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# Eidos

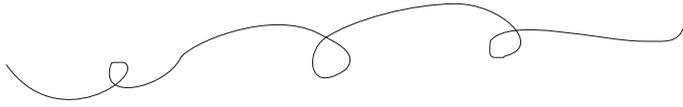
## 2015-16

### *Human Flows*



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# Editorial

“Human Flows”. At face value, this seems like far too vague a theme to be the topic of discussion for an academic journal. And yet, it is this broad scope of the topic that allows for the flowering of creativity, and the creation of papers that are wholly unlike anything we might previously have thought of. 

The writers in this volume have interpreted the theme in such a variety of ways. Although we initially imagined that most people would interpret the theme in its most literal sense, of physical migration of peoples across the globe, we were pleasantly surprised to find that the majority of papers theorised the more abstract sense of human flows: the evolution of thought and culture over time and space.

Although Sociology, and especially Anthropology, have had a history of studying the evolution of culture and thought, this study has been so rooted in a colonial sense of “what qualifies as culture” and evolution as being a term with a connotation of “becoming better”, these articles have, fortunately for us, taken a less Eurocentric stance.

A reader of this journal is likely to find at least one article that suits their liking, simply because of the wide variety of articles that we find here. The papers have focused on a vast spectrum of theories, from dependency theory to the concept of the nation; from the sexual revolution in America to the similarities between dance forms in different part of the world; from the use of art as a tool in diplomacy and war, to the evolution of Hinduism among Manipuri tribals over time; from the application of conflict theory in *The Lord of the Rings* to the Amish practise of Rumspringa.

This volume would not be complete without some papers on physical migration as well, a theme which is of ever growing importance, in our country – and especially in our city, with its recent history of violence against migrants – and in the world. In the face of the argument of classifying the fleeing Syrians as migrants versus refugees, in the cold shoulder given by the world and media to the Rohingyas, and in the terms cited by the UN to qualify as a refugee, there remains a great scope for the world to change and introspect, and it is for the academics to aid this process.

We would like to welcome you to look through this journal to support the attempt that academics worldwide are making, and the small contribution we hope to make to this attempt, to incite change through words. To take a simple thought and put it forth in the best way we can. We rest in the hope that you will join us in this endeavour to create something new, in the hope to better the world we live in today.

Meghana Telang  
*Editor-in-chief, Eidos 2015-16*

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# Papers

# Western Hegemony – Society, Trade, Religion and Beyond

Prachi Shukla, SYBA

*This paper will examine the effects of the worldwide pursuit to achieve development as undertaken by projects of international bodies controlled by Western powers. By using the Middle East as an example, one can see the social and economic effects under Dependency Theory and Modernization Theory. **Lastly, we view the Bhutan model as an alternative to conventional understanding of development.***



“Development” has no universally accepted definition. It tends to change meaning with what objective is in mind and who it is bringing about this change. While progress is imminent and natural, development is planned and calculated. It is brought about consciously by policy makers and those in power such as governments and international bodies. Almost universally, the term “development” is synonymous with “improvement”. (Seers, 1970, pg 2-3)



Establishments such as the United Nations were set up by the First World countries (victorious, Western nations) after the Second World War to bring about socio-economic progress in previously colonised countries which had a majority of the world's population but only a small fraction of the wealth. Programs at these establishments focused on poverty alleviation and economic growth, and more recently, human development, in an attempt to make these nations similar to the Western powers. Hence, these establishments decided what were to be the end goal of “development”, and also the action undertaken in order to achieve this goal. (McMichael, 2004, pg 22) The International Monetary Fund was established in 1945 with the aim of securing financial stability, boosting growth and reducing poverty around the world; however it seemed to serve the purpose of establishing American dominance in the field of international economics, trade and finance. It assigned higher IMF quotas to its own Western political allies making it very difficult for emerging economies to gain footing in the international arena. It also changed policies and method of foreign exchange, keeping only American trade at the crux of decision making. (Subramanian, 2011, pg 16-18)



Hence, not all components of development yield favourable results. Modernisation theorists such as Talcott Parsons, Diana Kendall and Walt Rostow look at a society's transition (with or without external help) from “primitive” and “traditional” to “modern” and “progressive”. On the other hand, Dependency Theory is based on the global distribution of wealth; where there

is a flow of resources from underdeveloped countries to developed ones, making the already rich countries richer and more powerful at the cost of poor ones. Theorists who have studied and put forward this theory include Samir Amin, Fernando Enrique Cardoso, Hans Singer and Raul Prebisch. These negative effects can be examined while using the Middle East as a case study.

## The Middle Eastern Countries – Dependency Theory in Action?

A major portion of Middle Eastern economy is based on international trade – export of oil and import of most consumer perishable and consumer goods. This implies that the economy is an “externally” oriented one and, hence, it is dependent on external economies – mainly Western ones. The influence of Western imperialism is seen in economic, political and social spheres in the Middle East.

The Middle East is the undisputed forerunner in the production and export of oil in the world. According to the OPEC, almost two-third of the oil reserves (roughly 800 billion barrels) is located in the Middle East (data obtained from official website of the OPEC<sup>1</sup>). Owing to the importance of oil in all aspects of today's world from private to commercial use, one would assume that the Middle East would be able to dominate the world economy and trade. However, Middle East oil industry is almost entirely influenced by Western policies and needs, and hence has proven to be extremely volatile as they have no control over the market of their primary export. The 1970s saw a huge increase in the demand for oil in countries such as USA (because of the 1973 Oil Crisis<sup>2</sup>) which led to an increase in oil prices and hence an increased flow of capital into the Middle East. This was seen as great “development” owing to the job creation and investment in infrastructure which was a by-product of this oil boom. However, this economic progress was entirely dependent on American needs. For example, now that USA's dependence on Middle Eastern oil has declined, experts at the IMF estimate that Saudi Arabia (Middle East's largest economy) will be

bankrupt by 2020 owing to low prices of its main export and a non-decreasing dependence on exports. One of the strongest economies of the world has crumbled owing to the decrease in demand of one commodity, yet their refusal to reduce market share in a bid to maintain economic-political importance has led to a staggering revenue loss of almost \$360 billion<sup>3</sup>.

The growing economic prosperity due to this development also brought about an increased affinity for foreign consumer goods. The growing population also needed more food, the problem which was compounded owing to the decreasing food-sufficiency. Experts at Reuters expect the import food bill to double to over \$70 billion in the next two decades<sup>4</sup>. Another factor which affects the decreasing food sufficiency is the rapid urbanisation of the countries – one of the primary components in modernisation. In a bid to constantly Westernise, the investments in urban spaces have come at the cost of ignoring agricultural areas. Coupled with unsuitable geographical and climate conditions, the Middle East has been forced to become one of the world's largest importers of food grains<sup>5</sup>.

### **Modernisation and Westernisation of the Middle East**

While the above described Dependency Theory shows the negative effects of development in the economic sphere with the establishment of Western superiority, the social effects can be seen under the Modernisation Theory which focuses on the increasing globalisation, urbanisation and Westernisation in developing countries in order to become the Western epitome of a “developed” and “modern” society. According to the World Bank, the Middle East has one of the largest urban growth rates of 4% and today, almost 60% of the total area is urbanised. The more “Westernised” way of life has been highly criticised by Jalal al-i Ahmad in his book “Occidentosis: A Plague from the West” in which he talks of the concept of “Gharbzadegi” (a term coined by Ahmad Fardid) which literally means “Westoxification”. Gharbzadegi refers to the socio-cultural hegemony of the West which is caused due to the Middle East's sense of compliance to Western wishes at all times and how this has worsened the already asymmetrical power dynamic between the Middle East and Western powers. He criticizes the shift from “traditional” or “conservative” values in terms of values, culture and norms, in favour of what is “Western”. (Al-i Ahmad, 1962, p 43, 62, 98)



This analysis is similar to one proposed by Edward Said

in Orientalism. “Orientalism” refers to the way in which the West portrays an exaggerated, fictitious and “exotic” image of the East which started in the European Enlightenment and subsequent colonization of the Middle East. He calls it as the “Western knowledge of the East” which leads to the establishment of the East as the non-European, and hence, different and weak “Other”, while also only putting forward a homogenised image of the entire East. This image was spread through mostly through art and literature created by the colonizers during their time spent in the East or Orient. He speaks about how this Orientalism was a form of rationalising the colonization of the Middle East owing to the widespread stereotype of the latter being inferior and in need of help provided by the West. (Said, 1979, p 38-40, 65-66)

Al-i Ahmad speaks about viewing one's own self as the “other” in context to the West. This leads to a loss of “self” in the race to absorb Western culture; how, the individuals in countries like Iran will be unable to recognise themselves owing to the “westoxification” of the traditional customs, manners, food, dress and language, making them strangers to themselves. Consequently, there is a convergence in economic and social hegemony of the West. The East exports labour and oil at very low prices to the West (as dictated by American policies) and in return becomes a dumping ground for Western finished goods and ideology, norms and culture. It is this warped power relation which he terms as gharbzadegi. (Al-i Ahmad, 1962, pg 34, 57)

However, it must be noted that these authors wrote in a very different era. Modern day Middle East is more affected by its history of conflict and revolutions, famines and globalisation which has brought in increased technology and communication. Today, it is a common sight in countries of the Middle East to see the rich upper class being very international, yet traditional. While their increased wealth due to international business and trade has led to an increased awareness of Western culture and consumption of foreign goods, it is common practise to see them still dressed conservatively with their heads covered and taking time out for prayer. This was described by Simon During in his book Thatcherism, whereby the uncertainty of increasing wealth due to economic liberalisation brought about an increase in cultural conservatism. In a region where market forces rule the society leaving an insecure uneasiness (as seen in the situation with oil which rules Middle Eastern society) individuals and society as a whole tend to celebrate traditional, long lasting values such as importance of family, religion and customs. (During, 1999 p 12)

However, another aspect that this increased Westernisation and Globalisation has brought about is fanaticism, particularly the radicalisation of Islam. Westernisation and globalisation are closely related to modernisation. Many individuals of the Middle East (particularly, extremists) view traditional, religious values as being mutually exclusive to modern, individualistic, or commonly called “rational” and “scientific” thoughts and, hence, feel that their these Western values threaten their traditional ones. (Rubin, 2003) Islamic militants also claim that it is rampant globalisation which has caused them to take up their cause of jihad in a bid to protect their religion. These militant groups blame American policy for their defeat in their home ground owing to American allegiance to enemy nations. Hence, apart from protecting their Islamic ideology, they undertake anti-American steps due to a feeling of betrayal from the superpower who controls world politics. (Griffel, 2003) While the increased flow of communication and technology tends to bring about a more profit-driven society, this has been used by extremists to propagate and spread their ideology and interpretations of Islam, and being able to maintain relations with followers across the globe. In fact, today's events of global terrorism are due to the availability of such deadly technology in regions inhabited by extremists. The American government supplies countries in the Middle East with ammunition of advanced technology in a bid to combat extremist groups who in turn are able to get their hands on the ammunition. (Hayden, 2005 p 172-188)

### **Bhutan - An Alternative Model**

To break away from Western hegemony, developing countries should, perhaps, shift focus on self-sufficiency and preserving traditional culture rather than only chasing economic growth based entirely on calculation of GDP or aping of western ideas of “modernity” or “development”. This is not entirely impossible, as shown by the Bhutanese model. The vision for the Gross National Happiness is elaborated by Karma Ura who is the President of the Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research. He elaborates the “Five Guiding Principles of Development” which rejects the Western focus on increasing GDP and instead focuses on fulfilment of the citizens, self-reliance in the economy rather than international trade, protecting the environment and ecological biodiversity by curbing industrialisation in sensitive areas, working towards regional balance rather than accumulation of wealth in urban areas, community centres of decision making, thereby contributing to decentralisation of power, and

lastly, cultural preservation. To protect the country from homogenisation of global culture, there has been a focus on “glocalisation”<sup>6</sup> and protection of Buddhism. The government has invested in tourism in rural areas to bring about a sense of pride in tradition, as well as, protect the inhabitants from poverty. Dzongs (local monasteries) are still popular as centres of community meeting to feast and enjoy, along with being spiritual centres.

However, this grasp on tradition (which is deemed outdated by promoters of Westernisation/Modernisation) has not come at the cost of citizens' quality of life. (Ura, 2005) The focus on “Happiness” implies that it cannot be quantified; however, the government aims to banish all barriers to achieving it. In less than a decade (2007-2012), the poverty rate has halved to 12%, healthcare and education for all is free, life expectancy has shot up by a whopping two decades and per capita income has increased by 450%. If it is this end result that is the aim of development, why must we choose to believe that there can be only one path to the same goal?

To conclude, while Western powers may have promoted and worked towards spreading a homogenised idea of development and prosperity, however, a more holistic approach must be encouraged by which countries around the world can be allowed to choose their aim and path to development.

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### **Endnotes**

1 According to the data found on the OPEC website, 66% of OPEC's roughly 1200 billion barrels of oil resources are located in the Middle East, with Saudi Arabia having the most reserves among the Middle Eastern countries with over 22% of total OPEC reserves.

**Reference:**  
OPEC Share of World Crude Oil Reserves. (n.d.). Retrieved November 13, 2015, from [http://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/en/data\\_graphs/330.htm](http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/data_graphs/330.htm)

2 The 1973 Oil Crisis led to a quadrupling of oil prices around the world within a span of just one year. In reaction to American involvement in the Yom Kippur War (fought between Israel and a coalition of Arab states), members of the Organization of Arab Petroleum

Exporting Countries raised prices of oil and placed an embargo on exports to all countries that allied with Israel, most notably the USA. They continued to cut production, thereby pushing prices even higher.

**Reference:**

Oil Embargo, 1973–1974 - 1969–1976 - Milestones - Office of the Historian. (n.d.). Retrieved November 13, 2015, from <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/oil-embargo>

3 According to the report found on Al Jazeera's website written by Abid Ali, revenue losses in the Middle East due to the international decline in oil prices amounts to \$360 billion, as told by IMF's Middle East director Masood Ahmed. Saudi Arabia is the region's largest oil exporter and, thus, is now facing huge budget deficits of 21.6%, and without any change in current economic scenario, the kingdom is expected to be bankrupt by 2020. This is due to the fact that oil remains as the regions prime export item and finances their huge import bills consisting of food, consumer and capital goods. However, instead of reducing production thereby pushing the prices up, the OPEC has chosen to continue supplying the same quantity in order to maintain its position as the prime producer of oil.

**Reference:**

Ali, A. (n.d.). IMF: Saudi Arabia running on empty in five years. Retrieved November 13, 2015, from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/imf-saudi-arabia-151022110536518.html>

4, 5 The World Bank states that the Middle East is a net food importer and is dependent on imports for almost half of their food requirements and almost entirely for staple food items such as wheat. In fact, according to a report written by Chris Arsenault published on Reuters, the import food bill is expected to double from \$35 billion to \$70 billion owing to the increasing population and no improvement in the agriculture sector. The increase in population is coupled with growing migration to urban areas and deteriorating climate conditions which have been a barrier to the growth of the region's own agricultural sector.

**Reference:**

Arsenault, C. (2015, September 11). Fears grow as Middle East food import bill set to double by 2035. Retrieved November 13, 2015, from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/09/11/food-climatechange-mideast-idUSL5N11G4AP20150911#7Zom2EmJSYCxrFKF.97>

Resources For Middle East and North Africa. (n.d.). Retrieved November 13, 2015, from <http://>

[web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/0,,contentMDK:21840570~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:256299,00.html](http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/0,,contentMDK:21840570~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:256299,00.html)

6 The Middle East has shown an average annual growth rate of 4% for the decades 1984-2004, which is the second highest anywhere in the world – only after Africa's Sub-Saharan region. The Middle East also has a urban area of almost 60% of its' total geo-political area, which is higher than the world average of around 50%.

**Reference:**

Fahmy, A., & Dhillon, N. (2008, June 11). Urban and Young: The Future of the Middle East. Retrieved November 13, 2015, from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2008/06/11-middle-east-urbanization-dhillon>

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7 “Glocalisation” is a portmanteau of the words “globalisation” and “localisation”. It was popularised by the sociologist and globalisation theorist **Roland Robertson**. The term glocalisation can be described as a convergence of global dynamics and local culture. The most common way of understanding this term would be to observe the manner in which international brands alter their products in a manner that would be most appealing to people of a region. For example, McDonalds in India offers a wide range of vegetarian options and spicier burgers owing to the country's widespread influence of Hinduism and other religions advocating vegetarianism, as well as, our palate for spicier food.




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# Abstract Expressionism: Art, Propaganda and the United States

Simone Gandhi, TYBA

*This paper attempts to explore the politicization of Abstract Expressionism in its use as a propaganda tool for the Cold War, and views the United States' attempt to do so through a Political Realist lens. Gramsci's notion of Hegemony is used to supplement the contention that the success of Abstract Expressionism had its roots in America's quest for her assertion of cultural supremacy.*

Abstract Expressionism, in a loose sense, may be understood as a vanguard art movement that grew in New York in the 1940's and 50's, post World War II, encompassing a small group of stylistically diverse artists that introduced radical new directions in the world of art through their work.

Artists such as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Mark Rothko to name only a few, in breaking away from normative conventions in both subject matter and technique, created gigantically scaled works of profound emotions and universal themes that stood as reflections of their own individual psyches. Having evolved at an economically, politically and culturally turbulent period for the country, this movement was later to be welcomed as the first, authentically "American" avant-garde, symbolic of freedom and individuality.

The generally accepted claim in explanation of the rise of Abstract Expressionism in New York in the 1940's, remains that it began as an attempt by artists at a non-representational, apolitical, avant-garde art form that could be used as a medium of expression under the face of extreme censorship and political repression arising from severe anti-communist sentiments on part of the State post the Second World War, in addition to breaking away from style and content that served to reinforce the ideals of the State. While the pre-war period saw the American Left as a strong, albeit internally divided front, political developments like the Moscow Trials of 1936 and the Hitler-Stalin pact, over the course of the war, played a heavy role in the gradual but rising disillusionment with Soviet Russia in its potential as a way out of the crisis of capitalism. By 1941, the American Communist Party now supported the State's pro-democracy military policies, and the locus of American art shifted from a site of the protection of American culture against fascism, to individualism and freedom of expression in abstraction (Guilbaut, 1983). Serge Guilbaut in his book "How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art" (1983), proposes that the success of Abstract Expressionism during the 40's lay not in its stylistic or aesthetic qualities, but in its utility as a propaganda tool for the Cold War. He contends that for the world to be peaceful on American terms, especially in

rise of the emergence of a direct supposed antithesis to the American values of democracy and freedom of expression in the form of the Soviet Union, America would need something more than just the political and military strength with which it emerged from the Second World War- it would have to lead in culture as well, and Abstract Expressionism would serve as this medium. The idea that the politicization of this movement- as has been proposed- manifested in its use by the cultural elite and government in propaganda efforts for the Cold War, will be critically examined through a political-realist lens to explore how even art was made to serve a role in America's attempt at its assertion of supremacy.

If the basic premises of political realism (henceforth referred to only as "realism") are to be considered, active steps taken by various American bodies, government or otherwise, in the promotion of Abstract Expressionist art fit sharply within the political ideology's framework. Briefly, the realist paradigm consists of a set of theories that share certain core-beliefs: The principle actors in world politics are states, which are considered to be sovereign political authorities. Concern with their own security, pursuit of national interests and calculations about power characterize state thinking, and states compete for power among themselves (Mearsheimer, 2002). International politics is a sphere dominated by conflicting interests among states, and hence the presence of active or potential conflict, with war considered to be a "legitimate instrument of statecraft" (Mearsheimer, 2002, pp. 25). The zero-sum quality to this conflict often renders it sceptical to the presence of ethics or moral considerations between states, although this issue has been greatly debated by realist thinkers in favour of both sides of the argument.

In "Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War", Eva Cockcroft (1974) contends that the links between the success of Abstract Expressionism and cultural cold war politics were deliberately forged by some of the most influential figures of the time in the realm of museum policy-making, and the advocating of cold war tactics designed to attract European intellectuals. Eminent figures like the Rockefellers, Walt Whitman Rostow and John Hay Whitney used the Museum of Modern Art

(MOMA) to create an environment favourable to the transmission of 'values' necessary for America's dominance in the Cold War, and this political relationship can be clearly perceived through its international programmes. She proposes that as a "tastemaker" in the arena of contemporary American art, the role of MOMA in its overt support of Abstract Expressionism was immense. It engaged in a number of war-related programmes through the 1940's, setting its precedence for its later activities as a key institution in the cold war.

MOMA's international programme conducted exhibitions of contemporary American art both outside and within America, and assumed a "quasi-official character", providing national representation in shows where most nations were represented by their official government-government sponsored exhibits. With the McCarthyist hysteria in the 50's generating issues in the maintenance of the delicate issues of freedom of speech and artistic expression, MOMA found it convenient, and altogether necessary, to take over this role of the international representation of the United States (Cockroft, 1974).

Additionally, the CIA, primarily through the activities of Thomas Braden, was active in the cold-war cultural offensive. It funded a range of cultural and intellectual activities, in the light of extensive anti-communist sentiments in Congress that would prevent any official sponsorship of a variety of cultural activities. According to Braden, "dissenting opinions within the framework of agreement on cold war fundamentals" could be a valuable propaganda weapon overseas (Cockroft, 1974.). Even under the face of extreme censorship from radical right-wing McCarthyists who perceived certain Abstract Expressionists to be "politically unacceptable" and dangerous given their left wing backgrounds, MOMA and the CIA relentlessly continued their promotion programmes.

The CIA as well as MOMA's purpose, hence, in promoting these events and activities lay not solely in contact with foreign intellectuals or international surveillance, but in influencing the foreign intellectual community by the presentation of a powerful propaganda image of the United States as a "free" society, as opposed to the regulated, regimented Soviet Union. These cultural projects could provide the adequately funded and more persuasive arguments needed to win the world over on the benefits of life under capitalism, and especially crucial was the attempt to influence artists and intellectuals behind the "iron curtain". As an art form, Abstract Expressionism became the ideal vessel for this propaganda- an exemplary and absolute contrast to the "regimented,

traditional and narrow" nature of Socialist Realism (Cockroft, 1974) - a form of art whose content and practice was dictated by State guidelines to further and glorify the goals of communism and the Party. Abstract expressionism, then, would have tremendous power as an advertisement juxtaposed against the Soviet attempt to, in the words of Lenin, "(create) an entirely new type of human being" (Czepczynski, 2008, pp.91).

Though a realist lens, power holds a central position of dominance, where a powerful actor may be understood as one who affects others more than others affect them. Power, then, is the ability or potential to influence other actors (Goldstein, 2006). If Kenneth Waltz's balance-of-power theory is to be considered, two powerful bodies in an anarchic order are faced with a structural pressure to "balance" (Donnelly, 2000). Wherever two dominant powers, such as the United States and the Soviet Union face each other, each is considered to be the only real threat to the security of the other, and hence cannot but be rivals. Each must balance its power against the other (Donnelly, 2000). Therefore, with the ability to influence the rival political actor by virtue of power on one hand, and the compulsion to do so on the other, it is no surprise that culture was mobilized to establish the United States' hegemony over the kind of ideology that was deemed appropriate enough to prevail.

For E.H. Carr,  world is governed by an underlying "conflict of interests", and in such a discordant environment, order is based on power, not morality. Additionally, morality itself is considered to be the product of power, and norms imposed upon other nations can then be considered an attempt to perpetuate the powerful body's own interests, where morality may be born of a set of ideologies ( Jackson, 2003).

Directly tying in with Gramsci's notion of Hegemony, the struggle over ideas may be considered as important in social life as economic interests, for the latter may be conducted through ideas itself (Cuff, 2006, pp.161). He asserts that ideas are effectively weapons that play a crucial role in structuring and changing society. Concerns about their objectivity and truth are secondary, since the pivotal phenomenon is the struggle for hegemony- which set of ideas are dominating the intellectual life of the society in question, and thereby affecting the terms in which they think about their situation in society? The realm of intellectual and cultural activities, hence, comprises a site for potential domination and resistance- an area of social struggle (Cuff, 2006). The Cold War may not have been fought directly with arms, but ideas became, instead, the weapons used for superiority, and Abstract Expressionism grew to be the perfect embodiment of these ideas. 

A movement that originally began as deliberately apolitical in nature eventually came to stand for freedom, and embody all the virtues of a liberal society, marketed through propaganda as a more desirable way of life. The United States, while acting upon the dictates of realpolitik, was able to justify its actions under the banner of a neo-liberalism that conveniently happened to align itself with the nation's realist objectives- an assertion of dominance and international control. Expressionism became the symbol of the difference between a free society and a totalitarian one, and artistic propaganda became a kind of "psychological warfare", as termed by President Eisenhower (Guilbaut, 1983, pp. 205). The alluring, popularized abstract art became the avant-garde knife used to cut through the European suspicion of American cultural drought, and transformed its perception to one of liberty and freedom of expression; a way of life supposedly worthy of being universally embraced in the place of Soviet totalitarianism.

Whether, however, the movement's success was the result of carefully planned promotion by powerful bodies or a spontaneous spark ignited by its striking colours and emotion, is a debate secondary to its revolutionary nature- freeing art and expression from being bound by State or cultural dictates in its creation, irrespective of how it was later used. Nevertheless, any State's ability to turn even an intentionally apolitical phenomenon into a tool to manufacture desirable attitudes, remains worthy of a special mention.

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# Lord of the Society: The Paradigm of Perspectives

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*The aim of the paper is to analyse the stark difference in the interpretation of the audience to literary fiction events and those that correspond to them in reality. To further explain this idea the paper will consider the example of The Lord of the Rings. The paper makes an attempt to argue that our perception is structured the way narratives are presented to us. In the end we will look at how a stateless society might help in an intersection of perception between reality and fiction.*

## Introduction

An aspect of society that has been part of its narrative is the existence of stratification since time immemorial. It is a form of inequality that dictates individual or group ranking in society. Stratification is founded on differences among groups that ultimately culminate in the segregation of society into sections that are considered superior or inferior. From the pyramid-like structure of the Egyptian society to the class-based stratification we have today, stratification is found in most cultures throughout the world in both reality as well as in literature.

The world of 'middle-earth' created by Tolkien presents multiple similarities to the world we live in today, be it the hierarchical structure of the social order or even the traditions and ways of its locals. We interpret how it mirrors our world which creates the perfect canvas for us to paint out ideas and theories of the society and its functionality. Tolkien says, "Hobbits are relatives of us ... liked and disliked much the same things as men did" (Tolkien, 1954 p. 2).

Through the course of this paper I will attempt to analyse and explore two broad areas, namely: how there is a flow of power, during and post revolution and whether the post revolution world imitates the one prior to it. I will also look into how we as audience take up different positions in real life revolutions as against those we take up in literary fictional revolutions.

## Conflict Theory and the Lord of the Rings Trilogy

Dahrendorf's conflict theory in its crux says that conflict is the struggle of those in power against those without. This conflict finds its source from power, or more aptly the lack thereof. However the definition of 'power' is what is of greater significance. Weber defined it as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (Weber, 1959). Dahrendorf while he relies on Weber's definition of power, he brings in the distinction to be made between what is considered superior (command class) and what inferior (obey class) (Tittenbrun, 2013). Positions based social stratification comes from reputation, wealth, and rank but moreover it

simply boils down to norms (Wallace and Wolf, 1980). In every group there is a set of definitive norms through which a certain class rises above the rest. And it is this generally accepted norm that defines good and bad and right and wrong in society which becomes the justification for the discrimination that takes place (ibid).

This kind of stratification and struggle for power can find likeness in the form of the famed war of the ring which is the overarching plot line in the novel, The Lord of the Rings. The clash between the free peoples of Middle Earth, which included, among others, the Men, Elves, Dwarfs, and Hobbits on one side, and Sauron and the Orcs, on the other. In order to relate their relations of power with those existing in the real world it is essential to take a deeper look at the universe that Tolkien created. In his fantasy universe, The 'Eru Iluvatar' was the creator of all things in the universe. He created the harmony that resonates throughout the universe, and this harmony stands as a motif to the norms prescribed to this society. Eru created the Valar (guardians of the universe) who ultimately put together all the creatures of middle earth and also personally created Men and Elves. Having been created by him they are all in sync with the harmony of the universe and this allowed them to rise to status and power. Their obedience to the social norm allowed Men and Elves to enjoy privileges like land and the gift of immortality which was exclusively reserved for them (J.R.R. Tolkien 1977.) Their superior position in society was considered as part of the harmony that kept the universe in balance. And it was Melkor who rebelled against this harmony to create a tune of his own (Tolkien, 1937.) Melkor's actions were much like that of an Organic Individual, representing the interest of specific classes. (Gramsci, 1971) He provided the ideology and motivation required to move all those of his creation to realise their inferior rank in society and to assert themselves therein and usurp power.

The nasty, blood sucking Orcs are thought to be villainous throughout the books. However, the narrative that surrounds this imagery can be argued. The reason why readers fail to relate to the Orcs in a positive light is because Tolkien created them as inherently evil creatures beyond redemption. Historically, that is exactly how the Monarchy and the Czarist saw the masses that revolted



against the social system that they perceived to be was balanced and stable. The Orcs who are a creation of Melkor along with dragons, trolls and numerous creatures, formed the vehicles for his cause (his cause to reform the existing system or harmony created by Eru to create a harmony of his own.). It was this uprising that inevitably led to the war.

Whether fiction or reality, all conflicts end in a way in which the structure of society remains more or less the same. Those on top remain on top and take up a different guise of their superior status. For instance, the once aristocratic families in the European society remain the elite in the society with large inheritance to support their position. Revolutions and wars open up society to be more malleable so that people “if they work hard enough” can climb up the social ladder. Even in the LOTR trilogy, the war of the ring, and all the other wars as well, huge losses did not culminate in change. From age to age Melkor and his creations have engulfed Middle Earth in war but every time the power structure remained along with the stratification in society no matter who ruled.

Dahrendorf explores the extent of violence in conflict or the magnitude of the war that the social stratification might entail. He bases it on three vital points: the degree of their position of subjugation, the pluralistic nature of the power in the hands of the elite and the mobility of the people being subjugated and their potential to improve their situation through other means. Since Melkor detached himself from the harmony of the universe, Middle Earth has been ravaged by war that was primarily provoked by the rise of the social demarcation between the Valar and the creation of Eru, and the creations of Melkor. The fight that Melkor and Sauron take on to secure power for themselves and the Orcs, Dragons, and Troll is intense and persistent because of its possession of the three points. The one ring was created as a means to secure absolute power in the universe and so in light of its creation the Men, the Elves, and Sauron have ensued in multiple wars - 'War of Elves and Sauron' and 'The War of the Last Alliance' in the Second Age (Tolkien, 1977) or in the 'War of the ring' in the Third Age (Tolkien, 1954). All the other battles that raged all over Middle Earth were done with the intention of gaining power. This point is in sound relation with reality as well. No matter the cause no resolution would be enough to eliminate the possibility of there being another war. It is an endless process that has been seen over the Ages in Middle Earth and over centuries on planet Earth.

### A Possible Alternative

It is a fair assumption, to make at this juncture, that a system of singular rule would be unfavourable and thus a different ideology needs to be in place to bring about

social order. One ideology that is the forerunner is that of anarchy. Those who support the anarchist chorale have endorsed a stateless and free willed society that is more than capable of sustaining itself. More often than not though, this idea is shot down by the common misconception of the definition of Anarchy as being that of chaos and disorder in the absence of controlling systems. Legal scholar, Gary Chartier constantly reiterates that the State is unjust and unnecessary (Chartier, 2013). True anarchy is seen as a fantastic and seamless structure. Power will always seek to put down those without it. While history and fiction have been plagued with strategies of conquest which assert the political notions that we have today of state government (as ploy for control, creating an endless circle of the collapse) It leads us to consider an anarchist society as an anthropological reality.

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# Rumspringa

Andrea Noronha, SYBA

*This paper seeks to understand a little about the Amish, a traditional orthodox community in America and more importantly about Rumspringa, a coming to age rite in which Amish adolescents go out into the world and experiment and the reason for them voluntarily returning back, using the theory of Deviance given by Durkheim and Parsons' Sick Role theory.*

With the influx of globalization and an increasing infatuation for the Western way of life, the world has become a global village not only in the commercial sense, but also when it comes to ideas like pop culture and fashion, with more and more people participating in a largely common practice. However there is one such community that rejects the Western lifestyle and promotes a more **simplistic** method of living. This is the Amish community, predominantly found in the state of Pennsylvania, America. The Amish are a Christian church that traces its roots from the Protestant Reformation in 16th century Europe and now comprise of a total population (adults and children) of approximately 290,100. It is their unique practices that make them one of America's most interesting religious subcultures.

Some elements of Weber's theory based on the Protestant Work Ethic, like avocation of a frugal lifestyle, hold evidence to the association of the Amish with the Protestants. The use of modern technology is also done selectively, in accordance to the cultural rules and for the benefit of the community rather than to enfeeble it. For example, the Amish accept chain saws but reject televisions and computers. The Amish are driven by mechanical solidarity. The core value of theirs – 'Gelassenheit' – requires them to yield themselves to a higher authority which involves self-surrender, submission and is the opposite of bold individualism and self interest. People feel connected through similar work like agriculture and communal barn-raising, education, religious training and lifestyle which is based on ties of kinship and familial network.

While talking about the Amish, we cannot ignore the significance religion has for them. The 'Ordnung' (German for order, discipline) is a set of rules for the Amish and is intended to ensure that church members live according to the biblical word of God and are devoted to him, the family and the community. Every local church maintains its own Ordnung. Amish church membership begins with baptism between the ages of 16 and 25. However before this, an Amish adolescent experiences a very significant coming to age tradition of the community called the 'Rumspringa' – to run around. It is a sort of 'cultural timeout' when Amish boys and

girls are given greater personal freedom with their style of living and are allowed to form romantic relationships. The Amish teens are allowed live amongst "the English" in cities and are free to behave as they choose, even if that means indulging in non-Amish behavior. However, it is much more nuanced and much less frivolous than what it has come to be known as. Teens have to make important decisions during this phase – whether to return, get baptized and join the church as permanent members and if they do decide to do so, they need to find a suitable mate.

An idea worth exploring here is, how can a separatist and highly Orthodox Church be so tolerant regarding the exploits of its youth? One would find this paradox baffling. The whole notion of a traditional group, when at the prime of their lives, being let loose into a world brimming with "temptation" with allowances to engage in any kind of behavior without being penalized for the same is quite intriguing. From the layman's point of view, it is expected that the Amish teens would want out of their community because of their 'severe discipline and indoctrination' at the cost of their freedom and choice. However, statistics indicate that on an average, 85% of the Amish youth join the church. So now the question that arises is - what catapults them in that direction, despite tasting the sweet nectar of 'easy living' and freedom? Well, this can be explained by looking at Durkheim's theory on deviance and Parsons' sick role theory. The following part of the paper will look at just how they predicted and accepted deviance, as a concept of leaving which actually brings society together, stronger than before, which is exactly what happens with the Amish youth.

Sociologist Durkheim believed that (Durkheim, 1895), deviance is a normal and necessary part of any society because it contributes to social order. In the case of the Amish, the whole idea of Rumspringa is to deviate from the traditional norms and indulge in activities of the 'outside world'. The "Youngie" or young folk choose their peer circle based on similarities in attitudes and interests rather than proximity of locality. These youth groups are called crowds and depict varied levels of conformity or rejection to adult standards of behavior. They also become tech-savvy and show a lot of interest in

media by using websites like Facebook and Twitter to document their latest exploits and befriend non-Amish youth. Young men, called 'Bouve', begin to consume alcohol and cigarettes. Trivial things like cable television, gaming consoles, or even a fridge full of beer tickle their attention. Their environment shifts from a controlled tranquil one to an energetic and emotionally charged one with many more unrestricted outings and parties. An Amish parent or minister would definitely not be comfortable seeing their kids be a part of all this, however they feel that Rumspringa is not consent to go out and 'sin', but rather a way for the youth to 'get it out of their system'. Keeping with Durkheim's theory, he suggested that this time-out facilitates certain sociological functions. Firstly, it affirms cultural norms and values. Seeing a person punished for a deviant act reinforces what the youth see as acceptable or unacceptable. Non baptized youth who leave and go are given derogatory labels like – “yankovers” or “jerk-overs” and all ties with them are severed. Secondly, it unifies others already existing in the society. Those who are newly baptized youth now feel responsible for the survival of the community and experience stronger bonds and respect for each other after experiencing so much. By the end, the constant frivolity tires them and urges them to settle down. Lastly, it helps the youth get clarity of right and wrong after experiencing both during their Rumspringa. Most of the activities mentioned above would be considered wrong according to the Amish faith, but practicing of them, for most, contributes towards reaffirming the youth's faith and those who decide to come back, come with a deeper reverence for it.

Religion being the most sacred in the community, however, has the strongest foothold. Amish youth are taught, before they leave, that their salvation is contingent on their ties with the church. They have been scared into believing that if they decide to leave the church they are doomed to go straight to hell after their death, by both their families and the church. Both the church and religion are deeply revered and unite the community, something that Durkheim emphasized by calling religion “an integrating force”.

Rumspringa is an important journey within social life of an Amish youth, wherein peer groups play a dominant and influential role. This journey is usually envisaged by the teens, and dreaded by their parents. Using Parsons' sick role theory (Parsons, 1951), the adolescents who embark on this journey, can be considered as 'sick', wherein “sick” implies that the sufferer enters a role of "sanctioned deviance”; Rumspringa being the sanctioned deviance from the Amish community and its values. The Amish society adapts to this situation and allows for a reasonable amount of deviation from behavior that would be viewed as typical of a well

person, in this case being, isolation from the outside world, abstinence from alcohol, technology and so on. However, legitimization is necessary i.e. such leniency will be tolerated for only those adolescents who are in their Rumspringa and not anyone else, like children, or those who already have been baptized. Under this theory Parsons describes two rights and responsibilities such “sick” people have. First is the right not to be blamed for the illness and to be given some leeway. This is why, the Amish youth are not restricted from partaking in activities otherwise frowned upon by the church, during their Rumspringa. Conversely, they are responsible for their condition and any action they indulge in and also to get well i.e. the decision lies with them whether to gain membership in the Amish church, or to defect from it.

However there are still some who fall prey to “temptation” by questioning the survival of such orthodox and traditional ideas in the face of modernity. Males more than females are unlikely to come back because females are considered to be faithful and committed while males find it difficult to follow rules and are more confident about making it on their own. In the end, Rumspringa has greater significance than what meets the eye. It provides an Amish youth, who is generally struggling with adolescence and facing an inner turmoil regarding roles and identity, immense psychological and sociological satisfaction as being the arbiter of his/her own fate. My belief is that it is this freedom of choice and accepted deviance, like Durkheim theorized, which ultimately brings them back.

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# The Flow from Profanity to Mainstream: The Sexual Revolution and its Impact on Film

Tanya Pal, SYBA

*This paper will focus on the changes brought about by the sexual revolution in society and its interpretation in films made during and after the revolution. The areas of sexual orientation, promiscuity and race will be explored within the realm of sexuality and its representation in films.*

Sexuality, a seemingly private concern, has over the last half-century become more of a civil interest. Sexuality is generally taken to refer to the social experience and expression of physical bodily desires, real or imagined, by or for others or for oneself. It encompasses erotic desires, identities and practices (Abbot, Wallace & Tyler, 2005 p. 198)

A fundamental cause for the liberation of sexuality and the public's interest in the same was the sexual revolution that took place in the West, through the 1960s to the 1980s. The revolution brought about numerous changes with regard to prevalent attitudes towards promiscuity and sexual orientation, and the availability of birth control and abortion.

This paper will explore the history of the sexual revolution, its impact and its reflection in films, and how it changed the portrayal of sexuality in films.

## The Impact of the Sexual Revolution on Sexuality

The 1960s is regarded as an important decade in the history of the feminist movement. Considering the magnitude of importance given to the status of the man a woman marries, a sex life prior to marriage was considered **utterly profane**.  revolution changed that. Most of the Second Wave feminists criticize the emphasis on female sexuality during this era as a submission to patriarchal norms. Many visual sources of sexual pleasure for men developed at this time, particularly pornographic magazines and films. These feminists initiated the anti-pornography movement in the 1970s. According to them, porn was fueling the patriarchal power structure by using the liberated female sexuality to satisfy the sexual needs of heterosexual males (Chaves, 2011).

The movement that countered this school of thought were the feminists who termed themselves as “sex-positive” in the early 1980s. These feminists opposed all forms of censorship, all social and legal constraints on sexual activity, and any kind of sexual restraint. They argued that sexual liberation was essential for the freedom of women, which was regarded as a form of freedom of speech within feminism (ibid).<sup>1</sup>

## Films

A film can create an atmosphere in which the audience feels a deep kinship with either a character or an experience that is being portrayed. It is this kind of an experience that can have a lasting impact on a person, even influence certain behavior and ideologies. A medium of mass media like film is largely consistent with the popular or growing ideologies of the time. The sexual revolution thus exposed mainstream cinema to areas of human sexuality that was previously silenced.

## The Bechdel Test

In their paper on gender asymmetries in reality and fiction, Garcia, Weber and Garimella (2013) talk about Alison Bechdel's 1985 comic strip titled *The Rule*, which was about a female who listed out the prerequisites of a movie worth watching according to her, “It has to contain at least two women in it, who talk to each other, about something besides a man”. On the basis of this idea, the Bechdel Test was created. This test is used to measure a film's extent of gender neutrality. It serves as an evaluation of the gender bias in movies (Garcia, Weber & Garimella, 2013).

This test does have its loopholes. A movie like *Legally Blonde* (2001), a film about woman who garners her resources in order to get into Harvard, just so that she can marry the man of her dreams, will pass the test, with a low score, because there is a scene where the protagonist is speaking to her female friend about her dog. However, a movie like *Zero Dark Thirty* (2013), which is about a woman planning the mission to take out Osama Bin Laden, passes the test with a lower score than *Legally Blonde* (2001), because it does not contain another primary female character.

The point of “two women talking about a man” is a very loose category. It could be two women talking about any male acquaintance, without engaging in a conversation that reproduces patriarchal dominance/supremacy.

## Fascination with the Human Form

Among the numerous ways a human finds sexual pleasure, scopophilia is one of the principle means. By

definition, scopophilia is using a visual method to please oneself. On screen nudity is one main source of scopophilia in films (Mulvey, 1975).

Any film which Marilyn Monroe starred in was aimed at pleasing the adult male demographic. Most of her films were made in the era preceding the revolution. In this era the image of the “dumb blonde” was accepted and even considered attractive, because in most of her films, Marilyn Monroe portrayed clueless characters.

Movies based on Ian Fleming's famous spy, James Bond also follow this principle. Most Bond films have two women- one a “femme fatale” and the other, a “sensible and sensitive” women. Both are usually extremely attractive and highly qualified in their field. In these films, the sensible woman is depicted as being preferred by society than the femme fatale. This also highlights the fact that the purpose of the femme fatale was purely scopophilic and has very little to do with the plot.

A film like *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) about a male hustler, or *Magic Mike* (2012) which is about male strippers would seem ridiculous in the era preceding the 60s. Only after the sexual revolution was it realised that females too have erotic desires that can be appealed to.

### A “Queer” New Genre

In the 1950s, queer presence in films was negligible. Subtle undertones of queer behavior in films were staunchly denied. For example, in *Ben Hur* (1959), the suggestive physical proximity of two characters of the same gender may have had queer undertones, but society ignored it (Bendel, 2013). Society is naturally apprehensive to ideas that do not conform to the mainstream. It was a natural course of action for the society of the 1950s to ignore queer presence in films, because it was not a widely discussed topic (McGovern, 2011).

Besides ignoring the queer presence, it was also used as comic relief in many films. *Some Like It Hot* (1959), portrays the affections of a homosexual man towards a heterosexual man who is dressed in drag as a comic note in the film. This is symbolic of the detrimental attitude towards the LGBTQ community of that time.

It is only after the revolution, that there has been a wide spectrum of the nature of depiction of people of alternative sexualities. There are films that are made with accurate depictions and others which have used stereotypes as a guide to these individuals. *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) is a film set in 1963, about two men who realize their feelings for each other and how their relationship affects their relationships with their respective families. What is also highlighted that they are

both afraid of revealing their sexual orientation at the risk of being tortured. This is a good example of an accurately portrayed experience. There is a genre of films in which heterosexual actors play the roles of homosexual characters and do so by portraying stereotypes attached to homosexuality which include flamboyancy, vanity and an interest in the performing arts. There is also the stereotype of the sexually promiscuous bi-sexual that is portrayed in *Basic Instinct* (1992).

### Race and Sexuality

Asian American hyper-sexuality was highlighted by the large presence of Asian women in pornographic films in the 1970s. The alluring demeanor and exotic form of these Asian beauties is what enticed the heterosexual white male public.

In her paper on white sexual imperialism, Woan (2008) uses an excerpt from an article titled “Oriental Girls” from the *Gentlemen's Quarterly* (GQ) issue of October 1990, to justify the fascination of white men with Asian women:

*“When you get home from another hard day on the planet, she comes into existence, removes your clothes, bathes you and walks naked on your back to relax you ... She's fun you see, and so uncomplicated. She doesn't go to assertiveness-training classes, insist on being treated like a person, fret about career moves, wield her orgasm as a non-negotiable demand.... She's there when you need shore leave from those angry feminist seas. She's a handy victim of love or a symbol of the rape of third world nations, a real trouper”*

Woan (2008) refers to Edward Said's (1979) definition is orientalism, a “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.”. According to him/her, this holds true in cinematic representations as well. In film, the hyper-sexualisation of women is hegemonic. Congruent with Said's comments, Woan also refers to Hueng (1995) who states that “The power of the coloniser is fundamentally constituted by the power to speak for and to represent.” Furthermore, Woan states that these films sought to paint Asian women as immoral.

The famous 1989 musical, *Miss Saigon*, told the story of Kim, a Vietnamese bar-girl who is arranged as a one night stand with an American Marine, not long before the fall of the city. Kim bares the child of the Marine and constantly fantasies about bringing up her son with her “strong GI”. When the Marine visits Saigon with his white wife, and this makes Kim realize that he has no intention marrying her and commits suicide, leaving her son under the care of the Marine and his wife. Quietly it is noted that she doesn't think of herself as someone that

is fit to be a mother, and believed that the white woman would do a better job.

In light of the hyper-sexualization of Asian women during this era, a marked increase of inter-racial heterosexual couples has been noted in **made** parts of Far-East Asia, particularly Hong Kong and Singapore.

### Conclusion

The sexual revolution transformed the way the general population regarded the topic of sexuality. Though this change in ideology has been greatly reflected in films with respect to nudity, sexual orientations, promiscuity, etc. these depictions haven't changed completely. Films about the LGBTQ community still use stereotypes as a standard, and female nudity continues to be displayed more than male nudity, among other issues.

The reflection of ideas from the revolution has nevertheless raised awareness in many areas. There has been marked increase in the acceptance levels of the LGBTQ community ever since they have been appropriately depicted in films. The physical process of intercourse and especially premarital sex, is represented on a larger scale. This has, with exceptions, influenced the domain of cinema and film and the sexual revolution has thus had a lasting and tangible impact on the Hollywood film industry, in particular.

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### Endnotes

1. Birth control and contraception was also a major factor in the Revolution. It was found that of the women born in the years between 1963 and 1972, a majority of them were engaging in premarital sex, and had at least 2 sexual partners by the age of 20, as compared to those born between 1933 and 1942, who had only 1 sexual partner, presumably their future husband. This is shown in the graph shown below. This was a result of easy access to birth control and contraception. (Greenwood & Guner, 2010).

# Kathak and Flamenco: So Far and Yet So Close

Pooja Kulkarni, FYBA

*This paper explores the role of "human flows" in bridging two dance forms, Kathak and Flamenco. It traces the evolution of the dances and compares their styles. The paper also highlights the Gypsy, Muslim, Convergence and Diffusion theories that seek to explain these similarities.*

## Introduction to the Dance Forms

Kathak and Flamenco, although similar in style, belong to cultures separated geographically. However, through the following research their shared cultural and historical roots are brought to light and the possible reasons for these commonalities are explained.

## Kathak

This classical dance originated in the northern part of the country. The word "Kathak", meaning a storyteller, is derived from *katha*, a Sanskrit word meaning story (Kothari, 1989, P xiv). This dance form dates back to the times when the epics (Mahabharata and Ramayana) were composed. The *Kathaks* were members of a wandering community of scholarly priests, who would perform in the countryside or in temple premises conveying the stories of these epics through song, poetry and dance. This art was passed down orally through the generations.

Miriam Philips (1991) through her Gypsy Theory, suggests that this description of the Kathaks resonates with the description of the Gypsies<sup>1</sup>. She postulates that due to this similarity, the Kathaks and the Gypsies might be the same people. So, the Gypsies were probably instrumental in spreading certain elements of Kathak as it existed then, influencing Flamenco through various emigration waves that they undertook.

Kathak in India was influenced by Islam, through Arab and Turkish invasions and trade with around the 8th century and later, the Mughal rule of the subcontinent, which lasted from the 12th century till the late 19th century. Consequently, the Indian society had to adjust itself to a new culture, thus creating a distinctive Indian-Islamic civilization which also influenced art (Massey, 1999, p15-21).

In the Islamic ideology, any art that represents God in human forms is abhorred. The Kathaks possibly had to modify their art to disguise religious content (ibid, p20-21). Additionally, during this period, the Mughal rulers encouraged dancers and musicians from Persia and Central Asia. Due to this assimilation, Kathak evolved along secular lines and entered what some have called its golden era. From its early form as a devotional expression dedicated to the Hindu gods, Kathak gradually transitioned: moving from temples and into

the courts of the Mughal rulers. It is in this period that the dance movements evolved to include the intricate and mathematically complex footwork (ibid, p22)

With the decline of the Mughal rule and the rise of the European power, Kathak degenerated, attaining a lascivious tone and came to be known as 'nautch' (ibid, p23).

## Flamenco

There's an abundance of theories that seek to explain the origins of Flamenco. The dance form is a mélange of different socio-cultural and musical influences that constitute the diverse Spanish heritage. In particular, the influence of the Moorish Empire<sup>2</sup>, the Sephardic Jews, and Gypsies can be seen on Flamenco.

Around the mid-15th century, Andalusia (Southern Spain) was targeted by the Christian Monarchy during the Spanish Inquisition, forcing the Moors, Jews and Gypsies into conversion, expulsion, or even annihilation. Together, the shared struggles faced by these persecuted groups gave rise to the first traces of Flamenco. It was shaped by the interaction of Gypsy and Andalusian traditions. The setting of the initial Flamenco performances was private, emotional and within the isolated Gypsy familial gatherings - for example, secluded rooms in bars or the patios of Gypsy dwellings.

The strong sentiment of the Andalusian Gypsies were conveyed through Cante (song) and Baile (dance) consisted of basic, spontaneous movements involving elements considered to have Moorish or Sufi influences, for example, pirouettes and uplifted arms.

In the beginning, Flamenco was looked down upon by the dominant Spanish classes, however, with the emergence of the Café Cantantes<sup>3</sup> there was a sudden transformation in Flamenco context and style.

The common Muslim influences, via the Indian Mughals and the Spanish Moors, on both the dance forms indicate the possibility that Muslim culture, and not the Gypsies, connects Kathak and Flamenco<sup>4</sup>. Both these Muslim groups had a special affinity for the performing arts in their courts.

Another aspect of the same theory involves the Gypsies and appears to me as a combination of the Gypsy and Muslim theories. The Muslim expansion from the 8th-18th centuries coincided with the Gypsy migrations and both covered the same geographical areas at some point of time. This brings in the probability of a continuous interaction between the two. The Gypsies were said to have begun their journey towards the western world during the 5th -10th centuries (Philips, 1991, p5), carrying Kathak along with them. Though the migration routes they took are controversial, many agree that their wanderings took them through Islam dominated Persia and then split into two different routes: one that passed through Asia, taking them to northern Spain and the other that went through the Middle East, and eventually into Andalusia. Simultaneously, the same Persian influences probably left their mark on Kathak. So while Flamenco developed as the Gypsies traveled through Persia, Kathak evolved with Persian elements coming to India.

### **Similarities between the Dance Forms**

Similarities between Kathak and Flamenco can be found primarily in two aspects: the dance steps and the evolution of the dances.

Both dances involve uplifted arms, fluid finger movements and rotation of wrists; the footwork is intricate and quick; both rely heavily on rhythmic patterns: a Kathak dancer is barefoot but ghunghroos provide rhythm while a Flamenco dancer has heeled shoes that make the rhythmic sounds. Another prominent similarity is the turns made by both dancers which are rapid and usually end in a dramatic pose (Fellay-Dunbar, 2013).

As mentioned above, the initial performances occurred in private and intimate contexts and gradually moved on to public and commercial settings, thereby developing along secular lines and entertaining foreign audiences (Philips, 1991, p4-5). This shift in context also possibly brought about changes in their form and style, transforming the dances from simple and spontaneous gestures to intricate, patterned movements that rely heavily on footwork. Before garnering national and international acclaim, Kathak and Flamenco were often viewed by the higher classes as debased activities.

We can take recourse to many theories to try and explain these similarities. 'Genuine convergence' is one of them and can be defined as "the independent development of psychologically similar cultural traits from dissimilar or less similar sources, in two or more cultural complexes" (Goldenweiser, 1913, p269). Kathak and Flamenco, that are so similar in their forms, evolved in different ways – the former is a mix of Indian-Islamic cultures whereas the latter was shaped by the Moors, Jews and Gypsies.

However, these similarities seem to end here and bring forth the idea that objectively similar traits need not necessarily mean that they can be classified as actually identical, for they may belong to different cultural settings, and, thus, stand for vastly different psychological facts (ibid, p260). The two dances were born out of two very different responses and served distinct purposes: while Kathak was a form of spiritual expression developed to spread the mythological ideas among the local people, Flamenco grew out of the shared struggles that fostered a sense of cohesion among the Gypsies. This invokes false convergence<sup>5</sup> and reduces the prospect of genuine convergence.

However, as Goldenweiser (1913) claims, the term 'psychological setting' is ambiguous with no distinction made between the psychological setting of a custom and the psychological sources of its origin. If the psychological setting of the custom is considered, then the chances of genuine convergence arise once more since both the dance forms developed similar functions, that of entertaining larger audiences in a public space. According to me, this acts as a strong argument favouring genuine convergence.

According to Rivers (1999), besides the psychological motives, we can determine convergence via inquiry into history of the customs. But, the further we delve into it, the closer we get to the fact that both Kathak and Flamenco share historical roots through the Gypsy or the Muslim influence. This observation favours the Diffusion Theory<sup>6</sup> that disregards innovation (Winthrop, 1991, p83), leading to a critical consideration – how does one then explain the important role played by the Vaishnavite movement and the cafe Cantantes, both being indigenous innovations, in causing a shift in the context of both the dance forms from private to public? If we consider Morgan's claim that diffusion was one of the "mechanisms by which the substantial uniformity of sociocultural evolution was made possible" (Harris, 1968, p177), I feel that the similarities between the two dance forms can be explained by a complex process that includes diffusion and genuine convergence as exemplified by the Muslim theory involving the Gypsies. The reasons for my conclusions follow.

Initially, Kathak consisted of simple upper body gestures as described above. The footwork developed only when the Mughals came, much after the Gypsies left India. While it is not known clearly what elements of Kathak the gypsies took with them, they presumably carried those gestures. These movements are also obvious in Flamenco.

Another distinct feature of Flamenco, the spin, can be attributed to Kalbelia<sup>7</sup> which also seems to have

influenced the Jaipur *gharana* of Kathak. As the gypsies arrived in Andalusia, they may have incorporated the spin into Flamenco in the form of '*la vuelta quebrada*'. Kalbelia makes use of *ghunghroos* that is also seen in Kathak, where they provide rhythm through intricate footwork. These ankle bells probably took the form of high-heeled shoes that serve the same purpose in Flamenco.

Navarro mentions Kalbelia and Flamenco's shared passion for music and adds, "They use music in a very similar way, for marriage, for birth, for everything"<sup>8</sup>. Nieddu, notes, "The roots of the music are close to each other. The rhythms are similar. Just as we have different ragas for different times of the day in Indian music, there are similar counterparts in Flamenco music"<sup>9</sup>. Each Palo (rhythmic structure) in Flamenco corresponds to a particular style of singing that sets the mood and tone for the dance<sup>10</sup>. Themes in serious Flamenco pertaining to suffering and tragedy of life are comparable to that of Indian classical music.

The Persian elements are too evident to be ignored as supported by Pirouz Ebadypour, who mentions that he immediately found Persian poetry and lyrics could be sung on top of Flamenco melodies without any changes to the Flamenco notes<sup>11</sup>. The Gypsies seem to have spread this influence in Andalusia. At the same time, it is widely accepted and evident that various Persian elements brought by the Muslim rulers also shaped Hindustani music which forms the basis of Kathak. The 12 beat rhythm cycle in Indian music that also exists in Flamenco could be a result of this. Similarly, certain Sufi elements like the song themes and whirling dervishes can be found in both the dance forms due to the interaction between the Gypsies and the Muslims.

### Conclusions

In this paper, I have introduced the Gypsy, Muslim, Convergence and Diffusion theories to explore and explain the similarities between Kathak and Flamenco. I believe that the Diffusion-Convergence theory can bridge the two dance forms based on the many observations. However, when certain discrepancies arise, I am at a loss of sufficient evidence. For this, further research needs to be conducted.



### Endnotes

1. The gypsies are members of a nomadic group that arrived in Europe around the 14th century. They speak a language that is related to Hindi and are believed to have

originated from Northern India. There were often blacksmiths, farm workers, musicians, fortune-tellers or entertainers

2. The Moors were the Muslim inhabitants of Islamic Spain, or al-Andalus. The term Moor is a late-antique and medieval Western European usage to indicate dark-skinned North Africans of Arab and/or Berber origin who were responsible for the invasion of Spain in 711 C.E. and the establishment of its flourishing Islamic culture, which lasted from the eighth through the fifteenth centuries. Retrieved November 7, 2015, from <http://bridgingcultures.neh.gov/muslimjourneys/items/show/218>

3. Commercial venues of Flamenco performances owned by the non-gypsies.

4. This idea was put forward by Philips (1991) through her Muslim theory

5. When the similarities between the cultural traits are not psychological, but merely objective or classificatory. Retrieved November 5, 2015, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/534816>

6. The transfer of discrete cultural traits from one society to another, through migration, trade, war, or other contact.

7. A folk dance of Rajasthan that is known for its barrel turns.

8. Ancheri, S. When Flamenco Met Kalbelia Under A Full Moon In Jodhpur. Retrieved November 2, 2015, from <http://www.natgeotraveller.in/web-exclusive/web-exclusive-month/jodhpur-Flamenco-gypsy-festival/>

9. Rizvi, A. (2014, March 23). Jodhpur Flamenco and Gypsy Festival: The return of the native. DNA. Retrieved November 1, 2015, from <http://www.dnaindia.com/lifestyle/report-jodhpur-Flamenco-and-gypsyfestival-the-return-of-the-native-1971383>

10. For example Solea, derived from soledad (solitude,) has tragic and sad lyrics that the dancer will reflect in her mood and facial expression. Alegrias, derived from the Spanish word happiness has a much more bright and cheery mood.

11. Retrieved November 2, 2015, from <http://www.straight.com/arts/383931/persian-and-spanish-styles-find-common-ground-jondo-Flamenco-festival>

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# Metamorphosed Identity: The Meitei Hinduism

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*The paper intends to explore the conversion of the Meitei community into Hinduism which has led to a brand of Hinduism known as the Meitei Hinduism through the processes of sanskritisation and de-sanskritisation.*



## Introduction

Manipur is a state in the north eastern region of India that shares its border with the neighbouring country, Myanmar. The Meitei reside in the valley while the hills are inhabited by the Nagas and the Kuki tribes. Both these topographies also get contrasted through totally different religions. In the valley Meitei have adopted Hinduism, the Nagas and the Kukis in the hills are predominantly Christians. While there is no doubt that the emerging Christian identity of the tribe needs serious **introspection**, this paper limits itself to the understanding of the conversion of Meitei into Hinduism

The history of the Meitei community indicates that they had their own pantheon of gods and before Hinduism entered this soil, the hierarchy was not ascriptive as seen in caste system but the categorisation was measured in the distance one had with the royalty. The closer the distance, the higher the status of the person was considered.

The advent of Hinduism took place in 18th century through the sect called the Bengal Vaishnavism. This paper intends to discuss the rise of malleable identity of the Meitei after the Hinduism touched this soil and was declared a state religion. It attempts to give a sociological understanding of synthesis of major religion with the indigenous notions of belief system

## A Short Genesis of the Flow

Manipur's recorded history dates back to 33AD when it hadn't even acquired the name "Manipur" and was known as either *Kangleipak*, or *Poireipak Meitrabak*. It was only during the reign of the King Garibniwaz in 18th century, who declared Vaishnavism as state religion, did it get its name as Manipur. During Seventeenth and the eighteenth century, the Hindu missionaries fled from Aurangazeb's domain to areas like Assam. The Mughals were unable to defeat the Ahoms (present day Assam) and this probably attracted the hindu missionaries, The Ahoms, the Kacahri Kingdom and Tripura gradually fell under the Hindu influence and the western kingdoms of Manipur neighbouring these regions was being influenced by the Vaishnavite Hinduism.

The kings did not see the Brahmins as any substantial threat rather; they were intrigued by their ways. They

were allowed to marry Meitei women as they mainly came without families. They were not given much importance in the society there is a clear indication that they were not given a responsible status neither were their faith or doctrine readily accepted initially. (A Critique of Hindu proselytization in Manipur, Dr. Thingnam Kishan Singh, 2009)

This began to change with the accession of King Charairongba, father of King Garibnawaz whose real name was Pamheiba. Charairongba was the first king who converted to Hinduism. Since he was already a king, to make himself akin to pan Indian kingship identity he probably took to Kshatriya status to achieve that identity. He however did not attempt to make Hinduism a state religion. It was Pamheiba who established Hinduism as the State religion. What may have really motivated the king to convert is still unknown. The Brahmins probably influenced the kings to convert as how else will they find a place for themselves in the society they now lived in? The Meitei were converted to Hinduism by assigning all of them the *Kshatriya* status. As Dumont said Kshatriya and the untouchables are the two entry points to Hinduism. (Dumont,1966) Conversion necessitated to assign a caste high enough but only one degree lower than the Brahmins themselves, as why would they accept lower castes of untouchables through conversion? Also, converting from below would not strike parallel and would have been difficult to fuse with the already existing structure. This is because untouchables never existed in the already existing structure. Since they were already divided into horizontal divisions of exogamous groups called *salais* (clans), it was easy to shift them to the seven *gotras* (the Hindu exogamous divisions based on the nomenclature of the *Sapta Rishis* (seven sages). Hence there has been no other castes other than the brahmins who came from outside and the *kshatriya*. Only those who rebelled and refused to adopt Hinduism were declared outcastes and were sent to the peripheries of the kingdom. Although these are the people who have been assigned schedule caste status by the government of India, they were not at all understood in terms of shudra and are not at all untouchables.

Sanskritisation, a concept propounded by MN Srinivas states that through this process the lower caste or the tribe by accepting the culture of the higher caste and copying their lifestyles try to climb the ladder of caste

hierarchy.(MN Srinivas 1952). This was different in case of the Meitei since here people took to vaishnavim because the king told them to do so. Hence sanskritisation was not an individual phenomena but part of the state paraphernalia whereby the newly absorbed Brahmins and the intellectual class started to re-write the cosmic pantheon as well as the mundane history linking Meitei to the Mahabharata where it was asserted that Arjuna came to Manipur and married princess Chitrangada the daughter of King Babrubhavan. The overt symbols of wearing Chandan tilak, tulusi beads became a blazoned form of asserting one's identity as Hindu. This shift to Hinduism also marked by their assertion as purer and therefore higher in ritual cleanliness to the tribals and all those who didn't convert to Hinduism.

After the conversion, there was a process whereby the Meitei pantheon of gods were given a striking parallel images to the Hindu gods. *Nongpok Ningthou*, who is one of the Meitei *Ngakpa Lai* or directional deity, has been identified with its Hindu equivalent, Lord Mahadeva/ Shiva. *Ima Panthoibi*, the wife of *Nongpok Ningthou*, is associated to Goddess Durga. Since then, *Panthoibi* is being worshipped during Durga Puja celebrations. This process of re-imaging themselves as the believers of Hindu gods as similar to believing in the Meitei gods was a process of Sanskritisation by the Meiteis.

Even in the Meitei ritual that is exclusively in the domain of the Meitei pantheon, we see the penetration of Hindu elements.. A festival called the *Lai Haraoba* (literally —rejoicing of the Gods) which is mostly preserved in its original form; it is a time when the local deities join the humans in celebration. Here also one sees an intermixing of terminologies and concepts. For instance, the chant addressed to the rain deity is "*Sibo linga Sri Swar Sanamahi, Sibbo linga Sri Swar Thangjing, maikai ngakpa Bishnu He! Narayan.*" The first call – *sibo linga* implies the shiva lingam (Shiva's phallus). The consecutive calls –*Sanamahi, Thangjing* are the divine figures and *Maikai Ngakpa* is the local name for the household and directional deities.

In spite of all this, we do see at the same time the de-sanskritisation process going hand in hand. The ideals of a Hindu woman did not find its place in this society. Manipuri women do not follow the *pativrata* syndrome whereby the husband is treated like a God. They are financially independent and are visible in the public domain. There are no child marriages, no sati, and wailing of widowhood is unheard of. The Maibis (the priestess of the pre Hindu faith) still have a platform in the society. When it comes to rites de passage, most of the rituals are conducted by the Brahmin priests, in *swasthi puja* (sixth day celebration of the birth of the child), but it is the *maibi* who formally gives the child to

the mother after some 'negotiations'<sup>1</sup>. Then, during the marriage there is a ceremony of *kanyadaan* (the gifting away of the daughter), but the rituals are not around the sacred fire and a simultaneously the ritual of observing the movement of the two fishes in the pond proclaiming the success or the failure of the married life is of the pre Hindu tradition. The most important life events of birth and death can only be declared by the *Maiba* and the *maibi* (the priests and priestesses of traditional Meitei faith) and only then the Brahmin priests take over the rituals.

Hinduism has been adapted to suit the early traditions and customs, likewise the old customs and traditions have been assimilated to the larger Hindu structure of worship. Therefore, the process of sanskritisation and de-sanskritisation went hand in hand to give a Meitei brand of Hinduism.

### Conclusion

Among the Meitei therefore one can say that Hinduism has influenced the indigenous belief systems but it has not been able to replace it. Hence we have today what the scholars of the region call the Meitei brand of Hinduism<sup>2</sup>. Today one can also see the symptoms of a reverse flow. The identity issues are gaining prominence and there is a surge to go to their roots. This discourse is gaining ground in their attempt to recognise the ancient religious traditions and also to rejuvenate it. The movement of the revival of the Meitei faith is accompanied by the re-introduction of the *Meitei Mayek* (Meitei script) in educational institutions<sup>3</sup>. Hinduism influenced the Meitei society in 18th century and its effects have flown since then. Today the ideas of nationalism, identity, and the return to the roots are gaining grounds. Probably it will yet again flow into another metamorphosed identity.

### Endnotes

1 It's a symbolic selling of the baby to its mother and to test the love of the mother for the child as part of the ritual.

2 Brara Vijaylakshmi (1998) Politics Society and Cosmology in India's North East, OUP, Delhi p. 122

3 The Brahmins had introduced the Bengali script along with the conversion

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# Migration in Mumbai

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*Rural-urban migration leads to development of the economy and leads to cultural conflicts simultaneously in the urban area. Various aspects of this dual impact of migration are analyzed with respect to Mumbai. Historical-structural models given by M. J. Poire and Saskia Sassen are used to explain the neo-Marxist perspective towards migration.*

Migration is one of the most vital issues today. With controversies around the European migrant crisis, the debate around migration has lit up once again. Here, we'll focus majorly on rural urban migration, which can be broadly defined as a flow or a movement of individuals from an under-developed region to a relatively developed one. This paper analyses the dynamics of rural urban migration with special focus on Mumbai.

Conflict between locals and migrants is seen everywhere. Every society has a concept of the "out group". As the number of "outsiders" grows in the area, locals try to protect their identity and their territory from these outsiders. There are always those politicians who benefit from this.

Mumbai is the financial capital of India. Thus, migration is not a new thing for this city. Development in Mumbai began in early decades of twentieth century. It has witnessed numerous waves of migration from initial development in trade, growth and fall of cotton industry to the high growth period post globalization. As the number of migrants started rising rapidly residential area and resources became scarce. Migration generally leads to overcrowding, unemployment and lower wage rates. In this case it has generated regional disparity. Workforce of the rural area shifts to a city which can leave the rural area paralyzed. Lack of employment opportunities and necessary infrastructure drastically contrasts the rural area from urban. The arguments made against migration stress on the ill effects of over-crowding like housing problems, sanitation problems, administrative problems etc. While all of this is true and needs to be handled carefully, the cultural, ethnocentric side of the arguments seems problematic. Arguments and beliefs like Maharashtrian culture is inherently better than migrants cultures' have no rational basis.

Many historical events have shaped **Marathi identity**. Beginning with Shivali's Swarajya, Maharashtrians have a proud history, which includes the Peshwa period, works of numerous social reformers, participation in the independence movement etc. Certain right wing political parties of this day try very hard to keep this identity exclusive. The ethnocentric perspective keeps the cultural exclusiveness strong. Parties like Shiv Sena

and Maharashtra Navanirman Sena are based on the ideology of Marathi nationalism and use divisionary politics to create vote banks.

Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navanirman Sena (MNS), working around the themes of regionalism and language politics, have accused the non-Marathi workers of stealing the jobs from the locals and spoiling Maharashtrian culture. For example, on 13 August 2013, shopkeepers and migrant workers from North India were attacked in Kolhapur publicly by Shiv Sena and Raj Thackeray's MNS workers who were purportedly angry about the rape of a two-year-old child on a construction site by a worker from Jharkhand. (Labourer held for raping infant, MNS, Sena men attack migrants, April 8, 2014, Indian Express) They portray migration as the cause of all social evil. Migrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have faced hatred and discrimination from the locals. There have been many accusations and attacks on migrants in Mumbai. Charged speeches by the politicians like Raj Thackeray have attracted a chunk of Maharashtrian youth. Shiv Sena began attacking south Indian migrants for unemployment in early 1970s. (Gupta D., Harvester of Fear, November 23 2012, India Today) Shiv Sena rallied against the communities of South Indian migrants and pressured employers to hire Marathi youth. This coupled with ethnocentric speeches worked in favor of Sena and created a loyal voter base for them in Mumbai. Recent violent attacks on north Indian migrants were witnessed in February 2008 in major cities of Maharashtra. In October 2011, MNS party campaigned against the errant auto-rickshaw drivers, especially those who had migrated from north India. (Shiv Sena, MNS target migrants again, October 6 2011, Hindustan Times) Progress or stagnation of the local economy is often neglected in such matters and relation between the locals and the migrants, turns into a politicized blame game. These right wing parties have successfully continued the migrants issue during this time. Reservation for Marathas was approved by the state government on December 23, 2014. Some legitimate issues like shut down of Marathi medium schools get neglected due to the fascist nature and aggressive approach of these right wing parties towards issue of migration. If they take a more assertive stance rather than an aggressive one then these issues might be resolved.

With so many anti-migration cries it is necessary to check whether migration has any positive impacts. Development studies recognize rural urban migration as a growth inducing phenomena. Migration, loosely translated into 'increased supply of labour' boosts the urban economy. In order to understand a neo-Marxist perspective towards rural urban migration, one should be familiar with a phenomenon that exists in various economies of the day — 'Dual Labour Markets'. A dual labour market is usually present in developing or developed industrialized countries. The Market is divided into two sections: a primary market is formal in nature where all activities are considered to be legal and authorized, where workers are required to have certain skills and are financially secured by government and market policies like pensions, health insurance etc. On the other hand the secondary market is very informal and is primarily characterized by low paid jobs, no job security and unauthorized activities. Secondary or Informal markets in Indian economy are a live example of this phenomenon. In Mumbai, street vendors, hawkers are an integral part of city life. The informal sector here covers a large variety of services - right from street food stalls to selling toys, clothes, books. Apart from the informal sector the secondary market may also include certain low wage jobs in formal market like cleaning staff, domestic servants, caretakers etc. Secondary sector is one of the greatest opportunities for semi-skilled migrants in the city like Mumbai. A large number of migrants work as domestic workers in upper-class and middle-class households. Wages in secondary sector are lower than the minimum wage rate in the economy. Yet they manage to attract rural workers as these wages are more than what they would get in rural area.

**Poire**, tries to structure the reasons for large scale labour migration. According to Poire, the labour migration is mainly a result of pull factors rather than push factors looking from purely economic perspective. Pull factors like growing industries and demand for labor are stronger than Push factors like lack of employment opportunities and infrastructure. 'The creation of the jobs precedes the migrants who fill them.' (Samers 2010: 65) This is directly a result of flexible nature and low costs of the migrant labor. This analysis can be completely true only in cases of first round of migrants. When migration continues for a long time, unemployment tends to rise. As the supply of labour increases, new generation of migrants are worse off with fewer employment opportunities and lower wage rates. When Mumbai started growing as the financial capital of the nation, various sectors began to flourish. Employment opportunities were generated in large numbers. This attracted migrants from under-developed regions. The population began growing and thus the

needs of the population grew too. In order to fulfil these needs various sub-industries, domestic markets, informal markets were generated. They grew rapidly as there was demand and opportunity. Thus jobs may precede the migrants but only partially because increase in overall population also increases demand for labor in certain industries like domestic labor etc.

Saskia Sassen, in her work on 'global cities', argues that the socio-economic structure of cities is in hourglass shape, with bulges of high income and very low income inhabitants, where the latter serves the former (King, 2012:17) The lives of well paid workers in the city depend on the services provided by the workers in secondary market. Informal sector widens as more and more migrants occupy it. This leads to the belief that migrants have taken over certain sectors and have a virtual monopoly.

Historical structural models stress on the pull factors of the urban economy which precedes the process of migration itself and dependency of the primary market and locals on the secondary market. It shows how migration helps the development process of the urban area by supplementing the primary market. In a metropolitan city like Mumbai we experience the necessity of the services provided by the domestic workers or street hawkers.

Yet, we see conflict around migration. The right wing parties have used various methods to create and widen the gap between locals and migrants. In schools and social gatherings Shivaji is portrayed as a Hindu leader who promoted Hindutva. Religious festivals like Ganapati are given a communal tinge. This year MNS tried to promote 'Marathi' Garba. In many places in India, religion is successfully use as a divisionary tool. But in case of Mumbai, regionalism has proven more effective. Reason behind this can be- Mumbai is a relatively developed city in an underdeveloped country even with internal disparities it is comparatively more developed than many other regions of the country. Due to wide disparity between rural and urban areas, mega cities like Mumbai hold greater attraction for people from rural area. This can explain the over possessiveness of the right wing parties over the region. Mumbai generates vast revenue which with unequal distributions goes in the pockets of the elite. It is easy to blame it on the outsiders than to account for corruption in the system. After terrorist attacks on Paris, many right wing fundamentalists demanded that the government should stop accepting refugees. All immigrants were blamed for actions of a terrorist organization. Sadly a considerable amount of people all over the world hold a similar opinion. The case of Mumbai is just a small version of this global scenario.

We need to recognize that migrants are not the cause of migration. Migration is patterned by the currents in global markets, the 'push and pull' factors of the various economies, nature of the government of different regions and social structure of the region. It is necessary to keep tabs on these social institutions, governments, corporations and financial systems influencing the flow of labour in the world. For, they tend to have the desire and the ability to shape the world according to their needs. Motives of these entities need to be questioned and regulated in order to ensure balance of power. For without balance, the rural urban gap will widen to a dangerous extent, conflicts within urban society will disturb any kind of equilibrium. Without a balance, the cost for development will be several times greater than the gains.

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Seminar

Papers

# Tracing the flow of Indian nationalism with relation to Hindu nationalist identity

Shreya Nair, SYBA

*This paper will look at the genesis of nationalism in India with respect to the Hindu and Muslim nationalist identity that presented itself in the colonial times. Using the theories of Gellner, Miller, Anderson and several other noted theorists, this paper will show the unstable and ambiguous nature of nationalist identity and its changing form over the ages.*

The rhetoric of nationalism rings strong in our country, just as it did during the independence struggle; except its nature has changed significantly. The force of fighting against an outsider unified the country against the 'evil' colonial power. However, the rhetoric today has taken shape of tokenism prompted by misplaced loyalties. The word 'nationalist' is flung around casually, without truly contemplating what it means. Its implications in our lives have increased manifold after the latest general election. 'Nation' as a concept has always been ambiguous and in one way or another, exclusionary. The definition of a nation is based on the assumption of a certain level of homogeneity, which in turn could mean the exclusion or immersion of varied identities into the melting pot of that of one national identity. This paper will examine the varied ways of understanding Indian nationalism with respect to Hindu nationalist ideologies and the Muslim national consciousness. It will explore the changing nature of these ideologies over the course of colonial history.

## Perspectives of scholars on Nationalism

Benedict Anderson defines the nation as 'an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign ferocity' (Anderson, 1991). Anderson opines that the nation is a creative imagination which goes on to have myriad cultural implications. Anderson also gives a compelling argument that the 'convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation' (Anderson, 1991). This reaffirms socio-cultural aspects and the notion of shared past to be the reasons for origin of a nation. However, his argument also throws up an interesting thought that in many cases the shared past is quite brief and the cultural ties are superficial. Despite this, we see several people who are willing to kill and die for their country.

This then brings us to David Miller, who questions the limits of a nation-state. He talks about whether it is justifiable for a nation to take extreme measures to promote or protect the idea of nationhood. When nations try to impose their will on the entire populace, the question raised is whether every participant in the

imagined community feels the same strong tie of homogeneity to the people of the nation. For some it might be 'that identifying with a nation, feeling yourself inextricably part of it, is a legitimate way of understanding your place in the world' (Miller, 1995, p.14). For others, there are different aspects of their identities that take prominence over that of belonging to a nation. In the modernized world, we see this shift with the growing liberal policies that promote movement across the globe; thus allowing the individual to form connections stronger than the one with the nation.

## The Genesis of Indian Nationalism and Hindu Nationalist Identity

When Gellner says '...Nations maketh man; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyal ties and solidarities...' (Gellner, 1983, p.7), he gives us a functionalist perspective explaining the emergence of nations. He states that the concept of a nation was born from the industrial society where barriers between communities are broken and ethnicities compete for space in the economy. Here, the weaker ethnicity would have to assimilate in order to ensure its survival. A parallel can be drawn to the genesis of Indian nationalism. The colonisers served the purpose of uniting disparate communities, in the same manner that industrialisation broke barriers between communities. This would essentially mean that nationalism is a convenient ideology that presents itself by uniting against a common enemy for survival. It involves inclusion of various identities into the whole, which then leads to a stronger resistance; as seen in the very early years of the independence struggle which began by impressing upon the populace, the idea of a common united people bound not by circumstance, but by myths of a glorified past.

While tracing the genesis of 'Indian' identity in the context of nationalism, colonial history is considered as its birthplace. Miller points out that those who might not feel patriotic at other times might be jolted into action if a significant threatening event occurs thereby placing the nation at risk. "At those exceptional moments when the fate of the whole nation is determined collectively, their sense of identity is such that they see their own well-being as closely bound up with that of the community."

(Miller, 1995, p.15) It can be argued that this was precisely the reason for the birth of Indian nationalist sentiment. The bond of strong cultural ties across the geographical area of the Indian subcontinent in pre-colonial times is disputed, yet the massive mobilization of masses with very a fragmented history of belonging to various empires in not a mean feat. This means that the 'outsider' element was a catalyst in the birth of Indian national consciousness.

The various strands of Indian national consciousness developed during the early colonial period and have myriad implications on the events of the next century. John Zavos suggests that "the two ideologies (Indian and Hindu nationalism) developed in the same discursive space, competing precisely on this level of "mental frameworks." He states that this is evident by the fact that some of the most vocal supporters of Hindu nationalism, who are even considered its architects, were all perceived as nationalists who fought against the British.

The thin line between the two blurred regularly, as many a times the Hindu nationalist rhetoric was supported by the Congress. The Indian National Congress from its very inception has a slight taint of the Hindu upper caste influence, as they were at the top of socio-economic ladder. This allowed the British educated, English speaking elite class to gain prominent positions in the core leadership. Across historical research, the common thread of the Congress tilt toward Hindu traditions has shown that although nationalism meant anti-British sentiment, the basic identification marker used was religious and cultural homogeneity. 'The activities of Congress spokespersons, through deliberate and public uses of religious symbolism, were accommodated into understandings of 'Hindu' traditions.' (Gould, 2004, p.7). On the local level, this helped them galvanize the masses through propaganda aimed at a homogenous view of free India. However, it is to be noted that Hinduism as understood by Congress of that time was inclusive in the sense that it 'could be theorized as a universal system, creating political legitimacy by integrating the sensibilities of other faiths and understandings about the nation and the wider world.' (Gould, 2004, p.8).

Hindu social reformers worked actively through platforms like Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj. They classified the evils of Hindu society as belonging to the later Vedic age, which was caused by corruption of the pure ideals of early Hinduism. In this way, it glorified what they believed were the original tenants of Hinduism. It slowly moved from the reformist to revivalist movements like the 'shuddhi movement' by Dayanand Saraswati. Jafferlot (2007) regards this as the first effort of Hindu mobilization and the ideological response to the 'Other' i.e. the Christian missionaries. By

declaring the Vedic religion as a part of the collective history of all Indians, the definition of a nation was no longer territorial but cultural in nature. These movements were the ideological origin of the exclusionary brand of Hindu nationalism which is practiced till date.

It was only by the early 20th century that the Hindu nationalist sentiment was codified into a political movement. Till then it remained a tool for reform and enabled the spread of nationalist fervor. The spread of the ideology of Hindu nationalism is noted as the response to the elitist Indian nationalists. It emerged as a reaction to the moderate stance taken by the Congress leadership and the resulting split between the extremists and moderates of the party. The Morley-Minto reforms 'explicitly affirmed the recognition of a Muslim community and in doing so it also implicitly affirmed the recognition of a Hindu community.' (Zavos, 1999). In the 30's, the Hindu nationalists became much more violent with the formation of 'shakhas' which imparted self-defence and discipline training with the view of arming oneself against the perceived Muslim threat. (Bapu, 2013, p.99)

### The Emergence of Muslim Nationalist Identity

Partha Chatterjee in his book 'The Nation and Its Fragments' examines how Hindu nationalism established the idea that foreign religions are not considered a part of the generic geographical meaning implied with the word 'India'. He claims that Hindu nationalism did not assume any inherent 'Hindu-ness', as their idea of a nation includes even people belonging to other folds like Jainism and Buddhism (since anti-brahmanical religions rose from the Vedic fold). Yet, it strongly excludes Christians and Muslims as they are seen as forces who have invaded/originated from outside of popular imagination of the Indian subcontinent. Such a criterion of exclusion takes on a historical character and tries to create the myth that all those sharing such a past were not true members of the nation. This then leads us to question what place the 'inhabitants of India who are excluded from this nation' (Chatterjee, 1993, p.110) hold in a modern state. The answer to this, as put by Chatterjee, is a majoritarian regime. Using examples of historical stories, he has put forth the idea that Hindu Nationalism in its very basis has the space for the outsiders, yet this space is reserved as one below that of the natural citizens.

In this backdrop, the demand for a separate state emerged, and even post partition, the identity of Indian Muslims with respect to the nation has always remained in conflict. The wealthy could afford to move to Pakistan, but a majority of Muslims left behind in the democratic state of India were and still are disadvantaged as compared to the non-Muslim majority



Paul Brass summarizes the movement of Indian national identity, while also pointing out its inherent instability. He states that before the British, the dominant empires were North-Indian Muslims. 'The struggle for independence from the British was led mostly by Hindus. Muslim political elites withdrew from it and ultimately fought against the Hindu-dominated Indian National Congress. The division of the country into two sovereign states, one predominantly Hindu the other overwhelmingly Muslim, was the result' (Brass, 1991), Post partition, we were left with the schism of Hindus and Muslims and also the division of the Hindi-speaking north and the vernacular language speaking population of the country.

We can safely conclude that the nation can be explained as a sociological concept created by notion of a shared history. In India, the nation symbolizes not just diversity, but the clash of various identities with competing versions of the same shared history. Thus any two groups that hold contrasting definitions of what one's national identity should comprise of, do not reach a consensus as the very idea of nation is exclusionary and creates a binary of 'us' and 'them'. In light of the recent debates we face regarding the 'secular' nature of our nation, it is to be remembered that the nation is a social construct, and although it is politically defined by territorial boundaries, it is very difficult to culturally or socially demarcate one nation from another.

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# Forced Migration of Women from Islamic Countries

Suveera Venkatesh, SYBA

*Through the course of the following paper I have explored the socio-cultural frameworks, with respect to Islamic countries, that have failed to protect and promote women's civil, political, economic, and social rights which leads to large scale migration of women from these areas. The paper also touches upon the issues of a gender neutral International law and problems with gaining refugee status in the countries that they seek asylum.*

## Introduction – An understanding of the concept

Every year, millions of men and women flee their homelands to seek refuge in a country willing to accept them. This is a large and growing phenomenon affecting virtually all countries as the source, transit and/or destination of migrants/refugees. Refugees, asylum seekers and trafficked persons, are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, repression or persecution. These individuals, their families and communities, who are displaced in their own countries or across international borders, are broadly termed as 'forced migrants'<sup>1</sup>

According to the UNHCR Report, 2011 it is estimated that in total 72 million people are victims of this phenomenon. Conflict and violence are said to account for 60 per cent of the cases under the canopy of forced migration. Statistics have also shown that more than 50 per cent of the world's refugees are merely generated from three countries- Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. Women and girls of all ages are said to constitute 47% of the overall population<sup>2</sup>.

## Social Status of Women in Afghanistan and Iraq

A clear understanding of the position women occupy in Islamic countries like Afghanistan and Iraq is reflected in its socio-cultural and historical context. The emphasis by scholars like Fatima Mernissi and Leila Ahmed, on the reading of the Islamic texts is on the patriarchal interpretation of texts. The texts then act as a justification for the subjugation of women in these Islamic societies. In Leila Ahmed's "Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate", she emphasizes that all strands of "legalistic Islam" were products of societies' dominant groups and the male legal establishment. In such hands, "ethical Islam," with its central values of justice, piety, and equality of all before God, took a back seat to a discourse adapted to the patriarchal mores and social realities of a given period (Ahmed, 1992)<sup>3</sup>. Mernissi stresses on the domination of interpretation by male elites. This domination is seen as a result of the position these male or religious authorities hold. As their religious position is considered sacrosanct in Islamic societies, all associated with it, like their patriarchal version of texts are too considered as the supreme. By extension as per Sharia law, women are seen as having the right to only half the amount of inheritance that their brothers receive. Male members of the kin

group have extensive control over key decisions affecting "their" women's lives. Marriage gives the husband the right of access to his wife's body, and marital rape is not recognized. Only men have the right to divorce unilaterally and without cause. The criminal code provides for acquittal or a reduction of sentence for men who commit "honor" crimes.

Many writings on Islamic countries and societies, have termed women in these countries as being empowered. However this empowerment, in a more general view, seems to come only after the fulfillment of certain conditions. If a woman works, the work should not require the woman to violate Islamic law (e.g., serving alcohol), and be mindful of the woman's 'safety'; If the work requires the woman to leave her home, she must maintain her modesty; Her work should not affect more important commitments, such as those towards her family. These conditions seem more as impediment rather than encouragement to work. Women hailing from these Islamic countries tend to have constrained travel freedoms. A woman needs her husband's permission to leave home, though general permission is sufficient for routine trips. According to the European Council for Fatwa and Research, this prohibition arose from fears for women's safety when travel was more dangerous.

In the context of women who migrate from Islamic countries, a need for a better life for themselves and in certain cases for their children is seen as a predominant cause. Women are provided with certain rights in these countries but their power is still seen as being subservient to that of the men. This inequitable distribution results in women being trapped in abusive relationships and the need to escape acts inevitably as one of the core causes behind the forced migration of these women. (Offenhauer, 2005)<sup>4</sup>.

## Experience of Migration based on Gender

While addressing the concept of forced migration is important, being able to bring out a gender specific view to it, is equally important. Having such a perspective helps confront popular notions, like males being the dominant gender and therefore a male's experience of migration being treated as the norm, leaving no space for any distinction between males and females. It is only in

recent years that “gender” is being recognized as one of the grounds upon which an individual can be considered a refugee and given protection. Gender based claims for asylum was earlier dismissed.

Gender, must not only be taken into account, but also must be considered important. In different confines of time and space, notions of gender also differ. Hence any analysis of the way in which gender shapes the experiences of asylum seeking women contextualizes those experiences. It also ensures that the asylum claims of women and are not routinely dismissed as culturally relative and therefore outside the mechanisms for their protection under the refugee convention. (Crawley, n.d)<sup>5</sup>

In most societies, even in cases of conflict, men's migratory process is seen to be comparatively easier than that of women (Torres, n.d)<sup>6</sup>. In the process of migration, women are seen as targets to various forms of violence and rape by external forces. It is this visibility and susceptibility to persecution that at times pushes them to leave their own countries and travel across national borders as refugees or political exiles. There is a greater probability of women facing gender-based procedures and corrupt agents, compared to men. (Torres, n.d). An entry status (irregular, regular, refugee, asylum-seeker, and dependent spouse) often determines residency and employment rights, ability to gain legal citizenship, access to social services such as health and education, access to language training and income security programs. Women tend to have fewer entitlements to the above (Torres, n.d). In some cases it could be due to a different entry status given to them, if they are viewed as “dependents”. Their rights may then be legally based on the migration and residency status of their husband.

The concept of politics is also said to be critical in the process of determining whether individual applicants should be recognized as a refugee. It has been suggested that women are less likely than men to be involved in politics and hence the concept of political opinion is unlikely to be central in the claims of women seeking asylum, but contradictory to this popular notion women are as vulnerable to political violence as their male counterparts, even though their participation take place at a so called “low level”. The penalties for political participation and resistance are much more severe for women than for men because of the cultural and social norms that preclude women's involvement. The stakes are higher not only because they are opposed to the regime in some way, but also because they are seen as shunning their traditional role as a women by being politically active.

It is also important to recognize the distinction that may exist with respect to the experiences of women hailing from the same social scenario but migrating to different

destinations, for example, a women fleeing from Iraq to Pakistan may have to overcome certain obstacles which a women fleeing from Iraq to America may not and vice-versa.

On the other end of the spectrum, certain studies have shown that a particular kind of depiction of this phenomenon could lead to women being merely perceived as victims and nothing more. Migration can also provide a vital source of income for migrant women and their families, and earn them greater autonomy, self-confidence and social status. While migration could entrench traditional roles and inequalities and expose women to new vulnerabilities as the result of precarious legal status, exclusion and isolation, experience shows that migration can provide new opportunities to improve women's lives and change oppressive gender relations – even displacement as a result of conflict can lead to shifts in gendered roles and responsibilities to women's benefit (Torres, n.d)<sup>7</sup>



### Problems gaining a Refugee Status

A refugee status comes with benefits which often include the provision of facilities like food, housing, employment, medical care, counseling and other services, which in turn help them to make the rapid transition to economic self-sufficiency. Having stated this, inability to gain that status serves as an obvious barrier.

Contemporary International law has imposed restrictions on the grant of asylum particularly in recent times. In the International law, the term “refugee”, under Article 1 of the 1951 Convention, shall apply to a person, who has well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group or political opinion. The challenge with the International law is the need for the refugee to prove without doubt 'well-founded fear'. This 'well-founded fear' is decided by authorities based on what one would commonly characterize under it, leaving many experiences to be not “well founded” enough that in turn is problematic as other experiences may be equally traumatizing.

### Conclusion

Viewing it from the perspective of the host country, an influx of refugees does serve as an obvious barrier. The immediate solution therefore adopted involves refoulement<sup>8</sup>. This process puts these women at a higher risk of persecution compared to what it formerly may have been. While providing benefits to women on the grounds of gender and their experiences may create the problem of discrimination of another kind (towards men claiming asylum from these countries), it is a solution that must be temporarily adopted so as to provide an essential boost for these women that are arising from



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# Gender, Sex as labour, and Forced Migration: An Analysis

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*The paper is written from a cis-gender, upper middle class, left feminist perspective. The focus of the paper is on sex-work as a result of forced labour migration. Under the umbrella of forced migration, the paper explores two causes of migration: trafficking and environmental change. It further highlights that this type of migration juxtaposed with assimilation theory is a threat for women in this profession and further how this leads to alienation. This paper takes into account female sex-workers from lower-economic backgrounds forced into this space and thus has a limited scope of study.*

## Introduction

According to Shah, trafficking is a form of forced migration<sup>1</sup> where women are recruited, transported across borders for work through use of violence, deceit, coercion (Shah, 2003) to protect themselves from being deported fall into the web of sex-work. The high demand for labour, combined with strong barriers to entry have created business opportunities for a new 'migration industry'. This includes legal participants, such as travel agents, shipping companies and banks, as well as illegal operators (Castles, 2003). Forced migration leads to a disadvantage for the women migrants as labour laws do not protect them, especially because under the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act<sup>2</sup> sex-work is not viewed as labour. Not only is trafficking a cause but also environmental change which leads to women migrating to urban spaces for better economic opportunities. According to the British medical Journal, it has been predicted that the drying of the sub-Saharan African region families move to urban spaces where their low-economic status foster condition for sex work and unsafe sex.

## Forced labour Migration and Causes

There has been through history, especially since the advent of globalization an intersection of sex work and labour migration, largely by poor women, to urban spaces in search of wage labour. Sex-work in India is not protected by labour laws or migration laws as it is juxtaposed with the Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act, 1956 which does not identify sex work as real work and criminalizes aspects of it. Sex-work thus comes under criminal law, and not labour law allowing the propagation of the current stereotype of sex-worker(s) as 'immoral'. The patriarchal structure creates an environment where women need to sell their sexuality for wages and it is made worse because there is no legal protection provided to them.

As poverty disproportionately affects women (along with their children), they are more likely to migrate in hopes of improving their economic conditions (for themselves and their families). 70 percent of the world's poor is comprised of women and their minor dependents. Further, restrictive regulations, like that of

the Indian (2007) government, induce legal female migration which leads to a rise in illegal migration, as irregular migration multiplies the risk of exploitation of female migrants it might result in trafficking in order to avoid deportation (Sharma, 2011) and "traffickers" then become necessary as migration experts who are able to navigate restrictive border controls and (Shah, 2003). Migration studies and policy making fail to take into account these migrants making this situation more difficult to deal with.

Trafficking is one of the many reasons women make their way into sex-work. Economic migration, for poor destitute women, is another reason for women to migrate within and outside their country of origin for sex work. However, it is not only the individual economic situation of victims but also discrimination against women in the labour market, growing unemployment, environmental change, and a lack of skills and training which contribute to their willingness to search for improved living conditions, and career opportunities via unorganized routes (Sharma, 2011). Many women in India who work in the sex-industry come from drought hit regions of the country. For example, an increasing number of women in Anantapur district are turning to prostitution. In the ten mandals of Kadiri, Anantapur, over 4000 sex workers have been forced into this profession because they cannot find another way of gaining income in this drought-prone region. About 400 others have been illicitly trafficked to Pune, Mumbai and Delhi in the last few years, where they are sold to brothel houses. (Colie, n.d.) The links between migration and economic survival for people living in poverty in India occurs against the backdrop of depleted water tables, drought-plagued arable land, and rural displacement. (Shah, 2013) This leaves women and their children with limited choice and they migrate for work. Often due to its unskilled labour requirement sex-work becomes a viable option for them.

This is not only true for India, but other parts of the world. In the area of mining especially, women and children have been forced into sex work. In Guyana, for example, not only are there serious environmental problems that are being faced due to the large scale

mining of gold, but girls in these mining camps are regularly exploited for sex.<sup>3</sup>

### Assimilation Theory

Between 100,000 to 200,000 Nepali women are working in the Indian Sex industry and between 5000 and 8000 young women are trafficked for prostitution into India each year. The IOM also claims that in India, 500,000 people, or 0.05 percent of the population, is engaged in sex work, and identifies Bangladesh as one of the major originating countries (Shah, 2003). This means a large number of women leave their countries of origin or states of origin to come to metropolitan areas. In assimilationist views the migrants, here the sex workers from Bangladesh and Nepal are characterised as those whose pre-migration culture is useless and even harmful in the new setting (Castles, 2003). They must go through a process of re-socialisation or acculturation, which involves renouncing the original culture, here of Nepal or Bangladesh, and adopt the dominant culture of the metropole that they inhabit. This dominant culture is seen functionally as fundamentally 'homogenous' and 'harmonious'. Migrants, who maintain their own languages, religions and cultures cluster together to cope with racism and exclusion are seen as a threat to the 'harmony', thus have to give up their previous cultures. The immigrant, according to assimilationist views has to be assimilated/ integrated to restore this harmony. This common sense understanding of the need for immigrants to adopt the dominant culture remains highly influential in most immigration countries today (ibid.).

The problem with this theory is its assumption that any place would have one dominant culture at large or even that this culture would maintain harmony. The bigger issue with this ideology is that these women not only have to leave the culture of their countries of origin but also identify with cultures of states that have never belonged to (like Assam and West Bengal) as they have to lie about their origins (Nepalese women for example, many-a-times, surround their narratives of origin to that of Assam) in the fear of violence from their 'brothel keeps' or being deported back, and then assimilate into the culture of their current work places. The problem here is that they are thus part of their own culture, an alien culture, and must somehow forget these cultures and assimilate to the third dominant culture. The lack of laws and the focus on assimilation along with degrading working spaces, environment, violence, threat from the local police, low wages, all of it adds up to alienation of the sex-worker from their body.

### Sex-Work and Alienation

Karl Marx explains alienation as a process in which a person's labour power produces commodities that are products of labour that do not belong to them, or are

'alien' to them. Thus for the laborer, unlike before, these commodities are those which lie outside of him, he feels no personal connect to these products. The alienation occurs between the commodity and the laborer and also the laboring process and the laborer because they are now producing goods that do not belong to them, the profit of these goods are not theirs and they are being produced now to satisfy the needs of an alien consumer. Similarly for the sex-worker the product of their labour becomes alien to them. The body, though not external to the sex worker, ends up being an object that provides satisfaction to an alien consumer. Their bodies are paid for, to satisfy the needs of another (usually a man) and the process of labour, of having sexual intercourse, thus becomes, monetized, tedious, repetitive (Diaz, 2014). The workers who migrate in search of jobs thus get caught in this web of reality; they are alienated from their job and from their cultures of origin without any legal backing and almost no agency over their wages.

### Conclusion

The paper is limited to secondary research and no new research has been done by the author on the topic in point. The problem with sex-work as part of forced labour migration is the lack of laws and regulations that do not help sex-workers escape human rights violations, or even exercise legal power because they have almost none based on the current legal system. The legal system aims to curb trafficking by making cross border migration stringent and sex-work almost criminal, but what they fail to see is the number illegal migrants and sex-workers in the country has been on a rise and none of the laws have helped curb this. The problem is rooted deeper with the government policies not protecting those within the country either. In drought hit areas there is no relief system or policy making that has been undertaken to ensure that families of farmers and farmers themselves get funds and aid from the government. If they did, women and families would not be pushed into taking up sex work as an alternative.

The way to take this paper forward is to understand the possible methods that can be undertaken to make the situation better for migrant sex-workers. One group at large which has done phenomenal work in the country related to rights of sex-workers has been the Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (henceforth referred to as DMSC), a registered a Cooperative Society under the Calcutta government. Since its conception in 1995, DMSC has been lobbying to get feminists, scholars, academicians, politicians, and others to see sex work as work. They came up with the Sex Workers Manifesto, to forward this perspective; they actively lobbied for the repeal of the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act. In fact, a large reason for the Indian feminist movement having a strong debate over prostitution has been because of DMSC.

It is important, vitally so, that more committees come up in the country like this. This will help make the government and people aware of the need for better laws which are inclusive and work towards breaking the patriarchal structures instead of the current ones which aim to only hide them.

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### Endnotes

1. Here, refers to, coerced movement of someone away from their home country/state. Of course, in this context it is very difficult to separate economic causes of migration from forced migration but for the paper I will be looking at economic cause as being a part of forced migration.

2. Under this act soliciting clients, living off the earnings of a prostitute, running brothels, procuring a person with or without their consent for sexual activity among other finer elements of this act are punishable.

3. U.S Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Fact sheet 2014: The Intersection Between Environmental Degradation and Human Trafficking

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# Dis be our story: A Study of African American Vernacular English

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*This paper focuses on the formation and evolution of African American Vernacular English following the Great Migration of the 20th century, and what is now understood as “black culture”, while taking into account the dialect's linguistic features and usage, based on the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and the phenomenon of code-switching. It also tries to address the stigma attached to it, with regard to social status and employability, as a result of media and popular culture representations.*

Diaspora, in modern times, is said to specifically apply to a community consisting of an “expatriate minority community”, however, the meaning of the word 'diaspora', and what it symbolizes, have been altered to include communities that may have migrated both between countries, and within them. Apart from the geographic shift, the migration of culture and linguistics shapes the intricate details of how a community will experience their new social reality.

Language and culture are generally understood as being acquired side by side, through the process of socialization. Culture can also be explained as being encoded within a linguistic structure with reference to specificities such as grammar, syntax and vocabulary that are essential to transmitting them, both consciously and unconsciously. Bilingual or multilingual people are aware that there are concepts, norms, and emotions that are available in one and not another.

An explanation of this is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis that claims that language and linguistic expressions are vital in shaping culture-specific thought and behavior. Thus, people may experience similar, or even the same events, but interpret and understand them differently. It focuses on the unique features of culture from the point of view of themselves and the “other”, and serves as a valid explanation of linguistic and cultural relativity.

Directly related to this is the culturally relative definition of each social role held by individuals in society. Language plays a key role in quantifying an individual's dynamic identity. Language, and its contextual usage, then, varies, based on the social, cultural, political, historical and economic implications of its occurrence. Our social roles are socio-historically defined, implying that how we act, or react in a certain situation is based directly on our perception and understanding of the situation, within the context of its incidence.

The phenomenon of code-switching is indicative of local influences on the linguistic patterns of the diasporic community. Code-switching is the tendency to alternate between two or more languages or linguistic

styles. It is understood as being a method of assimilating and understanding multiple languages and their related features and it enables an individual to communicate most effectively in the context of his social location, and the content of the conversation itself.

In the context of diaspora communities then, **code-switching** allows people to equally represent their “home” culture, while also integrating with the local culture, resulting in the formation of a hybrid third culture. Diaspora provides us with a completely different perspective on the linguistic expression of cultural life, owing to the fact that it is heavily subjective to interpretation, assimilation and understanding.

The Great Migration of the African American community in the United States of America serves as an ideal example of the diaspora highlighted above. It refers to the mass migration of members of African Americans from the Southern states of the US, towards the North and North-Eastern parts of the country, to heavily populated cities, such as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. There have been estimates that close to 6 million people migrated over a span of around 65 years (1905-1970).

The migration was driven largely by the continued existence of racism and segregation in the south, along with failing farmlands, and numerous job opportunities in urban, industrialized place. Subsequently, African Americans abandoned what was then known as the “black belt” of cotton and tobacco farming, and migrated in search of better economic and socio-cultural living conditions. However, while racial segregation was illegal in the north, prejudice and stereotypes still existed.

The growth and subsequent incorporation of black subculture into white, “American” society gave birth to new and unique forms of cultural expression. This includes the use of graffiti, or wall-tagging, music forms such as hip-hop and rap, and the formation of African American youth oriented associations, to promote a sense of cultural identity. The linguistic transition of the

African Americans from their native dialects, to the slang of African American Vernacular English occurred alongside this. As they began blending into the urbanized societies, members of the black community were expected to adopt the nationally accepted Standard English, over their native tongue, and in the process of learning SE, the slang became more and more popular.

AAVE, as with many other dialects, originated from the linguistic concept of a pidgin, or a grammatically simplified means of communication between two groups that do not share a common linguistic background, consisting of basic phonetic and syntax structures. In the case of African Americans, the simultaneous flows of SE along with primary African tongues, or Southern dialects, provided for an ideal situation for the formation of a pidgin that integrated features of both languages, in order to simplify and maximize communicative efficiency.

This was followed by the creolization of what would develop into modern day AAVE. The second- and third-generation African American migrants began to adopt the dialect as their primary or first language, learning and using Standard English only in formal settings. This led to the further development of AAVE, and raised many questions about its direct origin, and its linguistic relevance.

In the comparison of AAVE with Southern dialects, certain patterns are found to be consistently similar. White southern dialects are known to have distinctive features such as negative concord and negative inversion, their lack of inversion in embedded questions, and the use of double modal verbs, all of which are seen in the patterns of AAVE. Similarly, both share similar verb conjugation for the present and past tenses, other than minor variations for the future tense.

The featuring of these “white” American dialects is consistent with the geographical migration, as well as the patterns of the African dialects with which they have been combined. Shared characteristics with other Creole languages, such as grammatical similarities, common vocabulary and syntax, are indicative of the shared ancestry of AAVE and the Great Migration, and the historical significance of its usage today.

Another fascinating, interpretation of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis is seen here, with the expression of terms such as “nigger”, or “homie”, being culturally relative with respect to the social location of the individual that uses the term. Within the African American community, their usage, without negative connotations, implies a sense of empowerment and pride in belonging to the community. Interestingly, were

a white person to use the same term, the socio-cultural implications would be heavily negative, and indicate a form of racism, and discriminatory intentions. Here, the cultural and linguistic relativity rests not in the physical location of the individual, but their socio-historical context.

There is a deep-rooted belief that the Vernacular language is somehow less dignified, or less civilized than Standard English. The origins of this belief can be traced back to the time before the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, when people of colour were often treated with inferiority and contempt.

There exists a common pattern of such linguistic discrimination in the US, wherein any deviation from SE or the generally accepted normative patterns in language are judged as being incorrect, and the speakers are less competent. AAVE related discrimination has been an ongoing problem in American society since time immemorial, and there have been a slew of linguisticism-related incidents that have highlighted it, such as the Oakland Ebonics Resolution.

This controversial resolution was passed by the Oakland Unified School District Board in 1996. It stated that native AAVE speakers were considered to be “genetically predisposed” towards the language, which was considered an entirely independent language system, rather than a dialect or sub-category of English. It further proposed that AAVE speakers be taught Standardized English through AAVE, in order to make them 'more competent', implying that their linguistic skills are not indicative of their abilities. This resolution was met with widespread uproar, owing to its discriminatory implications. Many linguists countered the statement that AAVE was a separate language, citing that it shared as many similarities to SE as any other dialect.

The belief that AAVE constitutes sloppy, incorrect speech is highly problematic, considering that embodies the culture of a distinctly large minority of American society. Following large-scale protest, the Oakland school board issued an amendment in January, 1997, retracting its original statement.

Firstly, the general understanding of what constitutes AAVE has distinct variations based not only on location, but also on community, and various individual factors. Owing to this, as well as logistical flaws, it is hard to find a valid statistical figure to quantify the demographic that speaks it in the United States. It is then understood that while most African Americans do share a common idea of what constitutes AAVE, but the specifics vary from group to group. Alongside this, there is no formal definition of the rules,

frameworks that are not completely supportive of their needs.

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regulations and exceptions for the dialect are, as a whole, let alone its variations. There are very few universally identifiable trends or unanimity within the dialect, leading us to question the belief that the problems faced by members of this community can be easily solved.

In addition to this, a commonly seen feature of AAVE speakers is their tendency to code-switch between AAVE and Standard English, indicating their fluency in both. Studies indicate that African Americans are often consciously aware of their tendency to code-switch, and do so based on their situational interaction. This is also directly related to the environment and comfort levels, and the feeling that a situation could potentially benefit from, or require the use of AAVE in order to shape its outcome.

In addition to this, it should be noted and remembered that the existing media and popular culture representations of the African American community, and AAVE, are both heavily coloured by subjectivity, and are often skewed towards the extremes of showing AAVE speakers to be either completely incompetent, or also entirely resistant to the use of Standard English, and the associations that come along with it.

The use of AAVE in hip hop music and the subculture it has created is an example of this. Hip hop culture is characterized by its use of AAVE slang, originally as a form of representing their roots, has now evolved to a much cruder form of expression, highlighting misogyny, drug and alcohol abuse, and violence. This directly affects how AAVE speakers and members of the African American community are perceived externally.

In conclusion, the African American community serves as an ideal example of how a diasporic community's migration can create a unique subculture, as well as the exchange and mutual flow of linguistic and cultural patterns that defines a community's experience. It also provides us with insight into the more problematic aspects of this process, and how a group may be integrated into society, but still struggle with issues of identity, language, and social standing.

The diasporic nature of the African American community, and its extensive history with America, serves as a model for other diasporic communities, in order for them to be best assimilated into American society. The African American diaspora in America serves as yet another means by which to understand the workings of society on a more global and accepting level.

## End Notes



- Ebonics: AAVE is also known by the term "Ebonics", which was coined by psychologist Robert Williams in 1973. The term was used as an alternative to "Black English", combining the words 'ebony' and 'phonics'. It is now a commonly used alternative to AAVE, especially outside linguistic circles.
- Code-switching: the tendency to alternate between two or more languages or linguistic styles, seen in those with bi- and multilingual abilities.
- Great Migration: the mass migration of members of the African American community from Southern America to the North between 1905 and 1970, due to racial discrimination.
- Pidgin: a grammatically simplified means of communication between two groups that do not share a common linguistic background.
- Creole: a language that originated as a pidgin, or mixed language.

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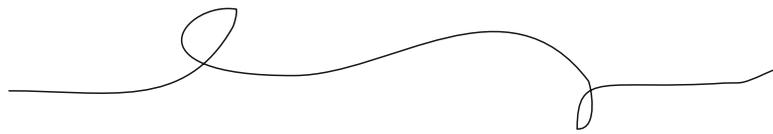
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# Guest Papers

# Yes, We Can(ada): Reflections on Queer Migration/Refuge

Jai Subramaniam

The recent noise over the complete legalisation of same-sex marriages in the US has something to do with what I write about—until such a thing happened, Canada was the only other “Queer-friendly” English-speaking country to regard as a potential hideout. I use the word “hideout” in all the three senses that Appadurai (1996: 6) explains diasporas in: voluntarily out of ambition, voluntarily out of annoyance and involuntarily, out of terror. How does writing on this as a caste- and class-privileged, gay-identifying nonwhite man in 2015 interact with one desire of many for emigration to Canada? How does this social location influence my theorising of what it means to enter Canada as a Queer refugee, or more precisely, to enter Canada as Queer but to become a Queer refugee? What form of diaspora does an individual or a group of individuals assume when laying claim to refuge?

## The Nation-State and Beyond

Immigration to Canada gets classified in one of the three: family-class immigration, independent immigration and refuge (Joomratty, 2010, as cited in Hunter, 2011). Refuge in Canada on the basis of sexual orientation is granted only when the claimant sufficiently convinces the bureaucratic-quasi-judicial mechanisms of the presence of persecution in their nation of origin on those grounds (Hunter, 2011; Murray, 2013). One of the bases for refusal of refuge as recognised by Amnesty International and by Canada includes the possibility of the claimant having sought refuge in a “safe third country”. This shows the presence of methods by which a refugee-accepting country may identify certain states as harbouring conditions which may (or may not) persecute a Queer individual. Also of import is to understand that this identification mechanism allows for certain national/non-national spaces to be identified as being sufficiently persecuting and others as not.

Drawing directly from this ability to classify persecution by gradation, the question to ask is, whom must the law/social structure persecute in order to be classifiable as a space unfit for the humane existence of a Queer individual or of Queer social interactions? What the refuge-offering country identifies, therefore, is not the persecution alone, but the persecution of a human object it recognises as Queer. This is linked directly to, and is visible in, the efforts that individuals must make in order to be identified as Queer enough, which is to say, Queer

for an officer from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and for the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) hearing, which will finally decide the result of the claim:

*In a full hearing, the claimant must provide evidence that they are a member of a persecuted group and that they would face significant danger if they were to return to their country of origin...[This is d]ecided upon by a single IRB Member (Amnesty International, 2011). If the decision is positive, the refugee claimant will be given the status of Protected Person, and may later apply for Permanent Resident status. (Hunter, 2011: 12)*

The use of the term Queer here would be a misnomer—Queer politics of the 1980s rose in opposition to the single-issue, white, middle-class cis-gay movement, reappropriating the pejorative word to define anything beyond (and threatening to) the heterosexist, heteronormative and heteroracist frameworks of not only society as Bernstein (2005) has pointed out, but also to the gay movement and its similar frameworks. Bernstein reviews it as an antithesis to identity politics—where the internally-felt and externally-imposed identities of “gay” and “lesbian” came along with (and excluded because of) certain other cultural markers as class, gender and race, Queer seemed to liberate beyond subject, challenging the discourses around deviance. Within the ambit of refuge-seeking, however, the State legitimates refuge only on the condition that the refugee-seeker be recognisable. Seeking refuge as a Queer person, therefore, creates a definite identity for a fictive subject where there is none or many—the Queer person must therefore have a name and a way for their Queerness.

Along what genealogy do these mechanisms arise? Malkki (1995) has stated the rise of the refugee and technologies for the production and study of the refugee in the post-WWII period as a precursor to the current situation of highly ossified and bureaucratized ways in which refugees must become refugees of a certain kind (nameable, knowable) and must be documented in certain manners. While she has not held this to be the watershed event shaping further situations for refuge and refugees, she mentions that the rise of systematic technologies (bureaucratic, legal, medical) to deal with the situations follows largely ever since, especially with the acknowledgement of a third party involved in the process of dispossession and refuge. The identification of a refugee body as such is not only a bureaucratic artefact but an essential expression of the control of the

State and its mechanisms over that which does not otherwise belong.

The process of inflow of Queer refugees presents a fracture in the understanding of global citizenship as imagined in the post-war phase (Malkki, 1995). Rather than a free-moving flow of people, the refugee flow in post-war Europe has come to redefine global citizenship in a more narrow way (as a result of being intercepted by bureaucratic technologies which were more or less nationally located, although also internationally mediated). Outside of and complementary to these bureaucratic technologies are networks of international refugee agencies which pledge a non-political approach to refugee situations and claim to address them from a humanitarian perspective alone. These networks function in localised forms in the forms of refugee-help centres which prepare claimants for their IRB hearings (Hunter, 2011). These are essential means for the State to de-politicise the refugee situation--this is why individuals claiming refuge on the grounds of persecution for being Queer may continue to lead lives as refugees, while the refuge-offering country may still maintain friendly diplomatic relationships with those nations which deny individuals claim to Queerness.

### On Difference

The emigrating/refuge-seeking Queer subject is in a state of movement from an identity which has been strategically created/reappropriated by LGBT movements (and this is pre-Queer) to defend behaviours which a State criminalises (as in the case of the oft-quoted Sec. 377<sup>1</sup> of the Indian Penal Code) or which communities persecute. The movement is towards an identity, as I have stated before, of a recognisably Queer body. Murray identifies this movement as an incommensurable process—where the individual inhabits neither identity. By the end of the hearing and acceptance, however, the person is made Queer.

I intend to differ slightly here. To make a reference to *The Great Gatsby*, the green lantern is far past gone—bureaucratic intervention in creating the Queer subject does not cease at the hearing. Neither is the Queer identity restricted to romantic or sexual or populist “cultural” behaviours. It is a subject that hollows out a possible questioning of the institutions of marriage and family by extolling “gay marriage” to be the ultimate form of homosexual commitment and furthers monolithic ideas of Queerness as opposed to the plurality that Queerness once seemed to offer. An identity “saved” is constantly shown as emblematic of the humanitarian nature of the refuge/residence-offering state, while the much-invoked Queer touchstone cracks, with all its manifestations being approximations. Therefore, the Queer subject here is not translated: it is the continuum along space and time of a set of non-

corresponding behaviours which ossify into different (but close) identities (of say, *kothi*<sup>2</sup> and gay) in different contexts. Queer refugee-claimants/migrants are negotiators of this continuum.

As shown elsewhere<sup>3</sup>, Queer migration to/refuge in Canada also has disturbing implications affecting the peoples of the First Nations (Native Americans). Looking into the details is beyond the scope of my paper, but it is essential to see that claim to refuge is embedded in contestations for state legitimacy. Aspiration for emigration by means other than refuge is also more likely a product of privilege than is refuge for most of those whose narratives Hunter (2011) has documented. It is embedded in privilege of class, (caste in my case) and gender and in the national-bureaucratic measures the host country takes to present a global face.

### Endnotes

1. Sec. 377 of the Indian Penal Code criminalises non-penovaginal sexual intercourse also between consenting adults.
2. *Kothi* refers to one of the many identities in the Indian Queer spectrum untranslatable in “Queer” terms—they identify largely as men, but may sometimes refer to themselves or to one another as *hijra*, feminine, female or as woman.
3. See Fobear, K. (2014). *Queer Settlers: Questioning Settler Colonialism in LGBT Asylum Processes in Canada*. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 30(1)

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