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A TALE OF TWO FATHER/MOTHER LANDS: The young south Asian diaspora in Scandinavia

Rashmi Singla

Med udgangspunkt i begreberne pluralistisk identitet og diaspora belyser artiklen den socialpsykologiske situation for unge, som samtidig tilhører to fædre-/moder-lande, nemlig unge fra Sydasien (Indien/Pakistan/Sri Lanka) der bor i Skandinavien, med hovedfokus på Danmark.

De unges interetniske relationer og diaspora-identiteter skildres gennem et kvalitativt forskningsprojekt kombineret med en række andre studier. De fleste unge er i gang med at blive en del af modtagerlandet og udvikler samtidig komplekse identiteter, indeholdende elementer fra såvel Danmark, international kontekst samt oprindelseslande gennem strategier som etablering af relationer på tværs af etniske grænser, deltagelse i demokratiske processer, at konfrontere racediskrimination bl.a. gennem ungdomsorganisering, transnational medieforbrug. En komparativ vinkel viser lignende mønstre for unge sydasiater i UK. Konklusioner peger på udfordringer for både de unge såvel som deres moder-/fædreland. Disse udfordringer gælder i vis omfang også for andre diaspora-grupper i Danmark.

Global media, telecommunications, and the flow of sound-structures divorced from their place of manufacture have provided for a greater interconnectedness and interdependency for minority groups.

(Kaur & Kalra, 1999, p. 405)

The Conceptual Background

The fast growing social scientific literature about the groups of people living away from the real or imagined countries of origin is characterised by conceptual multiplicity indicated by concepts like diaspora, migrants and ethnic minority. According to my knowledge, the use of concept diaspora is relatively limited in the Scandinavian context.

There are of course some commonalities between diaspora and the notion of migration. The concept of diaspora evokes two social spheres of interaction – the place of present residence and the place from which migration

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has occurred. Agency, in these multiple locations is in the diasporic groups, which show some form of collective mobilization around the tensions between home (s) and abroad(s). It is the ongoing political, economic, social, psychological and cultural ties between multiple institutionalised spaces that characterise Diaspora (Karla, Kauri & Hunk, 2005). The old idea of 'diaspora' was often conceived in terms of a catastrophic dispersion associated with the Jewish population, whereas now the concept is widened to include trade, imperial and cultural diasporas. According to Vertovec, 2000 and Karla et al. 2005, diaspora is theoretically perceived as a process and not just as a descriptive tool for categorization of people. The eyes turn simultaneously on the original context and the receiving context. Diaspora is perceived both as a social form, type of consciousness and a mode of cultural production.

The present article focuses on these aspects of diaspora acknowledging increasing importance of the global media and communication especially the role of Internet, cell telephone and the latest IP telephony (free of charge telephone service). Technology in terms of Internet and diaspora has been delineated by Appadurai (in Vertovec, 2000), as the complex transnational flow of images and messages perhaps creating the greatest disjunctures for diasporic populations, in the electronic media in particular, the politics of desire and imagination are always in contest with the politics of heritage and nostalgia.

Diaspora as a process of consciousness has high relevance for the social psychological framework, especially the young south Asians own experiences in background of Gilroy's reflections, which also applies to the situation in Denmark.

»... Easy resort to the notions of race and culture is to be found at present ... The complex history and experience of the migrants and settlers is still represented continually in pathological terms.« (Belly, 1997, p. 4)

In the present article, an attempt is made to avoid the representation of the migrants in psychopathological terms by using a broad, interdisciplinary, inclusive approach.

An illustration of the approach is perception of memory work and recreation of traditions (retraditionalisation) as significant in diaspora consciousness. Another illustration is that the South Asian populations reterritorialize the Nordic countries, but they can also be involved in the Indian, Pakistani context at some level, as the sense of reaching out, connecting, linking is very important for people in diaspora.

This article aims to throw light on some processes involved in these connections by focussing on the youth who simultaneously relate to two father / mother lands, – fatherland Denmark and motherland India. The first section of the article presents the demographic features of these groups in Denmark

with a short emigrational history and a literature review. The second section delineates the methodological and theoretical concepts. The results and discussion are followed by an overall conclusion.

South Asian Demographics: Drawing up the scene

In the Danish discourse about migrants and minorities, the dominating divisions are based on the broad geographical categories such as developing countries (also sometimes referred to as »less developed countries« in Denmark) or religious categories such as Muslims. In the heated debate about ethnic minorities, there are polarised views about different minority groups in the societies. The South Asians' social psychological situation is delineated in this article¹ through their interethnic relations and the complex diaspora identities. The focus is on Indians, Pakistanis and to some degree on Sri Lankans living in Denmark and to a lesser extent in Norway.

A quick look at the Danish immigrants' history in Denmark in relation to South Asia points to the years 1968-1971. We can roughly divide migration as colonial, labour and refugee migration. There has been colonial migration from Greenland to Denmark, which is not relevant to the present article. There were prospects for labour oriented migration, which resulted in migration from several countries, among them Pakistan and India. The first immigrants were mostly young men in age group 20-30 who came without families and supported the further migration of their relatives and friends. Thus, the pattern of chain migration started for most South Asians (Østergaard, 1983). The transplanted communities, which provided security and comfort to their sponsors were also the targets of marginalisation and isolation from the receiving societies. Paradoxically the law about the »Migration Stop« in 1972 led to the beginning of family reunifications with spouses. Most youth are born here, while some came with their mothers under family reunification. Some Sikhs from Indian Punjab came as refugees to the Nordic countries in the 80's and in the mid-80's about 10,000 Tamilian refugees came to Denmark due to the civil war in Sri Lanka (Fenger-Grøn & Grøndahl, 2004).

It is appropriate to distinguish between the concepts *direct and twice/thrice* migrant when we focus on the South Asians in the Nordic countries, where these terms are hardly used. In contrast to the direct migrants, *twice* migrants are the persons who migrated first to one country, then to the present country of migration. Bhachu (1999) has demonstrated that twice migrated British Asians migrated from the Asian subcontinent to East Africa, then to Britain in the late 1960's. For example there is a small group of

1 My thanks to Psychologist Ph. D. scholar Iram Khawaja and professor Lars Dencik for their valuable contribution to this article.

Indians who migrated to in Denmark after Idi Amin expelled several thousand Asians under Africanisation of Uganda in the beginning of the 1970s. Similarly there is a relatively large group of Pakistanis who first migrated to Britain and later to Denmark in the 1980s. It is relevant to point out that some young South Asians, especially well educated youth – born and educated in Denmark – have migrated to Britain in the past few years. They will be regarded as *twice migrant* there². They represent different histories of migration and settlement in the diaspora. Twice migrants possess very powerful communication networks which have been greatly facilitated by global communications and have command over »western skills« in contrast to some of the »less skilled« direct migrants, who are characterised by home orientations and a »myth of return« at least for the older generation (Bhachu, 1999, p. 344-245).

This migration history underlines that South Asians are a heterogeneous group. It is important, though, to consider both the differences and similarities between the major religious groups. There are, indeed, differences in the mainstream Danish perceptions of Indians versus Pakistanis, given the current climate of »Islamophobia« in Europe (Malik, 2005), as most Indians in Denmark are Hindus and Sikhs, while most Pakistanis are Muslims. There are similarities related to their migration history, broad family and marriage patterns, cultural consumption patterns (e.g. Indian films, music, cricket), languages (Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, as large number of the Indians are from the Northern India and so are Pakistanis from Pakistani Punjab).

Most of the South Asians came as migrant labour with low to middle level education, though their descendents have achieved higher educational levels. Table 1 indicates that there is a significantly larger number of Pakistanis, as compared to Indians, in Denmark, though a large number of them have now naturalised.

Table 1 South Asians in Denmark

	India		Pakistan		Sri Lanka	
Denmark (5.3 million)	4085	2231 Danish citizens	19301	8052 Danish citizens	10291	6569 Danish citizens

Source: Befolkning og valg 2005

2 The exact number is not known, Andersen (2006) has reported that about 15,000 persons emigrate from Denmark every year, though about 12,000 return after 6 years.

Literature Review

One of the first studies in Denmark about South Asians (Bajaj & Laursen, 1988), indicated that Pakistani youth had a high level of education. Røgilds (1995) studied interethnic relations termed »bridge building«, while Mørck (1998) throws light on the loyalty and conflicts between the generations among the ethnic minority youth including the Pakistanis.

The relationship between the diaspora and the construction of identity as a transnational project by Khawaja (2003), and the re-negotiations between the youth and parents' generation by Rytter (2003) have been studied among Pakistani young men in Denmark.

Similarly in Norway, Bredal (1998, 2005) studied the marriage patterns among minority youth including South Asians, while Østberg (2003) focussed on identity management of Norwegian-Pakistani youth involving negotiations with parents and peers, whereas Prieur (2002) focussed on the minority youths' struggles over identity formation.

Summing up, the Danish & Norwegian focus on South Asians is predominantly directed towards identity, education and marriage patterns. Hardly any of the studies mentioned above focus on the broad social psychological aspects of the South Asian diaspora, like the present study (Singla, 2004b). In order to have a comparative angle, some studies about the South Asians in the UK (Bhachu, 1999; Robinson, 2005) are also taken into consideration.

The Empirical Study

Theoretical Concepts

Diaspora, pluralistic identity, ethnicity and inclusion/exclusion are the major concepts used in this study. The concept of transmigration implies perceiving the diaspora from both the perspective of the sending society and host society (Castles & Miller, 2003). Thus, the Indian concept of `overseas born Indians – OBIS` (Bamzai, 2004) as well as construction of earlier discussed diaspora implying complex identities in the host societies (Kalra et al. 2005) are included in the social psychological depiction of South Asian youth.

A form of exclusion, which may range from relatively abstract to relatively specific, is the process of categorisation; positioning people into different social categories in terms of assumed sharedness of characteristics (Abrams, Hoggs & Marques, 2005).

The concept of ethnicity, i.e., the subjective feeling of belonging to a group (Fernando, 1995) as one dimension of a pluralistic identity and the conceptual framework of inclusion and exclusion (Abrams et al., 2005) are used to understand these youth. At the broader societal level, there is exclusion based on religious and ethnic differences, broad social ideology, and moral principles.

South Asian youths' relationships across ethnic borders in Scandinavian context, where the individualization and autonomy of the host country impinge on them, are an important issue of concern (Dencik, 2005). The interactions across the borders can lead to various combinations of autonomy and interdependency, which reflect the conceptualisation about pluralistic identity as delineated by Sen (2006), partly in line with the social constructionist perspective (Gergen, 2001). History and background are not the only way of seeing ourselves and the groups to which we belong. There are a great variety of categories to which we simultaneously belong, through birth, associations and alliances. Belonging to each one of the membership groups can be quite important, depending on the particular context. There are two distinct issues here – the identities are robustly plural and the significance of one identity need not obliterate the importance of the other. Mentioned below are two types of reductionisms: *identity disregard* and *singular affiliation* in the social analysis of the plural identity, which are avoided in this article.

»The first is »identity disregard« and it takes the form of ignoring, or neglecting altogether, the influence of any sense of identity with others, on what we value and how we behave. ... there is a different kind of reductionism, which we may call »singular affiliation«, which takes the form of assuming that any person pre-eminently belongs to, for all practical purposes, to one collectivity only- no more and no less.« (Sen, 2006, p. 20)

In understanding of the South Asians diasporic identities, it is relevant to consider the different categories such as citizenship, profession, class or gender. These categories can be either contrasting or no contrasting and can lead to loyalties conflict between giving priority to one category.

These identities involve choices within certain constraints. In accordance with some narrow communitarian thinking, it is presumed that one's identity with the community is the dominant (perhaps the only significant) identity a person has. This approach is not accepted in the present theoretical framework as it has the effect of rejecting the feasibility of assessing and fully understanding normative judgements about behaviour and institutions across cultures and societies. It has sometimes been used to undermine the possibility of serious cross- cultural exchange and comprehensions. Though at the same time it is kept in mind that universalising tendencies, without intercultural dialogues can approximate neo-colonialism³.

3 In the present world situation, there is an insistence in this approach on splitting up the large world into little islands that are not within intellectual reach of each other, in contrast to John Donnas warning »No man is an island entire of itself«.

Empirical Methods

The interethnic relationships reported are based on an empirical investigation conducted in mid-nineties (Singla, 2004a, 2004b), consisting of qualitative interviews with a matched sample of 14 South Asian and Danish youth, 16-25 years, in Copenhagen. This study aimed at understanding the youths' own real life experiences in the world, using semi-structured interview method. The narratives were analysed by meaning condensation-based categorisation grounded in in-depth readings.

At present (Singla, 2006a & 2006b) there is an on-going follow up research project, in which the young people studied under the above mentioned (Singla, 2004b) original project, are interviewed again about their life trajectory. Now they are young adults, 26-33 years old and the focus is on family/network building, work and identity processes, though these results are not included in the present article.

Results

The youths' impressions of the »others«

The interethnic relationships depicted by the South Asian youth and the Danish youth are illustrated by their comments of one another's peer groups, given in the quotes below (Singla, 2004b). The results vary from youths' positive impressions about the »others« in mixing across the ethnic borders, to very negative, stereotypic impressions where almost no contact has occurred.

Their narratives show nuances, with predominantly positive impressions, for example, Mita a young woman with Indian Hindu background, points out that Danes have positive rapport with their parents. The Danish peers influence her and she has acculturated to participation in parties and social drinking.

»The Danes can just talk to their parents. My friends and their mothers have had same sort of development. ... They enjoy life, ... know how to dress up and drink. Even I do drink a bit at the parties now«.

Interestingly, Danish Christian youth, Jonny's impression of minority peers is positive and stereotypical. *»...They are very different. They respect their family very much more. If their father says something then it is like that.«*

By contrast, a young Pakistani Muslim woman, Nadia, who had no social relations across the ethnic divisions also showed a stereotypical impression about the Danes, but negative.

»They have no family life, most of them. ... Danes have a lot of fun with their friends, not with their family and siblings.«

Nadia's negative stereotypic impressions were almost mirrored by Pia, a Danish young Christian woman, who had almost no contact with ethnic minority youth.

»I don't think the young immigrants do well, as they did not decide to come here. [...] Second-generation immigrants, they don't do well ... As a rule they move about in 'cliques'«

Experiences of Racial Discrimination

The South Asians experiences of racial discrimination are described both at the societal and personal level through their narratives, which vary from harsh critic to mixed reactions.

A Pakistani Muslim young man, Salman, pointed to the negative media attention given to the minorities, which further contributes to the categorization of »us« and »them«. Salman says:

»We get special treatment in this society, even in the media. We have lived here for 20 years; still it is »we« and »they«. This delays the process of integration: how long must it take to become a part of this society? It is difficult to get trainee places for young immigrants – the name Mohammad becomes a barrier. It is discrimination.«

Salman pointed out the differential treatment most ethnic minorities encounter in the labour market thereby reflecting about 3-4 times higher unemployment among the ethnic minorities as compared to the Danes (Hansen, 2003).

Responding to experiences of racial discrimination

Responses to these discriminatory experiences differ depending on a number of factors, among others the youth's functioning level e.g., Mita showed ambivalence, a sense of hopelessness along with a sense of belonging to Denmark. She discusses the experiences with her family.

»... when some refugee students had to begin in the college, they didn't come to my class because of these [racist] students. I do talk about this at home. I do understand that this is the Danish people's country. But it is also my country – for people like me, who were born and raised here.«

Furthermore, she has friendships with both her ethnic minority peers and Danes. Thus she has mixed peer relationships. However, Atim, a Pakistani young man, accepts discrimination passively, such as his experiences of be-

ing called »black pig«. Whereas, Salman responded to discrimination and the experiences of injustice actively through organising and taking part in dialogues through discussions, debates etc. Reflecting on the situation of being »different«, Salman stated:

»I am aware of being different. I am proud of being different and do not regard it as a burden. I am more attentive to these differences when I participate in panel discussions, debates etc« ...

Discussion

The youths' interethnic perceptions and experiences of racial discrimination illustrate that the negative impressions about the »others«, the dehumanising of the »others« seems to be reciprocally related to the levels of interethnic mixing, confirming the oft stated observation: *the less you know of the »other«, the more prejudices you have*.

Similarly greater mixing across the ethnic borders, as illustrated by some of the comments, leads to awareness of more common denominators and to an awareness of the similarities among the youth, resulting in still more interethnic acceptance. Selective bridge building across the ethnic borders among youth in the multi-ethnic areas in Denmark is also reported by Tireli (1999), Røgilds (1995, 2004) and Staunæs (2004).

These responses to discrimination epitomise both the invisible, the hidden racial discrimination and more open discrimination (ECRI, 2001, 2006, Fernando, 2003). There are risks of detrimental effects from such experiences for young people who do not have constructive strategies to resist and »fight back« like Salman.

Peter, another ethnic minority young man, responded to differential treatment by »causing trouble«, engaging in criminal activities, like stealing cars etc. with a group of Danish and ethnic minority peers.

These analyses exemplify that there are marked differences in the young people's responses to these experiences of discrimination. Three major types of responses are discerned: passive, active constructive and active destructive. The passive responses predominantly characterised by apathy, passive acceptance of race discrimination are exemplified by Atim's response, whereas Salman exemplifies the constructive active response in which various elements from the minority and majority contexts are combined. Congruently, Peter exemplifies the destructive, active response. This analysis, however, raises ethical issues, as these »destructive« behaviour patterns can also be debated as a »healthy« reaction to the experience of racism and exclusion from the established society.

There are paradoxes about a minority's situation in Nordic countries related to the classical understanding of identity formation in terms of the contrasting factors of similarity and differences. Suurpää (1998) notes that

accentuation of hierarchical differences between Danes and other ethnic minorities co-exists with a pursuit of equality and similarity. Another paradox is racial exclusion of South Asians in Danish society in general, but their inclusion in the educational arena, as indicated by their high level of education as compared to other ethnic minorities and even the Danes (Bajaj & Laursen, 1988, Seeberg, 2002). One reason for the difference in educational aspirations can be attributed to the Danish welfare regime, which impacts on transitions to adulthood. Completion of education can be accomplished without overwhelming financial difficulties due to a combination of extensive state provision with some assistance from the family (Hellevik, 2004). The opportunity for higher education is readily available to those motivated to want it. Another explanation for this complex situation is the construction of diasporic identities, for example, as illustrated by South Asian youth organising themselves.

South Asian Diasporic identity and Youth Organisation

The analyses of diaspora linked to subjectivity shows new diasporic trends in the way youth understand themselves. They use multiple ethnic, religious, cultural categories in their description of and narration of themselves.

Khawaja (2003) depicts that a Pakistani youth describes himself as, firstly a Muslim, and then a Pakistani. Furthermore, he states that he is also a bit Danish, because he lives in Danish society, but religion has a primary position. This young person is perceived to be actively engaged in constructing identities.

This description by Khawaja (2003), combined with the earlier mentioned Mita's statement that »Denmark is also my country« further documents youths' mixed feelings of belonging to and inclusion in the society in which they are growing up, despite some experiences of exclusion.

These narratives partly confirm the observations about the Indian diaspora as perceived in India: »the overseas born Indians (OBIS), children of increasingly assured immigrants do not wish to be anywhere other than where they are: safe, snug, successful in their parents' adopted homelands« (Bamzai, 2004, p. 25). The last part of Bamzai's statement can be contested. Feelings of safety and perceptions of success ignore the failures, struggles and sufferings expressed by some South Asians in Scandinavia. Bamzai's conclusions can perhaps be interpreted as an idealization of the overseas born Indian youths' situation, ignoring the complexities and the dark sides of it.

The narratives from both Singla's studies (2004a; 2004b) and Khawaja (2003) show that youth actually find new ways of identifying themselves, which basically transcend, develop and expand the existing binary opposition between the culture of ancestral country and the culture of the host

society. The host society should not see ethnic youth as a problem entailing conflict and identity crises but also see them as people with many resources (Khawaja, 2003). Being a Muslim or Hindu is not just to identify oneself as solely belonging to a particular religion recollecting the earlier delineated Sen's concept about the pluralistic identity. The evolution of youth identification also implies diasporic community identification, part of a global and international movement, which crosses traditional ethnic, national and cultural boundaries (Kalra et al. 2005). There is therefore, a certain transnational community feeling associated with these identifications, depicted in the youth organisation described below. Mobilization of youthful energy in ethnic organizations does not imply isolation from mainstream Scandinavia but is indicative of youthful »fighter spirit« and a wish to confront societal discrimination.

Selected examples of South Asian youth organizations include: The Association of Indian Students and Academics, (ISAF) and the Organization of Pakistani Students and Academics, (OPSA). ISAF, established in 1998, aims at youths acquiring knowledge of their own ethnic group, sharing the experience of being a minority, and of the barriers created by discriminatory practices, thereby creating their own space (ISAF, 1998). OPSA is a 13 year old association, which conducts study circles, debates, and sports activities along with making efforts to raise educational levels and raise participation in the labour market (www.opsa.dk). Encouraging reciprocal understanding between the Pakistani and Danish society, along with informing the Pakistani society in Denmark about the Danish as well as the Pakistani situation is among the aims of the association. Furthermore establishing contact with the educational institutions in the ancestral country, and organising exchange of students between Denmark and Pakistan as well organising humanitarian help (especially after the Earth Quake in 2005) are also among the aims. An online debate forum for the young Pakistanis is one of the activities for OPSA. Though these organisations are hardly able to influence the increasingly restrictive migration policies in Denmark.

In contrast to the Indian and Pakistani youth, the Tamilian youth in Denmark have published a bilingual magazine »The bridge builder« (Tamil and Danish) for the past few years. This magazine is critical towards the Tamilian ethnic group for rigidity as well as Danish society for discrimination towards the minority, and delineates the plural identity among the Tamil youth (Sütçü, 2003, Balasubramaiam, 2005). This democratically organised magazine illustrates that these youth are not bound by the past, which makes them hostages to the authoritarian political patterns in their community, and draws attention to the complexity of the diaspora life through everyday life themes including religious practices.

It is relevant to mention that there is a Hindu temple, a Sikh gurdwara and many mosques in Copenhagen, which are primarily being run by first parental generation South Asians, with limited participation by second

generation youth. The diaspora's intercultural dimension indicates diverse formal ways of keeping events, festivals etc. in people's memory.

A comparative angle: South Asian youth in UK

These transmigrational structures among the South Asians are in the early phase of operation in the Nordic countries, which is in contrast to the situation in Britain, where these structures are developed on a much larger scale. According to a study of South Asians in UK (Robinson, 2005), Muslims were more likely to emphasise their distinctive Muslim identity, as Muslims in Britain have become the primary targets of racist antagonism based on ethno-religious and cultural difference⁴. However Hindus and Sikhs were more likely to be bi-cultural than Muslims. Many of these youth define their personal identity in a hyphenated way, for example »Indo – English«, however »this has not changed the fact that they continue to suffer racial abuse both in and out of school and have mixed feelings about whether they belong to [Britain].« (Ghuman, 2003 in *ibid.*, p. 187).

Furthermore the results indicate that immigrants adopting integration show better psychological adjustment than those favouring other strategies (assimilation, separation and marginalisation). Though at the same time it is emphasised that the British policies towards ethnic minorities tend to be exclusive rather than inclusive

Diaspora and the Democratic processes

The above comparison points to the complex dynamics in belonging to the two countries, two capitals: Copenhagen – New Delhi, London – Islamabad on the other hand have some significance for the youth in the Danish and the British societies. In other words, both India as motherland and Denmark as fatherland have meaning for most of the diaspora youth at some level or the other. The colonial past and the minority status of the diaspora implies 'dialectics of the colonized mind', a fixation with the 'West' which includes both admiration and disaffection. This could include needless hostility to many global ideas such as democracy and personal liberty (Sen, 2006. p. 85). However the statistics reveal that South Asian youth in Denmark actively participate in the democratic processes both through the above mentioned organisations and through participation in the mainstream elections, e.g. Togeby, 2002 noted that Pakistanis in the major Danish cities had

4 Drawing on the comparative angle, we could probably add that similar processes can be seen in Denmark post Danish newspaper Jyllands Posten's Mohammad cartoon crisis in 2006.

the same voting level as the majority population. Another example is the India diasporas' awareness of India being world's largest democracy and the Western expropriation of the global heritage of universal political ideas such as the democratic reasoning. We can consider a broad understanding of democracy not only as political ideal but also as a way of life, based on values of negotiations, general welfare, fundamental debate and so on. In that case democracy has to be practiced in one's private life, in relation to the family and neighbours, and subsequently in relation to other people within own country and in relation to other countries (Koch in Elsass, 2003).

This intelligibility of democracy is a major challenge for the diaspora as well as the majority society. The diaspora members should, of course, contribute to the country they live in, though the power asymmetry implied in the definition of the ethnic minority and majority in Denmark make it clear that it is largely the responsibility of the majority to include the minority as equal citizens in the national democratic processes in spite of the social and the cultural differences.

South Asian, Danish, and International Youth »cultures«

We do not have detailed data about the cultural consumption patterns of South Asian youth nor about their journey to/from the sending countries. However, there is some evidence, both empirical (Vestel, 2001) and anecdotal. Young people are consumers of popular cultural productions like films, music and dances from India, Pakistan, Denmark and the United States. In Denmark, some music groups with Indian and Pakistani youth⁵ are gaining popularity. Moreover some youth travel back to India and Pakistan to get first hand understanding of the countries of their parental origin. Some youth also travel to other countries where the South Asian diaspora has settled, e.g., England, Canada, and USA and they maintain familial ties, while some migrate to some of these countries as *twice migrants*, while still retaining some ties to the ancestral country as well as Denmark. There was an exaggerated media focus on the myth of resocialising journeys to the ancestral country during 2005, though an in-depth research indicated very limited number of children (Jørum, 2005)⁶.

Global communication developments like the Internet, free or inexpensive telephone, SMS, facilitate easier maintenance of transnational networks for these youth, thus contributing to a »digital diaspora« (Vertovek, 2004).

5 In Denmark popular music group »Outlandish« have 3 young singers with Pakistani, Moroccan and Cuban background, whereas »Bombay Rockers« has 2 singers with Indian and Danish background. The latter is extremely popular in India.

6 554, since July 2002-December 2004 were sent to the parental country of origin for a long period affecting their school attendance.

At the same time it is relevant to consider that the microelectronic transnationalism is also about longing, recreating, representation and sense of belonging on a psychological plan (Guzder, 2006).

In the past few years, the ancestral sending countries are also displaying interest in the diasporic populations, e.g., the official Indian Diaspora celebration held in New Delhi on 9th January, the day Mahatma Gandhi returned to India after 21 years in South Africa. There is only partly acceptance of Bamzai's conclusion that »overseas born Indians« do not wish to be anywhere other than where they are, yet there is agreement that these »OBIS« are highly affected and interested in their ancestral country of their parents' origin, especially as not many were born in India.

»... they have a different engagement with India [than their parents]. ...It could range from a tentative exploration of its cinema to serious exploration of its medical colleges ... Each one internalises India and expresses it in a different way. That is how great communities renew themselves, the nations they left behind and the ones they have adopted.« (Bamzai, 2004, p. 35)

The ongoing globalisation hopefully makes Scandinavian societies aware that the dynamics of simultaneous inclusion in both ancestral and host countries is certainly not unique to the South Asian diaspora. There are examples throughout different contexts and periods. Thus, the Danish diaspora in America continues to maintain »Danevang« (Danish colony), Irish Americans will never put their past to rest and their motherland's bloody history remains with them, and the Indians have built some of the world's most impressive Mandirs (Hindu temples) and Gurudwaras (Sikh temples) in United Kingdom and USA.

Conclusions

The article delineates the dynamic and complex situation of the South Indian diaspora in Denmark and to some extent in Norway. Broadly, there is evidence of South Asian youths' inclusion in the host countries, as indicated by the high rate of naturalisation among the Indians and Pakistanis, as well as high educational levels, coexisting with the experiences of exclusion in some spheres, like the labour market. The analyses of interethnic relations reveal that the South Asians' transnational and diasporic identities draw on ethnic, religious, national and international »youth« contexts. For some youth though, religious identity becomes dominant, though the other identities are also present. This transnationalism focuses on dual feelings of belonging, as many immigrants display a form of loyalty to more than one national state, which do not imply conflicts (Nyberg-Sørensen, 1995). Nar-

row reductionist dichotomous concepts can hardly capture the complexities of phenomena such as diaspora identities, thereby emphasising the need for broader concepts, which celebrate transgression in terms of blending and coexistence.

South Asians are nurturing ties with the countries of their origin along with becoming a part of the host society in spite of the increasing polarisation between »them« and »us« in some arenas. »Transnationalism from below« (Mahler, 1998, Kalra et al., 2005) is documented in everyday life. The diasporic subjectivity is seen in the increasing consumption of South Asian, especially Indian, cultural products like films, concerts, television, as well as travelling to ancestral countries and maintaining networks within them. This is an area, which has hardly been scientifically investigated, in the Scandinavian context.

It is important to expand our own notions about what it means to be a South Asian youth living in Scandinavia. However, at the same time, we should not underestimate that it can involve difficulties. Many of these youth experience exclusion in the form of racial discrimination, some of them respond actively and are able to cope with using constructive strategies e.g., organising in youth associations, while others use passive strategies like ignoring and acceptance (Bhavnani, Mirza, Meetoo, 2005). The suffering and pain of some should not be overlooked. We are aware of the mental health issues involved in the diasporic situation. These conflicts emphasize the need for attending to the psychological problems related to sexism, ageism and racism in the ancestral and host societies.

The empirical evidence indicates that the youth generation is undergoing transformations in interaction with the highly modern Scandinavian society. My conclusion is that South Asian youth are becoming both a part of the receiving society – for many the only society they have lived in – and part of their diasporic networks. For most, diaspora is a part of their complex identities, though for some the recognition comes first only in youth or in adulthood.

Lastly the emergence of increasingly high educational levels among the youth create a basis for some optimism that being a part of the South Asian diaspora in the Scandinavian countries implies possibilities as well as limitations. The comparisons with South Asians in other contexts bring out the general in the particular – social psychological processes such as changing inclusion/exclusion in shifting categories, transnational identity formation combining individualization and interdependency.

Keep in mind Gergens observation that in the intellectual world more generally, psychologists are notorious for their absence from the major debates of the past 20 years (Gergen, 2001, p. 811), some challenges related to the betterment of the diaspora groups as well as the host societies and the ancestral countries are delineated. Continued awareness, acceptance and providing support with respect to these complex processes are thus the chal-

lenges. A progressive use of diaspora implies a future orientation including the current fatherland and the ancestral motherland rather than being just bound by the past-motherland.

The challenge for the ancestral societies i.e., South Asian countries, is to recognize and cement ties with their diasporic population. The challenge for the host societies is to avoid the present discourse of stigmatisation, victimisation and pathologisation of ethnic minority youth and instead perceive them as active, flexible citizens capable of contributing constructively to the host society, of which most wish to feel a part, provided there is some level of acceptance for them in the real democratic sense. A concrete challenge for the host societies is to support the pluralistic identities at the different levels and encourage the diaspora members participation in the democratic processes, among others, by building the political structures in such a way that there are still more incentives for participation (Togeb, 2002). The final challenge, as earlier mentioned, is also to South Asians in Scandinavia to contribute fully to the society in which they live their everyday life, we recollect what Mahatma Gandhi urged to the Indian diaspora in Mauritius in 1901:

»Educate your children and participate in the public life of your country of adoption.« (Mahatma Gandhi in Gayan, 2003, p. 43)

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