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Department of Geography

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Oct 4\textsuperscript{th}, 2001
ABSTRACT

Canadian politicians have stated that India-Canada relations are grounded in "people-to-people links". These links have been formed over the last century through a process of immigration that articulates specific regions of India—Doaba in Punjab—with particular regions of Canada—initially British Columbia, and now the metropolitan areas of Toronto and Vancouver. Employing the theoretical lens of transnationalism and a methodological approach based on networks, this thesis argues that the presence of extensive transnational linkages connecting immigrants to their sites of origin, rather than limit national Canadian citizenship practice, can actually enhance it. I examine how Punjabi immigrants activate linkages that span borders and fuse distant communities and localities, as well as highlighting how the state is involved in the regulation and monitoring of such connections. My findings indicate that the operation of state officials varies according to the nature of the exchange. Whereas immigration is differentially controlled at the micro-scale of the individual according to a range of factors such as race, class and gender; inanimate objects such as goods and capital are less regulated, despite the significant material effects associated with their transmission. Indian immigrants are not however, passive recipients of state regulation at the scale of the individual, and instead emerge as active participants in a Canadian democratic system that enables the individual to challenge certain bureaucratic decisions and hold federal departments accountable. In addition, contrary to ideas of transnational immigrant actors possessing new forms of transnational or "post-national" citizenship, this research suggests that immigrants value the traditional right of citizenship to protect national borders and determine who may gain access.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are a number of people I must thank both in Canada and India who have made this research possible. My gratitude extends to all those who assisted with my research, but in Vancouver I must thank G.S. Dhesi, A. Sull, and the Gill family. In India a huge debt of gratitude goes to Gurmit Singh and his family for acting as my hosts and more importantly, my family away from home. Officials with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and the Department of Trade and Foreign Affairs assisted me, especially in Delhi and Mumbia. At UBC my supervisor Dan Hiebert, and my committee, David Ley, Harjot Oberoi, Youtien Tsing and Trevor Barnes, have provided important support and encouragement. I thank Geraldine Pratt for the opportunity to be involved with the Metropolis Community Studies project, which examined issues of immigrant settlement in Surrey. Fellow graduate students in the Geography department at UBC have provided an intellectually stimulating and supportive environment, but I am particularly grateful to Jennifer Hyndman, Alison Mountz and Caroline Desbiens, who have been constant companions through the trials and tribulations of completing a PhD. My research would not have been possible without funding, and I am happy to acknowledge the support of the Indo-Canadian Shastri Institute, who funded my work in India, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the University of British Columbia for Graduate Fellowships, and The Vancouver Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis (RIIM) for research funds. Finally I thank Ben for being supportive and understanding throughout this whole process, and William, whose arrival marked the final phase of this venture.
INTRODUCTION

Immigration from India to Canada exhibits a particularly distinctive geography centered on migration from Punjab into Canada’s main metropolitan regions. This pattern has emerged over the last century within a context of highly racialized immigration policies. It is with this historical backdrop and through the conceptual lens of transnationalism that I examine contemporary immigrant networks between India and Canada, and the role of the state in regulating and monitoring those linkages. My findings reveal the existence of active immigrant-led political, social and economic networks between the two regions, resulting in significant transformations. Many of the transformations I examine are socio-economic in nature, but what emerges most strongly through my research is evidence of transformations that are highly political in formation and consequence. As a result of these findings I contend that the presence of extensive transnational networks connecting immigrants to their sites of origin and destination, rather than limit Canadian and Indian citizenship practice actually enhance it. My thesis therefore counters the traditional argument that immigrants who maintain ties with their home country are somehow only partially committed to the receiving country, and recognizes that within an increasingly globalized world, immigrant actors who have an interest in building ties across national boundaries offer the potential to enhance the state’s access to more expansive social, political and economic circuits. These effective transnational processes evident both in the source and destination regions are both grounded in and enhanced by the distinct geography of the migratory circuits established between India and Canada. While this connection between Punjab and British Columbia has been
anecdotaly obvious to Indian immigrants and immigration officials for decades, numerical evidence of the link has only been systematically collected by Citizenship and Immigration Canada since 1998. One indication of the maturity of this relationship between the two regions is illustrated by political events in British Columbia during 2000.

On Thursday February 24th 2000, Ujjal Dosanjh, an Indian immigrant from Dosanjh Kalan village District Jalandhar Punjab, assumed the leadership of British Columbia’s then ruling New Democratic Party, becoming the first minority immigrant premier of a Canadian province. It is entirely appropriate that British Columbia become the first Canadian province to be headed by an immigrant minority premier, and that he be a Sikh from District Jalandhar, Punjab—because the history of British Columbia is also part of the diasporic history of Sikhs from Punjab. The ongoing intensity of this bond was reflected in the treatment Dosanjh received during a visit to Punjab in December of 2000 (McInnes, 2000). Many opposition politicians and media outlets interpreted the exuberant celebrations, both popular and official, that accompanied his originally ‘personal’ visit to Punjab as inappropriate (Willcocks, 2000). The media’s obsession with Dosanjh’s treatment in Punjab displayed their lack of awareness both of the Indian cultural norm of paying deference to honourable guests, and the close nature of the linkages between the two regions. This spatial relationship between British Columbia and Punjab—more specifically Greater Vancouver and Doaba—is strikingly apparent when

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1 Data indicate that currently just over 55 percent of total Indian immigration applications originate from Punjab and Haryana, but in the case of family class it increases to 80 per cent. The system to measure the origin of Indian immigrants has emerged as a result of pressure from Indo-Canadians in Canada keen to see a full-service office opened in Punjab (Personal interview, CIC Delhi December 17th 1999).

2 Though of minority background Joseph Atallah Ghiz, former Premier of Prince Edward Island, was born in Charlottetown, Canada, in 1945 (Prince Edward Island official Government website).
one travels through villages in Doaba. For example, during my fieldwork I visited a number of villages throughout Doaba, where a comment about Canada was sure to illicit responses such as, “my Cha Cha (uncle) lives 132nd and 80th Ave”, revealing the specificity of knowledge about the location of Punjabi families overseas, in this case in Surrey, British Columbia. For the vast majority of people in rural Doaba, the places where Punjabis have settled abroad, especially Canada, become material and imaginary extensions of their home in Punjab. Those connections are renewed each year, most often during the winter months, as Canadian-Punjabis—their mobility far more fluid than the limited movement of most rural Punjabis—visit their hometowns and villages. My interactions with people across Doaba, whether in towns or villages, continually supported my impression that most Punjabis have a relative or friend abroad. As people gossiped about the successes and failures of their extended kin (both spatially and relationally), it became apparent that this detailed awareness of the events in many overseas Punjabi communities forms part of a wider imaginary. It is these imaginary and material intersections that I illustrate and interpret in my dissertation.

In the following pages I will review the dissertation’s contents chapter by chapter, but first I offer a general review of my theoretical framework, that of transnationalism, and offer some important reflexive comments on the terminology I employ with regard to the subject. The term transnationalism has been developed by anthropologists to capture the spatial and social transformations introduced through increased immigration and international mobility and exchange. Prominent for their systematic attempt to chart transnational movements is the work of Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller and Christine Szanton Blanc (1994). They draw attention to immigrants whose everyday life involves
them in more than one nation-state, and consider the implications of this border straddling for group and national identities. They argue that "bounded social science concepts such as 'ethnic group', 'race' and 'nation' can limit the ability of researchers first to perceive and then to analyze the phenomenon of transnationalism" (p.30), and in the place of these bounded concepts, Basch et al encourage processual and historical approaches in order to examine how migrants re-territorialize their practices. Anthropologists such as Arjun Appadurai have also led the way in highlighting the problems associated with using constrained spatial concepts to understand global processes, arguing that while the 'area' is still an important focus of research, approaches involving bounded 'civilizations', 'cultures' and 'areas' frequently draw the wrong boundaries, ignore important interactions and are driven by obsolete assumptions about national interest, cultural coherence and global processes (The Ford Foundation, 1997 p.2).³

Overcoming the obstacles that accompany the use of contained socio-spatial categories demands integrative and flexible methodologies. To this end I have interpreted India-Canada immigrant networks through a post-positivist network methodology, which is both flexible and non-deterministic. Before outlining the dissertation's contents, however, it is necessary to review the use of language in naming the population this study is concerned with, because it is central to the implications of the research and its contribution to more general literature on Indian immigrants in Canada.

Throughout the following chapters a number of different words will be used to refer to immigrants from India, but traditionally the majority have been Jat Sikhs from Doaba in Punjab, a region containing the districts of Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr and Karpurtala (see figure 1). Where state-collected data is used, I maintain the general

³ The White Paper can be found at http://www.uchicago.edu/cis/globalization/white-paper.html
reference to those of “South Asian origin”; in other cases the term “Indo-Canadian” is used in order to be reflective of a wider South Asian based identity, often employed by NGOs and political lobby groups. In cases where I draw upon my own research, I use regional identifiers, most often Punjabi. While Sikhism is strongly associated with Punjab, it is not the case that all Punjabis are Sikhs. To refer to a person as Punjabi does imply certain shared cultural understandings, which may or may not include religious influences emanating from Sikhism. Despite the dominant presence of Sikhs within the immigrant population from Punjab, I avoid the general term Sikh in reference to the population in question because it allows me to develop a more expansive frame of reference sensitive to issues of class, gender and age as opposed to religion alone. I also want to specify the regional focus of my work without declaring it too exclusive with reference to identity. My reasons for not referring exclusively to immigrants from Punjab as Sikhs, is to escape the overbearing debates of religion that tend to dominate work the region. I choose to use the term Punjabi primarily to indicate a geographical origin, but also to indicate my interest in the cultural identity of individuals whose origins lie in the region of Punjab, as opposed to locating my arguments within debates pre-framed by questions of Sikh orthodoxy, which I prefer not to extensively engage with. I recognize that Sikh identity is also a highly cultural as well as religious marker, and shaped by complex social issues of class, gender, and regional origin. However, in the context of transnational links, work on Sikhism tends to be drawn into an analysis of politico-religious networks and issues of Khalistani separatism, as Tatla (1999) has eloquently shown. I tend not to engage directly with those concerns, preferring instead to

4 For a discussion of the complexities of “Punjabi” self-identity in London, especially within the context of the partition, see Raj (1997).
examine more popular aspects of identity and society with regard to Punjabi immigrant networks. Having said that, I do recognize the complexity of debates on Sikh identity (see Kaur (1986) for example), and do not intend to dismiss them, but merely simplify my own use of terms. Therefore, throughout the following chapters I normally refer to Canadian Punjabis, people of South Asian origin or Indo-Canadians, rather than Sikhs *per se*.

It is important to mention the cultural context within which my research is set, because it shapes the type of contribution my work offers. By diverting my attention away from a preoccupation with religion, this research contributes to literature on diasporic Sikhs and Punjabis through an illustration of grounded, ‘popular’ interactions between places and social groups. By escaping the dominant lens of religious spirituality, and considering instead the everyday issues of family, marriage, citizenship practice and migration, I illustrate some important connections previously underemphasized. The metaphor of the network provides my methodological approach to understanding these linkages, as well as my conceptual tool for illustrating them.

Drawing upon a number of network conceptualizations, I develop a methodological approach based upon the notion of transnational networks, that possess three main components: *connectivity*, meaning articulation and linkage; *circulation*, referring to repetitive and recursive movement through space and time; and *transformation*, implying processes of change across multiple spaces and scales. Instead of merely charting the empirical existence of such linkages, this approach allows for a synthetic interpretation of events, and registers patterns, processes and outcomes of transnational immigrant behaviour. Each of the following three sections in the
dissertation primarily addresses one of these three components, although each is implied throughout the whole. In the first section I consider the issue of connectivity, both spatial and social, through a review of transnational literature and a discussion of my methodology.

In Chapter One I reveal how transnationalism allows for analysis grounded in immigrant actions and sensitive to issues of internal difference, but not ignorant of wider processes of global change. I review the transnationalism literature with reference to each of the three network components I have identified, and expand the geographical range of transnational debate through consideration of Indian examples. I then consider the contribution geographers can offer to the transnational debate, but argue that this is only possible after the subject surmounts traditional sub disciplinary separations. In place of overly abstract pontifications regarding the rise of immigrant-led transformations of place, I argue that detailed empirical research sensitive to differences of class, generation and gender (while recognizing the enduring power of state regulatory frameworks), is vital. My research therefore makes an original contribution to the field of transnational research because my approach offers a detailed and empirically rich account sensitive to process, difference and the state, and my geographical focus—India and Canada—is novel in a field dominated by studies on the United States of America and its southern neighbours.

In Chapter Two I present my methodological approach, which is grounded in social and spatial connectivity. My research is based upon a combination of interviews, participant observation, and the use of secondary data collected across the multiple field sites that comprise the transnational field I investigate. I review the academic context
that has enabled the acceptance of a transnational network research approach, and detail how connectivity, built through intensive social contact with research subjects and extensive spatial connection across multi field sites, is central to the success of the project. I make the argument that both qualitative and quantitative methods are essential to building a comprehensive interpretation of transnational processes and outcomes, and reveal how the two approaches can be reconciled through a critical engagement with discourses of objectivity. My research approach is guided by the argument that “academic writing should be seen as a process rather than a product” (Pratt, 1993, p. 51), and therefore I focus particular attention on issues of positionality and gender. This permits me to reveal the unique challenges of a transnational approach, while problematizing assumptions of distance and power between researcher and researched.

The circulatory nature of transnational networks, and the interaction between the immigrant individual and the state will be considered in Section Two. Immigrant networks play an important role in connecting places through their actions in transferring people, capital, ideas and goods between places. In Chapters Three and Four I consider the movement of people, and how the state is differentially engaged with the various components of this circulatory process. In Chapter Three I interpret the magnitude of Indian migration to provide a context, and discuss the effect this has on social and political relations within India and Canada. I demonstrate how the geography of migration between India and Canada has shaped the relations between the two nations, revealing how these immigrant networks, rather than determined by the state’s labour needs, are created through the social needs of immigrants themselves. The agent, therefore, can initiate and determine the nature of immigrant linkages between nations,
creating networks with spatially concentrated origin and destination points held together through social relations of family.

Since the state is hampered in its ability to shape the geography of immigration between India and Canada, resources are directed at controlling the individual migrant. I consider this regulatory aspect in Chapter Four, where I sharpen my focus and expose some of the ways in which the Canadian state, through its officials with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), attempt to regulate the movement of people at the scale of the body. I consider how this regulation is challenged by immigrants through a number of options that utilize democratic practices of representation. I also reflect on how this intersection of immigrant practices and political representation within a transnational frame alters traditional views of the state and citizenship. I interpret the importance of citizenship as participation, and support my assertions with detailed empirical material illustrating exactly how immigrants perform citizenship through specifically state-centric political processes in order to advance forms of transnational linkage. In keeping with traditional representations of Sikhism, I stress political action, but instead of that politics being oppositional and marginalized, as with Khalistan (Tatla, 1999; Dusenbery, 1995), such behaviour is demonstrated through the interaction of politicians and constituents via democratic channels of inclusion. My focus on political interactions provides evidence of enhanced citizenship participation within Canada, where the exercise of democratic rights is seen as a responsibility as well as a privilege of citizenship (CIC, 2000a). Indo-Canadians are able to influence the political actions of their democratically elected representatives, and rather than being politically marginalized, many immigrants inhabit a position of power and influence. I illustrate this through a number of empirical
examples: the involvement of immigrants in challenging immigration decisions and shaping the geography and composition of migrant flows; in influencing immigration policy change; and through active involvement in trade, financial and diplomatic exchanges between India and Canada. Such interaction and involvement can enhance associations between Punjab and Canada, continuing to strengthen these communities and their transnational networks.

Chapter Five continues the consideration of circulation, this time interpreting the movement of capital, not as a disembodied representation of wealth and power, but as an intensely embodied commodity, the use of which is determined not by economic rationales, but deeply cultural bonds to place. The movement of capital across translocalities such as Vancouver and Punjab is difficult if not impossible to chart accurately, and I emphasize this reality not just for capital exchange at the subnational level, but also in order to query the accuracy of other forms of measurement, such as worker remittances. The opaqueness of capital circulation needs to be stressed in order to highlight the complexity and limited use of presenting quantitative measures of capital exchange as sole evidence of transnational outcomes. In order to estimate the significance of global capital exchange, data on capital transfers needs to be contextualized within relevant socio-cultural bases. The last circulatory process I consider in Chapter Six is trade and the movement of goods. I review the literature on trade and immigration, and present evidence to support the link through qualitative research. I argue that Canada actively seeks to benefit from the position of immigrants as possible intermediaries, and certain immigrants emerge in this process as active economic agents promoting Canadian and Indian trade and financial linkages. I maintain that the difficulty economists have in
envisioning the linkage between trade and immigration is a constructive one, since the opaqueness of the connection is useful in preventing immigrants from being overly represented and valued as commodified components of the global economy.

Consideration of the circulatory dimensions of transnational networks illustrates how immigrants' transnational linkages can enhance forms of economic and social citizenship practices beneficial to the state, as both Canada and India strive to engage with the global economy. Immigrants are able to operate across this transnational landscape because globalization has reduced barriers, and the ability to straddle national borders has been reinterpreted from a negative sign of partial integration, to a positive measure of cultural and economic value. However, the circulatory magnitude of such linkages is difficult to quantify, and this obscurity is indicative of the embodied and culturally grounded nature of such transfers. Both capital and goods do not circulate independently, but in conjunction with people, and are thus influenced by socio-cultural meanings of place and positionality.

Section Three considers how transnational networks cause transformations across space and through time, especially through citizenship practices such as fundraising, religious attachment and political participation in immigration issues. Chapter Seven concentrates on fundraising, and the ways in which immigrants become active agents of change by linking communities across Canada and India in order to promote development outside of state control and influence. Attachment to the land of birth—the power of place—is a central aspect of Punjabi identity, and I support this assertion through a range of empirical material in order to argue that this connectivity, and the related transformations it encourages, while rooted in associations formed in the past, will
continue to mature into the future. The outcome of active immigrant-led development in Punjab is fragmented and partial, and the contribution to development, though in many cases positive, needs to be understood as grounded in cultural attachments to place and the imperative of status building as opposed to altruistic donation. In Chapter Eight I continue my consideration of transnational transformations, but this time I consider Vancouver. I present a number of quantitative measures to reveal how Vancouver’s population has changed and diversified as a result of immigrant networks centered on Punjab, and indicate the specific geographical outcomes of these linkages. I also consider how Canadian Punjabi/Sikh identity is influenced by changing linguistic and religious practices, and how second generation Sikhs, as well as the wider Vancouver community, are affected by such transformations. In particular I argue that a process of linguistic and religious deterritorialization is occurring, and is defined by tension and conflict as globally dispersed communities attempt to redefine their identities and attachment to place. This is indicative of a process of transnationalization, where the meaning of Punjab is in constant flux and transition through time and across space. In Chapter Nine I demonstrate the centrality of gender, by documenting how active transnational marriage networks between India and Canada are shaped by overwhelming male preference, and how men and women differentially benefit from these arrangements. I argue that marriage practices between Canada and India are evidence of socially intensive but spatially extensive networks, where norms of tradition and transnationality merge. Across this transnational field, processes of inequity are challenged by Indo-Canadian women, who turn to the Canadian state to extend and promote Canadian norms of citizenship rights and protections throughout transnational migratory circuits. This can be seen as a
form of transnationalizing Canadian norms of greater gender equality. Citizenship practice is therefore enhanced through transnational behaviours, which are no longer necessarily in opposition to the interests of the state. Unlike many homogenous interpretations of ‘immigrant communities’, the chapters in section three illustrate the heterogeneity of Indo-Canadian immigrant networks, highlighting issues of class, generation and gender.

This dissertation assists in understanding more fully the cultural transformations occurring in Canadian cities with high immigration, and in the source regions in the developing economy of India. My research is the first to explicitly consider Indian immigration to Canada within a transnational frame, which emphasizes both the role of structure, and the role immigrant actors play in creating and maintaining certain interactions between the two countries. It will further contribute to the debate on immigration and transnationalism through a more detailed consideration of transnational networks, and the relationship of the state to them. My movement through this transnational space, using methodologies that are flexible and encourage interaction with diverse sources of material, has resulted in some important claims regarding immigrant networks between India and Canada. I have provided an empirically rich interpretation of transnational linkages between Canada and India, arguing that citizenship practice and participation can be enhanced through such intersections. Citizenship practice across transnational fields is therefore not a zero sum equation, and immigrants can be an effective force in both source and destination contexts.
CHAPTER ONE

TRANSNATIONALISM: CONNECTIVITY ACROSS SPACE AND SCALE

In this chapter I selectively review the literature on transnationalism to highlight two contributions my research will make. The first is to develop the geographical range of the literature by departing from the dominance of USA and Central/South American based studies to a case study based on Canada-India links. The second contribution emerges from an explicit and critical understanding of the role of the state in regulating, monitoring and managing flows of people and associated capital and goods. This compensates for the dominance of overly celebratory readings of the retreat of the state in the face of increased processes of globalization (Ohmae, 1995). My rationale for selectively reviewing this literature is to illustrate how transnational networks facilitate connectivity, circulation and transformation, three themes I will continue to employ throughout the dissertation. In this chapter and the next, I focus on the need for conceptual and empirically connectivity.

Transnationalism has attracted the attention of scholars who seek to understand how global migration and globalizing processes have altered the role of the nation-state in shaping economy, polity and society. In its place, researchers have attempted to understand how new articulations formed by non-state actors span national boundaries, and enable greater socio-spatial connectivity and transformation. The word transnationalism is not itself a new creation. In a prescient article published in 1916, the
word ‘trans-national’ was used in a discussion regarding immigration and related societal transformations:

America is coming to be, not a nationality but a trans-nationality, a weaving back and forth, with the other lands, of many threads of all sizes and colors. Any movement which attempts to thwart this weaving, or to dye the fabric any one color, or disentangle the threads of the strands, is false to this cosmopolitan vision. (Bourne, 1916, p. 96).

Despite this early usage, the term does not come into wider circulation until the 1970s, when used to refer to changes in the economic sphere with the rise of integrated multinational or transnational corporations. Seen as the engines of growth and shapers of an increasing global economy, scholars turned to understanding how corporations were expanding investments overseas in a search for cheaper sites of production and potential markets. Geographers have been central in examining how these changes manifest themselves through economic space, by considering such things as the growth and spread of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as capital sought out new production sites and markets, the rise of the service sector and global cities which facilitated these international transactions, and the rise of a New International Division of Labour (NIDL), where communities in developing economies become incorporated into the expansive global capitalist economy through processes of production and consumption (Dicken, 1998). These aspects of trans or multinational corporate practice have been an important focus for geographers for at least the last three decades, and continue to be a dominant academic interest.¹

As globalization processes have accelerated, and the technologies of time-space compression have made interactions across vast distances easier, faster and more

¹ This interest is understandable since these corporate networks are responsible for two-thirds of international trade (Douglass, 2000), and increasingly focus their decision making centres in world cities, making transnational networks of exchange ever more dense, concentrated and significant (Taylor, 2000).
frequent, the dominance of corporate and state actors in conceptualizations of global change has been countered by an awareness of transnational networks shaped by individuals, especially immigrants. The same technologies that enable global corporations to conquer distance—email, fax, telephone, video, international flights—are now familiar to the vast majority of the urban world, permitting non-state actors to develop dense social networks between physically distant locales. These conditions have set in motion a process of transnationalism that is more grounded and individualized, networking people, communities and places rather than solely corporations and capital.

Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Christina Szanton Blanc (1992) are responsible for one of the first systematic and comprehensive studies on transnationalism. Using examples drawn from the Eastern Caribbean, Haiti and the Philippines, the authors argue that social science interpretations of migration that focus solely on incorporation into the host nation are inadequate for capturing the reality of migrants “who live their lives across borders” (1992, p.ix). In a later study they define transnationalism as,

the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multistranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders. (Basch et al, 1994 p.7)

While acknowledging the contribution of earlier scholars in identifying this new phenomenon, Glick Schiller et al develop a more global and systematic approach to understanding immigrant transnational processes, in place of the individual descriptive studies offered earlier.²

² Glick Schiller, et al note that in 1986 the American Academy of Political and Social Science held a conference entitled: From foreign workers to settlers? - Transnational migration and the emergence of a new minority. However the authors suggest that the conference was public policy orientated and did not develop the concept of transnational migration (Glick-Schiller, 1992).
Since the early 1990s the literature on transnationalism and immigrant networks has burgeoned. Although differing contexts shape various presentations of the social-spatial networks and outcomes, common themes trace immigrant-led transnational articulations and practices that reorder the meanings of space, citizenship, community and identity. These numerous practices include political networking and mobilization, economic transfers, social networks and cultural production.

**Defining Transnationalism**

Transnationalism, broadly defined, encompasses a wide range of interests. Dealing with the increasingly large literature drawn from anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, and others has become a daunting task. It is difficult to generalize about this literature because authors have made different decisions about which behaviours we should focus on, and therefore which outcomes we should register as transnational. I will consider this by reviewing some of the literature that attempts to define transnationalism, as well as discussions regarding methodology.

Basch, Glick Schiller and Blanc-Szanton’s relatively early work on transnationalism sought to posit transnational movements and outcomes within a strong political economy tradition. The authors contend that the major analytical frame dominating perspectives of immigration envisioned individuals only as labour power and not as social and political actors. Basch *et al* develop a framework for their transnational migration theory based on four premises. Firstly they argue; "Transnational migration is inextricably linked to the changing conditions of global capitalism and must be analyzed

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3 The range of journals that have emerged in the last decade with an interest in transnationalism is indicative of the growing literature: *Disapora, Public Culture, Global Networks.*
within the context of global relations between capital and labour" (Basch et al., 1994, p.23). The authors acknowledge that transnational connections are not new, but they have intensified under processes of globalization. They argue that the interpenetration of capitalism into more and more regions of the world marks new migrant experiences, and that global restructuring has damaged economies of the developing world, further intensifying the need and desire for migration. Secondly the authors contend, "Transnationalism is a process by which migrants, through their daily life activities and social, economic, and political relations, create social fields that cross national boundaries" (p.27) The authors feel, however, that much of the literature in relation to this remains "evocative rather then analytical" (Basch et al., 1994, p.28). The authors acknowledge that network analysis has been employed to consider immigrant social relations, prioritizing their role as social agents. However Basch et al want to move beyond network analysis and consider the outcomes of such transnational networks by viewing “migrants as active agents in a process of hegemonic construction" (p. 29).

Thirdly, the authors argue, “bounded social science concepts such as ‘ethnic group’, ‘race’ and ‘nation’ can limit the ability of researchers first to perceive and then to analyze the phenomenon of transnationalism.” (p.30). These bounded concepts have been taken for granted, and in their place the authors encourage an awareness based on a sense of the processual and historical in order to examine how migrants re-territorialize their practices between and across places. Fourthly Basch et al argue, by living their lives across borders, transmigrants find themselves confronted with and engaged in the nation building processes of two or more nation-states. Their identities and practices are configured by hegemonic categories, such as race and ethnicity, that are deeply embedded in the nation building processes of these nation-states (p.34).  

\[\text{Portes et al., (1999) have critiqued Basch et al's use of the word transmigrant, Portes et al maintain that the term immigrant is still an adequate one for discussing transnational practices.}\]
Here the authors argue they are interested in the paradoxical increase in cultural and political differentiation in an age of increasing homogeneity of global capitalism. One central route to an analysis of this differentiation is through a focus on the nation, which Basch et al argue, "is to talk about race" (p.37). In striving to move beyond this, they point to gender as a new location "from which to construct identities that allow us to think beyond the nation building processes of particular nation-states" (p.40).

In thinking beyond the nation, transnational approaches have risked occluding the continued importance of national mechanisms of control and regulation. Glick Schiller (1999) has acknowledged that claims about the emergence of the "deterritorialized" state are misplaced, and that even though processes of transnationalism have altered some aspects of the state, the boundedness and national vision of the state is still deeply entrenched. This is an important admission, since much writing on transnationalism tends to glorify the freedom of movement, without being attuned to the continued presence of the state in regulating and controlling the movement of bodies through immigration regimes (Sassen, 1996). Despite these shortcomings, Basch et al's four premises are highly relevant to any work that engages in transnational social processes. Their approach, grounded in an investigation of issues of power, class, gender, the state and political economy, reverberate with what Mitchell appeals for in geography's approach to transnationalism, where she argues that it is,

imperative to maintain a knowledge of the structural principles undergirding a system that infects and is infected by every other system in an *unequal exchange*. Without

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5 Consider the different representations of travel and movement elucidated by James Clifford and bell hooks, which blatantly reveal the importance of embodiment: how the individual's identity is read off the body to create different experiences of movement and control (hooks, 1992; Clifford, 1992). The state plays a central role in deploying these regulatory mechanisms.
this, the power relations evident in every facet of transnational contact—between states, institutions and people—become lost (Mitchell, 1997 p.109).

Certainly much of the work that has emerged since the early 1990s has argued that more emphasis needs to be directed to the ways that processes of transnationalism are connected to processes of global capitalism (Ong, 1999). In order to make explicit the connections between processes of immigration and global capitalism, throughout this dissertation I attempt to employ a network approach based on circulation, connectivity and transformation, thereby incorporating processes and outcomes into my analysis. On balance however, whilst global capital is significant to global migration, I maintain that we should not allow it to blind us to behaviours that are deeply marked by particular cultural and social contexts and expectations, therefore my departure point is always the immigrant individual or family. What also seems to be less developed in transnational literature is a rigorous, explicit focus highlighting the differences in transnational behaviour and state processes of regulation as inflected through race, class and gender.\(^6\)

Despite the comprehensive work of Basch et al, there have been many more recent attempts to unravel and define what we should consider as important transnational actions. In particular, European interest in transnational immigrant processes—emerging somewhat later than in the USA—has produced some literature. Heavily influenced by Britain’s Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) sponsored Transnational Communities Project (Transcomm), attempts have been made to formulate the study of transnational processes, but how far they replace earlier attempts to theorize ideas of transnationalism is questionable. A series of working papers on the Transcomm web site

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\(^6\) Whilst Ong’s (1999) work is directed at a particular class location, she does not adequately differentiate the elite migrant from the general labouring migrant. In addition, her examination of gender seems underdeveloped.
reveals an interest in the work of sociologists and anthropologists such as Alejandro Portes, and Ulf Hannerz. Portes’ extensive work in migrant communities in the USA identifies him as an important and useful contributor to a European discussion of transnational communities. Portes’ early work on transnationalism identifies the strong connections he makes between processes of global capital and global labour migration, emphasizing the importance of political economy that Basch et al promote (Portes, 1997). In a later paper—published as part of a special issue of Ethnic and Racial Studies, edited by the director of the Transcomm Project, Steve Vertovec—Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999) provide a review of the “emergent field” of transnationalism and identify some pitfalls. They argue: “Transnational migration studies form a highly fragmented, emergent field which lacks both a well-defined theoretical framework and analytical rigour.” (p.218). To remedy this their first suggestion is to delimit the phenomenon by focusing only on novel and distinct behaviours in order “to justify a new area of investigation” (p.219). The article goes on to define what the authors see as transnational behaviour, including the nature of the community and the unit of analysis, arguing that the individual should be the starting point since transnationalism is based in the grass roots (this issue will be taken up in Chapter Four). Whilst Portes et al’s arguments are well intentioned and indeed important in delimiting an increasingly wide ranging and all-encompassing domain—as this chapter is no doubt revealing—there are problems with their argument: In attempting to define the area of transnationalism we run the risk of losing the interesting and creative dimensions that this relatively new research approach has delivered. We also have to be conscious that research sites are hosts to numerous contextual differences where wide-ranging global processes occur with multiple possible
outcomes. We also need to be sensitive to attempts to close off this field of enquiry by limiting what we consider to be transnational practice. This can be seen for example in the authors' attempts to delimit *who* can be considered a transnational actor.

For purposes of establishing a novel area of investigation, it is preferable to delimit the concept of transnationalism to occupations and activities that require regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders for their implementation. By the same token, it excludes the occasional gifts of money and kind sent by immigrants to their kin and friends (not an occupation) or the one-time purchase of a house or lot by an immigrant in his home country (not a regular activity) (p.219).

Portes et al (1999), partly due to their own research interests, tend to prioritize entrepreneurial activity. In particular their consideration of such actions tends to project an image of the entrepreneur as an agent resistant to the global capitalist labour system. Such claims need to be subjected to rigorous empirical research, since in certain contexts those same transnational entrepreneurs are themselves responsible for furthering the global capitalist labour process, including “old” immigration classes such as farm labour (Singh, 1987), and the new immigrant class of hi-tech software programmers (Lowell, 2000). Beside this, by defining as transnational only those who sustain links through regular mobility, we erase sensitivity to the way class and gender, for example, might alter behaviours with transnational meanings and significance. Take for example an elderly Sikh immigrant woman, who may move only infrequently between source and destination location, but her unpaid labour in the form of childcare is vital to the ability of her husband, son or daughter to move frequently between places of transnational business; or the family whose daughter or son have emigrated overseas, but social contact is maintained through other forms of emotional exchange, such as the telephone. Or consider the local village official who plays a central role in coordinating immigrant
financial contributions to transnational fundraising schemes, but who rarely transcends borders due to restrictive state immigration regulations that, despite the popular notions of a borderless world, are still highly impervious for certain people. While some are excluded from the regular and sustained practice of actual border crossings due to class, gender, age differences, they may well engage in other behaviours that bring them into transnational networks of exchange (for example religious meetings, tours, news distribution, fundraising etc). To delimit who we recognize as a transnational actor desensitizes us to the meanings of such transactions, which cannot be read merely through frequency of movement. A gift or letter sent occasionally, a decision to buy land, a psychological and emotional connection to a distant land, all these linkages, and the networks they are deployed through, may have different meanings and consequences not easily equated with the frequency with which they occur.

Expanding the Geographical Focus of Transnationalism

In addition to recognizing the need for a broad interpretation of transnational activity, there is also a need to recognize and illustrate wider geographies of transnationalism. The context of much transnational research has been focused on the United States and Central and South American movements (Goldring, 1998; Mountz and Wright, 1996; Rouse, 1991; Kearney, 1995). This fascinating land border has become a site replete with meaning for those whose lives are ruled by it, who desire to cross it, live close to it and for those who seek to ‘defend’ it. Though Chinese transnationalism has been considered, (Ong and Nonini, 1997; Ong, 1999) this is still highly focused on the United States.
Karen Leonard (1992), has focused on the Punjabi community in California, and provides an insightful consideration of the historical transformations that occurred with regard to identity and community formation. Early Sikh immigrants socially contained by racist immigration policies turned to local Hispanic women as wives, and formed a complex and fluid form of identity for their children. This process was reversed however when immigration policy was relaxed in the 1960s, and a new influx of immigrants from India arrived, who shunned the earlier Punjabi-Hispanic communities and encouraged older immigrants to return to traditional Sikh social customs. Though an important consideration of the linkages maintained through time as well as space with the Sikh community in California, Leonard’s study is still focused on the USA. Transnational literature not focused on the United States is limited, and there is a need to build a comparative framework for the interpretation of transnational communities outside of the USA’s direct influence. The development of transnational communities between Canada and India presents a study that does not focus solely on the land border of the USA, but reveals how a series of networks and intersections of place have historically developed as an outcome of a complex set of colonial relations. The construction of immigrant networks between India and Canada has developed over a longer time frame than many US-Central American connections, creating exchanges that have a longer duration and more mature consistency. In addition the contemporary Canadian case is less influenced by undocumented migration, countering the dominance of discourses of migrant marginalization evident in the USA. A focus on India-Canada links offers an useful alternative to transnational studies centered on the USA.
There are over 14 million people of Indian origin resident overseas, whose movements are the result of complex histories and migratory processes, and work tracing these migrations has been available for some time. Arthur Helweg has researched Indians overseas across a number of sites, and although not employing the terminology of transnationalism, his work reflects sensitivity to social networks that straddle multiple places. For example, his work on Sikhs in England (Helweg, 1979; 1983) reveals the significance of migrant and village links in ways that preempt later work on Mexican migrant remittances (Kearney, 1995). His later work focuses on "new" professional Indian immigrants and their decisions about home, identity, and children in the USA (Helweg, 1987; 1990) as well as in Australia (Helweg, 1991). In addition to these studies across numerous settlement sites, Helweg has retained an important interest in the impacts of migration on the sending nation (Helweg, 1984; 1989). In Canada Tara Singh Bains and Hugh Johnston (1995) have presented a very personal recollection of one individual's immigration experiences, highlighting the nature and extent of connection between Punjab and Vancouver. Also Buchignani (1987; 1989), in his reviews of work on South Asians in Canada, has suggested that more research is needed to consider the linkages immigrants maintain between Canada and India, suggesting that scholars of Indian migration—whilst not employing the terminology—have long been attuned to the potentially rich field of enquiry such a transnational lens might provide. More general work, while descriptive, considers the potential impacts of large Indian populations overseas not only on the settlement location, but upon the development of India (Jain, 1993; Madhavan, 1985; Weiner, 1982 and Barrier, 1989).
While much of the work on Indian immigration might be considered overly descriptive, the recent flurry of interest on transnationalism has produced surprisingly few South Asian focused articles (for an exception see Lessinger, 1992). More inspiring work has emerged from ethnic Indian women more attuned to issues of gender and transnational networks. Monisha Das Gupta (1997) complicates issues of transnational identity construction by looking at four second-generation women in the USA whose parents struggle to reconstruct their daughters' identities in opposition to both American, and modernizing middle-class Indian values. Parminder Bhachu’s (1986) work on diasporic Indian communities, especially from East Africa, has considered fashion and the development of transnational entrepreneurship by second-generation ethnic Indian women. Her most recent work argues that these women have been active in recoding Indian fashion away from the racialized interpretations prevalent in settlement societies such as the UK, into a globally desired commodity circulating between diasporic communities (Bhachu, 2000). Bhachu’s focus on second-generation women signals the importance of context, since South Asian immigrants in the UK now exhibit a demographic profile that includes a dynamic British-born generation, and the sophistication of this cohort is displayed through cultural productions ranging from film, (East is East, My Beautiful Launderette) to music (Apache Indian), to writing, and fashion. Whilst ethnic Indian migrant groups have not been heavily profiled in recent transnational literature, there is ample evidence that such a focus could produce examples that bring together issues of gender, generation and identity, as well as address some of the more structural concerns, such as development, citizenship and nationalism.
Transnationalism and Multiple Outcomes

The potential a transnational approach can offer to understanding immigrant linkages across space is apparent when we realize how extensive the concept has become. Many authors have outlined the wide range of meanings associated with transnationalism (Mahler, 1998; Vertovec, 1999), and while I do not intend to repeat them here, I offer Figure 1.1 as a schematic representation of relevant conditions and outcomes pertinent to this discussion.

Conditions are represented as operating on two fronts, the migrant and the nation-state. The first, the migrant, is seen as de-territorialized body-in-motion, and the other, the nation-state, is traditionally seen as territorially rooted and bounded. However, this characterization is subject to critical examination, since in many ways the state, through surveillance mechanisms, can be a fluid, mobile entity moving beyond the space of the border, for example in Chapter Nine I consider how Canadian officials exploit the absence of certain legal confidentiality rights in India in order to investigate and dismiss immigration applications; something they would be precluded from doing in Canada. The migrant is constructed as individual mobile labour power, but his or her social context—spouses, children and domesticity—often result in greater fixity and containment than governments and researchers assume. However, both the nation and the migrant have been affected by the processes of “time-space compression”, where the history of capitalism has produced “processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves” (Harvey, 1989, p.240). These new processes, especially transport
and communications, facilitate more frequent and comprehensive forms of connectivity across space. In addition to these technological developments, human rights legislation put into place after WWII has enforced the rights of individuals to seek asylum in other states when they find their status and security in jeopardy inside their own nation. Add to this the complexities of uneven development across a global landscape no longer bluntly divided by the major political and economic axis of east/west and north/south but increasingly landscapes where extreme wealth and poverty jostle at the meso and micro scale, and we can see how access to channels of information about opportunities in richer industrial states has a strong influence at a multitude of scales. I review each of the outcomes identified through a selective literature review, but I especially focus on literature illustrating South Asian transnational outcomes in order to counter the dominant geographical focus on the Americas in much transnational research. The outcomes I identify contribute to an understanding of the network approach and how it entails connectivity, circulation and transformation.

7 Human rights legislation in practice is increasingly an area of concern, as major refugee receiving nations of the past alter their commitment to accepting asylum seekers of the present. In its place these wealthy hegemonic nations seek ways to contain displaced people “over there”, close to the regions of conflict within refugee camps which, “remove evidence of human displacement from view and contain ‘the problem’ without resolution, as noncommunities of the excluded” (Hyndman, 2000 p.190).
Figure 1.1: Transnationalism: Conditions and Outcomes

- **Connectivity**: Intensification and deepening of transnational social and spatial articulations (Goldring 1998; Mountz and Wright 1996; Appadurai 1996; Kearney 1995; Rouse 1991)
- **Circulation**: Increased material flows (Jackson 2000; Portes 1997; Portes 1991)
- **Transformations I**: Transnational political networks (Basch 1994; Rajagopal 1997; Tatla 1999)
- **Transformations II**: New citizenship practice (Bauböck 2000; Faist 1999; Ong 1999; Soysal 1994; Spiro 2000)
Connectivity: Intensification and deepening of transnational social and spatial articulations

Social and spatial articulations formed by immigrants across multiple nation-states are not new. There is a long history of political, social and economic networks shaped by emigrants, which have been sustained and enlarged through the transmission of ideas, information, capital and people. Despite the long history of what we can, in retrospect, call transnational networks, these networks have been subjected to intensification and deepening due to the rapidity with which people can move themselves, their money, their news, and their ideas across space, producing increasingly efficient systems of connectivity. Generally most scholars addressing issues of transnationalism highlight the importance of socio-spatial connectivity and articulation, and it has been through such discussions that some of the richest and most inspirational work has emerged in relation to ideas of transnationalism, migration and nation. In his work on Mexican migrants from the rural municipio of Aguililla, Roger Rouse (1991) reflects on what he terms the “Social Spaces of Postmodernity”, using the everyday examples of interactions across a transnational canvas. Rouse ponders on the complexities such networks introduce for our ideas of space:

Migration has always had the potential to challenge established spatial images. It highlights the social nature of space as something created and reproduced through collective human agency and, in so doing, reminds us that, within the limits imposed by power, existing spatial arrangements are always susceptible to change (p.11).

Rouse portrays the social and economic dislocations associated with the new spatialities of migrant circuits as an emerging border zone, where the border represents not the actual
line of political demarcation, but a zone where opposing systems—white America and Latino migrant labour—come face to face:

Throughout this fractured territory, transnationalism, contradictions in development, and increasingly polarized economies are stretching images of community beyond their limits, bringing different ways of life into vivid, often violent juxtaposition, and encouraging the chronic reproduction of their incongruities (p.18).

Rouse’s sensitivity to social and spatial complexities revealed by Mexican migration to the USA presents new complexities about the nature of the world we live in, and about the increasing interpenetration and connectivity of spaces previously seen as separate; developed/underdeveloped, rural/urban, south/north. Michael Kearney’s (1995) work, again focusing on Mexico and the USA, draws similar conclusions. Working in the transnational space he refers to as Oaxacalifornia, Kearney attempts to find “ways of conceiving migration that are not predicated on modernist assumptions about time, space, and social identity” (p.228). The heart of this complexity is found in the lives migrants lead, which takes them through multiple social fields and identities as they move between different national, occupational and social locations. Rather than undermining de-development in the periphery however, Kearney argues that these processes are reproducing what Sassen-Koob has termed “peripheralization at the core” (Sassen-Koob, 1982). This process, Kearney goes on to argue,

is in large measure a dissolving of the structural and spatial distinctions that defined core and periphery, developed and de-developed, sending and receiving, and other such dualist oppositions so central to the identity and functioning of modern nation-states (p.240).

Both Rouse and Kearney reveal how increasing migration has complicated and rearranged the nature of space and spatial representations through magnifying incidents
of everyday life. Their influence can be seen in the growth of research directed at understanding these spatial transformations, such as Mountz and Wright (1996), who introduce the concept of a social field they call OP, a space stretching between Oaxaca and Poughkeepsie, within which the intricacies of daily life such as gossip, gendered expectations, and familial and social relations play an important controlling role.

Goldring’s (1998) work on returning migrants and their contributions to home associations in Mexico reveals how transnational migrants seek to enhance their social status in the home locale. This is an important argument, since status is built across transnational space and becomes a central component of identity, even for migrants who have settled permanently in the USA. Such connectedness across space escapes the opposition of the local against the global (Hall, 1991), by complicating the nature of localities as well as concepts of spatial scales. Examples of such studies focused on India are rare, but in a reflective essay on the Sikh *panth* or community Axel, (1996) reveals the complexity of connections between immigrant communities and nation-states:

The frontier of the Sikh diasporic social formation is indeed a transitional area, but one which inverts the purpose of the nation-state’s frontier: rather than producing separations between various states, it produces connections which not only ignore the valorized centers of these nation-states (i.e. capitals) but also orient its localities to a ‘nation’ (i.e. the *panth*) which is other (p.78).

Such discourses of space and the forms of connectivity immigrants build between different spaces, ushers in completely different understandings of what immigration means for the individual and the host and home states.
Circulation: Increased material flows

As people’s circulation has been increasing, so too has the flow of commodities, information and money. Material flows have always been an important associated component of the immigration experience, and remittances can be seen as one of the first indicators researchers considered as a measure of the effects of international migration on “traditional” source regions, particularly in India (Kessinger, 1974). Other scholars interested in the role of small-scale entrepreneurs in importing/exporting goods between home/host localities have revealed the deeply cultural meanings of operating such ventures. Portes and Guarnizo (1991) focusing on Dominican Republic immigrants in New York, have shown how such transfers are embedded within the social structure of the family, where profit maximization and rational choice are secondary to issues of social capital and trust. Not only does the social framework structure the means of transfer, but the processes of distribution and expenditure depend upon the priorities of the family and kinship groups.

One cannot speak of commodity flows without making reference to the arguments raised about commodification and the threat of global homogenization bred through the increasing extension of western consumer goods such as Coca-cola and McDonalds around the globe. This homogenization argument has recently been challenged through work that argues that the experiences of consumption are mediated and transformed by local processes of reception (Jackson, 1999). Jackson, “seeks to trace the particular benefits and disbenefits associated with specific kinds of commodification, rather than
assuming that they can be mapped in some abstract and a priori fashion” (p.97). Material flows through the spatially extensive South Asian diaspora offer important examples of this cultural diversity of goods and the meanings and benefits associated with them.

Commodity flows include cultural products such as films and music (Joseph, 1999), as well as fashion, which play crucial roles within South Asian communities by helping to shape immigrant identity and build social cohesion across the spatially extensive sites of the diaspora. As Jackson argues, rather than make blanket statements about the effects of such flows, each needs to be mapped in ways to reveal their particular effects. I will highlight the gendered meanings of consumption for three common commodities that circulate transnationally: food, music, and fashion.

Narayan (1995a), offers a complex reading of the meaning of Indian food, colonialism, identity and immigration. Contributing to the discussion about food and the ethnic Other, Narayan considers the meanings of Indian food as it was transported and transmuted through colonial and postcolonial landscapes of the Raj and the South Asian diaspora. While she highlights the complexities that may be read into the act of consuming regionally distinct foods, she particularly highlights issues of race, gender and class. With regard to gender she draws out the limitations to incorporation established by immigrant communities, referring to the absence of women working in the Indian restaurant industry, as opposed to their presence in family-operated grocery stores. To interpret this she draws parallels to Indian nationalism and the symbolic distinction between home and the outside world.

Perhaps the proximity of these grocery stores to the space of the home permits women’s work in these stores to be seen as more akin to their domestic tasks, while waiting tables involves work in a more ‘public’ space. Perhaps too, women serving
Indian food is too redolent of the intimacies of Indian family life to be comfortably commodified as impersonal service in a restaurant (p.75).

Food is of course one of the key aspects of community, and the meanings and details involved in the preparation, sharing and ritual consumption of food are fundamental aspects of identity. Narayan’s argument encourages us to reflect upon the gendered meanings of this commodity as it circulates through the time and space of the colonial and postcolonial.

Another key commodity flow that moves through the diasporic spaces of South Asian communities is music. Gopinath (1995) reflects upon the popularity of Bhangra music, a variant of traditional Punjabi folk songs that in Britain have become increasingly popular, especially when mixed with Afro-Caribbean influenced reggae music. Gopinath suggests that Bhangra music reveals how the Asian diaspora incorporates conventional gendered nationalist discourses into its realm through the lyrics and images accompanying the songs and music, which often reflect traditional patriarchal images of women as reproducers of cultures and guardians of home. It also considers how the nation is drawn into diaspora through the statement that Bhangra is about ‘Britishness’.

Gopinath is suggesting of course that the diaspora is a site of contradiction; both outside and inside the nation, but it also reveals the limits of the nation, by transmitting ‘Indianess’ outside of the nation and into a transnational diasporic circuit encompassing Delhi, Mumbai, London, Yuba City, Vancouver etc., Gopinath’s work examines how circulations, in this case music, both question and support the national project through their reinterpretations and representations of new and old identities and relations.

Bhangra is a highly masculinist project of diasporic identity maintenance, and despite the
increasing involvement of women in the practice and performance of bhangra,
Gopinath’s argument is that the music perpetuates a highly gendered discourse which
visualizes women as passive, often immobile subjects. This draws our attention to the
ways in which transnational circulations are imbued with gendered meanings and can
often advance traditional norms of Indian patriarchy through neo-traditional transnational
circuits (I consider these issues further in Chapter Nine with a discussion of marriage
networks).

Contrasting this image of the South Asian diaspora as site of patriarchal norms,
Bhachu (1996) argues that women perform roles within the transnational diaspora which
offer both a transformation and reinforcement of traditional cultural behaviours. Bhachu
maintains that local specificities influence the transmission of cultural practices, in
particular the marriage economy and dowry decisions. Bhachu examines middle class
South Asian origin women as active agents, with economic roles and decision-making
capacities that have been improved through multiple migrations. Bhachu’s arguments
reveal how class position and locality influence the ways dowry decisions are made and
the type and nature of dowry gifts purchased. Bhachu’s reading of the transformative
potential South Asian women develop through the commodity circulation of marriage
gifts – especially fashion and textiles – differs from both Narayan’s and Gopinath’s
reading of the patriarchal gendered messages relayed through food practices and
Bhangra. While all these examples reveal the complexities of meaning embedded in the
circulation of commodities, Bhachu’s careful reading of the actions of South Asian
transnational women replaces the “woman as passive subject” with an image of “women
as active agent" whose practices have the potential to transform relations across multiple localities through their use and deployment of class position and commodity flows.

**Transformations I: Transnational political networks**

To move the network approach beyond mere description, we need to embrace an awareness of process, and I have included this by focusing on the transformative effects of transnational networks and immigrant behaviour. Basch et al (1992) consider transnational behaviours to be a creative migrant response to forces of global capitalism. In particular they draw attention to migrant practices of nation building within their home state through processes such as remittance sending, goods exchange and political support. The authors argue that as the home state attempts to incorporate migrants more effectively into their realm, a process of partial deterritorialization takes place, as the bonds between national space and national identity are disrupted, and migrants begin to perform political roles across multiple national spaces. This "post-colonial nationalism" (p.269) allows a person to physically live outside the borders of their state, but to continue to play a role within its development. Basch et al argue that the extent of migrant incorporation into their home state is highly dependent upon issues of class. While migrants may be represented only as economic 'cash cows' for the state, creatively contributing to the defence of their home from the uneven forces of global capitalism, they may also become agents of global capital, effectively transmitting forces of neo-liberalism back into their home regions. In India, the rising presence of Indians overseas has been linked to their increased activity within the nation, from projects of educational investment to active promotion of Sikh separatism (Tatla, 1999), or Hindu nationalism (Rajagopal, 1997). The current ruling party in India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has
been careful to respond to the demands of some Indians overseas, especially professional Indian software workers and entrepreneurs in the USA (Chakravartty, 2000). But not all Indians overseas have such cordial relations with the State; Tatla (1999) highlights the Sikh diaspora’s search for statehood in opposition to the Indian government. Using transnational political networks Tatla describes how Sikhs work at applying pressure to the Indian State through the governments of their new homes—mainly Britain, the USA and Canada—through extensive fundraising networks. In cases such as these, it is difficult for the receiving state to control the transnational political actions of immigrant and first generation individuals and the transformations they attempt to advance. This appears to be the case in Britain, as UK Muslim youth are reportedly choosing to leave the country to fight for the Islamic cause overseas and British security forces respond by admitting that they are powerless to stop British citizens over 18 from leaving the country. Such international political linkages are not new—consider the long history of Irish-American fundraising for the Irish Republican Army—but the reach of organizations that have access to communications technology and mobility across multiple nation states creates a situation where connections and actions have an immediacy and range that was impossible a century ago. In addition to technological changes, the changing political climate since the end of the cold war has witnessed a rapid reordering of national boundaries and internal unrest. The quite unexpected developments witnessed at the start of the 1990s with the break-up of the Soviet Union,

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8 Currently similar issues are emerging in Canada in relation to fund raising for Sri Lankan Tamil separatists—during 1999 Canadian Tamils raised as much as $22 million for relatives, some of which is suspected to have reached Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka (Economist, 2000).

9 Reports suggest that over 200 young men have flown to Pakistan with the last 3 years to receive training to fight in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Chechnya. Men are reportedly recruited through local mosques and on the Internet by Islamic groups such as Al-Muhajiroun (The voice, the eyes and the ears of the Muslims). One mosque in Crawley was reported to have seen four boys leave in the space of a few weeks (Punjab Tribune, 2000).
have set in motion a series of destabilizing forces. These radical reformulations across the
global political landscape have demanded a new approach from political geographers:
“Geopolitical theorization and conceptualization is now actively grappling with the
problematics of globalization, informationalization, and proliferating borderless risk” (Ó
Tuathail, 2000 p.176). The upheaval and dislocation associated with the reordering of
global hierarchies and nation-states has contributed to massive population displacement
and increased the potential for socio-political formations to enact transformations across
a transnational field. While transnational networks and the resources they can channel are
often exploited by the receiving state, there is also the potential for the state to be
undermined and challenged by these very same processes of circulation and related
transformation. Moments of contradiction as well as connectivity are therefore deeply
embedded within these transnational political networks.

Transformations II: New forms of citizenship practice

Transnational movements are also having an increasingly profound effect on issues of
citizenship, and it is in this realm that we can identify some of the most important
transformations associated with transnational networks. As the traditional theories of
immigrant assimilation are dismantled, the reality of transnational immigrant practices,
be they economic, political or social, are recognized as having a profound effect on the
meanings on citizenship. Faist (1999) considers the implications of citizenship change
in an era of rapid mobility by considering the issue of dual citizenship. Faist argues that
the presence of dual national membership for citizens rarely poses a challenge for the

10 In some circumstances this reorientation has led to radical institutional changes; take for example
Germany’s recent legislation to alter citizenship regulations in order to accommodate the thousands of
Turkish origin families and their German born children originally employed as guest workers.
immigrant receiving country, but is important in providing a symbolic tie for immigrants back to their home country, allowing them to retain certain legal and property rights. This lenient view of dual citizenship is also echoed by Spiro (2000), who reflects on the position of the USA in light of the Mexican government’s decision to change its naturalization law and grant dual citizenship to Mexicans in the USA. Whilst this has created some controversy in the USA, Spiro suggests that it is time to adapt to changing realities, and suggests that we use the term co-nationals to identify what he considers is a positive relationship being formed by those with more than one national status:

"dual nationality should be tolerated, if not actively encouraged, in the national interest.... The dual-national who becomes politically assimilated in the United States will presumably come to internalize our constitutional values. If that person remains politically active in his or her country of origin, he or she will also presumably apply those values there. As this occurs, dual nationality may become a vehicle for advancing the cause of global democracy (p.7)."

Whilst certainly an optimistic and unproblematic reading of citizenship practice, Spiro’s sentiment indicates the growing acceptance of the complexities transnational actors present to the state; the limitations of present citizenship discourse, and the transformative pressures this encompasses.

Soysal (1994) also explores the limits of citizenship discourse in its current form by considering modes of immigrant incorporation in Europe. Her argument has two main components; firstly that “incorporation style bears the imprint of collective paradigms of membership that persist over time” (p.36), and secondly that incorporation models change “as new global discourses permeate their boundaries” (p.36). Soysal argues that although a transnational order dictates the recognition of human rights, the nation-state is still the actor that administers, distributes and oversees them. Soysal argues that
citizenship models based on closed national spaces cannot reflect the increasing complexity of citizenship and advances the idea of "postnational citizenship" where the presence of multiple citizenships and interconnected nations shape ideas of citizenship, such as within the European Union. Soysal's argument, though persuasive, is questionable. Her research method examines incorporation through institutional groups, and her conclusion—that citizenship and incorporation are mediated through these institutional routes of ethnic organizations and politically representative organizations—is therefore tautological. Additionally, Soysal's institutional focus on citizenship practice ignores the meanings of citizenship at the local community level, leaving the definition of citizenship in the hands of the state whilst simultaneously arguing that the state is no longer an adequate space from which to conceptualize citizenship models. Whilst Soysal moves beyond and above the space of the nation-state, she overlooks the local and translocal context within which citizenship practice is implicated.

Unlike Soysal, Joseph (1999) focuses on the performance of cultural citizenship, where dislocated South Asian transnational migrants—whose expulsion from East Africa constructs their citizenship histories as complex and partial—search for ways to belong in their new diasporic homes through cultural mediations such as film, literature and music. Joseph also advocates ideas of postnational citizenship, where the rise of diasporic groups pose challenges to our traditional notions of nationalism as territorially and socially bounded. Drawing upon Appadurai's ideas, Joseph argues that thinking postnationally allows us to perceive forms of identity that are not primarily fixed to the traditional concept of citizenship:

The concept of the postnational demystifies citizenship as a social good and demands a reconsideration of the categories, assumptions, and practices of citizenship as a
social agent in a transnationally interdependent world. Citizenship here is a performed and continuous process of becoming as much as it is a fictive and imagined state of being. It is simultaneously bound up by the mythography of the nation and mediated by the social biographies of its heterogeneous populace. Its conditions of possibility are enacted through laws as well as through cultural practices, fracturing coherent categories of citizenship (p. 158).

Joseph therefore, unlike Soysal, recasts the nature of citizenship by identifying the changing forms of citizenship practice immigrants perform, but which do not take a single national space as the ontological grounding for their identity, complicating ideas of place and identity. It is this lack of a coherent national allegiance that Aihwa Ong also explores in her work on flexible citizenship (Ong, 1999). Ong focuses her attention on transnational ethnic Chinese immigrants, a particularly cosmopolitan and elite class of migrants whose identity is shaped through their use of global cultural and economic capital. Ong views these individuals as active agents who exploit situations within their own families and communities in order to structure a successful life transnationally. Ong uses the term flexible citizenship, to refer especially to the strategies and effects of mobile managers, technocrats, and professionals seeking to both circumvent and benefit from different nation-state regimes by selecting different sites for investments, work and family relocation (p. 112).

Ong’s work reflects her own positionality as an ethnic Chinese academic who moves across various locations within these flexible citizenship circuits. Ong’s argument is directed at a very particular group of elite, urban, ethnic-Chinese migrants. Her reading of culture for this group is highly instrumental, and though it is important to stress the role of political economy, the importance of capital is presented as paramount, with little room for discussion of other motivating factors or issues of debate. Her argument is, however, important for revealing the complexities of immigration and citizenship in an
era of greater mobility, and the role class plays in positioning certain groups in a
privileged place vis-à-vis the state. Arguably we could see this group as the global or
cosmopolitan citizens *par excellence*, whose allegiances are shaped by self-interest and
capital accumulation. From this perspective Ong provides another important refrain from
readings that highlight the constraints of immigrant forms of citizenship, that even though
the agent is an ethnically marked immigrant, power and potential are still invested in
them, they are not victimized *carte blanche*. The important gender and class issues Ong
addresses, however, are not examined rigorously enough in relation to these flexible
citizenship practices. Ong’s work does provide evidence of the break between national
allegiance and identification, and possession of citizenship. The performance of
citizenship for these actors is therefore, as Ong argues, a flexible self-serving
manipulation of legal rights and identities, mediated through the capitalist economy
where citizenship rights are available to those with adequate resources, and
transformations occur at multiple sites as the state operates in tandem with embodied
forms of global capital.

**Geography and Transnationalism**

Geographers have been relatively late to embrace the idea of transnationalism *per se*, but
there has been an interesting debate around issues of scale that conceptually intersects
with transnationalism. Swyngedouw (1997), in particular, has been drawn to issues of
scale and rescaling, and uses the concepts of rescaling, jumping or stretching scales and
the gestalt of scale, to refer to the possibilities available for both the state and civil
society to increasingly choose at which scale to act; the local, the national, the transnational or the supra-national. He draws examples from the radical rescaling of Europe, and highlights the potential for resistance to capitalism through labour and civil-based protest that move beyond the scale of the body and individual identity, to form more collective units of resistance through boycotts or protest movements at more effective scales (Swyngedouw, 2000). Swyngedouw (1997) employs the terms “cross-spatial articulations” and “nested scales” and these in particular hold obvious connection to the ideas of transnationalism as developed by Basch et al. Despite these similarities though, Swyngedouw’s arguments are based principally within the realm of materialist production, offering little reference to the importance of cultural factors that shape and determine the possibilities of rescaling and interaction between groups. In particular the dominance of structural forces within global capitalism compels him to refer to the *marginality* of immigrant groups within Europe. This generalized casting of immigrants as a disenfranchised group overlooks the moments when immigrants may be intensely engaged or complicit with the state and its political machinery (Soysal, 1994), or instances when immigrants themselves possess economic and social power (Ong, 1999).

Swyngedouw’s general assumption that immigrants are marginalized does not reflect the situation in Canada, where immigrants and immigrant groups can be actively engaged in citizenship practice, and utilizing the benefits of Canadian democracy, as my research findings will demonstrate. Swyngedouw, as with Harvey (1996), is tied into a primarily materialist vision of spatial articulations, and overlook or diminish the deeply cultural motivations of transnational practice. Swyngedouw’s interpretations of scale do not include a serious engagement with the scale of the body. Although Harvey does focus on
the body (Harvey, 1999), his is also an explicit focus on the strategies of materialist accumulation that surround it. Neither interprets the individual within the sphere of social reproduction, and it is within this domain that immigration is activated and its limitations most intimately experienced. Though these practices certainly lead to outcomes with significance for global capitalist production (such as the movement of capital, goods, and labour), to construct their meaning through structural –materialist norms misplaces incentive and motivation, it also flattens issues of internal difference, in particular the different relationships immigrants exhibit with systems of governance based upon class, gender and race. Transnationalism though obviously exhibiting points of intersection with these debates over geographical scale, has emerged from the position of the immigrant individual and the particularities of their location. Both approaches argue for the importance of understanding the role of political economy and global capitalism, but one layers its argument over immigrants, while the other builds its argument from the immigrant's unique transnational location.

Since the recognition of immigrant transnational networks has been triggered from the location of the individual agent, it is hardly surprising that anthropology has been the most dominant arena for the definition and advancement of a transnational approach to immigration. The anxieties that anthropologists experience in relation to their representation of the ‘other’, their assumptions about the ‘natural’ link between identities and spaces, and their own problematic forays into the field ‘over there’, have been ripped asunder by the increasing mobility of the third world subject in an age when Asian and African immigration has replaced the dominance of European migration. Within anthropology there has been an on-going debate over issues of representation and
anthropology's links to an imperial project of presenting the primitive other for the consumption of western audiences. Scholars such as Appadurai (1996a, 1996c), Ong (1999), and Clifford (1994), have been very influential, but too often this research depends upon personalized anecdote, that while illuminating and inspiring for younger scholars, still depends upon the 'foot soldiers' marching out to gather the partial facts and stories that can more fully illuminate and add meat to the bones of a transnational project. Both Ong and Appadurai possess social capital in this field because their own positionality places them within significant transnational circuits. Their work uses personal anecdote and vignette to great affect, more so for Appadurai, but even Ong exhibits a casual approach to empirical research. This trend may represent the reaping of seeds sown in an age when the production of knowledge has been subject to rigorous postmodern critique. Such intricacies will be considered in the following methodology chapter, but as Mitchell has highlighted, geographers can offer more rigorous interpretations of transnational processes:

Without "literal" empirical data related to the actual movements of things and people across space, theories of anti-essentialism, mobility, plurality and hybridity can quickly devolve into terms emptied of any potential political efficacy. It is geographical context, and thus geography as a discipline that is best placed to force the literal and the epistemological understandings of transnationalism to cohere (1997, p.110).

How do we, as geographers, begin to alter our spatial concepts in light of the connections, circulations and transformations international migration has introduced into Canada's urban landscape? How do we embrace the realization that immigrant settlement within western cities has always been shaped by engagement with other, often distant places? Appadurai (1996a, 1996c) has tackled these ideas at an abstract level, and his
insightful theorizations on the links between nation-states and circulating populations who struggle to reterritorialize their identities across the uneven landscapes of global modernity, has provided important intellectual stimulation. His idea of a translocality, though directed at transitory sites such as tourist locations and refugee camps, provides a framework that overcomes the burdensome dichotomies of global/local, developed/undeveloped, here/there:

such locations create the complex conditions for the production and reproduction of locality, in which ties of marriage, work, business, and leisure weave together various circulating populations with kinds of locals to create neighborhoods that belong in one sense to particular nation-states, but that are from another point of view what we might call translocalities (1996 p.192).

Through the idea of the translocality we see how places are merged through people's movements in ways that transcend their immediate national context. Appadurai presents these ideas to counter the anthropologist's traditionally static treatment of locality and neighbourhood. Rather than accept the local as a fixed construct, he asks: “What can locality mean in a world where spatial localization, quotidian interaction, and social scale are not always isomorphic” (179). Now to urban, social and cultural geographers this question is hardly novel, our whole perception of the production of urban space is saturated with the recognition of how the spatial and social are constructed across an uneven landscape of difference (Hanson and Pratt, 1995; Bourne and Ley, 1993; Ley, Hiebert, and Pratt, 1992). Geographers are therefore eminently positioned to make a contribution to this line of enquiry.

Within geography there are strong traditions of research that can be used to contribute to discussions about transnational processes. These interests, however, have in the past been divided between population, development and urban/cultural geographies
focusing on immigrant receiving urban centres. Transnationalism forces connections between all these nodes, and therefore geographers engaging in transnational research need to connect more fully across these broad sub-disciplinary areas, demarcations that have traditionally resulted in spatial division, not connection. The co-joining of urban/rural and developed/underdeveloped through the lens of transnationalism is reflective of the changing nature of space during an era of globalization. The spatiality of these changes has been an important aspect of transnational debate, as this chapter has shown. I contend that the separation of sub-disciplines within the geographical tradition has resulted in geographers being slow to perceive and react to the emergence of transnational spaces and social practices. I consider each of these sub-disciplines in turn.

**Population Geography**

Geographers have always traditionally been involved in understanding migration and population change. Traditionally aligned to demography and numerical evaluation, recently geographers have called for more attention to population movements through an ethnographic approach where migrants’ stories are used as a means to understand processes and outcomes of migration (McHugh, 2000). While Lawson (2000) makes a similar argument to McHugh’s, she recognizes the long tradition of using migrant stories in research on migration decision making, especially in third world contexts, and she supports Skeldon’s argument that researchers need to develop a broader awareness of the existing field of migration research before they proclaim the need for new approaches (Skeldon, 1995). The work of scholars such as Skeldon has long been an example of rigorous field-based research using migrant interviews in order to develop models of
migrant decision making in third world contexts, often tracking rural to urban migration patterns. White and Jackson (1995), argue that population geography as a sub-field has tended to separate itself from other sub-disciplines through its reluctance to engage with social theory and contemporary debates about the production of knowledge. White and Jackson argue that population geographers, as demographers, have access to significant quantitative data sources which they utilize uncritically. They argue that population geographers need to connect with debates over social construction, the politics of position and alternative research methodologies in order to reconnect with human geography more broadly, thereby enhancing its contribution to the wider debates on current global issues.

It certainly is true that whilst a great amount of research and conceptual models of migration have been presented through the field of population geography, the models and frameworks of migration tend to limit the debate to the narrow concerns of individualized migrant decision-making, which are then separated from detailed discussions of global processes. Certainly transnationalism overcomes this political-economic narrowness by explicitly connecting with global processes of capitalist expansion.

**Area Studies, Development and Geography**

Whilst the field of population geography can be critiqued for maintaining a theoretical/conceptual demarcation, other branches of geographical research have also limited our recognition of transnational networks through a process of spatial demarcation. Again, whilst there is a rich tradition within geography of interrogating

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11 The need for such rigorous fieldwork in third world contexts is linked to the paucity of data available from state and other regulatory bodies. This has not necessarily been the case in developed industrial economies, perhaps explaining the lack of awareness some researchers who work in western developed contexts possess regarding the tradition of fieldwork population geographers in third world contexts have developed.
issues of development, this has often been within a global framework where spatially
circumscribed localities or large capitalist/state institutions are the main focus of analysis.
The role of the international migratory individual has only recently been grasped as an
important indicator of possible development outcomes. Indeed there are very few
examples of explicit engagement across the fields of migration and development (for
exceptions see Skeldon, 1997; Zack-Williams, 1995; Kearney, 1986), and yet drawing
attention to these issues holds out the most promise for relevant political critique. One
possible explanation for geography's slow recognition of the significance of spatial
interconnectedness through third world migration is the bounded spatialization
geographers have traditionally brought to the study of place. Geography as a discipline
has always been concerned with place, and geographers have undermined positivistic
universal laws of development by focusing on the importance of the locality, where social
context and multiply contingent factors are key to understanding economic and political
development. This focus on locality has created a number of key concepts
methodologically central to the work of geographers, from areal differentiation to the
spatial division of labour and locality studies (Massey, 1984). The central role of place to
the work of geographers can be seen in the dominance of the region. Livingstone (1992)
reviews the work of geographers like Carl Sauer and Richard Hartshorne, concluding that
as a result of their common conceptualizations, geography has been shaped as the study
of regions:

Thus the notion of geography as the 'regionalizing ritual', provided a paradigm that
still governs much geographical work, whether in the qualitative contributions of
writers of regional personality or in the more quantitative emphasis of the practitioners
of regional science (p.33).
This 'regionalizing ritual' has had an important influence on the direction geographical research has taken, and the way in which space and spatial relations have been considered. Area studies is a key example of the limited spatial conceptualizations geographers have worked within. This brand of research—where particular countries or regions became marked off as a subject of special research attention—can also be seen as the product of the Cold War, where the political interests of western nations, especially the USA, directed research within an ideological mindset of spatial containment and alignment (Cumings, 1998). Similar critiques of the research approach to studies of development have been advanced by Escobar (1995), who argues that the development of the 'third world' during the Cold War period can be seen as a discourse, in that it created a delimited space where only certain debates and certain people were heard, which then reinforced the construct. The drive for modernization and development in the third world was part of an ideological battle against communism, and western patriarchy and ethnocentrism were central shapers of the policies adopted by the USA and other western nations intent on 'developing' these unaligned regions of the world. As a result, regions were both objectified and homogenized as problematic, the actual socio-cultural and political characteristics of locality were erased; and simultaneously the connectivity between regions and places—for example through colonial or neocolonial forms of resource extraction or political interference—were obscured. Whilst the ideological imperative for the 'creation' of these regions withered, their spatially contained representations endured.

More recently social scientists in general have begun to realize the significance of global connection and synthesis. The Ford Foundation sponsored White Paper, "Area
"Studies: Regional Worlds", is aimed at creating new links between area studies and cultural studies (The Ford Foundation, 1997). The report centres on a Ford Foundation sponsored pilot program, the Globalization Project, hosted at the University of Chicago. The multiple authors of the White paper (including Arjun Appadurai and Jacqueline Bhabha) argue,

"no serious engagement with the comparative study of global processes can avoid the specificities of place, time and cultural form. Thus the study of areas remains a central focus of our efforts. But we are also convinced that existing geographical approaches involving bounded ‘civilizations’, ‘cultures’ and ‘areas’ frequently draw the wrong boundaries, ignore important interactions and are driven by obsolete assumptions about national interest, cultural coherence and global processes (Ford Foundation, p.2)."

The authors’ main focus is a pedagogic one; but with regard to conceptual approach one major recommendation they make is:

"areas" need to be thought about as the results of processes, including research processes, rather than as objective clusters of cartographic, material or cultural facts. Emphasizing "process" geographies suggest new ways to approach both space and time in relation to "areas", with space becoming more flexible and porous and time less sequential and cumulative (p.8).

Whilst it is still important to maintain a strong link to the locality, more flexible understandings of space and time achieved by highlighting processes and interactions across multiple scales, is central. To this end my dissertation is based upon a methodological and conceptual framework based upon the idea of transnational networks that interlink across and through spatial scales. These networks provide the structures for connectivity, or articulation, circulation, or recursivity; and transformation, or processes of change. In the following chapter I explain the concept of the transnational network in more detail.
Conclusion

Transnationalism, in its broadest sense, illuminates our understandings of multiple social, economic, and political processes driven by the complexities of immigration and the changing role of the nation-state. The current range of research, however, is tightly focused on interactions between the USA and its southern neighbours. Though the extensiveness of transnationalism poses some methodological and conceptual concerns, attempts to contain and limit what we consider as legitimate transnational behaviour by measuring the frequency of actual trans-border crossings, risks erasing our sensitivity to how different actors are embedded within transnational circuits, even if they themselves do not frequently cross borders. Using a transnational approach where migrants act as the entry point, allows us to engage with issues of development and global capitalism in order to examine transnational processes across spaces and scales. Employing a transnational network concept based on connectivity, circulation, and transformation enhances this concern with process. Transnational approaches allow a focus on individualized forms of connections, but within a global framework. While geographers have been active in debates over scale, there is a need to promote less structural analysis in favour of interpretations that recognize the diversity of immigrant experience and its variable intersections with modes of capital expansion and state regulation. As such, this really is the site where geographers, with their ability to work at the micro, meso, and macro scale, and across multiple regions, can draw out social and spatial intersections which have intensified as the rate of global migration has accelerated, and its sources
diversified across an increasingly unequal economic landscape. A transnational framework allows a new lens to be utilized that no longer separates and isolates regions as zones of study in isolation from global events, but depends upon a rich tradition of synthesis so familiar to many geographers today. Geographers, despite their late attraction to transnational approaches to immigration, possess the research traditions of empirical investigation and theoretical application necessary to develop arguments that hold both the socio-cultural specificities of the local, or translocal context, and structural conditions driven by capital and state, in creative tension, without overwriting one with the other.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODS AND NETWORKS

Transnational methodologies have not been extensively considered within geography. Within anthropology however, attention has been directed to the nature of transnational studies, the traversing of political boundaries, the spatial complexities of transnational space, and the diversity of meanings encompassed within it (Hannerz, 1998). Also from within anthropology, Mahler (1998) has stressed the importance of focusing on issues of mobility, power and identity within transnational social fields. While these points echo those made in Chapter One, this chapter addresses methodological questions in an attempt to chart a framework for transnational studies within geography using a network approach. To achieve this, the chapter is composed of three main sections. First, I will review how debates in human geography regarding methodology have altered our perceptions of objectivity, thereby facilitating more diffuse procedures for knowledge production. Secondly, I consider the use of multiple forms of data, both qualitative and quantitative and how this intersects with a network approach. Thirdly I present a detailed review of my research methods and offer some personal reflections regarding gender and the nature of “the field” in transnational fieldwork.

Scientific Objectivity, Post-Positivism and Geography

In Chapter One I described how the study of immigration and socio-spatial linkages are being transformed through the concept of transnationalism. I reflected upon the limited
development of this emergent field within geography by considering how the traditional sub-disciplinary and scholarly practices of geographers have restricted our abilities to recognize the extent and nature of articulations between source and destination communities, especially those stretched between regions traditionally defined as developed and less developed. In addition to this spatial barrier, geographers have also lacked methodological frameworks that would encourage and strengthen a transnational approach, dependent as it is upon multiple sites and processes. To counter this limitation within human geography, I will argue that a number of contemporary arguments coalesce to provide geographers with the freedom to develop credible integrative methodological approaches suitable to the study of transnational phenomena. Such techniques allow us to capture empirical data from multiple sources, integrating them into explanations that do not seek untenable universal laws, but which conceptualize processes at work across multiple scales, from the local through to the trans-local and global. These integrative tactics offer geographers more creative methodological approaches, contrasting earlier traditions of rigid models and fixed laws which tended to regard variations from this pattern of research as weak, unproven, and in extreme cases, even dangerous.¹ I review the development of methods in human geography through a consideration of recent debates over scientific objectivity.

Geographical inquiry has important roots in areal differentiation and an interest in the unique nature of places and societies. These initial foundations have, however, been subject to major shifts. An important redirection came in the 1950s and

¹ Disciplinary boundaries and norms are changed and challenged through various processes of academic tension and debate, in some cases the intensity of 'professional' debate is replaced by personal attack. Micheal Dear reveals the way personal and political attacks against his work on postmodern urbanism have become entwined (Dear, 2001).
1960s with the quantitative revolution, a positivist approach based upon the work of scientifically trained post-war geographers operating in a context of rapid growth in the academy, and the rise of computers and advanced statistical techniques. These scholars moved the discipline away from Hartshorne's regionalism and emphasis on the unique, toward a scientific approach, which sought to prove generalizable laws (Barnes, 2000). Some geographers were critical of this development, querying the dominance of positivism and the possibility of neutral scientific approaches to seek universalizing laws and theories. Since the cultural turn of the 1980s, this dissatisfaction has become more pronounced as many geographers moved through a period of disenchantment with the dominance of positivistic analysis, whose advocates proclaimed neutrality as they interpreted social phenomena. An important component of this reflection has been to critically analyze the methodological approaches used—the actual production of knowledge (Haraway, 1991). Donna Haraway (1991) has been a major influence on researchers who recognize that any authority we claim to have is based on partial knowledge. Haraway, however, resists rampant social constructivism, and attempts to forge a form of feminist empiricism, based on the idea of situated knowledges, in which the researcher acknowledges that politics and ethics ground struggles over knowledge. Knowledge is therefore not 'neutral', or 'objective' but produced, and it is in the production of that knowledge that our situatedness matters.²

The work of Trevor Barnes (1996) provides a useful overview of the development of economic geography by foregrounding the situatedness of key geographers who

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² Consider for example Lawrence Berg's discursive analysis of Brian Berry's call for an urban geography firmly committed to generalizable understanding, neutrality and rational objective scientific approaches. Berg critiques this position through a discursive analysis of the text of Berry's argument, arguing that such an approach represents a masculinist discourse of exclusion (Berg, 1994).
directed the discipline along the path of scientific method. In particular he cites the influence of David Harvey who in the 1960s and 1970s promoted scientific explanation in geography, the dominance of which prevented geographers from engaging with critical arguments emerging within other branches of the social sciences. In particular, Barnes argues the work of the Edinburgh School and the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK) present strong critiques of the supposed rationality and neutrality of scientific approaches:

Scientific theories and facts reflected the contingent and contextual circumstances of their social origin. The practice of science was not about applying formal and universal rules of logic to a problem but was much messier, rooted in local history and geographical conditions where scientists made things up as they went along, only later attempting to justify them. More generally, the new wavers of the sociology of science were epistemologically relativists, arguing that humans decided their own truth rather then having truth decided for them by the ineluctability of a universal scientific rationality (Barnes, 1996 p.104).

Barnes constructs his argument by compiling evidence of the multiple unraveling of various scientific approaches. One example of this is the Hypothetico-Deductive (H-D) model, where universal laws regarding relationships between variables are empirically tested to provide both explanation and prediction, offering conclusions based upon logical syllogism—the relation between the general law and empirical events. Despite the confidence geographers invested in the H-D model and other forms of scientific method and explanation, Barnes argues that from the late 1950s the H-D model had been subject to various criticisms from philosophers such as Popper and Kuhn, whose arguments led to the view that science – rather than a neutral universal process – was the

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3 Barnes argues that the acceptance and success of the H-D model is rooted in the four beliefs of rationalism: truth, or correspondence between observation and theory; commensurability, in that we all follow the same procedures; reconstruction to allow verifiability; and ineluctable universal logic. The H-D method satisfies these criteria, emerging as the established method for human geographers practicing scientific methods.
outcome of a series of local, historical practices. Despite these criticisms, geographers still espoused the principles of scientific approaches (even though they were often not actually practicing them), encouraging Barnes to advocate that we "lift the veil of rationalist justifications and establish the locally constructed nature of knowledge that lies behind" (p.125).

Despite the critical attention directed at claims of scientific rationality and neutrality, especially through the growing engagement with recent “post-prefixed” approaches, Barnes argues that much economic geography still straddles the post-prefixed and enlightenment split. What has been put into place through the critical interpretation of method however, is a “logic of dislocation”, which disrupts the previously established order. Barnes argues that in place of a unified universal disciplinary system of laws, we now have to recognize that we have only “fragments and shards”; therefore our energies should not be directed to constructing single universal laws, which cannot be sustained. While Barnes provides a critical examination of the nature of geographical enquiry, specifically within economic geography, he does not explicitly outline his view of how geographers should approach research, other than his reassertion of the importance of contextualism.

Contextualism, by recognizing and celebrating difference, provides economic

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4 Later work within the sociology of science began to reveal how the process of scientific knowledge and its creation were rooted in contextual social constructions, “nature and reality are the by-products rather than the predeterminants of scientific activity.” (Woolgar 1988, p.89 quoted by Barnes, 1996, p.114).

5 Barnes refers to a variety of thinkers outside of geography who have questioned the assumptions contained within the enlightenment. These include post-structuralists such as Foucault and Derrida, Post-Marxists such as Laclau and Mouffe, Postcolonials Said and Spivak, feminist scholars such as Haraway and Fraser, and philosophers Rorty and Bernstein. Barnes draws out the following similarities between these diverse debates. Firstly, all reject a teleological notion of linear progress: rationality and reason are not considered as truths but social constructions. Secondly, the subject, rather then pre-existing is created and is located in certain power constellations; therefore, there is no extra-discursive reality outside of these discourses, and no universal truths. Thirdly, all reject notions of monolithic order or logocentrism: meaning is constructed not only through what is present but also by what is absent.
geographers with a charter for treating places as places; it insists that the texture and specificity of place be maintained and not reduced to something less than it is (p.53, 54).

Barnes' argument allows us to recognize the disjuncture between the principles of scientific investigation and the actual practice of geographical inquiry, which while promoting rationalism and scientific explanation in principle, have actually practiced methods grounded in local and contextual factors. Although he fails to explicitly outline any potential methodological approaches, his arguments provide the support necessary to present alternatives to the dogma of scientific rationality and objectivity.

A further reinterpretation of the meanings of scientific objectivity and subjectivity comes from John Paul Jones III (1995), who reviews the relationship between Geography and objectivity through a reading of Hartshorne’s *The Nature of Geography*. He argues that Hartshorne’s plea for objectivity in geography depended upon “objective descriptions of observations of nature” (Hartshorne, quoted in Jones III, p. 76). However, though Hartshorne advocated geographers undertake research objectively, Jones III argues that he did not define objectivity, or consider its construction. In an argument similar to Barnes’, Jones III considers Hartshorne’s objectivity as scientific presentation, and therefore it has to adhere,

_to the modes of representation that successfully implement the contingently agreed upon standards of conventional scientific writing._ In other words, for Hartshorne, objectivity is a ‘performance’ that properly enacted, can be called ‘science’ (Jones III, p. 83, emphasis in original).

Jones suggests that Hartshorne’s scientific objectivity, through areal differentiation, was concerned with outcomes of processes rather than the processes themselves, and interpreted space as ontologically predefined, instead of produced. This acceptance of
space as predefined and separate from ‘subjective’ social processes was challenged
during the 1960s and 1970s as geographers moved towards understanding space, human
subjectivity and its influence upon everyday life through qualitative research approaches.
Following this argument, I offer table 2.1 as a sketch of the possible relationships
between modes of representation, the goals of research and types of methods employed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of representation</th>
<th>Objectivity</th>
<th>Subjectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intended application</td>
<td>Universal</td>
<td>Local context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of space</td>
<td>Ontologically pre-defined</td>
<td>Socially produced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research purpose</td>
<td>Predictive capacity: outcomes</td>
<td>Recognition of contingencies: processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common form of data collection</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1. Objectivity/Subjectivity, Research Purpose and Means of Data Collection

Table 2.1 provides a useful outline of the relations between forms of knowledge,
embedded assumptions and the means by which data is collected and presented. This
sketch, however, is based upon dualist assumptions, and Jones III advocates that we
move past such polarizations and become “attentive to the social spaces of subjects,
objects, and the context of interpretation” (p.87). In conclusion his arguments are similar
to Barnes’ since both suggest that scientific objectivism in geography is a product of its
own epistemological context, and that research sensitive to context (Barnes), and
contingency (Jones III) is the key to revealing social and spatial processes through
What does this demand for contextualism and contingency lead to with regard to data collection? I suggest that such arguments dispel ideas of methodological 'purity' and create a demand for flexibility in empirical research. This encourages the combination of quantitative and qualitative processes of data collection, previously seen as distinct and separate approaches. In this next section I consider how to reconcile qualitative and quantitative methods through the use of a transnational network approach.

**Diverse Methodologies and Transnational Network Approaches**

In practice, many human geographers find themselves positioned somewhere between qualitative and quantitative research approaches, since determining numerical correlation and pattern does not explain the processes behind it. The use of multiple forms of empirical data allows for systems of triangulation, where evidence from numerous sources validates an argument, and augments interpretative claims about processes and related outcomes. In particular, feminist geographers have seriously debated the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, since quantitative approaches echo the supposed universality and neutrality of scientific rationalism seen as central components in the creation of a masculinist geography that marginalizes women and women's concerns (Rose, 1993). A special focus section of the *Professional Geographer*, addressed this issue through the question, “Should women count?”

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6 The use of quantitative methods is not the same as positivism, since the former provides empirical evidence using various data sources, and the later assumes a process of investigation and explanation that is value-free and therefore neutral. Reiterating Haraway's point, it is not that empiricism, whatever form it takes, is the problem, it is the assumption of universality and neutrality that needs to be challenged.
(Mattingly and Hindi, 1995). The discussion revealed that a number of feminist geographers found it important to utilize different methodologies depending upon the research question and the intended audience, and in certain contexts quantification made important contributions to highlighting the significance of female participation and issues of direct importance to women, such as commuting distances and access to suitable housing and employment (McLafferty, 1995). Rocheleau’s (1995) research on women’s land-use in the Dominican Republic is constructed through both survey data and interview data, where women produce maps of their land use. Her research is informed through feminist post-structuralist arguments, and in particular she draws from Haraway’s (1991) ideas of partial objectivities.

The acceptance of partial objectivities obviates the need to choose between multiple and irreconcilable subjectivities or the single objectivity of an omniscient gaze. Rather, it challenges scientist to revalue the subjective, then stretch and combine it into something that can be verified and validated through a variety of methods (including quantitative measures) within an ever widening circle of shared experience (Rocheleau, 1995, p. 459).

Once we critically assess the idea of “objectivity”, as Barnes, Jones III and Haraway have done, we undermine the very structure of difference that held quantitative and qualitative forms of data at separate ends of a science-society spectrum. What we can replace this with is a form of empirical inquiry that can be verified and validated, for example through triangulation, repetition or internal recognition. The research approach I utilize, and one that entails interaction with a number of different forms of data collection, is the idea of transnational networks. I review what I mean by the term network, and then go on to explain how both qualitative and quantitative data are vital for identifying network dimensions.
Networks

Initially used in geography to define transportation systems made up of nodes and links, this early network idea conceptualized geography as ontologically fixed space, where physical distance acts as a central component in any calculation regarding the characteristics of transportation networks (Hay, 1994). The term has since been used in a number of very different ways, and I trace some of these uses in order to develop a concept of the network where connectivity, circulation and transformation are central factors. In this way my use of the network concept provides not just a structure of articulation and transmission that spans space, but is also indicative of wider processes of change involving actors at multiple scales, from the individual through to the state, and each of these scales lends itself more easily to different empirical forms.

Social scientists for some time have known about the fundamental role social networks play in shaping individual action. Barry Wellman, for example, has been influential for his focus on the nature of ties between individuals, and how social networks channel resources and shape outcomes within diverse kin groups (Wellman, 1990). Researchers in Montreal have looked at how immigrants use different types of networks or links (weak links versus strong links), and to what degree these networks assist in integration, especially for women (Rose et al, 1998). Recognition of the importance of social networks in academic research on immigration and social relations is now so widespread that even economists are arguing that social networks are key to
understanding processes of international migration (Gorter, 1998). The idea of the network is now firmly associated with immigrant movements, settlement and outcomes. Yet networks in this sense tend to be seen as individualized forms of family/group interaction, and tend to underplay the role of ongoing circulatory processes of migration and global processes central to transnational arguments. In particular the moments when the immigrant individual has to pass through forms of state regulation is absent from this conceptualization of the network.

Expanding the network metaphor to incorporate interaction between the immigrant individual and agents of capital and the state is a necessary requirement of transnational arguments. Geographers have utilized the idea of the network at scales above the individual, in particular for interpreting links within and between organizations and for understanding production systems. Manuel Castells (1996) has been most prominent in advancing the network idea through his work on "the network society." Drawing mostly from the work of economic geographers, he argues that changes in technology have allowed an informational economy to develop, and the transmission of this information and the operation of this new economy depends upon various types of networks. Castells' argument, however, is uncritically based on secondary readings of economic geographers' interpretations of changing production processes which are then unproblematically re-presented as wholesale shifts—such as Fordism to Post-Fordism—without acknowledging that labour and production process are in fact highly differentiated depending on several variables including locality, regional and institutional

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7 This has been important in overturning the general assumptions about human behaviour based on the idea of *Homo Economicus* and profit maximizing behaviour, allowing for more nuanced research approaches that stress the significance of socio-cultural context and the effects of social identity upon actions.
culture, and labour traditions etc. In addition, Castells does not provide any evidence of how these networks operate on the ground other than stressing the importance of connectedness: “structural ability to facilitate noise-free communication between its components”, and consistency “the extent to which there is sharing of interests between the network’s goals and the goals of its components” (p.171). Castells’ network concept projects an image of hegemonic corporate overlay, where tension and friction within the system is minimized or eradicated. Certainly more empirical grounding is needed to justify his confidence that the network society might be the metaphor for a new historical era. Castells’ network metaphor is useful for identifying the radical changes communication technology can have on the production system, and related to this, social organization. Nonetheless, his idea of the network society risks becoming a universal law with little place for the recognition of the unequal power relations embedded within networks, or those absent from them. As a metaphor, Castells’ network society is both too broad and too partial. Too broad, in that he envisions the network to infiltrate across global economic space, when plainly there are people and places absent or only partially connected to these networks, and too partial since the operation of the network is based upon a number of inequities and imbalances in power relations, and these are differentiated along multiple axes which are not adequately discussed. His arguments however do stress the importance of the network as a system of connectivity and the importance this connectivity entails for organizational structures.

Perhaps the most interesting use of the network idea stems directly from the debate over scientific objectivity, and emerges from the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge. Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar’s (1979) ethnographic approach to how
scientific knowledge is constructed, reveals the importance of social relations and interaction within the laboratory, and traces how the actual process of scientific discovery is erased through the translation of findings into facts and laws. Their approach, termed actor network theory or ANT, places scientific discovery into its context of the laboratory, and highlights how social interaction shape the translation of events into ‘facts’. Unlike Castells’ idea of the network, which stresses links between actors and information, actor network theory identifies the components of relational materiality—links between human and non-human members, and performativity—the changes that occur to them as they become part of the network (Law, 1999). Latour argues that network, as he and others use it, denotes a series of transformations, not merely “instantaneous, unmediated access to every piece of information” (p.15) as Castells’ work suggests. In addition to advocating the importance of transformation, Latour argues that ANT allows for a summing up, which brings the researcher closer to the local, not away from it, and as a result, scale or differences between scales, become less important since all situations require a local “framing”, and a local “summing up”. Though this argument is important for creating a form of inclusivity not undermined by the network’s traversing across scale, scale does matter for network interpretations since it also indicates the context, be it; household/family, local/community, national/state regulation. Despite this limitation, ANT is more about circulation and transformation than information access and sharing, and within this approach space is variable, subject to change and transformation just as social actors are. Actor-network theory therefore depends upon a different idea of space than the early transportation model of networks,
an idea of space that is subject to malformation – creases and folds, as Latour refers to them.

In striving to develop his spatial concepts, Latour turned to geography, but found it “useless for ANT” (Latour 1997, p.2). But Latour’s reading of geography, as merely physical mapping and measuring, displays an impoverished perception of the discipline. Murdoch (1998) challenges Latour’s limited interpretation of geography, explaining that geographers have long had a different understanding of space than Latour assumes. Several key geographers have been active in debates over space, arguing that it is not a rigid fixed container for social actions, but is both constituted by and constitutes social relations: the spatial and the social are interwoven. As Murdoch argues, “the ‘malleability’ of space has been a recurrent theme in geographical analysis” (p.358). Such malleability allows different interpretations of space to emerge which overcome the limitations Latour refers to, and permits the development of a network approach suitable for allowing interpretations of scale and spatial articulation that challenge previous dichotomies of global/local, developed/undeveloped.

Drawing partially from Latour’s primarily methodological approach, which recognizes circulation and transformation in addition to Castells’ connectivity, allows geographers to utilize the network idea in conjunction with transnationalism. In this regard my use of a transnational network approach highlights the need for identifying systems of connectivity, circulation and transformation at a multi-scaler levels, but still framed within their own localities and translocalities. I review Basch et al.’s four premises of transnationalism from Chapter One and indicate why they need to be addressed through a network approach using multiple forms of data collection.
Firstly Basch *et al* argue that; "Transnational migration is inextricably linked to the changing conditions of global capitalism and must be analyzed within the context of global relations between capital and labour" (Basch *et al*, 1994,p.23). An expanded network idea can interpret the position of the immigrant individual within the context of these global relations. Empirical data to illustrate these processes is best provided through quantitative data sets often created by large state or international organizations such as the IMF (remittance and other financial data), and individual governments (immigration and banking data).

Secondly, Basch *et al* suggest that, "Transnationalism is a process by which migrants, through their daily life activities and social, economic, and political relations, create social fields that cross national boundaries" (1994, p.27) As I discussed in Chapter One, Basch *et al* consider that network analysis has been limited only to immigrant social relations, and has not considered the outcomes of such transnational networks. My use of a network approach within a transnational context moves beyond analysis, making transformation one of its three key components. An interpretation of such transformations depends upon multiple forms of data collection and interpretation to reveal the complex process of social and spatial change, as I demonstrate in section three of this dissertation.

Basch *et al*’s third premise is that “bounded social science concepts such as ‘ethnic group’, ‘race’ and ‘nation’ can limit the ability of researchers first to perceive and then to analyze the phenomenon of transnationalism.” (p.30). By entering the research field through the network, i.e. respondents adopt the researcher into their networks; the researcher has the potential to have their pre-determined assumptions overturned. For example, though my research parameters were predefined by the national fix of Canada...
and India, my adoption into multiple networks introduced me to individuals from other nations, who were central players in the networks I engaged with. My assumptions about national identification were therefore contradicted through my actual movement through immigrant networks, and my conception of a transnational network moved from a limited vision of interaction based on two nations, to an appreciation of the expansive nature of Indian transnationalism. This type of data collection depends upon an openness and flexibility normally reserved for participant observation.

Fourthly Basch et al argue, “by living their lives across borders, transmigrants find themselves confronted with and engaged in the nation building processes of two or more nation-states” (p.34). This spatial and social complexity depends upon the researcher actually moving through space and gaining an insight into how immigrants experience complex social positions. Such interpretations are best shaped by personal interview and reviews of secondary data such as literature, popular magazines and film etc.

In conclusion, the development of a transnational network approach is dependent upon a flexibility of method that would not be legitimate in an era of scientific objectivity and methodological and theoretical purity and universalism. Context, contingency, locality and interaction are central aspects of my research, and therefore a network approach sensitive to circulation, connectivity and transformation placed in conjunction with the collection of multiple forms of data, allows me to present at least a partial view of transnational immigrant links between India and Canada. I now consider my research parameters and experiences.
My research was conducted across two main sites, Greater Vancouver, British Columbia and the Doaba region of Punjab, India. In addition to these specific locations I also conducted several interviews in Delhi, Mumbai, and in Toronto. My research in Vancouver took place specifically over a sixteen-month period between March 1998 and October 1999, but previous research since 1995 with various other projects also contributed to my understandings of Indian immigration and settlement in this region. Following my research in Vancouver, I spent October 1999 to March 2000 in India, primarily in Punjab, interviewing various people linked to immigrant networks as well as government officials.

The core process through which I managed to operationalize a transnational approach was by inserting myself into networks that Vancouver respondents introduced me to. Rather than use universities and research centres as my base when I was in Punjab, I usually stayed with the counterparts of my Vancouver contacts. As a result, due to the intimacy I developed with research informants who were also my hosts, my research in India, though shorter in time, was actually much more intense than my Vancouver experience. My interactions and everyday experiences of living with Punjabi families proved to be fundamental in helping me develop an understanding of how social and spatial relations are developed and maintained between the two regions. I was also fortunate to stay with families of different social status and transnational positionality: for

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8 Several projects have enhanced my research expertise: My MA thesis research; various research assistantship positions with the Metropolis Community Studies Project; as a graduate fellow of CISAR (the Centre for South Asia and India Research) at UBC; and community work with PICS, an immigrant serving society in Surrey.

9 My research was funded by the Shastri-Indo Canadian Institute.
example one family were themselves transnational, moving between Punjab and
Vancouver on an annual basis, while another were Indian citizens and residents with
multiple links to several overseas Indians connected to their village.

My entry and understanding of how these networks operated depended primarily
upon qualitative research approaches such as unstructured and semi-structured interviews
and participant-observation. Such qualitative research approaches tend to have less
influence, especially outside of the academy. Baxter and Eyles (1997) argue that one
reason for this is the lack of any agreed upon criteria of evaluation, and have therefore
developed a set of general criteria for increasing validity and rigour in the assessment of
qualitative work. Using their model, I adopt four of their suggested criteria;
appropriateness, interview practice, procedures for analysis and building credibility, in
order to present my methodology. This assessment, rather than stifle creative research,
seeks to allow evaluation of research findings in order to facilitate dissemination to larger
audiences.

**Appropriateness of Methodology**

The need for detailed information about the various flows circulating through immigrant
networks between India and Canada, and the transformations that occur as a result of
these circulations, could not be revealed through a dependence on quantitative data alone.
As I will discuss later in Chapters Five and Six, quantitative data regarding capital and
trade flows – though essential for indicating official recognition and meaning—provide a
rather blunt and uncertain measure of the true nature and impact of such circulations.
With regard to immigration numbers, there is more information especially from the
Canadian side, but again numbers alone do not give an indication of the important
transformations occurring in both India and Canada. It is also necessary to recognize that
dependence on numbers alone gives little explanatory depth to understanding the social
and cultural processes that create and are recreated through transnational spaces of
circulation. As a result of these demands, I used multiple methodologies to bring into
connection both human and non-human actors—commodities, capital, government policy
as well as people—in order to reveal the circulations and transformations occurring with
a transnational field.

The real anchors of my research were the people who formed important nodes in
extensive social networks that transcended Vancouver and Punjab. In retrospect, I can
identify four respondents who became my main anchors or ‘gateways’ into the
transnational field. Two respondents were involved in fundraising projects, one family
ran a successful fashion business, and one was simultaneously involved in food
processing and export from India in addition to raising funds for their village. In
addition to these key informants, I also interviewed several others who were more
specifically linked to particular circulations, be they trade, capital or immigration. Figure
2.1 presents a simplified schematic to represent how these respondents and others
combined into a series of networks.

10 My access to these respondents came through various channels. In one case I made a presentation to
students in a Sikh studies class I was taking at UBC, and as a result of this one student offered an
introduction to her father, respondent Ajit Singh (pseudonym) who proved a very important contact.
G.Dhesi was initially referred to me through the Canada-India Business Council because he was actively
involved in trade with India. After interviewing him I also discovered that he was very active in fundraising
for his village, which was the more important lead. I made contact with respondents Sarjeet and Meena
Brar (pseudonym) due to my work as a research assistant on another project connected with immigrant
settlement in Vancouver, for which I thank Geraldine Pratt. Respondent Dhahan was involved in a hospital
project that had developed connections with the University of British Columbia’s nursing department, and
through these contacts I was referred to the hospital in India.
Across all sectors (immigration, capital, trade and social networks) there are five major networks linking respondents in both India and Canada. The network is revealed by the use of a symbol beside the initial contact from Vancouver, (first column) and then, where applicable, beside the respondents in India. There were several other Vancouver respondents who offered contact details for India, but these five represent the major networks I followed. The middle column represents the data type used to gather information on that particular line of enquiry. In all cases except for certain immigration data, quantitative data were collected in Canada.\footnote{Gaining access to data in India was difficult, often it did not exist or I was unable to persuade officials to provide it to me. In situations where the data was widely available, such as with the Reserve Bank of India, the numerical information was available through the Internet and therefore accessible in Canada.}

It is apparent from the numbers of interviews and field visits listed in the social networks section that certain networks yielded more contacts than others. This should not be taken as a proxy for the extent or ‘quality’ of information, because in some cases, such as with trade, immigration and banking, a single interview with an official provided important specialized knowledge. The benefits of the social networks, however, meant that after multiple interviews and field visits, patterns emerged as to which issues were the most important regarding immigration and transnational networks between India and Canada. All interviews in Canada, except one, were tape-recorded. In India the ability to tape interviews was prevented by three factors. Firstly several Canadian officials in India requested interviews not be taped; secondly, infamous power surges in Delhi managed to destroy the tape recorder’s power transformer; and thirdly, during field work in India there were days when I interviewed up to six people, and besides these formal meetings, I would often talk casually with key respondents. If all these meetings had been audiotaped, the sheer volume of tapes would have become overwhelming to transcribe.
As a result I decided to take detailed notes, which I usually transcribed that night along with field notes onto my now deceased laptop computer (another casualty, I suspect, of the Delhi brown out). This proved to be a more practical way to manage field data and allowed for continual review and interpretation of the issues and comments raised.

**Interview Practice**

Interviews in Canada were undertaken in a more formal manner than the majority of interviews in India. In Canada my interviews began with key trade officials, who referred me to other potential respondents, banking officials who were involved in Indian transactions, and immigrants who maintained active links with India. Interviews with officials were standardized (see appendix 1 for interview questions), but each was subject to certain variations depending upon specialty areas and the respondents' own backgrounds. My rapport with these respondents was generally very good; the majority were men who seemed to enjoy talking about India-Canada trade opportunities. Certainly as McDowell and Court (1994) have suggested, the fact that I was a woman seemed to make the respondents react to me in an open and positive, if somewhat paternal, manner.

With regard to social networks, three of the Canadian respondents were interviewed as immigrant individuals, and one as a family unit. With these respondents I developed a

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12 Provincial and business association officials, who were specifically connected to Indian trade issues, were predominately of Indian background.

13 The Brar family are also respondents in a larger Metropolis funded project on immigration settlement and community; the community focus is Surrey and the principal investigator is Geraldine Pratt. My research interests are distinct from this larger project in that I was involved specifically in transnational linkages, rather than interested in settlement issues in Surrey. Of course my own experiences as a research assistant in this project has enhanced my understandings of issues within Surrey and how they connect with developments in Punjab. Drawing distinct lines and compartmentalizing personal experiences between my work in Surrey with this project and my own work across Vancouver and Punjab, is however a futile exercise which undermines the whole point of adopting a transnational approach. Despite this, the two projects ask different questions of the respondents. In addition, once in Punjab the Brar family provided important support for general access within Punjab to officials and other respondents who contributed to my research material.
deeper rapport, with multiple interviews, visits to people's homes, and other forms of recurrent contact over the entire research period. Each of these four respondents did a great deal of work in organizing my meetings with people in India, through providing contact information both to myself and their counterparts in India, as well as organizing accommodation and assistance for me with their family and friends in their towns and villages in Punjab. While all were of Punjabi background, there developed many lines of connection through our somewhat common experiences as immigrants to Canada, and through connections to Britain.

Once in India, my interview style changed, and I have already mentioned how I took notes instead of using a tape recorder. For immigration officials, detailed questions were developed, and the information produced through these meetings was highly specific. In other contexts however, I found it inappropriate to follow set interview questions, since my guides presented me to many respondents informally, and on occasions when I did try to follow a set questionnaire regarding remittances, my host and the villagers I met continually redirected the conversation, or resisted offering specific answers. I chose to respect their evasion to such intrusive and specific questions regarding income, and eventually abandoned my set remittance questionnaire, electing instead to employ other forms of inquiry such as interviews with local bankers.

My relationship to respondents in India varied depending on the extent to which my work was mediated through the assistance of others. While visiting villages I was always accompanied by men, and this was helpful because in many cases translation was needed, but it also limited my access and direction over interviews and field visits. In

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14 In the case of the Brar family, I actually stayed with them in India since we were both there at the same time.
some circumstances I was frustrated at the direction I was being led, since some guides had very definite ideas about what or whom they wanted me to see. This was often apparent with regard to my attempts at gaining an insight into women's concerns, but this was partly addressed through visits to girls' schools and colleges, and discussions with the female staff and students there. In the villages however, my own language limitations forced me to depend upon male interpreters, or to speak only to males since they were often more proficient in English. Despite these limitations, my experiences and the assistance I received in Punjab were invaluable.

**Procedures for analysis**

My initial plan for the analysis of interview transcripts was to use *NVIVO™* software for qualitative data interpretation. I proceeded to use the program to analyze data I had already collected and transcribed, but this proved to be more difficult and time consuming than I had anticipated. Due to the multiple forms of data I eventually collected—taped interviews, noted interviews, field notes, quantitative data, secondary sources such as local newspapers and detailed brochures and pamphlets—I decided against investing time in learning and utilizing the software. Instead I opted for a more practical and flexible method for analysis. All the relevant pieces of information gathered in both Vancouver and India over the previous two years were complied into distinct units depending upon the nature of exchanges they referred to. Interviews and notes were reviewed, important passages highlighted and comments and cross-references inserted. All the information was both physically and digitally filed, depending upon the

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15 Also there was the novelty of being a white woman in a place far off the tourist track, and as such it was sometimes obvious that I was deliberately being 'exhibited' to improve that particular individual's status within the community.
significance it had for different areas of the research. At the end of the research period I was left with such a huge amount of material that this physical and digital filing system was the most efficient means through which to review and cross reference data. Though the qualitative software would have been helpful, the eventual nature of material gathered, the multiple questions and issues raised with each respondent, and the inconsistency of data collection methods across the two sites, was not appropriate for use with a software system that is best employed for use with standardized interview and survey data.

**Building credibility**

Since returning from India I have maintained contact with many of my key informants, particularly those who introduced me to people who became my hosts and guides in India. I have since forwarded copies of conference papers and other material to some of these respondents and received feedback. A conference presentation I wrote was circulated by the Punjab NRI Sabha in their magazine, and a draft chapter written for a book on transnationalism was circulated through an internet magazine published through Palahi’s Rural Polytechnic. Both these forms of communication are directed at the transnational field, transcending both the space of Punjab and the global spaces of Punjabis overseas. I have moved through these diverse immigrant networks, and along the way I have been afforded important access to information across a broad spectrum covering different levels of governance and different spatial and social fields. I moved

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17 Development, Migration and Transnational Spaces. A chapter for a proposed edited collection recently accepted by Routledge for publication, based on the AAG 2000 “Transnational spaces” sessions, and to be edited by Peter Jackson.
across space and through scale, and interacted with people of different caste, class, gender and ethnicity, which could only occur through the diverse research framework I have developed.

A methodological approach so heavily dependent on entering social networks in order to complete fieldwork across two spatially distinct, yet socially coherent field sites, requires an immense amount of interaction, personal commitment and dislocation for the individual researcher. In my case I entered a region I had no previous familiarity with, possessing no contacts other than those developed through preliminary interviews held in Vancouver. I want to revisit the feelings of dislocation I experienced while I was in India in order to give some insight into the challenges transnational fieldwork presents, or indeed any field work which requires the researcher to relocate themselves into a setting with which they are unfamiliar.

**Entering the Transnational 'Field'**

Geography boasts a strong tradition of fieldwork, but several feminist geographers have drawn attention to this tradition as a masculinist exercise where the researcher dominates an often femininized field, a distinctly contained space 'out there' separate from the academy (Rose, 1993), which is then visualized and consumed through distinctly sexualized interpretations (Sparke, 1996). However, many other feminist geographers have argued that fieldwork can provide important opportunities for challenging dominant norms and attitudes that create and maintain spatial and social binaries, and that through our activities as scholars, teachers and community activists, the field can be understood as present in everything we do (Katz, 1994; Hyndman, 1995). Although I understand
Sparke’s contention that “fieldwork remains imbricated within masculinist modalities of power” (1996, p.216), I want to demonstrate, by recounting my own personal experiences as a woman conducting research across a transnational field, how this construction of the field as masculinist can be complicated. I demonstrate this through two contexts, firstly by reflecting upon bodyspace, how my gender shaped my experience of space, and secondly by critically evaluating the idea of the spatialization of the field: ‘over here’ versus ‘over there’.

I experienced space in India in multiple ways, but gender was always an overbearing factor. My first arrival in India, through Delhi, was a lonely and disheartening exercise of familiarizing myself with a very unfamiliar setting. As an obvious ‘tourist’ unfamiliar with the city, my first week in Delhi presented me as a target for those dependent on tourists for a living. I experienced the contradictory feelings of social isolation, yet intense intrusion when I ventured onto the streets. Even in my hotel, a mid-priced hotel in New Delhi, the presence of a single white female was obviously intriguing for some of the other Indian guests. On one occasion a male guest in the hotel overheard my room number and later phoned me to offer me a small gift and invite me for lunch. His questions regarding my reasons for being in Delhi made me anxious, and when I eventually got off the phone, I could not help feeling that the safe space of my hotel had been transformed. This incident might indicate on one hand my naiveté, but also the process of adaptation to different social norms and expectations I was experiencing. In subsequent trips to Delhi I understood how to negotiate, how to interpret
situations and how to move around the city despite the gaze of others. This minor example challenges Sparke’s argument that the ‘field’ is feminized through the researcher’s masculine practice of visualization. Quite contrary to this, I felt that ‘the field’ constantly feminized me, the researcher.

My awareness of bodyspace was also transformed when I moved to Punjab, and stayed with some contacts made through Ajit Singh in Vancouver. My hosts were the Palahi family, a middle class Indian family living in Phagwara—a medium sized industrial town close to Palahi, one of my main research sites. Mr Palahi is the college principal in Palahi, and his wife is a school teacher. They have two children, Manjit, who is fifteen years old and attends the local Catholic school, and Joyti, who is nineteen years old and studies pharmacy at university in Armritsar. I had been in contact with Mr Palahi through email, so after my unsettling experiences in Delhi I arranged to travel to Phagwara in early November, sooner than originally planned. Once there I again experienced unfamiliarity and dislocation, yet the family setting was very safe and comfortable compared to Delhi, and I stayed with the Palahi family for seven weeks. During this time my research became intense as Mr Palahi was extremely well connected and respected throughout the region, and was very enthusiastic about my research. I was accompanied on several visits to villages, government officials, journalists and

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18 During subsequent trips to Delhi I stayed in Paharganj, a backpacker tourist area close to the railway station where western tourists, including single women, are a central everyday part of the landscape. Here, despite the noise and congestion, I felt very safe and comfortable.
19 I also experienced the sexualization of space in the hotel lobby through the display of pornographic materials in the magazine store, and the constant discovery of explicit pornographic jokes and images left on computer screens and printer trays at public internet facilities.
20 I also returned there in January and February with my husband for two weeks; during this time my reception was altered, since my husband now became the centre of attention.
politicians.\textsuperscript{21} I never traveled anywhere alone, nor did I seem to spend any time alone other than in my bedroom. Of course the safety of this experience was a comfortable feeling compared to the isolation and intrusion of Delhi, yet seeking time alone to contemplate and view the towns and villages was impossible. I had my own bedroom and bathroom, so would often retreat to bed early, in order to make field notes, but in reality I sought out solace and personal time alone. The family were very close, sharing sleeping quarters and preferring to be close when relaxing, reading, and doing any other work. My initial withdrawal from this interaction, I am sure, was seen as strange. The interesting thing however, was that after several weeks of staying with the Palahi family and becoming more comfortable and relaxed with everyone, I began to seek out greater closeness; sitting with everyone on a small cot in the midday sun, moving my laptop into the bedroom with Manjit and Jyoti in order to write field notes while they completed homework rather than sit alone in my bedroom. Again my experiences became paradoxical, at one level I enjoyed the closeness with the family, but at another I resented the intrusion upon my personal space, freedom and independence. The lack of open space, coupled with the manner in which I was often accompanied, became increasingly frustrating. In northern India it seemed I could never escape people, there was no place to take a solitary walk other than the areas used as public conveniences. Recreation deemed appropriate for me as a woman, always involved socializing with other women, chatting about jewelry, clothes, and food, while eating snacks and drinking \textit{chai}. There seemed little in the way of physical activity for a woman that was deemed appropriate and acceptable in public – read ‘male’ – space.

\textsuperscript{21} My research fellowship covered research costs such as transportation and translation, which were paid to Palahi Polytechnic to cover the period I was with them
Gender, of course, was a huge factor in the way I was guided and chaperoned during my research trips. I always had a companion sent with me even if it was to visit a neighbour’s house. By December I was resenting the fact that I had lost my independence and the freedom to structure my own research, so I decided to go to a Chandigarh research institute I had contact with, where I could develop my own schedule and move freely about the city. My first appointment in Chandigarh was with an Indian trade official employed at the Canadian regional office. He was shocked that I was traveling around the city alone. His consternation disturbed me, and again drew my attention to the fact that I appeared to be the only single white woman in the city. Heads spun round when I walked along the street, and I became sensitive and resentful of the way space in this Indian city was so gendered, and my obvious incongruent placement within it. I began to understand again what it felt like to be out of place, yet the focus of so much attention. My stay in Chandigarh at the time seemed difficult, the independence I had sought from the comfortable family setting in Phagwara came at a price. While I resented myself for not being stronger and more resilient, the imperative of planning research, data collection, interviews and meetings overtook me, and I ‘pulled myself together’ and ventured back out onto the streets. I only stayed in Chandigarh for a week however, and returned to Phagwara for a few more days before heading back to Delhi, this time to meet my husband. His arrival was a great relief, and his company over the next seven weeks dramatically changed the way many people interpreted my presence in India. I was no longer a woman violating social norms, a legitimate target for male visual consumption. I was now in my proper place, with my husband, despite the fact that he was dependent upon me for guidance and information.

22 The research institute was the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID).
My research experience also offers some challenges to the idea of 'the field' as a contained space over which the researcher exercises power, as Sparke (1996) has argued. As I have already discussed, my position as a woman in India subjected my mobility to the decisions of my interviewees. Certainly there were differences in our mobility, and I cannot stress enough what benefits accompany the possession of a British passport and permanent resident status in Canada. I was able to be in India and leave India when I wanted. But even if I had left India, I was not leaving 'the field', since the research field I operated within extended beyond the territorial limits of India, and as a transnational space it was never clearly demarcated. In Vancouver I would interact on the phone, over the email, make visits and attend meetings regarding my work in India, before and after my actual fieldwork period. Therefore I contend that the spatialization of my 'field' is not that of a separate and distinct space and time 'over there' or 'back then', that I can choose when and how to engage with. Instead the field is a recursive, expansive and continuous space that I hold responsibility to every time I open an email message.

Conclusion

With the displacement of positivism, human geography has now made space for methodologies that allow for flexible engagement with theory. I have found the concept of networks most helpful for interpreting the combination of both human and non-human actors – immigrants, state actors, capital, goods – across a transnational landscape with mutli-scaler points of connection. My actual field work and interpretations of India-Canada networks emerges from a combination of sources, both qualitative and
quantitative, but overwhelmingly the importance of qualitative work has been central in illustrating how processes of circulation occur and their possible consequences. I have also demonstrated the importance of personalizing the research experience to reveal how important identity is in shaping research experiences, allowing me to temper debates regarding fieldwork and masculinity. Finally I have tried to reveal how transnational space presents a different conception of what ‘the field’ is and where it exists, complicating both the subject’s and the researcher’s experience of space.
PART TWO

TRANSNATIONAL CIRCULATIONS AND THE STATE: PEOPLE, CAPITAL AND GOODS

In the next four chapters I consider transnational circulations between India and Canada, with particular reference to the position and role of the state in monitoring and regulating these movements. I read the state not as a hegemonic unified presence, but as a series of actors, attempting to create and implement policy across an uneven terrain. Immigration provides a highly appropriate lens through which to consider these processes. While I have made the assertion that the state has been obscured in the celebratory readings of spatial transformation under globalization and transnationalism, I also want to highlight the very practical means by which I have been able to both interpret and access state actors. My association with the Metropolis Project—a federal government funded initiative directed at understanding immigration and integration across Canada’s urban centres—has introduced me to individuals within Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and encouraged me to develop a keener awareness of the challenges and realities individuals within this government department face, and how those realities correspond with the actual operation of policy. By considering the state as a collection of practices and actors, I construct an image less of a dominant state enforcing its power, but more of a collection of actors operating within an increasingly transnational context, maintaining a system that has emerged due to a number of complex variables.
The following four chapters are primarily aimed at interpreting the circulatory dimension of transnational networks with particular reference to the moments when immigrants and state actors interact. Chapter Three attempts to understand the nature of immigrant circulation between Canada and India, and the relationship between immigration and the state both in material development factors – providers of labour and remitters of capital – as well discursively – the territoriality and meanings of nation. Chapter Four considers how Indian-origin immigrants in Canada operate across a transnational political field in order to advance their own particular needs, challenging the separateness of the state and its immigrant population, and also complicating ideas of territorial sovereignty, and of transnationalism as either from above or below. Chapters Five and Six turn to a consideration of the capital and goods transferred between Canada and India within networks created and maintained by immigrant actors. These two chapters reveal how the movement of goods and capital are encouraged, yet poorly monitored, revealing the differential porosity of political borders (Sassen, 1996).
CHAPTER THREE

IMMIGRATION AND THE NATION-STATE

In 1995, John Paynter, then Canadian High Commissioner to India, delivering a speech on Canada-India Diplomatic Relations, stated; “the bedrock of our relationship—political social, and economic—is, and must be, its people-to-people dimension” (Paynter, 1995, p.42), and in March 2001, Immigration Minister Elinor Caplan, announced her trip to India by stating: “This visit will reinforce the importance that Canada places on its people-to-people links with India”.¹ Canada-India relations, these people-to-people links, have been forged through the migration experiences of individuals and families who have created and maintained various forms of connection between the two states.²

I also contemplate the effect of global population movements on processes of national identity formation, both in India and Canada. Firstly I will consider the role of overseas subjects or Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in the development of the national Indian economy and the state’s interest in such linkages, as well as more general social reactions from Indians regarding NRIs. I then turn to consider Canada by highlighting Indian immigration processes, and related issues of Canadian immigration discourse and nationalism. These issues are complex and fascinating for the implications they present regarding nationality, development and Indian identity.

¹ Citizenship and Immigration Canada news release, March 1st 2001. Minister Caplan led a Canadian delegation to New Delhi, Chandigarh and Bangalore. She was accompanied by a number of MPs whose ridings are home to large Indo-Canadian communities.
² Indeed Paynter reveals that even before India gained independence, Nehru pressured the Canadian government to accord Indian immigrants in Canada the right to vote, thereby highlighting an early trans-political dimension of this immigration process.
Bombs and Bonds: Indian Nationalism and the Non-Resident-Indian (NRI)

The earth was thundering below our feet, a beautiful sight—the earth moving, we saw it with terror, with joy to see the achievements of Indian science.³

We have received an enormous response from the NRI investors. This is the largest ever debt raising in India. We hope that at least for some time it will be a record difficult to beat.⁴

Seemingly unrelated at first glance, the Indian nuclear test explosions of May 1998 and the August 1998 launch of the Resurgent India Bond, identify the contradictory ways through which the nation of India has imagined itself. At one level the national interest is to protect and enforce the physical borders of the nation, a nation that has, after all, “cartographic anxiety inscribed into its very genetic code” (Krishna, 1994, p.508). At another level, the identity of India is constructed through an extra-national population of Indians overseas who, the state hopes, will invest in and help develop their ‘motherland’. Whilst the nuclear tests attracted international sanctions and reprehensions, they also became a vehicle for advancing the image of India as a powerful state, a state that could snub international pressures while striving to join the powerful nuclear ‘club’. The West baulked at the increasingly unstable situation in South Asia (Pakistan responded to India’s actions by testing its own nuclear devices in the same month), and most Western nations applied sanctions immediately, denying both India and Pakistan access to aid, loans and trade development talks (Economist, 1998). In the weeks after the nuclear explosions, investors – concerned about the increasing political and regional instability—

³ Avil Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, scientist involved with India’s missile program, speaking of India’s nuclear tests May 1998 (Khandeparkar, 1998).
⁴ Mr M.S. Verma, chairman of the State Bank of India, speaking in August 1998 about the Resurgent India Bonds issued to NRI investors (Network, 1998b).
pulled almost US$20 billion dollars out of the Indian stock exchange (Moore, 1998). In subsequent months, as neither India nor Pakistan agreed to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, many western nations softened their positions, with the European Union resisting full sanctions (Network, 1998a), and the US moving to a process of open dialogue, which less than two years later resulted in a historic presidential visit to the region (Economist, 2000).

Three months after the May nuclear tests, the State Bank of India floated the Resurgent India Bonds (RIB), which were directed at NRI and institutional investors. Initially launched with a target of US $2 billion, the bonds were heavily oversubscribed and eventually raised US $4.16 billion. The great success of the RIB portrayed India as a nation that could manage to raise money effectively outside its national borders, despite the sanctions of the west and subsequent downgrading of the country’s credit rating. Such over-subscription seemed to support the popular view of many Indians, “that the sons of the soil wherever they live, they help their mother land”.

As Roy (1998) has argued, the testing of the “Hindu Bomb” and the media and political discourse that followed it, constructed an idea of Indian identity that was full of fallacy and contradiction. The raising of capital some months later from Indians living and working outside India also exposes the preoccupation with pure territorially-grounded Indian identity as a contradiction, illustrating Glick Schiller’s point that despite the reality of transnationalism, bounded territoriality “still remains an important part of the imagery of the transnational nation-state” (1999, p.211). The era of bombs and bonds

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6 Personal interview with State Bank of India officials in Vancouver, December 1998. Such sentiments were expressed to me by many Indian officials.
presented during 1998 juxtaposes these two, among many, ideas of India: one
preoccupied with enforcing borders, the other with crossing them.\(^7\)

I begin this discussion within the context of bombs and bonds, because most work
on India’s rising international status has focused intensely on its defensive capacities and
international tensions with its neighbours, Pakistan and China. In this chapter I will focus
on a different aspect of India’s rise, less profiled in the past, but nonetheless a significant
part of India’s ongoing integration into a globalizing world: the increasing number and
power of Indians overseas. I will consider how the presence of Indians overseas in
general, and Canada in particular, has shaped the types of global interactions occurring
through the transmission of people, but also through the exchange of related capital and
goods.

*Creating transnational citizens*

In the year 2000, India’s population officially surpassed 1 billion people, representing
one sixth of the total global population. Overseas migration out of India has been ongoing
since the pre-colonial period, with important trading routes formed by early migrants
from Southern India (Blaut, 1993). In contrast, nineteenth and twentieth century
migration trajectories were heavily shaped by the colonial networks created during the
period of the British Raj. The process of indentured labour introduced after the abolition
of slavery throughout the British Empire in 1807 was especially important. Migration of
indentured labour to colonial properties such as Mauritius, Fiji and the West Indies
became significant, and formed a new system of slavery in the service of the Empire

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7 Though a significantly important and accessible book on the development of Indian democracy and of its struggles to create a coherent national identity, Khilnani’s book “The Idea of India”, hardly considers the influence of migration and NRIs on India. This is surprising—or not so—when one considers that he himself lives and works in Britain (Khilnani, 1997).

93
(Tinker, 1974). Additionally, military recruitment, and changes in the colonial economic and social environment introduced greater migratory opportunities in the late nineteenth century. Many Indians began to migrate to new settler colonies such as Canada and Australia, and rural, low-skilled populations dominated these early movements. Since the 1960s this pattern has changed as skilled migrants have been taking advantage of liberalized immigration policies in the west. Within India the regional sources of migration have been highly concentrated in a few states, namely Punjab, Gujarat, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Goa (Madhavan, 1985). Particular migration patterns have also been linked to particular regions; for example there are strong migratory networks connecting Punjab, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Goa, Maharasta and Tamil Nadu with Middle East countries (see map of India, figure 3.1). Similarly migrants to the UK and Canada tend to come from Punjab and Gujarat; all the above states have contributed to migration to USA, Australia and West European countries (Madhavan, 1985). Today, the number of Indians, or people of Indian origin overseas, is difficult to ascertain, since the government of India has not collected consistent emigration data, and migration patterns are both well established—therefore possessing their own natural increase—and in some cases unofficial and temporary in nature. Table 3.1 illustrates current estimates for Indian migrants overseas.

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8 For a more detailed discussion of the various Indian migrations over time see Jain, 1993 and Madhavan, 1985.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Source *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Europe</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>942,000</td>
<td>Ethnic Indian, 1999, (Wisniewski, 2000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Indian citizenship 1998/99, (Eurostat, 1999)</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>35,000</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>Indian citizenship 1998/99,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>Indian citizenship 1998/99,</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>Indian citizenship 1998/99,</td>
</tr>
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<td>Italy</td>
<td>69,108</td>
<td>1998, South Asian work permits (<a href="http://www.istat.it">www.istat.it</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>60,924</td>
<td>1998, Asian immigrants (<a href="http://www.statistik.admin">www.statistik.admin</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>19,300</td>
<td>1981 figures for India and Pakistan</td>
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<td><strong>Europe sub total</strong></td>
<td>1,156,332</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>North America</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>593,120</td>
<td>1996 census, single ethnic origin response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>815,000</td>
<td>(Migration, 1997)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>North America Sub total</strong></td>
<td>1,408,120</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Africa</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>29,091</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>22,531</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1,085,318</td>
<td>1996, (2.6% of 41,743,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>17,995</td>
<td>1980 figure for Asiatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>10,830</td>
<td>1982 figures for Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>775,200</td>
<td>1996 Indo-Mauritian (68% of 1,140,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Africa sub total</strong></td>
<td>1,940,965</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Indies and the Caribbean</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>5,565</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>1,257</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>2,811</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>77,850</td>
<td>1996 (3% of 2,595,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montserrat</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Kitts</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
<td>5,056</td>
<td>1996 (3.2% of 158,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Vincent</td>
<td>1,586</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>508,800</td>
<td>1996 East Indian, (40% of 1,272,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turks and Caicos</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Virgin Islands</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>389,760</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West Indies sub total</strong></td>
<td><strong>992,953</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>6,458</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>392,350</td>
<td>1996 (7% of 5,605,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central and South America sub total</strong></td>
<td><strong>398,808</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burma (Myanmar)</td>
<td>919,520</td>
<td>1996 (2% of 45,976,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>1,796,670</td>
<td>1996 (9% of 19,963,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>239,700</td>
<td>1998 (Singapore Department of Statistics, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asia sub total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,955,890</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>1,300,000</td>
<td>Indian ministry of External Affairs, personal interview Feb, 1999.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>77,000</td>
<td>1987 (Nayyar, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>1987 (Nayyar, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>175,500</td>
<td>1996 (9% of 1,950,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>1987 (Nayyar, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oman</td>
<td>184,000</td>
<td>1987 (Nayyar, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>98,640</td>
<td>1996 (18% of 548,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>1,528,500</td>
<td>1996 South Asian, (50% of 3,057,000) (Muth, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>1987 (Nayyar, 1989)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1: Location and Number of People of Indian Origin Overseas

*Unless otherwise cited, all figures are drawn from US Bureau of Census, International Data Base (www.census.gov/cgi-bin/ipe/idbsprd)

The information we can ascertain from these numbers is highly limited. The table is predicated on the census machinery of individual states, and their interest in knowing who resides within their borders is highly variable. For example, the usual link between counting bodies in order to determine the allocation of resources and political representation is clearly not a priority for those countries that do not accord political representation to Indian migrants, such as the Gulf States. Also, many Indians who migrated overseas some time ago are now part of communities with complex, distinctly hybridized national identifications (those in Fiji and the West Indies for example). These numbers also tell us little about their settlement experiences and the nature of their migratory experiences; whether they are single, twice or thrice migrants, nor do we know where these migrants originated from within India. Nonetheless, for India, a nation with limited capacity to collect reliable population statistics (Natarajan and Swamy, 1989), the use of data collected through the cadastral apparatus of other states provides a useful
measure of the Indian diasporic community. The nation of India is thereby constructed partly outside of the territorial boundaries of the state. This sense of a global Indian identity is presented in highly positive terms. For example the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) in its July 2000 meeting held in Zurich, prided itself on having representatives from thirteen countries in attendance, and passed resolutions aimed at India, Fiji and the United Nations. Indian newspapers also pay keen attention to the vast potential offered by overseas Indians. For example, the March 2000 visit of President Clinton to India was preceded by Indian newspapers reporting on “the rising clout of Indians in the US” citing data suggesting that 40 percent of hi-tech jobs in the Washington area and Silicon valley are now held by people of Indian origin who collectively earn over sixty billion US dollars (Times of India, 2000). These individuals are seen as possessing immense political power within the USA linked to their economic success and participation in hi-tech industry. Their economic, political and cultural power is of great interest to the Indian State, and these Non-Resident Indians are seen as important potential investors in India.

NRIs and the Indian State

Formed in the 1970s by the Reserve Bank of India to market specific savings and investments instruments to attract capital investments from the successful migrant community abroad, the term Non Resident Indian (NRI) is grounded in an economic

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9 Most articles highlighting the number of Indians overseas depend upon the figures provided by other governments, for example see Abraham, 2000; Jain, 1993; Patel, 1999.
10 Articles in Indian magazines are fond of highlighting those NRIs who are great achievers in business and the arts, for example see The Week’s special issue on the 50 top NRIs (The Week, 2000).
11 The cultural power of hi-tech entrepreneurs is also important. In 1999 a historic exhibition, The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms held at London’s Victoria and Albert Museum, exhibited a number of important Sikh Art pieces on loan from California based hi-tech companies.
reading of the Indian migrant, especially those based in North America, Europe, South- 
East Asia and the Middle East. In response to this incorporation back into their homeland; 
Indians overseas created organizations to represent their interests at both the state, such as 
the NRI Sabha in Punjab, and at the global level, such as the Global Organization of 
People of Indian Origin (GOPIO). These groups often lobby the Government of India to 
accord NRIs more official rights, such as dual citizenship and a greater role in national 
development. Since the 1980s NRIs have been seen as possible catalysts for the 
development of certain sectors in India, for example Rajiv Gandhi met with prominent 
NRIs to encourage their assistance in developing India’s telecommunications system 
(Abraham, 2000). NRIs have been accorded several privileges, such as the option to 
invest hard currency with Indian banks at globally competitive interest rates. Such 
investments, along with regular remittances, from Indians overseas have been crucial in 
maintaining India’s foreign reserves. In 1990 however, the Gulf War caused a massive 
evacuation of Indian workers from the Gulf States, and the Indian Government’s foreign 
exchange reserves dried up as remittances plummeted. India was left with only six weeks 
of foreign reserves available to pay for goods such as oil and wheat. The situation forced 
the Prime Minster and the finance minister, under pressure from western nations and the 
IMF, to accelerate the process of liberalizing the traditionally closed Indian economy 
(Ganguly, 2000). The Indian state also looked toward NRI communities in Europe and 
the USA to invest in India after the initial reaction of western investors appeared 
restrained: “In this situation the NRI seemed appealing as a kind of ‘third force,’ 
combining the advantages of foreign capital with a native’s tolerance of Indian society” 
(Lessinger, 1992 p.55).
As the number of Indians overseas increases and India depends more and more on the remittances and investments sent by NRIs, the central government has been under pressure to direct more resources toward the needs and demands of this group. In September 1999, a new office was created to focus specifically on NRI issues. Headed by an under-secretary and associated with the Department of External Affairs, the office took over most duties linked to NRIs.\(^{12}\) Most of the office’s attention is directed to the Gulf States where three million Indians, mostly from Kerala and Punjab, are employed in semi-skilled occupations. The problems they deal with tend to be bureaucratic in nature, such as issues related to the repatriation of bodies of deceased Indians, contacting next of kin, and mediation in conflicts with employers regarding payment. In Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates (UAE) there are special labour offices created to deal with issues such as death and securing death compensation from employers. The embassies overseas are also responsible for visiting Indians in jail, handling deportation orders, dealing with missing persons reports and charges of family desertion filed in India. In the Gulf States, death, death compensation, and missing relatives are the most frequent problems.\(^{13}\) According to the Deputy Secretary, NRI affairs, overseas Indians can be interpreted as a “national resource” and unofficial ambassadors who build business connections. The comments of the under secretary are useful in identifying the increased role the government of India has adopted in assisting, but also monitoring, Indians overseas. Many of the concerns NRIs have with regard to their families and

\(^{12}\) Information is drawn from an interview with the Deputy Secretary NRI Affairs, Delhi, 22 February 2000.

\(^{13}\) In Europe undocumented migration is more of an issue. Germany in particular receives a disproportionate number of asylum applications. In addition to the problems of policing the border with Poland—which passes through swamps and forests—migrants who land in Italy do not always claim asylum immediately as per regulations, but chose instead to head north to Germany to seek asylum in what are perceived as more promising labour markets (Economist, 1999). Though there are similar problems of undocumented migrants in the Gulf, Indian officials view Europe as much more of a problem, since the cold winters and lack of work make the situation more desperate.
homes are articulated through their home states and the various bodies set up for NRI issues there. The central government has been a latecomer in the provision of special departments for NRIs. Despite the mundane needs for the central state to intervene, it is also important for the central government to oversee what type of Indian-based linkages NRIs develop. The potential threat to state security as experienced with Punjab separatism, is still an issue of concern for the Indian State. The Undersecretary stated that the Khalistan issue was now contained and that India had excellent cooperation from the UK, the USA and—reflecting the earlier strength of Canadian based Sikh separatists—"even" Canada, in dealing with the threat of insurgency supported abroad. He stated the suppression of the Khalistan movement has been the greatest achievement of the Indian state in the last 10 years. As Tatla (1999) recounts, the Khalistan problems in Punjab were initiated and sustained through transnational networks that worked through other states not immediately cognizant of the difficulties they would create for the central Indian state. Today the government of India monitors and blacklists any overseas associations that promote separatism, and if members of such organizations visit India the central government maintains surveillance.¹⁴ This surveillance has had a particular effect on Canadian Sikhs, and recent diplomatic efforts by former BC Premier Ujjal Dosanjh have resulted in the Indian Government promising to review a controversial visa blacklist which could include a number of Indo-Canadians who have never been involved with separatist action in India (Bolan, 2001a). Despite the difficulties of the past, it seems that India has moved into a much more comfortable relationship with the millions of Indians overseas, but especially with regard to those from Punjab which, according to the

¹⁴ Personal interview with the Under Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs, Delhi, 21st February 2000.
Deputy Secretary-NRIs, make up the top region when it comes to the origin of Indians overseas.\(^{15}\) This makes the connection between Canada and India especially interesting, since Punjab has dominated the flow of immigrants from India to Canada, and led to some very important changes and developments for societies across both nations. As the subsequent chapters on capital flows will demonstrate, these changes have been profound especially in the last ten years with the rise in immigration generally, but especially with skilled migration.

**Brain drain or brain circulation**

This current process of skilled migration overseas has been underway since the 1960s, when liberalized immigration regulations in most western nations attracted educated Indians to fill labour shortages overseas. This change has been identified by several authors, who consider the different impacts—both overseas and within India—of the “old” migration of unskilled rural labour versus the “new” movement of professionally trained migrants (Helweg, 1991; Madhavan, 1985).

These professionally trained Indian migrants are the product of an education system developed in the service of Indian nationalism (Prakash, 1999). During the 1970s and 1980s this outflow of trained labour caused concern, and was discussed in India within the context of a brain drain. It was argued that the permanent overseas migration of Indians who were trained in India led to a process which “privatizes the benefits and socializes the costs” of education (Nayyar, 1989 p.116). A debate raged as to whether this form of “brain drain” was another way in which the rich north could exploit the poor

\(^{15}\) As already stated numbers are impossible to ascertain, but according to the NRI Sabha in Jallandhar, there may be as many as 6 million Punjabis, documented and undocumented, overseas. Personal email communication 19 April 2000.
south. In the case of Indians migrating temporarily to the Middle East, Nayyar (1989) argues that the amount of labour sent was negligible compared with the Indian labour market as a whole, and that most of the semi or unskilled labour that migrated were underemployed or unemployed in India where unemployment is high at all skill levels. This issue is still relevant today, as India has emerged as the most significant international supplier of hi-tech employees for markets such as the USA.

India has become the dominant nation quite certainly because it has a large supply of computer-trained workers, and quite likely, because prior waves of Indian information technology workers have successfully established a beachhead in the industry that places them first in the demand queue (Lowell, 2000, p.11).

In Silicon Valley, Saxenian (1999) has suggested that rather than a brain drain, a process of brain circulation is occurring, where Indian immigrants are forming businesses in the USA and simultaneously creating business links back to India. This re-conception is important because it challenges the unidirectional idea of brain drain, which has dominated the simplistic view that migration equals the end of a relationship with one nation and the start with another. Saxenian’s work suggests that the recirculation of people, ideas and money can have important consequences. In effect, her work suggests that migration is no longer (if it ever was in the first place) a zero sum game. Through this lens, we can see that the training and export of highly educated labour is one way for India to expand markets and make connections across the world.

While these young professionals may be well trained, and part of a surplus labour pool in India, their reception in the USA is variable, with stories profiling the Indian

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16 In 1990 for example, 1.2 million out of 3 million science and engineering professionals were unemployed (Mcdonald, 1992).
17 In 1999 Indians received 47 percent of the H-1B visas issued by the US State Department, and most of these were systems analysts and programmers trained by some of the best Indian Institutes of Technology (Warner, 2000).
successes in Silicon Valley contrasting—and often erasing—starker examples of exploitation. In a discussion with an Indian journalist in Delhi, he mentioned a software programmer who had been working in the USA for three months, earning food and board, plus US$50 a day. Though shamefully low wages for a software technician in the USA, the man was nevertheless happy for the work, and was returning home loaded down with gifts for his family.\(^\text{18}\) Stalker has argued that such workers “are effectively indentured to their employers, as techno-braceros, the high tech equivalent of migrant farm workers” (Stalker, 2000 p.114). Not only are some of these workers exploited, often by other Indians,\(^\text{19}\) but also their often-temporary presence in the USA is circumscribed by state surveillance and occasionally harassment.\(^\text{20}\) This warns us to temper overly optimistic readings of current migratory movements; just because the employment is presented as ‘hi-tech’ and highly skilled, it does not erase the presence of racialized processes of exploitation and marginalization at work in the labour market. Despite the success stories that magazines like Fortune publish (Warner, 2000), and the well-documented reports of the success some immigrants experience (Saxenian, 1999), immigrant reception, despite high qualifications, is still influenced by issues of race, class and nationalistic exclusion

\(^{18}\) Personal interview, Delhi 9\(^{th}\) November 1999.

\(^{19}\) According to Lowell and Christian, the top 100 companies employing H-1Bs in 1998 shows that 60 percent of their CEOs had South Asian surnames (Lowell and Christian, 2000).

\(^{20}\) In January 2000, forty Indian programmers at the Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio were arrested, handcuffed and held overnight for not having their visa papers on their person. The INS was concerned that the two Indian-owned firms who brought the workers into the USA were hiring them out on other contracts, a process called “bodyshopping”. The Indian press presented the incident as a case of “Human rights, US Style”, complaining that: “Uncle Sam the preacher always has a lot of sermonizing to do when it comes to dealing with Third World countries like India. But it is not the least bothered about what happens in its own backyard” (Punjab Tribune, 2000a). This incident is an interesting example of the contradictory motivations of the state, since the workers were employed by one wing of the US government, the US Air Force, and arrested by another, the INS.
This process is not only evident outside of India, since the reception of NRIs within India is also subjected to nationalistic as well as class readings.

**Class Position and NRI reception in India**

There is no doubt that the NRI has a high profile in certain parts of India. In the villages of Punjab, the NRI is associated with great financial success and hence immense *izzat*, or honour, and their sons are often sought in matrimonial advertisements. But to other Indians, who are increasingly traveling themselves, the reception may be different. As one young Delhi professional told me, “you know middle class Indians have a different version of NRI. Rather than Non-Resident Indian, they say Non-Reliable Indian. They are the first to invest money if the interest rates are high, and the first to draw the money out if there is any trouble.”

Though an important source of revenue in certain parts of India, the figure of the NRI is often caricatured as a wealthy leisure-seeking creature, and in this statement we see a rare impression of the female NRI: “Blonde hair, Cartier watch, dripping with diamonds. They love popping pills and discussing nutrition....love trying to get in touch with some designer or other on the mobile” (Ramani and Vetticad, 1999). This impression of the female NRI is fuelled in part by the large numbers of NRIs who return to India during the months November to March, when the weather is pleasant, and families and friends gather for weddings, parties and shopping. Many designers of chic Indian fashion, jewelry and beauty products find that the business they do December

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21 In Germany a similar requirement for Hi-tech workers has led the government to approve a “green card” plan similar to the USA in order to allow 20,000 temporary hi-tech workers into the country (Herman, 2000). The proposal has been subject to objection from both politicians and the members of the German public. Some politicians have been accused of playing on “xenophobic feelings, arguing that Germany will be overrun by immigrants from India” (Eggleston, 2000). While many German firms subcontract work to Indian companies in India, the opportunity to employ Indian workers temporarily within Germany itself is resisted through discourses of race and national exclusion.

22 Personal interview, Delhi 9th November 1999.
through February is greater than the remaining nine months of the year. Take for example a party I attended in the modernist city of Chandigarh. As I walked between servers carrying trays laden with western snacks and crystal glasses filled with generous shots of *Chivas Regal*, I enjoyed the ambience of the host’s luxurious Chandigarh home, which, as with most properties in Chandigarh, was worth well over half a million Canadian dollars. As I wandered through the crowd, I caught snippets of conversation, overwhelmingly the language of choice was Hinglish, a merge between Hindi and English often spoken with what appeared to me as a distinctly English upperclass accent. Many party guests were transnational actors, for example the Bains family from Seattle who own a successful travel agency business, or Raj, a young man with a Newcastle accent who was a captain in the Merchant Navy, and who spoke of the inexhaustibility of his pounds sterling salary once converted into Indian rupees. This event, in a fabulous house, with men and women drinking and mingling freely, gave me some idea of the wealth possessed by middle and upper-class Indians, and the global range some of the population enjoy. Ong’s (1999) idea of the flexible citizen appears in this Indian example, as people with money to spend and global social circles to move in, discuss global educational opportunities and comment on how “livable New York City has become.” This was just one of many occasions where I experienced a sense of India’s dualism, and the city of Chandigarh seemed to symbolize that duality through its rapid transformation as its business sectors fill with computer training centres, private banks

23 The price of property in Chandigarh has increased substantially; this situation is similar across many of India’s major urban centres. The yield from commercial property in Mumbai and Delhi for example was over 13% in 1999 (Vasu, 2000).
and immigration consultants, services directed at increasingly globally mobile consumers.24

The impression of wealth I experienced in Chandigarh was not only evident in the NRIs I met, but with resident Indians whose wealth accorded them global mobility. In a conversation with Meena Brar,25 a recent immigrant to Vancouver who also maintains a house and business in Patiala, Punjab, it became clear that returning Indo-Canadians; Punjabis from rural backgrounds, are still viewed by wealthy Indians as rather uncouth and village oriented. Meena referred to one Indo-Canadian woman she spoke to on the plane from London to Vancouver, who told her how she felt ‘out of place’ at a party in Ludhiana, because all the Punjabis there were so rich and sophisticated. Meena explained that many Punjabis in Vancouver originally came from the villages, and now when they go back to Punjab, the urban monied -Punjabis can tell they are from Vancouver because they use “odd language” and exhibit “coarse” behaviour rooted in rural village norms and customs. Meena also indicated that the clothes and jewelry worn by typical Vancouver Punjabi women was much more ostentatious than those worn by the monied class in Punjab. Shopkeepers in Punjab know this, and when NRIs visit, especially from Canada, they deliberately show them the most excessive clothes and jewelry on hand. In addition to Meena’s comments, her sons mentioned their surprise at the strength of the regional Doaba identification held by Punjabi immigrants in Vancouver. Meena’s husband also

24 Simultaneously however, another Chandigarh is being formed, as the edges of the city are filled with instant ramshackle shelters for those who flock from the neighbouring poverty-stricken states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Here, as with most large metropolitan areas, the extremes of wealth and poverty align through the micro geographies of streets and neighborhoods, and as sections of Punjab’s population seek international mobility, other, much poorer regions of the country become the sources of internal migrants who forge a renewed existence in Punjab.  
25 Pseudonym. Meena Brar and her family came to Canada as independent immigrants; they retain a house and business in Patiala in the Malwa region of Punjab. Patiala is renowned for its connections to the Maharaja of Patiala, and is a fairly ‘sophisticated’ city.
felt uncomfortable with the transition from Patiala—where his social circle included people connected to the Maharaja and upper-middle class educated wealthy families—to Vancouver where his social circle included relatively uneducated labouring classes. This brief illustration reveals a distinctly classed and regionalized Indian immigrant identity evident in Vancouver. In the following section I will consider how the Canadian state has managed this process through its immigration policy.

**Indian Migration and the Canadian State**

In the centre of Punjab, close to the industrial town of Phagwara lies the small village of Palahi. Here I was shown a rather forlorn looking building that used to be the village dispensary. Outside the main door there was a white marble plaque, and though some of the black lettering had faded, the inscription read: “The foundation stone of this Canadian Hospital was laid by Miss [first name illegible] Armstrong, Second Secretary Canadian High Commission in India on 26th October 1960.” The fact that in October of 1960, a Miss Armstrong of the Canadian High Commission in India—not the top officer but a rank of some significance—would undertake a journey that would be far more difficult than the six hour train journey of today, is intriguing. Whilst it clearly shows the historical significance of community connections between Punjab and Canada, it also reveals how the idea of Canada is inserted into the everyday spaces and imagination of rural Punjabis. This fusion of distinct localities has arisen as a result of the long tradition of migration between the two regions.
Indian immigration to Canada: History and General Patterns

Whilst Canada’s relationship with India might be grounded in the “people-to-people” dimension, those people have not always had a straightforward route into Canada. Even after Indian independence in 1947 and the introduction of the first Canadian Citizenship Act, the immigration system was still favourable to white Europeans from the commonwealth. The Immigration Act of 1953 strengthened this bias, granting clear preferential support to white immigrants. It was not until 1967 that immigration policy eliminated discrimination based on race, religion or national origin, moving instead towards a points system based on qualifications. South Asian immigrant numbers changed only slightly throughout the 1960s, as Figure 3.2 illustrates, due in part to institutional impediments—there was only one immigration office for the whole of India, compared to six in the UK (Sampat-Mehta, 1984). Towards the late 1960s and early 1970s the increased numbers of Indian professional immigrants reflected policy changes, and in 1978 the current Immigrant Act was proclaimed, which set yearly targets linked to economic conditions. If we look at more contemporary immigration patterns in the 1990s, (figure 3.3) the metropolitan bias of international migration to Canada is clear, with over 70% of immigrant arrivals in Canada making either Toronto (42%), Vancouver (17%), or Montreal (12%), their point of destination (Canada, 1999), and seventy-five percent of immigrants to British Columbia choosing to locate in Vancouver.
Immigration Policy and the Canadian State

Early attempts at dominion nationalism under Prime Minister Laurier were directly aimed at preventing Indian immigration. Drawn to British Columbia in the late nineteenth, and early twentieth century, male Indian immigrants, predominately Jat Sikhs from Punjab, found work in the province’s resource industries. Facing the general anti-Asian backlash of the time, Sikh immigrants remained isolated and marginalized by both government and labour interests (Ward, 1987; Jensen, 1988; Walton-Roberts, 1998). Their story of establishment in the province of British Columbia is one of denial and exclusion, illustrated most obviously by the 1908 continuous passage Order-in-Council. The continuous passage decision denied Indian immigrants the right to land in Canada unless they arrive through continuous passage—a feat made impossible by the Canadian Government’s active prevention of the only possible direct marine routing between India and Canada. This ruling was enforced despite the fact that Indians were technically already citizens of the Empire. Gurdit Singh, a Sikh businessman from Punjab, challenged the Order-in-Council by chartering a boat and transporting 376 Punjabis, mostly Sikhs, to Vancouver in May of 1914. The boat, The Komagata Maru, and most of its passengers, were denied the right to land, forced to remain anchored for two months in Burrard Inlet, and eventually escorted out of the area under federal military control. The events surrounding the Komagata Maru are too complex to review here, but the incident signals the establishment of a series of important connections between the Pacific North
West and British colonial authorities in India (Fraser, 1978; Johnston, 1988).

The Canadian Government’s demands to prohibit Indian immigrants from landing in Canada were resisted by the British government, since Indians were deemed subjects of Queen Victoria. The British were particularly concerned because most migrants were Sikhs, who were of significant military importance to the British in India (Fraser, 1978). Despite the objections raised by the British, the implementation of restrictive immigration laws against South Asians continued until the mid-twentieth century, and can be seen as an important component of Canadian nationalism (Mongia, 1999).

One hundred years later immigration policy in Canada has undergone significant changes, but it is still promoted as a vital component of Canada’s ongoing national development. In an age of free trade agreements and globalized investment regimes, immigration is one of the few arenas remaining where the state can exercise its sovereign right to control entry at the scale of the body. In line with this control, the Canadian government is currently considering a ‘New Immigration and Refugee Protection Act’, Bill C11. In British Columbia both Liberal and Alliance MPs have utilized the same rhetoric with regard to this bill: “Closing the back door / opening the front door wider”. This is the subheading former Federal Liberal MP Ted McWhinney used to present his position on the act to his Vancouver-Quadra constituents. Liberal members of Parliament including Herb Dhaliwal, Hedy Fry and Sophia Leung have spread the same message. “Closing the Back Door” equals the prevention of abuses to the system, and “Opening the front Door Wider”, allows for ongoing immigration to contribute to Canada’s

26 The Ghadr party is an important example of this, formed by Indians overseas to pressure the British out of India, it promoted an active violent rebellion as opposed to Gandhi’s pacifist movement (see Brown, 1982).

27 The Bill was introduced to the house in February 2001.
development. Their joint constituent newsletter contains three times as much detail regarding plans to “close the back door”\(^{28}\) as it reveals about their ideas for “opening the front door wider”.\(^{29}\) This metaphor of the house is surprisingly uniform across the political spectrum, as evidenced in the 1998 comments of a Reform (now Alliance) MP:

[T]he immigration system is just like a house, where the front doors are comparatively closed, but the back doors are open. People can abuse our immigration system very easily, because it is susceptible to being abused. I think what should happen is we should monitor the front doors, and open them a little bit, but close the back doors, ventilators and windows.\(^{30}\)

The metaphor of the house is interesting for its representations of a hermetically sealed space, which in an age of increased transnational flows—not least of which is composed of people—appears overly simplistic.\(^{31}\) This metaphor of the “house” provides a strong example of Hage’s critical reflections of who can “belong” within the nation. In his thought-provoking book on Australian Multiculturalism, *White Nation*, Ghassan Hage (1998) argues that the forms of everyday racism are more usefully interpreted through the ideas of nationality rather than race. Exercising control over territory is, for Hage, the major explanation for actions of the state and society in denying, excluding and otherwise marginalizing the ethnic ‘other’ which are most commonly revealed through debates on immigration control. Hage interprets this discourse of control—often fuelled by

\(^{28}\) For example $584 million has been earmarked for the RCMP over the next three years to combat human smugglers and to protect Canada’s borders.

\(^{29}\) “The New Immigration and refugee Protection Act”, newsletter sent to constituents in the summer of 2000, no date.

\(^{30}\) Personal interview November 1998.

\(^{31}\) If the ‘back door’ refers to the immigration and the refugee assessment process, then this is not a ‘back door’ to the *actual* territorial space of Canada, but a means to achieve recognition as a rightful member of that society. Controlling the actual territorial space of the nation, the communities, homes, and workplaces across Canada requires more gatekeepers and more surveillance. For a system of surveillance to operate within a space so integrated into global movements of trade, tourism and exchange, those deemed the most likely violators—often ‘third world’ subjects—will be marked, leading to a deeply racialized system of state surveillance.
academics with a penchant for numbering and monitoring movements—as evidence that multiculturalism in Australia is about numbering otherness and maximizing its value, while simultaneously maintaining the naturalization of whiteness.

Hage's ideas appear highly applicable to Canada, but the importance of context must be stressed. Though both Australian and Canadian histories were formed through the colonial exclusion and persecution of indigenous groups, Canada also has to deal with the uncertainties of nationhood continually shaped by both an Anglophone and Francophone presence. Harris (2001) has argued that these challenges shape Canada into a space whose national identity has been formed in light of competing identities and persistent cultural difference. It was onto this history of First Nations, then French and English settlement, that the policy of multiculturalism was introduced. Despite the complexities of Canadian nationalism, the Canadian state does direct significant attention to monitoring and attempting to control immigration. In the case of India, the intimate connections and the historical traditions of movement between the two regions pose some important challenges for the Canadian state in its efforts to control such flows.

Managing flows, or "getting the mix right"

Within the context of the current immigration policy, it is possible to argue that other than validating family relationships are bona fide, CIC has little control over the geography of Indian immigration, since the intense regional concentration of this migration pattern creates networks that possess internal momentum and continuity, constraining CIC’s ability to “get the mix right”. Nonetheless, CIC’s Mission Statement
certainly exhibits some of the motivations Hage highlights, such as management, territorial control and extracting immigrant ‘value’.  

CIC’s Mission; To build a stronger Canada by: deriving maximum benefit from the global movement of people; protecting refugees at home and abroad; defining membership in Canadian society; and managing access to Canada. CIC is the department controlling both the selection of immigrants and refugees as well as the granting of citizenship. The department has 4,284 employees in Canada and overseas, as well as 982 locally engaged staff. There are 70 missions abroad: 15 in the Asia and Pacific region (including 3 in China), 10 in Europe, 23 in Africa and the Middle East, and 22 in the Western Hemisphere (including 6 in the USA). These consular offices are sites rich with meaning, where the workings of the state as a collection of bureaucratic transnational actors negotiate the uneven terrain of policy. In order to examine this in more detail, I consider how officials in the Canadian High Commission in Delhi process visitor applications, as well as the methods of resistance applicants introduce to the process.

33 Canada became a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention and the 1967 Protocol in 1969. The Convention relates to the Status of Refugees. This document defines a refugee as a person, who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return, avail himself of the protection of that country." [sic] (p. 51). Countries that sign this 1951 Convention promise not to return refugees to any territory where they might face persecution—non-refoulement in diplomatic parlance. As of 1997, some 134 countries have signed the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol (UNHCR, 1997).
34 The department is headed by a federal cabinet minister, and is divided up into four sections, policy and program development, operations, corporate services and attorney general (responsible for legal services), The policy and program development section drafts policy for each area of immigration, including enforcement as well as settlement issues, but the operations section oversees the actual application process and the practices of measuring, monitoring and evaluating immigrants in their attempts to enter Canada (CIC Canada web page, CIC Backgrounder, http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/about/cic-e.html).
Micro state practices: Visitor visas and mobility

The consular office, the front line of CIC operations, is an important site for understanding political processes shaping human mobility, especially for subjects from ‘third world’ contexts. This interaction has typically been experienced as a site of asymmetrical power relations where issues of race and class heavily influence the treatment one receives. The obvious power imbalances and the possible discriminations linked to visa issuance has become a prominent issue for immigrant advocacy groups. The first resolution of the 2000 Global Convention of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), held in Zurich, was on “Adoption and Promulgation of Guidelines to Preserve Human Dignity in Visa Application Procedures.” 35 The resolution calls upon the United Nations to establish broad guidelines for foreign embassies in the process of visa issuance, such as assuring the comfort of the applicant while waiting, and attempts to allow visas to be granted by mail to avoid the need for personal appearances. The final point of the resolution demands that the “diplomatic mission must make every effort to act in a manner that purges the impression of irrationality and adhocism in the visa application procedure” (GOPIO 2000 Resolution 1: Point 11). GOPIO’s demands expose the concern Indians harbour regarding their treatment at consular offices and the anticipations they bring to such meetings with state officials. Indian citizens, together with those from over 130 mostly developing nations, are required to secure a visitor visa in order to visit or transit Canada. In order to secure a visitor visa an Indian national must attend an interview in person at the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi.

The Canadian High Commission in Delhi is set back from the wide grassy boulevards of Shantipath, offering a haven from the chaotic streets of the overwhelming

The embassy district presents itself immediately as a classed and privileged space, where even dogs—unlike the mangy parasite infected city canines—are well groomed and walked on leashes by embassy-employed houseboys. This area is the home of most embassies in the city, where space is transformed into dozens of micro borders controlled against the crowds of Indian nationals who line-up against high well-patrolled fences: a physical demonstration of the everyday struggle of global migrants against the borders of state sovereignty.

The Canadian High Commission enclosure toward the middle of Shantipath has at least five gates, each of which is guarded. The entrance for those people attending interviews for visitor visas is marked by the use of metal gates to maintain the early morning queue in an orderly fashion, and booths with glass windows, behind which locally-engaged staff offer tokens to the first 250 people in line. Those people lucky enough to be issued with tokens go through to a large waiting room inside the building, where they wait to attend an interview. Visitor visa interviews only take place four mornings a week, and queues gather in the early hours as people often arrive the night before and sleep on the pavement outside.36 Immigration officials are entrusted with the responsibility of deciding whether the individual interviewed presents a flight risk if she or he were given permission to visit Canada. The personal interview is an essential part of the assessment process, and the information applicants are normally supposed to provide allows the visa officer to ascertain that: a) they have a genuine reason to visit Canada; b) they own property in India, or have sufficient funds in the bank to prove they

36 The lack of shelter, water and facilities has been a contentious issue for some time. Germant Grewal and other Members of Parliament have complained vigorously, but the head of immigration at Delhi argues that the land outside the High Commission is owned by the city, and Delhi authorities are unwilling to develop any facilities. While a water pipe was installed, local people in the area used it for their daily water supply which led to its withdrawal.
will return and; c) they have a job that they will be returning to.\footnote{It seems unlikely that many people are aware of the need for this information. The actual visa application form does not stipulate the need for this information, and one man I spoke to – a Canadian waiting outside for his cousin – was not aware of the need for these documents when I asked him about them.} High Commission figures show that up to a third of applicants each year are refused visitor visas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Non-immigrant visitor visa applications received</th>
<th>Visitor visas issued</th>
<th>Percent of applications declined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>25,512</td>
<td>19,413</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>31,765</td>
<td>23,343</td>
<td>26.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>33,314</td>
<td>23,726</td>
<td>28.8 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>36,164</td>
<td>25,406</td>
<td>29.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>37,468</td>
<td>25,920</td>
<td>30.8 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: Visitor Visa Processing at New Delhi CIC Offices, data from CIC office manager, Delhi High Commission, December 1999.

It is common practice for Citizenship and Immigration to screen applicants from developing countries in order to identify potential ‘flight’ cases.\footnote{Several Immigrant advocate groups, and Donald Cameron, an immigration consultant who previously was consul general in Seattle, have been highly critical of this practice (CBC radio July 8th 1999).} Immigration officials estimate that Indian nationals are in the top three or four of undocumented arrivals in Canada, and they use this information to justify their rigid approach to visa processing.

This rigidity, borne of suspicion, was clearly displayed during a High Commission social event I attended in December 1999. “The Club Canada Players”, a social group composed of immigration staff from the Canadian High Commission, put on a pantomime called Cinderella\textit{jai}. The performance was a public fundraising event held adjacent to the bar and swimming pool of the High Commission’s social club area. The cast was made up of a variety of CIC officers, and the audience was mostly CIC’s Canadian staff, families and friends, none were of Indian origin. One song in particular, sung to the tune of “\textit{tie a yellow ribbon}” was a cynical presentation of the significant demand for Canadian visas.
I stood in line, got token five
Now, I’ve got to show that jerk I’m bonafide
If he believes my story, which consists of mostly lies
Then he’ll know just what to do
Let me book my flight
Leave this place tonight....

Put a student visa in my passport please
I spent 14 Lakh$^{39}$ on these fake degrees
If I don’t get a visa with these fake degrees
I’ll stay in the Punjab
Forget about Toronto
And blame it on CIC
If I don’t get a visa with my fake degrees

Put a goddam visa in my passport please
It’s been 6 long hours since I paid my fees
If I don’t get my visa telling me I’ll soon be free
I’ll write to my M.P.
I’ll file an appeal
And try a little bribery…
If I don’t get a visa with my fake degrees

The lyrics of this song reflect the extent to which potential migrants are already
embedded in transnational circuits, in particular the reference, “I’ll write to my M.P. I’ll
file an appeal”, assumes the potential migrant has channels of access to Canadian forms
of representation, which many will undoubtedly have through family contacts. These
lyrics are a demonstration of the extent to which Indo-Canadians use their Canadian
citizenship rights and extend them to other nationals, and the degree to which CIC
officials are aware of this connection. I was initially shocked with the nature of this
song; for the unequivocal stereotyping of Indian visa applicants as liars, cheats and
potential fraudsters implies an entrenched bias held by many CIC officials, despite the
personal commitment some officials voiced to an immigration system based on fairness
and equality. It indicates the importance of understanding policy implementation within a

$^{39}$ About $50,000 Canadian dollars
social context where negative processes of stereotyping based upon racializing and
criminalizing discourses produce geographies of exclusion (Sibley, 1995). However, in
many discussions I had with Punjabis and Indian officials, they agreed that attempts to
circumvent foreign state regulations regarding visa applications were widespread, and, as
with this example, most treated it in a humorous fashion. In particular many officials
commented on the nature of the Indian bureaucracy—where official forms and
certificates are impossible to verify, yet easy to manipulate—together with the huge
demand for immigration overseas, and the intricate knowledge people have of
opportunities abroad, all conspire to make the job of verifying applications an almost
impossible task. In light of this, it is not difficult to understand why officials might
choose to treat all applicants with distrust and suspicion. These restrictions however
highlight the preconceived ideas officials’ hold with reference to Indian nationals,
explaining the limitations on mobility that the vast majority of Indian citizens face, and
the genuine concern groups such as GOPIO express with regard to the lack of fair
treatment Indian nationals face in foreign embassies. While it might be understandable
that general suspicion rules decisions regarding visa issuance, a corollary to such
limitations is that a number of alternatives to state sanctioned mobility have emerged,
which state officials find almost impossible to monitor, never mind control.

Conclusion

The almost 14 million people of Indian origin overseas represent a hugely diverse
population settled across a geographically extensive area. Though representing diverse
class, caste and regional backgrounds, immigrants maintain connections back to India, socially, politically and financially. This bond with India contributes significantly to India’s economic and social development, as well as shaping an increasingly global form of Indianness not ontologically rooted in Indian sovereign territory. Once we focus in more detail on the nature of immigration between specific locations, the particularities of immigration flows reveal important social and spatial components. The pattern of immigration from India to Canada indicates a tight regional bias focused on Punjab, and the composition of immigration illustrates its social basis, in that family class migratory networks have been the fundamental shapers of these circulations. Though skilled and professional immigrants from India are increasingly entering Canada, the regional bias is still evident in this class of immigrant, and it is yet to be seen if their numerical presence will displace the family class. I have drawn attention to the ongoing centrality of immigration policy in the discourse of Canadian nationalism, but also stressed the role of the Canadian state in policing human mobility from ‘third world’ sites and the importance of understanding how such policies may be translated by bureaucrats through processes of racialization and stereotypical assumption. I have also indicated how potential immigrants can challenge CIC through their families in Canada, indicating the effective transnational use of Canadian citizenship. In the following chapter I delve into citizenship in more detail, paying particular attention to ways in which the Canadian state’s administration of immigration policy is altered by the presence and effectiveness of dense, regular and rapid (i.e. transnational), immigrant networks.
Immigration from India to Canada is marked by the dominance of mobility activated through the family class of Canada's immigration policy. This suggests the production and maintenance of a transnational social field where intimate cultural factors shape transmissions in a recursive manner. In this chapter I develop this claim by presenting examples of how processes of immigration regulation and control are subjected to various transnational responses and strategies through which Indo-Canadians and Indian migrants interact with the Canadian state. The first considers undocumented migration, the second interprets the increased power of the immigration consultant, and the third considers how democratic pressures mobilized within Canada have increased the density of immigrant networks based in Punjab and the political importance of Punjab's links with Canada. These examples will reveal the increasing sophistication with which individuals and immigrant groups use the Canadian democratic system to interrogate aspects of state regulation.

Throughout this chapter three themes will structure the discussion. Firstly, the notion of nation-states as distinct separate entities is challenged by the interactions transnational subjects introduce. Secondly, despite the challenge these interactions introduce to concepts of national separateness, transnational immigrants are participants in national processes through the exercise of citizenship. Thirdly, I argue that this citizenship participation by transnational subjects cannot be adequately represented

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1 The strong tradition of marriage between India and Canada and the cultural norms for the reconstitution of family, parents, and siblings, within Canada, is an important aspect of Indian immigration. This will be considered in more detail in Chapter Nine.
through the idea of transnationalism from above or below.

Citizenship and the State

Sovereignty, exclusive territory and citizenship mark the specificity of the nation state, and immigration has played a central role in the creation of the Canadian nation-state. Mongia (1999) effectively demonstrates how the formation of a Canadian nation distinct from the British Empire was rooted in the desire to deny the entry of Indian immigrants into Canada. The complexities of the colonial relations Canada was embedded within made their exclusion of Indians—subjects of the Empire—problematic, but was eventually overcome with the introduction of passports for all free Indian migrants in 1915. This introduced a pseudo-universality that disguised both the Canadian Government's blatant racism, and the British Colonial authorities desire to prevent the unraveling of Empire due to the obvious differential treatment of subjects along racialized lines. This intersection of territorial space and racial difference leads Mongia to use the term nation-\textit{race}:

The emergence of the nation-state as the first state formation to exercise a monopoly over migration indicates not that control over mobility begins \textit{after} the formation of the nation-state but that the very development of the nation-state occurs, in part, to control mobility along the axes of the nation-race (p.554).

Race and immigration are still critical elements in the exercise of sovereignty. Saskia Sassen (1996) contrasts what she interprets as two tensions brought into focus especially through immigration debates: one of denationalizing economic space and the other a renationalizing of political discourse.
The existence of two different regimes for the circulation of capital and the circulation of immigrants, as well as two equally different regimes for the protection of human rights and the protection of state sovereignty, pose problems that cannot be solved by the rules of the game. It is in this sense that immigration is a strategic site to inquire about the limits of the new order: it feeds the renationalization of politics and the notion of the importance of sovereign control over borders, yet it is embedded in a larger dynamic of transnationalization of economic spaces and human rights regimes (Introduction, xvi).

The ‘new order’ Sassen refers to is grounded in the ascendance of the global economy, but rather than see the global economy and the state as mutually exclusive, she maintains that global processes originate in the space of the nation state, and that "the state itself has been a key agent in the implementation of global processes" and as a result “sovereignty has been decentered and territory partly denationalized" (p.28). The social sciences, Sassen argues, need to reconsider their analytical investigation of the nation-state as the container of social, political and economic processes, and it is immigration where tensions over changes in state sovereign power are most visibility displayed.

Immigration, once easily controlled from within the legal frameworks of the sovereign state, is now being monitored by international human rights organizations and populations whose own immigrant backgrounds make them highly vocal contributors to issues of policy. "Immigration is thus a sort of wrench one can throw into theories about sovereignty" (Sassen, 1996, p.63) and debates over citizenship mark this complex union between the immigrant and their membership to a sovereign state. In the case of India and Canada, the strength of its “people – to – people links”, together with both nations’ incorporation into global economic processes, has redefined aspects of their sovereignty.

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2 Sassen develops a concept of "economic citizenship", which in addition to the social rights attached to the welfare state, includes a series of individual rights to employment and economic well-being. She considers the potential for global economic bodies such as the World Trade Organization to promote this public interest, but this notion rests upon a unproblematic conflation of democracy and human rights with a free market ideology.
It is through this interface of immigration, citizenship and the state, that I frame this chapter.

The effect of large-scale international immigration from non-European sources has had a particular impact on conceptualizations of citizenship, and has become a major topic of interest for researchers and policy makers alike (Bloemraad, 2000). As international immigration increases, resulting in a highly diverse population both ethnically and politically, the assumptions regarding citizenship—what it is, how it operates and how it intersects with the construction of a national identity—have been questioned. In India the central state is keen to benefit from the immense resources their overseas population offers, and balances its need for sovereign integrity against the demands of a globalized population who seek incorporation into a spatially heterogeneous, but culturally homogenous community. This right to incorporation is not without tension, and the idea of dual nationality is highly contentious in India, where national chauvinistic pride is combined with unease regarding the potential for economic subordination. This concern over national identity is also rooted in an almost psychological anxiety, where the integrity and protection of the nation is seen as threatened by increasing diversity, be it economic or ethnic. In reaction to this presumed threat, Canadian discourses of national strength have been built out of the reality of ethnic diversity in order to construct national coherence. For Canada, multiculturalism has provided the glue to protect the nation from centripetal forces of ethnic difference created both through international migration and Quebecois claims for separation. Multiculturalism has been seen as an effective way for the state and its diverse population to cohere; “Multiculturalism policy, and the web of cultural relations that it engenders, is
an important and effective means of mediation, and ties Canadian government to popular interests in ways seldom achieved in other countries” (Kobayashi, 1993, p.224). The success Kobayashi accrues to multiculturalism depends upon the active participation of immigrants in citizenship practices, whether constituted institutionally (Soysal, 1994) culturally (Joseph, 1999), or materially (Mitchell, 1993). Bloemraad (2000) argues that of the four dimensions of citizenship – legal status, rights, identity and participation—participation is a vital concept for considering the interaction between individual immigrants and the socio-political community that grants membership. Citizenship participation has tended to be interpreted through the restricted channels of political voting and campaigning. In this chapter I consider forms of citizenship participation practiced by Indo-Canadians that, while highly political, have not been considered in the literature. These practices simultaneously configure transnational circulations and local community development.

**Transnationalism From Above or Below?**

The intersection of citizenship participation and transnationalism is a fertile area of inquiry that considers the interface between the immigrant individual and the state. Interaction with state actors or global elites has often been represented in the literature as either transnationalism from ‘above’ or ‘below’, although rarely is this binary explicitly identified (Mahler, 1998). Transnationalism from above relates to the hegemonic power of global elites and organizations that seek to exert greater power and influence over political, economic and cultural forms globally. Transnationalism from below is seen to
represent counter-hegemonic social spaces across two or more nations, which are “grounded in the daily lives, activities, and social relationships of quotidian actors” (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton-Blanc 1992, p.5). Mahler (1998) argues that this bipolar, hierarchical structure imposed on transnational practices is too rigid, and may marginalize certain transnational practices and actors. Mahler highlights, “the difficulty and artificiality of distinguishing between transnationalisms for they, indeed, are interrelated” (1998 p.72). Mahler argues that transnational practices and social fields should be investigated critically, and within their relative contexts, before allowing subaltern and transformative agency to dominate our explanations of migrant activity across home and host states. This challenge encourages us to seek the points where there are interconnections, complications, contradictions and surprises, and these often involve the state in intricate ways. Others, such as Portes (1997) have recognized the ability of immigrant groups to use the same advantages that states and corporations drawn upon:

The economic activities that sustain these communities are grounded precisely on the differentials of advantage created by state boundaries. In this respect they are no different from the large global corporations, except that these enterprises emerge at the grassroots level and its [sic] activities are often informal (4).

Although the movement of immigrants is indeed influenced by differentials in wage rates, it is too restrictive to divide transnational practices into the levels of the grassroots and the elite. These simplistic dualisms of above and below, masks the complicities and contradictions that necessarily involve states, global elites and grass-roots groups. Besides, the very notion of transnational practices involves traversing a number of scales and social locations, in that migrating bodies have to move around, or through, the state and its surveillance apparatus, often transforming and reshaping their social location in
the process. Charting movements between and across these spaces and scales demands a more flexible and encompassing framework in order to allow the researcher to capture and expose the multiple avenues through which transnational articulations are formed. I illustrate this argument through three examples, the first of which is a consideration of undocumented migration, an action most often considered a grassroots, grounded form of political subversion against the hegemonic structures of the state.

Transnational Responses and Strategies I: Negotiating Around the State

The immense will and desire for international mobility makes undocumented migration a process open to multiple forms of agency and determination that challenge the state to control and monitor its boundaries. As an immigrant to Canada I understand the desire with which one longs to be included and recognized within a nation. Though privileged in my position as a white subject from a developed country with colonial linkages to Canada, I nevertheless appreciate the determination to feel the right to belong in a place, and the desire to contribute and prove my worth. In the case of India, the condition of society, environment and political structures make this desire palpable in the faces, voices and emotions of those who seek entrance to Canada. Such strong emotions elicit strong reactions, and for those who do not have the professional talents or appropriate networks to facilitate their formal entry into Canada, other options emerge.
Misrepresentation and Irregular Migration

Hage (1998) interprets the unofficial and undocumented movement of migrants through the imaginary of the “caged ethnic”, the illegal migrant that is treated harshly by the state in order to show how the state disciplines ‘queue jumpers’. Caging the ethnic-undocumented migrant becomes a symbolic display of the power of the state’s will to control its borders and discipline those that would flaunt its power to control. Hage’s illustration of this process as a battle of wills is important because it reveals the place of agency. Rather than suggest that the structures of national apparatus control from afar, he suggests that the battle is an embodied and direct one. His argument, however, depends upon the idea of a strong state able to ‘cage’ those who flaunt its rules and therefore demonstrate its actual power. How does the Canadian state exercise its will in opposition to those who attempt to advance their own?

Throughout Punjab people have stories about the kabootan-bazi: the “pigeon that flies away”. There are a number of routes available, from opportunistic impersonations of friends or extended family members with Canadian passports, the use of stolen passports, or the use of ‘travel agents’, who for a fee provide forged visas for travel overseas.³ In my conversations with immigration officials and people in villages and towns across Doaba, there was much discussion about irregular immigrant movements. Moving through political space without the correct documentation is itself a political act; it makes a statement about individual desires and demand for freedom. In Punjab it was common

³ Newspaper reports regarding agents caught and charged indicate the cost of buying visas is in excess of 2.5 lakh (close to $9,000 Canadian), and often the process involves printing operations overseas (especially Bangkok), as well as skilled forgers altering stolen passports within India (Sunday Punjab Punjab Tribune, 2000a).
knowledge that many people go abroad without the required documentation, and often there was a general acceptance of such practices.

Immigration departments demand documentation in order to regulate and control immigration; the passport for example, is representative of the exclusivity of state territory. In India, however, the creation of official documents is often open to manipulation, and during a number of discussions with Punjabis regarding immigration matters, they commented on such irregularities. During an interview with a village school headmaster, he related the case of two boys in his school who applied for visitor visas, were declined, and then changed their names and reapplied, this time securing visas. In other conversations individuals laughed about the lengths people would go to secure visas, even offering prayers at the Gurdwara in order that they might have guidance from God to present the right (but incorrect) stories to visa officials during their mandatory interviews. There were several stories related to me about misrepresentation. In general, people seemed to tolerate any attempts, as long as they were made in order to travel overseas for work, or to be with other family members. Tolerance even extended to instances where marriages were arranged between a brother and sister, or between close relatives—despite social norms that would castigate such actions—as long as the marriage was purely to facilitate immigration. Other common examples relayed to me included sports teams embarking on Canadian tours, where only the captain returns to India, or business trips organized by legitimate business groups, but where individual members sell off their visas to people intending to remain in Canada, and Punjabi musicians and artists on cultural tours where no-one returns (Bolan, 2001b). Widespread

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4 Personal interview 24th January 2000.
5 My thanks to Professor Bhupinder Singh of the Sociology Department, Punjabi University Patiala, for sharing this information.
community tolerance for this type of action appeared to stem from the experiences of a large number of genuine visitor visa applicants who have been refused the right to travel to Canada, and become immensely frustrated at the seemingly insurmountable limitations placed upon their mobility.

In reacting to these practices, Canadian officials often work at the village level. Because Indian immigration to Canada is so tightly geographically focused, it allows immigration officials to routinely visit Doaba to investigate irregularities reported to them. The New Delhi office has one such dedicated Immigration Control Officer, who routinely investigates suspicious cases presented to him by officers both in India and Canada. In the villages the officer and his assistants speak to neighbours, school principals, and police officers and ask questions about individual applicants, their age, marriage and family relations, etc. The Canadian Immigration Control officer advised me that most people in the villages are willing to speak to him and his assistants, providing various information, such as whether a person was married before they left for Canada with their parents. If they find information that contradicts the original application, they take statements from the public to support their decision to reject the case. The collection of such personal data from police and other officials would not be possible in Canada, where privacy laws protect official information. This raises an interesting example of how Canadian officials can exploit uneven legal controls across a

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6 Because Britain and Canada have similar immigrant populations from the Doaba region, the two embassies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding, and often share duties regarding interdiction, or the prevention of improperly documented arrivals (IDA's) finding their way abroad. Whereas the British Embassy has a Airport Liaison Officer, the Canadian High Commission has an Immigration Control Officer. The Canadian officer makes regular visits to Punjab, as well as to the Delhi Airport.

7 Together with one or two local employees, the group will stay in Jalandhar or Ludhiana and travel out from these areas usually covering 2,000 kilometers on each trip.

8 Interview with immigration control officer, Delhi, 23rd February 2000.

9 If the case relates to a person already in Canada, they can try to overturn the visa, but it is a long process subject to appeal and legal dispute, and is usually unsuccessful.
transnational space in order to secure evidence to deny applicants, since such options are highly limited if enacted within Canadian jurisdictions.

The idea of the hegemonic abstract state enforcing its power on the individual is also challenged by that fact that immigration officials are often informed about suspicious applications through “poison pen letters”. In many cases informants are family members of the prospective immigrant, who plead not to be identified. One officer estimated that roughly seventy percent of letters have some proven basis. The officer showed me two examples of letters sent within India, which revealed irregularities in specific immigration applications. One signed letter informed the immigration department of an outstanding criminal charge for gold smuggling against a man whose son in Canada was about to sponsor his application for immigration. Another anonymous letter detailed an individual who was sponsoring his mother and father and two sisters. The two sisters, the letter revealed, were not his real sisters; one of them was his uncle’s (mamaji’s) daughter. The letter detailed where officials could access the original birth certificates – an important fact since there are so many registration offices in India. The letter also indicated the dates they planned to return to Canada. These letters form an important tool for immigration officers in determining cases of misrepresentation, and encourage us to ponder issues of identity at the scale of the family and the nation.

Firstly, this example highlights how the Punjabi interpretation of the family unit is much more expansive and flexible than the western idea of an immediate, biological

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10 The letters are mailed to CIC offices in both Canada and India at the rate of approximately five a day. 60 percent are signed, 40 percent are anonymous.
11 One letter recalled by the immigration officer and written by an Indo-Canadian, was explicit about the manner in which the whole system was being abused, stating that “the smiles in the wedding photos were not out of happiness, but because everyone was laughing at how easy it was to get a Canadian visa.”
predefined nuclear family.\textsuperscript{12} Indeed, through my discussions with individuals across Doaba, the desire to reestablish the extended family overseas was seen as a perfectly reasonable motivation for many applicants to offer misrepresentations through the family class immigration process, and as such was not seen as a serious violation against Canada’s national interest, merely a legitimate process to achieve the more important goal of reconstituting family across a spatially distended field. The attachment to family and issues of status and jealously, may also propel some individuals to use any means to prevent others from taking advantage of the system to the benefit of their own family. Secondly, these instances of internal community discipline raise the issue of people’s own nationalisms, be they Indians or Canadians, and the resentment they may feel towards those whose actions they interpret as undermining national integrity. In this way immigrant identification with the nation might not be a “post national” experience, but an emotional attachment very much at ease with traditional notions of state sovereignty.

These examples challenge Hage’s image of the state “caging the ethnic”, since the state is not the only actor in the process of disciplining those who would defy sovereign control. These examples also reveal the very personalized means through which state processes of exclusion are enacted, both through immigration officials operating at the local level, and through the involvement of the subject population. It also complicates the idea of irregular or undocumented migration being directed from the grassroots ‘below’, against the state ‘above’, since the state is assisted in its action against

\textsuperscript{12} The Punjabi language has many specific words for particular members of the family, such as brother’s son, bhatija, or sister’s son, bhanja, or daughter’s daughter, dohti, or son’s daughter poti. The specificity of kinship relations indicates the important structure of the extended family, but in addition to this, many people refer to non-relatives as sisters, brothers or aunties and uncles. This also denotes the expansive and flexible nature of family or family-like relations. For example many of the young children I came into contact with through their families would refer to me as “auntie”.
such processes by information freely provided by ‘community’ members both in India and Canada.

Regulating Human Traffic

While operating at the level of the village allows Canadian immigration officials important direct access to relevant information, the exercise of state regulatory frameworks is also present at the site of airports. Here international agreements between airlines and governments enforce the need for passport control, and impose fines on those carriers who transport inadequately documented passengers across international borders. Other than the surveillance apparatus in place at transportation nodes, a surprisingly limited network physically represents the state. In Delhi for example, two officers—the Canadian Immigration Control Officer and the British Embassy’s Airline Liaison Officer—are the only officials on hand for airline staff to call if they have some doubts about the validity of any international travel documents. As a result, these individuals are overburdened with the job of protecting multiple state borders.13

Since the mid-nineties CIC reports that the actions of Immigration Control Officers overseas has led to a steady increase in interceptions of improperly documented passengers overseas (CIC 1999a). CIC also collects financial security deposits from transportation companies as part of a program of fees and fines linked to the removal of improperly documented travelers transported into Canada. The Chicago Convention

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13 In the case of the British Airline Liaison Officer, this post was created six years ago, and the first Liaison Officer had to cover the whole of the Indian Subcontinent including Sri Lanka, but excluding Pakistan. Despite the huge coverage required, and the fact that the officer was always flying to different parts of the subcontinent to check on suspicious cases, the position was so successful it was expanded, and now India is the only country where Britain has two Airline Liaison Officers. Personal interview with the British Embassy’s Airline Liaison officer, Delhi 24 February 2000.
ensures that carriers maintain air safety by securing that all travelers have proper
documentation. Since 1987 this has been bolstered by the Air Carriers Liability Act,
which holds airlines financially responsible for any improperly documented passengers
transported.\textsuperscript{14} In the UK the fine per undocumented arrival is 2,000 pounds, and in
Canada the amount charged is Cdn $4,000. Forty-five countries now have carrier
legislation to impose such penalties.

Despite the increasing sophistication of information sharing between foreign
governments,\textsuperscript{15} both the British Airline Liaison Officer and the Canadian Immigration
Control Officer were less than optimistic when asked how effective they were in
controlling improperly documented movements. The British Officer felt that traffickers
or agents were ruthless people who exploited individuals and were often supported in
their work by police and other officials. At the receiving end in Britain, though he wanted
to support the right of genuine refugees to make a claim, he felt that the system was being
abused as over 80,000 asylum seekers were entering Britain each year, many of whom he
suspected were moved by large, centrally organized criminal gangs who were becoming
more sophisticated in their methods.\textsuperscript{16} The Canadian Immigration Officer at Delhi
admitted that most charges are brought against individuals, and not against the "big fish".
The individual often gets a quick conviction of maybe two months, but the source of the

\textsuperscript{14} The introduction of such penalties for airlines has made them particularly keen to train their staff in this
area. Both the Canadian Immigration Control Officer and the British Airline Liaison Officer run training
courses for airline staff, enabling them to recognize the difference between genuine and forged travel
documents.

\textsuperscript{15} Canada has apparently had an international monitoring system for tracking irregular migrant movements
for over 10 years, and has had an Immigration Control Officer network for 10 years with people who are
experts with regard to document fraud.

\textsuperscript{16} A UN report in 1994 estimated payments from undocumented Mexican and Caribbean migrations at
US$3.5 billion annually (Castells, 1998). Work in South Asia has also called for more attention to be
directed at the trafficking of women and children (Johnston and Khan, 1998).
counterfeit documents is rarely found, and the officers have little success in breaking the larger rackets; this, he argued, was the responsibility of the Indian police.

When we consider the actual practices of the state in the control of international population movements, the image is one of a series of small actions aimed at the individual’s act of actually crossing the border. There is little sense of any overall control of those who orchestrate large-scale smuggling networks, thereby undermining what is deemed to be the state’s sovereign right to control access across its borders. These examples contrast the micro-geographies of migrant movements against the image of the state as a separate territorial distinct unit; transgressions across borders are commonplace despite the state’s efforts to police them. These examples also complicate the impression of transnationalism from above and below, because while some political acts like crossing borders may be seen as subversive grounded actions from below, they may also be intimately tied up with human smuggling networks composed of elite classes not so easily defined as transnational actors from below.

Transnational Responses and Strategies II: Immigration Consultants

Since the liberalization of Canada’s immigration policy in the 1960s, and the increased migrations from non-European sources, the exclusionary relations Canada historically enforced with India have to some extent been ameliorated. In 1997 CIC launched a global promotional campaign for skilled migrants, and consultants emerged to meet the demand for intermediaries able to file successful applications. Although immigration consultants

\[17\] In 1997 CIC ran a world wide promotional campaign to attract independent class applications, and CIC staff in Delhi were only just completing the processing of these applications two years later in 1999. This
prove important mediators between CIC and potential applicants, very little has been written on the topic. Hardie (1994) considers the impressive rise of migration advisers in late 1980s Hong Kong, and interprets their role in the migration decision-making process as a very active and persuasive one, where consultants ‘coach’ the migrant to present themselves not as sojourners, but as applicants desirous of long term settlement overseas. In effect, the consultant’s efforts to make the applicant appear suitable to Canadian immigration officers actually resulted in creating a class of immigrants seen as exiles, when the immigrant’s intention may actually have been to exploit certain flexible and temporary citizenship options as Ong (1999) argues. Consequentially, they should more accurately be portrayed as elite sojourners.

I will focus on Indian immigration consultants in order to demonstrate how Canadian citizens of Indian origin are, from a transnational position, introducing a new balance of power into Canada’s immigration system. The number of immigration consultants in India is rising, acting as important mediators in the demand for overseas immigration. The presence of such mediators is nowhere more clearly displayed than the streets of Chandigarh, where the pages of daily newspapers and shop fronts display the encouraging words of this growing sector of the Indian service economy.

While in Chandigarh I interviewed two consultants specializing in Canadian immigration. Both were Canadian citizens of Indian origin who had set up Indian companies after providing assistance to community members in Canada. One company I visited was a small outfit with a mixed clientele—marriage, family, visitor visa as well as independent class applicants—and the manager had a number of complaints about CIC cohort of applications has contributed to a backlog, which translates into a minimum 24-month waiting period for independent applications through Delhi, (Personal interview with the CIC office manager, Canadian High Commission Delhi, 17th December 1999).
and their rejection of the applications he had forwarded to them. The other, World Wide Immigration Consultants (WWICS), was far more impressive in size and success, focusing more intently on skilled applicants and providing an immigration support infrastructure including offices throughout India, and an office in Mississauga Ontario, which dealt with client settlement and employment placement in Canada. WWICS role in the immigration process needs to be considered in more detail. Firstly for the potential they offer in concentrating immigration flows, and secondly as an illustration of the new transnational strategies of negotiation that intermediaries bring to the immigration process.

**World Wide Immigration Consultants: Transnational Actors**

Canada—A Heaven on Earth.
The Canadian Government provides abundant welfare incentives, free medical, free education (up to 13th grade), highly subsidized university education, free houses for senior citizens and equal opportunities for all. It is a totally crime free country, ensuring a lifestyle devoid of any fear and apprehensions. It also offers a pollution free environment to live in (WWICS brochure Chandigarh office, 1999).

To Indian professionals who worry about their, and their children’s future in a country where many feel a political, economic, cultural and environmental meltdown is in progress, this description of Canada is the heady stuff of dreams. If you have the right skills and Cdn$3,000 plus the landing and processing fee, WWICS promises it can help you make it in Canada, claiming that it is the largest Canadian immigration consultant in India. The director of WWICS, Colonel Sandhu, is a Canadian\(^\text{18}\) and ex-Indian military man. In the 1980s Sandhu owned a supermarket in Toronto, and was shocked by the number of undocumented Punjabi immigrants in the city. Based on the problems of

\(^{18}\) Though he described himself as Canadian it is not clear if he is a permanent resident or a citizen.
terrorism and police action in Punjab at that time, he encouraged a number of them to file
with the Immigration Refugee Board. He began to work for an immigration law firm on-
an honorarium basis, and in 1993 decided to set up his own immigration consultancy
firm, which currently employs five hundred staff in offices across twenty-four Indian
cities. The company also employs fifty staff at its Canadian office in Mississauga and its
subsidiaries, Global Settlement Services—responsible for client settlement—and Global
Placement Services—an employment placement service for WWICS clients and others.19
The actual number of independent applications they claim to have filed since 1994 is
2,500 with 3,000 currently in process (Punjab Tribune, 2000d). According to Col Sandhu,
in 1999 they had processed close to 50 percent of the 3,439 total of principal applicants
who migrated to Canada from India.20 This has important repercussions for the
settlement patterns of independent Indian immigrants in Canada. WWICS does assist
clients who wish to go to any part of Canada, but since they do offer settlement services
only from their Mississauga office, there is a significant incentive for clients of WWICS
to choose to land in Toronto. This certainly contributes to the increased concentration of

19 These offices are both in Mississauga. The settlement service is exclusively for WWICS clients, and
assists in relocation and settlement issues, using the infrastructure of a welcome house and staff at the
office. Employment issues are dealt with through GPS, which operates as an employment agent not just for
WWICS clients. The use of these services is included in the general consultant fee paid in India. In an
interview with the Director of Employment services at Global Placement Services, Mississauga, he told me
that they deal with 360-400 WWICS clients a year through their settlement services group, and 1,000
general and WWICS clients a year through the placement service. He also stated that 90 percent of their
clients are working within a month, and 75 percent are satisfied with the employment trajectory they are on
within the first month. After 6 months he suggested that when they ask their clients if they feel ‘settled’, 90
percent say they do.
20 Though WWICS exclusively processes Indian applicants, they do not exclusively use the Delhi High
Commission for processing. They also file applications through Canadian Embassies in London, New
York, Washington, Hong Kong, Singapore, Cairo and Syria in order to speed up the processing time. Of
course the successful completion of these applications depends upon the client being able to attend the
interview in that country when called, which not only requires financial resources, but also that they secure
a visa for the trip. The use of other offices also makes it difficult to directly compare figures gathered solely
from the Delhi office, which will not represent the total number of applications made from India. The 1999
figure of 3,439 principal skilled applicants from India landing in Canada is from CIC (2000).
Indian immigrants in the Toronto Metropolitan area: of 5,724 total skilled immigrants landing in Canada from India in 2000, over 70 percent, or 4,200 landed in Toronto.\textsuperscript{21} In addition to shaping the geographical patterns of immigration settlement, WWICS is also active in altering the actual process of immigration.

WWICS prides itself on its near total success rate, the director and staff argued that they offered a 99.9 percent success rate; indeed their brochure details a “Zero Risk Factor, a written guarantee for refund of entire amount of professional fee if one doesn’t get immigration” (WWICS brochure, 1999). In part the consultants know they can offer this because they only submit applications that meet the required number of points, but they have also developed a system of appeals based upon the knowledge they have formed as transnational actors familiar with the legal checks and balances federal departments are subject to within Canada. In cases where WWICS have processed an application that has been rejected, they will write a letter to the visa officer requesting an explanation within 30 days. Following this they file a judicial review in the Federal Court of Canada using lawyers they retain in Toronto. If the case still fails they will re-file the application. CIC’s Delhi office manager indicated that they had seen a significant increase in judicial reviews in the last few years. In 1998 the office had only seven or eight, but in 1999 that number had risen to seventy-five, and he suggested that the same process was also occurring in Hong Kong, probably also being driven by immigration consultants. The judicial review process determines whether there is any evidence of procedural unfairness, and in the majority of cases the CIC manager estimated they are ruled in CIC’s favour. Though the CIC manager stated his support for the applicant’s

\textsuperscript{21} Only 6.5 percent of skilled immigrants from India landed in Vancouver in 2000, drawn from cross-tabulations of LIDS 2000 data, courtesy of Harald Bauder.
right to review, he did indicate the frustration experienced by CIC staff due to the extra resources needed to deal with judicial reviews (which are priority cases with strict court appointed deadlines). He also mentioned that the increase in judicial reviews contributed to general processing backlogs. The Citizenship and Immigration Department is therefore subjected to forms of external scrutiny through the legislative arm of the Canadian state initiated by immigrant actors who make full and active use of these rights.

If consultants can present an image of privileged access in relation to the Canadian system, then clients feel more comfortable allowing them to take over their application process, despite the fact that immigration is supposed to be available and accessible for all potential skilled migrants without the need of a consultant. WWICS' glossy 37-page brochure boasts photographs of Col Sandhu speaking with previous immigration minister Madame Robillard, and with MP Gurbax S. Malhi. On the back page a general message from Ujjal Dosanjh welcoming people to British Columbia, is presented in a way that suggests it is specially written for WWICS, bolstering the image of the organization having vital personal links with important people in Canada.

Canadian officials viewed such marketing with some skepticism.

The office manager of the Canadian High Commission office in Chandigarh, when asked if there were any formal links with immigration consultants in the city, adamantly stated that they did not encourage any type of connection.\textsuperscript{22} He argued that while the Canadian consular office in Chandigarh was there to give objective information, consultants often pressured the applicant since their motivation was only to make money. He also felt that some consultants were not ethical and therefore staff at the Canadian office in Chandigarh were encouraged to keep their distance and decline

\textsuperscript{22} Personal interview, Chandigarh Friday Dec 10\textsuperscript{th} 1999.
invitations to social events.\textsuperscript{23} When asked about the potential for any official type of association between CIC and consultants, he was adamant that any official association would be misused. The CIC office manager in Delhi seemed to hold a less antagonistic view regarding immigration consultants. He felt they did a useful job when it came to completing forms for family class immigrants, where issues of literacy and language might pose problems. For independent class immigrants, however, he felt there was little need for a consultant, but when I asked how CIC disseminates information to prospective applicants, I was told they offer downloadable forms from their web site — hardly a parallel to the services offered by consultants.\textsuperscript{24} Considering this mostly negative official reaction to immigration consultants, one has to wonder why they are so popular with those eager to migrate? It is obvious that applicants who have the skills required could, if encouraged, file their own applications, but they are increasingly opting to use the services of immigration consultants. It could be that the expertise the consultants bring to the practice is actually making the process easier for skilled applicants—revealed in the increased number of independent immigrants from India, and the number consultants claim to file—and for CIC where forms are completed in line with the most recent guidelines. It might also indicate how applicants interpret the bureaucratic arms of the state, in that individuals need an advocate who can circumvent bureaucratic mentalities that might racialize and marginalize the Indian applicant.

\textsuperscript{23} He argued that many consultants would like to “mix up” with the officials at social events, and use subsequent photographs to exploit potential immigrants, encouraging them to hire a consultant when they could apply equally well apply on their own.

\textsuperscript{24} Although forms are supposed to be available in the Chandigarh office, I heard many people complain that there were never any forms there and staff were not particularly helpful in advising them.
While immigration consultants certainly advocate on behalf of immigrants and challenge the position of authority CIC seeks to retain, they are not necessarily representative of "transnationalism from below". Immigration consultants are active businesses intent on making money from global population movements. World Wide Immigration Consultants charge Cdn$3,000 per applicant, and payments are made in installments as the client moves through the process. WWICS will hold back important information such as the file number if the first installment is not paid, and if the second installment is not paid that the client will not be advised of their interview date.25 Having already processed 2,500 applicants with 3,000 more currently in process, WWICS' potential income since operations began in 1993 could be around Cdn$16.5 million.26

Seen as a recent, but steadily growing phenomenon, immigration consultants are important clients for the financial services industry, and connections between the two services are evident. In an interview with the regional head of a private sector bank in Chandigarh, we discussed the growth of immigration consultants and the associated rise in foreign exchange services; Chandigarh has seen significant growth in banking in the last five years, and in immigration consultants in the last three years.27 Typically the potential émigré uses Indian rupees to purchase a bank draft made out in Canadian dollars to a Canadian subsidiary of the immigration consultant in India, and the money is then transferred to Canada. According to the banker, however, under the 1973 Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) there is no allowance for companies of this nature to

25 CIC experienced 8% interview no-shows for Delhi for November of 1999.
26 This charge appeared in line with other consultants I spoke to, and is actually lower than some considering it includes settlement assistance from the Mississauga office. One consultant who operates from Toronto informed me that she charges US$4,000 per applicant just for processing the immigration forms with no formal settlement assistance (personal interview Toronto, March 2000).
27 Personal interview, 18th February 2000, Private Sector Banker, Chandigarh.
remit capital overseas. The banker approached FERA officials, asking them to clarify the position. They advised that this service was prohibited, but since they did not raise any indication of potential enforcement action, the bank chose to continue acting on behalf of its clients, aware both of the significant business volume, and the uncertain legal status of these transactions. FERA was replaced by FEMA (the Foreign Exchange Management Act), in January 2000. FEMA uses civil rather than criminal charges against violators and allows convertibility of capital in the current account, but not fixed assets or capital assets such as land. This transition probably goes some way to explain the ambivalence of officials in deciding how to enforce the regulations during the time in question.

Immigration consultants – usually Indo-Canadians familiar with both the Canadian and Indian systems – are therefore able to exploit the current flexibilities of the Indian system in order to develop their own commercial interests. The role of immigration consultants and the financial inputs both for commercial interests and CIC clearly demonstrates an intersection rarely highlighted, that between the global movement of people and capital, and indicates the effect immigration consultants can have in shaping both the social composition and geography of migration.

From my interviews and discussions with immigration and Canadian state officials in India and Canada, there are ambivalent feelings about the impact of immigration consultants. Some have suggested that forms coming from reputable consultants are provided with preferential treatment, and this would be understandable if the forms were completed and compiled comprehensively and efficiently. However, should CIC focus on making the process more accessible for all applicants regardless of the use of consultants, or is it just a convenient way to streamline the process without

28 Reserve Bank of India, http://www.rbi.org.in
actually admitting the significance of consultants: in effect a form of privatization of the immigration process? The process does, after all, create more revenue, much of which works its way back to Canada since it appears that many immigration consultancy firms have been established by Canadian immigrants. With the limited information available, one can argue that consultants have tapped a huge market where immigration is seen as a complicated process that can be eased through the use of specialists. CIC’s processing teams arguably benefit from the consistent expertise brought to the practice of submitting forms, but they do not care to admit any official recognition of this channel. In the case of WWICS, the consultant is acting as an advocate for the applicant, and is achieving some impressive results, not least of which is the income they generate.

To consider these examples as transnationalism from below, again overlooks the links between the individual immigrant and their ability to challenge state barriers through the mediation of corporate actors whose own ability to transcend national boundaries and state barriers is rooted in their simultaneous location as immigrants and capitalists. To read the actions of consultants as evidence of transnationalism from below is plainly too simple, but by defining it as transnationalism from above, we demean the significant political actions they introduce into the immigration process on behalf of other immigrants. Instead I chose to highlight the complexity of relations between immigrants the state to challenge this dualistic framework, and reveal how the state is itself stands to benefit financially from the movement of people. This is also enhanced by the actions of specific citizens who are transnational, exploiting their double placement as both Canadian and Indian subjects.
Transnational Responses and Strategies III: Multicultural Democracy

The Canadian political apparatus is another channel offering new options for immigrants in their dealings with CIC. Indian immigrants in Canada are increasingly showing their interest and dedication to the political process, and in many cases this promotes an explicit connection between India and Canada, furthering the transnational nature of citizenship and community for many Indo-Canadians, and bringing Indian and Canadian officials both at the federal and provincial level, into closer contact with each other. While many Indian-origin immigrants in Canada have experienced democracy first hand in India, the majority of Indians agree that corruption is a major problem within the Indian political system.

Instead of transcending divisive forces, developing an Indian identity and evolving a united nation, leaders of different hues became vote merchants busy in dividing the people for their vested interests of capturing and holding onto power. The problems that have been thrown up are those of communalism, criminalisation and casteism in politics and administration, emphasis on narrow identities and loyalties, widespread corruption, abject poverty, rampant illiteracy, overpopulation and lack of quality leadership (Kashyap, 2000).

In Canada, by contrast, immigrants are presented with a political process that is relatively open to the influence of minority voters, especially as community size and socio-economic standing improves (Wood, 1981). Many Indo-Canadians have moved from influencing their elected representatives to seeking nominations themselves, and seizing the opportunity to make their mark on the political landscape which in India is seen to be a high calling (Littlemore, 2000). The individual who holds the record for the fastest progression from immigrant to Member of Parliament, for example, is an immigrant from India, Gurmant Grewal (Surrey Central), who came to Canada in 1991 and was elected to
the Federal Government as a Reform Candidate in June 1997. Immigrant politicians play an important role in building international linkages, but they also address the concerns of their constituents using the democratic political process to its full extent. Grewal for example, has made several pleas to the Federal Government and the Immigration Department in particular with regard to the condition of the High Commission in Delhi, which for Grewal’s Surrey constituents—positioned in networks linking them to family in India—is of major concern. He indicates these issues in his news releases; “Legitimate immigration applicants have every right to be concerned with the continued backlog, lengthy processing times and abuses within the system” (News release, February 3rd 1998). In a later press release he argued; “I feel it is important to assist in cleaning up the system so that it works for my constituents” (March 27th 1998, news release).

Within a system of democratic representation Grewal’s concern for his constituents’ needs is commendable, but once we appreciate this community’s particular tendency to utilize their right to access their political representatives, it becomes more understandable. The importance of political representation within the Indo-Canadian community is illustrated by the location of such information in The South Asian Business Directory and White pages for 2000. The directory prominently displays the following

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29 There have been calls from MPs like Gurmant Grewal for Canada to play a greater role in encouraging peace between India and Pakistan, as well as increased attention to building trade connections often mobilized by both the federal and provincial governments through trade missions composed of mostly Indo-Canadians and often headed, in the case of BC, by Indo-Canadian ministers (see chapter six for more detail). In addition Punjab politicians often make Vancouver an important stop on their international trips. Punjab State Minister Parkash Singh Badal was to have been a guest of then BC premier Ujjal Dosanjh in October 2000, but his trip was cancelled due to security concerns connected to the arrest of suspects in the Air India bombing (Bolan, 2000b).


31 Indeed the problems of fraud and corruption in the immigration system have been registered in several overseas missions (Laghi, 2000). In December 1998 a number of LES immigration staff at the Delhi High Commission were fired due to serious malfeasance linked to bribery and visa applications (personal information from staff at the Delhi office, December 1999).

32 Published by the South Asian Telephone Directory Ltd, Vancouver.
before it even mentions the listings for immigrant and religious services and institutions: photographs of Vancouver’s New Democrat Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) on page 7; a list of BC’s Government Ministers on page 16; a list of Federal Ministers and Secretaries of State on pages 17-19; a list of all the BC Members of Commons on pages 20-21; a list of all the Members of the Legislative Assembly of BC on pages 22-23; and a list of Canadian Embassies around the world on pages 24-25. The number of representations made by Members of Parliament on behalf of their constituents to CIC as Table 4.1 shows is another indication of the active participation of Indo-Canadians in the democratic system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of representations presented by top ten MPs</th>
<th>Total number of MPs making representations</th>
<th>Total number of representations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2574</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>4926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2523</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>4569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2669</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2438</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.2 illustrates how the uneven nature of immigrant settlement in Canada has a direct relationship to the representations made to New Delhi. During 1999 and 2000, where over half of the top ten representations to the Delhi High Commission were Representatives for electoral districts either within, or in close proximity to Mississauga and Scarborough within the Toronto CMA.\(^3^3\)

\(^3^3\) Gurbax S. Malhi has consistently been the most active MP making representations to the New Delhi Mission, with 3,461 between 1997 and 2000.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1999 MP AND FEDERAL RIDING</th>
<th># OF REPS</th>
<th>2000 MP AND FEDERAL RIDING</th>
<th># OF REPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. MALHI, Bramalea-Gore-Malton, Census subdivisions Brampton /Mississauga, ON.</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>G. MALHI, Bramalea-Gore-Malton, Census subdivisions Brampton /Mississauga, ON.</td>
<td>822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. BEAUMIER, Brampton West, census subdivision Mississauga, ON.</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>C. BEAUMIER Brampton West, census subdivision Mississauga, ON.</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. DHALIWAL Vancouver South, census subdivision, Vancouver, BC.</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>J.KARYGIANNIS Scarborough Agincourt, Census subdivision Scarborough ON.</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. CULLEN Etobicoke North, census subdivision Mississauga, ON.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>H. DHALIWAL Vancouver South, census subdivision, Vancouver, BC.</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. KARYGIANNIS, Scarborough, census subdivision, Scarborough, ON.</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>D. OBHRAI Calgary East, census subdivision Calgary, AB.</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. GREWAL Surrey Central, census subdivision, Surrey BC.</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>R. CULLEN Etobicoke North, census subdivision Mississauga, ON.</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. OBHRAI Calgary East, census subdivision Calgary, AB.</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>S. ASSADOURIAN Brampton Centre, census subdivision Brampton ON.</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. KILGOUR Edmonton Southeast, census subdivision Edmonton AB.</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>D. KILGOUR Edmonton Southeast, census subdivision Edmonton AB.</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. MARTIN La Salle-Emard, census subdivision Montreal QU</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>A. HANGER Calgary Northeast, census subdivision, Calgary AB.</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. ASSADOURIAN Brampton Centre, census subdivision Brampton ON.</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>J. MCKAY Scarborough East, census subdivision Scarborough, ON.</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gurmant Grewal, the 1997-2000 MP for Surrey Centre, British Columbia’s largest federal constituency and one with a high percentage of Indo-Canadians, indicated to me in an interview the socio-cultural factors that motivate his constituents to use his office for this purpose.

there are more immigrants, and their loved ones are still in other countries and they look forward to reunification, so I will have more immigration problems compared to other constituencies. Some three four months ago another MP talked to me from Winnipeg, and he had 3-4 cases of immigration, I had about 200-300 cases in my office. That way there is more immigration work here.\(^\text{34}\)

As individuals utilize this channel the impact on CIC’s workload intensifies. New Delhi has a twenty-four month backlog for independent applicants, and the office, together with Beijing and Hong Kong, has one of the largest and most complex inventories. Delays are therefore routine, and the CIC office manager in Delhi argues that the use of ministerial representations, together with the increase in judicial reviews, delays the process even more.\(^\text{35}\) CIC is therefore not an isolated channel free from accountability, but a section of the federal government that can be interrogated through the country’s own political systems, and new immigrants are revealing their own increasingly effective access to these systems of representation and their ability to articulate and exploit distinctly local systems across a transnational field, just as immigration officials can.\(^\text{36}\) It also indicates

\(^{34}\) Personal interview November 1998. Gurmant Grewal made 219 representations to the New Delhi Mission in 1998, placing him fourth in the top ten list of MPs representations to New Delhi.

\(^{35}\) Personal interview with the CIC office manager, Canadian High Commission Delhi, 17\(^{th}\) December 1999.

\(^{36}\) A recent change to family class immigration applications from several developing countries, including India, has created a central processing centre in Mississauga. The reasons for this may include the need to cut workloads for CIC staff abroad, but it has also been suggested as a partial solution to malfeasance in overseas missions (Laghi, 2000). This raises an important point about the ability of staff to continue to investigate suspect cases at the village level in Punjab, which has been part of CIC’s procedure (see previous chapter).
the artificiality of attempting to define such actions as transnationalism either from ‘above’ or ‘below’, since state actors, notably MPs, are central figures in this process.

**Punjab power: Raising Canada’s presence in Punjab**

Another example of the powerful presence of Canadian Punjabi political interests is the pressure to create a full Canadian Commission in Chandigarh, the union capital of Harayana and Punjab. Currently India has only one full service High Commission in New Delhi, a High Commission Office in Chandigarh, a Consulate Office in Mumbai and a Trade Office in Bangalore. For some years the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has been pressured, together with CIC, to open a full service Commission in Punjab. In 1997 an office was opened in Chandigarh, but its main role was as a trade facilitation post, only providing information for immigration and visa matters. In April 2000 Herb Dhaliwal, the Federal Liberal Minister for South Vancouver/Burnaby, released a letter from Lloyd Axworthy addressed to Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, requesting that a full Canadian consulate be opened in Chandigarh:

> I understand the government of India generally limits diplomatic representation to four major urban centres, but that expectations have been made based on strong community ties...I believe that a Canadian consulate in Chandigarh could serve to strengthen the bonds of community which are an important component of Indo-Canadian relations (Extract of letter from Lloyd Axworthy to Jaswant Singh, published in Rattan, 2000).

In releasing a copy of the letter to the press, Dhaliwal was careful to point out his own continued pressure for a Chandigarh office since 1993, when he was elected to the Federal Government. This action is in response to the tight linkages Canada has formed with the region over the past 100 years, and is pragmatic in light of the current nature of
immigrant flows, but there are some contentious issues linked to such expansion. India is a diverse country with immense regional differences, and in Mumbai I spoke with a successful Indo-Canadian who makes regular business trips between western India and Canada. When I raised the idea of a full consulate in Punjab, he argued that a few Punjabi-Canadian politicians pushing for greater Canadian representation in Punjab would be seen across India as political favouritism, and in his opinion it was more important to open a full service office in Mumbai, the commercial heart of India. He felt that Canada needed to do more to encourage western Indians, who he felt were a vital component in the progression towards greater skilled immigration and increased trade capacity. This response is a useful indicator of the typical regional stereotypes across India regarding Punjabis. Often seen as the "hard working go-anywhere men" of India, there is also a classed aspect to this discussion. In other conversations with officials, for example the head of the Chandigarh office, a similar tone of dismay was voiced with regard to Canada and its ‘choice’ of immigrant. These feelings were typically expressed in a manner that suggested Canada was allowing a ‘lower class’ of Indian in. But this argument overlooks the fact that the state is locked into powerful networks emanating from Punjab, which now intersect with an increasingly powerful Canadian domestic political lobby. This lobby has been partly responsible for pressuring CIC to collect statistical evidence to support what has been known for years: that the nature of immigration from India to Canada is heavily influenced by Punjab and should therefore be given greater consideration when it comes to Canada’s diplomatic actions in India. In some ways it is inevitable that the Canadian state has to react to the demands of Indo-Canadian communities, since their political power and obvious linkages to Punjab can no
longer be ignored. These maneuvers formalize the strong linkages developed between Canada and this region, but they have been achieved through the growing strength of Indo-Canadian communities, which, unlike the image of 100 years ago, are no longer wholly victimized, marginalized or disenfranchised.

**Conclusion**

Canada has become intricately embedded into tightly linked immigrant networks between India and Canada, and this has an impact on the ability of state actors to police and define the boundaries of the Canadian state. Interactions between individuals, families and politicians increasingly overcome the spatial and socio-political divisions between the two nations. While such interactions can be seen as grounded, in that immigrant communities have driven them, this is not an example of grass-roots activism. Indeed, Canada’s political machinery plays a very active role in traversing divisions between the nations; drawing them together through their shared populations and their participation as citizens across a transnational canvas. The rights and equalities all Canadians now expect under multicultural policy and law are represented in the openness of political channels, and have important consequences for the immigration department and its operation, as well as the diplomatic priorities of Canada with regard to India. Indian-origin immigrants are utilizing both the Canadian state’s democratic options and the Indian government’s increasing openness to the global market, in particular through changes to its financial regulations. In detailing the transnational flows of people between Indian and Canada, we can see that defining these transnational processes as either from ‘above’ or ‘below’
forces us to separate actions along redundant categories that compromise our ability to illustrate the complexity of interactions between immigrants, federal state departments and politicians. I have argued this through three illustrations. Firstly the means by which state action “from above” limit the mobility of Indian migrants is highly dependent on personalized action “from below”, through “poison pen letters”. This example reveals how immigration officials attempt to exercise the state’s right to exclude based upon information provided by components of the very population it is supposedly disciplining.

The second example considers how immigration consultants are positioned simultaneously as global transnational capitalists, but also effectively challenge CIC in its ability to monitor and regulate immigration flows. Finally I consider the means by which immigrants exercise their democratic rights within Canada to great effect, resulting in important processes of articulation between Canada and India that are built through a series of complex small scale interactions along a continuum rather than a binary scale of transnational behaviour. This type of interaction forces us to reconceptualize the identity of the nation-state, since transnational immigrant communities encourage greater and more diffuse forms of interactions between the two regions, and act as mediators not only spatially, but also across scales: locally, nationally and transnationally.
Immigration is not an isolated process, but deeply imbricated with other global processes of circulation. In particular, the links between capital and human movement have often been neglected by geographers whose discussions of systems of global financial exchange have contributed to the creation of intensely disembodied explanations of capital circulation. In this chapter I demonstrate the links between immigration and capital exchange, and I also consider to what extent transnational transfers are monitored and regulated by official bodies. I conclude by admitting the difficulty of measuring capital movements at a sub-national level, especially when much of the capital is moved through diffuse personalized networks of exchange.

Since the 1970s the movement of money around the globe has increased as deregulation and technological change have allowed both the range of financial instruments and systems of monetary transfer to expand dramatically. Geographers have focused on this aspect of globalization, particularly the increasing international spread of various investment flows since the 1960s. One key indicator of these flows has been the rising level in direct and indirect foreign investment. Until recently, the pattern of foreign investment has been dominated by core-to-core transfers, with developing economies only attracting one quarter of total Foreign Direct Investment, which has been concentrated into a few key states such as China (Dicken, 1998). These investment flows have been interpreted as indicators of the increasing movement of capital beyond national
borders, but this view tends to see such transfers in isolation. Absent is any consideration of the movement of capital as an embodied action, linked to people who also circulate around the globe. In this chapter I want to approach this topic from the novel angle of co-joining people and capital in order to understand how the movement of one might lead to the movement of the other and vice-versa. For this purpose I consider remittances as one of the most significant movements of capital linked to migrants, and also one of the few processes linking people and capital that is monitored through official systems of measurement. Though no longer a novel field of inquiry, remittances are still vital indicators in measuring the impact of immigrant movements on capital circulations, because they offer the only verifiable and large-scale data set indicating the global magnitude of this process. I then turn to examine a case study of specific capital transfers across particular spatial scales: Vancouver to Punjab. Following this, I examine the new class of immigration emerging from India that is accompanied by capital flows moving in the reverse direction: from India to Canada. Throughout the chapter I utilize both quantitative and qualitative forms of data. As I argued in Chapter Two, both are important for providing empirical support for my arguments, but both forms of data are representative of partial objectivity, since the construction of each is dependent upon the partial collection of data. In effect I offer an economic geography of capital circulation between India and Canada representative of only shards and fragments (Barnes, 1996, p. 250), which indicates the difficulty of “envisioning capital” (Buck-Morss, 1995).
Global Remittances

Remittances are classified as private capital transfers, and in countries experiencing large labour out-migrations they may contribute significantly to the economy. In the past, economists and geographers have overlooked the importance of migrant and related capital transfers in their discussions of global transfers of capital. The financial transfers generated by migrants have been seen as insignificant compared with the circuits of international trade, investment and foreign aid. Even when the presence of remittances is measured, the impact of these transfers has been seen as negative on the general development of the home economy. Conventional views stress that remittances become either consumer or investment income, or "squanderables", with little impact on economic improvement beyond construction and real estate (Choucri, 1986; Metha, 1990). Economists also argue that if remittances fuel demands that cannot be served domestically, then inflation sets in and is associated with an untenable demand for foreign goods, causing a balance of trade deficit. Recent work contends that the conventional aggregated measurements of remittances and remittance expenditure fails to recognize the socially embedded nature of remittances (Connell, 1995; Jones, 1998). In addition to these geographers, a small number of economists such as Russell (1992) have stressed that remittance transfers increasingly represent a major form of capital exchange between western industrial nations and less developed nations. In 1998 the measured amount of remittances worldwide was US$ 61 billion. Though $61 billion may not seem significant in light of other global transfers, most writers on remittances agree that the official record "grossly underrepresents the true magnitude of these flows" (Choucri, 1986; Metha, 1990). 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1 IMF Balance of Payments Statistics yearbook, worker remittances.
1986, p702). Moreover, goods often form an important part of migrants’ remittances, which introduces greater complexity, but potentially greater significance to these movements (Portes, 1991; Connell, 1995). In addition to magnitude, Jones (1998) argues that the decline of other forms of income such as donor aid makes remittances an increasingly important source of development revenue as well as one of the few mechanisms of capital redistribution between developed and developing economies. It is this uncertainty over the actual level of migrant related remittances that has contributed to their erasure in discussions of economic transfers in the wider literature on globalization and development. This erasure can be explained, in part, because without definitive figures economists face the impossibility of registering this capital as it circulates the globe, and as Buck-Morss argues, this process of “scientific representational mapping” is crucial for “envisioning capital” (Buck-Morss 1995). Without this official validation, the acknowledgment of large-scale migrations and migrant related capital transfers, and its links to other issues such as global development and north-south divisions, are obscured.

An estimation of worker remittances can be drawn from the IMF Balance of Payments Yearbook. These data are collected from individual countries and are compiled by the IMF into tables identifying national credits and debits. The data are partial however, since some countries, such as Canada and Britain, do not register figures for worker remittances, and are not represented in the tables. In addition, systems of calculation used by each state differ, making comparisons difficult. Nonetheless, the data provide one indication of the magnitude and geographical dimension of these transfers.
Using the IMF Balance of Payments Statistics yearbook, worker remittances, it appears surprising that the figures for the Philippines, which was not included in the list, should be considered.
Indian Remittances and Capital Inflows

India—the largest remittance creditor nation—collects information regarding worker remittances through the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Figure 5.3 indicates that during the 1990s worker remittances have become the single major source of official foreign income for India, greater than FDI, external assistance and NRI deposits combined.

If we consider migration as a form of export for India, the significance of overseas labour migration and the dependence of the Indian economy on this commoditized human transfer are revealed (Table 5.1).

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$1057 million in 1997, but only $204 million in 1998, are lower than this. Also in the case of China, though it did report credits of $4423 million in 1997, 1998 figures dropped to $247 million. These figures are subject to multiple interpretations depending upon state measurement processes.


5 The RBI collects remittance data from banks and authorized currency exchangers, and quarterly surveys are conducted to ascertain unclassified receipts (IMF Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook, 1999, methodology section, p 210).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Worker Remittances</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Worker Remittances as % of Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990/1</td>
<td>2,352</td>
<td>18,100</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991/2</td>
<td>3,275</td>
<td>17,900</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992/3</td>
<td>2,891</td>
<td>18,500</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993/4</td>
<td>3,495</td>
<td>22,200</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/5</td>
<td>5,782</td>
<td>26,300</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995/6</td>
<td>6,139</td>
<td>31,800</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996/7</td>
<td>8,453</td>
<td>33,470</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997/8</td>
<td>10,297</td>
<td>35,006</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998/9</td>
<td>9,453</td>
<td>33,659</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Worker Remittances and Exports. (All figures in millions US$).

Since official receipts tend to under-represent the amount of remittances, we can conclude that India's economy has, especially within the last decade, become increasingly dependent on the millions of Indians who work overseas. Remittances are especially important if the settlement of Indian overseas workers is temporary in nature, since their eventual return and resettlement in India is likely. The two major remittance debtor nations, Saudi Arabia and the USA, are key destinations for Indian migrants, but in both cases the dominant form of migration is temporary in nature. This leads to a

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8 Indian immigrants to the USA are increasingly using the H-1B visa, which grants three years work authorization to highly skilled foreign persons, renewable for another three years. Though some individuals attempt to adjust their status at the end of their stay, there is a per country limit for green card applications, so this option is not available across the board (Lowell, 2000). In the Middle East migration is always contractual in nature, and workers' rights are limited since their status is always temporary no matter how long they have actually been in the country. In Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE, migrant workers account for over 50 percent of the population. In Kuwait migrant rights are determined by the Kafala system where the employer sponsors the migrant and takes full economic and legal responsibility for them during the contract period. This is the major institutional process determining migrant rights, and limits their freedom through various demands such as surrendering their passport to their employer (Longva, 1999).
rather sad irony: that the greater the uncertainty of settlement and tenure for migrants in overseas destinations, the greater the potential economic returns to India through the remittance process.

In addition to worker remittances, India has increasingly altered its regulatory frameworks to enable the fluid movement of other forms of migrant linked capital across national boundaries. NRIs have access to deposit accounts held in hard currency with favourable interest rates and repatriation terms. The Indian state has also made other adjustments to encourage capital transfer at the individual scale (Nayyar, 1994). One example of this is the 1998 Indian budget, which excluded custom duties on gold and silver imported by passengers or other nominated agencies, and increased the baggage allowance from Rs.6000 to Rs.12000 (US$142-$285) for passengers returning to India. The 1998 budget also included several changes to further augment the flow of NRI investment dollars into India:9

- NRI investment limit in secondary market for Indian companies was raised to five percent from one percent. The aggregate limit was raised to ten percent from five percent;
- Simplified procedures for NRI investment in capital markets were adopted;
- High growth Millennium Schemes introduced for dollar investment by NRIs;
- Fully repatriable Resurgent India Bond will be denominated in foreign currencies for NRI subscriptions, with tax concessions.

NRI investments have also been encouraged through the development of a Persons of

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9 Monday, 1st June 1998, The India News Network <INDIA-L@indnet.org>
Special Edition - India - Budget 98-99
India Origin (PIO) card for foreign passport holders. Presented as a way to make “their journey back to their roots simpler, easier and smoother” the launch of this card displayed that the government recognized,

the sentiments of persons of Indian origin to be closer to their original country and to reinforce their emotional bonds, as well as respecting their desire to participate in the development of the country of their origin.\(^\text{10}\)

Despite the deep cultural meanings of such pseudo-citizenship, this recognition has a time limit and a price tag affixed to it—the card will have a validity of 20 years, and will cost US$1,000. The introduction of the PIO card can be interpreted as reflecting the general ambivalence in India regarding NRIs. The notion of dual-citizenship is not widely supported in India, since there is a strong feeling of pride and chauvinism attached to Indian national identity, and the media highlight incidents when Indian nationality is retained by famous Indians overseas, such as the economist Amartya Sen. Part of this suspicion directed at those willing to surrender their Indian identity is revealed in the debate over cultural versus economic motivations for NRI-led investment. Lessinger (1992) argues that the interaction between the two is complex, with cultural attachments and the importance of ‘Indianess’ still a central discourse evident in government attempts to woo NRI investment. Nonetheless, Lessinger argues that, increasingly “NRIs echo the demands of other capitalist states anxious to penetrate the Indian market” (1992, p.59), and she believes their identity and relationship to India will be redefined as the pressures and processes of economic liberalization continue. Discussions of NRI capital transfers back to India, however, are still seeped in the discourse of Indian identity and the motherland. During an interview with the manager of the Vancouver State Bank of

\(^{10}\) Indian Government press note 30\(^{th}\) March 1999. The planned scheme will introduce a visa-free regime and provide economic, educational, financial and cultural benefits.
India regarding NRI deposit accounts, even though the terms of the deposit made sound economic sense, ideas of national attachment to the feminized state were stressed, remittances into India by NRIs are allowed to be repatriated back to the country where they remitted it from, so because India repatriates the funds, and welcomes the citizen, the sons of the soil wherever they live, they help their motherland..... So these NRI accounts, they offer certain facilities in India, in the process they help their motherland to grow. This money helps India to meet the balance of payments and other things.\textsuperscript{11}

These efforts to capture NRI capital indicate the Indian state’s complicity with processes of economic globalization, “global capital has made claims on national states, which have responded through the production of new forms of legality” (Sassen 1996: p. 25). In this case however, capital is not directed by a few substantial corporate actors, but by a multitude of individual actors operating within a system of labour migration, facilitated, as well as curtailed, through globalizing processes.

\textbf{Punjab and Vancouver}

The impact of remittances are even more profound when we look at the sub national-level, since migration flows from India are concentrated in certain regions. Nayyar suggests that in Kerala, remittances equalled 25 percent of the state’s domestic product in 1980-1981; in some regions with significant outflows of labour he suggests that this figure may have been as high as 40 or 50 per cent by the early 1990s. In Punjab the role of remittances has been seen mostly through the agricultural developments of the area, but the capital transferred by migrants is also directed to maintaining the migrant’s role in the family, for building family status or \textit{izzat}, and through funding important cultural events, such as marriages and religious events. La Brack (1989) labels those sending

\textsuperscript{11} Personal Interview December 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1998 with the Vice President/manager of the Vancouver Branch of the State Bank of India (Canada).
remittances to Punjab as "New Patrons". Helweg (1983) also considers Punjab as a key example of the role of remittances on village development. Using Jandiali, near Phagwara in Doaba as his case study, Helweg identifies certain stages in the remittance process, the first being the family maintenance stage where the family and land provision are the priority. This stage is followed by a conspicuous consumption stage, where the basic consolidation of land holdings, once achieved, is followed by a process of expenditure which visibly marks the family's success for all to see—the most common form of which would be to build a large house, or fund important religious rituals such as kirtan or akhand path. Finally Helweg identifies a business investment stage. Helweg's research covers the period 1950 to 1980, but it is important to stress that as migration expands and new groups enter into the process, these stages, or variations thereof, can occur at any time and in combination. In that regard Helweg's classifications are important benchmarks to work from, and will be considered in more detail in part three of the dissertation.

Mehta's (1990) fieldwork on out-migration from the Bist Doab area of the Punjab focuses on what she terms active and passive impacts of migration. Active impacts include the formation of new channels of contact between places for information and resources to be shared. Remittances are a part of these impacts, but based on her fieldwork, Mehta argues they have little direct impact on agricultural development and—in line with the conventional view of remittances—are more likely to be used for household and luxury goods. Despite these observations, Mehta found reluctance on the part of most respondents to answer questions regarding remittances, and over 80 percent of respondents replied that they received no remittances from relatives who had migrated/emigrated. She considers that this may be due to the channels such goods or funds move though, i.e. illegal or informal, and the different nature of remittances, such

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12 A continuous reading of the holy text.
as gifts etc. When remittances were acknowledged, however, annual amounts were usually more than 5000 rupees (US$125). The reported use of remittances was similar across rural and urban areas, in that they were used for household goods, renovating residential structures, construction of new houses, luxury goods, travel and the purchase of land. Through personal observations, however, she ascertained that luxury goods, cars, electronic goods and so on, were associated with families that had relatives overseas.

While Mehta construes the 'active' impact as "non-productive", she makes some important observations in what she terms the "passive impact" of migration on educational institutions and enrollments. Mehta argues that overseas migrants during the 1960s, though they had low educational levels, recognized the value of education once in their destination country. As well as informing friends and families of the importance of gaining education and professional training, overseas migrants made donations to educational facilities and created educational scholarships. This positive endorsement from emigrants, coupled with the elevated standard of living for families with relatives overseas, encouraged other families in the area to prioritize educational attainment as a means to secure overseas migration:

in order to realise their dreams for a foreign jaunt many of them educated themselves, or supported others in their circle (morally and financially) to go in for education in a big way. It was clear that emigration made a multipronged impact on the people in the region, but the impetus it gave education was far stronger than the amounts received in donations by the educational institutions would suggest (Mehta, 1990: p.157).

These observations are significant in identifying concrete impacts from international migration on source regions. They also offer a potential for measuring how transfers of capital—in this case the place of fund raising for education, health and other services—operate through migratory networks, and the impact of migration on the development of source locations. These issues will be taken up in more detail in part three of the dissertation.

In the case of Vancouver-Punjab capital transfers, it is impossible to find
definitive data regarding capital movement. Unlike India, Canada does not register worker remittances, so this amount does not show up in the IMF international balance of payments statistics. Banking data are proprietary, so this leaves a number of avenues that whilst providing no absolute figure, do present an indication of the magnitude of capital exchange between these two localities.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Measuring Canada-India Capital Flows}

The importance of Punjab as India’s agricultural heartland, and its centrality to transnational migrant networks can be seen in the size of capital deposits and the number of rural branches. If we compare rural deposits on a rural per capita basis for Punjab, (rupees 607.62) with another region heavily influenced by out-migration, Kerala for example (rupees 87.69), we demonstrate the significance of capital investment in Punjab.\textsuperscript{14} These official banking statistics indicate the amount of investment in the rural areas of Punjab, but they do not indicate anything of where the money originates and how it enters the system. In order to correlate external migrant capital with that invested in rural banks, we could turn to worker remittances, but this often underreports the real magnitude of such transfers and is not disaggregated to the sub-national level. NRI deposit information is available for certain commercial banks, but a number of investments made by NRIs are not necessarily placed in NRI accounts. Additionally, we can get an idea of financial exchange quantities at the individual bank level, but not all financial exchanges take place through official banks.

\textsuperscript{13} The data I draw upon emerges from sources both in Vancouver and Punjab, as well as secondary sources.

\textsuperscript{14} Rural population figures in 1991 for Punjab were 14.3 million, Kerala 21.4 million.
Faced with these limitations in the actual recording of capital movements, and in order to identify an estimation of the significance of migrant linked capital, I spoke to a number of bankers in Punjab. With regard to urban banks, in an interview with a banking official in Chandigarh, I was advised that foreign exchange transactions across the whole of Punjab, including Chandigarh was between 150-200 crore (between US$35 – US$47 million dollars) annually.\(^{15}\) Regarding NRI deposits, in Chandigarh, the bank manager of a dedicated NRI bank informed me that he had total NRI account deposits of Rupees 160 crores (over US$38 million).\(^{16}\)

If we move to the scale of Doaba, the region of Punjab that has experienced the

\(^{15}\) Interview, 18\(^{th}\) February 2000, Regional Head, Private Sector Bank, Chandigarh. 1 crore equals 100 lakhs (1 lakh = 100,000 rupees). Conversation to the US $ is calculated at the rate of 42 rupees to the dollar.

\(^{16}\) Chandigarh is not actually included in RIB banking data for Punjab, but is nevertheless a significant location for Punjabi banking, State Bank of India, Chandigarh Branch Manager NRI branch, Dec 7\(^{th}\) 2000.
most out-migration, most bankers I spoke to suggested that due to the presence of NRI money, average deposits were probably much higher than in Punjab as a whole. In Dhesian Kahna, a village in District Jalandhar, I spoke to the bank manager of the Canara bank. He told me that the Doaba area is significantly supported by NRI money, and this was most obvious during agricultural depressions, when the Doaba region faced less hardship than other parts of Punjab. He estimated that banks in Doaba received on average 20-30 crore (roughly between US$ 5 and $7 million) deposits per year from NRIs, and this was on top of the long-term deposits from the 1960s. If deposits in Doaba from NRIs are between 20 to 30 crore (between US $5 to $7 million), as the Bank manager at Canara bank suggested, and we compare this estimate to official India-wide NRI deposits, which in 1998/99 were US$20.3 million, the Doaba total of NRI deposits of between US$ 5 and 7 million represents roughly a quarter of the Indian total. In another discussion with a rural banker, I was advised that 20-30 percent of the money his bank handled came from NRIs. In the same village the bank manager of the Cooperative Bank told me that since the bank opened in 1996 most of the bank’s dealings were with NRIs, and they have taken in 4 crore rupees (just under US$ 1 million), even though this bank did not yet have permission to open official NRI accounts.

Certainly we can guesstimate based on the comments of rural bankers that in the Doaba region anywhere between 20-30 percent of deposits could be linked to immigrants overseas, but not necessarily placed in specific NRI accounts. Using official RIB data for all scheduled commercial banks in Punjab, total deposits are US$ 854 million; therefore,

17 Personal interview, Manager of the Canara Bank, 27th January 2000.
18 Punjab and Sind Bank, Palahi, Interview with Bank manager 30th Nov 1999.
19 Cooperative Bank in Palahi, interview 17th November 1999. The bank manager estimated that proportionally 50 percent of the NRIs were from Canada, 45 percent from the UK, 1 percent from the USA and 4 percent from the Middle East.
assuming 20-30 percent of deposits are linked to migrant NRIs, deposits could equal anywhere between US $ 170 –256 million.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office number and location</th>
<th>Deposits in lakh rupees</th>
<th>US $ thousands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural (1119)</td>
<td>868,903</td>
<td>206,881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Urban (649)</td>
<td>1,177,669</td>
<td>280,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Metropolitan (717)</td>
<td>1,541,166</td>
<td>366,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total deposits</td>
<td>3,587,738</td>
<td>854,222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3: Total deposits in Commercial Banks in Punjab, 1999.

The town of Phagwara, an important banking node for the Doaba region, is centrally located on Punjab’s main GT road, and is accessible by public transportation from many surrounding villages. As it runs through Phagwara, the sides of the GT Road are lined with scores of banks and private moneychangers advertising their welcoming messages to NRIs and their money (Figures 5.4 and 5.5). A new NRI branch of the State Bank of India was being opened in this location, and I interviewed the officials regarding the amount of NRI capital they estimated flowed through Phagwara. At the same interview, a local official money exchanger had been invited to advise the bankers on the amount of foreign currency he dealt with. The moneychanger indicated that on a daily

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20 Reserve Bank of India, “Statement No.8: State and population group-wise distribution of the number of reporting offices, aggregate deposits and gross bank credit - all scheduled commercial banks, December 1999.” http://www.rbi.org.in/
21 State Bank of India, NRI Branch Phagwara, (28th Nov). Meeting with the District manager of Amristsar and Karputala district. Also present were the Branch manager, and the owner of Bhandari’s authorised money changer, Phagwara.
basis he changed 5-6 lakh rupees (between US$11,000-14,000), and this occurred continuously throughout the year. Across the whole of Phagwara he estimated that Rs50 lakh were exchanged everyday. This is equivalent to over US$100,000 daily, over $36 million annually exchanged by moneychangers in Phagwara, only one town in Doaba, making the possible Punjab total of NRI capital injection of US $170 -256 million quite plausible. 22 Obviously the presentation of this type of data indicates the difficulties of matching official financial data and verbal evidence about ordinary rural bank deposits made by NRIs. Should these deposits be considered as NRI deposits, or worker remittances? Are they recorded in either class? As difficult as it is to conclude, the material here does suggest that official data for capital transfers from overseas Indians is limited in that it cannot tell us how much comes into a region, how and where the money is spent. Worker remittances seem to be more illustrative of the realities of capital transfers, but the partiality of the data is troubling (I have already noted that neither Canada nor the UK, two major destinations for Punjabi migrants, record worker remittances, which suggests that despite the rise in worker remittances, the data still under-represent the potential amount of transfers). With all these indications of capital inflow, disaggregated analysis is vital in order to comprehend how such capital inflows are spatially concentrated, and the consequences of such unevenness for social and economic development. If a single town in Doaba is exchanging US$36 million annually through moneychangers alone, this tells us that the magnitude of capital transmitted by individuals across the whole of the region is an important form of global exchange, one capable of significant influence at the level of the household, the village and the state.

22 This calculation assumes the same amount of money exchanged daily throughout the year, which despite the money changers comments seems unlikely, since most NRI visits tend to be concentrated into the winter months of October to March.
Another difficulty is to ascertain the regional nature of capital flows. Often the movement of capital is captured at the level of the nation state as it enters or exits, but rarely is it possible to pin down the amount moving between two localities at the sub-national level. Despite this I will try to illustrate the amount and nature of capital flows between Vancouver and the Doaba area of Punjab.

Vancouver

In March of 1999 a cheque drawn on the account of Deol Foreign Exchange held at the Khalsa Credit Union was cleared without sufficient funds. The cheque amount was for Cdn $450,607 and caused major problems for the credibility of the Khalsa Credit Union's directors (Bolan, 1999b). Deol Foreign Exchange has two branches in Canada, one in Surrey, BC and one in Mississauga, Ontario. The offices serve locations in India, Pakistan, Canada and the USA, with Indian offices in Ludhiana, Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Panipat and Delhi. Other currency exchangers have a wider geographical spread to tap into the overseas Indian community, boasting offices in Dubai, California and England as well as locations in Punjab. These money exchangers provide a service specifically catering to the needs of the South Asian community, and the distribution of offices in Punjab and other locations where Punjabi immigrants have settled reveals the specificity of this capital transmission system, as figure 5.6 suggests. The amount of money that passes between these various locations is very difficult to ascertain, but the fact that a single cheque from a single currency exchanger was in the range of half a million Canadian dollars is suggestive of a substantial flow of capital linked to these small independent operators. Whilst India implements monitoring and control systems for

tracking foreign exchange activity, Canada, as already stated, does not track any class of worker remittances, nor are there any currency control regulations, and no requirements for tracking income other than within the bank’s own records. The bank of Canada Annual Review does include information on the balance of trade and banks’ total claims and liabilities booked worldwide, including India. Such data, however, only provide measures of correspondent accounts and Indian deposits in Canadian banks for one point in time; they do not indicate flows of capital. To examine this issue in Vancouver, therefore, I had to rely on more creative, yet less “rigorous” information.

There are several ways to transmit money between India and Canada. For example, one can legally transmit up to Cdn$10,000 in person during a flight. One can use a barter system, where individuals with capital in India who need it in Canada, and vice versa, are matched up through family networks and exchangers. Courier post or actual couriers can transmit cheques, and many money exchangers use this method since they can guarantee door-to-door next day delivery where the customer knows exactly how many rupees will be delivered. Some money exchangers are regulated, but many bankers see this service as a process lacking security, and based solely on trust. Well aware of the growing significance of immigrant remittances, though, some mainstream banks are trying to build a niche in this market. During a conversation with the head of multicultural banking for one of Canada’s main national banks, their approach to this type of demand was discussed:

24 Accounts used by Canadian Banks for import/export payments, etc.
25 My thanks to Professor Maurice Levi of UBC’s Department of Commerce and Finance for this information.
26 I interviewed three bankers and two community representatives in Vancouver who were familiar with the nature of capital exchange between India and Canada.
27 Although this type of transfer does not actually entail the movement of capital across borders, it does indicate a form of exchange. It is also against FERA regulations since it denies India the foreign reserves.
we have found a considerable amount of money that goes back to the Punjab area in India on a monthly basis. What we are competing with however is the courier companies, because one of the things that they do, and obviously the bank can’t do and doesn’t want to do, is a door-to-door delivery.

Instead this bank has opted to target services to ethnic communities through focus branches, the location of which they have determined using census data mapping techniques. Within branches targeting the Indo-Canadian community, the bank has set up an agreement with the Bank of Punjab Ltd., to facilitate a telegraphic transfer service to Punjab that takes two working days. The service did encounter some resistance on the part of customers though, who were more familiar with specific courier services delivering exact amounts of money to relatives in India:

The courier companies offer a rupee payment, so what happens is that the individual will engage the courier service and say ok, I need 10,000 rupees to send to my brother in a particular city, but our product is not a rupee service, our product is a Canadian dollar service, and that is the challenge. Even though in my opinion that is better because the exchange market in India is far more competitive than it is in Canada for Canadian dollar/rupee payments, but it is hard to break that experience of what people have been used to in Vancouver.... When we send our Canadian dollar payments they don’t know what the exchange rate is going to be. ..... So the image we are trying to create to the customer is if you had sent it yesterday, here is how many rupees you would have got, and historically, certainly over the last year and a half, the rupee payment in India has been 1 to 1.5 rupees better than what they would get from say State Bank of India in Vancouver. But it is still a very difficult thing to try and prove and persuade the customer to use our service.28

For the bank, the remittance service, together with gold sales, provides a way to tap into the large Indo-Canadian financial market in order to provide other services:

gold holds particular significance for Indo-Canadians, and the bank ... being a gold bullion bank, made a lot of sense for us to, for instance, to appoint our Strawberry Hill branch [120th St and 72nd Ave, Surrey] as a gold consignment branch. So we sell a lot of gold in Strawberry Hill, and I think the latest statistic was that across Canada our Strawberry Hill branch is probably the third most active branch in our whole network

28 Personal interview, Head of Multicultural banking March 9th 1999.
in Canada, in terms of volume of gold coins that are sold on a monthly basis.... And of course the reason we do that is not so much just to sell gold coins, but to create awareness of the bank, and obviously when people walk in we can try and engage them to consider other services, so it is all about up-selling and stimulating interest and awareness of the bank.²⁹

Although information regarding the size of the bank’s exchanges was proprietary, he did suggest that the amount of money sent via casual remittances averaged around $1,000 to $1,500 per transaction, and that he had heard estimates that the total remittances from Punjabis across the entire Lower Mainland area to Punjab was between Cdn$30-40 million dollars annually (this does not include investments, or specific deposits made to Non-Resident Indian investment accounts held in India). Another bank involved in this business is the subsidiary of the State Bank of India in Vancouver.³⁰ When asked how much the bank sends to India annually in terms of remittances, the Manager indicated that it was roughly 1000 million rupees (Cdn$35 million / US$ 23 million dollars). This suggests that if one bank alone is transmitting over Cdn $35 million dollars to the whole of India, than the Vancouver region as a whole could certainly be transmitting between Cdn$30-40 million (US$18-25 million) to Punjab annually, since not only are there banks sending money, but money changers as well as other more personal forms of transmission, including the transportation of gold. If we consider the amount of money deposited in Punjab by NRIs as anywhere between US $ 170 – 256 million, as I suggested earlier, transfers from the Vancouver area could represent about 10 percent of this.

Undoubtedly there is a significant amount of capital being transmitted between Vancouver and Punjab, but how this money is transmitted is difficult to determine. When

²⁹ Personal interview, Head of Multicultural banking March 9th 1999.
³⁰ Personal interview December 2nd 1998.
I asked people to estimate the split between money sent through ‘official’ and ‘other’
routes, responses varied from between 20 to 85 percent using channels that while legal in
Canada, are not registered in India. But in one conversation the potential magnitude of
transfers through these operations was surprising:

You know I was talking to one guy who was in transfer business; he was saying that
sometimes he deals with about $20 million dollars per month.31

Most people agreed that the demand for these unofficial channels had reduced since the
difference between the official and unofficial Indian exchange rate has closed to a few
rupees. If the issue is not the rate of exchange, it may be the potential for recording the
transfer that encourages some people to seek out other alternatives. Most national
commercial banks require new customers sending large amounts of cash to complete a
declaration explaining the source of the income. Organizations or individuals linked to
illegal groups might want to avoid such demands. It was in this regard that one informant
suggested the Canadian state should tighten its loose financial exchange system.

There could be money coming from all sources; nobody is keeping an eye. Just as they
say in Punjabi, “nobody is caring when an elephant is going, but they don’t let an ant
go.” So you are caring about small things….the Canadian government have failed to
keep an eye on how the money is transferred through the black market….the Canadian
government does not have any trouble with the transfer of capital, but in the long run
we should have a little tighter control and monitor carefully what is happening with
the flow of cash.32

These comments highlight an important difference between India and Canada with regard
to capital flows. Whilst Canada’s currency is fully convertible, and as I have already
suggested not easily tracked in its precise global movements, India has maintained only
partial convertibility of its currency and tighter controls on capital movement. The

31 Personal interview with political representative Nov 9th 1998.
32 Personal interview Nov 9th 1998.
growth of an overseas population with access to financial services that allows foreign
exchange has generally not been a problem for India as it builds up its foreign reserves.
However, unchecked flows of capital directed by organized groups in opposition to the
state of India have been of concern to India. The campaign to build a Sikh Homeland in
Punjab, and the networks this depends upon, have created difficult relations between
India and places where large numbers of Sikhs have settled. Allegations and indications
of these unchecked flows of capital between overseas Sikh communities, including
Canada, have cast the whole Canadian Sikh population in a negative light (Tatla, 1999).
While the domination of Khalistan separatism may have diminished, in Canada there are
still unresolved issues connected to the movement, such as the Air India Bombing, and
Vancouver newspapers regularly carry stories that link sections of the Canadian Sikh
community with suspected Sikh terrorist groups.

Punjab to Vancouver capital flows

The major direction of capital flows has been to India, but as families settle more
permanently in Canada, investments and capital move in the opposite direction as well,
out of India into Canada. In this section I consider the development of this reverse flow

33 In 1985 an Air India plane was bombed and 329 people were killed. Fifteen years later, as the RCMP are
finally bringing suspects to trial, there are still controversies and threats surrounding these events, for
example in the assassination of a local outspoken journalist, Tara Singh Hayer who was reported to have
made statements to the RCMP about the Air India bombing (Bolan 2000). Vancouver has therefore become
an important player in the global perception of Sikhism.

34 The case of Gurbax Kaur is one example (Bolan, 1999c). In the summer of 1999, Kaur, a Greater
Vancouver resident, was found murdered in India, and three men from a rival Sikh separatist organization
were charged with her murder. Her activities in Canada were linked to raising funds through charitable
organizations and gurdwaras. CSIS documents suggest that this money was used for militancy activities in
India. The Vancouver Sun reported that CSIS documents suggest Canada is used "as a base to arrange and
direct terrorist activities in other countries.... This is a particular problem with some members of Sikh
terrorist groups whose leaders continue to endeavour to use Canada as their headquarters" (Bolan, 2000c).
of capital, using the example of the capital that moves with independent class immigrants from India, a class that since 1996 has been increasing in significance.

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, not only do immigration consultants transmit money into the Canadian economy, but independent immigrants to Canada—intent on creating the kind of settled, successful lifestyle highlighted in the consultants' brochures—also bring significant funds with them. This kind of professional migration requires significant capital to enable the migrant to transfer current professional skills to the appropriate Canadian field, and achieve some form of family settlement. This capital is in addition to the Cdn$500 processing fee paid by each principal applicant and the $975 landing fee paid by each person, which the Government of Canada collects.

Landing fees alone from Indian immigration provided Cdn $20.7 million in 1996; Cdn $19.1 in 1997, and $14.9 in 1998 for the government of Canada; this is money transferred directly out of India’s foreign reserves into Canada’s domestic account.\(^35\)

Processes of migration entail transnational movements of capital, and needless to say, moving people whether within or outside the state system is big business. The Canadian state, for example, has explicitly set out to capture embodied capital, where the key to attracting money is to attract the person first. In particular the business/investor class immigrant has emerged as a highly commodified, capital-imbued figure. The state invites this embodied form of capital into the nation, but with a price tag affixed and expectations outlined by various levels of government.\(^36\) The entrepreneur immigrant

\(^35\) Numbers of immigrants from India to Canada (CIC, 1999).
\(^36\) The entrepreneur program admits entrepreneurs with a net worth of at least $500,000, who intend to establish a business in Canada. The Business investor immigration program requirements vary depending on the provincial scheme, but individuals must invest at least $350,000 for five years (Kunin and Jones, 1995).
class has been in effect since 1978. The idea of ‘selling passports’ has been subject to
critical debate, but increasingly scholars are also arguing that the scheme itself has been
badly managed, poorly monitored, and has certainly not delivered the rewards it initially
boasted it would (Nash, 1994; Ley, 2000). The business immigration scheme has been
under review, and current suggestions for its improvement include tighter monitoring,
more emphasis on business skills as opposed to mere investment, and a suggestion to
improve the program’s integrity through requiring information on the origin of business
funds (CIC, 1998). Immigrants from India, however, have not been seen as the
embodiment of capital in the same way that Taiwanese and Hong Kong immigrants have.
With respect to Indian business immigrants this class has not been significant, since the
nature of immigration from India to Canada has been strongly classed and regionalized.
India does not feature in the top ten countries sending business immigrants to Canada
(see Table 5.4). Despite the strong immigration links between Canada and India, the
number of Indian business class immigrants to Canada is negligible, with only nine
investor class immigrants from India landing in 2000 (CIC LIDS 2000 data). One reason
for the lack of Indian business class immigrants to Canada is the limited convertibility of
the Indian rupee. Reserve Bank of India regulations stipulate that Indians going overseas
are considered Indian residents, and therefore not allowed to transfer currency out of
India unless they secure special permission from the Reserve Bank of India. Indians
temporarily overseas can only open an account if the money invested originates from
sources outside India, and upon return the accounts are to be closed and the money
transferred to India. Once in India all foreign currency is to be exchanged through official

37 The scheme comes under the Immigration Act of 1976 (Kunin and Jones, 1995). The investor class was
developed in 1986.
exchange agents within three months of return (Exchange Control Manual Vol 1, Chapter 12, Reserve Bank of India (http://www.rbi.org.in).)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>7,418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>5,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macao</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>161</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,667</strong>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Including family members of applicants, the total number granted permanent residency is estimated at up to 80,000. Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Table 5.4: Number of Applicants Granted Permanent Residency Status Under The Investment Program by Country, 1986-1998.

In an interview with an Indo-Canadian businessman involved in the 1996 Team Canada Trade Mission to India, reference was made to a discussion he had with a technician from the Indian Central Bureau of Intelligence (CBI), who advised him that it was illegal to export foreign currency without special permission:

I didn’t discuss it any more about trade and investment from India to here, but especially the investor category. And then a few months later they charged quite a few ministers for taking the money out! It is difficult; a lot of people do bring the money, but it is not official from that point of view. In order to take the money out you have to go through a lot of regulations.38

The new Financial Exchange Management Act, passed by the Indian Government in January 2000, does allow for current account transfers, but the experience of the 1997 Asian economic downturn and India’s protection from adverse currency speculation due

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38 Interview with Indo-Canadian entrepreneur, Nov 1998.
to the limited convertibility of the rupee, may well have cautioned India against making the rupee fully convertible too soon. Initially I assumed that FERA currency regulations in India would prevent Canadian officials from processing business class immigrants from India; however, during an interview with a CIC official in Delhi, I found that was not the case. Due to the complexity of business immigration applications, nine special centres have been established to process this class of application, and applications from India are sent to either Hong Kong or Singapore for processing. The Delhi office did have two hundred business immigration applications prior to the establishment of these special centres, and now has only two remaining. When I asked specifically about the program’s requirement to bring money into Canada, a process that would break FERA regulations, I was told that CIC just asks the potential applicant to show evidence that he or she possesses accessible funds overseas; they do not ask how the funds got there. Considering the regulations regarding capital transfer out of India, I was intrigued at the seeming flexibility with which Canadian immigration officials viewed the issue of capital transfer. In an interview with the Director of Enforcement Division, FERA, I asked about immigration and capital transfer. While FERA enforcement officials do use intelligence reports and surveillance to monitor transfers that break the regulations, their main interest is not the individual, but corporations who fabricate import/export details in order to send money overseas undetected. The concern here is not just the bypassing of regulations and the undermining of India’s foreign reserves, but the source of the capital and potential links to corrupt practices, especially in connection with politicians. When I asked about immigration, his response was indicative of the general stereotype of the Indian immigrant; he envisioned immigrants as mainly poor people, assuming that owners of

39 Personal interview, CIC office, Delhi 17th December 1999.
property and businesses were unlikely to sell up and emigrate. Whilst he agreed there
might be some independent immigration, he considered the numbers were likely so small
it was of little concern to the enforcement agencies, “in any case” he advised me “nobody
gives visas to Indians, so it is not much of a problem.”40

Generally it seemed to me that there was an incredible amount of disinterest in the
issue of migration and associated capital flows out of India from the perspective of Indian
state officials. Canadian state officials also seemed unconcerned about the potential for
illegality with regard to investor immigrants and the transmission of capital. It could be
argued that the Canadian state’s interests have been coupled with the desire to enhance
investments into Canada wherever they might emerge. As most others do in India,
Canadian regulations can work in a flexible manner around Indian regulations. The
numbers are after all small and on the scale of things insignificant for India. But this type
of relationship does change the overwhelming image of India as the poor impoverished
nation whose masses ‘flood’ Canada, and place stress on state social services. Before any
documented Indian immigrant arrives in Canada they have already paid a direct fee to the
Government, and in the case of independent class immigrants, they have likely already
paid money to an immigration consultant who more than likely has forwarded some of
those funds to Canada. As India liberalizes and it becomes easier for individuals to
transfer capital, there may be more opportunities for Canada to capitalize on the desires
of the middle class to escape the limited opportunities they see in India. Even if the
Indian state limits full convertibility of the rupee, there are still plenty of ways for
individuals to get their money out of the country, and other states such as Canada are
keen to receive it.

40 Personal interview, Delhi 25th February 2000.
Conclusion

As I stated in the title of this chapter, the difficulties of "envisioning capital" at scales below the state and transfers of capital across regions, are obvious, and consequentially my research hints at only a partial reading of the economic geography of capital flows between India and Canada below the scale of the state. Most official data are aggregated at the national scale, therefore they rarely indicate where the money comes from, nor indicate where the money goes to on any sub-national scale. Even when we have useful data sets to work from, such as the IMF balance of payments information on worker remittances, the data are partial, often non-comparable due to different national measurement regulations, and vastly underestimate the amount of remittances immigrants provide to their source country's domestic economy. Despite these limitations, we can conclude that the Indian economy has become increasingly reliant on the millions of its citizens working and living overseas. This certainly adds to the argument outlined in Chapter Three, that the Indian state's preoccupation with territorial integrity is challenged by the reality of huge capital inflows deeply contingent on the dispersal of millions of citizens outside of India's territory.

At the sub-national level it is also clear that Punjab, and the Doaba region in particular, are interconnected with specific networks of capital exchange, and certainly we can support the estimate offered by Canadian banking officials that between Cdn$30-40 million is transferred between Vancouver and Doaba region annually. There are, however, a number of questions left unanswered. Exactly what percentage of the capital sent by immigrants back to Punjab is recorded as either official worker remittances or
NRI deposits? How much of this national capital are Punjabi migrants responsible for, and how is the money used? What role does culture play in the transmission and eventual expenditure of this capital at the level of the village? Some of these issues will be addressed in Chapter Seven. In addition, we need to temper the overwhelming view of immigrant remittances and investments funding only the developing or “third world” sending countries. Such rigid spatial categorizations are challenged by the fact that capital transfers, both directly to the state and into the domestic economy, accompany the movement of skilled Indians and their families to Canada. CIC has also shown remarkable flexibility with regard to facilitating investor class immigration, a form of embodied capital transfer, despite the Indian state’s earlier regulations prohibiting such financial transmissions.

Though capital increasingly moves around the globe in the blink of an electronic eye and appears increasingly detached from people and places, be they regions or nations, there is still an important flow of capital that is deeply embodied. Money moves with migrants, it paves their way to new lands and it returns to the homes they have left; transforming places, households and ideas. This same money influences those left behind to seek out the source of the wealth, and so the migration circuit continues. Whether people move with or without the state’s permission, money moves with them. This revenue is also only partially traced, and therefore, as my attempts reveal, very difficult to measure in order to give any definitive account of capital flows. In conclusion, this chapter has revealed the immense limitations we face in trying to quantitatively gauge the impact of the movement of people and capital at the regional and local scale.
CHAPTER SIX

TRADE AND IMMIGRATION

In this chapter I continue with my consideration of the circulatory aspects of transnational networks, and address the question of whether immigration leads to an increase in international trade. I continue with the argument developed in the previous chapter, that global economic processes are often intimately tied to the global circulation of people; yet such arguments are muted due to the difficulty of locating reliable quantitative data. Anecdotally, many have argued that a link does exist between immigration and increased trade, but until recently explicit interest in this connection has been surprisingly sparse. This has lately been rectified by social scientists interested in transnational entrepreneurs, and by economists who are intrigued by the link between trade and immigration, yet struggle to model and quantify it.

In this chapter I develop my interpretation of trade and immigration links specifically between India and Canada. In place of economic models and measures, I use qualitative material gathered from traders and government officials in order to supply more satisfying examples and explanations for how trade and immigration might be linked.¹ This allows us to highlight other processes at work such as the deployment of complex and contradictory stereotypes, the role of different federal departments, and the

¹ Material in this chapter is drawn from eight interviews with Canadian trade officials in Vancouver, Delhi, Mumbai and Chandigarh and nine interviews with immigrant entrepreneurs/corporate employees in Vancouver conducting trade with India.
need to decentre economic explanations in the consideration of complex economic interactions that are actually deeply culturally embedded. I conclude by arguing that attempts to represent these links quantitatively fail to capture the complexity of immigrant actions with regard to trade development between India and Canada, and suggest that this inability to quantify the extent of such relations may actually be a positive thing.

**Economic Research on Trade and Immigration**

Helliwell (1997) has proposed that borders have a significant reductive effect on the amount of trade transacted between proximate regions, even when controlled for distance, and that international migration, more so than inter-provincial migration, offers some potential to overcome these ‘border effects’. Once the presence of border effects is assumed, the role of international migration in increasing trade becomes a topic of interest, but a review of the limited economic literature on the issue of trade and immigration in Canada reveals contradictory evidence. Globerman (1995) discusses two aspects of the trade immigration relationship. The first is factor price equalization, where free trade should eventually eradicate economic disequilibria, and hence international migration. Of course this neoclassical view assumes that all immigration is economically motivated, ignoring political, cultural or social causes, and also that trade is framed purely by economic rationales rather than political connections (such as colonial linkages and strategic geo-political motivations). The second aspect Globerman considers is that

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2 Border effects include national institutions, norms and contacts that enable greater trade within national space.

3 There has also been a small amount of research conducted on the links between international travel and trade. Though the results are preliminary, researchers have found a positive relationship, and are confident the research area is promising (N.Kulendran and Wilson, 2000).
immigration potentially enables reduced transaction costs, supporting this by referring to D'Cruz and Omhae's (1993) arguments about the role of immigrants in developing trading networks through their cultural as well as business expertise. Transaction cost reductions, unlike factor price equalization, would support the view that increased immigration can lead to increased trade. Looking at the data for Canada, Globerman concludes that there is no relationship between trade (aggregated imports and exports) and immigration, and that the two policies should not be considered together. Globerman found this particularly the case with India and the Philippines, two major source areas for immigrants to Canada. Baker and Benjamin (1996), however, tackling the same question, take a different view. They suggest a strong link exists between trade and immigration in relation to Asia Pacific countries (but this excludes India), and conclude by saying; "we are left with a reasonably robust conclusion that immigration is correlated with trade, with the correlation with imports being slightly higher than with exports." (338).

Head, Ries and Wagner (1998) following Head and Ries (1998), test three variants within a gravity model framework to consider the effect of immigration on trade. Each of these models is subjected to “fixed country effects” which control for various connections that could mistakenly be credited to immigration, such as commonwealth country links. The first model Head, Ries and Wagner use assumes constant elasticity between trade and immigration levels, the second posits that immigrants possess greater propensity for trade than non-immigrants, and the third allows for the immigrant effect to decrease as the number of immigrants in a province rise. They conclude that only the first model provides statistically significant results when subjected to “fixed country effects”, suggesting that total annual trade associated with immigration ranges from US$91 to US$105 billion for exports and from US $60 to US$138 billion for imports. The failure of the

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4 This is an interesting example, because commonwealth links are also responsible in many cases for immigration networks. Consider my earlier comments on how immigration from India to Canada became an important political issue in Canada’s struggle for political autonomy from Britain.
other more theoretically sophisticated models to produce any statistically significant results forces Head, Ries and Wagner to conclude: “Determining how immigration and trade are linked has proved elusive. Yet, there continues to be strong evidence that the link is there” (p.33).

**Questioning economic measurements and models**

While economists struggle to quantify the relationship between trade and immigration, there are a number of critical issues that must be addressed with regard to this approach in general. De Voretz (1996) has argued that in studying connections between immigration and trade, aggregate national statistics are unhelpful. Instead, he argues, the metropolitan scale is more appropriate because immigration is disproportionately directed at urban centres in Canada, primarily Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. However, such analysis is currently hampered by national data collection regimes, which only measure at the national and provincial scale. Even at the provincial scale, the researcher’s only tool is merchandise import/export data based on the province in which the goods *cleared* customs, not where they are *consumed*. Although Head, Ries and Wagner (1998) use import data at the provincial scale, they are aware of these limitations, though their provincial calculations were also compromised by the fact they only used four years of data. In general, when measuring links between immigration and trade, the quality of the trade data collected by government bodies, and its consistency over time, pose a problem for economists searching for explanatory or predictive laws. The possibility of the state eventually capturing more reliable trade data at the sub-national or sub-provincial level is unlikely, considering general pressures to increase the free movement of goods and reduce the amount of regulation and bureaucracy surrounding such activities.
Additionally, immigration-trade models that link the immigrant’s country of origin with the potential for trade with that country, result in essentializing the position and potential contribution of immigrants to international trade. This is particularly evident for the millions of Indians overseas, who are known for their ability to trade across a wide geographical range (Kotkin, 1992; White, 1994). The simplistic quantitative interpretations of trade linkages between country of birth and country of trade overlook these dynamics, and promote a static bond between the immigrant trader and nation of birth, despite the fact that businesses, even small and medium sized ones, increasingly operate across more than one country.

Other concerns emerge when we consider the language used to represent relations between these complex processes. Gunnar Olsson (1975) provides a detailed examination of mathematical attempts to model human interaction over distance, and cites a number of problems with gravity models in particular. Olsson’s adage “that what I say may reveal as much about the language I am talking in as it does about the phenomena I am talking about” (p.452), is particularly relevant when thinking through how economists choose to illustrate complex socio-spatial processes, such as trade and immigration links. Olsson argues that regression analysis and causal explanation, for example, do not capture recursive processes: that an individual’s behaviour might begin to adapt to the opportunity sets they are forced to make their decisions within for example. In the context of trade and immigration, for instance, an immigrant’s role as a trader might not necessarily be due to their greater propensity for trade, but due to their lack of access to other forms of employment – the blocked mobility thesis (Light and Bonacich, 1988).

5 In discussions with entrepreneurs in the garment industry, major supplies are sourced in countries other than India, such as Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore.
Olsson argues, gravity model regression may sometimes conceal rather than reveal important social processes shaping the phenomena under discussion. Olsson also argues that the use of gravity models, with their penchant for incorporating distance and its effects on social interaction, explains more about spatial ‘prisons’ than actors’ desires. But Olsson’s consideration of the limitations space places upon human interaction—the utility of interaction balanced by the disutility of travel—also needs to be critically viewed in light of the arguments developed in section one. There I argued that in an era of technological transformation, spatial distance is being reconceptualized, and together with social context—the type of networks and resources one is linked to—the basic geometry of distance and the disutility of travel are being transformed.

Further to these considerations, I also want to critically interpret the means by which economists bring complex processes into view though the separation and isolation of a domain presented as the ‘economy’. Timothy Mitchell (1998) has highlighted how representations of human activity in production and consumption have become fixed within the realm of the “economy”. Mitchell posits that with the emergence of this economic realm, it became possible to imagine certain forms of production, consumption and exchange “as a self-contained sphere, distinct from the social, the cultural, and other spheres” (p.91). In practice, however “what is depicted as the non-economic is implicated at every point in the creation of the economy” (p.93). In other words, the economy is culturally embedded, and it is only through a critical reflection on the whole idea of the economy as a separate and naturally distinct domain, as well as the processes through which it is brought into view by specialists using specialized language (Buck-Morss, 1995), can we reveal this. I illustrate these arguments at this juncture because I
find it interesting that economists – located at the hard science end of the science/society pole (Latour, 1997) – struggle to measure trade and immigration links through quantification, but are drawn to the phenomena in the first place through anecdote. Though economists might see data as merely the plural of anecdote (Helliwell, 2000), this ‘softer’ knowledge is rarely seen as adequate to stand-in for the rigour of significance found in numbers, no matter how such numbers are manipulated in order to reveal proof, and how much they erase or obscure in the process.  

Social Science Interpretations of Immigration and Trade

While economists struggle to prove there is a link between trade and immigration, social scientists have recently focused on understanding exactly how immigrant entrepreneurs increase international trade. Though much research on immigrant enterprise highlights the links between economic activity and the socio-cultural capital immigrant trading networks are built around (Granovetter, 1995; Portes, 1995; Walton-Roberts and Hiebert, 1997), only recently has the connection between increased trade and immigration been made explicit (Saxenian, 1999; Lever-Tracy, 1996; Portes, 1991). The key point in these arguments has been that networks (especially but not exclusively family-based) are stretched between and across places globally, and serve as conduits for information, capital, labour and goods that are imbued with cultural, as well as economic significance. Immigrant entrepreneurs thereby act as trade facilitators, linking distant markets through their unique position as transnationals. This is an increasingly important aspect to consider in relation to immigrant entrepreneurs because, under conditions of

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It is important to ask these questions of language and assumption, since in the field of immigration research economists seem to have the greater impact on government thinking (Richmond, 2000).
globalization, networks of communication and possibilities for trade have expanded, and small and large scale operators alike are positioned in important ways to benefit from, and contribute to, these efficient, flexible, and often highly trust-based trading networks (Castells, 1996).

Working from this premise we can see that the potential for a positive correlation between trade and immigration might certainly exist, yet quantitative analysis has not conclusively demonstrated such a connection. Part of the problem is the complexity and diversity of processes involved in international trade and immigration. In an attempt to work around this complexity, I draw upon interviews with government trade officials and immigrant business professionals and traders involved in trade with India, in order to explain exactly how connections between these two highly complex processes might be formed.

**Trade and Immigration: The India-Canada Case**

Canada’s relations with India have been varied over the past few decades, and were especially strained during the 1970s, particularly with India’s testing of nuclear devices (Wood, 1999). The nuclear issue has continued to complicate India-Canada diplomatic relations, with India’s 1998 nuclear tests meeting with sanctions under Canada’s then foreign affairs minister, Lloyd Axworthy. Through the late 1990s sanctions remained in place despite American and European efforts at easing relations in order to pursue enhanced trade and investment opportunities with India. The position taken by Lloyd Axworthy has since been reversed by his successor, John Manley, who argued that India—the world’s eleventh largest economy with a population of over one billion people
and a GDP of US$463.6 billion—is an important market that Canada cannot afford to distance itself from, stating: “When the U.S. and other trading countries have re-engaged, it makes little sense for Canada to be on the outside looking in” (Trickey, 2001). The fact that Canadian trade with India is significantly less than that of other western industrial nations, partly explains Manley’s desire to boost Canadian engagement with the Indian economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exports from India (Total: US $37.5 billion)</th>
<th>Imports into India (Total: US $45.6 billion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. USA - 22.3%</td>
<td>1. USA - 8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. UK - 5.6%</td>
<td>2. Belgium-Luxembourg - 7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Germany - 5.3%</td>
<td>3. Japan - 5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Japan - 5.2%</td>
<td>4. Saudi Arabia - 5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hong Kong - 5.1%</td>
<td>5. Germany - 4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada* - 0.2%</td>
<td>Canada - 0.7 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Calculated from table 6.1 and 6.2.


Two-way trade between India and Canada only surpassed one billion dollars in 1997, with Indian exports to Canada showing a significant increase in the past few years. Apparel, clothing, handicrafts (including jewelry), and iron and steel dominate South Asia’s exports to Canada, and Canadian exports to India are dominated by pulp, paper, edible vegetables/roots and fertilizer. In the last few years India has significantly increased its exports to Canada, creating a favourable trade balance as figure 6.1 and table 6.2 reveal.

Despite the relatively weak trading position Canada holds with India, increased interest in trade with India (indeed with Asia as a whole) over the last few years has led to several trade visits organized by a consortium of government ministries and business leaders. These are seen as useful exercises in networking, and generate political support to initiate and close deals, both in India and Canada. The key meetings over the past 20 years have been:

i) In 1983 a delegation of 25 business people spent two weeks in New Delhi and Bombay in discussions with government officials and businesses with a particular focus on the oil and gas sector. It was declared “the first private sector initiative of this sort” (Toronto Star, 1983).

ii) In 1991 John Crosbie, then Minister for International Trade, visited India.

iii) In 1993 Joe Clarke visited India and met with trade groups and officials.

iv) International Trade Minister Roy MacLaren led a trade mission of 40 Canadian business people to India in 1994, which at the time was the largest Canadian trade mission to visit India (Newswire, 1994).

v) Two years later Prime Minister Jean Chretien, accompanied by seven provincial premiers and several business leaders, embarked on a two-week trade mission to India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia. Business deals worth Cdn$ 2 billion were signed, and the trip was seen as an important exercise in initiating business links with India (Newswire, 1996).

vi) In 1997, Industry and Environment Canada headed a Canada Environment Business Mission to showcase aspects of Canada’s environmental sector. The visit
included twenty business representatives, twelve of whom were of South Asian origin (Environment and Industry Canada, 1997).

vii) A year later Team British Columbia sent its own Trade and Investment Mission, led by then Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh. Government representatives were MLA Harry Lalli and Special Advisor to the Premier Govind Sundram. Of the twenty-seven business participants, sixteen were of South Asian origin (Team British Columbia, 1998). The group visited New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Chandigarh.

viii) In 1999 Calgary MLA Shiraz Shariff led a Canadian oil and gas mission to India, visiting New Delhi and Mumbai, and was accompanied by eight company representatives (Mission, 1999).

ix) In 2000, the Canada-India Business Council (CIBC) led a business mission aimed at “Forging Synergies with India”. Nineteen company representatives joined the mission, fourteen of whom were of South Asian origin.

Trade missions such as these have an important role to play in creating connections between individuals and promoting Canada’s strengths in certain fields. The very personal nature of a trade mission and the government’s involvement in such missions by sending senior government ministers and officials indicates their commitment to developing trade. The interpersonal nature of interaction connected with the need to trade is a central reason why economists suspect that immigrants, possessing important social and cultural credentials when it comes to trading with other nations, contribute to the capacity of a nation to build effective trade links. But this impression of the links between trade and immigration is built upon a series of assumptions regarding immigrants and the nature of Canadian business behaviour. It is important to consider
these stereotypes in more detail, because as Pratt (1997) has argued, while their
deployment results in material consequences, they are also constructed through social
processes marked by ambivalence and contradiction which, once revealed, offer potential
openings for positive readings and interventions across a wider context.

Transacting Trade: Ideal Types and Stereotypes

Immigrant traders

A significant number of the business and political representatives listed as participants
with Canadian trade missions to India are of South Asian origin, lending support to the
idea that South Asian origin immigrants possess either important cultural capital, or
greater propensity, when it comes to accessing the Indian market. Within government and
business circles the benefits of immigration for trade development have been recognized,
not always explicitly, but certainly advocated in ways that encourage the use of
immigrant entrepreneurs as sources of information and cultural acumen. In addition, the
cultural capital these immigrant entrepreneurs are assumed to possess offers greater
potential when the challenging nature of the Indian market is taken into consideration.
Henry (1991) argues that long-term commitment and cultural understanding are central to
achieving success in the Indian market, and Vicziany (1993) has documented the
necessity of such factors with regard to Australian companies trading with India. The
Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, echoing John Paynter’s
(1995) comments regarding the importance of people-to-people links, emphasizes
Canada’s possession of a domestic cultural resource when it comes to understanding and
accessing India’s markets.
Why trade with India? The sheer size of its market and its resources; the commonality of Commonwealth traditions and the English language; its proven commitment to democratic principles; its potential as an emerging "Asian Tiger"; a massive pool of inexpensive but highly trained labour; a large expatriate Indian population in Canada; and tremendous infrastructural requirements all suggest that there is in fact enormous scope for Indo-Canadian commercial cooperation, both in the Indian market and jointly in the global economic village.8

The Canada India Business Council (CIBC), the national Canadian body working for increased trade with India, also advocates the promotion of individualized connections as one of its main objectives, "to promote trade and investment between Canada and India by fostering direct contacts between Canadian and Indian business people" (CIBC mandate, 1996). This heavy focus on personalized connections to facilitate and increase trade relations between India and Canada recognizes the potential of Indo-Canadian business people to initiate and facilitate trade between the two nations.

Politically, there has also been important support and active encouragement for immigrants and immigrant organizations seeking to create trade opportunities for Canada abroad. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s a directory of ethnic business contacts was published by Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada called “Multiculturalism Means Business.” The first page explains the reasons for such a directory:

Increasingly, Canadians are coming to understand that multiculturalism goes far beyond the issue of language, heritage and culture. It extends into the way people earn a living, and reaches into the world of business.... It is hoped that this directory will prove a valuable resource for all of Canada’s business people. Above all, it should highlight another source of economic dynamism and promote the ‘networking’ that is the foundation of commerce today (CIC, 1989).

8 Canada - India Trade Overview, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, March 1996, emphasis added.
In the 1989 directory, nine ethnic groups were listed for the Vancouver area. Though the directory is no longer published, the 1999 City of Vancouver’s web page lists twenty-one business associations with explicit international or immigrant affiliations. The growth and ‘mainstreaming’ of such organizations reveals the changing attitude being developed toward immigrant traders present in Vancouver. Rather than dismissed as an ‘ethnic’ company, these powerful players now offer important routes into a newly emerging market with potentially immense prospects for corporations in Canada. The idea of capital accumulation has therefore transformed commercial readings of difference (Mitchell, 1993; Olds, 1998).

In discussions with Canadian trade officials in Delhi and Mumbai, the majority agreed that Indo-Canadians play an important role in creating trade connections for Canada, but their degree of confidence in this link was dependent upon personal experience. In Mumbai, one official told me that in his experience, eighty percent of initial assessments Canadians make of the Indian market, even those by large Canadian corporations, were made by Indo-Canadians. He also advised me that about eighty to eighty-five percent of the 2000 CIBC mission were Indo-Canadians, most of whom had been in Canada over 20 years. Some officials recounted important examples of Indian immigrants responsible for developing an export market for Canada in India. One example is Hemant Shah, from Winnipeg, referred to as “Mr India” by the Winnipeg press; he boasts immense success in connecting Manitoba businesses with opportunities in the Indian market.

In 1977 Shah emigrated to Winnipeg and after a few years of working at a variety of jobs, including parking attendant, to gain an understanding of business life in

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10 Personal interview Canadian Consulate, Mumbai 28th February 2000.
Canada—he went after his first contract. He cold-called at a Winnipeg company, Kipp Kelly, a manufacturer of grain cleaning equipment. Armed with a knowledge of India, and a letter of introduction from his father, Shah was given permission to attempt to sell Kelly equipment in India. He financed the trip himself and eventually sold three pieces of equipment. "I got my first deal using family contacts and political connections," Shah says. "And then one success led to another" (Bramwell, 1996).

In 1986 Hemant Shah was in India on business, and while visiting the new Canadian trade office in Mumbai he was asked if he could facilitate a deal between a Winnipeg pulse exporter and a Western Indian importer interested in buying dried green peas. Mr Shah met with the Indian exporter, who it turned out was an old family friend. With such an affiliation Shah established instant trust, and dispensed with the need for the usually long and arduous process of negotiation, resulting in the first export of green peas to India from Canada. Mr Shah is also credited with forming a memorandum of understanding between the Maharasta Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Pune and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce that has been described by DFAIT as “an excellent example of industry to industry co-operation” (DFAIT Focus India 1996, p50). Mr Shah offers an ideal example of the trade-creating type of immigrant Head et al assume exists in their research on trade and immigration.

Despite this evidence of the potential immigrants can offer in creating trade links, some federal officials have voiced frustration with what they perceive as the limited abilities of Indian immigrants to initiate trade, especially when compared to Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs. The following comments, made by a British Columbia trade official in Vancouver, illustrate this frustration.

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11 Personal interview Canadian Consulate, Mumbai 28th February 2000.
12 Canada’s export of peas and pulses to India was over 212,000 metric tonnes in 2000 an increase of 2,000 metric tonnes from 1999 and equivalent to 20 percent of India’s pulse market (India Canada News 2001).
China is about 12 years ahead of India purely because they liberalized 12 years before India. So it was really the Chinese community here which created the push. The difference is that the Chinese community are much more entrepreneurial than our East Indian community. East Indian community tends to be more the professionals; we are trained to be doctors, lawyers, mathematicians, scientists.  

One Vancouver based trade official was very familiar with immigrants keen to assist in developing trade linkages through their credentials and networks with their country of birth, yet his comments reveal how in some instances corporate experience of using such intermediaries had been less than successful, and left the corporation highly skeptical of entering such markets. This suggests that the immigrant-trade connections can also have a negative effect on the development of Canadian capacity to expand international trade.

One of the reasons that people do not do business in China, in India or in Iran, three huge markets with enormous potential, is that there has been a steady stream of newer immigrants coming over here with an eye to setting up a business link with their home countries. And they have gone into the major companies and they have said, “my cousin is the so and so, my brother is the so and so.” They have given all of these pretences that they know who is doing what... Now, what’s happened is that you have all of these, we call them wannabes, they are all coming over here with the pretence that they have all of these things that they can do for Canadian companies, can do to earn money. These companies go over there to check it out and have found it has been completely false, they spend a great deal of money and got absolutely nowhere, and now they refuse to deal with that country.

The current trade profile between India and Canada is also an important factor to consider, since the general trade pattern indicates where opportunities for immigrant entrepreneurs may lie. Goods such as food, textiles, and craft goods dominate imports from India; all these industries are highly open to small operators who can easily coordinate and mobilize trade through social contacts. But with regard to exports, trade officials at the provincial level suggest that Canada’s export programs tend to be directed

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14 Interview with Vancouver trade official, October 1998.
at assisting larger corporations concentrated in Eastern Canada and in highly capitalized industrial sectors, areas where immigrant entrepreneurs are not overly represented. This was also echoed by a member of the Canada-India Business Council who argued that the Toronto-based head office of the CIBC was seen as distant from the needs of BC members, and Vancouver was rarely included on the itinerary of Indian business missions to Canada. This geographical imbalance was also apparent to trade officials in BC:

You have to remember, and temper any observations, that Vancouver is very much a branch office town, and there could be huge amounts of business being done with India, but it is being done out of Toronto and not out of Vancouver. We are getting the dregs of stuff, where you get Indian families coming over here and they set-up little minor trading outfits with their mothers and their sisters and so on, where there really is some quite big stuff going on back east, machinery and that sort of thing.\(^\text{15}\)

These comments suggest that most immigrant entrepreneurs in Vancouver with connections to India are perceived as overseeing small-scale importing ventures: “the dregs of stuff”. This classed, gendered and regionalized representation of the Indian immigrant in Vancouver and the type of trading operations exercised, was also apparent in conversations with non-Punjabi Indian immigrants, as this discussion with a Vancouver immigrant from Mumbai suggests:

The type of immigrant that has been coming in, most of them may be from rural villages under the family class, who come here to work, but they are not much interested in, or they don’t have the capacity to develop trade on a two-way basis. The new batch of immigrants that are coming in, there are a lot of people coming in with business skills, a lot of people who would like to foster trade between India and Canada. In fact there seems to be more trade associations, more trade groupings that have been set up. Four or five years back when I was new to Canada, I would go to these meetings and you know it would be the same crowd, the same stories and it would just sort of fizzle out, but I have seen more and more new faces coming into the picture now, so I think it is a very promising step. And the fact that these types of

\(^{15}\) Vancouver Trade Centre official, personal interview October 28th 1998.
immigrants are coming in from India, I think it would certainly go along way to fostering two-way trade.  

Indeed the image of “new” Indian immigrant, educated, westernized and linked into hi-tech business has even made its mark in Vancouver, the home of one of the oldest settlements of “old” style migrants, who made their way in life through hard labour in the resource industries.  

Despite the reality of Indo-Canadians developing important trade links with India, state departments exercise policies that envision the immigrant individual in contradictory ways. While DFAIT might envision the potential immigrant as a trade stimulator, Citizenship and Immigration still exercises its right to exclude individuals. The contradictory position of certain federal departments was raised in one interview with an Indo-Canadian engineering director who was also involved in the Canada-India Business Council, when I asked if he had experienced any problems between trade and immigration departments.

A: Yeah, we have one real serious problem is the, like it just happened last week. A fellow here—he was with our mission—and he developed a contract, and he has two Subways [Sandwich franchise] here... he developed some contacts there, and they agreed, one in Delhi and one in Bombay, to open the franchise. After all this work on the contracts, everything was done, so they were coming here to see and sign the contract. They went to the [Delhi] Embassy, High Commission for the visa, and they refused the visa! They felt very insulted, you know, and they said we don’t want this business, ok? So you know then the fellow called me and I gave the names of the people to contact right away. So he phoned BC Trade, Ministry of Investment, and he also phoned Industry Canada and the Department of Foreign Affairs, and those three people sent the faxes. You know. And then they say ok.

Q: So then Immigration backtracked and gave them visas?

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16 Personal interview with immigrant from Mumbai, Vancouver March 1999.
17 Vancouver has become the home of the first Canadian chapter of TiE, The IndUS Entrepreneurs, first set up in 1992 in Silicon Valley by hi-tech entrepreneur and millionaire Kanwal Rekhi, to provide mentoring and financing for Hi-tech start-ups run by Indian first - and second-generation immigrants. The organization’s principal role is to help Indians in North America, but the founder also believes that the success of Indians overseas has inspired a change in the business climate in India (McCullough, 2000 ).
A: Yes, but that is not the right way to approach, you know, any business people that want to come, we should welcome them, and when you know all this, you should not have that kind of attitude... when Mr Walker was here, we also talked about that, with the High Commissioner, and he says yeah, obviously he will do what he can. So we have from time to time you know, these are the issues which we see, we talk to the government, the Department of Foreign Affairs. But this is one of the issues which is really serious.

The poor treatment these India citizens received from CIC contrasted with their business value, and I asked if the problem was perhaps rooted in the general impressions certain immigration officials held with regard to India and Indians.

Exactly, exactly. They feel that all these are poor people who are coming here and they are going to burden us, and this is one of them, I don’t know why they should think this way. They are isolated cases, but I don’t think they should treat everybody like that... you know, you feel ashamed as a Canadian... Some of the families are multi-millionaires and good people.

These comments represent a contradiction between different arms of the government and introduce a complication to the impression of a homogeneous state acting in unison. The actions of the individuals concerned, and the use of various trade officials to pressure CIC officials also reveals the internal dynamics of a governance system, and the degree of power certain people can exercise in circumventing bureaucratic decisions. It also throws light on the struggle between the capitalist and nationalist motivations of Canadian bureaucracy; each has a different mandate and desire that this example neatly exposes.

The Canadian business community and economy

Of course there are some cases where disappointment in the Canadian system also extends to the general business community in Canada, seen as lacking the required business zeal, infrastructure, capitalization and interest in pursuing overseas trade
opportunities. This issue was raised in an interview with Indian immigrant professional working for a small engineering services company, whose problem was the immense lack of interest encountered in their attempts to raise financing for a billion dollar power generation project in Northern India.

Q: I am getting the sense that you were fairly frustrated by the lack of interest.

A: Um, Raj\(^{18}\) [company owner] would give you a very clear idea on that (*laughter*) he would really let off a lot of steam. But... one can’t really pin the blame on Canadian companies; they tend to be less adventurous when it comes to getting to overseas markets. ...I think the tendency is for them to let others lead and they follow the markets when they feel they can do some business.\(^{19}\)

This point about the reluctance of Canadians to get involved in difficult overseas markets was also made by several trade officials; the following statement is fairly reflective of the thoughts many informants offered regarding the image of Canadian traders.

Canadian’s have not yet seen India as the sort of opportunity that others might, or if they have seen it, they are being typical of Canadian traders; “I don’t want to be first in”, and then three years from now when everyone else has gone in and cleaned up the market, they will be bitching because they can’t make any profit there because they are last in. Canadians are terrible traders, they really are, they are so slow at getting off the mark, they have very little entrepreneurial spirit, they don’t want to take a risk, everything they do has to be a sure fire thing, and the result is that half the time they miss the boat.\(^{20}\)

This presents an interesting stereotyping of the non-immigrant business community, an admission that it is not the fact that Indian immigrants are ineffective in creating international trade links as bureaucrats and economists assume they should be, but that Canadian traders generally exhibit conservative and risk-averse behaviour. Canada’s geographical proximity to the immense American market, and the relative ease of

\(^{18}\) Pseudonym.

\(^{19}\) Personal interview with recent immigrant from Mumbai, Vancouver March 1999.

\(^{20}\) Vancouver Trade Centre official, personal interview October 28th 1998
exporting to it, explains why Canadian exporters might have little incentive to invest their
ergavities into entering India. Despite the image of India as an important emerging market
demanding commitment and early access, the risks are still seen as too great:

the big problem that India suffers right now, is that people don’t see it as a safe place
to do business. People don’t feel comfortable that their money is safe, that they are
going to get a return on investment, they can trust their partners and so on. It is a very,
very uncertain market. Unless you have some absolutely blue-blood contacts there that
you can trust with your life, most people won’t do business with India. The time
frames are too extracted; the concept of bribery, Canadians hate the thought of giving
payments, of greasing palms. It is a way of doing business in Asia and they have got to
get used to it; otherwise they will never get into the market.\(^\text{21}\)

In addition to these barriers to trade development, there is also the general lack of Indian
interest in Canada. Currently it is more important for Indian businesses to connect with
European or American companies. The trade consulate in Mumbai bemoaned the fact that
most people did not even know there was a Canadian trade office in the city. This
newspaper report sums up the difficulties Canada continues to face in attracting Indian
interest:

Even a vaudeville showman, carnival barker or firebrand orator would consider
it a tough act to follow, and Lloyd Axworthy surely is none of the above. When
Canada’s earnest Foreign Minister spoke yesterday to India’s top industrialists gathered
in a Calcutta arena, a day after British Prime Minister John Major had packed the
house, attendants scurried to move the 200 or so listeners to fill empty seats in front of
the stage (Stackhouse, 1997).

The importance of immigration to trade creation then, cannot be considered in isolation
from general trade concerns, nor can we ignore the processes by which different actors
construct images of the both immigrant and non immigrant through highly cultural, racial
and classed stereotypes.

\(^{21}\) Personal interview with trade official in Vancouver, October 1998
Non-entrepreneurial immigrants and trade creation

Economists cannot answer the question of how exactly immigrants create trade? The assumption made by Head et al., for example, is that immigrants overcome trading barriers with their own country of origin that non-immigrants would find it hard to manage; because of such things as language ability and personal connections; they are, in effect, immigrant trading entrepreneurs. Head et al assume that in this case, the business class of immigrant – who they consider is specifically selected and admitted to Canada in order to develop export trade – offers the greatest potential to positively affect exports. This assumption is not supported by their findings, which reveal that independent class immigrants exhibit the strongest effect on trade, followed by family and then business-class immigrants and refugees. This finding lends some weight to other studies such as Ley (2000) that suggest the business immigrant class has not achieved the outcomes immigration officials initially hoped for.

Although not explicitly identified in the work of economists, immigrants can also contribute to an increase in trade through regular employment. The employment of Indian immigrants as government trade bureaucrats and as managers and professionals in large corporations trading with India also provide cases where immigration can enhance trade opportunities. During interviews in Canada and India with business leaders and government officials, over ninety percent of those I spoke to were Indo-Canadians. During one interview with three trade officials in Delhi, two of whom were Indo-Canadian, issues of selection due to ethno-cultural background were addressed. The topic, though approached tentatively, yielded an interesting reflection on government hiring and posting practices, something informants admitted they had not considered in
much detail before. Individuals insisted that they had not been selected for particular
government postings in South Asia because of their ethno-cultural background, although
they did comment on the under-representation of Indian-origin staff in the UK embassy.\footnote{22}
Canadian officials did however make reference to the aggressiveness with which the
USA Embassy in Delhi deployed its Indian-origin staff.\footnote{23} I also interviewed several
representatives of large corporations in Vancouver with trade experience in India. In this
classification with a Vice President of a large international engineering company, I asked
if it helped having employees of South-Asian background on their staff to assist in
developing projects in India:

That helps, there is no question about that. It is not just the origin, it is being able to
make the language and understanding the culture and knowing how to go about things.
The North American who has lived in India in that same position, that person can do
the same job, but … there are more of the Indians by origin here; therefore it becomes
more and more practical to utilize those people in order to maximize your efforts in
India. … In our company we have a certain, many I should say, Indians, or Canadians
of Indian origin, that are familiar, but they are very specialized people you know. You
just can’t take somebody who is an engineer in civil structural to go and do project
development. All that person can do is communication that is it. Whereas there are
other people who are very senior, they are incredible engineers, but they are very
strong business people as well, and those are much more helpful to us. So sometimes
we find that we don’t have anybody within our company to help us in a specific case,
so we are on our own.\footnote{24}

Similar comments arose in the following interview with an Indo-Canadian engineering
director with a large corporation who had been called upon to travel to India to assist in
the development stage of large projects.

A: … we have one Vice President here who is Caucasian you know. One of the
projects we were talking about, he said… “Why don’t you accompany me?” I went

\footnote{22} Personal interview with trade officials at the Delhi High Commission, 12th November 1999
\footnote{23} I have not even begun to grapple with the issues of racialization and essentialization that emerge from
this attempt of tying trade in India with individualized ethnic Indians.
\footnote{24} Interview with VP International, engineering corporation, Vancouver March 1999.
with him and we went to a few places, and he said, “I can’t believe it.” What he was able to achieve, he said “I could not achieve in these few days what you achieve, you know, because of cultural issues.” He said “when you talk there is the red carpet treatment, when I come you know they are a little bit shy to talk and very very conservative in their approach.”

Q: Why is that, is it just language?

A: It is cultural, you know comfort level, that anytime you see people like people of the same background, and that guy comes to sell to you and you know you can rely on them.

Q: Do you feel it is an issue of trust?

A: Yes.

Q: Or is it that they know right away how important it is.

A: And they feel that you understand their problems, what is the problem in India, how it is, you know culturally what the problems are in India and how you can accommodate those issues.25

These comments highlight the cultural dimensions of economic interactions, and the particular importance of ethnic association and understanding. Though such positionality can be an important advantage when attempting to access overseas markets, ethnic difference plays a less benign role when it comes to the immigrant’s location in the labour market. Although Indo-Canadians are seen as important actors, whether they have access to higher positions in the corporate structure or not, has an important bearing on their ability to contribute. The glass ceiling certainly does exist for Asian immigrants who experience lower pay than non-immigrants and white immigrants with similar educational backgrounds (Pendakur and Pendakur, 1996). In a Fortune article regarding Indians in Silicon Valley, Kanwal Rekhi, a highly successful technology entrepreneur and one of the founders of a networking organization called The Indus Entrepreneur

25 Interview, 25th November 1998 with engineering director, large engineering corporation.
(TiE), recounts his experiences of seeing original Indian founders replaced by white executives when the company is taken public.

"We'd always hear that the company didn't have a 'businessman', that there wasn't anyone with a marketing background or selling expertise. That's what they'd say. But the real issue was will customers buy from an Indian? Indians were seen as damn good backroom operations people, but are they good in the front room, running the show and selling to customers?" This helps explain why, despite the wealth and success of Indian entrepreneurs, there are still few Indian CEOs running high-tech companies. In many instances, VCs [venture capitalists] investing in an Indian-founded company have brought in a non-Indian CEO, relegating the founder to a technical role. (Warner, 2000)

This example highlights the point that links between immigration and trade do not depend on immigrants being constructed purely as traders. The skills and qualifications many immigrants possess with regard to accessing overseas markets does not have to be seen in isolation from their role within government departments and large Canadian corporations' efforts to access these markets. By identifying this aspect of immigration and trade creation, we are no longer placing responsibility entirely with the immigrant for whether or not trade, especially exports, are developed. Instead we turn our gaze to corporate and government hiring and promotion practices to determine whether opportunities for capacity building in international trade are being developed effectively through hiring practices. This shift from the immigrant to the wider Canadian corporate and government system reveals the implicit assumptions of econometric analysis of trade and immigration, where the responsibility for building immigration-trade links lies somehow outside of core Canadian economic processes. As Olsson argues, gravity regression may sometimes conceal rather than reveal important social processes shaping the phenomena under discussion, and stereotypical assumptions about immigrants and
their propensity to trade misdirect our critical gaze away from problems with wider Canadian economic practices.

**Decentreing the Economic**

In considering the ways in which immigrants contribute to creating trade networks between their home and host locations, the evidence of a positive relationship is compelling. Provincial and state government trade officials, who see the people who visit their offices and create opportunities, consider that immigrants are important for opening the market to Canadian corporations. The estimations of the size of contribution and success vary, and economists have had difficulty quantifying this relationship adequately, resulting in an impoverished image of such complicated, socially nuanced processes. In this chapter I have considered primarily one aspect of immigrant-led transnational economic development, the promotion of international trade. In many cases though, immigrants are also involved in investing in their hometowns, villages and family properties in India. Indeed, one trade officer saw this cultural attachment and in-betweenness as a precursor for their interest in developing trade:

So what happens is that the first step is, any trade with emerging markets, usually the funnel for that is Indo-Canadians, people like myself, who might be here and are really passionate about doing something…. It usually starts with importing; they bring something and then process it and people start coming and say, well this would be nice, if I can write off my next business trip, or my visit to India for business, what can I do, I can open something out, maybe I can think of exporting something in a small way? So you create usually an almost artificial business to help you write off some of the work you normally, as an expense, have because you want to go and see your family once a year or something like that. And that leads into you know; “hey you know, I am making some money; maybe if I invest a little bit more I can do something more.” So it builds up, and once the trade flow starts flowing and some of his
problems are overcome by...Indo-Canadian business people, then the mainstream usually goes in.26

There are two connections this quote introduces: the first is the link between imports and exports and the second is between the economic and non-economic. Economists have generally agreed that the link between immigration and imports is stronger than the link with exports (Baker, 1996; Globerman, 1995; Head and Ries, 1998). For DFAIT this is not positive news, since their mandate is to encourage and support export ventures in order to bolster the nation's balance of trade. Missing in this scenario however is the recursivity that Olsson refers to; the realization that immigrants may begin with the importation of goods due to their immigrant community's cultural preferences, but after having developed this expertise, later identify and seize upon export opportunities. One Indo-Canadian entrepreneur I interviewed, though he imported fruit pulp from India, was involved in developing a mushroom processing plant in Tamil Nadu that would involve significant exports of processing machinery and technical services from Canada.27 Another, though his business involved importing machinery parts from his family's firms in India, was also reexporting them to the USA.28 These examples reveal that the process of trading can involve links between exporting and importing; a circulation of goods overlooked in econometric analysis of trade and immigration.

This quote also clearly highlights Timothy Mitchell's (1998) argument that "what is depicted as the non-economic is implicated at every point in the creation of the economy" (p.93). Economic actions are often based in deeply cultural attachments to place, and though this connection is often tacitly acknowledged, it is rarely given

26 Personal interview with BC trade official, January 25th 1999
27 Interview, Vancouver 17th Feb 1999 and July 1999.
28 Interview, Vancouver 19th February 1999.
explanatory power when it comes to the ‘economic’ representation of trade and immigration links. Such awareness is important for changing the way we envision ‘economic’ processes as distinct and separate from other processes of social and cultural interaction. It is also important to decentre economic explanations which deny the subject’s multiple positionality: individuals may be involved in trading goods, but their international connections are also shaped by socio-cultural issues such as fundraising and caring for family members still in India. By challenging the assumptions of global transfers we find the existence of systems of exchange that query the hegemony of global capitalist visions. This supports the assertion of scholars like Gibson-Graham (1996), who argue that the power of global capitalism is predicated upon the discursive power of only certain systems that are made visible through hegemonic practices, whilst in fact economic life for most people is structured by multiple positions and realities.

**Conclusion**

Trade information is collected on an aggregate scale and we therefore lack the ability to understand how and where goods are consumed, and what this may mean for regional development, especially in major urban areas. Understanding where goods come from, who transmits them, and what this means for communities as both consumers and producers, has become more challenging for the state to monitor, and therefore more difficult for researchers to model. We also need to recognize that the problem of constrained trade with India is not due to some limitation embodied within a particular immigrant community, but with more general business attitudes in Canada. In addition to

29 These issues will be discussed in Chapter Seven.
the problems with the Canadian business mentality, we also need to highlight the
disjuncture between the immigrant's active economic citizenship; their participation in
Canadian trade development, and the limited inclusion of those immigrants within the
wider Canadian economy and labour market.

Finally, we should seriously ask the question how important is it that we render
this complex relationship between trade and immigration visible through the science of
econometrics? Should immigrant worth be constructed purely along the lines of how
much can they bring to the state through trading practices—the stereotypical bazaar-style
trader? Is this the ultimate commodification and allocation of worth dependent upon
purely economic potential, the type of cynical "immigrant value" Ghassen Hage (1998)
refers to? To avoid such a sterile view of immigration, maybe it is best that the
connection between the immigrant and trade potential is left obscured, hard to define and
quantify. Maybe it is best to leave the examples of immigrant traders embedded in their
life stories, their personal connections, their family histories, their lucky breaks and
cultural capital, contexts generally expressive of all business stories (Schoeberger, 1996).
Maybe this way the economy always has to remain firmly planted within social and
cultural spheres of influence that do not lend themselves to quantification, abstraction and
isolation. Seen as part of the larger social fabric, the links between trade and immigration
can remain elusive in the realm of econometric analysis, but very obvious and everyday
for others, such as trade bureaucrats and immigrants, even if constructed through
contradictory and ambivalent stereotypes.
PART THREE

TRANSFORMATIONS AND TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICES

In the next three chapters I focus on the transformative effects of transnational networks. I consider the role Indian immigration plays in the creation of translocalities—social and spatial articulations that intimately link regions across national boundaries.

Translocalities are connected through various transnational practices that are culturally grounded and differentiated along lines of class, race and gender and generation. Chapter Seven considers the processes through which Punjabi immigrants overseas have contributed to the development of their villages in Doaba. The socio-economic effects of capital flows initiated by immigrants are culturally mediated and offer an alternative view of development to the western hegemonic practices of capitalist expansion. Chapter Eight also considers how immigration can reshape and transform space and social relations, but in this case with reference to the second generation. In the final chapter I consider marriage practices, an important transnational practice that contributes to building and maintaining strong linkages between Punjab and sites of settlement overseas. I reveal implications of this practice for women, and consider how the state is involved in these processes.

Each of these chapters highlights not only the resilience of connections across space, but following Cwerner (2001), I consider the temporal complexities of immigration. I reveal how immigrant identities and social practices both endure and are transformed through time. In Chapter Seven I illustrate how immigrant nostalgia for the site of origin is enhanced over time, resulting in concrete actions that have important
consequences for the development of Punjab. I also illustrate how the passage of time between generations can create disjunctions in the sense of geographical belonging (Chapter Seven), but lead to renewed identification with religious and cultural beliefs associated with the site of migrant origin (Chapter Eight). In Chapter Nine I reveal how certain social customs, namely marriage practices and patriarchal norms of male preference, endure over time, but are subject to transformative pressures that are partly rooted in differences across space. All of these examples illustrate how transnational networks operate across the twin dimensions of space and time, with the potential to reshape the qualities and meanings of both.
Since Glick-Schiller et al (1992) introduced their analytical framework for transnational understandings of immigrant communities, studies of transnational spaces or transnational social fields have produced rich illustrations of the ways in which space and social relations are being shaped by migrant networks that operate across the boundaries of multiple nation states. Much of this work has been driven by investigations focusing on the USA and Central and South America (Goldring, 1998; Kearney, 1995; Mountz and Wright, 1996; Rouse, 1991). In this chapter, I turn my attention away from Latin America and the USA to India, Canada and Britain—three nations joined through shared, but unequal, colonial experiences and linked in the present through a post-colonial transnational space built primarily around Indian immigration. Within India, I focus on the Doaba region of Punjab (in northwest India) the site from which millions of Indian immigrants have dispersed to numerous places of settlement and resettlement to form extensive global networks. Researchers such as Ballard (1990), Helweg (1984), Johnston, (1984), La Brack (1989), and more recently, Tatla (1999) have focused on Punjab specifically through diasporic migrant links, but the density and continued development of Indian transnationalism merits further attention. In this chapter I will review these distinctly transnational connections by considering Canadian NRI (Non-Resident Indian)
fundraising for community development projects in Punjab, and demonstrate how places continue to exert considerable power over immigrants. Punjabis, especially men, exhibit a strong attachment to their home village, and in many instances surnames will indicate the village of their birth, revealing the extent to which identity is rooted in place.¹

The state of Punjab is thought to be one of India’s most significant regions of out-migration and exhibits close links to several countries of Punjabi settlement overseas. During discussions in 1999 with NRI Sabha officials in Jalandhar, Punjab, I was told that possibly five million Punjabis, documented and undocumented, are currently overseas.² This represents almost one third of the total estimated number of Indians overseas, for a state with less than two percent of the total Indian population. This overrepresentation of Punjabis overseas becomes evident when traveling through the state, where one is struck not only by the intimate geographical knowledge many people have of the sites of Punjabi settlement overseas, such as Vancouver in Canada, Southall and Wolverhampton in the UK, and Yuba City in California, but also, especially in the winter months, the number of British, Canadian and US citizens of Punjabi origin visiting family and friends in the region. Such concentration results from intense attachment to their home villages, as well as sustained and long term migration networks between Punjab and multiple sites of settlement (Ballard, 2000; Jensen, 1988). Punjab certainly qualifies as a transnational space, one that has, over at least a century, been subjected to intense international migration and connection, creating a territory that continues to be at the centre of multiple transnational networks linking migrants with their villages and relatives in...

¹ As I will explain the Chapter Nine, women traditionally go with their husband’s family, and become part of that household, leaving the village of their parents. Men on the other hand traditionally remain in the house of their parents, and are therefore more emotionally rooted in the home village.
² The NRI Sabha is an organization representing the interests of NRIs, especially with reference to property related matters.
The History and Significance of International Migration for India

The notion of communities having global links that form a kind of transnational space, or a social field that links multiple 'translocalities' (Appadurai 1996a), may be a relatively new idea, but in the case of Punjab the actual links and processes are not new. Punjab, especially the Doaba region, has been a traditional site of international out-migration for over a century. Initiated during the colonial period, a combination of declining land holdings and increased options through military and other paid employment, encouraged families to support the movement overseas of a large number of young single men, with the initial intention of sojourning (Kessinger, 1974; Fox, 1985). The networks resulting from these movements enabled information, people and money to circulate between Punjab and overseas Punjabi settlements with significant consequences. For example Punjabis on the west coast of North America played an important role in advancing the Indian independence struggle through the Gadar party (Juergensmeyer, 1982), and as a result were subject to intense surveillance from British and Canadian colonial forces (Johnston, 1988). In the post-independence era, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, the contribution of remittances sent to Punjab assisted in the agro-technological advances of the Green Revolution through the provision of tube wells and tractors, with significant, though not always positive results (Shiva, 1991). There have also been challenges to the central Indian state through the role Sikhs overseas played in the rise of the Khalistan movement through the 1980s and 1990s (Tatla, 1999). While it is important to place immigration from India within a wider political-economic context, my purpose in this
chapter is to reveal the circulations and transformations transnational linkages entail at the local level by focusing on two villages, both in the Doaba region of Punjab: Palahi, near Phagwara in District Karpurtala, and Dhesian Kahna, in District Jalandhar.

Palahi: The Global Village

Palahi is located on a link road between Phagwara on the main GT road, and the Hoshiarpur road. It has a population of 3,800, with an equal number of former residents settled abroad. Seventy percent of the working population in the village are agriculturalists, and the village has 548 hectares of irrigated arable land. The village is home to a successful rural polytechnic, which since 1984 has trained over twelve thousand technical and computer students. The majority of students are rural, unemployed, male youth, but women are trained in computer and stenography courses. The Polytechnic also has seven extension centres around Punjab where young women complete embroidery and sewing classes. Palahi has become something of a model village boasting a library, post office, two banks, a community park, three schools, solar street lighting, a community hall, and a community biogas project, and as a result, has been profiled in the television and print media as a local as well as national success story (Hartosh, 1999; Vinayak, 1997). Palahi benefits from a number of committed individuals on the village council or panchayat, but large communities of people abroad have been central in funding the major village improvement projects. There are important precedents to these overseas contributions to the development of Punjab.

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3 This involves capturing methane from human waste and using it as an energy source.
Early migrants who settled along the North American Pacific west coast in the early twentieth century were active in raising funds for the needs of several villages and educational institutes back in Doaba. Palahi set up its own educational society as early as 1922, and village elders believe that US$17,000 was donated by Palahi men working in North America at this time. More recent fundraising has been channeled through the village NGO, the National Rural Development Society Palahi (NRDSP), which was set up in 1983 and was responsible for establishing Palahi’s Polytechnic. The advantages of collecting money through an NGO rather than the village council or panchayat, allows funding decisions to be made independently of the local block development officer. The head of the society is Mr Jagait Singh Palahi, who for many years was village head or Sarpanch. Mr Palahi is now a permanent Canadian resident, and spends his time visiting his family in Victoria, Canada, touring throughout North America collecting money for village projects, and returning to Palahi to oversee developments. His global mobility is central to his fundraising effectiveness. The most recent project to be completed in Palahi was the Miri Piri community hall. This sound-proofed hall with a capacity for 1,100 cost thirty-five lakh (over US$83,000) to construct, and was mostly financed through contributions from Palahi people overseas. The hall also has a clock tower and solar powered clock that cost five lakh (over US$11,000), financed by one man from Slough in Britain.\(^4\) Currently the society is raising funds for a village underground sewage system, which has been denied a matching grant from Punjab’s rural development program because officials argue that many towns in the region have no underground sewage system.

Beside contributions to community projects, a significant amount of personal

\(^4\) One lakh is 100,000 rupees. One Canadian dollar is equal to 27 rupees, 1 US dollar is equal to 42 rupees.
capital flows into the village from abroad. At the Punjab and Sind Bank, Palahi, the manager told me that 20-30 per cent of the money handled by his bank came from NRIs. The manager of the Cooperative Bank told me that since 1996, when the bank came into operation, they have taken in four crore rupees (roughly US $900,000). A significant amount of this, he felt, came from NRIs and was most commonly used for the purchase of land, building houses, financing weddings, and donations to the village, especially the Gurdwara. Any village in Punjab has at least one Gurdwara, which acts as a central gathering point and spiritual focus for the community. As a measure of the transnational networks Palahi is embedded within, three of the five-person Gurdwara management committee are Canadian residents who meet annually during the main festival of the Gurdwara, the birthday of the 6th Guru, Guru Hargobind.

It is difficult to get any figures on the number of people who had left this village, (or indeed Punjab for that matter), but a few examples show how extensive the global migrations have been. My host, the principal of the village polytechnic, guided me through a survey of sixty houses in the central part of the village where Jat and other higher caste families reside. Residents had moved abroad in forty of the houses, mostly leaving them to be inhabited by other family members. But ten of these houses were empty and locked, and eleven were rented or had a caretaker. The destination of migrants

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5 One crore is 100 lakh.
6 He estimated that 50 percent of the NRIs he dealt with came from Canada, 45 from the UK, 1 percent from the USA, and 4 percent were in the Middle East.
7 Most villages in the Doaba region are set out in a particular pattern, with the central houses inhabited by the Jat Sikh landowners and other higher castes, with the "untouchable" sweeper and tanner castes experiencing the most residential isolation on the periphery. Hershman (1981) argues that the presence of caste as an organizing system within Sikh villages is still important despite the religious teachings of Sikhism, which shun caste based practices. The fact that this survey was carried out in the central part where higher caste families live probably causes an overrepresentation of certain settlement locations. Even with lower caste village members however, migration is common, but there would probably be greater emphasis placed on temporary or undocumented migration to the Middle East and Europe.
Such connectivity permits the creation of translocalities: places associated with circulating populations not necessarily grounded in the nation-state, and increasingly, these regular networks are furthered through the effects of communication technologies, allowing the villagers greater and more regular contact with their relatives. The village has about two hundred and seventy phone connections for five hundred houses and five Public Communications Offices offering the ability both to make and receive international telephone calls. Other forms of communication are shaped by very intimate personalized connections; the principal of the Rural Polytechnic for example, acted as a type of local correspondent for an international Punjabi language newspaper based in Vancouver. Most evenings he would scan the local newspapers and select stories he thought people overseas might be interested in. Late in the evening he would fax the stories to Vancouver, and for this he received a small payment.

One communications resource the people of Palahi particularly prided themselves on, was the Polytechnic internet connection. All villagers and visiting NRIs can send and receive emails through the college, and it also enables the principal of the Polytechnic to keep in touch with the chairman of the village development society as he tours North America gathering funds. This situation, a village with an Internet connection, is seen as rather unique in India, and on one local television story Palahi was termed a “Cyber Village”. The report’s storyline reveals how processes of time-space compression have introduced spatial complexity to this village through its contradictory relations with ‘nearby local’ government officials and ‘distant global’ migrants overseas:

The state officials in Phagwara, a three-kilometer drive away, remain as inaccessible as ever to the villagers here. But their NRI relatives are only a click away. Step aside Mr. Postman; Palahi is zooming ahead on the info-highway.

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8 This is relatively high for a village of this size, which might normally have only twenty-five or so home phone connections for five hundred houses
This type of communications technology has enabled Palahi to promote itself through a monthly internet newsletter sent to Palahi people overseas and others who have a connection to the village (such as myself and environmental NGOs in Europe). This newsletter is increasingly becoming a central means through which villagers connect themselves more closely to a globally dispersed community, and is certainly an example of how new globalizing technologies are intensifying, extending and transforming traditional immigrant networks. It also presents an example of the malleability of space as networks transform physical distance through the circulation of ideas and information.

**Transnationalism and immigrant settlement**

Transformations at the level of the village are also accompanied by transformations at the site of overseas settlement. As Appadurai (1996a) argues, we need to see how immigrant communities and networks are often formed across nation-states in very personal and intimate ways, revealing the highly emotional connections immigrants maintain with their home villages. My link into Palahi was Ajit Singh, a man who emigrated to Vancouver in 1974 with a degree in economics. By 1982 he became a real estate agent, but prior to that he held several jobs as a cleaner, glasscutter and for two years as a taxi-driver. Despite, or perhaps because of the hard times he faced in achieving a successful life in Canada for himself and his family, he always felt extremely attached to his village. Soon after Palahi’s National Rural Society was set up in 1983, Ajit felt he was in a financial position to contribute, so he helped in an initial 1985 fundraising which collected approximately Cdn $30,000. About ten years later he helped coordinate a similar collection, gathering Cdn $32,000. Such fundraising is certainly aided by the dense geographical settlement patterns of Indo-Canadians. Of the 126 donors in 1995, all

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10 Pseudonym
were in British Columbia, and three-quarters lived in the Lower Mainland region of the province, with over one third from just one municipality, Surrey, in the south-east of Greater Vancouver. Ajit explained that the collection was so successful because Palahi village was becoming such an important symbol of success both in India and for immigrant communities abroad:

[This] is an exemplary thing, because most villages they don’t have electricity, and here we are talking about internet web site. So I think the main inspiration was since I spent my time, I have studied there; I was totally involved with the commitment to my village. But here, when I came here, I could not forget it, I even thought I was more in a position to do something…. Why we did it? It was needed, how we did it? Because we were able to that, and people were cooperative. 11

The impact of such actions are important not only for the positive material transformations of place in the receiving locality—Palahi—but also because of the ways they allow for the maintenance of important emotional attachments for immigrants as they negotiate their position both within and between multiple sites of home:

A: Like for me, this is my community now, Canada is my community. If I am thinking about my village… I think how I can contribute to a fund for Surrey Memorial Hospital, because when a patient is turned down there, my pain is equally, same or more, than for people suffering in India. Plus, I can make a contribution if we are here, because, there [in India] it is a very hard task to make enough money … Whereby here, we can make, I mean if we don’t go to McDonalds one time, that is worth 236 rupees, and one can teach their child for 236 rupees for a whole year!
Q: So your contribution is much bigger if you are earning in Canada?
A: Definitely, definitely. But my psychological problem is I am a Canadian, but I am Punjabi and Indian and living psychologically in Punjab all the time.

The actions of maintaining these linkages across “source and destination” countries, therefore, are not merely a matter of economic development, measuring the impact of remittances and the pace of development and change in the source region, but of

11 Interview in Vancouver, 5th November 1998.
negotiating and maintaining positive forms of transnational identity and attachment to
place, which can also contribute to successful settlement overseas.

Honouring Parents and Luring Children: Dhesian Kahna

Where Palahi represents the successful mobilization of a significant overseas community,
Dhesian Kahna represents a much smaller project, but nevertheless still draws upon
transnational networks in order to effect change at the level of the home village. Dhesian
Kahna is a small village in District Jalandhar, roughly one hour’s drive from Palahi. The
village has about eight hundred houses, four Gurdwaras, some successful light industry,
and six banks. There is also a very large Gurdwara complex built around Sant Gurmail
Singh, attracting many devotees and funds from abroad. One similarity between Palahi
and Dhesian Kahna, which indicates the lack of formal development assistance from the
state, is the conditions of the roads connecting the village to external routes. Although in
1996 state officials made political gestures by unveiling two foundation stones to mark
road improvement schemes, by 2000 there was no evidence of any progress.

I had been introduced to this village by my Vancouver contact, Mr Dhesi, to study
a development project he was funding to drain a large pond of stagnant water in order to
convert it into a village park. Mr Dhesi had set up the Mehroki Patti Development Fund,
which according to receipts was financed by Non-Residents, but in reality had
overwhelmingly been financed by Mr Dhesi, whose sole financial contribution up to
1999 was 705,608 rupees, or around Cdn $25,000.12

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12 The fund was established in Canada and had secured charitable status.
As with Palahi, Dhesian Kahna had been a site of out-migration for several decades, and Mr Dhesi estimated that between 50-80 percent of his generation had left Punjab. Many of the houses were empty, locked and in poor repair. Contact appeared to be ongoing however, with several new houses being built by NRIs from Britain and Canada, and communication facilitated through about fifty phone connections, as well as five PCOs. Most of the international calls placed through the PCOs were to the UK.

**Transnationalism and immigrant settlement**

Immigrant communities, despite the different areas of settlement overseas, can still effectively operate as a network across these different sites. In the case of Dhesian Kahna, though Mr Dhesi from Vancouver provides much of the finance, his cousin from Bradford, England oversees and manages the actual project during his annual visits to Punjab. Each of these individuals represents different processes of migration and settlement overseas. Both are financially secure and well established, and they both maintain important links to their original migratory site.

Mr Dhesi, an Indian trained engineer, came to Canada in 1969 assisted by his uncle, an early migrant to Canada, and found work with BC Rail where he remained until 1982. In 1979 the Chief Engineer who had promoted and mentored Mr Dhesi, died and was replaced by a man from Saskatchewan. Under this new manager Mr Dhesi was made to feel like an outsider:

As soon as he became in charge of our engineering services department, I start feeling same thing that I did when I came to this country... What he did, he start bringing all his close friends ...I was in charge of department, then he put me aside, then he put another person beside me. Then he says, now, “you teach him what you are doing.” Of course I train him a full year, then the fellow is fully acquainted with what I am doing,
then he again sub-divide our sections. Then he put me on the corner, and for about one year and a half, I was going back to the office, eight o’clock, come 4 o’clock, for a full year I never touched one thing, and I was being fully paid and I was getting frustrated, and junior people than me become my boss. They were promoted; I was sort of demoted, you know because I didn’t get my promotions.  

Mr Dhesi left BC Rail and opened his own business importing and exporting goods from India. He developed a business partnership with a London-based company importing and manufacturing fruit juices, initially for the Indo-Canadian community. Over time the business became so successful he set up alone and now runs a fruit juice production plant as well as having an interest in an engineering consultancy. His work with his fruit juice company requires him to visit India regularly, where he usually stays with relatives in Delhi. In 1996 he took a day out from the Team Canada Trade Mission he was involved in to visit his home village, and what he found disturbed him:

I was going in the winter time...still January it start getting hot there. So I say I can’t stand it, I have to go back, people say... how come you are not going to live with us anymore?... then I say, why is it such a smell? This smell comes from this pond. ...I could not sleep, the wind was blowing and smelling this, you know....You were born here, you played here, you played with the dirt you know, you lived here, you jump in the pond, swim in the pond. Those days there was no sewage water, nothing like that it was just simply rain water, it was clear water! And the animal was drinking water there because there was no sewage there.

The presence of the large drainage pond filled with stagnant water and sewage was a shock to his nostalgic childhood memories. Perceiving his shock, the older local men asked him to do something to help them, telling him; “Son, if you can do something for your own village, if you can afford to do, look that you have everything, all these things, we heard about you.” Having “heard about you”, they were implying that they knew he was a successful man in Canada, and that meant he had the funds to help the village improve. In response Mr Dhesi paid Cdn$10,000 towards having a park built in his

13 Interview July 13th 1999.
father’s name in place of the stagnant pond, and eventually his contributions rose to Cdn$25,000. His main motivation came from the desire to honor his father, but also, as is common in Punjab, to compete with other villages to create something unique:

There is no village in Punjab, I search all over [where] there is a park, where the kids can play, have a good health, and in the evening, after the sun, after the hot day, go in the cool air, sprinkling water, all these things, sit there, talk, exchange ideas, look after it... we have a school, dispensary, banking, you name it, but there was no park.  

Due to Mr Dhesi’s business concerns, he rarely had time to visit his village, so in his place, his cousin, Sohan Singh, agreed to manage the project during his annual visits to the village. Initially Mr Singh felt there was little interest in the project, and the responsibility to motivate the community and oversee construction work became excessive for him. A letter he wrote to his cousin in Vancouver in December of 1998 hints at the frustration he was experiencing with the project.

As you know I have been tied down to this responsibility for last 2/3 years. Nobody co-operated or given any help to me. This job was too demanding and pressurous [sic]. Now, somebody else should take responsibility.

But by February of 1999 things appeared to have improved as other village improvement projects received funding and increasing interest from both village officials and NRIs.

New Sarpanch [village head]... is taking keen interest in improvement work. But, still, nothing is being done to the drains that lead to the big pond...people hope that this Sarpanch would do something to rectify.

Though there appeared to be more support from the Sarpanch for improvement schemes, the designation of the land as a park strictly for recreational purposes in a village where function and utility – whether material or spiritual – are paramount, was creating some tension:

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14 During my fieldwork I visited other villages that had parks, but generally the presence of a park was not common.
Entrace gate must be finished soon, so that misusing of park could be stopped. People graze cattle sometime we have to quarrel with them to stop. Sometime farmers park agricultural machinery in the park. So once gate is fixed we can control the entrance.

By late 1999 the progress made on the park had impressed some other NRIs who maintained houses in the village, about ten of whom had contributed funds, giving the project a further 300,000 rupees. Despite these gestures, during my visit to the village, Mr Singh indicated to me the frustration he felt that the older generation of immigrants were the only ones with any emotional attachments to the village. With nothing motivating their well-settled children overseas to develop any strong attachment to their parents’ home village, he was concerned about the long-term viability of the project. Though Singh’s children did occasionally visit the village, he commented that his son had advised him not to assume he would visit regularly, and therefore he should not spend too much money on improving his house there. It appeared that his son’s future was firmly rooted in Britain, and his father’s village appeared as a infrequent vacationing possibility rather than a second home. To compound this detachment, despite Mr Dhesi’s attempts to convince state officials of the importance of this project, the Punjab State government offered no matching grant for the development project, and Mr Singh was unable to gain information on those projects that were funded.

The park development offers an interesting reading of the desires of NRIs to improve the status of their village. In part the motivation is clearly a feeling of emotional responsibility to honor their family name and maintain their attachment to their village, but it is also in response to their own desire to spend more time in the village as they approach retirement. To fully enjoy their regular annual trips back to Punjab, it was
important that children and grandchildren felt comfortable with the idea of spending time in the village. While improvements could be made to individual homes – and they certainly were in Dhesian Kahna – the surrounding environment would continue to intrude unless action was taken. In Mr Dhesi’s case it was the smell that first offended him, but in other cases the potential for disease, especially malaria, was of major concern to NRIs. Ranjit Kaur Singh and her husband, who lived near Bradford in the UK for almost 20 years, were building a large palatial home with six bedrooms and bathrooms close to the park. In discussions with Ranjit it became clear that she was excited at the prospects of her children and young grandchildren visiting them in their new house while they stayed in Punjab for extended periods. This was complicated however by the fact that her young granddaughter was terrified of mosquitoes after her grandmother contracted malaria while in India. The illness the child witnessed her grandmother endure once she was back in the UK had sensitized her to the possibilities of disease from mosquitoes. Ranjit felt something had to be done about the standing water in order that the family would feel comfortable enough to visit. In this way the transformations occurring in Dhesian Kahna result from a series of complex interactions between generations, as well across a landscape shaped by uneven development and international flows of capital.

**General Processes**

These two examples are obviously selective, but after four months of fieldwork, seventy interviews and thirty-nine field visits throughout Punjab viewing NRI funded community

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16 Pseudonym
development schemes, they serve to highlight a series of processes common to several of the projects I viewed. I will review these processes under the following headings: spatial and temporal linkages, the myth of return, demographic markers, ongoing circulation, inter-generational issues, and community conflict, in order to demonstrate the wider importance of transnational migrant activities across both source and settlement regions.

*Spatial and temporal linkages*

Most of the NRIs I interviewed had migrated from *rural* villages in Doaba to *urban* regions in the west, and their lasting attachment to their village—a socio-spatial merging of family and place—sustained their desire to return. Even when NRIs buy houses in towns away from their villages of origin, they often retain ownership of their village family property, and contribute to village fundraising projects. In this way the territorial link to a specific place is retained despite the reality of a long-term movement away from the village.

It is also important to understand that Punjab, and Doaba in particular, is a region fundamentally shaped by long-term and sustained global out-migrations. The intensity and scale of these flows has changed as opportunities fluctuate globally in line with changing government immigration policies. While immigration policies have undoubtedly been the product of racialized government discourses, civil rights and immigrant groups have also shaped receiving government practices in order to sustain community through processes of chain migration. As immigration regimes have changed so has the nature and magnitude of flows out of this region, but it needs to be stressed that any human migration must not be interpreted as a one-time event. The whole point of
using a transnational approach to understanding migration is to emphasize long-term effects, which, in conjunction with new technologies, accelerate and sustain the creation and recreation of multiple social and spatial outcomes over time. The examples of transformation within Palahi and Dhesian Kahna offer one attempt to chart these outcomes.

**Myth of Return and Actual Processes of Return**

Linkages between the source region and multiple sites of Punjabi settlement overseas must also be emphasized within a transnational approach. Punjab is a central symbolic and material anchor for many migrants who are well settled overseas, and understanding the strength of this connection explains why linkages are so resilient over time and across space. This anchoring has been referred to in numerous studies of Indians overseas through consideration of the “myth of return”. In Britain, Harlan (1991) suggests that despite the fact that only 5 to 15 percent of Punjabis in Southall actually do return to India permanently, the myth of return functions to provide important mechanisms for social control and psychological security, as Robinson (1986) and Helweg (1979) have also argued. Indeed Helweg, throughout his extensive research on Indians overseas, has continually highlighted how individuals balance the desire for permanent return with the reality of their settled life overseas. He acknowledges that the plan to retire in India “is a dream held by many Indians in the States” (Helweg, 1987 p.169). In a Canadian example, Helweg found that one immigrant’s decision to buy a house was accompanied by regret: “I procrastinated on buying this house because it symbolized permanency in Canada. I did not want to face the fact that I would not be returning to India” (Helweg, 1985 p.69).
In Australia Helweg found the initial intention of returning to India was present for both the new and old immigrant groups (Helweg 1991). The intention to return is also recorded by Rangaswamy (2000) in a survey of 574 Indian immigrants in the Chicago area. Rangaswamy found that though 51 percent of respondents stated that they had initially intended to return to India permanently, only 5 percent had actually made this a reality. She also reports that men exhibited a greater desire than women to return to India.

In the two examples I have highlighted, both male Vancouver contacts indicated their desire to return to India on at least a semi-permanent basis, and their socio-economic position allowed for such possibilities. It is important to stress, however, that many immigrants, young and old, are unable to exercise their desire for return due to lack of financial resources. In addition to financial concerns, permanent return is also made difficult for the older generation once their children become successfully established in the country of settlement. The idea of permanent separation from sons, daughters and grandchildren becomes too distressing, especially for women.

In place of permanent return it is more likely that the current trend of visiting India for extended trips will increase. In the case of Vancouver, such transnational flows are evidenced by the fact that scheduled flights from Vancouver to Delhi (both via London and Singapore), are often fully booked in the winter months. Visa applications also indicate the extent of traffic, with the Indian Consul issuing 30,000 visas annually to Canadians of Indian origin across Western Canada. While this represents a substantial 14 percent of the Canadian South Asian population in the western provinces, a Vancouver survey of 3,500 South Asians puts this estimate even higher, suggesting that approximately a third of those sampled reported traveling to India in the previous year.

17 Interview with Air Canada official October 1998.
(Ethnimark, 1997). I offer these figures to suggest that though the idea of return may well remain a myth for many Indian immigrants, the desire to return is a potent force, which may be satisfied though regular trips to India. Such movement has the potential for a variety of outcomes, including development projects funded and/or directed by NRIs.

**Demographic Markers**

Who are the people organizing these transnational networks and linkages? My field visits to NRI-led community development projects were overwhelming directed by men. This is the result of a number of factors: my limited language ability, which curtailed my ability to confer with many women at the village level, the patriarchal nature of Punjabi society, and the cultural norms of interacting with ‘honoured’ guests—as I was often deemed to be. I tried to rectify the absence of women from much of my fieldwork through specific visits to women’s schools and colleges, and through secondary sources and ‘expert’ interviews. However, it is clear to me that much of the fundraising and community development projects funded by NRI money are mainly controlled by older men. This reflects normal Indian cultural patterns, since in most Indian families authority is determined by gender and seniority in age (Sharma, 1993). Elder males are seen to deserve the most respect, and those who have attained significant reputation and success overseas are often treated with special deference, especially in villages. Most of the projects I visited were explained to me as the direct outcome of the “vision and sacrifice” of certain male individuals with little mention of their family’s, especially spousal, sacrifice. The customary importance of honoring and deferring to such individuals, though excessive at times, needs to be understood as an important aspect of Punjabi,
indeed Indian, cultural relations. Most of these men were retired, and at a point in their life where they could afford a significant amount of time to be either in Punjab overseeing developments, or traveling to overseas sites of Punjabi settlement in order to raise more funds. It was particularly striking that British citizens of Indian origin were involved with many of the projects I visited. In many interviews with British and Canadian NRIs, it stuck me how similar their life-cycle patterns were: emigrating in the late 1950s and 1960s, employed in a semi-skilled occupation or running their own businesses, and working through to retirement to enjoy considerable financial savings and success (the rupee value of a British sterling state and private pension alone at the time of my research was financially significant). Most respondents had grown children who were successfully established in the country of settlement, often pursuing professional and managerial careers with the support of their extended family, especially older females who provided child-care services. Seeing their families well settled seemed to reassure many of the men I met, freeing them to pursue regular contact with their remaining Indian relatives, and deal with any outstanding Indian property or business interests.

The demographic profile of Indian immigrants in both Britain and Canada, as shown in Table 7.1, provides an indicator of the population under discussion. The age profile of older Indian immigrants is fairly similar across Canada and Britain, but the Indian origin population over 45 years old in Britain is larger in absolute numbers than Canada’s. The larger percentage of Indian origin population in Britain over 45 compared to South Asian Canadians reflects the nature and timing of significant migrations, with Britain’s most active Indian immigration occurring a decade before Canada’s. Assuming the continued desire for some form of return or connection for this group, increased
transnational activity may become more evident between India and Canada as this age group of Indo-Canadians finds both the time and the finances to satisfy their desire for regular and longer trips to India. This suggests that the type of connections already present in the form of transportation networks, financial transfers and cultural interactions and exchange will intensify.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British Indian Origin</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>British Total population</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Canada South Asian</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Canada total population</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 75</td>
<td>18,840</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4,266,000</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>&gt; 75</td>
<td>10,505</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1,465,905</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-74</td>
<td>84,780</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>7,593,000</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>26,425</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2,668,815</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>150,720</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>10,669,000</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>127,355</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>5,592,975</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total &gt;45</td>
<td>254,340</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>22,528,000</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>Total &gt;45</td>
<td>164,285</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>9,727,695</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1: Total Number and Percentage of Indian/South Asian Origin Population in Canada and Britain Over 45 Years Old.

Ongoing circulation

As with other transnational communities, status plays an important role in transnational social fields (Goldring, 1998). The ability of NRIs to display wealth and power through their material investments in their village indicates success and increased status. Many of those who left in the 1960s and 1970s were relatively uneducated men and their success abroad proves an immense incentive for young men and women in the villages of Doaba, despite the fact that the economic conditions and labour market demands overseas have

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19 Great Britain 1999 population 57,804,000 www.gad.gov.uk/population/
changed since the 1960s. The fact that many recent migrants face great hardship, especially if they are undocumented, does not seem to deter young men and women inspired by the NRI wealth they observe directly in their village. Young people find ways to go overseas by utilizing different migration options that are highly gendered and carry with them a number of potential negative effects for the individuals concerned. For men, a common option is to use an agent, who for upwards of 1 lakh rupees (approximately US$2,500) can provide a forged visa.22 I heard many reports of men who found themselves stranded in Eastern Europe for up to two years waiting for a chance to enter the European Union. For women, most cases I came across involved marriage to an NRI, which in itself can present great difficulties depending upon the intentions of the receiving family overseas.23 While many middle class urban families I spoke with held more ambivalent attitudes regarding overseas migration, marriage was often a time when families would seriously consider the possibility of selecting an NRI partner, attested to in the matrimonial pages of Indian and overseas newspapers which often included detailed immigrant or foreign citizenship status information, especially for grooms.

Attitudes to work are also influenced by the presence of overseas options. Many respondents referred to young men who refused to work on their family farms because they saw it as demeaning, preferring instead to hire in-migrants from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. These same men, however, would willingly work overseas in the most menial janitorial and labouring jobs because of the potential to earn foreign currency. In

22 I heard many different reports about the cost of fake documents and assistance to go overseas; some were as high as 9 lakh (Over US$20,000), for a genuine visa. Other newspaper reports indicated that agents were selling fake visas for 1 lakh, and for cases where assistance to the destination was provided—in one case to Korea—over 2.5 lakh.
23 I heard of several cases where the NRI deliberately deceived the family in Punjab regarding his educational and class status. Details of such events have become common throughout Doaba, and though many people are more cautious about going through with such unions, the demand for NRI matches, especially grooms, is still high, Chapter Nine will deal with this in more detail.
conversations justifying the reinterpretation of status across transnational labour markets, it struck me that people always referred to foreign earnings in terms of Indian rupees, another sign that the intention to return to India to display this foreign wealth was central to their actions. The display of wealth NRIs exhibit through land investment, property improvement, and lavish weddings, etc., and the increased status performed through charitable giving and preferential choice in the selection of a match for their sons and daughters, all contribute to perpetuating the desire for overseas migration within rural Doaba. This desire is matched through several mechanisms, including the extensive range of services provided for fake document production and migrant smuggling, and the cultural norms and mechanisms for increasingly globalized marriage networks. These influences are important to highlight, albeit briefly, because they reveal how transnational networks contribute to the continuous nature of migration across an extended spatial and social field, a point that both academics and policy makers should recognize.

**Inter-generational issues**

For Sohan Singh the long-term viability of improvement projects in Khana Dhesian depends upon the interest and contribution of the second generation. Concern about the second generation’s interest in its cultural roots and attachments to Punjab have been displayed in a number of ways. In a report on a group of Punjabi writers settled in the UK visiting Punjab, the impression was that the second generation was detached and selfish:

Where the older generation, which once migrated to the west from here, desperately pines for the motherland, the new generation is only concerned about their growing individual interests (Punjab Tribune, 2000e).
Concern over this detachment was given official recognition at the Fourth Annual NRI Sabha Punjab convention in January 2000, where government officials, NRIs and Sabha officials dedicated one day of the conference to discuss “Dilemma of Punjabi Diaspora”.

Part of the program read as follows:

The first generation of NRIs has the anchorage of their memories but the new generation which was born and brought-up in foreign lands does not have any moorings in the motherland of their parents. Elders want to mould their children according to the Punjabi culture and they expect from them adherence to age old values and obedience to social norms which appear ridiculous to younger generation. Both live in a state of dilemma – the old ones live in nostalgia, the younger ones in the new world (NRI Sabha, 2000).

The NRI Sabha, responding to the general concerns of NRIs, also lists one of its main objectives to: “Maintain cultural and ethnic bonds of Punjab with the NRIs especially with the new generation of the NRIs” (NRI Sabha Punjab constitution, p.1). The intention of the NRI Sabha merges with so many of the concerns academics have pinpointed in work that focuses on second-generation youth and identity formation (Gillespie, 1996). But building second-generation interest in the home village in order to sustain its viability and vitality needs to be critically evaluated. Palahi manages to maintain its vitality not just through the active overseas fundraising, but because it has a rural polytechnic which attracts hundreds of local young people into the village every year, as well as an active involvement in a number of sustainable development initiatives coordinated at the national and state level. These interests extend to involvement in biogas projects, ferro cement technology and advocating for environmentally sustainable agricultural methods. Without involvement in local and national projects directed by local residents, a village will not be able to prosper. In this way NRI fundraising needs to be included in an overall development scheme, mediated by locals who are residents and can confer with those still
resident in the village. Though many NRIs may worry that their children are losing interest in their cultural roots, the actual improvement of their home village needs to be seen as something more locally rooted that will not be improved through migrant transnational actions alone.

**Community Conflict**

Transnational movement and the social influences exercised in the source region do not necessarily result in wholly positive processes. Kearney (1995) for one has indicated how flows of capital and development processes within Mexico can contribute to furthering the uneven nature of development within and between villages and regions. Punjab also exhibits this trend. At the level of the village Helweg (1983) has considered this process of NRI led development, detailing how the allegiances formed between emigrant families and trusted ‘managers’ who remain in the village, alter power dynamics, displacing traditional structures of control and social norms. In both Palahi and Dhesian Kahna, investment and change depend upon having people in place at the village level in order to control project development. How villagers accept the project is also open to various interpretations. In the case of Palahi, the respect shown to both Mr Jagait Singh Palahi and the polytechnic principal are certainly due to their long-term presence and activity in the village—Jagait Singh Palahi only recently emigrated to Canada. In the case of Dhesian Kahna however, Mr Dhesi, though respected, cannot be present in the village, and his cousin, though present part of the year, has to work with other people in the village to get co-operation and support from the wider community in order to sustain the project.
Across the whole of Punjab, and Doaba in particular, the injection of significant overseas funds has transformed villages economically, socially and culturally (Shiva, 1991; Metha, 1990), but such transformations have not occurred equally across the landscape. Regionally, Punjab is seen as one of the more prosperous states in India due to its agricultural production, but in recent years agricultural productivity has declined with very little replacement manufacturing and hi-tech diversification (Singh 2000b). While many village families and properties in Doaba receive remittances and investment through NRI channels, other parts of Punjab are not so fortunate. Across the whole of Punjab it is widely acknowledged that the local state has failed to invest in rural areas to provide basic civic amenities such as adequate water, lighting, roads, sewage systems and schools, and only half of the funds budgeted for rural development actually reached villages (Thukral, 1999). In the financial vacuum left by the state’s failure, villages with no alternative sources of revenue are left to flounder. This is particularly evident in those districts south of the Sutlej River, which are not traditional sites of out migration and do not have extensive overseas resources to call upon. Three such districts, Mansa, Sangrur and Bhatinda in the Malwa region, have been reported in the media as the site of a number of farmer suicides prompted by massive debt, and the lack of state concern has prompted widespread criticism (Gill, 2000; Shiva, 2000). Many villages in this region are also cited as suffering from the lack of state investment in basic amenities such as schools (Singh, 2000c). In periods of economic decline and transition coupled with local state withdrawal, the insertion of external capital such as NRI remittances and investment exaggerates and perpetuates uneven development, protecting some while others are

24 Though only 1.5 percent of the area of India, in 1998 Punjab produced 21 percent of Indian wheat, 9 percent of the rice and 15 percent of cotton.
impoverished.

While NRI development funds can often be deployed far more efficiently than those from the local and central government, associated problems of community tension, plus unplanned and uneven development are present at all levels. At a time when Punjab faces a number of domestic challenges, especially the limited ability of the state to mould and implement policies that advance some kind of overall development throughout the region, these migrant contributions are examples of development almost entirely out of the hands of the local state. Driven by deeply cultural attachment to specific people and places, the positive impacts of such investments, though undoubtedly evident, are highly fragmented both spatially and socially.

Conclusion

The interpretation of a transnational space implies a spatially extended field. As a result of this extension, multiple sources of information from several locations need to be integrated in order to illustrate how networks operate, and to establish the role of the various actors involved. I achieved this by following two specific networks from Vancouver to Punjab, but as this chapter has demonstrated, the material consequences of actions transmitted through these transnational networks contribute to wider processes of change in both the source and destination regions. In both of the examples I have traced, though the intentions and aims of those involved have material effects, and are highly motivated by cultural meanings, particularly the desire to retain connection with the family village, indicating the power place can exercise over a person's identity years after
their departure. This cultural contextualization of capital and information flows repositions such actions outside of the typical economic model of capitalist expansion from the west into less developed zones.

This chapter has contributed to the field of transnational literature by moving away from the dominant USA/Mexico continuous land border, to a more spatially dispersed context. Also, unlike previous anthropological studies which considered migrant fundraising and impacts on the home village by tracing links from the rural village to the urban site of recent migration settlement (Kearney, 1986), this chapter has traced networks in the opposite direction, from the urban site of settled ‘home’ to the rural village ‘home’, several decades after the initial, now permanent migration was undertaken. This indicates the long-term resilience of transnational attachment and the material consequences such attachments have on the landscape of the sending region.

Using these two examples, I have drawn connections to South-Asian origin settlement experiences such as the myth of return, and demographic and generational patterns of change. In the source region I have highlighted the links to factors of local state involvement and the grounded realities of village development through external funding. The combination of the Punjab state’s failure to advance development and the insertion of outside capital from NRIs has led to a patchwork landscape of success and decline, and though a forceful participant in the development of Doaba’s rural villages, the NRI is not a panacea for the problems faced by many Punjabi villages. Recognizing this unevenness, and the place of international migration within it, highlights the fact that these processes are no longer separated as distinct fields of enquiry—immigrant settlement on the one hand and ‘third world’ rural development on the other—but
brought together into one field of interpretation as a transnational space. Therefore this chapter has also addressed Skeldon's (1995) concerns regarding the need to move population geography forward by broadening our view to include work from both developed and developing sites.
CHAPTER EIGHT

VANCOUVER AND THE PRODUCTION OF TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

In the previous chapter I considered some of the long-term consequences of international migration and subsequent return upon the rural landscape of Punjab’s Doaba region. I argued that Doaba should be seen as an important cultural anchor point for Punjabis overseas, and that this attachment has proved resilient enough to motivate migrants to perform as agents of economic and cultural transformation decades after their initial dispersal. In this chapter I consider similar transnational processes between Punjab and Vancouver with regard to their effect in Vancouver.

Forces of human migration have always shaped the city, and in an age of accelerated global exchange the conjoined processes of economic expansion and migrant attraction continue, albeit with different actors (Portes, 2000). The form and function of western cities can in large part be understood by tracing the history of immigration, and how—either in concert with or in opposition to earlier settlement waves—immigrants created neighbourhoods, homes and businesses. Increasingly scholars have come to recognize that contemporary migrants do not wholly transform their social and cultural practices in order to assimilate to a dominate reception body, but that settlement processes are characterized by resistance and change (Ley, 1995). Current processes of settlement allow immigrants, new and old, to retain economic and cultural attachments to their homeland. These transnational connections, though having a long history, have become such an everyday feature that we can no longer marginalize their importance for
understanding immigrant settlement and wider urban change. Dense social networks intimately link territorially distinct locales, redefining their geographical qualities of proximity, distance and connection. For British Columbia, especially Greater Vancouver, and within that the suburban municipality of Surrey, the concentration of migrants with similar regional origins has allowed for important linkages not only back to Punjab, but also to other sites of Punjabi settlement globally. Such linkages involve marriage, business, religious and cultural exchanges. These spatial complexities are rich and compelling not only for evaluating ideas of place and identity, but also for more general interpretations of global political, economic and cultural change. I interpret these changes both qualitatively and quantitatively. I reveal the urban dimensions of change through census data and other measures, and then highlight the cultural transformations occurring through language and religion.

Quantifying the Presence of South Asian Canadians in Greater Vancouver

When discussing the presence of Indo-Canadians in British Columbia, the first requirement is to consider how difference is marked through various state measurement mechanisms. I will draw upon a number of government sources to highlight the profile of South Asian Origin Canadians in Greater Vancouver, but this will only provide a mere indication of the quantitative presence of difference. The rest of the chapter will trace material and cultural transformations occurring as a result of transnational linkages. I will focus on Surrey and East Vancouver within the Greater Vancouver Region, but reference will be made to British Columbia and as well as other Canadian provinces and cities.
Numerical profiles

It may seem unproblematic, but census measures and markers are themselves highly politicized, emerging as a colonial form of state surveillance and control (Appadurai 1996b). Dependence upon state gathered data does pose problems in its potential for the homogenization of difference across, as well as within distinct communities (Walton-Roberts, 1998; Hiebert, 1994), and often blinds us to processes of definition by the state which marginalize certain sectors of the population (Smith and Feagin, 1995). During this century the presence of Indian immigrants and subsequent generations in Canada has been subject to a number of reformulated identifiers. Originally derogatorily referred to as “Hindoos” during the Anti-Asiatic atmosphere of the early twentieth century (Walton-Roberts, 1998), the vagaries of definition, especially over the last fifty years, reveal how state cadastral polices have adjusted to the realities of increased diversity and difference within Canada’s South Asian origin population.¹

Using the category of South Asian and East Indian, we get a fairly clear impression of spatial distribution over time. Both Vancouver and British Columbia have been important settlement sites for South Asians for over 100 years, and only since the 1970s—a time of rapidly increased non-European immigration—has Ontario surpassed BC in terms of the South Asian origin population. By 1996 over 80 percent of the South Asian origin population in Canada were residing in Ontario or British Columbia.

¹ In 1961, the Canadian census indicated only a category of “Asiatic countries”; then in 1971 “East Asian” appeared under the “Asian Other” class, as well as population by birthplace (India and Pakistan), and population by country of citizenship (India). By 1981 even greater detail became available through the mother tongue measurement, which included Punjabi, and under ethnic origin (India). By 1986 the South Asian ethnic origin category was further sub-defined by Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati and other regional identifiers.

This regional concentration across Canada becomes sharper as we move to the scale of the three largest Census Metropolitan Regions (CMAs): Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, and then to specific communities within these CMAs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ON</th>
<th>BC</th>
<th>Prairies</th>
<th>QUE</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>Yukon/NWT</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941*</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1,937</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1,155</td>
<td>4,526</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>30,920</td>
<td>18,526</td>
<td>9,230</td>
<td>6,510</td>
<td>2,405</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>93,990</td>
<td>56,210</td>
<td>7,375</td>
<td>7,580</td>
<td>1,205</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>166,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>135,135</td>
<td>69,250</td>
<td>40,960</td>
<td>17,780</td>
<td>3,560</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>266,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>231,385</td>
<td>103,545</td>
<td>51,745</td>
<td>29,240</td>
<td>4,175</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>420,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>390,055</td>
<td>158,435</td>
<td>59,670</td>
<td>47,585</td>
<td>4,515</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>660,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1941* "East Asian" based on Johnston 1984.

Table 8.2: South Asian Origin population in Toronto Montreal and Vancouver CMAs Based on the 1996 Census Community Profiles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Asian origin population</th>
<th>As percent of provincial South Asian origin total</th>
<th>As percent of national South Asian origin total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toronto 329,840</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver 120,140</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montreal 46,165</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a discrepancy between provincial figures and community figures for South Asian population. In this case I have used the higher total of 670,590 from the Canadian community profile total for South Asian population. This could be the result of the different composition of "South Asian" used in the two calculations.

South Asian includes East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi and Sri Lankan Gujarati etc (Statistics Canada Statistical profiles of communities).
South Asian immigration is concentrated in the major Metropolitan regions of Canada. Within those regions a distinct pattern of suburban settlement can be identified; twenty-seven percent of South Asian origin Canadians live in just three suburban areas in the two largest Canadian cities, and Surrey, though the smallest of the three major suburban settlements in absolute numbers, is relatively more significant when placed within its provincial context. Hiebert (1999) has drawn attention to immigration and the changing social geography of Greater Vancouver, and highlights the joint processes of increasing concentration and suburbanization since the 1970s. While Hiebert argues that several immigrant groups exhibit these processes, he cites the case of South Asians in Surrey as the clearest example of this spatial tendency, as figure 8.1 indicates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Asian Origin Population</th>
<th>As a percent of CMA total</th>
<th>As a percent of provincial total</th>
<th>As a percent of national total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surrey (Vancouver CMA)</td>
<td>49,805</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarborough (Toronto CMA)</td>
<td>75,395</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississauga (Toronto CMA)</td>
<td>61,525</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.3: South Asian Origin Population in Selected Communities within Toronto and Vancouver as Percent of Other South Asian Origin Totals, 1996.
Surrey, British Columbia

In 1996 Surrey’s South Asian foreign born population was 29,315, and by far the largest ethnic group in Surrey representing 33 percent of the total foreign born. The concentration of South Asian origin populations within particular suburban regions is sustained by ongoing immigration from India. In the first three quarters of 1993, 28.8 percent of Indian immigrants landing in British Columbia settled in Surrey, with the majority being family class immigrants—94 percent in the first three quarters of 1994 (BC Stats). In 2000 Toronto received over half of all Indian immigrants to Canada compared with Vancouver’s reception of less than eight percent. The two cities received a different balance in the composition of immigrant class, with Vancouver exhibiting an overrepresentation of family class landings versus skilled worker class when compared to Toronto (table 8.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Toronto</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
<th>Canada Total for class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>2,885</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>5,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents, Grandparents &amp; dependents</td>
<td>2,566</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>5,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill worker, (principal &amp; dependents)</td>
<td>9,359</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>12,359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total all classes</td>
<td>15,478</td>
<td>2,042</td>
<td>25,936</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.4: Distribution and Composition of Selected Indian Immigration Classes in Toronto, Vancouver and Canada as a whole. Source LIDS 2000.

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Over 16 percent of Surrey’s total population are South-Asian born. The total Surrey population in 1996 was 302,755 and the South Asian Canadian population was 49,805, (Statistics Canada Community Profile for Surrey).
This suggests that Indian immigrant settlement in Vancouver is disproportionately shaped by family class immigration. This type of migration is indicative of settlement and community development processes dependent upon social networks in both the source and destination context.

**Social networks and settlement choices**

Immigration decisions are often made within the context of particular social networks. In a study of motivational factors for Indian immigrants to Canada, based on data from the Canadian High Commission in Delhi, Winchie and Carment (1989) found that the most frequently-cited reason for choosing Canada as a destination was the presence of family or friends there, and they argue that it is an important factor in directing, though not necessarily determining, migration decisions. In my discussions with immigrants both in Vancouver and in Punjab, the presence of family and friends was cited as an important factor in choosing a settlement location in Canada. Even in cases where it appeared that an individual had no immediate family relations in the area, subsequent discussion invariably revealed that they knew some people in Greater Vancouver before they migrated, and that these contacts proved important in the immediate period after arrival.

The residential settlement pattern of South Asian origin Canadians reveals important spatial concentrations, which undoubtedly benefit new immigrants with settlement assistance and information. One of the most important types of information new immigrants need is knowledge about the labour market. Table 8.5 shows the employment profile for South Asian Canadians in Surrey and reveals a concentration in manufacturing and agriculture (compared with the non-immigrant population), which
undoubtedly reflects processes of co-ethnic employment in these industries (Singh, 1987).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>South Asian born</th>
<th>Non-immigrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and related service</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and storage</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation, food and beverage service</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.5: South Asian Born and Non-Immigrant Population in Surrey by Employment Sector (Source Martin Spigelman Research Associates, 1999)

An economic profile of the South Asian community in Surrey reveals that while the participation rate for South Asian Canadians is above 60 percent, their unemployment rate is just above 20 percent, but is 30 percent for recent immigrants (Spigelman, 1999).

According to the census, the average total income for the South Asian immigrant population was $23,000 in 1996, higher than the average for all immigrants at $18,000 but slightly lower than the non-immigrant average of $24,000 (Spigelman, 1999). This information is deceptive, however, since South Asian immigrants exhibit a significantly higher household as opposed to individual income. Based on 1991 figures, pre 1981 South Asian immigrants in the Vancouver labour force were ranked fifteenth amongst all immigrants for individual income, with just over $23,000 total income, but for household income South Asians ranked second with an income of around $70,000, and displayed the largest mean household size of any immigrant group at 4.4 members (Hiebert and Ley, 2001). These figures reinforce the importance of family networks for Indian immigrants not just for immigration purposes but also for settlement processes and community formation.
The combination of increased family class immigration and increased concentration for the South Asian population in Surrey indicates that a resilient community is being established through chain migration. While these migration networks are centred on Punjab, individuals of Punjabi origin have also migrated from other sites, indicating the presence of extensive transnational networks (Table 8.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Last permanent residence</th>
<th>Number of landings in BC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>63,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>2,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68,473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


I have shown how Surrey has become a vibrant community building and consolidating itself through ongoing migration. This supports the argument that Surrey is the site of important transnational linkages mediated through immigration, but to understand what these linkages look like on the ground, we need to read the socio-cultural landscape of Greater Vancouver. The remainder of this chapter identifies how identities are

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5 This data set is drawn from a special cross tabulation requested from BC Ministry for Multiculturalism and Immigration courtesy of Greg Cunningham. Interpreting the validity of the data is problematic however, since information on individual landings involved in subsequent sponsorship cases may be absent from this category and temporarily inserted into other categories during the period the data is complied, therefore subjecting the data to unpredictable variations at any point in time. It is however useful as an indication of the global origin, and diversity of Punjabi speakers to Canada. It also quantifies the distinct regionalized connection between Canada and Punjab, even if the migrants are indirect.
reconstituted and reformulated locally and transnationally in Surrey and Vancouver through the role of language and religion. I focus on social and spatial disjunctures, one between the first and second generation, and the other between Punjab and Vancouver. Such disjunctures imply a process of deterritorialization is occurring, where cultural meanings and practices of Sikhism, just as with individuals, are in a process of detachment from their site of origin.

Deterritorialized Punjab: Language, Religion and Global Sikhism

Since the first immigrants from Punjab arrived in British Columbia over a hundred years ago, literature has been one means through which the ruptures and anxiety of the migration experience have been recounted. In Punjab the production of poetry and literature, often intensely political in nature, is a widespread pastime due in part to the tradition of verse and poetry in the Sikh Holy book, The Adi Granth (Bolan, 1999d). The panth or community follow the rituals of daily prayer as outlined in the Adi Granth, and because of the text’s centrality to everyday activities, Sikhism can be interpreted as a ‘textual community’. A follower’s adherence to the details of the text does not necessarily mean they have to be literate themselves, since in place of direct interpretation, community members can rely upon others to translate and convey the meanings of the text (Oberoi, 1994). The importance of conveying the meanings of the text for the community’s everyday activities places the literate in an important position of

6 With the cultural turn, literature has gained more prominence as a form of social text and data. Literary productions emerging as a result of migration, with its deeply dislocating influences on the migrant and their association to place, are now recognized for their value in social science research (see King et al, 1995).
respect and social authority. This tradition of respect for literacy and textual interpretation persists across time and space, and Vancouver is home to the oldest Punjabi literary society in Canada. Formed in 1973, members of the society have published over 100 books of fiction, poetry and drama and been active on various boards and organizations including the Writers Union of Canada. The production of Punjabi literature from Canada is now reported to exceed that produced anywhere else outside of India, including Britain (Bolan, 1999d; Wigod, 2001). Much of the literature produced in Vancouver reflects Canadian issues, for example Sadhu Binning’s poetry focuses on issues of racism, the relationship between the first and second generation, as well the relationship immigrants maintain with India (Binning, 1994). Literature provides a means of articulation and release for immigrants as they deal with issues of race, nation, colonialism and identity, and in giving voice to the disorienting process of migration and settlement, literature provides an opportunity for change and re-imaginings.

In keeping with the transnational nature of my research, it was in Amritsar, Punjab that the richness of Vancouver’s Punjabi literature was most clearly articulated to me. At Guru Nanak University, Amritsar, I spoke with Professor S.P. Singh, head of the Punjabi Literature Department and specialist in Punjabi immigrant literature, and the author and academic Darshan Singh Tatla. Both considered British Columbia’s Canadian-Punjabis the most active and well-established overseas Sikh community, and cited two factors in particular as evidence of this; the range of media publications, and the quality of literature produced.

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8 Personal interview, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar Punjab, 3rd Dec 1999.
Vancouver is home to a number of South Asian, particularly Punjabi weeklies such as the *Indo-Canadian Times, Punjabi Guardian, Des Pardes, Chardi Kala* as well as several English language newspapers; *the Link, the Voice,* and *Asian Express.* There are twelve offices listed for South Asian/Punjabi publishers in the 2000 edition of the *South Asian Business Directory* and four radio stations, including Radio Punjab, which broadcasts across North America.⁹ Punjabi newspapers published in Vancouver also have an influence outside of the Lower Mainland, with papers such as *Chardi Kala* distributed internationally. These media outlets provide an active forum for discussion, and in some cases the debates have led to the courts via contentious libel cases. The editor of the *Indo-Canadian Times,* Tara Singh Hayer, prior to his assassination in November of 1998, was often involved in libel suits against other Punjabi newspapers (Smith, 1996; Bolan, 2000d). For example, in 1996, Tara Singh Hayer and his daughters won a libel case against *Chardi Kala Punjabi Newspaper Society,* when Justice Duncan Shaw found that the newspaper defamed Hayer and his daughter Rupinder Bains, in a number of articles over a three-year period. The articles included allegations of drunkenness in the Punjabi market, having extramarital affairs, and of creating a “tumult” at Wreck beach. Such allegations undermined the reputation of the Hayer family through their daughters, and the Judge interpreted the situation within its ethno-specific context, recognizing that the “assertions in the articles were fabrications of conduct that is considered shameful in Mrs Bains’ community” (Smith, 1996). This incident reveals an interesting process of social transformation, with the Canadian legal system used to counter insults that have been shaped by a tradition of gendered vulnerabilities centered on Punjabi Sikh customs and taboos.

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In addition to the vibrancy of Punjabi media in Vancouver, Punjabi literature produced in Canada is highly respected, even in Punjab where a number of graduate theses have been produced at Guru Nanak Dev University on Canadian Punjabi writers. In particular Professor S.P. Singh referred to one magazine that represented the successful settlement he felt characterized Canadian Punjabi communities. Originally named Watno Dur (away from homeland), the magazine was produced for 4 years before it was renamed Watno (homeland). The name change was signified in the journal’s editorial as reflective of a sense that Canada was no longer a land away from home, but was now home, a place where readers should strive for improved social and economic standing. To S.P. Singh this was a telling indication the community’s effort to collectively identify and align with their ‘new’ home in an explicit way, with literature providing the medium through which this sentiment was vocalized. This strong community identity and attachment to British Columbia has emerged as the result of a long tradition of struggle for justice and equality. Events such as the Komagatura Maru incident for example, have become indelibly marked in the consciousness of many Canadian Sikhs, since the event challenged the racist immigration policies Canada maintained against Indian nationals at the time (Mongia, 1999). The Komagata Maru incident left Sikhs realizing that they were being treated as second class citizens, and a new ethnic consciousness intensified and precipitated a strong collective identity that contributed to the formation of a community combined and committed against the discrimination and hostility of the host population (Chadney, 1989). Vancouver’s link to the Ghadar movement, and its drive for freedom from colonial rule for India in the early part of the twentieth century, is also indicative of the forward thinking nature of the
Vancouver community at that time. These incidents highlight how the roots of the Vancouver Sikh community are shaped by the sentiments of equality, justice, freedom and contribution. This impression of contribution and justice can be seen in early informational pamphlets, such as one produced by the Vancouver and Victoria Khalsa Diwan Society in 1943. The pamphlet was an means by which to educate Canadians about the democratic nature of Sikhism, and encourage Canadians to, “use all their moral influence, the power of understanding, to help bring to the Sikhs in India the right to stand beside good peoples of all lands as recognized political equals” (Dhami, 1943, p.3).

This interpretation of the development of the Sikh community in British Columbia is important because it places Sikhs from Punjab firmly within a British Columbian context through protest actions as well as words. It denaturalizes the assumptions of Canada as a white space, and makes British Columbia part of Sikh history and thus Sikhism as part of British Columbia. Juxtaposing this early denial of democratic rights against the examples used throughout this dissertation of contemporary active citizenship participation by Indo-Canadians exemplifies the transformation Canada has undergone in the last 100 years, but also how the tradition of political action and involvement continues for Punjabi-Canadians.

In a practical sense, both in India and Canada, I was able to design my research to account for my lack of Punjabi language skills, but with regard to grasping the intensity with which issues of identity were developed through literature, my lack of language and reading skills did pose a limitation. In order to appreciate the importance of both Punjabi language and text, I audited an introductory Punjabi class at the University

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10 While the argument is that the Ghadar party was based in San Francisco, links to Vancouver were much stronger that recent scholarship on the issue suggests. I thank Professor S.P Singh and Dr. Darshan S. Tatla for these observations.
of British Columbia. In a further indication of the strength of Punjabi culture here in British Columbia, since 1994 Punjabi has been recognized as one of six languages that can be considered for qualification as a second language for university admission.\footnote{Class notes, Sadhu Binning, 1998.}

While I grasped the initial technical aspects of the language, once the class moved onto the use of wider vocabulary, it was obvious I was one of the few people in the class who did not speak Punjabi at home, since most of my classmates were younger, second generation Canadian Punjabis. My 'distance' from this cultural community was most apparent in this environment of dialogue, but my interaction with the class was important for developing cultural cognizance regarding cultural meanings demonstrated through language.\footnote{For example, when referring to a woman of important rank or to show deference, the masculine form is used to address her. Therefore to be important, is to be male!}

In addition, class discussions as to why students were electing to take this course revealed the resilience of links with Punjab. Many students wanted to develop their writing as well as speaking skills in order to interact with their grandparents and relations in India, to enhance their sense of identity, and to make their trips back to Punjab more fulfilling.\footnote{For several of the students it was an "easy" credit, a fact the instructor was aware of and filtered those students with obvious language ability into higher level classes.}

My introduction to Punjabi also illustrated how the language has detached itself from the territory of Punjab, expanding to a number of global sites of Punjabi settlement overseas. This is evidenced in Punjab textbooks, for example Bhardwaj (1995) uses examples of dialogue based not in Punjab, but: "a Sikh temple in Birmingham" (p. 22); an interview for Asian television in Toronto (p. 64); or Nottingham University (p. 120). The book's conversation units that are set in India are often involved in tourist activities, again indicative of the disjuncture between the territorial roots of the
language and the geographical range of the linguistic community. This disjuncture is also evidenced by the growth of Punjabi as a mother tongue in Surrey, where the number of Punjabi mother tongue speakers has doubled over a five-year period (table 8.7). This is reflective of the processes of increased concentration and suburbanization mentioned earlier, but the figures also suggest the Punjabi language is maintained by the children of immigrants, since the number of Punjabi mother tongue speakers is greater than the number of foreign born South Asian Canadians in Surrey by some six thousand. These numbers suggest that Punjabi cultural traditions, such as language use, are resilient and indicative of strong communal forms of identity channeled through the second generation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Surrey</td>
<td>15,285</td>
<td>35,500</td>
<td>132%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of</td>
<td>10,700</td>
<td>12,885</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>37,730</td>
<td>68,115</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The use of the Punjabi language by the second-generation reveals a cultural tradition adopted and maintained by the younger generation, where language and identity are intertwined, and speaking Punjabi is an important factor in maintaining a strong Sikh identity. My interpretation of the strength of Sikh identity for the second generation is informed by my general research activities, but in addition my attendance at a Sikh studies class held at UBC contributes to these arguments. The class was predominately attended by young Canadian Sikhs, and for my research purposes functioned as a form of

14 There are an estimated 12.3 million Punjabi speakers outside of India and Pakistan, (S. Binning class notes).
pseudo-ethnography, with regular meetings and discussions covering complex debates of Sikh religion, identity and meaning. These discussions revealed the intensity with which second generation Punjabi Sikhs debated identity, in particular caste and association to Punjab, the meanings of Sikh religious identity, and issues of male/female relations. The depth of common identity and feeling among the young Sikhs in the class reinforced my own awareness of my social and cultural distance, yet it is this very distance that gave me freedom to think around some of the most basic assumptions and norms, such as issues of gender and identity. In particular, I found it intriguing that attachments to family land and home village and issues of caste still appeared highly influential in the self-identity of students.\textsuperscript{15} Sikh identity in Doaba, the traditional site for out-migration to Canada, is highly influenced by the Jat caste, leading Ravinder Kaur (1986) to suggest that: “a substantial portion of what now constitutes Sikh identity might have been and probably is what formerly constituted Jat identity (1986 p. 227). Jats are a landowning caste with strong attachments to the land, the Jat “sees his primary role as that of an agriculturalist: his connection to the land is what he holds most dear and what identifies him” (Kaur, 1986, p. 233). This explains part of the motivation for the continued attachments to Doaba and the home village as demonstrated in the previous chapter, but it also suggests a strong corporate identity that may transmit to overseas communities, particularly those marked by tight geographical and social origins. This presence of a strong Sikh—specifically Doaba and Jat based—identity in Vancouver can be surprising to realize for

\textsuperscript{15} Being a Jat Sikh, for example, was declared with a sense of pride, whereas when one student mentioned her family was Kshatriyas, many in class seemed to fall silent as if to read it as unfortunate.
new immigrants to the region. In an interview with a young Sikh male who came to Canada as a teenager, he expressed his surprise on his first day at Princess Margaret School in Surrey, not only at the number of people with connections to Doaba, but also the number wearing turbans. The interest in, and enhancement of, Punjabi language is vital to maintaining a strong Sikh identity, and for creating cohesion across the generations, but in addition to language, music and dance are vital.

Bhangra is a rural dance from Punjab traditionally performed by men at harvest time. Musicians both in Punjab and overseas cooperated in the late 1980s and early 1990s to revitalize the music and dance, merging it with modern hip-hop and reggae music to create a hugely popular form of expression for South Asian origin communities and non-South-Asians alike (Gillespie, 1995). The popularity of Bhangra has seen it become a somewhat over utilized example of ‘cultural hybridity’, but the music plays a pivotal role as a transmission mechanism for aspects of Punjabi language and culture. It is popular for both men and women, and provides an important opportunity for social interaction, as well as a context for especially masculine virtues of fitness and strength to be demonstrated. The songs are in Punjabi, and typically the audience wears traditional clothes, especially women who wear the Punjabi dress salwar kameez. Today bhangra is popular across sites of South-Asian settlement, but especially so in Universities. In British Columbia, university Sikh student societies both at UBC and SFU cater to the popularity of bhangra, and the tradition of presenting skits – short humorous sketches

16 Popular forms of this attachment can be seen in the display of Khalsa bumper stickers and the presence of a type of youth subculture marked by the recoding of Sikh symbols into a masculine form of assertion and pride (Gillespie, 1995).
17 The interview comprises part of the Metropolis community studies project. Principal investigator is Geraldine Pratt.
18 “Bhangra Blowout”, for example is an annual bhangra competition held for US university teams who compete for cash prizes, attracting crowds of up to 4,000 people (Sengupta, 1999).
reenacting popular themes of politics and family relations etc., are presented within a
contemporary context and offer important entertainment and socialization opportunities
for younger Punjabi Canadians, as figure 8.2, a poster advertising a comedy night at SFU,
illustrates.

Cultural identities based upon central motifs of family are both reasserted and
reshaped through these popular skits. Such enunciations of identity are central to the
maintenance of a strong Sikh-Punjabi identity. Bhangra, as well as more traditional
Punjabi music and song, exerts considerable influence across India, in addition to
diasporic sites, and contributes to creating new imagined geographies of India for Indians
overseas (Gopinath, 1995). In the case of bhangra one could argue the cultural traditions
of Punjab are revitalized due to the successful incorporation of the younger generation,
with reference to religion, however, the inclusion of young Sikhs is less well defined.

During a focus group discussion with members of the UBC Sikh Student Society,
the interaction between young Canadian Sikhs and the Gurdwara executives revealed
dissatisfaction with the lack of attention paid to the younger generation, and the dominant
role played by new immigrants on temple executives.\textsuperscript{19}

Male 1: If you go talk to the Gurdwaras, and say “hey look, you know what role do
youth have to offer”, they will turn around and say “hey, look there’s so and so, and
there’s so and so, they are 26 and one guy was 29 when they joined the executive.”
The thing they fail to mention is that they are also immigrants…

Male 4: That is true.

Male 1: And whenever they point to youth they always point to immigrants.
Immigrant people who share morals or they share the same viewpoints.

Q: What makes a first generation and a new immigrant of the same age have different
viewpoints?

\textsuperscript{19} UBC, March 11\textsuperscript{th} 1999.
Female 2: Because we can find other ways to express our viewpoints, like we have an association right, we put on conferences, more of an academic viewpoint, rather than getting involved in the politics of the Gurdwara, which I think is wrong, because you know it is us that are going to be running it after our parents. But still, we find other ways of expressing our viewpoints, getting our views across, having conferences in the universities, talking to professors, writing papers, you know. That’s our way of getting what we think and what we want to leave behind, instead of actually going into the politics.

In addition to this feeling of exclusion from executive decisions at Gurdwaras and the inclusion of recent immigrants over Canadian-born Sikhs, some students felt that issues of Sikh orthodoxy were at stake, and expressed concern regarding the ‘purity’ of religious ritual, which they saw as contaminated by Hindu practices.

Male 1: The other thing is education, not just papers and academic stuff, but education in our religion, parents they give us the situation like, they are pretty well happy going with the status quo, they don’t want to educate people about the religion, they want to have the misconceptions, they don’t want to try. They don’t want to make those efforts, whereas our generation does. We want to make the push in education to teach our own community. From the mistakes that they are making, they are saying things are religious practice but they are not. You know that would be Hindu practice, or cultural practice that they have incorporated as a religious practice, and we want to squash those things out...

Female 2: I guess in a way they also see it as a threat, because these Hindu practices or cultural practices are a source of income for these Gurdwaras, and I would think that you know, if we came in we are like, “No way, that is wrong, that is not religious, not according to Sikhism, that is totally wrong”, they are like, “but yeah, but if you flush that out we lose this special day when everyone comes to the Gurdwara.”

The issue of religious purity and orthodoxy is a vexing question. While in Punjab I felt that many of the Sikhs I met held a flexible view regarding religious practices, and were far more tolerant, even accepting, of Hindu ritual and celebration. For example many Sikhs I met would show deference to Hindu gods and celebrate Hindu holidays, as well as maintain their attachment to Sikhism. In some households, for example, different members of the family would maintain a number of shrines, some to honour Hindu gods,
and some Sikh Gurus. During some of my interviews in Punjab, the issue of religious intolerance was raised, one Sikh who was clean-shaven told me that he had never been challenged about his Sikh identity until he was traveling in North America. General conversations also indicated that issues of Khalistan and Sikh separatism survived only because of overseas Sikhs who were funding militant conflict, the consequences of which they themselves did not have to live with. Despite the seeming flexibility of the religious practices of many Sikhs in Punjab, Sikh religious authorities in Punjab have been active in disciplining what they see as unorthodox practices emerging globally.

For diasporic Sikhs, religious devotion and identity became revitalized after Indira Gandhi ordered troops to storm Amritsar's Golden Temple complex in 1984, where Khalistani Sikh separatist terrorists had gathered. The transgression of the Indian State into Sikhism's most sacred space led to a series of violent actions, both in India and overseas, where Sikhs, and the wider societies they were part of, became involved in years of political concern over the violence in Punjab. The ramifications of state sponsored violence and unstable terrorist action spread beyond Punjab to sites of Sikh settlement overseas, leading to a complicated series of international pressures, including refugee applications, fundraising, and political lobbying (Tatla, 1999). In Canada these events became intensely localized as Sikhs demonstrated against the Indian consulate in Vancouver, and directed their protests to Canadian officials (Bolan, 1998). The hostility reached its most destructive with the 1985 bombing of an Air India jet off Ireland with the death of 329 people. Yet the violence did not end there. Fifteen years later the Vancouver RCMP are finally bringing suspects to trial, and there are still controversies and threats surrounding these events, for example in the assassination of an outspoken
Vancouver journalist, Tara Singh Hayer who was reported to have made statements to the RCMP about the Air India bombing (Bolan, 2000a). Vancouver has therefore become an important site within Sikhism’s global mappings. The networks of religious control between Punjab and Vancouver, presents a spatial articulation that has caused distress and conflict within the Sikh community locally, developing into a wider debate over issues of identity.\textsuperscript{20}

In 1998 Sikhs in British Columbia faced a controversial \textit{hukam-nama} (letter of command) from Ranjit Singh, one of five \textit{Jathedars} or high priests in Punjab, regarding the rituals of Sikhism. Seemingly a simple debate over the use of tables and chairs in the \textit{Gurdwara} for eating the communal meal or \textit{Langar}, the issue reveals the complexities of religious authority and control within a global context. The issue of Sikh practice globally became controversial when Ranjit Singh specifically singled out Canada and Surrey, for contributing to disruption within the whole Sikh community for their continued reliance upon the use of tables and chairs, as opposed to sitting on the floor.

Especially in Canada and in Surrey, people with no knowledge of Sikhism have started to control Gurdwaras...These so called intellectuals of the Sikhs are misguiding the community (Stackhouse, 1998).

Ranjit Singh, as one of five \textit{Jathedars} is charged with directing the Sikh \textit{panth}, (or community), but the authority of \textit{Jathedars}, collectively but especially individually, is highly debated. This is evidenced not only in the conflict that emerged between the five individual \textit{Jathedars},\textsuperscript{21} but within Sikh communities, and between places of Sikh settlement globally, be it Punjab, California or British Columbia. Part of this dispute is

\textsuperscript{21} Ranjit Singh summoned fellow \textit{Jathedar} Manjit Singh to appear before him after he met with excommunicated Sikhs in North America; it was considered an unprecedented action (Bolan, 1999).
grounded in the different contexts that influence the rituals of Sikhs globally, and Ranjit Singh recognized, but dismissed this:

We are believing in 500-year-old traditions. On the other hand these people in Canada are relying on 90 years of their own traditions. Who do you believe? (Stackhouse, 1998)

Ranjit Singh was directly challenged by some Sikhs in Vancouver, and an attempt to visit North America in 1998 was prevented due to the pressure Vancouver Sikhs applied to the US immigration service to deny him a visa due to his criminal convictions in India. The controversial priest has now been dismissed from his post by the body that appointed him, the Shrimoni Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

Whilst it is dangerous to suggest a general or single response from Sikhs in B.C., there are some issues I want to point to. Politics and religion are indistinguishable in Punjab, and rather then see Ranjit Singh as a victim of the power of diasporic communities to influence the operation of Sikh politics in India, his removal was the result of domestic political divisions between Ranjit Singh and Prakash Singh Badal, the Chief Minister of Punjab and head of the Akali political party. Despite these internal debates, the ongoing process of Canadian Sikhs negotiating their identity often in defiance of the control and power of Sikh institutions in Punjab, has often led diasporic communities to define their autonomy, and increasingly this has been through the use of the secular legal frameworks of their country of settlement (Johnston, 1999). Just as with the language of Punjab, the religion of Punjab is marked by a disjuncture between the place of its origin and the spaces of the diaspora, and these transnational conflicts explicitly expose this division.
This channel of religious authority then, though another way in which these localities are fused together, is not always positive, but contributes to confusion and conflict within diasporic Sikh communities. This is especially the case for those who feel marginalized from the often violent, masculinist, and very public events of community conflict played through local media.\textsuperscript{22}

*The presentation of Sikhism to the Vancouver “mainstream”*

The Sikh religion, through its markers of distinction, contributes to a public display of religious attachment and devotion, and moments of dispute have become equally visible, assisted by the now sophisticated reporting approaches of local papers well aware of the significant power and influence of Sikhs in British Columbia. The metro broadsheet, *the Vancouver Sun*, hosts a regular column by Manpreet Grewal which considers specific Sikh concerns such as maintaining the Sikh faith through the five ‘Ks’, the challenges facing young Sikhs, and the experience of being a transnational subject. This devotion of column space in a ‘mainstream’ newspaper to a specific ethno-religious group is indicative of the increasing importance of Canadian Sikhs and Indo-Canadians. The newspaper also has a full-time specialist reporter on Sikh affairs, Kim Bolan, who received the South Asian Journalists Association Award for best South Asian story in North America in 1999 for her coverage of the Air India Bombing investigation (Vancouver Sun 1999). While the reception to Bolan’s reporting varies, it is possible to argue that it has touched on some vital community concerns, since in addition to several journalistic awards; she has also received death threats. In certain cases the significance

\textsuperscript{22} The debate over *langar* and subsequent *Gurdwara* elections where executives were elected within tense, court mandated procedures, were regularly featured through television and print media.
of the conflict over the meanings and interpretations of Sikh practice has been less seriously engaged, in certain cases even lampooned by the popular media. I illustrate one of these incidents to show how the particularities of Sikhism have become a common vernacular within Vancouver’s mainstream media circuit.

The intense media focus on the langar controversy brought a number of people into contact with an often-violent, intra-ethnic display of hostility over a seemingly innocuous issue. The deeply spiritual concerns associated with Sikhism’s central tenets of humility and equality among all became occluded by television and newspaper reports showing violent men brandishing swords and daggers. Understandably many who considered themselves to be Sikhs were embarrassed and distressed by the events unfolding across the region, especially as they became the subject of amusement for Vancouver’s wider population through a popular Vancouver radio station: CKNW’s Rock 101, “Vancouver’s classic Rock Station”. Information on the radio station suggests its demographics include a higher than average proportion of tradespeople, skilled salespeople and executives across the listening area of the Lower Mainland, parts of Vancouver Island and Northern Washington. The daily format between three and six pm is covered by DJs Dean and Hatch, who “crank it up for the drive home, aided by the Rock 101 Twisted Tunes™, humorous song rewrites with the words altered to parody newsworthy situations.” These newsworthy events can be any number of local issues such as radar guns, legalizing pot, multiculturalism and in this case, the Sikh dispute over tables and chairs. In 1998 in reaction to the highly publicized controversy over langar, Dean and Hatch launched their twisted tune, “the Sikhs ain’t got no seats”. The lyrics were technically correct regarding contentious issues of authority, but it is problematical

to say if they reinforced a negative stereotyping of Sikhs, because at the time it seemed
difficult for anyone to recognize what was occurring without falling into the polarized
and easy language of fundamental versus moderate Sikhs. The pronunciation of Punjabi
words, like *hukamnama* and *langar*, and names, such as Rangit Singh, were all correct,
yet in searching for reactions to the song from Sikh students at UBC, all I received were
denials of ever hearing it, then once acknowledged, a comment that it was
“embarrassing”. Rather than dwell on the issue of how we should see the song in terms of
its objectification of aspects of Sikh politics and spirituality, I want to consider it from
another angle, what does it tell us about what has happened to Vancouver?

Rock 101 is a large established ‘mainstream’ radio station playing rock and
contemporary music across the Lower Mainland. Its audience is large enough to make it
profitable, but small enough so that the listeners have a shared understanding of events in
the region. The incident of a song about the interactions between the central religious
authority in Punjab and its effect on the local Sikh population is a surprising example of
how significant the Sikh population has become in the consciousness of the general
population of the Lower Mainland. Of course the reception of the song, just as with the
reception of television newscasts and newspaper reports, is an uncontrolled zone where
prejudicial mindsets may absorb the information and shape it to reinforce negative
impressions. But in the actual process of adoption and dissemination, the song reveals
how far the Lower Mainland population has been informed about the spiritual concerns
of Sikhs in British Columbia, and how they are intimately connected to events in Punjab
India.

My choice to use this case as an example of the widespread impact transnational
links have upon Vancouver society is not without a certain amount of personal ambivalence. Despite my concerns in this regard, I do believe it is an important indication of how influential the Sikh presence is in the region and across the country. These songs may seem trivial, but I believe they are important indictor of transformations across Vancouver due to the presence and power of transnational networks. The strength and visibility of Sikhs, the increasingly powerful positive presence of Sikhs in politics and other publicly visible positions, has led to a number of different representations circulated through the Vancouver region.

Conclusion

The landscape of Vancouver has been transformed through immigration networks from India. The actual make-up of the population has changed and diversified, and quantitatively we can see how these processes of community building have become manifest through the dual processes of suburbanization and concentration. Charting the meaning of this change for immigrant communities and the wider urban society however, requires more intimate profiles. The strength of the Punjabi language, both in the production of texts and its embrace by the second generation is a sign of the continuity of cultural forms, but in ways that engage with Canadian themes and concerns. Religious involvement for young Canadian Sikhs is more complicated, as they face the presence of

24 In a later, possibly more generous song; “one turban, one queer, one Scot.” The diversity and multicultural nature of Vancouver was celebrated, in a way that included Euro-Canadians—one Scot—within its remit. This seems a wholly more positive message, but again one that incorporates the highly visible Sikh—one turban—in a way that can be construed as evidence of the general acceptance Canadians, at least in Vancouver, have developed to the realities of a city where difference does not detract, in fact it becomes central to, the positive qualities of a region.
new immigrants direct from India with different approaches to religious attachment, as well as the contentious in-fighting between Vancouver Sikhs and authorities in Punjab. These complexities suggest that Canadian Sikhs in Vancouver are exercising language and religion in ways that both articulate and sever their connections with Punjab: A deterritorialization of language and religion from Punjab, simultaneously accompanied by a reconstitution and reinvigoration across a transnational landscape. We have to recognize that the connections such articulations enable are not always emancipatory, or even welcomed. Therefore, as Massey (1993) suggests, we have to be attuned to the power-geometry of it all, which I have particularly drawn out from the issue of generational differences and religious authority. These issues must always inform and underlie our understanding of the translocal or transnational articulations and transformations immigration and globalization have enabled, not just for immigrant communities, but also across entire metropolitan regions.
In this chapter I examine gendered aspects of immigration from India by considering marriages between Indian and Canadian citizens in order to demonstrate two things. Firstly, the global transmission and partial reconstitution of patriarchal Punjabi marriage practices in Canada articulates diverse geographical sites, and is distinctly transnational. Secondly, I reveal how the Canadian state attempts to regulate this practice transnationally. I also consider the ways in which Indo-Canadian women have pressured the Canadian state to control this type of migration in order to protect women’s rights. This places immigrant women within a dominant nationalist framework of controlling borders, a move somewhat contradictory to Basch et al’s (1994) claims that gender can provide a new location "from which to construct identities that allow us to think beyond the nation building processes of particular nation-states" (p.40).

Women, Migration and Marriage

Immigration has been a central component of Canadian nation building and capitalist expansion, and the interrelationships between race, class and gender have been prominent in the historical organization of productive activities within the state (Ng, 1993; Silvera, 1993; Pratt, 1997). There has, however, been relatively little research directed
specifically at gender and migration through marriage.\(^1\) Recently the phenomenon of the mail-order bride has been examined, especially with reference to the overt sexist and racist stereotypical assumptions of white western males who seek out such matches (Park, 2000). In Canada the problems of domestic abuse and insecurity faced by Filipino mail-order brides married to Anglo-Canadians has recently been highlighted through community-based policy research (Philippine Women Centre, 2000). Overwhelmingly the findings of such research seem to support the argument that women who migrate through marriage are subject to increased vulnerability because of their tenuous legal status, and that immigration policies often unintentionally amplify that vulnerability by granting control of the immigration procedure to the resident spouse (Narayan, 1995b).

The majority of South Asian females migrating to Canada as spouses marry South Asian origin men through processes that are both traditional and transnational. As with mail-order brides, many women who migrate from Punjab through marriage are selected for perceived characteristics that embody more “traditional” gendered assumptions about the role of the wife, particularly when contrasted to Indo-Canadian women born in Canada. These constructed qualities tend to place many South Asian immigrant females in a position of invisibility through the idealized imaginary of the subservient ‘good’ wife, both within immigrant communities and society as a whole (Bannerji, 1993). Part of this social positioning originates from the ideals of arranged marriage, a well documented South Asian practice. I want to briefly consider this cultural practice, but before that, I want to reflect for a moment on marriage norms more generally in order to contextualize my readings of this cultural practice.

\(^1\) A detailed account of British immigration and its racist and sexist development can be found in Bhabha and Shutter (1994). Recently there has been some interest directed at the movement of war brides to Canada, see Barrett et al (1996) and Ladouceur, (1995).
In May 2000 I visited England to attend the wedding of my brother-in-law. He and his wife first met years before while they were both at University. On the same day, another friend was marrying a man she had been introduced to through a ‘dating’ agency. In both these cases partner compatibility and socio-economic suitability were determined by contextual factors. Universities provide idealized locations through which to meet potential spouses with similar intellectual capabilities and financial promise. Dating agencies, albeit more contrived, still represent an opportunity to prioritize those characteristics each partner deems necessary for a successful match. I offer these reflections on marriage partner selection because I think it is important to de-racialize the process of marriage matching and undermine the commonly held assumption that arranged marriages or introductions – familiar South Asian practices where parents and family assist in selecting suitable matches for their children – are perceived by many westerners as archaic and abnormal customs. Though the extent to which family members are involved in partner selection may vary, the ideas of intellectual, personal and socio-economic compatibility are central criteria for marriage choices across diverse geographical and cultural locales, even if they are not explicitly recognized and articulated. My intention therefore, is not to castigate the cultural practice of arranged marriage, but to examine the transnational socio-spatial context and outcomes of the migration of Punjabi women through marriage in order to question issues of male preference and gender inequity.
The Status of Women and Marriage Norms in Northern India

There is a vast literature outlining the details of marriage norms and the status of women in India (Hershman, 1981; Uberoi, 1993; Bumiller, 1991; Menski, 1998), where there are distinctly different cultural norms both regionally and between urban and rural contexts. While I do not want to suggest that there exists a single essentialized form of marriage across Punjab, there are certain traditions and procedures that are widely held as significant. Before I review these practices, it is important to understand that marriage norms cannot be seen in isolation from the wider position of women within Indian society.

**Male preference**

Male preference is a very strong force across Northern India, especially so in Punjab where male births are typically greeted with greater fanfare than female births. Hershman (1981) argues that though this is the case, once the birth of the girl is accepted she is treated “with as much care and attention as a boy” (p. 156). This is debatable however, since numerous studies have shown that at all ages female mortality in Punjab is higher than male mortality, and this is explained through the preferential allocation of nutrition and medical care to male children (Gupta, 1986; Singh, 1989; Das Gupta, 1987). The sex ratio in Punjab is one of the most skewed of all Indian states, with one report suggesting figures as extreme as 721 females per thousand males compared to an all-India ratio of
Female infanticide has historically been practiced in Northern India, especially by Jats and other higher castes who would normally face difficulty finding an appropriate caste match for their daughters (Bhat and Halli, 1999; Hershman, 1981). From my own observations in the Doaba region, the practice of sex selection through abortion is still present. Signs on the streets of most towns in Doaba attest to the wide availability of ultrasound technology, and though the actual termination of a fetus due to male preference is illegal, the practice is a social reality (Shah, 1993).

The cultural preference for male children is a potent force with systemic socio-economic ‘rationales’ reinforced through a number of cultural practices, which overlap to strengthen the desire for few, if any, daughters. Traditional marriage practices explain some of these systemic biases against the female child. While living in her father’s house the girl is *amanat* or “held in trust” till such time as she departs to join her husband’s family, so having a daughter is seen as akin to “watering your neighbour’s tree” (Tee, 1996 p. 115). When a daughter becomes sexually mature, her family, especially her mother, become vigilant in monitoring her behaviour, and protecting her sexuality (Das, 1993). Her brother, or *bhai* also closely guards the girl’s honour, and it is the brother’s job to defend his sister from malicious gossip. Even after her marriage the brother is still considered the protector of his sister and her children, especially against her husband.

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2 This information is drawn from a Human Rights Refresher conference held in Punjab in 1999. Previous figures placed the ratio at 879 females per 1,000 males (Das Gupta, 1987).
3 During my interviews and fieldwork this was not a topic easily raised. On the few occasions I was able to discuss it, respondents agreed that it was widely practiced. Many middle-class urban families with only two children displayed a birth order of a girl and then a boy, and the youngest child in middle-class urban families with more than two children was invariably the only son.
4 The differential treatment received by young boys and girls in Punjabi towns and villages is clear. While young men are free to meet friends and venture out in the evening, a young woman’s behaviour and movement is tightly monitored; she is nearly always chaperoned. Even when girls receive education at colleges and universities within Punjab, but away from home, their residences are often guarded and strictly female-only.
should the situation arise. Though the woman’s honour will be protected by her brother and father, in cases where she brings shame to the family, for example through sexual relations prior to marriage, these same patriarchs often avenge the family honour by punishing the woman and the offending male, in some cases through violent means (Hershman, 1981). In this way a woman’s body become the repository of the family honour or izzat, and her rights are subsumed, sometimes violently, to those of the patriarchal family.

The female child, once she reaches marriageable age, will leave her natal family to join her husband’s family. Despite the rejection of caste through the teachings of Sikhism, Sikh marriage practices are caste endogamous, but are strictly exogamous in that women cannot marry into their parents and grandparents got, or descent group. Within a village most members of the same caste are also of the same got, so the woman usually marries into another village where she has no prior kinship ties (Ballard, 1990). Whilst living with her natal family the girl is respected as ‘pure’ by kinsfolk, since in her father’s village the possibility of sexual relations are minimized through social norms and taboos, but this sharply contrasts her treatment in her husband’s home. Since all men in her husband’s village possess the potential for sexual relations, the woman is expected to show greater deference to her husband’s family, especially her in-laws, and greater

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5 This relationship is symbolized through rakhri, where the sister ties a bracelet to her brother’s wrist to demonstrate her material dependence on him, and his responsibility for maintaining his sister’s honour (Gillespie, 1995).

6 A similar process at the level of national discourse is detailed by Menon (1998) and her consideration of India’s Abducted Persons (Recovery and Restoration) Act of 1949.

7 The exogamous nature of Sikh marriage practices contributes to creating geographically extensive systems of relations, and Ballard (1990) has highlighted the differential effects of marriage norms for Punjabi Sikhs and Hindus versus Moslems, arguing that earlier permanent establishment of Sikhs and Hindu families in Britain has contributed to their successful long term settlement.
modesty; “she veils herself and so demonstrates that her sexuality is the monopoly of her husband” (Hershman, 1981 p.158).

Marriages are usually arranged in some manner, but the nature of the process varies depending upon several factors, including geography and class position. Without suggesting that there are rigid rules regarding marriage, generally in rural Punjab today marriages are commonly arranged, in that the female may never have met the male before, but in urban areas and for middle-class families, the couple may have been introduced, and the woman may have some influence on the final decision.\textsuperscript{8} It is certainly ironic that while popular Hindi films revolve around love stories of ‘boy meets girl’, the reality for many is that their parents will carefully consider potential matches and choose the one they believe offers the best financial security, family background and personal compatibility.

In marriage matches friends, family, work colleagues, newspapers, professional marriage brokers and increasingly the Internet, act as matchmakers. The occupational status of the potential groom is of central importance, and middle-class Indian families have an acute knowledge of the different levels and incomes of Indian civil servants, with Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Administrative Service (IAS) at the upper end of the spectrum and Railways and Post Office departments at the lower.\textsuperscript{9} The woman’s educational background is also important, but increasingly the role of dowry is playing a

\textsuperscript{8} There are cases of ‘love’ marriages, but my impression of these, developed through several conversations, is that while permitted, love marriages are undertaken quietly, and the family may become a source of pity within the village.

\textsuperscript{9} Power does not solely reside with the potential groom’s family. Particularly for lower class families, it can be challenging to find and attract a girl from a good family. In one case I spoke to the principal of a local college who had to deal with the emotional requests of the parents of a boy with few prospects, who felt that if they could not have him registered on some kind of vocational course, their chances of finding a good marriage match were significantly hampered.
large part in marriage matches, especially for upper and middle class families and in Northern Indian (Menski, 1998).

**Dowry**

While the 1961 Dowry Prohibition Act officially outlaws dowry, the practice is widespread. Sweeping assumptions suggesting that this practice is directly responsible for the lower status of women in India are simplistic, and divert attention away from other forms of discrimination that undermine the position of women more generally (Leslie, 1998). The term dowry or *daj* refers to gifts given at the time of marriage or very soon after, and pre-marriage negotiations usually determine the type and amount of gifts and who is to have control over them. Dowry in its widest sense refers to many things (Menski, 1998); firstly, it includes the cost of wedding celebrations, and the gifts given by guests to the bride and groom. Secondly, it refers to the things a woman takes with her into her husband’s house, and in normal circumstances these goods are seen to belong to the woman, contributing to her status in her husband’s family. For some this aspect of dowry is seen as representing the daughter’s inheritance.\(^{10}\) Sharma (1993) argues against this, since the dowry does not represent a fixed share of the bride’s father’s property, but is the outcome of current marriage market negotiations. It is also wealth transferred to the son-in-law; therefore “dowry property is not women’s wealth, but wealth that goes with women. Women are the vehicles by which it is transmitted rather than its owners” (Sharma, 1993 p.352). Thirdly, dowry now refers to property or cash demands made by the groom’s family, such as cars, appliances and so on. This “new dowry” (Srinivas,

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\(^{10}\) According to Indian law, women have equal inheritance rights with men, but it is customary for brothers to inherit the property, with the understanding that their sisters’ welfare will continue to be their concern.
1989) is seen to be the major contributor to the modern problems of dowry, especially for middle-class families. Normally the amount of dowry would be controlled through internal community-based norms, but over time these have been undermined as processes of modernization and upward social mobility increase access to expensive and desirable consumer goods. The increase in dowries is also internally reinforced by families who offer a match with their son, while demanding dowries equal or greater to the costs they endured in marrying off their daughters. The 'evils of dowry' present in Indian society tend to be connected to this new dowry and occur when the groom's family—in some cases led by the mother—continue to demand gifts or cast aspersions on the quality of gifts given, thereby demeaning the bride and her family. The izzat of the bride's family is damaged by such claims, and so families may place themselves in severe debt to meet dowry demands, compounding a problem they may have created in the first place by promising more to the groom’s family than they are actually able to provide. In extreme cases the groom and members of his family have murdered the bride, in order that the groom may remarry.

Dowry deaths—often due to burning or poisoning—have been receiving increased media attention in India. In 1999 there were eleven dowry deaths reported in Punjab, and fifty-three cases of harassment (Talwar, 2000). In addition to murder, suicide linked to harassment from in-laws and dowry demands accounted for 80 percent of female suicides in Punjab during the first half of 2000 (Singh, 2000a). The problems of...

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11 I have heard of one marriage negotiation where the mother of the groom presented a video of her daughter’s wedding to the potential bride’s mother, in order that she might replicate in grandeur and cost of the wedding ceremony, in addition to the provision of cash gifts.

12 These of course only refer to those cases brought to the attention of the authorities. Many deaths related to dowry may go unreported, since they are often constructed to replicate an accident. In 1994 there were 5,199 dowry deaths across India, 117 of them in Punjab, which has the second highest rate of dowry-deaths at 15 per million population, equal to Delhi and one less than Uttar Pradesh (Menski 1998).
dowry death and wife harassment have been of major concern to feminist organizations in India, but there has been no general agreement as to what might be the solution, and education certainly will not displace the practice because if anything dowry has been on the increase for middle class educated families (Bramham, 1996). Many feminists recognize the deep complexity of the problem, in that women and men can both benefit, and suffer through the practice of dowry (Bumiller, 1991; Leslie, 1998). The failure of the 1961 Dowry Prohibition Act to be enforced – many people in India are not even aware of it – has encouraged some feminists to argue that rather than outlawing dowry, women’s inheritance rights should be promoted (Kishwar, 1989; Leslie, 1998). Once women are given equal right to property, the hope is that their status and protection within their own, and their husband’s family, will be enhanced. This approach can arguably assist in improving the status of women, while directing attention to processes of domestic violence and discrimination against women in India more generally.

**Indian Women and Migration to Canada**

How do we make the connection between women and marriage norms in India and immigrant communities overseas? By understanding Indian overseas migration transnationally, I am arguing that movements of people are continuous, and rather than the blunt assertions of assimilation, cultural practices and norms are transplanted and transformed across the source and settlement sites. In this section I consider how gender

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13 There has been some demographic research suggesting that improved mortality rates have caused a marriage squeeze, since the number of available widowers has been consistently reduced. This, however, is more applicable to Southern India, because Northern India actually exhibits a gender imbalance that should ameliorate this demographic issue (Bhat and Halli, 1999).
relations and marriage practices have been both transplanted and transformed through migration.

Indian women overwhelmingly enter Canada as dependent immigrants, with 87 percent of Indian female landings in 2000 entering as spouses, parents/grandparents and dependents, or dependents of skilled workers.\textsuperscript{14} Almost a quarter of all immigrants from India enter Canada as spousal applicants. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) officials in Delhi suggest that the number of spousal applicants is equally split between males and females, but in 2000 over 60 percent of Indian spousal landings in Canada were female. Gurpreet Bal (1997) has argued that the migration of Sikh women to Canada has primarily been through marriage, resulting in settlement processes shaped by relations of patriarchal norms. Bal suggests that patriarchal norms are enforced both by the family a woman marries into and her own family in Punjab, since the woman’s migration is seen as the key to further family migrations. Kavita Sharma (1997) makes similar observations about the problems of being a dependent relative and the transmission of patriarchal norms through migration, and Helen Ralston (1999) has considered how South Asian social and religious patriarchal norms are used to justify and legitimate violence against immigrant women. Migration therefore does not imply a transformation of pre-migration gender norms as assimilationists might argue. There are a number of examples that reveal the resilience of certain aspects of patriarchal norms across multiple sites of settlement. In this section I consider the transplantation and reconstitution of the cultural norms of male preference and arranged marriage. I then turn to consider transnational marriage networks linking Punjab and Greater Vancouver.

\textsuperscript{14} LIDS 2000 data, CIC.
Male preference

Christine Fair’s (1996) research on female foeticide among Vancouver’s Sikhs provides a detailed analysis of the use of ultrasound to determine gender. Fair draws together a variety of factors, including the strategic position chosen by different sections of the community with regard to the practice of female foeticide, to a discussion of the more general societal use of reproductive technologies and medical intervention in pregnancy. Fair’s investigation resists a general demonization of this practice, but she does reveal the degree to which many prominent Sikh men in Vancouver unproblematically accept the cultural norm of male preference, while simultaneously castigating the coalition of women’s groups, including Indian Mahila Association and its leader Raminder Dosanjh, for making their objections to sex selection in the ‘mainstream’ public domain. Migration does not therefore necessarily erase traditional gender norms and relations, though they can be transformed and reshaped. Such transformation is evident when we consider the practice of arranged marriage.

Marriage practices in the diaspora

As with my consideration of marriage practices in Northern Indian, it is impossible and foolish to suggest there is a fixed, essentialized set of processes in place for Indians overseas. Nonetheless, it is possible to say that the concept of arranged marriage for the children of immigrants in Canada while still present, often exhibits tensions as the balance of control between parents and children adjusts.\footnote{The context for change is also influenced by ongoing immigration, which adds to the size and complexity of the South Asian origin population. In 1986 Kurian (1986) argued that South Asian immigrant parents would have to become more open to inter-ethnic marriages since the size of the South Asian origin community was too small to support enough choices. While suggesting inter-ethnic marriages will be more} Karen Ai-Lyn Tee’s (1996)
research on first and second generation South Asian Canadian women suggests that first generation women recall their experiences of arranged marriage as one of powerlessness. With second-generation women however, Tee suggests issues of control are more openly debated as the norm changes from arranged marriage to arranged introductions, where parents may present options, but their children are not necessarily pressured into accepting them.

The arranged marriage system in its contemporary form of arranged introductions remains a source of conflict for some when coercion is involved. However, many of the first generation who themselves had traditionally arranged marriages preferred either to permit their children to find their own partners (some even to date, although this is a sensitive issue for many) or to be involved in arranging introductions (Tee, 1996 p.180).

An interesting comparison of two magazine articles, one from Britain, and one from Canada, suggests that middle-class Canadian and British South Asian origin women are seeking and gaining more rights in marriage decisions. In Britain, Poonam Joshi’s humorous revelations of enduring her parents’ introductions is portrayed in the women’s glossy magazine Marie Claire in a way that highlights her agency in the process rather than suggesting she is “trapped between two cultures”:

The constant warnings that I’m ‘getting late’ are beginning to haunt me and so I go along with the process in the hope that I might replicate my parents’ good fortune, though I’m still somewhat obtuse on meeting my prospective husbands. Meanwhile, should I meet someone myself, that would be fine, too (Joshi, 2000 p.135).

common for the third generation, his argument has been undermined by increased migration from India in the last decade which adds further numbers and complexity to South Asian community dynamics. This is not to imply that similar processes are not underway in India. Especially for urban middle and upper class women there is increasing evidence of women staying single by choice as they live independent lives (Raval, 1999).
In Canada, *Elm Street* magazine ran a story profiling three Indo-Canadian women and their views on arranged marriages. Harpal Gill explains why she abides by her mother’s expectations, and is willing to consider her suggested matches:

Seeing this educated women slop burgers and clean toilets made me understand the sacrifices she made for me, and I can’t throw that away. I owe her a lot and the only thing she asks in return is that I obey her cultural guidelines (Howard, 1999 p.84).

This acquiescence based on respect is not evident for Renu Bakshi, who questions women who claim they voluntarily choose an arranged marriage. She also highlights the different marriage options men have, especially those who she believes are intimidated by her independence, “Guys my age who are born and raised in Canada – when it comes to get married, they go to India, to the villages, to find a wife. They want a woman who will cook and clean. I’m just a misfit” (Howard, 1999 p.90). A similar observation is provided in the British case:

The truth is, Asian men are also disillusioned, faced with women motivated solely by the promise of financial security. The men, in turn, are fighting back, seeking out nubile Indian village girls in favour of their British Asian counterparts” (Joshi, 2000 p.135).

These comments highlight an issue many people raised while I was in India: that it is more common for a male NRI to select an Indian wife, than for a NRI woman to select an Indian husband. Women who have been overseas are perceived as less ‘traditional’, more likely to have been ‘corrupted’ by western traits of dating and sexual liberation. For men, such behaviours are rarely of concern, but for women, whose purity is deemed essential, being raised in the West leads Indian families to suspect her virtue, and her willingness to perform the duties of a traditional wife. These traits suggest that South Asian women raised in the West are doubly disadvantaged in the marriage market, because males are
less encumbered by judgments on their upbringing in the west, and therefore at liberty to enjoy greater status as they seek more traditional partners across a larger geographical range. The NRI groom therefore acts as an important link in the transnational networks formed between India and various sites of the global Indian diaspora. In the following section I review a selection of interviews and events to illustrate how such matches are undertaken, and how they act to channel characteristic male biases between India and overseas sites of settlement.

**NRI Grooms and Transnational Marriages**

As indicated in the previous discussion, the exogamous dimension of Sikh marriage practice creates the potential for geographically extensive marriage networks to form (Ballard 1990). Since the early 1900s, with the rise of male led international migration to Canada, Australia, East Africa, Asia and later the UK and the USA, distant communities of Punjabis, once established overseas, were seen as prosperous and respectable matches for women in Punjab. The process sustains cultural meanings and practices, and provides a strategy for reconstituting the extended family across a spatially distended field. Additionally, as immigration policies in most western nations became more restricted, the opportunity for other members of the family to follow the bride increased the power and choice Non Resident Indians experienced during transnational marriage negotiations. For those, and other reasons, the attraction of the NRI groom remains strong throughout villages in Doaba. How are these linkages orchestrated across spatially extended fields? The following stories are useful for revealing the density and social nature of marriage networks operating between distant locations.
Whilst in Punjab I was invited to witness a wedding between a young Indo-Canadian male, Jassi\textsuperscript{17} from Vancouver, and a young Punjabi woman, Amar from a village near Phagwara. The wedding was arranged through Jassi’s employer Raj, a Punjabi who migrated to Canada in 1974 at age 17, and now operates his own construction company. Raj is a very good friend of Jassi’s father, but Jassi’s parents were unable to attend the wedding since it was arranged at such short notice. Raj, his wife Suki and sister Anita, accompanied Jassi from Vancouver. Amar is Raj and Anita’s cousin, the daughter of their masiji (mother’s sister). Raj and Anita – originally from the Palahi area – were assisted in their wedding arrangements by local contacts in Palahi. Jassi, though clean shaven, wore a pink turban and did not shave for several days before the ceremony. In place of Jassi’s family, Raj and Anita’s local kin enacted the traditional aspects of the wedding process. The groom’s party went to a nearby Gurdwara for a blessing, and then onto another Gurdwara for the main ceremony. At this Gurdwara we gathered in a small room, waited for Amar. Once she arrived, the traditional Sikh marriage ceremony began.\textsuperscript{18} In addition to traditional matrimonial rituals, certain tasks shaped by the requirements of the Canadian state have also become common features of all weddings.\textsuperscript{19} A local company recorded the wedding on video, an important component since immigration officials often ask to see a video of the ceremony. Another requirement for immigration purposes is certification of the wedding, and since Jassi was leaving for Vancouver the next day, the wedding had to be registered immediately. Usual administrative channels in India could easily require two weeks to get a wedding

\textsuperscript{17} All names are pseudonyms throughout this chapter.

\textsuperscript{18} For a description of traditional Sikh wedding rituals see Gell (1994).

\textsuperscript{19} See Gell (1994) for a discussion of how British Sikhs continue to perform a dual wedding ceremony, one at a registry office, and months later at a Gurdwara even though the legal requirement for such is no longer required for their children, who are British citizens.
certificate, but fortunately for this wedding party, one of their local contacts was friendly with the district notary, and the registration process was completed in under an hour.

After registering the wedding we went to a relative’s house. Amar and Jassi sat together in a room with her relatives and had their photos taken. Eventually Amar left with Jassi, Raj, Suki and Anita for Jalandhar, where she would stay for the night. She and her relatives were very upset at her departure, even though she was returning to her home village the next day, since Amar would stay in Punjab until the visa process was complete, anything up to a year and a half. Once the paperwork was complete and Amar was able to travel to Canada, Raj said that there would be a large wedding party in Vancouver with possibly 1,500 guests. Jassi, Raj and Anita seemed keen to get back to Vancouver once the wedding was completed, and Jassi in particular seemed exhausted, since he had only taken a week off to visit India, and fifteen hours of that had been spent on a bus from Delhi to Phagwara due to a road accident. The wedding really appeared to be a technicality, and understandably so, because the delay in visa processing meant that Jassi and Amar would not actually be united for several months. It seemed the real celebrations would occur in Vancouver. In discussions after the wedding, a few local people speculated that Raj and Anita had been pressured by their mother to find a match for their Masiji’s daughter, Amar. Such a match would allow their maternal family to migrate to Canada. Of course this is all speculation, but my general impression of many marriage arrangements led credence to the idea that matchmaking between NRIs in Canada and families in India was often shaped by the desires, if not for family reconstitution as Bal (1997) has argued, then as instances of status building for the matchmaker because of the intricacies of locating an appropriate match.
Networking for suitable NRI marriage partners who are caste endogamous, but village exogamous, creates intense pressure, and finding the right match can mean that some people wait years without ever successfully finding a partner. Understandably, this context adds certain urgency to the need to locate a suitable NRI match in a timely manner, and those who can broker a linkage between a family in India and a NRI engender great respect. On the other hand, the importance of the broker can be seriously undermined if they cannot deliver on promises made. In Punjab I met Harjeet, an Indo-Canadian from Surrey/Delta, B.C., whose story reveals how these tensions can manifest themselves. Prior to Harjeet marrying his Punjabi wife in 1986, he had been asked to consider a different match. When Harjeet refused, the man who proposed it was so furious that he informed the Canadian High Commission that Harjeet was a terrorist. The Canadian High Commission advised the Indian police, who visited Harjeet’s village inquiring about his actions. Since this was at the height to the troubles in Punjab the situation created huge problems for his relatives in Punjab. Eventually his name was cleared, but only through the interventions of his wife’s family. These two stories indicate how networks that connect possible marriage matches are the result of social and economic connections within immigrant communities with similar regional and cultural backgrounds. But such dense social groupings can also provide the context for intense negative social pressures. Individuals involved in matchmaking put their status on the line, and coercion to oblige these matches can be directed at men as well as women.

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20 The cultural pressure to wed and have children is an overwhelming Indian preoccupation. A person’s life is not complete unless they are married and have a family. Invariably during my fieldwork in India, the first question people would ask me is “are you married”, the second automatic question was “how many children do you have?”

21 Interview Phagwara, 28th January 2000.
While in Punjab I stayed with Sarjeet and Meena Brar, a middle-upper class Jat Sikh family, who had had migrated to Canada in the early 1990s. They had retained their home and business in Punjab and made frequent trips between Canada and India. While I was staying with them, another guest from Canada, Hari, a wealthy Indo-Canadian real estate developer, also visited. Hari was in his fifties, young-looking, clean-shaven and twice divorced. He was in Punjab seeking a third wife and had placed an advertisement in the matrimonial section of the *Punjab Tribune* stipulating that he wanted a woman no older than 35 with a good figure. He had received over one hundred responses. During negotiations he stressed that he wanted a pre-nuptial agreement because he was already paying so much maintenance to his previous wives in Canada. In one day Hari, accompanied by Sarjeet, visited six families. Later that evening Meena, Sarjeet’s wife, explained how disturbed Sarjeet had been to witness how desperate families were to marry their daughters off to Hari, immediately if need be. Hari had been visiting Punjab annually since his second marriage ended three years prior, but had not been satisfied with the results. He said he wanted a woman who would be intellectually stimulating, but also take on the chores of keeping his large house in good condition. Meena had introduced Hari to her friends who were his age and also divorced, but she was somewhat perturbed that he did not view them as possible matches. Despite the ample choice Hari had, he was growing tired of the process. In place of seeking a bride in Punjab, he speculated that maybe he should try for a Cuban or Mexican wife. I was struck by the commodified nature of these transactions, and how, when it seemed that Hari’s search in Punjab was becoming futile, other regions were envisioned as sites receptive to his western status of wealth and success. The fact that he was older and twice divorced
seemed to have no bearing on his ‘quality’, which stemmed from his accumulated assets, his citizenship and wealth, whereas the women he ‘viewed’ had to be carefully sorted and selected through their bodily attributes of age and perceived qualities of purity. And yet, despite the imbalances present in this particular match, plenty of families were willing to offer their daughters to him, providing evidence of the widespread desire for marriage to an NRI even if it meant the bride would be entering a relationship offering less compatibility in terms of age and marital background, and with the impact of a pre-nuptial agreement, potentially less security.

The desire many rural families and their daughters have to marry NRIs was made most obvious to me through a visit to Guru Nanak Khalsa Girls College, in Sang Dhesian, District Jalandhar. The school is a vocational college where 1,300 to 1,400 young women between the ages of 15 and 24 receive a broad arts education. The school has received funding from NRIs for extensions and other developments, and they have recently accepted a few students who are the daughters of NRIs whose parents have decided they should be educated in Punjab. Though all students have to be unmarried at the time of admission, the headmistress estimated that 60-70 percent of the students marry NRIs while at the college, and the majority, about 70 percent of these, married Canadian NRIs. In fact she told me that in one area in Surrey there are so many students from the College that they jokingly refer to a street in the area as Sang Dhesian Street. Many girls who become married or engaged to NRIs stay and complete their studies at the college while their visa is processed. The headmistress was highly informed regarding

22 Field visits and interview 20th November 1999.
23 This seems to be a recent and growing trend. I visited a number of new schools and schools under construction targeted at NRIs and their children that were aiming to provide a good “western” education but without the corrupting influences of the west.
immigration requirements, and humorously commented that the Canadian High
Commission in Delhi must be very familiar with her and the school because she has sent
so many references and transcripts in with spousal applications. The headmistress felt
that 80 percent of NRI marriages were successful, and the majority of women led happy
lives overseas, often visiting the school years later with their children. She did
acknowledge the potential for problems to arise, especially when there was a “mismatch”,
when the age or marriage background of the partners was significantly different. She told
me about a few cases where young women had been deceived, even by their own
families, and how often the reality of the situation only becomes apparent when the
woman is overseas, isolated, and possessing very little support. This reflects an important
component of marriage as a transnational practice, since despite the intricacies of
immigrant networks between these physically distant sites, local social familial support
for women once transplanted to Canada becomes more complicated.24

**Status, deception and migration**

From theses stories it is clear to see that matches between NRIs from Canada and young
women in Punjab are subject to a number of pressures emerging from family needs,
status and the desire for suitability in matrimony. The normal desire of parents to secure a

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24 This is a complex issue, since even in India the woman is removed from her family and natal village.
Isolation more generally appears to be an experience women endure after marriage, and alliances with other
women in her husband’s family, such as mother-in-law and her brother-in-laws’ wives, are often more
conflictual than supportive (Das, 1993). Indeed the experience of isolation is symbolized by the women’s
festival *Teeyan*, where women are permitted to return to their parents’ village to join festivities and
reconnect with family and other women from their village in order to share their experiences. My
impression of this gathering is that it provides space endorsed for the sharing of complaints about in-laws
through song, dance and skits (satirical plays). My introduction to this festival is through Vancouver, where
one of the main Indo-Canadian immigrant serving agencies launched a replica of the festival for Indo-
Canadian women, which has become hugely successful with attendance regularly in excess of one thousand
women.
suitable and promising match for their child may often be eclipsed by the overpowering lure of international migration. This has led to the development of an uneven field, where power is unequally allocated to the NRI.

In such an environment the NRI – ranked next only to God – is almost being extended an invitation to deceive. “Some NRIs marry the local girls only for fun during their stay here,” says R.P.S. Bajwa, a lawyer-social activist in Kapurthala. There are instances of NRIs getting married as many as five times in the Doaba belt. In India, the foreign-returned man has always had a certain allure, as if he were more polished, more worldly. He also promises in dollars not in rupees. Such a groom can be forgiven anything, a physical infirmity, mental incompatibility (Vinayak, 1998).

Within India stories of mistreatment and deception through NRI marriages are common. In District Hoshiarpur within Doaba, the District Commissioner told me that marriage complaints were the most common NRI related concerns brought to the attention of the District Police Chief, with over 500 individual complaints in 1999. Surinder Kaur Grewal, chairperson of the Punjab State Women's Commission, was quoted as saying that “NRI matrimonial frauds now account for at least one fifth of women-related complaints” (Vinayak, 1998). Increasingly the public are being made aware of the problems of NRI marriages through detailed media reports. A full-page story in the Sunday Punjab Tribune provided a comprehensive warning to its readers about the risks of marriage to an NRI.

A fairly large percentage of marriages between Indian girls and grooms based in distant lands are steeped in deceit. Scores of women, especially in rural Punjab, are simply dumped behind by their dollar-earning spouses. Many discover that these citizens of developed nations actually hark back to the Dark Ages and that bigamy is very much alive and kicking. Can she turn to law to bring such transnational offenders to book? (Singh, 1999).

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25 Interview 19th February 2000. The District Commissioner suggested that in other districts in Doaba land disputes were the most common NRI related complaints, but the lower price of land in Hoshiarpur meant matrimonial cases were the most common NRI related complaints.
The general tone of the article was that any woman who finds herself duped by an NRI husband or facing a quick divorce where she is stripped of funds and access to her children, must try to bring the case to court overseas. The Indian legal system, though it does have provisions to deal with such cases, is seen as less inclined to treat women’s concerns justly or in a suitable time frame. In attempting to remedy the situation, Singh (1999) argues for the reform of the judicial system, faster processing of spousal visa cases, and a more sympathetic position from Embassies and the Indian Department of External Affairs. Quoting Peyshi Deewan, Singh suggests that the problem lies not just with NRIs: “As long as we remain blinded by the luster of dollars and sterling pounds and continue to use our daughters as passports for self-aggrandisement, the problem can’t be solved.” Undoubtedly the problems of NRI marriages, the lack of detailed information about the potential match, the need for quick decisions during the brief winter visits of NRIs, the long wait between marriage and eventual migration, and the social and physical isolation the bride must endure after her movement overseas, combine to create difficult situations for immigrant women.

Marriage Migration and the State

I now turn to consider how these potentially exploitative social processes are perceived and treated in Canada, where the uncertainty associated with NRI marriages is also influenced by state immigration procedures. The present Canadian Immigration Act of 1976 sets out social, humanitarian and economic goals. The humanitarian goal to facilitate “the reunion in Canada of Canadian residents with close family members
abroad” (CIC, 1999b p.6). For humanitarian reasons the immigration minister has declared the family class a priority, and the processing time for spousal applicants, once all requirements are met, is set at six months. Usually the process takes longer because forms are required from the prospective partner in Canada, and the partner in India, and only when officers have both these forms can they begin to process the application. The sponsor in Canada must either apply before the marriage, or have the marriage in India and then wait while the application is processed. In 80 percent of cases the spouse is interviewed within six months. Although it is possible to apply for a spousal/fiancé landing application while in Canada, the likelihood of a young single Indian male or female being granted a visitor visa to land in Canada in the first place is slight. By controlling the movement of young single people, CIC can monitor and determine the validity of marriage applications while the spouse is in India, and subject them to a detailed screening process to determine the validity of marriages in line with local customs. Of all marriage applications, 58 percent are waived and processed without the need of an interview. Of the remaining 42 percent, 25 percent are accepted at interview, and 17 percent are rejected or pending. Since 1998, all spousal applications are screened through a Central Analysis Unit (CAU), consisting of locally engaged staff (LES) whose

26 Since late 2000 in order to decrease processing times, a new pilot process has been introduced. A random sample of family and independent class applicants from a number of countries, including India, will be processed at a centralized processing centre in Mississauga Ontario. For family class applicants under the pilot scheme, a joint application kit will be used. This places all the required forms in the hands of the sponsor in Canada, and they are responsible for collecting the information. Once they have all the information they then forward it to CIC. Complex cases or cases that require an interview will be sent to the Delhi High Commission. Judging by current numbers, that suggests that about 40 percent of spousal applicants will be referred to Delhi (Frequently Asked Questions: Centralized Processing Pilot Project Practitioners, personal CIC communication, October 2000). This concentration of responsibility reinforces the power the sponsor exercises over the application processes, leaving little options for the spouse in India to expedite the process or obtain any information.

27 Interview with CIC officials in New Delhi December 1999.

28 Again, as figures in chapter three suggest, a third of visitor visa applicants are rejected and these tend to be young single men and women.

29 Interview with CIC officials, New Delhi December 1999.
job it is to highlight any inconsistencies or irregularities. In 1998 staff became suspicious when a number of photographs included in various applications presented the same Punjab wedding palace location, same priest and same crowd scenes. A small team of immigration officials visited the marriage palace in question and discovered it was used as a front for creating the marriage scenes, photographs and videos now practically mandatory as supporting documentation for visa processing.30

It is accepted, both by CIC officials and people in the villages of Punjab that fraudulent marriages established for the sole purpose of gaining entry to Canada do occur. In attempting to control this type of fraud however, visa officers have to prove themselves culturally cognizant in their readings of local customs. In a meeting with an immigration consultant in Chandigarh, I was shown a standard refusal letter sent out by CIC, which judged that the applicant’s marriage was deemed fraudulent because the wedding ceremony did not seem to meet the usual level of ostentation and excessive expense most Indian weddings incur. This reading of matrimonial ritual has become an important part of CIC’s ability to frame marriage norms in static terms, providing them with space to refuse applications where the local norm has not been achieved. Another example of CIC’s spousal refusal indicates the support for local Punjabi norms, even if this perpetuates male bias:

You and your sponsor are incompatible in terms of marital background. The arrangement of the marriage of a young never married male to a divorcee is generally not contemplated. Marriage among the Sikhs is regarded as a sacrament and divorce is socially disapproved, even abhorred. Partners in failed marriage are viewed with suspicion. Only after a thorough investigation of her background by the groom’s family could a woman who had been divorced, eventually be found to be an acceptable bride. Even where the marriage of never married male to a divorcee is negotiated for some cogent social reasons, an attempt is made to investigate the reasons which led to the breakdown of the previous marriage of one of the prospective

30 Interview with CIC officials New Delhi February 2000.
spouses and the other is fully apprised of the circumstances and particulars of the previous marriage and divorce so that the marriage is not followed by acrimony in marital relations due to any misunderstandings. However, in your case, you did not know the person with whom your sponsor was married, the year of her marriage, for how long she has lived with her ex-husband, when she was divorced, and the reasons which led to the termination of her previous marriage. This lack of knowledge about your sponsor’s past marital life is not indicative of an intention of (sic) create a serious marital relationship with your sponsor.  

Suddenly the traditional bias against women present in Punjabi culture has been transposed into the policy of CIC. This highly gendered reading of marriage practices allows for denials to be dispensed to divorced women both in Canada and India. This denial offers important ramifications, especially when we reconsider the prevalence of NRI marriages that occur within a context of bigamy, creating a pool of young divorced women:

Duped by unscrupulous grooms already harbouring a wife and three kids in Slough, unsuspecting brides are returned to the matrimonial circuit, only this time, encumbered with the weighty tag of ‘divorcee’. These are the saddest experiences of assisted marriages and they continue to happen (Joshi, 2000 p.135).

If the NRI groom absconded with a dowry, never intending to submit a visa application, the woman has to be granted a divorce from her NRI husband without ever having left India. Other women, if they do go abroad and experience social isolation, may not be able to secure any citizenship status or access any information regarding their rights, and faced with abandonment and divorce they might certainly flee back to India. Based on the

32 Such gender discrimination also occurred in Britain in the 1970s, in that the patriarchal norm of the male providing the home for the female was used as the argument to deny British women the right to have their foreign husbands join them in Britain. Women who were British citizens, who wanted to live with their husbands, were forced to settle overseas unless they could prove undue hardship. The fact that a woman of Indian origin had never been to India was not deemed undue hardship. The deeply entrenched gender bias directing these debates is clear in the comments of Ivor Stanbrook, MP, making this statement in 1976: “There is no rational argument in favour of saying that a wife in another country should be in a position to provide a home for her husband and children. It is contrary to all common sense, human nature, and the way of life of both Britain and the subcontinent” Quoted in Bhabha and Shutter (1994, p.62).
information provided so far, these are all possible scenarios that could produce a cohort of divorced women whose families have no intention of divulging information detailing such unfortunate episodes. To add insult to injury, if the women were to find another match, CIC may deploy a reading of chauvinistic Punjabi customs to deny their application.

Certainly this example adds weight to the general point I made at the start of this chapter, whereby Canadian immigration policies, unintentionally perhaps, amplify the tenuous legal status of women who migrate as spouses. But further than that, they also reveal how patriarchal norms of Punjabi society seep into the operation of Canada’s immigration policy overseas.

Immigrant advocates and the state: The separation of race and gender

I now want to consider what pressures have been mobilized in Canada against the gender inequity evidenced through marriage and migration. In chapter four I considered how the state, CIC in particular, is subject to democratic processes from various groups aimed at pressuring CIC into greater openness with regard to their decisions on certain applications. I now want to show how immigrant community demands with regard to spousal sponsorship in particular, reveal two partly contradictory pressures: on the one hand antiracist demands for greater openness in certain immigration procedures, and on the other antisexist demands for greater control of certain immigration procedures.

It is a common criticism of CIC that spousal applications take too long, and that the decisions regarding admission are sometimes excessive and draconian; CIC has in
particular been criticized for excessive refusal rates especially in China and India. Despite the gender bias evident in certain Indian customs, many advocates have worked to encourage CIC to become more sensitive to cultural norms in other countries, especially with reference to spousal applicants. CIC argues that it does not impose western ideas of marriage overseas, and uses local staff to assist in developing an investigative framework in line with local marriage norms (Jimenez, 1997). Canada’s immigration policy has recently come under greater public scrutiny in response to a series of documents outlining how the new Immigration Act should look. The Immigration Legislative Review Advisory Group (ILR) report, “Not Just Numbers: A Canadian Framework for Future Immigration” was made public in January 1998, and was followed by a number of public meetings and debates in the media over how immigration should be altered for the future. Following an intensive round of public debate, Citizenship and Immigration Canada released “Building on a Strong Foundation for the 21st Century: New Directions for Immigration and Refugee Policy and Legislation” (CIC 1998). This document outlines the general directions the government wants to pursue in immigration policy, and is a precursor to Bill C-11, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, presented to the house in March 2001. I will read the ILR’s recommendations related to spousal applications—an area that received virtually no public attention in the wider debates that followed the release of the ILR’s

33 The figures presented earlier on spousal applications through Delhi show that 17 percent are rejected or pending a final decision. In 1997 the rates of refusal at the Beijing High Commission was roughly 18 percent.

34 As I have argued the use of local norms in determining the validity of applications also provides a useful tactic for limiting certain immigration cases.

35 Some of the most active criticism was directed at the ILR’s recommendation that immigrants should already possess some English or French language skills prior to arrival.
recommendations—through the responses of two organizations concerned with women’s rights.

In the case of female migrants who enter Canada through marriage, I have already suggested that the pre-migration context in Punjab is a highly uneven one, where male NRIs exercise immense influence and power over rural families in Punjab. Many families who desire a better future for themselves and their children are willing to ‘sacrifice’ their daughters in order that other family members might eventually migrate (Bal, 1997). If a daughter is sent overseas, her vulnerability and dependence upon a male spouse can become an incredible burden, especially under situations of physical and mental abuse. If this situation develops, women are often afraid to seek help because they are concerned about their immigrant status (McDonald, 1999). Husbands often use this fear against their partners, forcing them to remain in situations where they are subjected to cruelty from the spouse, and in some cases his family.

Sahara, an Indo-Canadian Women’s Group based in Abbotsford, B.C, has taken up these concerns in a report addressing the ILR’s recommendations (Sahara, 1998). In that report Sahara draws upon South Asian women and their experiences of being abandoned by their husbands who at the encouragement of their parents, divorce them in order to marry other women from India. Sahara’s report is aimed at reforming the spousal application process in order to deal with the problems many South Asian origin women have encountered in Canada. The group has advocated for all women affected by these issues, but has primarily been involved in South-Asian women’s concerns, immigrant women who are overwhelming rural Punjabis, and not the sophisticated twice and thrice migrants that Bhachu (1996) refers to in her work on dowry and South-Asian women in

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Britain. Sahara has developed connections with other women's organizations and immigrant groups, as well as cultivating connections internationally with groups in India such as Apna Ghar. Another group representing its reactions to the ILR is The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (Arat-Koc et al, 1999). The responses of these two groups reveal somewhat different concerns regarding immigration policy change.

There are four recommendations the ILR presents which directly affect the spousal application process. Sahara provided their comments on these to the Legislative Review Secretariat in a three-page letter dated March 1st 1998 (Sahara, 1998). The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) also presented their response to the ILR through an article in the journal Canadian Woman Studies (Arat-Koc et al, 1999). I review those four recommendations and the varying responses offered by these two groups.

Recommendation thirty-seven as proposed in the ILR, would shorten the current sponsorship undertaking to a period of three years. Currently any person who sponsors a relative into Canada has to agree to financially support that person for up to ten years. If they end up claiming any state support, the sponsor can be held financially responsible. The NAC interprets this as "a relatively positive move, which would decrease the period of dependency and make some Family Class immigrants members and residents of Canadian society in their own right" (Arat-Koc et al 1999, p.21). Sahara, on the other hand, disagrees with recommendation thirty-seven. They feel it "will not help protect

37 There have been a number of debates around how sponsors can be held more accountable for those they sponsor in the event that they have to rely on the State's social security system.
families and women” and that the “sponsor should be responsible for the spouse for a minimum of five years and preferably for ten years.”

The responsibilities of sponsors to maintain support for those they sponsor even after separation or divorce is tackled in recommendation thirty-nine, which would require any potential sponsor who is in default of any previous child support or alimony to be prohibited from sponsoring new applicants. The NAC is concerned this, and other recommendations restricting those eligible to sponsor, will contribute to “family class immigration being reserved for a small elite” (p.21). Sahara however, “strongly supports” this recommendation, arguing: “It is a logical conclusion that those who have proven to be unable to fulfill prior legal obligations to family members would be unlikely to be able to fulfill future obligations to other family members.”

Recommendation forty-two provides for relief from sponsorship obligations on the grounds of physical or psychological abuse. This would cover co-sponsors coerced into any joint financial undertakings. The NAC considers this recommendation as ambiguous, since it does not specify what will happen to the family class immigrant after sponsorship is terminated. Sahara supports this recommendation however, since they feel that both recommendations forty-two and forty-three “promote a public policy against domestic violence.” Recommendation forty-three suggests that anyone convicted of crimes involving spousal abuse should be ineligible to sponsor until a period of five years has elapsed and evidence of rehabilitation has been provided. NAC did not comment specifically on this point, but Sunera Thobani, past president of the NAC, argues that this policy would “only serve to increase the control which sponsors currently assert over

38 Appendix D, (Sahara 1998).
39 Ibid.
their ‘dependents,’ and could potentially lead to an escalation of violence against immigrant women.” (Thobani, 1999 p.14). Sahara however argues that:

Recommendation 43 will specifically affect the Indo-Canadian community. Many Indo-Canadians engage in arranged marriages and chose to sponsor other spouses from India. As a result, most of the sponsored spouses know very little about their spouses living in Canada. Many members of Sahara have been in this situation. When violence becomes a part of the marriage, the women find themselves in a very difficult situation. They fear for their safety and that of their children but they do not want to bring shame to their families by leaving their husbands. Culturally, they often feel that they must endure the abuse as a normal part of their marriage. Recommendation 43 will make a positive difference by preventing further crimes of abuse from being committed against women by known abusers.40

By reviewing the different responses of the NAC and Sahara, the importance of cultural context and the extent of transnational influences on South Asian immigrant women in Canada become apparent. NAC is concerned more ideologically with creating a policy that overcomes any racist and sexist structures, and in that regard the terminology and the masculinization of language – dependent, feminized and disenfranchised immigrant – is challenged. There are also instances of attempting to keep the process open, especially in NAC’s response to Recommendation 39, but for Sahara, the concern is not just to deal with the situation in Canada, but also to deal with the transnational networks established between India and Canada. These networks involve a ready supply of young women and their families in Punjab keen to enter the migration circuit, and men in Canada who, due to the gendered bias of Punjabi culture (and CIC policies), are free of any stigma to divorce and seek a new bride when it seems advantageous to do so. This circulatory system is upheld despite the consequences for the women and children from a previous marriage. The issue of positionality is also central for Sahara, though it has caused them problems within their own ethno cultural communities. The answer to protecting Indo-

40 Appendix D, (Sahara, 1998).
Canadian women’s rights seems to be to encroach upon Indo-Canadian men’s rights and limit their ability to activate gendered migration flows. Differences in citizenship status are also paramount in this case, since these recommendations will also have an impact on women in Punjab and their families, whose eagerness to migrate may eclipse their concerns about subsequent marital conditions. A calculated decision has been made to prioritize the rights of women already in Canada in order to prevent continued gendered migrant flows within a context of extreme male preference and abuse. This concerted pressure to influence the immigration process appears more comprehensive than earlier less organized Indo-Canadian attempts to influence immigration policy (Wood, 1978). Sahara’s recommendations however, allow CIC to limit certain immigration flows, something most immigrant advocates are wary of, in order to enhance and protect the rights of women already in Canada. A paradoxical situation has arisen where issues of citizenship, race and gender, though always intersecting, have actually been strategically pried apart by the political actions of women’s groups with different requirements and understandings of the immigration process. In this case, Basch et al.’s concerns regarding immigrants as active agents in "a process of hegemonic construction" (1994 p.29), does not necessarily create a process of political identity building indicative of a new movement of nationalism. Old nationalisms based upon citizenship rights and immigrant exclusion and selection play an important role, and therefore the use of gender as a new location "from which to construct identities that allow us to think beyond the nation building processes of particular nation-states" (Basch et al, 1994 p.40) needs to be carefully considered, since immigrant women who possess important citizenship resources are now in a position of power to protect and advocate for them.
Conclusion

It has been a rather long journey tracing marriage norms through Northern India to sites of Indian immigrant settlement overseas. In that journey however, I have shown how traditional patriarchal Punjabi norms have proved to be resilient both through time and across space. Indeed the masculinity of men in Punjab is a cherished and celebrated feature of that society, and women, as the mothers of sons, are often the most vigorous promoters and perpetuators of these imbalances. Within a context of global migration, the NRI becomes the embodied representation of uneven development, and marriage offers the potential for a successful life for both the bride and possibly her family. The networks that facilitate such articulations are subject to intimate pressures of family and status directed both at males and females. The state monitors and controls these flows with varying success, but its replication of gender discrimination has been exercised under the guise of respecting local traditions, revealing the ways in which the state itself can justify its option to operate transnationally in order to exclude locally. Within Canada Sahara has pressured the state to recognize the importance of protecting its citizens from being financially abandoned by spouses who seek new matches from India, demanding that in certain cases, the state furthers its transnational regulation of marriage practices. In seeking to protect women already in Canada one could argue others are disadvantaged, although the extent to which one path is more justified that the other is a difficult question. Indeed the desire for migration is a strong force in rural Punjab, and as such, it creates a situation where women's rights and protection will not be advanced if they are seen to deny wider opportunities of migration. With such social and economic pressures,
the mobilization of women’s groups in Canada to pressure the state to make its migration policy sensitive to gender discrimination presents an interesting contradictory intersection of cultural norms, transnational social practices, and issues of gender equality within Canadian policy frameworks. In the case of marriage practices, the demands of gender equality and protection and the expectation of respect for cultural diversity are oppositional, encouraging the state to alter its approach. If these measures to protect women through controls on spousal and family class immigration are adopted, the implications are profound for multicultural societies in the strategic privileging and division of gender rights over ethno-cultural rights, and for the way such demands position and monitor the state across a transnational, not merely national space.

41 A similar situation arose in Britain when a High Court judge went to extraordinary lengths to secure the return of a 17-year-old British Sikh girl whose parents had forced her to go to Punjab where two potential suitors awaited her. The case came to light through the intervention of the girl’s older sister, and Justice Singer, an expert on child abduction cases, launched a complex procedure involving the British High Commission in Delhi in order that the girl could be interviewed (the family maintained that she was in India willingly, the sister claimed she was being coerced). Once she was inside the British Embassy in Delhi she told officials she did not want to be married. She was immediately returned to England to live with her sister, and her parents were charged with abduction. The case made front-page news in Britain and was heavily debated due to the apparent collision of respect for distinct cultural practices, and the rights of British citizens, especially minors (Frean, 1999).
CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

In this final chapter I present my conclusions in four sections: firstly, I review my conceptual framework of the transnational network and consider the contributions my research offers to the literature; secondly, I consider the problems of measuring circulation; thirdly, I consider how my research contributes to debates surrounding immigration, citizenship, and the state; and finally, I discuss the importance of positionality.

Transnational Networks

My research employs the concept of transnationalism to frame an empirically rich and grounded interpretation of immigrant-led linkages between India and Canada. Using the term transnationalism avoids the ephemerality of globalization, and the fixity of internationalism. The term indicates connectivity and transformation initiated from individual and communal socio-cultural interaction, yet it simultaneously connects with global processes of economic and political exchange. In my review of the literature, I argue that examples of transnationalism exhibit a tendency toward spatial limitation, since the dominant geographical focus has been on the USA and its southern neighbours. My research has expanded the geographical range of the literature, and indicated that Indian examples of immigrant led transnational behaviour are numerous, and
underexamined. I have also considered the connection between transnational arguments and geography. For geographers, transnational approaches to research on issues of immigration and globalization can be highly productive, but are predicated on a movement towards more flexible engagement with both qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to capture the social and spatial complexities accompanying transnationalism. This also presents a demand for both empirical and conceptual connectivity, and as a discipline, geography needs to overcome a number of sub disciplinary and spatial demarcations, which are most obviously revealed in the tradition of area studies.

After a critical review of a number of network ideas from scholars such as Castells and Latour, I have structured the presentation around the idea of a transnational network, the properties of which are connectivity, circulation and transformation. The inclusion of these three aspects creates a network approach that encourages the interpretation of process as well as pattern, and envisions the network as the outcome of immigrant links, not a separate externalized structure that is superimposed upon them. This approach has allowed me to connect and combine material in order to demonstrate the effect of transnational Indo-Canadian immigrant networks through the circulation of people, capital and goods. I have reversed the common tendency to diminish the role of the state, but have simultaneously maintained a prominent focus on immigrant-led behaviours that intersect with state actions on a number of levels. Therefore my employment of a transnational network approach to understand connections between the immigrant and state actors has illustrated moments of interaction as opposed to solely domination.
Furthermore, the geographical range of actors involved—Canada, the USA, Britain and elsewhere—suggests that these transnational circulations are highly resilient over time and across space. However such intersections are highly differentiated by various axes of differences often overlooked in broader interpretations of ‘immigrant communities’. Gender is a vital component to highlight as the examples of marriage networks reveal, generation is also often overlooked even though it is highly influential in the structuring of transnational linkages, as shown in the examples of village fund raising schemes. Class also marks immigration networks and their reproduction across space, and when placed within a wider geographical and historical context the importance of developing sensitivity to processes of racialization are crucial in order to illustrate the role of the state and its attempts to control both the discourse and actual process of nation building.

Circulation and the Problems of Measurement

While I advocate conceptual connectivity through the use of a transnational lens, I also stress the need to build connectivity through methodological approaches, both in the actual research process (the use of multiple research sites that are interconnected), and the forms of data gathered (the use and integration of qualitative and quantitative material). My use of a network approach permits these intersections because my network concept is not just a system of structural connectivity, but also interpersonal connectivity linking localities through individuals and families. Networks are most obviously forms of connectivity, but they are also important in mediating processes of circulation, where the
movement is not only one way, but recurring. While connectivity implies social-spatial linkage, the circulation aspect allows for temporal and processal qualities to be included. The inclusion of circulation in the examination of Punjab-Canada links is important because recent technological and demographic maturation has created a situation where exchanges of capital and people has a number of variable effects upon both the sending and receiving areas.

The movement of people is not isolated from other transfers, and the connections between these flows have been undervalued for some time. I reverse this neglect and examine how remittances and other immigrant transfers have resulted in series of socio-economic developments that challenge previous socio-spatial distinctions of ‘third world’ rural development and industrial western metropolitan change. In this regard, my findings echo those of Kearney (1995) and Rouse (1991), but my research approach is distinct from theirs, since I follows networks from the ‘developed’ urban to the ‘developing’ rural setting, often many decades after the initial migration. The recognition of the material consequences of such interactions and circulations has highlighted the problems of immigrant-led transformations, in that processes of uneven development are replicated on a finer scale, especially within contexts where the local state is compromised in its ability to manage development.

My attempts to interpret the magnitude of various circulations at different scales, capital in particular, have been hampered by the lack of verifiable empirical data. As processes of transfer become more intense, rapid and widespread, official representations of the magnitude of flows of people, money and goods across national borders have become more ambiguous. For many developing countries subject to significant out-
migration, the collection of migration data is partial and diffuse. This has important consequences since significant links between immigration and development are muted. In particular the capital input funneled through worker remittances, as most scholars agree, is vastly under recorded. Despite this, even official remittance figures indicate the importance of this capital transfer for many developing economies, and the hard currency they receive from workers overseas can often have the effect of making labour one of their major export commodities. This is particularly relevant for India, which in 1997 received almost half of Asia’s total worker remittances with over US $10 billion.¹

As processes of international migration continue, the amount of money that is moved, and its regional destinations, will become increasingly more significant for states and international agencies. It also begins to show immigration as a vital component of some kind of global development process that may possess greater redistributive potential for developing economies than global trade and production incorporation alone have so far.

Despite the changes globalization has introduced, the most significant everyday issue for populations in western industrial nations is not the movements of commodities and capital, as much as it is a reaction against the people who move.² Asia is now the dominant source area for immigration to Canada, and for this particular global movement the state has developed processes of surveillance that appear more micro managed and individualized that those developed to monitor the movements of goods and capital. The

¹ IMF Balance of Payments yearbook 1999.
² Of course in some instances the links are made very visible. The massive outbreak in Britain of foot and mouth disease in 2001 and the destruction of hundreds of thousands of agricultural animals has recently been linked to illegally shipped meat from China. The meat shipments hidden in containers of household goods, were allegedly directed to Chinese restaurants in Newcastle, and entered the agricultural chain through restaurant scraps purchased by farmers to be used as pigswill. Chinese restaurateurs in the area have been quick to deny the use of smuggled meat, but certain media representations were quick to racialize the problem (Herbert, 2001).
media, for its part, often presents an image of immigration as escaping state control, fueling public pressure to create better forms of management and regulation. The public's demand for control of these embodied representations of globalization appears far more widespread than the recent struggles against global capital and trade movements we have seen voiced in the opposition to the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, and World Trade Organization meetings. The presence of an Asian immigrant is a visceral and visible aspect of global circulations that are open to diverse forms of cultural interpretation; this results in immigration debates occupying a wider, more everyday realm of contestation over global flows. These debates, however, usually visualize immigration in isolation from other global flows. Once we begin to recognize how the movement of capital, goods and people is linked, we can see how benefits can be spread amongst a number of communities, not just those in the developed north, and may actually go some way to create avenues for the redistribution of wealth, as well as draw our attention to the links between these flows that fuel and maintain the global capitalist system. This new vision of immigration as a central linkage in a general global system of circulation encourages us to recognize the limitations of discourses where immigration is posited as a single process concerning a single nation. Registering the outcomes of such networks may be difficult if we maintain our reliance on data collected through the apparatus of the state, which will often have limited ability to capture the dimensions of exchange such transnational, culturally grounded, activities entail.
The relationship between Canada and India, as Canadian federal government representatives have recognized, and this dissertation has demonstrated, is certainly grounded in "people-to-people links". These links emerge from a long history of interaction initiated during the colonial period when the Canadian nation-state was defining itself within a context of racial homogeneity. Indian immigrants played an important role in revealing the racist foundations of early Canadian immigration policy, which in turn was reflective of Canadian attempts to define its sovereignty in opposition to that of the Empire (Mongia, 1999; Fraser, 1978). While the history of Canada's national sovereignty is rooted in racialized processes of immigrant differentiation, my research reveals that in the current era Indian immigrants have come to inhabit a more central political position, often using democratic channels of influence in highly effective ways, especially in connection with immigration matters. The centrality of immigration issues and the desire for greater connections with India has led many immigrants to actively develop and maintain their links to their homeland, which has the result of drawing the Canadian state into closer social, political and economic relations with various levels of Indian government. As states transcend their borders through the negotiation of closer economic and political relations, it can no longer be expected that the state's population will remain contained by those same boundaries. Therefore, as the boundaries of a society expand, so must its concept of citizenship. This extension of citizenship concepts and practices does not necessarily entail a negative association with the previous assumption of citizenship centered on membership in the state; hence my
argument that the presence of these extensive transnational networks connecting immigrants to their sites of origin and destination, rather than limit Canadian and Indian citizenship practice, can actually enhance it.

Though my findings support an expansion of the citizenship concept, I also argue that the current literature does not adequately represent these processes. For example, advocates of 'post-national citizenship' who suggest that transnational processes of immigrant identity formation challenge the primacy of the nation-state and traditional concepts of citizenship (Basch et al., 1994; Joseph, 1999, Appadurai, 1996c), overlook the daily practices of immigrants that reinforce the integrity of the nation. My research challenges some of these assumptions, since it is apparent that Indo-Canadians are vigorous political actors within the Canadian democratic system, making use of avenues that challenge certain state actors, but are also highly supportive of the traditional right of the sovereign state to control its borders, as the instances of 'poison pen' letters and the advocacy of women's groups against abuse of the spousal immigration process demonstrate. These examples reveal forms of citizenship participation practiced by Indo-Canadians that, while highly effective and widespread, have not been considered in the literature. These practices simultaneously configure transnational circulations and local community development through democratic channels of governance. Therefore, alongside the active performance of transnationality, the rights associated with traditional concepts of citizenship are still highly valued and utilized.

Despite immigrant-centered political practices that reshape the nation's international relations, the presence of the state in regulating borders is still significant. Such regulation, however, is not uniformly administered, since at times it works in
opposition to immigrant interests, and at others in tandem. Moreover, in some cases the state exhibits a highly invasive form of regulation, such as with spousal immigration, and in others a virtual absence of state monitoring, such as with capital flows. In reasserting the role of the state in global processes, we identify the partiality of action dependent upon the nature of transfers involved, and highlight the fact that state responses to global movements are not uniform. My contribution to this argument is to empirically reveal how the state enforces its borders through immigration regimes, but in so doing I have drawn attention to the fact that immigrants and potential immigrants both challenge and co-operate with the state and its exercise of sovereignty. Therefore the relationship between the state and immigrants in the regulation of borders is contradictory, and varies depending upon the positionality of the immigrant and the type of networks they are embedded within.

**Positionality**

I highlight the importance of positionality in two ways, firstly through that of the researcher and the research process, and secondly the positionality of immigrants and how this may influence the type of behaviour introduced through transnational links. My research approach has demanded that I position myself socially and spatially within immigrant networks, engaging with various agencies and actors as I move through the network. This type of research approach requires a certain commitment from the researcher, and is deeply personalized through issues of positionality and power relations.
Transnational research is complex since movement through the research site becomes recursive, and challenges some standard debates about the nature of ‘the field’ as a separate space, which the researcher can abandon at will. In addition, the argument that power is unequally invested in the researcher is also challenged when issues of gender and body space frame research practices. I have demonstrated how gender permeates every aspect of the research process, and introduces variations and containments to data collection that are integral to the entire project’s outcome.

Positionality is also central to interpreting the heterogeneous nature of immigrant networks and the individual’s connection to them. Connectivity, though vital to any appreciation of networks, as Castells (1996) has argued, is not uniform, and issues of power shape attachments to the network. The power to enter the network or to remove oneself is not equally dispensed, but dependent upon personal location and social attribute, for example immigration networks favour those with family links or forms of economic capital, and gender overwhelming dictates the power one has over the context of their movement. In section three of the dissertation I revealed how individuals are differentially incorporated into transnational networks dependent upon their class, age and gender. In addition to focusing on aspects of identity, I have also suggested, in opposition to Portes et al (1999), that transnational networks also include those who may not regularly travel across borders, but that the network extends to the second generation who maintain cultural traditions (Chapter Eight), those who remain in Punjab but benefit from development projects (Chapter Seven), and women in Canada whose marriage options are contextualized by transnational networks they may not be part of (Chapter Nine).
While gender is central in the migration experience, class is also relevant to wider immigration process. In Chapter Three I revealed how a tight social origin persists through dense immigration networks. In Chapter Six the active deployment of a classed and regionalized stereotype is advanced both in Canada and India with regard to trade and immigration linkages. In Chapter Eight I reviewed the production of transnational space in Vancouver and revealed how Indian immigrant settlement in Canada exhibits increasingly concentrated spatial settlement patterns. This spatial and social density has contributed to building a self-sustaining circulation process that possesses its own internal momentum and characteristics. This allows for the reconstruction of the extended family across a spatially distended domain, and for the partial reconstitution of gendered and classed Punjabi cultural norms across a transnational field.

With regard to increased material flows, I have argued that actors are multiply positioned, and economic outcomes are often firmly grounded in aspects of cultural identity, as shown in the chapters on trade and immigration and capital flows. With regard to trade and immigration, I argued that the discourse surrounding econometric views are predicated upon a series of stereotypes that redirect our attention away from problems within the wider Canadian economy, towards the assumption of immigrants and their ‘failure’ to create trade. The deployment of these analytical frameworks obscures the ways in which the state fails a number of its citizens, and instead supports the assumption that certain people should be differentially responsible for the export potential of the Canadian economy. The fact that many immigrants do fill this role again supports my assertion that citizenship practice, in this case economic contribution, is enhanced by the presence of extensive immigrant transnational networks.
I have emphasized transnational socio-spatial connectivity in order to overcome the limitations that Appadurai and Basch et al have identified with the use of terminology such as nation and race that contain and delimit our interpretations of process. However, thinking beyond the terminology of nation and race in the abstract has obscured an appreciation of the continued importance of national mechanisms of control, and minimizes the fact that processes of globalization have not resulted in the withering of state control, but as Sassen (1996) argues, merely a reconfiguration. This reconfiguration of state control and regulation has been highly influenced by the presence of immigrant communities with strong and active links back to their country of origin, and who actively utilize the democratic system to shape and support transnational social, political and economic dimensions of community.
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APPENDIX I

General Interview Questions

Introduction

1. With regard to linkages between Canada and India, can you tell me briefly about your work?

Questions about specific exchanges

*These varied depending upon the particular transfers the individual is involved in, but generally the questions were:*

2. Exactly what kind of transfers between India and Canada are you involved with; information/goods/capital?

3. *(For goods or capital)* Are these transfers registered in "official national figures" with regard to trade and capital exchanges? If not, are they recorded in any other ways?

4. As an estimate, of the transfers you are aware of how significant are they...
   a) to the companies, communities and institutions in British Columbia
   b) to the regions/businesses/families in India.

*($ terms for goods or capital, or some other estimation for other transfers).*

5. Can you tell me a little about your own background and experiences of a) coming to Canada as an immigrant, or b) being a second, (third) generation Indo-Canadian, or c) becoming involved with linkages between India and Canada?

6. Do you think your experiences have contributed to your ability to make these connections? If so why and in which particular ways?

Localities and networks

7. Are the transfers you are aware of focused particularly on certain locations, i.e. from Vancouver to Chandigarh for example.

8. If so, what shapes these networks of exchange, immigration/ family networks/
9. How far would you agree that immigration shapes and maintains these networks of exchange, i.e. family networks, overseas ownership and investment in family holdings?

a) and if so, what are some of the advantages or problems associated with such exchanges; informality, different power relations, cultural and personal differences?

b) if not, what are the important things that shape and maintain these exchange relationships? Economic demand, infrastructural or community need, government policy etc.

**Background**

10. Can you tell me a little about your own background and experiences of coming to Canada as an immigrant?

a) When did you come? Were you sponsored; if so who by?

b) Who came with you?

c) Did you sponsor relatives who have since come to Canada?

*Depending on the respondent, either question 9 or 10 was asked, but not both.*

11. Do you have relatives in India? (Or did you recently have relatives still living there who now live in Canada?)

a) How do/did you maintain contact? Phone, letter, fax, email? How often?

b) Did you send them goods or money? Roughly how much and how often?

c) What was this money or goods used for?
   - to finance their immigration to Canada
   - Gifts or dowry for weddings/funerals
   - to expand family land holdings or business interests in India?

12. Do you still maintain connections with India through:

   Family links
   Business interests

Do you have business or investment interests in India?