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Twice Versus Direct Migrants: East African Sikh Settlers in Britain

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Author

Bhachu, Parminder

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TWICE VERSUS DIRECT MIGRANTS:
EAST AFRICAN SIKH SETTLERS IN BRITAIN (1)

This paper has three main aims: first, it attempts to document salient features of a settler population of the twice migrant East African Sikhs, whose orientations and patterns of settlement, are different from that of the directly migrant groups who constitute the majority South Asian population in Britain. It analyses the major features of the organisation of the community, namely community values, its structure, economic organisation, the influence of a strong communications network, the consequences of the lack of a "myth of return" and so on to formulate a picture of the field of social relationships in Britain.

Secondly, it examines the relationship of caste and class, both prior to the Indian army action at the Golden Temple in June 1984 and after the 1984 which outraged the Sikhs internationally, to show that these axis of social organisation were, and still remain, critical to the formation of the intra-group identities of the direct and twice migrants. These are defined not only as a result of the increased contact of of the latter with the former on the British scene, but also in accordance with the perceptions of the white indigenous British, who are not familiar with finer internal differences.

Thirdly, it explores the post-1984 phase which has seen developments that are different from the Pre-1984, and which led to the formation of a more inclusive and more "universal" Sikh identity, regardless of caste and class differences, and experiences of migration.

The East African Sikhs form one part of the total Asian population in the UK from East Africa which is estimated to be around 206,000, of which slightly over half are men. (2) The majority of them arrived in the UK from the mid-1960s onwards, their pattern of migration being different from that of direct migrants from the Indian sub-continent and Pakistan (Ballard 1973; Ballard and Ballard 1977; Saifullah Khan 1976, 1977; Helweg 1979;

Anwar 1976; Kahya 1973; Jeffrey 1976; Robinson 1984). They are twice removed, having left the Punjab during the early part of the twentieth century as indentured labour to build the Kenya-Uganda railway (Mangat 1969:32) and thence to the UK in the 1960s, having been seriously affected by post-independence Africanization policies.

The twice migrated community (3) of East African Sikhs in the UK, constitute a single group of urban though traditionalist settlers with a common history of migration from India to Africa to Britain, and who:

- (a) belong predominantly to one caste group, that of the Ramagarhias (the artisan caste) (4)
- (b) were already part of an established community in East Africa, where they had developed considerable community skills prior to migration;
- (c) moved from urban East Africa to urban Britain (Ghai 1965:93) having been concentrated in a handful of towns in East African;
- (d) were mainly public sector workers (5) forming the middle level of the three-tier system in the plural society of East Africa (Mangat 1969:131; Ghai 1965:94);
- (e) were technically skilled because of early recruitment policies which only allowed skilled labour into Africa (Morris 1968:62);
- (f) despite both their absence from India for over seventy years and the lack of home orientation have maintained many of the values and traditions they migrated with in the early twentieth century;
- (g) have arrived in Britain with considerable command over mainstream skill (e.g. language, education, familiarity with urban institutions and bureaucratic processes) and also a certain amount of capital, which makes them relatively prosperous and one of the most progressive of the non-European migrants. Their lack of a myth of return and the fact that they are 'twice migrants' is of

central importance in explaining their progress, as well as certain features of their social organization.

East Africans are therefore experienced migrants who had developed considerable community and technical skills prior to migration, and who had also had powerful community ties which they have been able to reproduce in Britain since the late 1960s. They lack a strong orientation to a home country, and are settlers who combine facets of both progress and traditionalism in their settlement in the UK. A number of highly-qualified East Africans migrated to Canada and the US around the mid 1960s, whereas the public sector workers and some businessmen holding British passports moved to the UK.

In the following, I shall refer to salient features of the East African Sikh community to put them into the context of the wider minority of directly migrant Sikhs and other South Asians in Britain of whom they are a part, but from whom they differ in certain fundamental ways.

Twice Versus direct Migrants

From the outside South Asian migrants in Britain are generally seen as a homogenous community, yet there are clear differences among **them** of class, caste, experiences of migration, origins (from urban to rural areas), etc. All of these play a determinant role on their orientation and settlement. The complexity of different communities within the South Asian grouping is generally not given enough weight due to the assumption of an entity called 'South Asian Culture'. Yet there are direct migrants for whom migration to Britain has been their first move from the Indian sub-continent, often from rural areas to urban ones, and there are twice migrants like the East African Sikhs.

In Britain, East Africans, mainly Ramgarhia Sikhs, constitute a minority within a larger minority of Sikhs consisting of other caste groups with a large number belonging to the Jat Sikh caste. The Jats have mostly migrated from the Indian sub-continent and have been in Britain often more longer than East Africans. In the

latter case, residence in Africa for over sixty years has resulted in the loss of their ties with India, unlike the direct migrants, who maintain them more intensely. They were, thus, orientated towards staying in the UK permanently, right from the point of entry. This is in contrast to other South Asian migrants (Saifullah Khan 1977; Dahya 1973; Aurora 1967; Anwar 1979; Helweg 1979; Jeffrey 1976) who were home-orientated and who made frequent visits to India for reinforcement of their cultural values. East Africans based abroad belong to a community which lacked a crucial feature common to South Asian minorities: that is, the myth of return. The latter was a powerful organizational feature of migrant communities in structuring their attitudes and orientations towards settlement in UK. In spite of increasing lengths of stay and after uniting with families, the myth of return was often still retained by direct migrants as 'a central charter for the maintenance of Sikh ethnicity in Britain' (Ballard and Ballard 1977:41-42). Brooks and Singh (1978-79:22) further emphasize its importance, stating that 'the myth of return is of overriding importance when considering the perspectives and actions of migrant workers, particularly those from the Asian ethnic groups...The successful retention of the myth of return is necessary for the emphasis on the minimizing or prevention of contact with the wider society.'

Dahya (1973:241) too makes similar points, in classifying Pakistani migrants as 'transients', whose stay abroad is of a temporary nature. He states (1974:82) 'Like Indians...Pakistanis emigrate not in order to earn a livelihood but to supplement the economic resources of their families of origin...to improve their existing landholdings and /or to extend them, to improve their family homestead by building a pakka (literally, solid) South Asians in Blackburn, who he states have 'restricted aspirations while in the UK, centered upon the myth-or reality-of an early return to the sending society. This factor, when allied to structural constraints, has ensured that the group remains encapsulated in its neighborhood, in its place of work and in its place of learning' (1984:245).

Eventual return home remained the ultimate goal even though the final return might either have been constantly postponed or indeed might never have taken place. Migration was seen as an interlude, the country of origin and kinsmen resident there acting as a controlling influence on the motivations, actions, and attitudes of the directly migrant South Asian minorities. For example, Jeffrey (1976:145) in describing Muslim Pakistanis in Bristol stated that 'values carried over from Pakistan influence patterns of interaction in Bristol, links with kin at home contain obligations and necessitate a constant orientation in the direction of Pakistan on the part of migrants, and their investment patterns and intentions to return have an impact on the lifestyles they choose. Features mentioned above are consistently salient in descriptions of the settlement patterns of South Asians in Britain at the time. Such characteristics however, do not apply to East Africans, who do not fit into a number of commonly held stereotypical assumptions **about minorities**. They are neither home-orientated nor view their stay in Britain as a sojourn, since their migration to Britain was always of a permanent nature.

Despite their absence from India for a long period and their lack of ties to a home country East Africans have remained traditionalist. This also applies to other East African Asians like the Gujeratis who have remained culturally conservative and intensely religious (Tambs-Lyche 1980; Michaelson 1979; Shah 1979). They are almost 'Victorian Sikhs' as an Indian Sikh informant suggested, having maintained some of the fundamental traditions with which they migrated from India. This is not to suggest that their cultural values have been ossified and remain static because they have changed in response to their country of residence. but they do observe many of their traditions stringently, more so than newly-established migrants. Their conservatism manifests itself in the ritual elaboration of their marriages, in the gift exchanges that take place according to traditional rules, and in the injection of the wages of brides into their dowries, thus converting

female wealth into a traditional framework, and so on (see Bhachu 1985a, 86).

The perpetuation of some central **cultural values** more strongly than in the past has occurred, despite such features as changes since migration in domestic organization, with an increasing tendency toward nuclear families which set up separate residences away from an extended family; the high rate entry of women into the labour market as wage earners, (6) the dispersed nature of the community, the lack of a myth of return on arrival, and also the absence of control exercised by a kinship group from a distance.

Arrival in family units:

Balanced age and sex and structure

East Africans' orientation towards staying in the UK permanently is obvious from other features of their social organization. For example, their arrival in complete family units, often consisting of three generations, of grandparents, parents and children, make them unique in relation to international migration, which is invariably of a much younger age group. (7) In the majority of cases, even if the households heads arrived first, the families were united within a couple of years. The phases of settlement described by Ballard and Ballard (1977) for Sikhs and most other migrants from the subcontinent, are not relevant to them since the community has not gone through the early stages of bachelor households to fully-fledged family life with the arrival of families in the 1960s and 1970s. The arrival of East Africans as family units has led to their rapid settlement in the UK, alongside the reproduction of strong communication links established during their stay in Africa. The longer process of settlement applicable to South Asians who had migrated directly was automatically telescoped for them. This contraction of phases of settlement, together with their strong communications network has catalyzed the establishment of ethnic services within a short period of their arrival, even though in comparison to direct migrants East Africans were latecomers,

arriving the late 1960s. The former have been in Britain since the labour shortage period following the Second World War and only started the process of consolidated families in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with people of Bangladeshi origin doing this even later, in the early 1970s, even though their menfolk have been Britain since the earliest days of South Asian migration. This period also coincides with the arrival of Ugandan Asians in 1972 as refugees ousted by General Idi Amin. I shall not delve into their settlement patterns here, since these have already been well documented (Kuepper, Lackey, and Swinerton 1975; Humphrey and Ward 1974). East Africans in my study, because they were mainly public sector workers based in Nairobi, are either from Kenya, or have arrived prior to the 1972 Amin episode. Having stated this, I should emphasize that some of the features described here for East African Sikhs are also of relevance to other East African Asians in general, whether they be refugees from Uganda, Kenya or Tanzania: and whether they are Hindus, Muslims, or Gujeratis, etc. (Fernando 1979; Tambs-Lyche 1980; Michaelson 1979; Robinson 1981, 1984; Shah 1979). Their past experiences and common position in East Africa as middlemen gives them a large number of shared characteristics (Brooks and Singh 1978-79). (8)

Strong Community ties and expertise

Despite their late arrival in UK, their common experiences have given them skills which they are able to utilize in the establishment of communities in Britain. In East Africa they were concentrated in a few towns, and were highly urbanized: they were employed by an equally small number of organizations, their children had been to a select number of 'Asian' schools in the main towns, etc. Since they were already part of an established diaspora before migration to the UK, they have been able to reproduce not only common ties and skills, but also establish institutions like temples (surdwaras) and caste associations rapidly on arrival to further consolidate the community. Their

skills have helped them to establish themselves much more rapidly than direct migrants who have not possessed the same expertise, linguistic facility, and communications network to develop community structures at the same pace. All this has further helped to reaffirm their East African identity.

In that country they had been able to maintain their community intact through traditionally-arranged endogamous marriages (Bharati 1967:284; Morris 1967:267). This helped group formation and the development of the community along caste lines, and also led to the perpetuation of the traditional values with which they migrated. Cross-cutting kinship ties developed through marriage alliances in East Africa, and the great overlap of contact concentrated in urban areas had been conducive to the building of a powerful network there which is now to be found in the UK. It is this that is drawn upon to mobilize the community for specific projects and for generating support in relation to particular issues which are of especial concern to them, and for arranging marriage alliances.

Along with the community expertise, East Africans were skilled technically prior to arrival here due to the selective nature of early recruitment policies to the colonial British government in East Africa. It only allowed in the skilled labour needed to build the Kenya-Uganda railways (Morris 1968: 62 Managat 1969:61; Ghai 1965:96). Morris (1968:62) states that immigration rules in East Africa were so difficult that 'no alien was admitted unless he could fill a post that was for the benefit of everybody. For this reason, East Africans in Britain possess developed community and technical skills acquired before settlement in Britain, and, in a large number of cases, even before settlement in Africa.

Since those who have arrived in Britain have mainly been public sector workers, they have not necessarily occupied low-grade jobs or semi or unskilled industrial work (Phizacklea and Miles 1980; Rex and Tomlinson 1979; Castles and Kosack 1973; Brooks 1975a/b), being more occupationally dispersed in different

spheres of work than is suggested by the general literature on migrants workers. The emphasis on the working class and also 'underclass' nature of migrants (Rex and Tomlinson 1979:275) is also not always relevant to East Africans as a whole, though it clearly applies to some of them. In London, East Africans have pursued the types of jobs they had in Africa, filling administrative civil service jobs as well as factory and professional one, reflecting a cross-section of the community. In the Midlands, in relation to the local employment situation, East Africans are to be found in heavy industrial work though not on the same scale as migrants coming direct from the Indian sub-continent. East Africans do not conform to the types of employment patterns portrayed in the existing literature, being much more diversified throughout the UK, though with a strong tendency towards occupying public sector employment niches, as in East Africa.

Geographical Dispersal and Cultural Conservatism

Another facet of the East African community that is unlike that of other minorities, is its geographically dispersed nature. A feature of minority settlement frequently mentioned is residential segregation and concentration in inner city areas, leading to the formation of 'ethnic ghettos' (Anwar 1979; Castles, Booth and Wallace 1984; Rex and Tomlinson 1979; Dahya 1973, 1974). East Africans are residentially dispersed even though they reside in areas of high immigrant population. Despite this, a strong communications network operates within the community. However, it should be stated here, that it is precisely the community ties which have helped perpetuate cultural values and religiosity, which have further catalyzed the revival of Sikhism, especially in the Pre-1984 phase, amongst the general Sikh community resident in Britain for much longer. The injection of a more culturally conservative though progressive (that is in their attitudes towards residence in the UK and their command over mainstream skills) community with a clear East

African identity, into a much less developed and more diverse home-orientated one, has precipitated over the last decade the resumption of Sikh symbols. This has led to a stricter organisation of temples and the establishment of ceremony along more defined lines, with a stronger emphasis on their Sikh identity. It has been helped by their tight community links, which are useful in mustering support by setting up internal community organisations. Ballard and Ballard (1977:47) have also referred to this trend amongst the Sikhs, attributing the conservatism of East Africans to their lowly Ramgarhia status.(9) They state that since they are 'traditionally ranked lower than the Jats, the Ramgarhias have long sought to improve their status by following the rules of religious orthodoxy more closely and they continued their strategy both in East Africa and Britain'. However, a point that has not been sufficiently developed in their case is that they are highly organized, which, combined with their common East African Sikh identity which is not entirely based on religious orthodoxy but is secular in nature, being a product of residence and consolidation in East Africa as a Sikh community.

It also reflects their middle-class status in comparison with the predominantly working-class situation of direct migrants. These factors partly account for greater conservatism despite more westernized urban ways, and also the market skills which make them successful settlers. They are thus a traditionalist twice migrant community which possess community skills as well as those need for operating within urban institutions in the UK. They have in the past acquired such experiences through having worked within the apparatus established by the British in East Africa in the fields of administration, employment, education, social services, etc. Familiarity with colonial British institutions and urban life prior to migration in conjunction with their greater command of the English language facilitated the dispersal of East Africans all over the UK, away from areas of concentrated Asian

population. In this respect, they differ from direct migrants who have lacked experience with European institutions, having migrated from rural areas in the sub-continent in which they have considerable familiarity with traditional social organisational values and hierarchies (Saifullah Khan 1979a).

Caste and Class: internal differentiation versus external identity Pre-1984

of the traditional features that have gained prominence in the U.K., caste has become a definitive principal of organisation of many minorities of Indian origin, and one which is gaining in importance. The increasing significance of caste, and the projection of exclusive caste identities, among Gujarati communities from East Africa in the UK has been also been described by Michaelson (1979), Shah (1979), and Tambs-Lyche (1980).

Caste differences have always been important in the arrangement of marriages and still apply stringently in Britain, to the criteria of for spouse selection, even though, there are minor changes in the rules of marriage arrangement as a result of settlement. On the whole, Jats marry Jats, Chamars marry Chamars, Ramgarhias from East Africa marry other East African Ramgarhias etc. However, these caste divisions have been accentuated and reflected in the British Sikh diaspora institutionally, for example, in the formation of separate caste associations and temples, which have executive committees restricted exclusively to caste members. Overtly this may not seem the case because of the open entry to anyone who cares to worship within Sikh temples. In fact, in a number of cases caste has crystallized as a feature of organisation in Britain and has manifested itself in the establishment of caste-based institutions, precisely because of the interaction of the different caste groups with varying orientations. This is most obvious in areas of high concentration like the Midlands and London. In such places, there are exclusive Jat temples, Ramgarhia Caste Associations, separate Chamar and

Bhattra temples and so on, contrary to the egalitarian Sikh religious ideals, which deny caste divisions.

The caste status of East Africans has been emphasized in the UK, not because of their own consciousness of it, even though in East Africa, it was crucial in marriage arrangements and the maintenance of caste endogamy. Since they themselves were the majority Sikh group in East Africa, there being almost 90 per cent Ramgarhia Sikh (McLeod 1974:87; Bharati 1972:34-39), their caste position was not a defining marker of their intra-Sikh ethnicity because their status as Sikh assumed greater importance. The homogeneity of their caste group rendered their caste status irrelevant, as a defining feature of their interaction with other Sikhs who were mostly other Ramgarhias. Their caste boundary has been defined in UK, as a result of their interaction with direct migrants from the sub-continent who, as Ballard and Ballard 1977, p.54) have also mentioned are more conscious of their caste and village ties, being more familiar about functioning caste hierarchies. The East Africans' position in Britain is a new one, of becoming a minority caste within the majority Sikh population of Jat Sikhs, even though, there are other minority castes such as the Khatris, Ahluwalias, Ravi Dasis, Bhattras etc. In a way, the caste consciousness of East Africans ie. their Ramgarhianess, is interactive ethnicity (Wallman 1979 p.6), produced as a result of contact with a more diverse range of caste groups within the UK, who have different experiences of migration and settlement, from their own East African ones.

However, even though, caste has become a powerful organising principle for the British Sikhs, equally important is the variable of class position within the British class hierarchy. Class already has, and will further assume increasing importance, as a defining feature of internal differentiation within the Sikh community, in common with other ethnic minorities. For example, the division between the Jat and Ramgarhias which expresses itself in the maintenance of separate marriage circuits and

community institutions, is a reflection not only of their different caste positions and experiences of migration, but also of their different class positions. The former are predominantly working class, having entered the British hierarchy as industrial workers from rural Punjab, whilst, the latter entered as more middle class public sector workers from urban Africa, who have reproduced their occupational specialisations and also their relative prosperity. So, the expression of their differences is not only produced by their different caste positions but also by their different class positions in Britain.

However, the definition of these two positions is also dependent on the context. Their "East Africaness", reflecting their class position, manifests itself most clearly vis-a-vis interaction with the indigenous British, to stress their differences from the mainly working class, home-orientated and directly migrant Sikhs, whereas their "Ramgarhianess", reflecting their different caste positions, is expressed most saliently during interaction with the dominant Jat Sikh community. In areas of high Sikh concentration, caste and class positions amalgamate to define the East African separateness from the direct migrants, the projection of differences being a product of caste and class combined. Hence their caste status is of especial relevance to the ethnic context, but not in relation to interaction with the indigenous British, who do not perceive internal differences between the different caste groups, and between the twice and direct migrants.

However, racism and the lack of awareness by the white British of the different South Asian groups includes them in the very groups from which they seek exclusion. Thus, the East African exclusion of the directly migrant South Asian groups is only effective within, and relevant to, the internal organisation of the community. Even though, caste and class divisions have become more salient than ever in the past, conversely, there is also increasing strategic unity for effective political action, in conjunction with other "Black" and "Asian" groups. This is the

result of the growing sophistication of the community, especially amongst the younger generation of East African and "British Asians" who are British products and who are forming overreaching and more inclusive identities, for collective action and political mobilization for common interests.

POST - 1984.

External threat, internal coalescence: reaffirmation of a Sikh identity.

Having described the internal differentiation of the British Sikhs, it should not be assumed that the boundaries between twice and direct migrants remain static and unchanging, because they are continuously influenced and redefined - weakening and strengthening - according to the national and international forces to which the Sikhs are subject. For example, the otherwise important boundaries of class and caste between the various Sikh groups, blur for the purposes of political action on specific issues that affect the Sikhs generally, and during times of crisis. An example of the latter situation was the army action at the Golden temple in Amritsar in June 1984, which angered the Sikhs internationally. During this period there was the increased consciousness of a more universal Sikh identity, regardless of caste, class and histories of migration. The reaffirmation of a more cohesive Sikh identity was a consequence of a very powerful, infact, the most serious external threat to the Sikhs and their religion and which generated the most unprecedented emotion from the British Sikhs. This horrendous event and also the Delhi riots after the assassination of the former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during which Sikhs were massacred, remain in the present and will do so in future, the most critical forces in the generation of an exclusive and internally inclusive Sikh identity, irrelevant of the country of residence in the diaspora, and of caste, and class divisions.

In Britain, this was also obvious from the support mustered by British Sikhs, during the much-publicized Mandla versus Lee ('0) case which resulted in the successful classification of the Sikhs as a 'race' in 1983. The protest marches that took place in central London included Sikhs of different origins and caste and class groups, even though East Africans were prominent as initiators of the case and the ensuing demonstrations. Community support was mobilized on the basis of their common Sikh identity because these issues angered the Sikhs as a group.

Thus, in such cases boundaries coalesced for particular purposes and when posed by an external threat, to include people in other circumstances would have been excluded (Wallman 1979:4-5). During times of difficulty, a consolidated Sikh identity evolved ignoring the narrower confines of twice and direct migrant differences and caste and class divisions, which otherwise, remain important exclusionary and inclusionary mechanisms. A more united Sikh identity became paramount as represented by the post-1984 period, in which Sikh effervescence and a consciousness of a common shared Sikhi was at its peak. This was reflected in the generous donations given to reconstruct the Golden Temple: for rehabilitating the victims of the Delhi riots, for gathering support to present the Sikh case to the relevant international organisations etc.

But even though boundaries dilute in relation to particular national and international issues of universal concern to the Sikhs, on the whole, these remain key features of the internal organisation of the community in Britain. In the current phase, the different orientations of the Sikhs discussed earlier have re-established themselves, though some of the forces that impinge on them are of a different nature. For example, the home-orientation of the directly migrant Jat Sikhs is reflected in their greater interest in a establishment of Khalistan - a homeland in the subcontinent and in Sikh politics in the Punjab, whereas the Ramgarhia Sikhs, being twice migrants and urbanite Khatri and Arora Sikhs, are more distant from these particular

concerns. However, their common interests remain potent, and ever ready to effloresce, when their religious institutions, symbols and values are subject to attack from the outside.

A further point to be made here is that whereas in the above, I have discussed the impact of external forces on Sikh communities in Britain and the nature of their internal organisation, in defining Sikh identities, other forces are equally critical in this definition. These include the construction not only by the international media but also by other agencies, of Sikhs as terrorists regardless of their orientations, caste position, allegiances to their countries of residence, political inclinations, interest or for that matter lack of interest in the Punjab and Indian affairs - has had a critical impact through the imposition on them of a derogatory Sikh identity, which is beyond their control or management, relegated to realms of public perceptions and media constructions of them.

A parallel to the situation described above concerning the ascription of a negative identity is related to the presence of racism which applies equally to all Sikhs and 'lumps' them together with other South Asian minorities referred to as 'Pakis' and 'Hindus', by sections of the white majority regardless of their internal differences. However, their negotiation of racism is dependent on their class position and the skills that accrue from it. The more middle-class twice migrant Sikhs were, for example more efficient at maintaining their external Sikh symbols because of their confidence and familiarity with urban processes and skills, which made them more 'ethnically assertive' ---as opposed to working class Sikhs who were more willing to forgo them in order to obtain jobs. The latter's skills of negotiating their ethnicities in the British economic contexts were less developed. As a result, they were less efficient in perpetuating their Sikh identity overtly in the pre-1984 period, when the external threats were not in existence in the same fashion, as in the post '84 period. Since this period, a different situation

applies in which young and old Sikhs have donned turbans (often orange coloured ones) and are more overtly conscious of their Sikh roots. Thus religious and cultural values have been revived as a consequence of processes that differ from those operative on the Sikhs prior to this phase. Just as they remain familiar with the internal differences within the Sikh community, which continue to persist as a principle of Sikh social organisation in times of relative peace, they are equally, also more conscious of their common religious and cultural values which have been seriously threatened and misconstrued in the post '84 period.

Conclusion

This paper has dealt with a particular category of South Asian in Britain, the twice migrants to show that their experiences of settlement and also orientations are different from that of the directly migrant groups in certain fundamental ways. Contrary to a number of the existing stereotypes of migrants in Europe, East Africans possessed technical, community and urban skills, necessary for operating effectively in urban Britain; they were relatively prosperous on arrival in Britain, they lacked a "myth of return", they were occupationally dispersed and have remained traditionalistic, despite their urbanised and "westernized" ways.

I have also explored their relationship the directly migrant groups to refer to the internal dynamics of the community, both in the pre - 1984 and the post - 1984 phases, to show that their intra-group identities articulate along the axis of caste, class and experiences of migration. Equally important is the impact of racism on the twice and direct migrants, and also the national and international forces that the Sikhs are and have been subject to.

I have also examined some of the dynamics within the British Sikh communities after the dramatic post - 1984 phase, which has seen developments that are quite different from that of the pre - 1984 period.

ENDNOTES

1. This paper is a product of research undertaken from 1976 to 1980,, field work for which was conducted between 1977 and 1978 in London, updated during 1981-1985 and 1987-1989 in London and the Midlands. It is based on two anthropological research studies: a doctoral research which focused on the East African Sikhs, and the second, post-doctoral, one which dealt with the educational aspirations of Asian parents, in particular the Sikhs.

The East African study on which this paper is based has been reported in greater detail in my book, *Twice Migrants* (1985). I lived in Southall (London) for a year, during my doctoral fieldwork and relied on participant observation. A number of my sample families lived in other parts of London, though Southall acted as my main base. My fieldwork was a 'network study', since this was the most practicable way of working in an urban area with a population as geographically dispersed as the East African Sikhs. Also, methodologically, this approach helped to get the right criteria included in a manageable number of households.

I concentrated on 13 families who acted as my 'core' group, though I operated more peripherally with a wider group of another 20 families. The latter were referred to as 'wedding families', with whom I was more involved during the wedding season. In choosing to concentrate on these families, I looked for features which partly represented the general background of the East African Sikh community and which were also related to a key theme of the research, marriage and dowry patterns.

My fieldwork experiences, the joys and difficulties of working as a young Sikh woman within my own community in urban Britain and also within a geographically dispersed minority, have been described in greater detail in a forthcoming article 'The resocialisation of an anthropologist: Fieldwork within one's own community' (1987)

2. The most recent figures obtained from the Labour Force Survey of 1984, conducted by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, reveals a total Asian population from the New Commonwealth of approximately 1,011,000, of which the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups constitute 462,000, and the Indian, 805,000; and in all included 206,000 Asians of East African origin.

3. I have used the word 'community' loosely throughout the article to refer to a group of Asians of Sikh origin who have migrated from East Africa. They share a set of features common to other East African Asian groups from their experiences as 'middlemen' in the plural setting in East Africa, where they formed settled communities with developed community institutions, cross-cutting kinship links, and close neighbourhood and work

ties. Therefore my usage of the term 'East African community' does not refer to a bounded geographical group resident in one area in the UK and from a particular region of the subcontinent, but to a population that has shared past experiences and has a strong East African identity which has been reproduced in the UK. During their considerable stay in Africa, the East African Sikhs consolidated to form an 'inmarrying' group which is perpetuated in the UK.

4. East African Sikhs belong predominantly to the Ramgarhia caste group (McLeod 1974; Bharati 1967), consisting of three artisan groups, Lohars (blacksmiths), Tarkhans (carpenters), and Raj (bricklayers). This caste ranks above the scheduled castes, but below the Jats (landowners) and Khatris (the mercantile group) in the traditional caste hierarchy. Their move to East Africa consolidated this group much more so than on the Indian scene.

Within the Sikh society in East Africa there was no intermarriage between the Ramgarhias and Jats (Bharati, 1967). From the marriages in my sample, regional endogamy was also more intact than it is in Britain at present.

5. In the 1960s, East Africans moved to the UK, especially from Kenya, which had the largest number of wage earners of the three East African countries. There was a preponderance of employees working for the public sector, which was especially highly developed in Kenya, since Nairobi, its capital, had the headquarters of all the government and major private concerns. These included the Railway and Harbours, Posts and Telecommunications, and Public Works departments, and the banks. Government enterprise was not as developed among Kenyan Asians as it was among the Ugandan and Tanzanian communities. Ghai (1965) commenting on the occupational distribution of Asian employees in the three-tier system of East African countries, states that 36 percent of Asian workers performed executive, administrative, and managerial functions: about 25 percent were involved in skilled manual jobs; another 20 percent in secretarial and clerical jobs; and 15 percent in professional and technical occupations. As in previous decades, Asians provided the 'middle level' manpower, though by the late 1950s and early 1960s a number was obtaining higher-level executive positions, thus denting the three-tier system.

6. The higher rate of entry into the labour market by East African Asian women is borne out by statistical surveys. For example, the Unit of Manpower Study (DOE, 1976) demonstrated that, in comparison with indigenous women born in the UK, a larger percentage of fulltime female workers are migrant women born overseas: 81 percent of those born in the New Commonwealth (of which East African Asian women are a part), as compared with 62 percent of UK-born women (quoted in Allen, 1980). When the category of South Asian women in full-time employment between the

ages of 16 and 59 years is examined separately, East African women constitute 67%, as compared to 58% of women of Indian origin, and 17% Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. In the South-east of Britain, which has a higher rate of female employment than any other region, there is hardly any difference in the employment percentages of East African Asian women and indigenous British ones - East African women constitute 67%, in comparison to 66% indigenous white women. Afro-Caribbean women have a higher rate, at 77%, than both white indigenous and Asian women (Labour Market Survey 1986).

7. The balanced age and sex structure of the East African Sikhs also applies to other East African communities (Robinson 1982), giving them enormous advantage of settlement abroad as communities with a sufficiently large pool of people who can marry endogamously. It also makes them unique in relation to the international migration of minority groups which tend to have a younger age profile and a more restricted range of people within them.

8. Brooks and Singh (1978) say 'we accept obviously that East African Asians come from a number of ethnic groups. Nevertheless, it is apparent to us that the East African experience is so important that it cuts across ethnic divisions and, for the purposes of our argument, it is appropriate to group East African Asians together. . .whilst recognizing their ethnic 'identity' (my and authors' emphasis).

9. Paul Ghuman (1980:315) describes a similar process for the Bhattra Sikhs who, he suggests, have remained 'ultra conservative and traditional' because of their lower caste position. He states 'that the Bhattras want to adhere rigidly to their religious and social way of life to compensate for their low status; their pride themselves on being pukka Sikhs and consider themselves the custodians of the Khalsa traditions'.

10. The Mandla versus Lee case was sparked off by the refusal of the headmaster of a private Catholic school, Mr. Dowell-Lee, to allow an East African Sikh boy, Gurinder Mandla, the permission to wear a turban as part of his school uniform. The main Sikh actors involved in the case, the boy himself, his solicitor father, and the main prosecuting barrister are all East African Sikhs. Similarly, Sikh religious leaders who gave it impetus, and the community organisation which initiated the demonstrations that ensued (especially after the Denning ruling, which refused to classify the Sikhs as a 'race', but which was later overturned by the House of Lords) were all largely East African Sikh in origin.

This case demonstrates particularly well not only the organisational abilities and strong community ties of the East African Sikhs, but also their religiousity and staunch adherence

to external opposition to their maintenance. The complex procedures involved in the case, and their ability to succeed, albeit with the expertise and resources of the Commission for Racial Equality, also reflects their urban skills and familiarity with British institutions, which they were able to mobilise effectively.

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