might be dubbed 'open' or 'closed', thus influencing their sons' and daughters' views. 'Open' or 'closed' also refers to interaction with Austrian and Viennese mainstream society, which may vary considerably. More ethnographic work needs to be done in this field.

For some years a new economy sector has been opening up: following the class differentiation among migrant populations, jobs in family-run 'ethnic enterprises' are becoming available, mostly for adolescents from the families of owners. These jobs include mainly unskilled work in groceries, butchers, bakeries, market stalls and hairdressers, and sewing. This is especially valid for the Turkish groups. The young people, mostly boys, work with their fathers or uncles. The shops are situated in the working-class districts, often in the vicinity of parks, cages and the coffeehouses. Thus, a universe of its own is created; interaction with German-speaking society becomes scarce and seemingly unnecessary.

From these new middle-classes who have made money as ethnic entrepreneurs comes a new development: their children, especially sons, hope for a future in their land of origin. The parents have inspired them to think that way: look at us, we didn't have an education, and still we make plenty of money. As the parents invest the money 'back home', the adolescents believe that they will simply go there and live off it. As prospects in Austria wane (due to rising unemployment and difficult access to higher education), these illusions of a Shangri-La increase. Such thought processes also express a detachment from Austrian society and a decreasing interest in participating in (political) structures in Vienna. These adolescents are also found in the parks, where they form subgroups who are economically better-off, and strongly positioned against 'Austrian' society, which they are, inevitably, still part of.

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10 Through participant observation, we have witnessed several family situations and conflicts. However, we base our data here mostly on information given to us by park adolescents themselves (interviews conducted in 2003 and 2005), and we include several talks with parents and other family members for comparison. Some families have been known to us for many years, several as long as ten years, thus giving the data the weight of a long-time study.

### *Family Celebrations*

In the interviews we conducted, we found that adolescents adhere, at least superficially, to family and community traditions. They participate in religious festivities (Kurban Bayram, Seker Bayram, Yayla night, Newroz, Orthodox or Christian Easter and Christmas traditions) and in socio-cultural events (henna nights, weddings, mutual family visits and so on).

These celebrations are often connected to larger family gatherings, where the children meet many other young people, thus strengthening family ties. One group we know, of Muslim Macedonian Roma, consists of four or five brothers or cousins who are musicians like their fathers. They play at family celebrations, but there is not much difference to their every-day social life in their park.

Weddings are the biggest events, of course. Everybody is dressed up and jolly and the weddings often lead to more weddings as adolescents meet there.

### *Language*

Children speak their mother tongue at home, at least mostly to parents. Brothers and sisters often communicate in a mixture of the mother tongue and German, switching to German if they do not want their parents to understand what they say – thus forming a ‘room of their own’ by language. Many park children speak German quite well and some speak correctly and dialect-free, though this is not necessarily true of their spelling and writing, which might tend to suffer strong deficits.

Not knowing German well is a decisive factor in adolescents’ lives; if they are obliged to interact with German-speaking people, they feel mute – and not being able to express their feelings and views in German, they are often perceived as stupid and dull. Such situations can quickly lead to violence – this seeming to be the only way to defend oneself if words are not forthcoming. Many adolescents in park and cage groups have a negative school career behind them. Their lack of German pushes them increasingly to refrain from interaction with German-speaking people, hindering them in the mainstream job market and in communicating with people other than their peers. Closed groups, cage groups, often share these characteristics.

### *Eating Habits and Households*

We have witnessed over the years that the cultural tradition of cooking is on the wane, as is the shared family meal. The de-structuring of daily life as a result of unemployment or jobs with odd hours and without much regularity, as well as the dissolution of the old working-class weekend-based life have led to a ‘self-service food culture’ in the home where each family member consults the fridge after coming home at their individual time.

Adolescent boys often bring home their own take-away food and eat late at night in front of the television, after the rest of the family has already gone to bed. Or they fry up eggs in the kitchen after coming home from the park. Breakfast is often taken very late, even after noon, when the youngsters get up after everybody else has left. Though if they have a job, they try to stay out (in the park, in the cage) as long as possible. This is a way of creating a space of their own, a conflict-free zone in their family homes where they are often criticized and hassled when they meet their parents.

Girls might be substantially involved in household work, even to the extent of being kept from going to school. Larger families depend on them; girls have to clean, go shopping and do the washing. Such girls, after they finish compulsory education at 15, might simply stay at home (instead of going into further education or beginning the difficult search for a job) and see to household chores with their mothers or even instead of them, as mothers have to go to work increasingly often, helping to improve the financial situation which is often seriously stressed.

### *Conflicts*

Economically stressed migrant families, frequently juggling their scarce funds between the 'homeland' and Vienna, often build their future hopes on their offspring, boys and girls. In many cases this may lead to considerable conflicts. We have already described the decreasing chances on the job market, and some of the restrictions that hinder access to higher education, but as the migrant populations diversify, and new economic structures emerge – for example, ethnic entrepreneurial opportunities like the Turkish trade in fruit, vegetable, cheese, meat and food in general – different identity processes get under way. This is especially true for adolescents who are seeking to find their way in grown-up society.

Depending on the general family climate – whether supportive or repressive – conflicts between adolescents and their families (parents) can be major contributors to standpoint-building and negotiations, or may lead to arguments, violence and the breaking off of contact altogether. While the themes of the conflicts between grown-ups and adolescents might be similar, it may seem superfluous to mention that violent conduct is more likely to occur in very authoritarian families. Conflicts arise over money and jobs, work, boyfriends, peer groups, but also clothing, general conduct, smoking and drugs, especially with fathers who are often supported by an elder brother.

### *Young Migrants' Experiences in their Places of Origin*

Many of these youths were born in Austria, or arrived as small children. Although it is extremely common for them to return to their countries of origin regularly (every year, or every second year), for example, during summer holidays, they have little or no experience of really living there. They did not go to school there, and many spend the summer in the countryside with grandparents, aunts



and uncles. This is seen as more desirable and easier for everybody, compared to spending the summer in a city or town, even if the migrant family lived there (and not in a village) before emigrating.

Some not only go to the village/small town of their origin, but their families want to see the famous tourist sites in their (former) home country. This is especially so for people from Turkey, their country being a major tourist destination. In these tourist sites, a holidaying adolescent can feel 'like a stranger, like a tourist'. They experience their status as foreign, rich Western or European guests who are distinctively different from the 'indigenous' people working in the tourist industry businesses. This is a position very much apart from that in Vienna, where they are relatively poor and economically stressed, regarded as people from a poor country, underprivileged and often discriminated against.

One common experience when visiting 'back home' revolves around the differences in language use. Since the young people never learnt their mother tongue at school, there are major deficits in language use, especially in writing.

A remark often heard from adolescents who have spent the summer in a town or village in their homeland is: 'the people there have no culture'. It seems that the children see their relatives' lives as 'backwards', 'not modern'. This is especially true for those returning from visits to the former Yugoslavian countries, where the economic deprivation is strongly criticized by the adolescents. Likewise, children coming back from Turkey have expressed many unpleasant experiences, for instance saying that 'the water makes them sick', 'it is boring', 'people are strange'.

These young people consider Vienna to be their home town. For them, the concept of going back is neither an option nor an issue. This does not mean that discrimination and marginalization due to non-Austrian descent are not felt, but there are no other opportunities.

Another, smaller group came to Vienna after some years of education in their country of origin. These adolescents have experienced 'normal' life back home, and still remember a great deal. They often long for the life they left behind, in which they had school friends and peers, and maybe relatives and teachers they got on well with. Some earned really good marks at school, a situation that changed with migration and entering school in Vienna: bound to fail in school solely due to a lack of German, considerable frustration follows.

For these young people, Vienna is not really home; they kindle a concept of going back, where everything will be alright, they will be treated with respect, it is where they belong, they can live how they were brought up and do not have to adapt or be looked down upon. This psychological construct is used especially in situations of frustration, and may give comfort. If they go back, for a holiday for example, the adolescents might be confronted with new negative experiences which do not fit into the previous picture, thus gradually or spontaneously changing their perceptions.

## Conclusion

The multicultural, multi-ethnic city of Vienna is marked by a population structure in which unemployment and a dwindling need for unskilled labour mostly affects part of the migrant populations, mainly from Yugoslavia and Turkey. They have formed a new underclass in the city, living in the cheap working-class districts. While diversification processes of the migrant populations has opened up more possibilities for some, forming new middle-classes, others have lost their economic stability.

The second and third generation after labour migration grow up in these new formations. Those who frequent the public places, parks and cages are considered here to be the most deprived, in terms of economy/money and access to mainstream society.

The peer group is the most important social structure for all adolescents. Experiences with society at large, with grown-ups and institutions are reflected. These peer cultures, group structures and activities serve the adolescents to differentiate themselves from other groups and from their parents and families. Opinion-forming takes place in the groups, and also processes of fusion and fission. Eventually, growing up consists of finding a way into society and adult life.

Young urban migrants in the parks and cages face marginalization and discrimination. They, too, reflect society and social processes, especially conflicts and confrontations, in their groups, in music, rapping, and in their club and café culture. Integrating their migration experiences and backgrounds, they reflect and react to Viennese urban structures. As access to mainstream society is difficult and marked by repression and, often, adolescents' violent reactions, the park or cage peer group and leisure time activities take on a most important, defining position in their lives. In their groups, the young urban migrants create their own way of life, their own youth culture, group structures and organizations.

Depending on 'open' or 'closed' peer group structures, interaction with mainstream society is experienced as positive and strengthening, or as frustrating and alien. The peer group thus becomes an emotional and intellectual resource and retreat, but can also become an obstacle for integration and access to mainstream society.

As access to education, jobs, mainstream society is increasingly denied to those who cannot 'adjust', who close themselves into their cages, the group activities may become the sole emotional and, eventually, also economic base of their lives. These structures, developed while growing up, are then transferred into adult life strategies, involving illegal occupations. Another option for some is to find occupation in 'ethnic enterprises' of relatives which makes interaction with Austrian mainstream society seemingly unnecessary.

Young urban migrants between two cultures – their migration background, and the reality of Viennese urban life – find their place in society in growing up with their peer groups, either coming to terms with society at large, developing strategies to cope, or failing to gain access and staying 'in the cage' far into adulthood.

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# Chapter 10

## Migration, the Emergence of Multi-Ethnic Cities and Ethnic Relations in China

Zhang Jijiao

### Multi-Ethnic Society: From Rural to Urban Areas

China is a unitary multi-ethnic country. Although China is often viewed by outsiders as a rather homogenous country, the Chinese population is diverse; to date, 56 ethnic groups have been identified and recognized by the central government. The Han population accounts for the majority. As the population of the other 55 ethnic groups is relatively small, they are customarily referred to as ‘minorities’.<sup>1</sup>

The 55 minorities, though smaller than the Han, are scattered over vast areas covering approximately 64.3 per cent of the Chinese territory, and are mainly distributed in the rural or border areas of the North-East, North, North-West and South-West. Most are farmers or herders. The Yunnan Province, home to more than 20 ethnic groups, is the most diverse. Taking shape over China’s long history, this situation is made of different ethnic groups who dwell in specific areas and live in individual compact communities. It continues to provide the basis for political, economic and cultural interaction between the Han and the various minorities.

While the movement of Han people into minority regions has been a long-standing phenomenon, only recently have China’s minorities begun to move in significant numbers from rural areas to urban areas, motivated by economic, social, and political factors. Hao Shiyuan’s *China’s Minorities on the Move: Selected Case Studies*, published in 2004, is a pioneering study of minority migration (see also Iredale et al. 2003). This collection of articles rejects earlier assumptions

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1 According to the fifth national census, conducted in 2000, ethnic groups totaled 106.43 million people, accounting for 8.41 per cent of the national total. 18 minorities have a population of over one million, namely the Zhuang, Manchu, Hui, Miao, Uygur, Yi, Tujia, Mongolian, Tibetan, Buyi, Dong, Yao, Korean, Bai, Hani, Li, Kazak and Dai. Of these the Zhuang ethnic group has the biggest population, numbering 16.179 million. There are seventeen ethnic groups with a population of between 100 thousand and one million, namely the She, Lisu, Gelao, Lahu, Dongxiang, Va, Sui, Naxi, Qiang, Tu, Xibe, Mulam, Kirgiz, Daur, Jingpo, Salar and Maonan. There are 20 ethnic groups with a population of between 10 thousand and 100 thousand; namely, Blang, Tajik, Primi, Achang, Nu, Ewenki, Gin, Jino, Deang, Ozbek, Russian, Uygur, Bonan, Monba, Oroqen, Derung, Tatar, Hezhen, Gaoshan (excluding the Gaoshan ethnic group in Taiwan). The Lhoba ethnic group, at 2.965, has the smallest population.

that downplay the role of ethnicity in explaining the dynamics of migration. It fills a gap in migration studies by demonstrating the relevance of ethnicity in understanding population flows in China. However, while the chapters in this book complement each other and collectively produce a rich account of minority migration dynamics in China, the book as a whole, like others on this topic, suffers from certain limitations.

In particular, few scholars have paid attention to an important new phenomenon. The growing number of minority migrants has drastically transformed the urban demographic landscape of most major cities, as they have become ethnically diversified. Multi-ethnic communities have thus emerged not only in rural areas but also in urban areas. However, few scholars have paid attention to this phenomenon. In this chapter, I shall describe minority distribution in China's urban areas, focusing on stereotypes about ethnic groups and on how such stereotypes affect the relations between the majority population and the minorities and the relations among different minorities.

### **Migration and the Emergence of Multi-Ethnic Cities**

In the eyes of the general public, the minority population is very small in China's 668 cities. However, according to an incomplete census, by the end of 2003 the population of the habitual residents and migrant minorities in China's cities was about 90 million.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, there are hundreds of concentrated minority communities in urban areas. For example, Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province, is home to the greatest assembly of ethnic diversity to be found in the South-West. According to municipal statistics, 759,500 minority people were registered as Kunming residents in 2006. The Yi people were the most prominent minority, with more than 400 thousand residents. The statistics regarding the other ethnic residents are also telling: there are 149,000 Hui people, 73,200 Bai, 46,100 Miao, 17,700 Lisu, 14,000 Zhuang, 13,200 Dai and 11,000 Hani.

Before China's reforms and its opening up to the outside world in the late 1970s, most minority people became city dwellers through job appointment after graduation from college, job transfer in other areas, or through appointment to civilian jobs on leaving the army. Only a few were traditional city residents. Since the late 1970s, the constant migration of minorities to urban areas has made the ethnic component much richer and the urban minority population dramatically larger. There are now both permanent and floating minority groups in each city, particularly in the larger cities. Various processes account for this demographic pattern.

First, some of the minorities that used to live permanently in remote areas began to flow to coastal cities, such as Guangdong, Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin,

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2 There are more than 1.3 billion people in China. The population of 90 million minorities in the cities is relatively a small one.

and Zhejiang, to 'settle down' there. This led to a rapid growth of the minority population (Shen Lin, Zhang Jijiao et al. 2001, pp. 98–100). For instance, by 1997, 520 thousand people of various ethnic groups moved from the Guizhou province as migrant workers; 90 per cent of them took up residence in Eastern cities (Zhang Jijiao 2004, p. 301). According to the national census of 2000, in Beijing the minority population reached 590 thousand; over 260 thousand in Tianjin; over 210 thousand in Shenzhen;<sup>3</sup> over 130 thousand in Guangzhou and over 80 thousand in Nanjing (see Table 10.1). Over the years, this trend has continued steadily.

**Table 10.1 The population of some Chinese cities and growth rate of ethnic minorities**

City	Total population – 10,000	Minorities population according to the census in 2000 – 10,000	Increased minorities population in the year of 2000 in contrast with 1999	Growth rate of the minorities 1990–2000	Growth rate of the Han people 1990–2000
Beijing	1381.9	59	17.6	42.5%	27.1%
Tianjin	1000.88	26.38	6.35	31.7%	13.51%
Shanghai	1673.77	10.41	4.19	67.4%	25.3%
Chongqing	3090.45	198.3	49.92	33.49%	5.62%
Shenzhen	700.84	21.16	19.98	168.4%	31.1%
Guangzhou	994.30	13.41	11.08	476%	56.28%
Ningbo	596.26	3.39	3.00	670%	16.55%
Dalian	589.40	33.3	4.7	16.43%	12.12%
Xi'an	741.14	8.15	1.47	22.08%	19.91%
Chengdu	1124.43	6.05	2.45	68.06%	13.38%
Wuhan	831.26	5.18	1.45	38.91%	16.45%
Haikou	83.03	1.94	1.55	390%	100%
Fuzhou	639.27	6.59	0.73	12.43%	19.77%
Hangzhou	687.80	4.48	2.33	108.37%	17.60%
Nanjing	623.80	8.4	1.4	19.37%	20.72%
Changsha	613.30	4.78	2.98	165%	11.19%

*Notes:* The census of 2000 took into account the people who lived in the city for more than six months but had no registered permanent residence. The standards of that census were loose, compared with those of the census of 1999, so the result of the comparison of the total population and the growth rate between these two censuses is approximate.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Shenzhen Municipal Bureau of Statistics, the population in Shenzhen had increased to over 361,500 by the end of 2005.



Second, not only did minorities increasingly flow into urban areas, but in some cities they also formed relatively concentrated communities of various sizes. For example, in the Jiangxi branch office in the Wuhou District of Chengdu city (South-West China), there are relatively concentrated communities, including 38 ethnic groups of which 10 per cent are minorities. In this district, some units – such as the South-West University for Nationalities, the Tibet Office in Chengdu, the Tibet Military Command Office in Sichuan and also the Ganzi Office in Chengdu – host large permanent minority groups. At the same time, there are also many non-permanent minorities; for example, the Ganzi Office in Chengdu accommodates more than 10 thousand minority people annually (Yang Jianwu 1999). In Ganjiakou and Weigongcun of Beijing, the Uyghur have formed two concentrated communities – ‘Xinjiang Villages’<sup>4</sup> – respectively in the 1980s and the 1990s, and there is a concentrated community of Uyghur people in Sanyuanli in Gunagzhou city (Zhang Jijiao 2004, p. 38).

Third, many minority groups are also present in the hi-tech industrial districts and in the new satellite cities in some metropolitan areas. For instance, according to the census of 2000, there are 100 thousand minority people in Shanghai. Tellingly, the Shanghai Baoshan Iron and Steel Company employs almost one thousand leading technicians from ethnic groups, such as the Manchu, Hui, Korean and Xibo, and the Shanghai’s astronautic industry employs over 160 minority technicians (Ha Baoxin 1994).

Finally, the population of some frontier cities is becoming increasingly diversified. Take, for example, Wanding city in the Yunnan. Originally inhabited by Dai people, it now hosts many ethnic groups; the permanent residents are just over 100 thousand, while the floating population of various ethnic merchants who pass through the city every day exceeds 300 thousand (Zhang Jijiao 2004, p. 303).

Nowadays, in some large cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, a multicultural situation has emerged in eating habits and other forms of cultural consumption. It is frequently the case that the Han eat mutton cubes roasted on a skewer by the Uyghur, the Miao eat the food cooked in thick bamboo tubes by the Thai, the Manchu eat Korean cold noodles, the Li sing Zhuang folk songs, the Hani use the lacquer ware made by the Yi, and so on. The issues raised by the multi-ethnic character of many urban areas need attention.

### **Ethnic Relations in Urban Areas**

The impact of frequent and large movements of migrants on China’s urbanization is unquestionable. On the one hand, the movement of population into urban areas provides the human resources needed for urban development, at the same time

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4 Because the Uyghurs are from the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang Uyghur (North-West China), the Beijing residents call their communities ‘Xinjiang Villages’.

putting great pressure in terms of the cities' ability to accommodate such great numbers. On the other hand, it generates changes in the population ratio among different ethnic groups. Such changes have led to competitive relations among different ethnic groups over resources, which is closely related to ethnic conflict.

We can regard the city as a high density space for social activities. The fact that a considerable amount of heterogeneous population with different ethnic and regional backgrounds concentrates in certain urban areas not only affects the spatial urban landscape; it also brings about diversity in lifestyles and professional and cultural life, and eventually generates various barriers in inter-ethnic or trans-ethnic relations.

### **Stereotyping: A Major Factor of Conflictual Inter-Ethnic Relations**

Stereotypes are generalizations about a group of people, whereby a defined set of characteristics is attributed to it. The attendant classifications can be positive or negative, such as when various nationalities are classified as friendly or unfriendly (Hilton and Fein 1989). Trans-ethnic communication always begins with certain 'stereotypes'. When people from different ethnicities come into contact with each other for the first time, they usually tend to classify the others in the group to which they belong and to judge their character according to stereotype. For example, different ethnic groups have different views of the Mongols; for the Han, they are brave, generous, good at riding horses and at drinking wine; for the Tibetans they and the Mongolian people are the same and both believe in Tibetan Buddhism. On the other hand, for the Mongols the Han people are brilliant and good at doing business, while the Tibetans believe that the Han are too philistine, that their main purpose in life is to work and make ever more money and that they have no holy beliefs.<sup>5</sup>

Generally speaking, each ethnic group always uses its own parameters to judge and define other ethnic groups,<sup>6</sup> thus reinforcing ethnic boundaries. It is easier to create stereotypes when there is a clearly visible and consistent attribute that can be readily recognized. For instance, in the eyes of those ethnic groups that are good at singing and dancing, the Han are too rigid and always serious.

In many areas inhabited by different minorities, an old legend states that long ago the Han, rarely regarded as natives to a specific area, moved there to do business and made large amounts of money from dealing with local people.<sup>7</sup> Is this view

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5 This material comes from my research on the Mongols, that I conducted in North-Eastern China in 1998, and on Tibetans, that I carried out in South-Western China in 2001.

6 Ethnic boundaries, a concept borrowed from Fredrik Barth (1969), are best understood as cognitive or mental boundaries, resulting from collective efforts to construct and maintain difference. Ethnic boundaries dichotomize insiders and outsiders – 'us' and 'them'.

7 I heard similar stories from different minorities when I did a survey on the Yao in the Northern Guangdong Province in 1986, a study of the Miao and the Tong people in the

grounded in reality? I suggest that this kind of stories closely relate to perceived conflicts of interest among ethnic groups. Careful analysis suggests that in many cases, we cannot simply say who suffered losses or who gained unfair advantages from the relations between two ethnic groups. Perceptions of loss and unfair gain are often closely related to established stereotypes. Why there are interest disputes among different ethnic groups? The theories of David Sears and other social psychologists (Sears et al. 2000) may serve as points of reference. They noted that, no matter how complicated the process of cognition, people's final emotional judgments are rather simple and impulsive. It is indeed very obvious that people's likes and dislikes are always clear. Meanwhile, people usually equate the interests of the ethnic group to that of the individual, believing that one's personal interests are always closely related to the wellbeing of one's ethnic group. The ambiguous meaning of such a concept easily leads people to associate the interests of their ethnic group with their own personal interest. Stereotyping can be subconscious, subtly biasing our decisions and actions, even when we do our best not to be biased. In certain societies this is intensified, as the stereotyping of an ethnic group brings its members together and greatly contributes to making other ethnic groups out-groups.

Even in today's modern urban society, the bargaining and competition in the business transactions among different ethnic groups are viewed unfairly by some members. Some magnify this further, casting competition in terms of conflict between the interests of different ethnic groups.

Historical events should also be taken into account. A significant element that influences people's approach to inter-ethnic relations is connected to the Qing Dynasty. During the long time over which the Qing Dynasty ruled China, the central government formed 'personal relations' with the leaders of various ethnic groups throughout the country, including both the élite and business people. These personal relations strengthened trust and reliability among different ethnic groups (Wang Zhonghan 1991). Obviously, however, it is generally the case that only few members become involved with other ethnic groups and gain a better understanding of them. Generally speaking, stereotypical views are usually held by people who do not take part in economic activities directly, whereas those who are involved in business or who move to cities and work there tend to be more open-minded (see case 1 opposite). As a consequence, 'stereotypes' change little. Ethnographic examples will help to clarify this point.

## **Ethnic Concepts and Identity**

In this section I discuss five case-studies which I constructed between 2001 and 2007. I start with the case of a Tong man who is employed as a security worker in a Taiwanese-owned wood furniture company.<sup>8</sup>

Investigator: In what circumstances do you feel that you belong to the Tong people?

Answer: When I fill in a form, if there is an ethnic group column, then I realize I am a Tong. I won't change my ethnic group into Han or another ethnic group. Meanwhile, I don't think that Han people discriminate against us. Whether in daily life or marriage, we are all equal, and they will not bully you only because you belong to a minority.

Investigator: How would you feel if some minority people were driven away because they set up stalls and sell their goods arbitrarily?

Answer: I wouldn't think that that amounted to bullying minorities because those people were acting against the law.

Investigator: Sometimes the government officials who are in charge of street management throw these people's goods into the ditch. What do you think of this?

Answer: I think that the salesmen deserve this since they do not obey the law.

Investigator: What is your view about ethnic minorities?

Answer: There is no difference here among the Han people and other ethnic groups no matter what position you have. In the office, regardless of whether people are Han or belong to a minority, all are equal and there is no special treatment for anyone. The work here is very efficient and if you can't keep up with the pace, no one will give you special treatment only because you are minorities. Everyone is on the same standing here, and if you are qualified for your job then you can keep it, if you are not, then you will lose it. Minorities are also making progress now, the Han people and other ethnic groups are the same.

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8 Source: A survey on urban minorities I conducted in Shenzhen, 2001. The field work of this survey was done both in Beijing city and Shenzhen city during 2001–2002. Quantitative material was collected through 207 questionnaires. Eighteen in-depth interviews provided qualitative case material. Here I only report on four cases. In a separate work I have analyzed my qualitative material more fully (see Zhang Jijiao 2007a).

Everyday, constant economic relations among different ethnic groups seem to weaken stereotypes about 'the other'. For those who have the opportunity to migrate to cities and take part in trans-ethnic relationships, the ever deepening inter-personal exchanges and communication are gradually breaking ethnic 'stereotypes'. Nevertheless, some persisting stereotypical views are highlighted by comparison between 'urban' and 'rural' dwellers. When discussing Tibet and Tibetans, the aforementioned Tong man said:

The sunlight in Tibet is too strong, and as a result people living there look comparatively swarthier. The way of life there is also different from ours. In Tibet only urban people eat rice; rural people eat highland barley and coble and make wine from highland barley, while we (Tong) eat rice even when we live in a rural area. Every Tibetan has a knife. They value personal loyalty greatly. When they say something they really mean it, and they keep their promises. Sometimes we (Tong) who live in urban areas cheat, but the Tibetans won't.

The judgment, impressions and comments on various ethnic groups by people who have migrated to cities to work there or who have lived in cities for some years are heavily based on their personal experience of social relations and events. For example, a female Korean owner of a barber shop in Beijing said, 'I like to interact with Han people in particular and have lots of friends among them'.<sup>9</sup> Of course, this does not mean that her lifestyle and her ethnic identity are the same as those of the Han, as she still lives a Korean lifestyle, though she pointed out that Korean businessmen and Han people get along very well for they share the view that business transactions should be based on contracts and reputation, bearing in mind that for the Koreans it is essential to maintain social relations and engage in business transactions. Business transactions are, however, normal among different ethnic groups.

In many cities where different ethnic groups live together, they engage in extensive interpersonal relationships in their work and daily lives. Since they have a good mutual understanding of each other's attitudes to work, lifestyles, way of thinking and culture, they are not easily influenced by negative preconceptions (Ji Ping and Gao Bingzhong 1993, pp. 383–456). As those who work in various kinds of ethnic enterprises or are involved in trans-ethnic commerce and trade are likely to share certain common interests with other ethnic groups, their attitudes to other ethnic groups are usually practical and feasible.

Social interaction is a form of social exchange. If people can benefit from a relationship, they will strive to keep and develop it. Trans-ethnic relationships include various social and cultural exchanges, as well as economic exchanges. For instance, in contemporary China an increasing number of Tibetan, Mongolian, Korean and Tai people run trans-regional businesses jointly with Han people, specializing in manufacturing and sales, and greatly profit from them. Economic interest stimulates people to keep and improve business relations. At the same time,

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9 I collected this material in Xinyuanli Road, Chaoyan District of Beijing, in 2001.

they also show a motivation to expand their networks because they realize that social relations are mutually beneficial and that resources can thus be expanded; in the process, they appear to take on characteristics specific to their counterparts.<sup>10</sup>

The Tibetan-style book bar in Beijing provides an interesting example of this kind of exchange. C.L. runs and manages this bar on his own; there are no employees or permanent assistants. He deals with all the daily jobs like reception and stock replenishment. However, several friends and some students from the Central University for Nationalities and from the China Youth University for Political Sciences often come to help him. Some are Tibetans; some are from other ethnic groups. Their purpose is to read books and gain some knowledge about the history, culture and landscape of Tibet. C.L. has many friends, some of whom are his business partners; others are personal friends. His friends include Tibetans and Han people.

C.L. has a strong sense of ethnic identity and pride. When discussing Tibetan people, he seemed very excited and proud and expressed his willingness to pass on to others his knowledge of Tibet and of Tibetans. In his view, people in Beijing show great respect for the traditional customs of different minorities, and only a few look down upon minorities. Equally, he said, he respects others, believing that people should respect each other.

As I mentioned earlier, daily contact with and knowledge of others encourages respect and appreciation of cultural diversity. The case of the leader of the propaganda team in China's Folk Culture Village in Shenzhen offers an example that stresses this key point. This man is from Naidong County of Tibet in South-Western China. As he originates from a remote area, the question arises how he adapted easily to the new environment when he moved to a modern city to work there? There are two main explanations. Firstly, he had lived with Han people before. Secondly, the Tibetan ideology of human relation is based on honesty and kindness. The Tibetans who believe in Buddhism are committed not only to cultivate their own mind and develop their own character but also to liberate all living beings from the negativity of this mortal world. They believe that people should be kind to each other and not see others as their enemies.<sup>11</sup> Thus, they

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10 Fieldwork among different ethnic groups was carried out by a team of anthropologists and ethnologists. It can be regarded as a kind of exchange. While for the interviewees the information they provided was common knowledge, for the interviewers it was valuable research material. As should be the case in a successful investigation, the interviewers offered, in return, some social knowledge and knowledge on the outside world.

11 My somewhat limited knowledge of Tibetan ideology of human relations draws on two fieldworks. In May of 2002, while collaborating to a project concerning an evaluation for world bank at the foot of Jiuhua Mountain in Anhui Province, I met two travelling Buddhist monks from a temple called Ganchan, located in Cailong Village, Bazha Town, Huzhu County in Qinghai Province. Although we did not know each other, they sent each of us a mascot. In October of 2001, while working on a different project, I experienced Tibetan honesty and kindness in places as varied as a people's home, the Tibetan Buddhist Temple and the Garza Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan province.

absolutely reject the idea that ‘It is difficult to get along well with the city dwellers’ (Zhang Jijiao 2004, p. 331).<sup>12</sup>

Referring to the Naidong county in the Shannan District in Tibet, the team leader said,

In our county, there are lots of Han people; they make up 30–40 per cent of the total population; the rest are Tibetans. The chief official of the county government is a Han. My wife is a Tibetan and the members who work in the propaganda team are all Tibetans. However, many Han people work there after their graduation from university or college, a large proportion of teachers are Han and many jobs are done by the Han; most doctors, businessmen and even construction workers are Han.

In addition to economic profit, some people also benefit on a non-economic level from their contacts with other ethnic groups, particularly in terms of gaining a better understanding of other cultures. Some grow to love different ethnic cultures. For example, while most ordinary Han think that Tibetan Buddhism is superstitious, out of date and untraceable, some do fall in love with the mysterious Tibetan culture, and a few even travel a long way to visit in pilgrimage the famous temples in Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Some Han who have interacted with Tibetans or Thais have come to appreciate the peaceful and self-effacing nature of Buddhism; others are fascinated by the depth and intensity of the nomadic culture of the Mongolians. And so on. Like economic profit, these non-material benefits play a significant role in promoting social relations and cultural exchanges among different ethnic groups. Nowadays, an increasing number of Han who live in modern cities visit Western areas of China, which are mostly inhabited by minorities, to enjoy the sights and experience the traditional customs of Tibetans, Thais, Naxis and others. At the same time, minorities from frontier and remote areas increasingly visit or travel to work in the coastal areas and modern cities. They say they want to share the material and spiritual comforts of modern life and acquire new knowledge and technology.

Over several years of field research in urban settings, I have observed that the ethnic staff who work in the same unit for a long time do not find it easy to form a clear ‘ethnic united front’ or an ‘ethnic faction’ in the work place.<sup>13</sup> During a fieldwork carried out in 2001, I asked a manager (male, Miao) who worked in a Taiwanese-owned wood furniture company what was his view of minorities. Reflecting a situation that I have observed in other work places, he said, ‘The Miao and the Han get along well with each other and we are all satisfied with this; we communicate with each other in a friendly way and nothing at all stands between us.’<sup>14</sup> A woman employee in the theatre said,

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12 Source: a survey on urban minorities that I conducted in Shenzhen, 2001.

13 From 1983 till now, I have carried out research among a multi-ethnic work unit.

14 Source: a survey on urban minorities that I conducted in Shenzhen, 2001.



We (different ethnic groups) mix together on the night shifts. I think that each ethnic group has its own characteristics and, anyway, I never met very bad employees or any weird people, and I have found most people very hospitable. Among my best friends there are Tibetans, Mongolians, Yi people and Dai people; they are all open-minded and warm-hearted. Mostly, we get together during the Spring Festival. When people are nice to you, you should do the same in return, right? If they are nasty to you, you may just let it be. We girls working here live in the same place, and we often talk in the dormitory; so spend a lot of time together and this helps us to get on with each other quickly.

The remarks reported above shed some light on social relations among different ethnic groups in a working unit. Whether working in governmental offices, schools, hospitals, factories or companies, people tend to attach great importance to interpersonal relationships, be they working relationships, or interest relations. Different relationships are conveyed in the differential allocation of interests in job position, type of work, salary and encouragement and reward, and so on. Most significant, these interests and relationships are aimed at individuals not the whole ethnic groups.

### **Cultural Inequality as the Root of Conflict in Social Relations**

I would suggest that the root of conflict among different ethnic groups in urban settings does not lie in their cultural diversity but in the inequality in their roles and positions. Eighteenth and nineteenth century European scholars have broadly speculated on inequality, particularly in terms of control over private property. As Ralf Dahrendorf pointed out, Rousseau and Marx were 'unrivalled in their insistence on property as the sole cause of social inequality' (1968, p. 159). In human society people's behaviour has less to do with the randomness of chance than with norms and established and inescapable expectations. The compulsory character of these expectations and norms is based on the operation of sanctions; that is, of rewards and punishments for conformist or deviant behaviour.

Following Dahrendorf, it could be argued that if every society is, in this sense, a moral community, it follows that there must always be at least an inequality of rank that results from the necessity of sanctioning behaviour according to whether it does or does not conform to established conventions. Dahrendorf (1969, pp. 16–44) noted that inequality results from the extent to which people conform to social conventions.<sup>15</sup> Many scholars think that this theory is wrong because it transposes the order of cause and effect. I believe that we should look at the thought-provoking nature of this assumption before we make a judgment. Firstly, Dahrendorf's theory highlights two remarkable issues; inequality and social conventions. Then

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<sup>15</sup> Dahrendorf's lecture 'On the Origin of Inequality among Men' was given at Tübingen in 1961.

he combines these two issues in his discussion. This is a meaningful challenge to the theory of economic determinism that has so much influence in the social sciences. Secondly, when a society develops to a certain level of sophistication, the relationship between inequality and social conventions cannot be unilateral, and most probably it will be more complicated than the simple equation whereby they are at once cause and effect.

In the multicultural environment of urban settings, if there is a dominant ethnic group, then its social norms will be regarded as universal. They are not simply the conventions of the dominant ethnic group's behaviour and value system; the other ethnic groups are supposed to conform to them too. Accordingly, the dominant ethnic group is in a privileged position and the others are in a lower social, political and economic position. For instance, in some Chinese cities, the Han majority occupy a crucial position, whereas the other ethnic groups are in a subordinate position. However, some ethnic groups are especially good at conforming to the social norms of the dominant ethnic group and sometimes they are even better at doing so than the ethnic group that made them; thus, some norms are accepted agreeably while some are opposed strongly (Zhang Jijiao 2004, p. 335).

If we agree that the inequality in social norms results from the inequality in social position, then it follows that the inequality in social norms of different ethnic groups perpetuates the social pattern. If in some cities no ethnic group is dominant, then there will be competition among different conventions until one prevails; when this does not happen, such competition results into disputes that affect the broader society. In a social setting where different ethnic groups belong to different social classes, often one ethnic group profits at the expense of others.

In some Chinese cities, the norms of the disadvantaged minority migrants tend to be slowly and tentatively absorbed by the urban dominant conventions, as long as the minorities' attitudes towards the dominant social norms are flexible and active, not antagonistic and passive. Take, for example, the overseas Chinese in Malaysia. Although they are not the politically privileged group, they dictate the business rules and are the initiators and executives of economic achievements in that society (Samad et al. 2002; Tey Nai Peng 2005, pp. 191–197; Zhang Jijiao 2006, pp. 127–145). However, in some urban settings, the government adopts preferential policies towards the ethnic floating population, so it is easier for those minorities to get rid of their disadvantaged position in society and achieve economic, cultural and political betterment.

### **Conflict does not Lie in Culture Alone, but also in the Interest Structure**

On the one hand, conflict between any two ethnic groups may be generated by prejudice or discrimination, rather than by ethnic belief-systems or ideology. On the other hand, conflict may be determined by the interest structure of certain ethnic groups, rather than by their culture or history.

Compared with class-based cultural identity and social conflict, ethnic identity and ethnic conflict appear to be more stubborn and obvious. All ethnic groups are engaged in the pursuit of interest, often appearing to be more efficient in such a pursuit than other groups. An ethnic group can, to a large extent, be defined as an interest group. In the past, some conflicts (such as the Irish divide), may have originated in religious belief. Nowadays, however, conflicts largely boil down to conflicting interests between different groups, competition over secular power, and so on. For instance, linguistic conflicts are not about the use of language on public occasions; they are about whether the users of a particular language should have better opportunities to gain access to certain resources.

Apparently, the emphasis of ethnic identity and trans-ethnic conflicts has shifted from culture, custom, religion, language to the pursuit of interest. Since the members of each ethnic group share their history, region, religion, identity and interest, when different ethnic groups live in a city where there are so many different social networks, the 'ethnic group' becomes the very centre of activities aimed at the pursuit of collective and individual interest.

Every ethnic group has its own informal social network, which enables its members to draw on different relationships such as blood relations, marital relations, regional relations and occupational relations at each stage of their life (from birth to kindergarten, from primary school to secondary school, from colleges/universities to employment to retirement) and pass such relations on to the next generations. Minority migrants educate their children to be proud of the culture and tradition of their own ancestors, as well as of the contribution they have made to the construction of the city in which they live; should they fail to do so, they would be unable to lessen their sense of inferiority, or to gain any sense of settlement. The fact remains, however, that it is impossible for newly-moved-in minorities to be completely assimilated, due to the difference in population size and in social economics.

Minorities, whether they are settled dwellers or newcomers and regardless of what opinions they express in public, always maintain their ethnic traditions and ways of life. Inter-ethnic marriages are a key element in the fusion of different cultures, for they make it possible for the original social relationships to lose strength. For instance, in many cases the majority of black people are ruled out of social occasions, clubs and even churches by a minority of white people's, without even the nominal invitations (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997).

Different ethnic groups set up their own organizations, regulations and networks for the distribution of resources. There are some immediate benefits in keeping their own networks (Zhang Jijiao 2007a). For instance, the Hui people have formed a neighbourhood in the Niujie Street of Beijing, where they share all their resources, and yet in the late 1990s, when the Beijing Metropolitan Government was about to renovate an old street in their neighbourhood, some local Hui made a number of material (money) and non-material (keeping the mosque) demands. In Malaysia, the Malaysian Chinese have long campaigned against discrimination in the allocation of licenses, jobs, education and housing; at the same time, it is

beyond their wildest dreams to join in the Malay circle and enter main stream Malaysian society (Zhang Jijiao 2007b) and they cling to their communities, neighbourhoods and social networks.

From the government's perspective, ethnic groups intended as groups of people that have a collective existence and interest pursuit are acceptable and usable. Some historical references will help to clarify this point. For example, the British government's meeting Scottish demands in the nineteenth century, was a practical political choice. The Scotsmen benefited, while the politicians won votes. Another good example is given by the Thai government letting a Chinese serve as vice-president of the Parliament in order to obtain the support of the Chinese residents in the country (Shen Lin and Zhang Jijiao et al. 2001, 84–86).

Economic cooperation is one aspect of the relationships among different ethnic groups; competition is another. There was a time when people from inland China ran restaurants and dominated the local market in Lhasa, while the Tibetans were at a comparative disadvantage mainly because people from inland China were more versed in running private enterprise. In this case, disparity was explained beyond ethnic belonging. As Tibetans felt that their interests were violated, a few Tibetan governmental officials and local business people developed an unfriendly attitude and grumbled against the alien competitors, though extreme behaviour never actually materialized. Competition among ethnic groups in this industry began to arise as some time later Tibetans and Hans began to take on restaurant and entertainment businesses. Today, the Tibetans are especially advantaged in the trade of Barley Wine, Sweet Tea and Tibetan Cuisine, in which they have a considerable market share. Despite fierce competition, these ethnic groups perform their economic activities according to the universally-accepted rules and regulations concerning marketing and competition, and there is no evidence of a tendency to boost their business by enhancing the idea of a Tibetan priority.<sup>16</sup>

## **Conclusion**

China is often viewed by outsiders as a rather homogenous country. Since China's reforms and opening up to the outside world in the late 1970s, the growing migration of ethnic minorities has changed the social, economic and cultural landscape of both rural and urban areas, engendering the phenomenon of multi-ethnic cities and their multicultural development. Hundreds of concentrated communities have established themselves in urban and in rural areas, which have acquired a strong multi-ethnic character. As I have said, the population of habitual residents and migrant minorities in China's cities is now in the order of 90 million.

In this chapter I have argued that the considerable ethnic and cultural diversity that marks today's China may well translate into various barriers in inter-ethnic and

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16 Sources are from the research carried out in 1991 by Yu Changjiang in Lhasa, Tibet.

trans-ethnic relations. We have seen that stereotype is a key factor in the conflict marking inter-ethnic relations. I have suggested that the root of such urban conflict is not cultural diversity but cultural inequality and that, here, conflict does not lie in culture alone but is largely engendered by the interest structure.

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## Chapter 11

# Sharing Cultures: Integration, Assimilation and Interaction in the Indian Urban Context

Sumita Chaudhuri

### Introduction

Cities are part of the larger society and are in a constant process of internal change, growing as a result of both new births and migration. The role of migration in the context of social change and economic development has been noted by a number of scholars. Indeed, large-scale migration, whether between nations or among different social and ecological zones of a single nation, has played an important role in social change. In the urban context, where society is essentially multi-ethnic due to the presence of various ethnic communities, it is expected that immigrant communities will bring with them their own socio-cultural traditions, values and worldviews. Consequently, during the process of adjustment in the urban milieu, the socio-cultural traditions of the various ethnic groups may dissolve to produce a new urban culture. It is also likely that these communities will exhibit, on the one hand, very high structural exclusiveness and many areas of privacy and, on the other, a tendency to influence each other during the processes of natural adaptation and adjustment. With the increasing effects of globalization, interactions within a particular nation and also across nations have also increased considerably.

The rapid urbanization of the present times is a worldwide phenomenon and India is very much part of such urbanization. Moreover, inter-regional migration has a very crucial role to play in the process of industrialization and urbanization in a developing nation like India. Given that migrants bring with them their own socio-cultural traditions, worldviews and behaviour patterns, the role of these socio-cultural traditions of migration in the process of urbanization become an interesting object of inquiry. It has been observed that, usually, if a migrant lives in the metropolis and has money to send home, he raises himself and his family in the esteem of his village. In this context, it is true that as the migrant judges himself by the standards of his people he has not really migrated but has actually moved out of the village and formed his own urban frame of reference, which only adds to the socio-psychological capacity of the process of migration.

The socio-political climate of contemporary India appears to be rather disquieting. A large number of movements, based apparently on disparate ideologies and goals, have surfaced in every corner of the country. Although the majority of such movements have become visible only recently, several are undoubtedly rooted



in the past and particularly relate to the historical phases of the initial contact of the distinct population that had come to live in India. The movement of large numbers of rural people to urban centres is among the more important social phenomena that accompany the process of industrialization of a society. While some of those who move to urban centres may have their origin in other cities, the large bulk is made up of people who move from rural villages to towns or cities. This movement of predominantly rural folk to the urban, metropolitan centres is an event of economic, socio-psychological and cultural significance. In India, such a process is further complicated by the fact that the movement of many immigrants to the city involves the transcending not only of long physical distance but also of the additional cultural barriers that are associated with different languages and religions.

In 2001 the four mega cities of India, namely Mumbai (Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta), Delhi and Chennai (Madras) contained a population of more than five million each (with the first three of these having populations of over 10 million each).<sup>1</sup> Nearly one quarter of the Indian population lives in Class 1 towns and one sixth of India's urban population and 4.4 per cent of the country's total population live in these four mega cities. These mega cities dominate not only in demographic terms but also in terms of concentration of economic, social and cultural activities, which significantly contributes to their emergence as powerful centres. In this chapter I make an attempt to understand the process of urbanization in India, one of the most important factors for the growth of multicultural cities, in the context of the immigrant communities. The present discussion is based on a study conducted in Kolkata and includes a brief outline of the Indian urban background.

## **Background of the Migrant Population**

I have stressed that people migrate to urban centres from different areas. Table 11.1 shows the background of the migrant population with reference to the four mega cities of India.

The 1991 Census figures show that in Kolkata 66.6 per cent of migrants come from rural areas, in Chennai, 38.9 per cent, in Delhi, 52.1 per cent, and in Mumbai, 64.9 per cent (see Table 11.1). Although the majority of migrants to mega cities originate from rural areas, divergences and dissimilarities can be observed among the mega cities with reference to the background of the migrant population. In the case of Kolkata, the

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1 Greater Mumbai UA (Urban Agglomeration) – 16.4m; Kolkata UA – 13.2m; Delhi UA – 12.9m; Chennai UA – 6.6m (2001 Census of India, see: for Greater Mumbai UA <[http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population\\_Finder/View\\_Village\\_Population.aspx?pcaid=6869&category=U.A.](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population_Finder/View_Village_Population.aspx?pcaid=6869&category=U.A.)>; for Kolkata UA <[http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population\\_Finder/View\\_Village\\_Population.aspx?pcaid=5865&category=U.A.](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population_Finder/View_Village_Population.aspx?pcaid=5865&category=U.A.)>; for Delhi UA <[http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population\\_Finder/View\\_Village\\_Population.aspx?pcaid=5394&category=U.A.](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population_Finder/View_Village_Population.aspx?pcaid=5394&category=U.A.)>; for Chennai UA <[http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population\\_Finder/View\\_Village\\_Population.aspx?pcaid=7571&category=U.A.](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population_Finder/View_Village_Population.aspx?pcaid=7571&category=U.A.)>, all accessed 6 April 2009).

**Table 11.1 Rural and urban origin of migrants to India's mega cities in 1981, 1991**

Area of Origin	City	1991			1981		
		Urban origin %	Rural origin %	Total	Urban origin %	Rural origin %	Total
From within district	Mumbai	54.6	45.2	100.0	—	—	—
	Kolkata	25.5	73.3	100.0	28.7	71.3	100.0
	Delhi	73.1	26.9	100.0	—	—	—
	Chennai	63.5	36.4	100.0	40.4	59.6	100.0
From within state	Mumbai	29.1	70.8	100.0	23.8	76.2	100.0
	Kolkata	33.0	65.8	100.0	36.0	64.0	100.0
	Delhi	73.1	26.9	100.0	57.7	42.3	100.0
	Chennai	55.4	44.4	100.0	57.7	42.3	100.0
From the spatially contiguous states	Mumbai	39.7	60.3	100.0	41.6	58.4	100.0
	Kolkata	28.1	71.9	100.0	25.5	74.5	100.0
	Delhi	25.1	74.9	100.0	24.8	75.2	100.0
	Chennai	64.1	34.9	100.0	67.8	32.2	100.0
From other states	Mumbai	30.1	69.9	100.0	26.6	63.4	100.0
	Kolkata	27.9	72.1	100.0	32.1	67.9	100.0
	Delhi	68.3	31.7	100.0	72.0	28.0	100.0
	Chennai	84.6	15.4	100.0	83.1	16.9	100.0
From Asian countries	Mumbai	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—	100.0
	Kolkata	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—	100.0
	Delhi	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—	100.0
	Chennai	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—	100.0
From other countries	Mumbai	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—	100.0
	Kolkata	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—	100.0
	Delhi	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—	100.0
	Chennai	100.0	—	100.0	100.0	—	100.0
From all areas	Mumbai	35.1	64.9	100.0	34.0	66.0	100.0
	Kolkata	33.3	66.6	100.0	30.5	69.5	100.0
	Delhi	47.9	52.1	100.0	48.4	51.6	100.0
	Chennai	61.1	38.9	100.0	60.9	39.1	100.0

*Note:* Some totals have been adjusted for small rounding differences.

*Source:* Census of India 1981, 1991.

proportion of people from urban areas is mainly from within the state, though there is a sizable migrant population from other states. In contrast to this, Delhi's immigrants tend to come from the contiguous states. In other words, immigrants from contiguous states are overwhelmingly from rural areas. The proportion of immigrants moving from urban areas to Chennai increases with distance.

The reason for the prevalence of rural migration to mega cities could be that the cities continue to maintain strong ties, economically and socially, to the immediate surrounding hinterland. An explanation for the rather low proportion of migration to mega cities from urban areas could be found in the fact that many of India's metropolitan cities, though large in terms of population, have not yet developed a firm economic base of a high order and, as a result, do not offer a reasonable level of employment opportunities for migrants from other urban areas. Table 11.2 shows the proportion of the population that is migrant and non-migrant in the four mega cities in India.

In Table 11.2, the figures for the migrant component of populations over the period 1971–91 reveal a declining trend in migration to mega cities. The question is whether such a decline should be attributed to the possibility that nearly all four of the mega cities have reached an optimum point in terms of immigration or there are other factors which inhibit new entrants. Another possible explanation could lie in the diversion of rural and urban migrants to other metropolitan cities of India which have, of late, started receiving greater numbers of immigrants. This means that the expansion of new urban areas has attracted more migrants than the mega cities, and as a consequence more investment is needed both in terms of economy and ability.

The present context of land reform and the consolidation of rural *panchayat* (Statutory Village Council(s)) in the villages of West Bengal has also possibly checked migration to mega cities, particularly to Kolkata. To some extent, the land reform and *panchayat* system in West Bengal has brought stability to the

**Table 11.2 Migrant, non-migrant population in the four mega cities of India**

City	Year	Migrant population %	Non-migrant population %	Total
Kolkata	1991	23.75	76.25	100.00
	1981	31.06	68.94	100.00
	1971	32.23	67.77	100.00
Mumbai	1991	44.69	55.31	100.00
	1981	51.33	48.67	100.00
	1971	57.00	43.00	100.00
Delhi	1991	39.52	60.48	100.00
	1981	44.42	55.58	100.00
	1971	49.23	50.77	100.00
Chennai	1991	27.63	72.37	100.00
	1981	34.45	65.55	100.00
	1971	33.98	66.02	100.00

Source: Census of India 1971, 1981, 1991.

rural economy, the fragility of which in the past compelled people to leave their places of origin. In all the tendency to migrate from rural areas to Kolkata has been checked by three factors within the West Bengal Left-Front Government policy to limit such migration: first, the development of metro cities apart from Kolkata; second, a successful land reform programme that has brought some security to marginal rural areas; third, the implementation of a rural development programme for both men and women through the *panchayat* system that has led to greater employment opportunities throughout the rural areas of the state. Over the years, the combination of these factors has played a key role in the decline of the migrant ratio in Kolkata. Effective township development planning has also had an impact not only on the low migration to Kolkata but also on emigration from Kolkata, engendered by the employment opportunities created in newly developed townships around the city. Evidence of the sharp fall in the migrant component during the period 1981–91 is provided in Table 11.2.

### History and Growth of Population in Kolkata

Historically, the city of Kolkata grew from a tiny English settlement. At the end of the first decade of the eighteenth century some ten thousand people lived there. Today, the population has grown to over 13.2 million in the city and its immediate vicinity, making this one of India's largest urban agglomerations, called Greater Kolkata.<sup>2</sup> Kolkata is the major urban centre of a vast region, including not only rural West Bengal but also the whole of eastern and north-eastern India. Table 11.3 shows the growth rate of population in and around Kolkata, as well as a number of significant trends.

**Table 11.3 Growth rate in population of Kolkata**

Area	1971–81 %	1981–91 %	1991–2001 %
Kolkata Urban Agglomeration (UA)	+23.90	+19.88	+19.91
Kolkata Municipal Corporation (MC)	+11.04	+6.33	+4.11

Source: Census of India 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001. Census of India, 2001, West Bengal, Provisional Population Totals. Paper 2 of 2001, Series 20.

<sup>2</sup> 2001 Census of India, <[http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population\\_Finder/View\\_Village\\_Population.aspx?pcaid=5865&category=U.A](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Population_Finder/View_Village_Population.aspx?pcaid=5865&category=U.A)> (accessed 6 April 2009).

The speed of growth of Kolkata is partly due to large-scale migration from different areas. Besides Bangladesh and rural West Bengal, over the years a large number of communities have migrated here from various Indian states, mainly in search of employment opportunities. Bose (1965) observed that the migrant population in Kolkata included Sikh workers from Punjab, businessmen from Rajasthan and Gujarat, highly educated civil service professionals from Kerala and Chennai, and Hindi-speaking labourers, mainly from the neighbouring states. The migrant population in Kolkata also included native Bengali Muslims, as well as the dominant Bengali Hindu population from within the state itself. Bose further observed, 'Calcutta is thus the scene of a major confrontation between the enduring institutions of old India – her caste, communities and diversity of ethnic heritages – and the pressures and values arising from the process of urbanization...' (Bose 1964, p. 91).

Two types of migration can be observed in this urban context; one is the seasonal migration and the other the migration of people seeking to settle here for longer periods. Seasonal migration accounts for an appreciable number of Kolkata's urban poor, mostly unskilled labourers who generally return to their native villages in December, at the time of harvest, and come back to the city in early February. Undoubtedly, seasonal migration strengthens traditional relationships as migrants maintain regular contact with their native places. A large number of communities migrate to the mega cities, mainly in search of employment opportunities, for educational purposes and for social reasons. They stay in the city for a comparatively longer period. Obviously, economic factors, or more specifically employment opportunities, are among the main reasons for migration. However, there is a marked difference in the reasons for migration between men and women. While men usually migrate for employment reasons, women migrate chiefly because their families move or because they marry. Similar patterns apply to migrants from within and outside the state.

### **State-Wise Migration**

Table 11.4 details the state-wise migration trend to the city of Kolkata, which also shows the percentages for male and female migrants.

It is said that Hindus were the original residents of Kolkata when the city was founded in the late seventeenth century. Communities like the Gandhabanik (spice merchants) and the Subarnabanik (bankers and gold traders), followed by the caste Brahmins and the Kayasthas (scribes), were the first to come to this growing centre of trade and commerce. Indeed, the residential patterns of the ethnic communities in Kolkata are the product of the long history of an evolving structure of economic opportunities (Biswas et al. 1986). The ethnic composition of Kolkata being an important aspect of the city's level of urbanization drew the attention of Bose (1964), who examined the population of Kolkata from three points of view: the occupational clustering, the linguistic clustering and the residential pattern.

**Table 11.4 State-wise migration to Kolkata**

States	M 1961	F 1961	M 1971	F 1971	M 1981	F 1981	M 1991	F 1991
Andhra Pradesh	0.008	1.220	0.800	1.800	0.600	1.500	0.900	1.500
Assam	1.000	2.000	0.900	2.700	0.800	2.700	1.400	3.100
Bihar	53.600	38.880	26.80	36.700	57.900	38.300	59.300	44.400
Gujarat	1.380	2.510	2.100	4.800	1.500	3.900	1.600	3.300
Haryana	0.540	1.080	0.60	1.010	0.900	1.700	0.600	0.700
Himachal Pradesh	0.030	0.050	0.080	0.200	0.070	0.200	0.200	0.300
Jammu/ Kashmir	0.010	0.160	0.110	0.100	0.060	0.100	0.100	0.200
Kerala	1.220	2.130	1.500	2.700	1.000	2.100	1.100	2.100
Madhya Pradesh	2.570	2.140	0.700	1.600	0.900	2.050	0.900	1.800
Maharashtra	1.040	2.310	1.100	2.700	0.800	2.500	0.700	2.400
Manipur	0.020	0.030	0.010	0.050	0.050	0.060	0.100	0.100
Meghalaya	n/a	n/a	0.050	0.160	0.080	0.300	0.200	0.400
Mysore/ Karnataka	0.220	0.650	0.300	0.600	0.200	0.700	0.200	0.400
Nagaland	0.004	0.002	0.009	0.020	0.080	0.300	0.010	0.050
Orissa	9.350	4.410	32.100	3.700	7.400	3.600	7.900	4.300
Punjab	3.240	4.870	2.300	4.500	1.600	3.300	1.700	3.100
Rajasthan	3.490	12.020	6.300	10.100	4.800	10.200	3.300	6.600
Sikkim	Neg.	0.004	0.010	0.030	0.010	0.030	0.100	0.200
Tamil Nadu (Chennai)	1.870	3.080	1.300	3.100	1.000	2.400	1.000	2.400
Tripura	0.130	0.190	0.100	0.400	0.200	0.600	n/a	n/a
Uttar Pradesh	18.670	20.650	24.500	20.300	18.500	20.800	17.000	19.300
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0.003	0.002	0.009	0.020	0.080	0.300	0.020	0.030

**Table 11.4 continued State-wise migration to Kolkata**

States	M 1961	F 1961	M 1971	F 1971	M 1981	F 1981	M 1991	F 1991
Arunachal Pradesh	n/a	n/a	0.001	0.009	0.008	0.010	0.100	0.100
Chandigarh	n/a	n/a	0.020	0.060	0.007	0.009	0.100	0.100
Dadra Nagar	nil	nil	nil	0.004	nil	0.010	0.100	0.200
Delhi	0.540	1.230	0.500	1.600	0.600	1.900	0.700	1.700
Goa, Daman, Diu	0.028	0.030	0.100	0.190	0.040	0.100	0.100	0.200
Lakshadweep	0.005	0.002	0.010	nil	0.001	nil	0.020	0.020
Mizoram	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.001	0.030	0.040	0.030
Pondicherry	0.001	0.008	0.006	nil	0.005	0.020	nil	0.020
<b>Total<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Notes: M = male; F = female; <sup>a</sup> = Column totals have been adjusted for small rounding differences; <sup>b</sup> = Column total adjusted for unidentifiable error in original census data.

Source: Census of India, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 (Migration) West Bengal.

Kolkata's proverbial tolerance of diversity is indicated by the existence of over 50 endogamous caste-like groups among the local Muslims. Siddique's (1982) observation of some minorities in Kolkata is that a large and decisive bulk of such communities and of their respective segments continue to concentrate along specific occupational areas, suggesting occupational specialization along linguistic lines within the city. Kolkata shows a highly differentiated texture in terms of social identity, culture and linguistic background. A number of communities have been living here for generations. It may be interesting to study whether or not immigrants have maintained their identities and whether community isolation has decreased through increasing interactions among the different groups, which are distinguishable from each other by language, culture and sometimes even occupation. Thus, it may be interesting to study whether Kolkata has become a melting pot on the model of Western cities; if not, it may be equally interesting to examine how the identities of the different communities are maintained, considering that people from these communities quite often interact within the same environment: they may, for example, work in the same place, study in the same institution or belong to the same political party. Certainly, the role and influence of the traditional social cleavages, like caste, community, religious and linguistic background, in the boundary-maintenance mechanism in an urban context like Kolkata can not be overlooked.



For most communities, religion, language and geographical background play a crucial role in the choice of residence in Kolkata. It may be interesting to examine the prevailing situation in the context of Kolkata close to the end of the twentieth century with particular reference to the problem of primordial solidarity, boundary maintenance and inter-group communication (Barth 1969). I have observed that the various communities that have migrated to Kolkata have maintained distinct residential concentrations. Obviously this pattern of spatial distribution would promote more in-group interaction and less interaction at an inter-community level, thereby strengthening and maintaining distinct socio-cultural traditions. I have also noted that the larger communities are by and large concentrated in certain specific areas in the city and thus the spatial distribution sometimes reflects their socio-cultural background and distinctiveness. Again, in the case of the smaller communities it has been noted that they prefer to live in clusters in some specific areas where they may not always predominate. It has further been noted that the social hierarchy, caste background and even the dialects within the same religious-linguistic group are not always ignored and find expression in spatial enclaves of an exclusive nature. However, although linguistic and regional identities are important binding forces for most of the communities living in Kolkata, at least in the case of a few communities other than the Bengalese, there is another focal point of cohesiveness: in addition to the performance of specific religious festivals, which help a community in maintaining a particular identity, the Hindus (who are the majority of migrants) visit or participate in the sacred performances in the various Hindu temples and religious places in and around Kolkata.

A number of religious festivals are performed by the local people of Kolkata. In spite of the fact that migrant groups generally have their own religious places, most of them, who also belong to different communities, participate in many of the local religious festivals, which also indicates a point of cohesiveness and interaction among the different migrant groups. The same is true in the case of a few other religious festivals performed by the non-Hindu communities.

Moreover, in Kolkata there are various associations, generally linked to caste or regional background, that look after the interests of the concerned population, as well as a number of associations that, in contrast, are not connected with any specific caste or place. The latter are mostly affluent clubs where upper-middle-class people and senior officials who work for government and private organizations come for various purposes. Finally, apart from the political parties, there are quite a few trade associations, like the Rickshaw Pullers' Association, the Hand Cart Union and so on, whose members belong to different areas and communities.

The Western model of urbanization has emphasized the 'melting pot' theory, according to which migrant groups are assimilated and absorbed into the core culture of a city. In North American society, for example, the ideology was to lay emphasis on 'cultural totalitarianism'. This type of social situation is likely to overlook the nature of cultural pluralism in a given social environment. In fact, some scholars have shown the limitations and fallacy of this theory and it has been pointed out that different groups with their distinct cultural patterns do exist

(Glazer and Moynihan 1970). The 'melting pot' theory is certainly not applicable to the context of Indian cities, where cultural plurality is predominant.

Generally speaking, then, the urban context in India is essentially pluralistic, due to the presence of various communities. These communities may exhibit highly structural exclusiveness on the one hand, but on the other there may be a tendency to influence each other for natural adaptation and adjustment. In the mega cities there is, thus, the possibility of assimilation. Naturally, in such a context, the questions arise: Why does this element of separatism exist? And do these communities live in a separate island in a mega city? Moreover, there is a possibility that an adaptive culture is adopted, whereby anyone can survive, through interaction.

As indicated earlier, a number of culturally different communities have been living and interacting in Kolkata for generations, which tallies with the multi-ethnic character of urban societies in India. At the same time, in most mega cities and other urban centres, the ethnic communities tend to replicate their regional distinctions along cultural and social environment lines (Bose 1964). Although the metropolitan character of Kolkata is marked by a situation of cultural pluralism, the present situation would discourage us from emphasizing the similarities in local life. Instead, the differences in the patterns of development and underdevelopment need to be highlighted. It is presumed that the similarities are internal to each pattern, without taking into account the specificity of each metropolis and comparing such specificities with other instances of metropolitan growth.

Although Kolkata is the homeland of the Bengali-speaking people, as indicated earlier, there is a sizeable number of non-Bengalis in the city's population; particularly Hindi-speaking people, who come mainly from the adjoining states, such as West Bengal, but also from distant states such as Rajasthan and Gujarat. The Hindi-speaking population can be broadly divided into two classes; the labourers, who live in slums, and the educated, skilled people, who are mainly concentrated in the specific areas of the city where they are in the majority (linguistically, state wise or community wise). Thus, the Bengalese communities (of various religions) living in the city belong to the upper-, middle- and lower-income groups, whereas the Hindi-speaking communities are broadly divided into labourers and professionals.

In the context of Indian urbanization, a UNESCO study has indicated that different linguistic or regional groups do still exist, maintaining their distinct identity and cultural tradition. It has been observed that, 'Although the great cities of Asia have large size, high density and heterogeneous population, those characteristics have not produced the basic changes in impersonal relations, the nature of human beings and the social institution, as in the western context' (UNESCO 1956, p. 286).

## Interaction Level of the Population

There are a number of similarities and contrasting features that mark the city of Kolkata. We have discussed the situation of the migrant population; according to the 1991 Census, out of the total urban population, 23.75 per cent are migrants, and, again, in the context of the migrant population, 66.6 per cent come from the rural areas around Kolkata. After migrating to the city, most of the communities have retained their distinct socio-cultural identities through festivals, educational institutions, clubs, recreational centres, libraries and newspapers. At the time of religious festivals, cultural programmes are also often performed in order to re-establish the communities' distinct socio-cultural identities. This, however, does not mean that the migrant communities always live in isolation. There are many situations in the context of any city which make it necessary for people to interact, cutting across religious and socio-cultural boundaries. This mostly happens in work places and in neighbourhoods. In fact, in Indian cities, people have multiple identities. Just as one is distinguished by his or her cultural tradition, language, religion or regional or caste background, there are many cementing forces too. Just as there are traditional social cleavages, often influencing the interaction requirements of an individual, there are also many opportunities for individuals to interact with others.

Inter-ethnic relations in the multi-ethnic societies of the developing world are in a fluid state because of two processes: a) the process of modernization, which provides incentives and opportunities for mobility, and creates the conditions for increasing internal migration; and b) consequent to such a process, there is the growth of ethnic identification and ethnic cohesion as nurtured by modernization. These two processes are often antagonistic, since in a multi-ethnic society, one encourages the movement of individuals across cultural, linguistic and ethnic regions thereby changing the 'mix' of the ethnic groups within a given space, while the other often generates anti-migrant sentiments among 'local' people. Economic and demographic tendencies thus conflict with social, cultural and political tendencies. Migration is critical because it changes the demographic and economic balance within a given space. Hence, the 'protection' of space and the economic opportunities within it are often the control objectives of the local population, while the expansion of opportunities within that space is a central objective of the migrants. Therefore, in a multi-ethnic society migration frequently has destabilizing effects and tends to arouse intense conflicts.

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## Chapter 12

# The Consumption of Experience and the Ethnic Market: Cosmopolitan Identity Beyond Multiculturalism

Silvia Surrenti

In this chapter I argue that contemporary Western cities are characterized by a process of symbolic and representational modification in which places of consumption play a central role in cultural change. During the last few years, the literature has underlined the involvement of marketing strategies in delivering experiences, rather than selling products, as brand images. At a deeper level, a new way has been identified for companies to foster alternative lifestyles in their ‘consumption of experiences’, and to face competition in the present market place. In the context of marketing strategies, the present discussion recognizes that ‘experience’ is what is actually sold on the market today and looks at the ways in which global and local flows of experiences are restructuring places of consumption and are influencing social actors’ experience. This chapter addresses the two-way cultural movement that views Western societies as increasingly orientalized and non-Western world as increasingly Westernized.

In this context, the analysis also looks at ‘ethnicity’ as a means of consumption delivered as a particular kind of experience. From this point of view, customers are seen as tourists travelling in exotic scenarios and to cultural destinations, while dwelling in multicultural cities. In spite of differences in trading, the study has identified a hybridization of styles in the quest for experience, which is casting the meaning of belonging to a specific ethnic group and that of local identity under revision.

Empirical research was carried out in two places of consumption in Florence: one is ‘The Art Gallery Hotel’, a model site of ‘cosmopolitan experience’; the other an ethnic restaurant called ‘*India – Ristorante e non solo*’ (India – Not Just A Restaurant), where the ‘authenticity’ of the experience is taken as an example of cultural construction. My aim is to analyse and compare the two places in order to systematize the content and the organizational principles of the experience delivered in built-up environment. In particular, the discussion focuses on the symbolic meanings and the cultural milieu employed to give a thematic connotation to the experience that is being sold. Then, it verifies how the double flow of cultural authenticity and cultural cosmopolitanism are central symbolic features to our lifestyles and to the commercialization of places in our consumption processes.

## **Which Meaning for a Multicultural Society?**

Rather than referring to a multicultural society as the place in which people coming from a variety of different countries gather together, with all the political, social and economic implications the process addresses, my analysis examines this complex phenomenon as a social fact based on the meaning it acquires in the field of consumption. More specifically, I look at what I have called ‘ethnic consumption’ within the social dynamics of the Italian, Florentine landscape.

The view is now well established that the global market is driving our lives in a symbolic and economic process in which not only we belong to a specific culture but are also engaged to consume culture, cultural symbols and cultural styles. For this reason, and taking in consideration marketing strategies, I refer to culture not only as an identity indicator but mostly as a factor of taste. Moreover, we should consider that while consumption of ethnic goods was once a sign of social distinction – it put in evidence our cultural and economic capitals – nowadays it may also be a sign used by consumers to communicate a special kind of lifestyle and a personal taste that can also be shared by the majority of the population for, being mass traded, it can have a low range price. Thus, paradoxically, our identity is at the same time local- and global-embedded.

In this sense, ethnic consumption is expression of the new trends in the field of consumption and an useful indicator of the globalizing fluxes of contemporary culture. It is both an indicator of a kind of consumption aimed at awakening traditional emotions, a voice of nostalgic feelings linked to an idea of authenticity that the ethnic mark conveys in our imagination, and a sign of the symbolic presence of a multicultural society. It is representation of contemporary identities – given by the multitude of different objects sold, coming from different countries – and, finally, a mark of what I have called a cosmopolitan experience, in the sense that contemporary consumption gathers products targeted to certain people, functional to Westerners’ taste and to its desire to be global. Products become, thus, de-territorialized from their authentic context and style, as they are mostly linked to a certain idea of what is ‘ethnic’ to the Western public.

Given a multicultural background, there is a tendency peculiar to the contemporary market, whereby the ethnic style is the reflection of our lifestyles in the process of the aesthetization of culture, rather than being a sign of belonging. This occurs regardless of the tendency of the traditional market to import goods to satisfy immigrant people’s tastes. I consider the cosmopolitan trend as Western taste organized, at a symbolic level, to consume products coming from different countries but functional to Western consumption,<sup>1</sup> and for this reason I describe these products as disorganized in their authentic traits.

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1 We should not forget the fact that being white and Western pre-supposes a state of ethnicity too.

This process becomes evident throughout marketing strategies which make goods become traditional;<sup>2</sup> peculiar, that is, to the non-Western context but with the feeling they are part of the outside world. In particular, I point out a movement which sees the practice of what I call pluri-localization of traditional identities as a way to create a cosmopolitan aesthetic context in the thematic consumption field. As we shall see in the case of the Hotel, the experience of the city of Florence is sold as an aesthetic experience in which the determinants of a real multicultural city are glossed over, while the aesthetic aspects are reproduced – the feeling of being global within a cosmopolitan landscape. It seems to be important to convey the idea of a cosmopolitan belonging to the present culture; a kind of international lifestyle that most of the time does not answer to the integration of cultures and places, keeping people aggregated in a specific aesthetic portion of the territory.

Starting from the idea that consumption is an emotional experience, and without denying the materialistic act of acquisition, I look at consumption of ethnic taste as a bridge that makes people travel in different contexts, in places others than those of the daily life, in a ‘nowhere place’ reproduced by the spectacularization of merchandise.

### **The ‘Experience of Consumption’ or the ‘Consumption of Experience’?**

Consumption plays a complex role in our society. Theories on consumption have been dominated by two different viewpoints, the economic and the sociological. The major difference between the two is a theoretical shift from the satisfaction of needs to the rising of desires, and from this to the role played by emotions in stimulating the senses of the new consumer. If from the economic point of view consumption has been seen as a means to satisfying needs, sociologically it is seen as having a symbolic role (Baudrillard 1974; Bourdieu 1979; Veblen 1899). On the other hand, it is necessary to underline evolution and differences in interpretation within the sociological framework too.

The classic body of sociological literature is diverse in terms of focus and findings, given that it is mostly linked to a theoretical shift from the modern period to the postmodern era. The most evident difference from modern theories is that modern interpretations once reflected the productive pattern peculiar to industrial society and were dominated by the key terms of utility, rationalism and convenience, all of which reflected differences in consumers’ social status. On the contrary, the postmodern era has been characterized by a series of cultural and social changes on the basis of which assets are fundamentally considered for their ‘non-material’ value, both symbolic and communicative. In this sense, although the classical sociological literature focuses on the symbolic meaning of consumption as one of the leading characteristics that showed differences in status among consumers,

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2 For example, by creating a special environment of experience and by giving a personality to objects sold.



contemporary studies are more concerned with the idea that a symbolic turn is now occurring (Featherstone 1991; Fabris 2003; Rojek 1995; Pine and Gilmore 1999). According to post-modern theories, symbolism in consumption is less evocative of the status-symbol of the consumer, which in a way was driven by consumer desires, and more based on lifestyle symbols, stimulated through the emotional perceptions of the consumer.<sup>3</sup>

This means that, according to the post-modern insights, the market plays a role in the identity-building process of the social actors involved. In other words, contemporary theories conceive the post-modern market as the stage from which consumers show their individual identity or their group cultural affiliation and, obviously, their economic capital. However, it is argued that such a stage now mostly shows the distinctiveness of consumers' personal tastes, rather than simply demonstrate their social prestige, as the status-symbol once used to do. Following this line of thought, it is necessary to underline distance and differences that the cultural approach fosters, in theory and in empirical research, in respect to the economic vision.

Mike Featherstone (1991) explained that if the culture of contemporary consumption is characterized by constant production and reproduction of signs that modify the existing symbolic order, then the very activity of acquiring – the shopping – cannot be reduced to a simple act of material appropriation (as the economic vision argued) through means of economic transaction. Shields (1992) demonstrated that at least a third of the visitors to shopping centres do not go there with the intention of carrying out an economic transaction. A significant part of present day consumers look for vivid emotions in their choice of where to shop. Therefore, I suggest that to comprehend these changes in consumers' motives, we must understand that within the symbolic order consumption can also be *experiential*. We shall see that if strategies of consumption are reworked so as to act on a multiplicity of signs and senses, shopping can be considered an event that is inseparable from *the communicational path* embedded in goods and in the built environment within which practices of consumption take place. This is not to say that the instrumental or the symbolic aspects of acquisition do not have relevance, but that next to these traditional interpretations we must consider the analysis of spaces of consumption as places of *cultural experience*.

An important part of the present studying focuses on the analysis of space layout and organizational modifications in innovative places of commerce. The way in which a place is organized is a contribution to marketing strategies aimed at creating a thematic experience. Therefore, the idea of making the environment heterogeneous and multi-factored is a way of enhancing the communicative distinctiveness of the goods so as to stimulate consumer's imagination and

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3 It has been observed that the contemporary consumer is primarily interested in whether a product suits his or her lifestyle, rather than simply in its monetary value. I refer to lifestyle as to the whole of habits, values and social determinants each social actor faces and adheres to in daily life.

emotions. Modifying the milieu outline is also the best way to create the right choreography that can produce a special context within which consumers may be able to live a special experience. Consequently, this is the best way to make people consume.

As Schmitt suggested, 'Today customers take functional features and benefits, product quality, and a positive brand image as a given. What they want is products, communications, and marketing campaigns that dazzle their senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds... They want products, communications and marketing campaigns to deliver an experience' (1992, p. 22). Drawing on empirical research, I study the ways in which a significant part of contemporary consumption is thus considered primarily as an experiential event, and secondarily as a way in which goods become bridges of passage towards a symbolic attitude, perceiving an everyday activity – shopping – as an 'event'. These strategies, stemming from the new 'economy of experience', are efficacious because they manage to influence symbolic self-image. In this specific context, I refer to self-image as a dynamic process by which *goods* become *communicative performances* that generate symbolic relationships with consumers' emotions. On the other hand, the process creates a need for them to negotiate a temporary but specific lifestyle for, within the representational field of consuming, the consumption of experiences may give individuals a meaning for their sense of local belonging, for their relations with others and even for their tastes, thus generating a cultural meaning for everyday activities. Nowadays goods are part of the representational flow of our society. The communicative patterns that they offer are employed as a cultural background in which to inscribe our identity preferences.

Contemporary marketing strategies are interested in stimulating the emotional processes of the consumer rather than simply influencing their desires. At the basis of such a shift is the awareness that consumers make their choices according to their own personality and sense of identity, but mostly that the new consumer has the ability to enter a new personal relationship with goods sold. In this context, raised emotions and those created within such a relationship become a significant means of influencing the shopping experience. Since consumers orient their choices on the basis of their individual taste and proper lifestyles, in order to choose a specific, personal lifestyle, images, aromas, and colours – in other words, all the aspects of the current lifestyles paraded in store displays, according to the most innovative marketing strategies – are directed at immersing the consumers in a thematic experience. Therefore competition based on price oscillation no longer meets the needs of the contemporary consumers. Such a strategy would fail to take into account the different identities of contemporary consumers and of the products on offer. Consumers are now searching for 'memorable experiences' that enhance their generic activities in some special way. So, whereas past strategies acted upon the request of a generic consumer, the consumption of experience acts on the individuality of the person, an individuality in search of vivid sensations that create particular and diverse environments.

If we assume that consumption can be experiential, we must reflect on the reasons why such a process is occurring nowadays. First of all, while mass culture accelerated the transformation of experiences into products of consumption, advertising and display practices in spaces dedicated to consumption have done the opposite. Today products have been transformed into images, signs, representations and, again, experiences. Consequently, 'the experience of consumption' and 'the consumption of experience' are becoming less distinguishable (Featherstone 1991). Spending a few hours at a shopping centre, or eating in a particular restaurant – the 'experience of consumption' – is directly related to the communicative capacity of such locations – the 'consumption of experience'. The concept of 'the experience of the user' is today of interest to many disciplines and activities linked to entertainment, consumption and design. In this perspective, attention has been paid to creating and offering special and intense moments to the consumer. This takes into account the little free time people have. In their book dedicated to the rising of the experience economy Pine II and Gilmore (1999) recognize that the value of contemporary goods must involve marketing an experience as a reflection of how consumers spend their time living intensely. That in this perspective *experience* becomes the good really sold is at the basis of the most innovative restructuring of spaces of consumption. From concept stores to theme restaurants to luxury corners of airports, the management of space takes advantage of the added value of experience. For instance, the new Giorgio Armani Store in Milan offers the experience of being immersed into Japanese culture while looking through clothing stands. The potential consumer strolls in a Zen garden and eats at a sushi bar. Selling experience as merchandise is part of a project, of the new frontiers of marketing, whereby a design denominator, *experience design*, aims to create experiences involving specific sectors of the market. Thus, the experience design seeks to adapt the experience to the cultural heritage of the selected brand names. For example, any experience offered in an Armani concept store must be in line with the value of the brand name. It must be characterized by elegance and minimalist styling. It must be linked to a Japanese setting, with the tranquillity of Shinto temples and the simplicity of the materials used in the temples (Simeone 2001).

Modernity has seen strategies geared to tying the brand name to the identity of the product, thereby establishing a static identification with the product itself. Post-modern techniques related to 'name brands' mostly play with a place or environment of representation, so as to multiply the identification of the product. If we add the fact that from the shopping point of view, the literature says that the post-modern era is characterized by 'shoppertainment' or 'entertaining', we can identify shopping as the search for entertainment and the focusing of attention on the design of products. Today the search for entertainment in recreating spaces of consumption contributes to the experiential settings that try to multiply and influence all the senses of the potential consumer (I feel, I touch, I smell, I think, I act = I sense [Arnould et al. 2002]). Again, what is new is the fact that contemporary strategies of spatial organization are increasingly multidimensional in their logic.

According to the concepts of classical economy, the value of goods was equivalent to work strength and production time. Today, the communicative patterns of products interact with the consumer to create the culture of *consumption of experiences*, so as to reach and give an answer to the mobility and heterogeneous dimension of contemporary identity.

Empirical research has identified three different kinds of typology that can be used to organize the innovative space of consumption: *multi-functionalism*, *poly-sensorialism* and *pluri-localization*. These three typologies refer to the organizational principles of our experience within the restyling of the created environment in specific spaces of commerce. *Multi-functionalism* refers to the fact that nowadays places of consumption use the same amount of space functions that once were kept separated and that now are under 'one united roof'. *Poly-sensorialism* refers to the fact that contemporary marketing strategies try to stimulate all our senses. *Pluri-localization* refers to the power of a place to remind the consumer of different aspects of different cultures within a single experience.

This typology will be the guideline to understand empirically the organizational principles of the created environment. From the selling point of view, experiences can be recreated mainly following two different strategies. Experiences are established through the communicative diversification of the created environment, so as to recreate a thematic setting. Alternatively, the original products are allowed to express a special experience. Here, I focus on the first strategy.

When trying to understand the reasons for the birth of the present process it is difficult to ignore the influence played by different technologies in shaping our perception. As we are immersed in new forms of technology and thematic parks are invading our tourist experience, we are ever more willing to look for stimulating representational scenarios during a great part of our daily life. The most simple patterns of communication are not considered interesting enough to catch our attention. In other words, the influence played by the new instruments of communications, and the need for marketing to differentiate the characteristics of products in the market place are, nowadays, among the main reasons for the need for experience in the consumption field. We could add another factor of interest concerning the raising of the shopping activity from an objective status to a status of subjective participation. Goods in the market place now share a special moment of experience with the consumer and become part of one's lifestyle. They are now endowed with a specific biography and, in certain way, with a certain amount of communicative qualities. In brief, I examine areas of contact among mixed symbolic contexts to analyze the complexity of consumption and the nature of the experience that is showed in contemporary consumer spaces. Empirical research was carried out in Florence, dealing with one Hotel, The 'Gallery Hotel Art', and a special kind of Indian restaurant, 'India – Not Just A Restaurant'. I observed the communicative aspects of the experience proposed by these two places of consumption. Using the typology approach in studying their space layout, I have identified the multifunctional aspect, the poly-sensorial aspect and the pluri-localized aspect. This should help us to grasp the cultural character of the experiences delivered.

Both spaces of consumption offer a special pluri-localized context for the cultural experience that they offer, which basically allows people to shift from a cosmopolitan understanding of the cultural context to the recreation of an authentic space. Here, giving a cultural connotation to the activity of consuming appeared to be the most important aspect, although ethnographic research also pointed to the need to recreate a sense of place, even if related to an unstable identity, as in the case of the cosmopolitan Hotel, or to an authentically rooted context, as in the case of the Indian restaurant. It has emerged how, the consumption of ethnic goods can also be interpreted in terms of the Western desire to satisfy the complexity of a cosmopolitan taste. The study has looked at ethnic consumption as an exchange market for Western desires, parallel to the ethnic consumption proper to immigrant consume habits.

### A Spatial Example of ‘Cosmopolitan Experience’: The Gallery Hotel Art

The Gallery Hotel Art in Florence is a locus of syncretism. The hotel combines classic and contemporary styles. According to the interior design and architecture magazine *AD* (1999), it is like staying in a luxurious hotel in the historical centre of one of the most famous cities of art, while enjoying contemporary art and design. Visiting the hotel, the first thing I noticed was the oriental-styled hall. Along the walls there were several ethnic artefacts, spotlighted on pedestals as if in a museum, suggesting an authenticity to each piece. They were red-enamelled pieces from nineteenth century Burma. The reception desk was contemporary in design and made of African Wengè wood; behind it there were more Burmese pieces. The bookcases in Japanese-styled reading room displayed both antique and art books. The restaurant, as described in the presentational promotion, is the place to meet the city and taste ‘fusion’ cooking, a culinary experience that mixes Tuscan, French and Japanese cuisines. The promotional presentation claims that in this syncretic ‘frontier zone’ the guest can have an experience ‘beyond the boundaries of an Italian night,’ though the question, why is there no reference to anything Florentine? remains unanswered. The hotel manager explained that the rooms were decorated in typical Florentine style, but the goal of the hotel was not to communicate an exclusively *local* message, but to give clients a *cosmopolitan experience* beyond the boundaries of an Italian sojourn so as to multiply faces of Florence beyond the idea of the uncontested city of Renaissance masterpieces. The architect, Michele Bonan, undertook not only the restoration of the building, but the transformation of space into *multifunctional* areas in which art, exoticism and culture encounter the public. He explains that the word ‘Gallery is the perfect container for taste that is in continual evolution, a place of peaceful charm where a summary of the areas leans towards the simplicity and symmetry of Asia, where East meets West.’ In addition to this, the hotel hosts art shows that range from contemporary art to photography, from ethnic culture to design, creating a continually changing atmosphere. The Art Gallery director – Isabella Brancolini

– said that her intention was to show art and ethnic objects as if they were in an art gallery, but accessible and usable at any time, just as if they were at home or in a contemporary museum.

The organization of the Gallery Hotel Art supports the hotel-event model, with great attention paid to creating a dynamic, multifunctional environment furnished with exotic objects, thus moving beyond the idea of a *local space* identified with a *Florentine place* and atmosphere; the message here is *global* and *syncretic*. To go beyond boundaries also implies the use of a unique concept of the guest, far removed from the generic clients of the past. Now, the guest is considered to be a person with multiple identities, and satisfying of his/her desires concerns both tourists and inhabitants of the city: the hotel meets the demand for diversity, a desire that residents and tourists have in common. So the Gallery Hotel follows the communicative patterns of ‘experiential consumption’, to which architecture too seems committed, to create *multifunctional*, *pluri-localized* and *poly-sensorial* places that are ready to answer the unstable desires that have been created.

A poly-sensorial experience has been created in the hotel’s Fusion Bar. The five senses of the consumer are stimulated before becoming mixed in a total experience, involving the guest in a sensitive relationship within the environment. The ingredients are:

1. *Seeing*: the decor, the objects, the furnishings contribute to the excitement of discovering images of the world go by. CDs and books identify cultural fusion.
2. *Listening*: specially compiled music plays softly.
3. *Smelling*: delicate aromas stimulate the food-smell interaction.
4. *Touching*: objects of contrasting materials can be touched.
5. *Tasting*: unusual combinations of subtle and delicate flavors are offered in a crescendo of new sensations.

The Gallery Hotel Art and the Fusion Bar offer a new frontier zone in which to sell a particular experience. A *cosmopolitan experience* requires communicative codes from a variety of contexts. ‘Experiential marketing’ strategies affect the poly-sensoriality of the visitor. In a way, experience creates a dilated Florentine context, one which surpasses defining Florence as simply a city of art.

Multifunctional style and cosmopolitan taste are qualities sought by the European young professional, the primary kind of guest in this hotel. Used to living in cities with historical and artistic traditions, and largely tied to the concept of localizing, the client arrives in Florence looking for new experiences. He or she stays in a cosmopolitan environment that satisfies his or her need for experiences ‘over and above Italian boundaries’. This is in contrast to the American tourist, who is used to living in newer cities and wants a more classical Italian sojourn, to be part of the presumed Florentine ‘authenticity’ and to experience its art heritage.

Hannerz has argued that ‘genuine cosmopolitanism is first of all an orientation, a will to interact with the other; it sees an intellectual and aesthetic aperture towards



divergent cultural experiences, looking for contrasts rather than uniformity' (1996, p. 131). This seems to be close to the aesthetic model proposed by the Gallery Hotel Art. The cosmopolitan traveller wants to be, and is immersed in, experiencing cultural contrasts and mixed cuisines. Even if the cosmopolitan aesthete is not looking for encounters with the other and is not interested in cultural exchange with diversity, he or she is integrated through superficial consuming, aesthetic contact, travelling among communication codes and syncretic styles, multifunctional environments and multiple tastes. In this case to experience 'ethnicity' is a question of style, not even a question of 'otherness'; a model prepared to stimulate our aesthetic imagination and to 'feed' our fashion desires.

One of the hotel's advertising postcards portrays this concept perfectly. The foreground shows one of the rooms furnished with pastel-coloured and colonial-style futons. While enjoying an aperitif on the terrace, one can view the historical centre of Florence with a glimpse of Palazzo Vecchio. The cosmopolitan aesthete looks upon a detached Florence, but such a foreshortened glimpse is sufficient since an added value is given by the enlarged experience lived within the Hotel and 'beyond the boundaries of an Italian night'. In fact, 'aesthetic cosmopolitanism' is characterized by a diffusion of representative images, both on an emotional and on an experiential level, captured from the habit of looking at the circumscribed context through shortcuts and frames (Urry 1995).

A comparison of the post-modern architecture of the Hotel Bonaventure in Los Angeles to that of the Gallery Hotel Art, shows that the taste of a social constitution is built on distinct functions of cultural and economic capital. The populist appearance of the post-modern Hotel Bonaventure reflected a new spatial language that integrated social codes into urban landscape; the hotel reproduced the characteristic signs and spectacles of the American commercial strip, thus immersing itself into the social fabric from which these symbols were derived. In the case of the Gallery Hotel Art, as in other contemporary locations of consumption, post-modern idealism has been surpassed by new aims. Whereas post-modern architecture acted upon the manipulation of symbols and the citation of signs, the contemporary movement modifies space with the application of formulas of mobility, temporality, poly-sensoriality and syncretic planning. The Gallery Hotel Art tries to extend a lifestyle. It proposes that a multifunctional use of space is necessary to interpret the desires of transitory experiences. Nowadays the variety of experiences combined from the world of consumers is a hybridization of channelled messages and a multiplicity of styles that reflects a segmented and nebulous social identity.

The cosmopolitan experience that the tourist is offered by the Galley Hotel Art multiplies her or his travel experiences by adding an aesthetic dimension during her or his stay. Its architecture is part of a global project of urban marketing. The power of the metropolis stems from its reflexive capacity to redefine itself by paying special attention to the connection of cultural changes to spatial reality. The restyling and reorganizing of its image is the first goal. Here, space is expanded beyond the idea of a local identity.



The anthropological definition of a place is that of a space rooted into a specific culture and tradition. The space under investigation is a place with no specific geographical references, it is a place of 'crossing experiences'. The global and the local ideas of experience are conjoined without forgetting the new directions of personal identity. People are today able to interpret plural identities. The strong and stable subject postulated by the 'Metaphysical' era is no longer in use and this is true mostly in urban contexts and marketing strategies. Architecture too is trying to make more fluid the meaning of belonging through the implementation of mobile materials and patterns.

Therefore the cultural experience that a guest has in the Gallery is of crossing borders of experiences. The guest is a personalized guest: the guest and the inhabitants of the city have the same desires and ways of satisfying them. Florentine culture is mixed with other different cultural experiences, but places of origin are decontextualized from their historical background and translated into experiences in search of new multiple re-localizations and varied locales. This process is induced by globalization, which has made the classical relationship between place and culture problematic. In a way, we can say that identity today may also deal with problems of instability and of lifestyle rather than only of belonging. Marketing strategies have reconfigured multiple levels of locality that have freed the place from its need of roots and stability. The sense of a place is here an ensemble of images and signs that deal with the loss of culture continuity rather than with cultural roots. As a consequence, identity too, in a way, is nowadays becoming more and more a marketable item. According to marketing strategies, not only do we belong to a specific culture, but we can also share aspects of different cultures. Finally, we can negotiate our dynamic identity by consuming cultures rather than belonging to any of them. Through the creation of a cosmopolitan experience the fact is stressed that there are three different organizational principles for creating environments that reproduce a thematic mixed experience ready to be consumed.

### **The Ethnic Restaurant: An Experience in Authenticity?**

Experiencing the variety of contemporary consumer goods and the places of consumption stimulate the senses of taste and sight. Nutrition, has been overshadowed by the aesthetic experience of food. People are interested in savouring the tastes of other cultures in a particular setting. Most of the print space in Italian travel and entertainment magazines is devoted to 'the culture of taste'. The magazine *Gulliver* (2002) states that in Padua, it is possible to eat Japanese food underwater, in a restaurant that simulates a submarine, with port-holes and rocks. Another restaurant in Piacenza emphasizes the spirit of travel by displaying a details from different countries in every corner. It offers a mix of African, Asian and American cuisines. Finally, there is a restaurant that incorporates new and seductive sensorial experiences: one can order a shiatzu massage before or during the meal.

In analyzing spaces of 'ethnic' food consumption questions are raised concerning social identity and how the West continues to represent others (in fact most of these fashionable places are organized by Westerners). This issue becomes more pressing when a society is pervaded by multiple and syncretic tastes and heterogenic narrative codes. If we linked food experience to our identity – multi-ethnic contextualization of contemporary food – and to the notion 'we are what we eat', we can be described as unstable subjects, in constant contact between the global and the local, and so dissatisfied with the simple act of eating that it must be spectacularized.

The symbolic aspect of food has been tackled in many studies that deal with its role in social traditions (Bourdieu 1979; Douglas and Isherwood 1979). According to Bourdieu (1979), food is a social demarcator, distinguishing status, marginalizing certain groups and defining social boundaries. In contrast, La Cecla (1997) maintains that food is one of the first and more accessible areas in which the boundary between different cultures can be crossed. 'Tasting' other cuisines is a valuable means of cultural contact; taste is the text that needs to be translated. Today, taste is no longer sufficient to make us cross this boundary. All the senses must be stimulated. The experience must be total. Seductive techniques are therefore crucial for creating spaces of consumption.

The Florentine 'India – Not Just A Restaurant' is interesting because of the particular type of syncretism it encapsulates. First, the restaurant is a poly-sensory zone of Indian experience. Second, it has managed to merge Western and Eastern cultures while using strategies of experiential marketing. It will be useful to analyse the quality of the experiential zone before looking at the details of this restaurant.

Many ethnic restaurants offer an atmosphere strongly marked by the characteristic traits of the culture of origin. The farther away a restaurant is from its origin, the more it is constrained to theatricalize that culture. Experiential micro-space is built to attract a particular type of consumer; its presumed 'authenticity' is directly proportional to the cultural distance of the consumer. In this case, the farther the consumer is from Indian culture, the more the restaurant is forced, paradoxically, to create a hybrid zone based on Western desires, unfaithful to its original context.

'India – Not Just A Restaurant' reproduces a slice of India – including imported objects, artisan decorations, waiters' costumes – that is aestheticized, and therefore immune from the historical changes that all cultures are subjected to. Yet it is this exercise in style that allows for experiential consumption; it is the reproduction of the extremes of typicality that makes the environment rich. Here, Indian typicality is built on Western desires which are always brought near the concept of authenticity, both in ethnicity and location, but more frequently ethnicity is exclusively tied to otherness, forgetting the dialogical aspect of the term. The commercialization of identity shows itself to be a symbolic practice founded on a nostalgia for tradition and for the location of origin.

'India – Not Just A Restaurant' is an example of the hypothesis that consumption is a form of ethnic experience where the consumer is offered an

entrance to 'altered' cultures in their context. In the menu of 'India – Not Just A Restaurant' the aim of the restaurant reads: 'An India to taste, to smell, to observe, to touch, to listen to, an India mysterious and rich where the heart delights and the senses are stimulated. Let yourself be transported on this unique voyage, letting your emotions and curiosity run...' This India however, is falsely traditional. It is only a Western spectacularization of an Indian culture that is in a persistent state of typicality. Removed from the original location, which is created from experiential marketing research, the consumer is now a sensorial traveller of the zones of consumption. A cultural association in Turin promotes urban tours called, 'Tourists for home', with itineraries that vary from visiting Asian shops to dining at Latin American restaurants. The concept is built on contemporary ideas of travelling. Not only does the person travel, but the culture and the objects that the trip incorporates travel too. The problem is that a culture that travels is a culture that ceases to reflect the typicality of its original location. This typicality is now subject to a process of constant contamination because of its dislocation among a pluralized context.

In *Dining Out* (1989), Finkelstein proposes a descriptive typology of restaurants based on styles of eating out. In the first category, restaurants that are '*Fete speciale*', have a material organization aimed at attracting the guest. In the second category, the 'parodist restaurant' offers a particular experience through a recreated atmosphere. Finally, there are restaurants of economic convenience, including ethnic restaurants. Today, ethnic restaurants can no longer be confined to convenience, but overlap into the first two categories.

'India – Not Just A Restaurant' typifies a narrative space that has intensified the food experience, and has mixed communicative codes. Upon entering the restaurant, the consumer can gaze through kitchen windows at tandoori ovens. The room itself is furnished with typical Indian tapestries, masks and photographs of colonial times. However, its novelty comes from the small bazaar where one can buy jewellery, incense, statuettes, photographs and books on India; it is now possible to bring home a piece of this culture. Next to the bazaar there are an exhibition of antique turbans, a reconstructed bar with all the Indian magic to offer cocktails and a television channel dedicated to Indian soap operas. The evenings are enlivened by dance performances, magic and Indian stories. 'India – Not Just A Restaurant' succeeds in fusing the reconstruction of a local culture with a global design defined by new communicative modalities in which to produce an Indian experience. It points to the internal contradiction of liberating ethnicity from the Western obsession that wants it tied to its authenticity, unmoved from its place of origin. In spite of the fact that it is based on Indian authenticity, 'India – Not Just A Restaurant' occupies a frontier zone in which the homogeneity of the represented nation is transformed in a dislocated cultural destination. On the one hand, a stigmatized Indian culture is in a state of pre-modern inertia; on the other hand, the evident falsification of the context unveils the stereotype of a recreated atmosphere. Here, ethnicity is fundamentally a consumption benefit and a question of style, a sign with no referent. Even ethnic consumption is not an exception to the normal

dynamics of contemporary consumer experience; instead, it represents a variant theme of consumption based on the supply and demand of experience. In reality, certain types of ethnic consumption and those of the West, are moving along the same axis and with the same objectives but we always forget the presence of a white ethnicity and we find it in exotic cultures that are considered to be authentic and unpolluted. developing a distance between us and them.

However, the cultural syncretism espoused by the cosmopolitan experience of the Gallery Hotel Art differs from the experience of authenticity staged by 'India – Not Just A Restaurant'. The two spaces of consumption use different typologies of taste. The panorama of taste – the taste-scape – is the field in the distinctive character is played. In the case of the Gallery Hotel Art, the cosmopolitan experience is represented by a particular taste-scape. It is refined and contaminated by oriental styles, aromas, and chains of expository semantics that travel from the public space of the art gallery to the inviting atmosphere of the living room. The cosmopolitan citizen is such because she or he metaphorically transits between styles and heterogenic architectural modernity. The furnishings, displayed as if they were works of art and unique pieces, emphasize the distinctive taste of their viewers and multiply the sense of their own temporary inertia. In 'India – Not Just A Restaurant', regardless of the aesthetic furnishings, the taste-scape is less refined. It recreates the Indian legacy, based on a folkloric idea of culture, in which the tourist experience attract the visitors to this poly-sensorial fragment of India. Here, taste is not associated with the refined art of the world, but is intended to recreate an authentic cultural context, which in reality is just a detached territorial fragment of Indian culture.

The three multi-factorial dimensions of the created environment – the multifunctional, the poly-sensorial and the pluri-localization of a thematic space – are some of the most important contributions to the creation of an experience and to the weight of a suitable lifestyle.

'India – Not Just A Restaurant' is a multifunction place. It gathers different functions that were once kept separated. It is the case of a restaurant that is organized as a museum, a bazaar and a place of entertainment; at the same time it stimulates all the senses of the consumers. Finally, it is pluri-localized in a state of culture characterized by a localized (and at the same time de-localized) Indian site, which claims to be an authentic scenario that in effect is also contaminated by Italian style and modern Indian and in general ethnic Western standards.

## **Conclusion**

The discussion developed in this chapter has underlined the importance of the *experience* in the new forms of consumption. In particular, this study identifies the principles on the basis of which the layout of some of the new spaces of consumption is organized in order to convey in the consumer the emotion of a specific and unique cultural experience. Multi-functionalism and poly-sensorial factors in the pluri-localization of cultures are key aspects of such a context.

The symbolic analysis of the activity of consumption demonstrates the ways in which a large number of consumers are nowadays much more interested in buying a living thematic experience than simply acquiring goods. On the other hand, on an empirical level, the study has shown the presence of two kinds of cultural flow that are used to give meaning to the experience that is being sold. To understand this point, it has been necessary to take into account the fact that the communicative patterns embedded in goods have a multifactor logic so as to intensify the characteristic of the experience.

Basically, contemporary consumers try to buy things that can create private relationships with their emotions, but above all with their principles and tastes. In other words, buying is a complex experience capable of giving meaning to those emotional contexts and relationships that, at same time, can give relevance and expression to people's lifestyle symbols.

Even if different characteristics of different cultures are present in the exhibition of a thematic experience, the analysis has stressed that the practice of enriching the environment of commercial spaces can also be carried out on a cosmopolitan and local level. The evocative power of a place is one of the most important factors in giving birth to an experience. For this reason, I have translated the multicultural aspects of the experience of consumption into cosmopolitan, which is to say the aesthetization of identity and cultural traits. The ethnic identity is thus invested of a pluri-localized power as a means of communication: of our personal belonging to the local and global culture.

The discussion has identified the actual expression of contemporary cultural flow, which fluctuates between flows of locality and of cosmopolitan and hybridization. Empirical analysis has shown that contemporary consumers wander among experiences as if they were travelling to exotic destinations, thus transforming a daily activity, such as that of consuming, into a special and rich event that gives meaning to their personal urban practices.

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