

QUITTING INDIA¹:
THE ANGLO-INDIAN CULTURE OF MIGRATION

Robyn Andrews

ABSTRACT

In my work with the Anglo-Indians in Calcutta I was reminded of Caplan's (1995) comment that Anglo-Indians had a 'culture of emigration', as I observed a steady stream of Anglo-Indians leaving India. Even though destination opportunities are being eroded, the Anglo-Indians I spoke with regularly referred to relatives and friends living abroad, and in the main wanted to emulate this pattern of migration.

In this paper I draw particularly on case study material collected in India and Australia over the past five years. I explore the nexus between Anglo-Indian identity, which they often regard as more Western than Indian, and their migration patterns. Concentrating on their reasons for leaving, I contribute to the 'culture of migration' literature through this analysis of the migration culture of an ethnic group which exhibits variations on the set of reasonably distinct characteristics associated with groups having a 'culture of migration'.

INTRODUCTION

As I worked through transcripts from interviews with Anglo-Indians who had migrated to Australia I noted a correlation between the ways these Anglo-Indian interviewees talked about their decision to migrate from India and the ways they expressed their identity. This brought to mind an extract I had read in the (as yet unpublished) manuscript of an Anglo-Indian fiction writer, Keith Butler.² In this piece he captures the sense of what I was finding in the transcripts:

Over the next few weeks her belly did not distend, but shrunk as the baby grabbed at the insides of her womb in terror of emerging countryless. In the following months she vomited maps; projectile spews

that hit the concrete floor and splashed warmly around her ankles, vomit with pink gobbets shaped like far off lands—Australia, Canada, England. The child would have to go to one of those civilised places—India now was no place for decent Anglo-Indians!

Certainly Iris had seen how other Anglos had made fleeing India possible; English passports opened many doors. Her brown friend Dottie Goodall used a forged one to leave India, landed at Heathrow wearing a face pancaked white with Pond's Foundation Powder No. 1 and brown hands and legs. Dotty had to convince the Customs officer she didn't need to be quarantined.

He was writing in a semi-autobiographical, fictional way, rendering his mother's anxieties about his birth.³ The extract is set in 1948 – one year after Indian Independence – and is, according to the author, emotionally true of the times. The central issue faced by 'Iris', and by Anglo-Indians in India at this time, was *how* to leave India. *Whether* to leave was not in question.

This imperative to emigrate has translated into huge numbers of Anglo-Indians leaving India. At the time of Independence there were estimated to be 200,000–300,000 Anglo-Indians in India (Anthony 1969: 9); after over fifty years of steady exodus from India the population of Anglo-Indians in India is estimated to be less than half that number now (Blunt 2005; Caplan 1998; Anthony 1969; Mills 1998; Williams 2002; Younger 1987). What were the reasons for sustained emigration of such magnitude?

In this article I explore some answers to that question. A productive approach to this is the examination of the 'culture of migration' theory⁴ (Ali 2007; Kandel and Massey 2002; Massey *et al* 1998) in relation to Anglo-Indians. A culture of migration refers to 'the cultural atmosphere that leads many to decide to migrate' (Ali 2007: 38). This seems to capture the sense of Anglo-Indians' drive to leave India, which is now so ingrained that it has become part of their culture. I propose that Anglo-Indians are an extreme case of those social groups who display a culture of migration and that identity is pivotal to the way in which they think about and implement it. In looking at the Anglo-Indian case I add further dimensions to the culture of migration theory.

I begin by discussing the culture of migration literature and identifying the characteristics of such a culture. I then introduce the Anglo-Indians, a community with which I have an ongoing research interest,⁵ and provide a brief overview of the history of their migration from India. I explore ideas they have

about leaving, and remaining in, India based upon ethnographic fieldwork in Calcutta,⁶ India over the years 2001–2005, combined with more recent case study and interview material from Anglo-Indians now settled in Melbourne. I also draw on conversations and observations made through attending the 7th World Reunion of Anglo-Indians held in Toronto in August 2007. Finally I look at where Anglo-Indian migration fits within or departs from culture of migration theories, focussing on the ways in which their identity contributes to their pattern of migration.

CULTURE OF MIGRATION

As indicated in other articles in this edition the reasons for migration are varied. Consequently some theories are more useful than others in explaining migratory patterns and trends in particular situations. I look briefly at two migration theories which have some value in terms of explaining Anglo-Indian migration, before turning to the culture of migration explanatory framework.⁷ Hammerton and Thomson's (2005) 'Adventure migration' theory explains the experiences and attitudes of young British men and women who went to Australia during the period from the 1940s to the 1970s (when Anglo-Indian migration was high) and does seem to correspond with some, especially young, Anglo-Indians' explanations of their migration decision. One Anglo-Indian woman I spoke to, for example, said that she and her husband would settle in Australia before they started a family because it was a 'glamorous' thing to do. To explain migration in a way that centralises adventure (or glamour) as the motive, however, would not reflect the reality for most Anglo-Indians who leave India. Another theory which carries some explanatory power to account for Anglo-Indian migration is that of Neoclassical economics theory (see Massey *et al* 1998), which, at the Micro level, explains migration in terms of individual choice on a cost-benefit calculation. In this case migrants are viewed as rational actors whose primary considerations are economic, although other factors such as health and reunification of family are also recognised as having significance. This fits much of the individual rhetoric around Anglo-Indian migration but falls short in that it fails to take into account the collective nature of their migration. While there may be merit in other migration theories, the one which stands up to the most scrutiny is the culture of migration framework which accounts for both the collective nature of the migration of Anglo-Indians, and resonates with the way in which individual Anglo-Indians speak about their decisions to migrate.

The idea of a culture of migration was first rigorously analysed in Massey *et al's* *Worlds in Motion* (1998) as a factor of their 'cumulative causation' theory

in which they draw together a number of reasons for on-going migration.⁸ Kandel and Massey (2002), who regard the culture of migration as a 'key link in the broader social processes' of on-going migration (2002: 982), developed the idea further using data relating to Mexican migration. Syed Ali (2007), whose work focuses on the migration of young Muslim men from Hyderabad, India, extends the theory qualitatively. I draw on the works of Kandel and Massey, and Ali, in discussing this theory, and to make comparisons with the Anglo-Indian situation.

Kandel and Massey's research looked at the movement of young Mexicans who have a high rate of migration to the U.S. to work and/or live. Through their study they develop a quantitative model of the development of a culture of migration in which they demonstrate statistically that the more family members a person has abroad, the more likely they are to migrate themselves. Thus a culture of migration is created, in that 'the aspiration to migrate is transmitted across generations and between people through social networks' (Kandel and Massey 2002: 981). A key indication of the development of a culture of migration is that would-be migrants invest less in their country of origin, and more in getting to their destination and making a success of themselves there (Kandel and Massey 2002: 983). One way that this is played out in the Mexican situation is that there is a statistically significant trend of poorer performance in school that is linked to the increased likelihood of out-migration to the U.S. (in particular, those who are anticipating migrating leave school an average of one year earlier than others not anticipating migrating). Doing well at school is not seen as conducive to migrating, therefore it is not sought after. Other findings of this study are that migration has evolved into a culturally appropriate way of attaining adulthood, as well being seen as a means to ensure improved economic status – for both the migrants and, through remittances, the sending families.

Syed Ali (2007) explores the idea of the culture of migration through his ethnographic research with Muslims in Hyderabad, India. He writes that Kandel and Massey's was the 'only in-depth theoretical exposition of the culture of migration to date' (Ali 2007: 40) and that his work goes beyond their focus on economic benefit and remittances and looks at the effects of these on status relations in the sending community. He reports that migration to the U.S. and Saudi Arabia of young male IT professionals and labourers has been gaining momentum since it began in the 1960s.⁹ He argues that migration 'changes local culture in a way that affects not only those families that send migrants abroad, but also those who remain at home' (Ali 2007: 38). Although his own research is qualitatively based, he draws on and develops ideas from Ken-

dal and Massey's quantitatively derived theories. A key finding of both Ali's, and Kandel and Massey's research is that the sending of remittances 'greatly enhance[s] the culture of migration' (Ali 2007: 41). Ali, for example, argues that the culture of migration, 'by shaping the effects of migrant remittances, transforms traditional ideas about marriage and status and links them instead to migratory movements' (2007: 38).

Massey *et al*, in discussing the usefulness of the different migration theories notes that 'culture' is the hardest of the indicators to measure – either short- or long-term (Massey *et al* 1998: 58). Culture, in this instance, refers to the worldviews, expectations and values of a given group or society. These are not fixed (or homogenous) features of any social group; rather they are fluid, flexible and ever-changing in response to various influences. One such influence, as this theory elucidates, is the migration of members of the group. What the culture of migration theory entails, then, is an understanding that the values, expectations, and worldviews of a society are changed *by* migration to mean that further migration is more likely to occur. In order to investigate this theory in any meaningful way it is necessary to employ case study and other qualitative research methods; for all that material gathered in this way may be complex and contradictory. Analysis, therefore, requires attention to ethnographic detail and reflection on interpretation.

Lionel Caplan carried out such ethnographic case study research with Anglo-Indians in Madras¹⁰ over the course of a series of visits from 1991 to 1999 (Caplan 2001). He writes (before this idea had been developed theoretically by others) of Anglo-Indians' persistent drive to leave India in terms of them having a 'culture of emigration' (Caplan 1995; Caplan 1998). After introducing the community, I shall look more closely at his reasons for this assertion, at my own fieldwork-based observations, and at ways in which this theory can be further developed in relation to Anglo-Indians.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ANGLO-INDIAN COMMUNITY

Anglo-Indians are a minority group in India that can trace their history from the 16th century, when the first Europeans (particularly the British of the East India Company) made their homes in India and formed relationships with Indian women. Their progeny started the community that is now known as the Anglo-Indians (and were previously called Eurasians). The Indian Constitution definition of an Anglo-Indian, as stated in Section 366 (2) of 1935 Government of India Act, is:

... a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only (Blunt 2005: 3).

As well as their particular origin, Anglo-Indians' cultural characteristics have differentiated them from other groups in India, and aligned them with the 'West'.¹¹ These cultural characteristics include having English as their mother tongue, having European names, and being Christians. Not surprisingly they have tended to dress in Western clothing, and they profess a preference for Western food and eating habits. From the earliest days of their existence they have aligned themselves culturally with Britain. Their schools, based on the British system, perpetuated or endorsed this link. Even when, after some time, the British began distancing themselves from them, Anglo-Indians were still given preferential employment in essential services in maintaining the infrastructure of British India. They worked in the railways, post and telegraph, customs, the armed forces, as well as in nursing, teaching and clerical positions.

ANGLO-INDIAN MIGRATION FROM INDIA

Given this background of attachment to Britain, it is understandable that Indian Independence in 1947 posed a potentially serious threat to Anglo-Indians. Fears of reprisals and insecurity about their future in India led to three major waves of migration from the sub-continent (Blunt 2005; Caplan 2001; Mahar 1962). Immediately after 1947 tens of thousands left for England, which they had always considered as some sort of a homeland (Blunt 2002; Stark 1926). The second major migration wave was in the early sixties coinciding with a move in India to replace English as the national language. The prospect of Hindi replacing English as a national language was a concern to Anglo-Indians as they generally did not speak another Indian language well enough for employment and other purposes. Another reason for the movement at this time can be attributed to the closure of large international companies in the main centres where many Anglo-Indians had employment.¹² The destinations for this second migratory wave were Canada and Australia as immigration to the UK had become difficult due to the introduction of controls to regulate immigration (Massey *et al* 1998) and also because Australia had dropped its 'whites-only' policy, which had affected all but the fairest Anglo-Indians (Blunt 2005: 139–174; Massey *et al* 1998: 161). The third wave, from the seventies and continuing, is sometimes referred to in India as the 'family reunion' wave (President of the All India Anglo-Indian Association (AIAIA), Personal cor-

response, February 2002). This idea is referred to in migration literature as 'family reunification'¹³ (for example, Massey *et al* 1998: 161; Moch 2005: 98–99) and in the immigration policies of many countries, including New Zealand (Trlin 1997). The main destinations for this wave of emigrants have been Australia, England, Canada, and to a lesser extent, New Zealand. There may now be more Anglo-Indians living out of India than there are in India.¹⁴

It has always been a challenge for Anglo-Indians to get to their preferred destination countries, but the opportunities are now diminishing further as these countries tighten up their immigration policies.¹⁵ From my recent experience with the community in Calcutta, however, there is still a steady stream of Anglo-Indians leaving India, and even more who confidently hope to do so. The significance of emigration was reinforced to me in a number of different ways. As well as individual migration stories there are other indications of this imperative to leave; for example, one area of Calcutta (which is officially named Picnic Gardens) is often referred to by Anglo-Indians as 'Little Australia'. The area has a large population of Anglo-Indians who have recently moved (in a process of internal migration) from the Central Business District. The explanation given for the name is that if they cannot live in Australia then this is the next best thing – and it is often a stepping-stone to Australia.

Anglo-Indians now see themselves as part of a global network, or diaspora.¹⁶ Initially there seemed to be little impetus to develop a cohesive set of networks and communication, but this has changed since the mid 1970s with three-yearly World Reunions, annual Anglo-Indian days (which are celebrated in pockets of high Anglo-Indian population around the world), and the proliferation of publications, websites, and blogs linking Anglo-Indians to their worldwide community.

In 1995 Caplan wrote about migration of Anglo-Indians from Madras, commenting that 'existing studies provide few analogous instances of migratory effects which can be compared to the Anglo-Indian case' (Caplan 1995: 27). Twelve years later I am unable to identify any case which shares many characteristics with the Anglo-Indian migration situation. The idea of a culture of migration does, however, offer some links between Anglo-Indian and other instances of migration. Caplan's explanation of Anglo-Indians' migration was that they feel culturally qualified to migrate due to being so closely linked to the British. He said that the idea of emigration looms large in the consciousness of Anglo-Indians in Madras. His work in Madras complements what I have observed in Calcutta in many respects; an exception is that while he argues that there is a class dimension to Anglo-Indian migration in Madras

(in that it is almost exclusively a middle class aspiration) this is not evident in the same ways in Calcutta, where I found examples of Anglo-Indians of all classes who hope to migrate.¹⁷ I incorporate ideas and data of Caplan's, along with data from my fieldwork. I turn now to case studies drawn from material gathered in Calcutta, Melbourne and more informally, Toronto.

MIGRATION STORIES

Most people I spoke to in Calcutta had something to say about their own migration (both anticipated and attained);¹⁸ some spoke of being disadvantaged in the job market, others of being frustrated by many things Indian, most of generally being out of place in India. The following are examples that highlight different aspects of the migration (aspired or attained) experience. From James,¹⁹ a 30-year-old Anglo-Indian who still lives in India:

My batch-mates all live abroad now and they say they can't believe that I, of all people, would still be living in India at this age. I always thought I would have been long gone from here too – to Australia or even New Zealand.

When asked why he thought he would have left he answered:

India isn't the right place for me. And it's going to get worse as Hindu fundamentalism and Indianisation takes hold. I don't fit in this society, and this society excludes me from it (From interview conducted in 2002).

I was introduced to him right at the beginning of my fieldwork in Calcutta – as someone I might be able to help to get to New Zealand. It was from him that I came to realise that Anglo-Indians were well acquainted with the immigration policies of their preferred destination countries – he could, for example, tell me exactly what New Zealand's immigration policy was at this time. He had a two-year BA and work experience in local banks. Neither the tertiary qualification nor the work experience was of a high enough standard to meet the criteria to come to New Zealand. He tried various ways of circumventing the direct route, including obtaining work in a Middle Eastern country for a short time, in order to emigrate from there rather than from India. His preoccupation with finding a way to leave India was at the expense of putting his energies into strengthening his position in India. This tendency by would-be migrants to sacrifice an investment in a future 'at home' in order to leave parallels Kendal and Massey's findings in their work in Mexico (2002) where they

found that young men who were likely to migrate were particularly prone to neglecting their education. In the case of Anglo-Indians, they generally do not sacrifice their education to leave; rather they see a good education as providing a *means* to leave.²⁰ James, for example, had obtained a degree for this purpose, and did not anticipate that the truncated degree he had opted for would be insufficient. Ali (2007: 38) demonstrated that in Hyderabad also, the culture of migration shapes choices made about education and work. The next case study offers an example which supports this.

Keith²¹ is a Calcuttan Anglo-Indian in his late 50s. He left India for Australia in the early 1970s when he was 24. For him staying in India was never an option:

I wanted to be a journalist from an early age, but I knew I would have a better chance to leave India if I trained as a teacher – so that’s what I did. Leaving India was never a matter of ‘if’ but rather of ‘when’.

He says that his generation of Anglo-Indians all wanted to leave, and mostly they did. Keith has been successful as a teacher in Australia, but his real love is writing. The extract at the beginning of this article is from the manuscript of the novel he is currently working on.

Keith has recently re-settled in New Zealand. His experience entering the workforce in New Zealand was not as smooth as he had been given to expect. Keith qualified as a teacher in 1970 with a Diploma in Teaching from a renowned Calcuttan teacher training institution. After moving to Australia several years later, obtaining an Australian University B.A. in the 1980s, and teaching for 35 years, he came to New Zealand where the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) assessed him as an ‘untrained teacher’. He had been granted full teacher registration as part of New Zealand’s Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act, so he was able to be employed as a teacher, but as an ‘untrained’ teacher he received less than half the remuneration of a trained teacher with no classroom experience. Hearing of the assessment a senior manager of one of the schools Keith worked for was outraged at the obvious injustice and intervened on his behalf. After robust communication with the Ministry of Education, his training and experience have now been recognised – but as a one-off special consideration which is ‘not to be taken as a precedent’.

Another person I interviewed was Delores, a domestic worker in Melbourne who is in her early 50s and has lived in Australia for just six years. Her mother

died when Delores was in her 20s and as the oldest sister of five children she took on the responsibility of caring for her father, her siblings and the household, as well as working fulltime. In the late eighties her father had a stroke so Delores's workload at home increased again. In 1992 all of her siblings left India for Australia one after another over the course of just six months. She explained to me that they left 'because they wanted to better their prospects. They were looking out for better ways of life from what they had as Anglo-Indians in India.' When I enquired further, she replied, 'there were no prospects there because the Indians got all the good jobs. When the British left most of the Anglo-Indians left too.'

Delores trained as a teacher and taught for 30 years in India. Although the rest of her family left India she did not as she 'had decided to stay and look after [her] father in India'. He died in 1999 and soon after that her family in Australia sent for her to have a holiday with them. She met a friend of theirs who proposed that they marry; she agreed and settled in Australia with him two years later. She says she is happy to be there, except that she is unable to obtain employment as a teacher due to the Australian authorities failing to recognise her Indian qualifications. Unlike Keith, she has still not succeeded in having her qualifications recognised. Instead, at the age of 50 plus, she has begun a pre-school teacher-training course in the hope of re-entering the workforce as a pre-school teacher.

Delores's experience illustrates a distinctly Anglo-Indian migration pattern – that of individual family members leaving and then the rest of the family following as soon after as possible. This is in contrast to many other migration situations where adult children may leave for economic betterment and career and lifestyle opportunities, but other family members remain behind. In these cases it is typical for migrants to send remittances back to family in order to improve their lifestyle also. Anglo-Indians, on the other hand, if they send money at all, are more likely to send money to cover the cost of airfares for further family members to leave India. They do not consider that India offers them worthwhile prospects for their future, believing instead that the only viable way of improving prospects for Anglo-Indians is to leave – if not for themselves then for their children.²²

PERCEPTIONS OF ANGLO-INDIAN IDENTITY IN INDIA

In my times in Calcutta, 50 years after Independence, I frequently found evidence that many Anglo-Indians do not see a future for themselves in India. By way of illustration I begin with an anecdote written up from my fieldwork

journal notes:

On the morning of August the 2nd 2003, which is Anglo-Indian day, I asked a couple of young Anglo-Indian men (at the hostel I was living in) if they were going to the dance at the Rangers Club that night. Neither of them was but they knew about it. I asked if they were going to any other of the Anglo-Indian day events. One response was 'No but...Oh, is that what the dance is for?' 'Why was the second of August chosen as Anglo-Indian day?' they wondered. One speculated that perhaps it was the date of Anglo-Indian independence. 'From what?' another asked, then ventured a reply: 'India? We'd love independence from India!'

This statement is particularly revealing in terms of how they see themselves in relation to India – that they would prefer to be separated from it.

To complicate the issue of how Anglo-Indians relate to India I now relay an incident illustrating an opposing sentiment, drawn from another event in Calcutta, also on Anglo-Indian day 2003. The fact that the two viewpoints were expressed on the same day highlights the disparity, and complexity of Anglo-Indians' views.

One of the official events for Anglo-Indian day was a panel discussion where the topic was 'Tomorrow's People Speak Today'. The panellists were all young adults (either at university already or about to start) who were to talk about how they felt about being Anglo-Indian in India. After some time I realised that the off-the-programme agenda for the morning was to convey the message that Anglo-Indians are Indian and that their future, and the future of the community, involves staying in India and being successful there.

The four young panellists who spoke gave the impression that they were very much at home in India. One of the panellists, for example, ended his opening address with 'we are Indians, the Anglo-Indians.'²³ During the course of the morning's discussion they all demonstrated their competence in a vernacular language,²⁴ and I was interested to see that three of the four were dressed in 'Indian' clothing. Both young men wore *kurta pyjama* and one of the young women was wearing a *salwar kameez*. The second girl was in a Western top and trousers. The other official Anglo-Indian guests, all older than the panellists, on the other hand, were wearing Western clothing. I was interested in the implications of the panellists' choice of attire while representing Anglo-Indian youth on such an occasion. In dressing in the way they had they reinforced

the central, but undeclared, theme of the morning's discussion: that they were 'Indian'.

In a telling moment, however, there was a significant glitch, or slip, in the morning's well-orchestrated discussion when one of the young women panelists commented that 'we don't have a country of our own' (which was quickly refuted by the morning's facilitator). The young woman's comment seemed spontaneous; the others' too rehearsed to be viewed without, at least a little, scepticism.

To what end and for what audience do I think it was rehearsed? This event provided Anglo-Indian leaders with an opportunity to convey the message to the Anglo-Indian audience that they should not feel compelled to leave India. They were demonstrating (rather than saying explicitly) that Anglo-Indian youth were doing well in India, and had every chance of having successful lives there. By arguing that Anglo-Indians *are* Indian, perhaps they hoped that Anglo-Indians would no longer feel alienated and out of place in India.

In the course of my fieldwork the desirability of integration with 'the rest of India' was not a sentiment that I was hearing much of – it was certainly not as widely accepted as the morning's panel discussion suggested.²⁵ I became increasingly interested in the disparity between what I was hearing from people I spoke to and interviewed, and the message that was being promoted in this, and other, official Anglo-Indian forums. I can find, for example, no instance of an official stance by an Anglo-Indian political leader urging Anglo-Indians to *leave* India. On the contrary, Anglo-Indian politicians, such as Anthony and Gidney (the leaders of the AIAIA up to and around the time of Independence), and their successor Neil O'Brien (the current President-in-Chief of the AIAIA) consistently urge Anglo-Indians to stay, to consider themselves Indian, and to make their home in India (Blunt 2005: 59, 124).

REASONS FOR ANGLO-INDIAN MIGRATION

The disparity of views about whether or not Anglo-Indians should consider their future to be in India could be analysed productively in various ways. What I want to do here, however, is to look only at the effect that this has had on migration, and try to understand the underlying reason for Anglo-Indians' drive to leave India. The original impetus to emigrate is understood to be a result of Anglo-Indian anxiety about their future in India. And if, after Indian Independence, the feared reprisals had eventuated, or if they had been gravely discriminated against by the incoming Indian government, it would

be understandable that they would want to leave India. But it turned out that their fears were mainly unfounded; in fact, the post-Independence government provided incentives for Anglo-Indians to stay in India. These took the form of allocations of jobs in the government services, educational advantages which gave independence and a degree of support to Anglo-Indian schools, and Anglo-Indian representation in state and national government. With the exception of the job allocations these incentives are still in place today. So despite their assurances of employment, governmental representation, and an Anglo-Indian education system, and although the political leaders were urging them to stay, there was, and still is, a steady migratory stream of Anglo-Indians out of India.

One Anglo-Indian man's explanation for this situation is that they are 'wired' to migrate. This is consistent with Caplan's idea of Anglo-Indians' 'culture of emigration'. But this does not reveal or identify the primary motive to leave. Why are they 'wired' to leave in the first place?

IDENTITY AND MIGRATION

My proposition is that there is a strong correlation between Anglo-Indian migration and their identity. I dwell momentarily on the idea of identity, since as a concept, it has been under close scrutiny. Brubaker and Cooper (2000), for example, caution social scientists against using the concept of identity in analysis at all claiming that the word is too vague; that on the one hand it is used as if it refers to something definite and concrete and substantial, while on the other it is used with a 'softer' more fluid meaning. For the purposes of this paper I use the term both to refer to individual identity which can be seen 'in close connection with a concept of self' (Sokefeld 2001: 527) and as a collective identity, or ethnic identity, which has fluidity, is constantly under construction and negotiation (Nagel 1994: 152), and remains enigmatic. In terms of migration, Anglo-Indian identity rhetoric and action is individual, but a consequence of the large numbers of Anglo-Indians who migrate is that they are seen (by themselves and others) as behaving collectively – so migration becomes a characteristic of them as a group (which does not mean there are no exceptions within the group either in terms of how they identify or whether they aspire to migrate).

My proposition, then, is that a result of Anglo-Indian identification as culturally more Western or European than Indian is that they are motivated to leave India for a place where they are sure they will feel more 'at home'. Where 'home' was England in the past, it is now any English speaking, preferably Common-

wealth, country. In the past, as illustrated in the extract of fiction earlier, some Anglo-Indians, especially the ‘fairer’ ones, would attempt to ‘pass’ as British. Others have felt that by virtue of being born Anglo-Indian they were somehow British. This sentiment is articulated by one of anthropologist Laura Bear’s²⁶ research participants, a man from Kharagpur, who responded to a question about why Anglo-Indians were employed on the railways with the following:

That’s quite natural, that’s the blood. The blood flows simple as that. That’s why it’s inborn in us, this culture, the British culture. We don’t have to be educated. We don’t have to have the least education even primary education. English is our mother-tongue, we talk English. So that’s how we are brought up, our parents and our parent’s parents. So even if we are not educated, but we still have that culture, must be because it’s in our blood (Bear 1998: 163).

I saw no evidence of this strength of affiliation to Britain in my time in Calcutta. They are no longer ‘more British than the Brits’ and they certainly no longer refer to England as ‘home’, but they do make it evident that they think of themselves as culturally more Western than Indian. According to Blunt, ‘Many Anglo-Indian migrants saw it as neither possible nor desirable to assimilate in independent India’ (Blunt 2005: 167). One of her Anglo-Indian interviewees who settled in Australia, for example, said ‘if we had to stay [*in India*] then we would have had to make the best of it, and assimilate and lose our identity’ (*ibid.*). In contrast, Anglo-Indians welcome the idea of living in Australia and other commonwealth countries (particularly Britain, Canada and New Zealand), as they believe they will feel at home with the dominant populations due to their shared language, religion and culture.

This belief is reinforced by stories of Anglo-Indians who have resettled successfully into their destination countries.²⁷ As well as individual accounts, the diasporic communities themselves are regarded as successful, even model, immigrant communities.²⁸ D’Cruz writes about Anglo-Indians who are seen (by themselves and by the Australian media) as ‘good Australians’ (1999; 2006), and the 7th World Reunion held this year in Toronto celebrated Anglo-Indians as model immigrants in Canada’s multicultural environment (see, for example, McGuinty 2007). It would hardly be surprising if this knowledge encourages further migration from India to these destinations.

The community-felt urge to leave is further illustrated by people who, when asked about whether they will stay or leave, seemed to feel the need to provide a reason for *not* going, illustrating that wanting to leave is considered the norm

and any dissenting opinion requires justification. Several people, for example, explained to me that they *had* to stay because they had a sick or very elderly relative who relied on their presence and assistance.

The Anglo-Indian experience of leaving India is varied. While a few might have the opportunity to visit their destination countries before moving permanently, most Anglo-Indians do not have the means to do so. They have no opportunity to compare their expectations with the reality of living away from India (except through stories from people who have gone before them); they have one chance to go and they take it. Many manage to cobble together the fares through a variety of means, and leave, burning all their bridges as they do. I heard many stories of people who borrowed money and just disappeared in the night, not even consulting with family members about departure plans, lest they be thwarted.

SOME COMPARISONS WITH OTHER STUDIES²⁹

I turn now to a comparison between the Anglo-Indian situation and that of the migrant groups described by Ali (2007), and Kandel and Massey (2002). A significant shared aspect between the migrant groups they focussed upon and Anglo-Indians is would-be migrants' tailoring of their education and employment with the prospect of migration in mind. Anglo-Indians keep themselves up-to-date with potential destination countries' immigration policies and work towards ensuring that their credentials fit these immigration criteria.

In terms of the timing of emigration, the most common age to leave is the same throughout the various groups – although this timing decision is, in reality, determined by the immigration policies of the destination countries.³⁰ Many Anglo-Indians leave soon after they complete their studies and gain some local work experience – in a similar fashion to other migrants. Anglo-Indians, however, continue to leave at all ages as long as the destination countries make this possible, for example, migration under family reunification policies is frequently utilised. What is distinctive for Anglo-Indians is the regular occurrence of migration of families with teenaged children³¹ – where the motivating factor is these children's prospects.³²

No matter what the timing, one of the most significant departures from the usual culture of migration scenarios is that 'remittances' are not a feature of Anglo-Indian migration; that is, there is no pattern of sending money back to family in India in the form of regular, obligatory donations characteristic of what is generally understood by the term.³³ This is at odds with Ali's,

and Kandel and Massey's studies where the practice of sending remittance is significant in that it assists in the development of the culture of migration through changing the financial situation of the recipients, as well as those who have sent the remittance. In yet another study, it was noted that remittance money is generally spent on 'consumption, land and housing' (Glytsos 2002: 312). Ali's study also indicated that remittance money is used for status-enhancing events such as lavish spending on life-cycle rituals and weddings, and on conspicuously generous dowries (Ali 2007: 44-46). Anglo-Indians do none of this – they do not convert economic capital into social capital through status-enhancing entertaining, they do not practice a dowry system, and most significantly, they rarely invest in land or housing in India. Any money sent is not with expenditure of this type in mind. Instead it is sent to assist with the day-to-day living costs of very poor family or friends, or else to contribute to the costs of family members leaving India.

Another significant point of departure from the culture of migration situations discussed by Ali, and by Kendal and Massey is the attitude Anglo-Indians have towards the country of their birth. Many Anglo-Indians feel alienated from India, as illustrated by James' comment earlier. He claims that he is excluded from 'society' in India. This sentiment is frequently found in the migration stories and writings of Anglo-Indians and represents a noteworthy difference between the situations of young men leaving Mexico and Hyderabad who still think of the places they have left as 'home' and the Anglo-Indian situation.

For all that Anglo-Indians have been urged by a succession of leaders to think of India as home, mostly they do not – neither when residing there nor after they have left. The following extract of a letter addressed to diasporic Anglo-Indians, and written by a non-Anglo Indian, is revealing:

India and all Indians would like the Anglo-Indian community worldwide to take an active role in India and in India's promising future, politically and economically, just as the rest of the 25 million strong (non Anglo-Indian) Indian diaspora is doing. So we are reaching out to you to be our equal partners in this venture. You are as Indian as us. And you have an equal right and equal responsibility towards India. You can never be accorded the love and respect from the English as you will from us. We want you to 'come home'. You are us and we are you. We are in this together.

In the past, there has been an estrangement between the Indians and the Anglo-Indians. Part of this is both our fault and part of this is

due to circumstances. India felt let down that you had rejected the greatest civilization (Indian) and the greatest religion of the world (Hinduism) for fleeting and non-existent political gains. We also understand that you needed to survive. So let us forget the past and welcome each other with open arms (Personal communication from an Anglo-Indian acquaintance who had received this email on 11 October 2007).

Even with invitations such as the above there is very little return migration or engagement with India once Anglo-Indians leave India, and although Anglo-Indians may speak fondly and nostalgically about growing up in India, many are not interested in returning even for a holiday.

A further difference between Anglo-Indians and other migrants is their identification with the dominant populations in the countries they aspire to migrate to. Anglo-Indians feel socially and historically aligned to particular commonwealth countries; they are sure they will feel at home amongst people in these places in ways they do not feel at home in India amongst their fellow Indians (Blunt 2005; Caplan 1995).³⁴

The characteristics of Anglo-Indian migration add further dimensions to the culture of migration theory. Although it was a particular set of circumstances which initiated and continues to perpetuate Anglo-Indian migration, some of the ideas around identity (which for Anglo-Indians, I argue, is the strongest motivator to migrate) may be applicable to other migration situations. A culture of migration theory that includes an identity dimension may illuminate the processes involved where, for example, would-be migrants feel excluded by the dominant populations in their birth country, and/or identify strongly with populations in their potential destination countries. Hage (2004), for example, writes about Lebanese Maronites who distinguished themselves from the majority Muslims and aligned themselves with the European colonisers through their shared Christianity. In his article Hage does not specifically attribute their migration to their identity, but in discussing this idea he indicated that there is a causative link between the migration of Maronites and beliefs they hold about their identity.³⁵

CONCLUSION

Migration of Anglo-Indians out of India to other countries operates on multiple levels simultaneously. Whilst there is a diversity of reasons for the mass exodus of Anglo-Indians from India since 1947, what is incontestable is that

they felt threatened by Indian Independence in particular and unique ways, rather than liberated by it. From that point in time, the impetus to migrate from India gained momentum so that a culture of migration is now a characteristic of the Anglo-Indian community and more Anglo-Indians may now live outside of India than in it. Looking at other examples of situations where a culture of migration exists, it is evident that the Anglo-Indian situation is unique in significant ways. The push and pull factors, including cost-benefit considerations, which are usually associated with migration are different for Anglo-Indians. The explanation which seems to be the best fit with the reasons offered by Anglo-Indians for migration is that their culture of migration incorporates a strong emphasis on their 'Western' identity to the point where they feel a cultural orientation to live in a more Western country than India. The impetus to leave is fuelled by the success stories of Anglo-Indian migrants; these emphasise that the characteristics of language, religion and Western culture had set them up for relatively easy resettlement.

Anglo-Indian political leaders attempt to convince Anglo-Indians to stay by insisting that they are Indian. This message is not sufficient to counter the combined effect of a well-established culture of migration, a (frequently but not invariably held) sense of alienation from India and the reassurance and encouragement from their contemporaries and kin who reside abroad. At least for the time being, Anglo-Indians in India are still more motivated to quit India, than to stay.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A version of this paper was presented at the 2006 ASAA/NZ conference. I appreciate the many useful recommendations from various people, especially Ghassan Hage, Dorothy McMenamin, and Carolyn Morris. Sita Venkateswar's comments on a developed version of the paper assisted me greatly, as did the suggestions from Henry Barnard. I also acknowledge Henry Barnard's expert supervision as I worked on my PhD research; portions of which are used here. Thanks particularly to Keith Butler for the use of the extract from his manuscript and for many useful conversations on topics covered in this article. A note of appreciation also to the anonymous reviewers whose comments were invaluable.

NOTES

- 1 The 'Quit India' movement was a civil disobedience Independence movement launched in 1942 calling on the British to leave India. Anglo-Indians 'quit India' for reasons linked to the British leaving India in 1947 – as will be discussed in

this article. Reginald Mahar, an Anglo-Indian from Calcutta, uses the same sort of wording when he writes: ‘So, many of them quit’ in describing Anglo-Indians’ mass emigration which he attributes to Anglo-Indian feeling of not being wanted by India (Mahar, 1962: 87).

- 2 I have used his name here but all other names are pseudonyms. Butler has been published by Penguin (1998) and in *The Age Newspaper* many times, and is currently working on his first novel.
- 3 While the use of this extract is a break in style from my use of case study interview material, this work, based to a large extent upon Butler’s life, does serve to illuminate the views of Anglo-Indians of his era. A number of anthropologists argue that fiction provides a valuable source of understanding as ideas can be more ‘honestly’ expressed by a ‘fictional’ person than a ‘real’ person. See, for example, Narayan (1999).
- 4 I use the term ‘theory’ to refer to an ‘explanatory framework’, as others who write about the culture of migration do [for example, Kandel and Massey (2002), and Ali (2007)]. Arguably it inflates the idea of ‘theory’ when in this case terms such as hypothesis, idea, or argument may suffice.
- 5 I carried out research with Calcutta’s Anglo-Indians as part of my PhD research. [For more detail see Andrews (2005)]. In new and ongoing research I look at aspects of Anglo-Indian aging – in Indian and diasporic contexts.
- 6 Calcutta is now officially known as Kolkata but I use the old name because, in the main, Anglo-Indians do.
- 7 It is beyond the scope of this paper to review all contemporary theories of migration. See instead other articles in this publication, and works which devote themselves to such a review [for example, Massey *et al* (1998)].
- 8 This publication is the result of work undertaken by The Research Committee of South-North Migration that focussed on identifying theories that explained the *cause* of migration in contemporary times. They explored the usefulness of current theories, developed others, and tested the performance of the theories empirically, drawing on a wide range of case studies (from their own and others’ research). Other theories identified and discussed in this work include Neoclassical Economics (at Macro and Micro levels), New Economics of Migration, Segmented Labour Market Theory, Historical-Structural Theory, and World Systems (Massey *et al*, 1998).

- 9 Ali notes a class distinction here in that the movement to the U.S. is by young IT professionals, while the movement to Saudi Arabia is by labourers.
- 10 Madras is now known as Chennai, but since Caplan refers to the city as Madras, and I am working here with his material, I do too.
- 11 More and more middle-class, English medium educated Indians are also identifying as 'Western' nowadays, but Anglo-Indians are distinct in that their forebears *were* European and they have no other identities to choose between – other Indians can exercise a choice, as different situations might demand.
- 12 This issue was highlighted to me by Anglo-Indians I interviewed (in Melbourne in 2007) about their reasons for coming to Australia, and is noted by Blunt (2005:156).
- 13 The term 'chain migration' is also used to express the same idea.
- 14 There are difficulties obtaining exact numbers of Anglo-Indians, as they have not been counted separately in the census since 1961. Even when they were, the population statistics were questionably low (Andrews 2005; Anthony 1969; McMenamin unpublished)
- 15 It is not only Anglo-Indians, of course, who are affected by the tightening up of Immigration regulations; this affects other Indian groups as well as other, especially third world, peoples who attempt to migrate.
- 16 I use this term as Blunt (a geographer and Anglo-Indian researcher) does when she says that '[t]he term 'diaspora' is inherently geographical, implying a scattering over space and transnational connections between people and places' (Blunt 2005: 3).
- 17 I explore the classed dimension of Anglo-Indian migration in more detail in a forthcoming publication.
- 18 The fact that so many Anglo-Indians are keen to relay their migration stories was emphasised at the 7th Anglo-Indian Reunion in Toronto. There, other researchers and I were frequently offered complete, seemingly well-rehearsed migration stories – some of which I draw on in this article.
- 19 I have used pseudonyms here and throughout this article, unless otherwise stated.

- 20 The telling exception is that Anglo-Indians have notoriously poor competence in Indian languages (other than English). This may be changing though, as schools now require a pass in Hindi and the official State language for promotion into the next class.
- 21 In this case I have used his real name.
- 22 Leaving India ‘for the sake of [*their*] children’ was a refrain that came up frequently in my interviews with Anglo-Indians who had migrated.
- 23 This young man has since left India. He has gone to Australia for further study, but friends of his who I spoke to in late 2005 don’t expect to see him residing in India again.
- 24 If these four are typical of Anglo-Indian youth then a huge shift has occurred for Anglo-Indians in terms of their competence in Indian languages (other than English). My experience, from talking to Anglo-Indians in Calcutta, did not indicate that this level of competence was widespread amongst the Anglo-Indian population, although certainly many of the younger ones were more competent than their parents. As I have noted earlier, they now require a pass in languages in the senior years of school in order to be promoted into the next grade. This is in contrast to older Anglo-Indians who attended schools which didn’t offer a local Indian language at all, let alone require a pass.
- 25 This is another issue I take up in the forthcoming paper which looks at the class dimensions of Anglo-Indian migration. For leaders and other more socially mobile Anglo-Indians there are other factors at work which make it more likely that they will remain in India.
- 26 Laura Bear, an anthropologist and historian, carried out research with Anglo-Indians in Calcutta and Kharagpur in the mid 1990s.
- 27 It is important to note, however, that there are examples of Anglo-Indians who struggle with resettlement, including those I have written of here who have had their qualifications challenged and/or downgraded. Anglo-Indians do not usually dwell upon these aspects of resettlement. The ‘de-sahibing’ of Anglo-Indians would be interesting to investigate further but is beyond the scope of this paper.
- 28 See Adrian Gilbert’s PhD thesis for further discussion (Gilbert, 1996).

- 29 Anglo-Indians are not alone in wanting to leave India. Ali's (2007) study, examining Hyderabad Muslim migration patterns, is one such example. It is beyond the scope of this paper, however, to compare the varied forms of migration of non-Anglo-Indians from India except to note that their allegiance to India is less likely to be a factor than it is for Anglo-Indians.
- 30 In New Zealand, for example, for immigration purposes the maximum number of points for an age range was allotted to people between 20 and 29 years (Immigration NZ 2007).
- 31 Other groups migrate for their children's education, too, but generally neither as a whole family nor with plans to resettle permanently.
- 32 Based on my interview material there seems to be a gendered dimension to this: with parents of daughters saying that they left because they did not feel confident that there would be suitable marriage partners for them in India, and those with sons saying they were concerned that their sons would not do well in the job market due to perceived preferential treatment of Indians, by fellow Indians, for positions in the job market. In Caplan's research in Madras he encountered the same reasoning (Caplan 1995).
- 33 When I asked one Anglo-Indian about remittances he commented that he knew Indians did this, but Anglo-Indians did not; their aim was to get everyone out.
- 34 Another reason for Anglo-Indians' lack of connection with India, which I explore further in looking at class dimensions of migration in a forthcoming paper, may be linked to the fact that many Anglo-Indians do not have the traditional ties to a country that come about through land ownership. For various reasons Anglo-Indians have not historically owned, and still do not own, the homes they live in.
- 35 This was discussed after I presented an earlier version of this paper in 2006 at the ASAA/NZ conference.

REFERENCES

- Ali, S. 2007 "Go West Young Man": The Culture of Migration among Muslims in Hyderabad, India, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33 (1): 37-58.
- Andrews, R. 2005 *Being Anglo-Indian: Practices and Stories from Calcutta*, Palmerston North: Massey University.

- Anthony, F. 1969 *Britain's Betrayal in India*, Bombay: Allied Publishers.
- Bear, L. 1998 *Traveling Modernity: Capitalism, community and the nation in the colonial governance of the Indian railways*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan.
- Blunt, A. 2002 'Land of our Mothers: Home, Identity, and Nationality for Anglo-Indians in British India 1919–1947', *History Workshop Journal*, 54: 49–72.
- Blunt, A. 2005 *Domicile and Diaspora: Anglo-Indian Women and the Spatial Politics of Home*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brubaker, R. and F. Cooper 2000 'Beyond "Identity"', *Theory and Society*, 29: 1–47.
- Butler, K. 1998 'Sodasi', in C. Bird (ed) *The Penguin Century of Australian Stories*, Melbourne: Viking: 332–340.
- Caplan, L. 1995 "'Life is Only Abroad, Not Here": The Culture of Emigration among Anglo-Indians in Madras', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 14 (1): 26–46.
- Caplan, L. 1998 'Colonial and Contemporary Transnationalisms: Traversing Anglo-Indian Boundaries of the Mind [Electronic Version]', *The International Journal of Anglo-Indian Studies*, 3. <http://www.alphalink.com.au/~agilbert/capo399.html>.
- Caplan, L. 2001 *Children of Colonialism: Anglo-Indians in a Post-Colonial World*, Oxford: Berg.
- D'Cruz, G. 1999 *Representing Anglo-Indians: A Genealogical Study*, Melbourne: University of Melbourne.
- Gilbert, A. 1996 *The Anglo-Indians in Australia, from Unsuccessful Caste Members to Attaining Immigrants: An Examination of Anglo-Indian Labour Force Performance and their life Perceptions*, Victoria, Australia: Monash University.
- Glytsos, N.P. 2002 'A Macroeconomic Model of the Effects of Migrant Remittances in the Mediterranean Countries', in I. Sirageldin (ed) *Human Capital: Population and Economics in the Middle East*, London: I.B.Tauris: 300–325.

- Hage, G. 2004 'White Self Racialisation as Identity Fetishism: Capitalism and the experience of colonial whiteness', in K. Murji and J Solomos (eds) *Racialisation: Studies in Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 185–206 .
- Hammerton, J.A. and A. Thomson 2005 *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's Invisible Migrants*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Immigration New Zealand 2007 <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/work/skilledmigrant/caniapply/claimingpoints/age.htm>.
- Kandel, W. and D. S. Massey 2002 'The Culture of Mexican Migration: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis', *Social Forces*, 80 (3): 981–1004.
- Mahar, R. 1962 *These are the Anglo-Indians*, Calcutta: Sona Printers.
- Massey, D. S., J. Arango, G. Hugo, A. Kouaouci, A. Pellegrino, J. E. Taylor 1998 *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- McGuinty, D. 2007, 'A Personal Message from the Premier', *Symposium Programme*, August 2007.
- McMenamin, D. unpublished 'The Curious Exclusion of Anglo-Indians from the Mass Slaughter during partition on India or Anglo-Indians: Exclusion from Partition Violence and Decision to "Quit India"'
- Mills, M. 1998 *Ethnic Myth and Ethnic Survival: The Case of India's Anglo-Indian (Eurasian) Minority*, Ontario: York University.
- Moch, L. 2005 'Gender and Migration Research', in M. Bommers and E. T. Morawska (eds) *International Migration Research: Constructions, Omissions and the Promises of Interdisciplinarity*, Hampshire: Ashgate.
- Nagel, J. 1994 'Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture', *Social Problems*, 41 (1): 152–176 .
- Narayan, K. 1999 'Ethnography and Fiction: Where Is the Border?', *Anthropology and Humanism*, 24 (2): 134–47.

- Sokefeld, M. 2001 'Reconsidering Identity', *Anthropos*, 96: 527–544.
- Stark, H. 1926 *Hostages in India: Or the Life Story of the Anglo-Indian Race*, Calcutta: Fine Arts Cottage Press.
- Trlin, A.D. 1997 'For the Promotion of Economic Growth and Prosperity: New Zealand's Immigration Policy, 1991–1995', in A. D. Trlin and P. Spoonley (eds) *New Zealand and International Migration: A Digest and Bibliography*, Number 3, Palmerston North: Massey University: 1–27.
- Williams, B. 2002 *Anglo-Indians: Vanishing Remnants of a Bygone Era*, New Jersey: CTR Books.
- Younger, C. 1987 *Anglo-Indians: Neglected Children of the Raj*, Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation.