Changing Forms of Transnationalism

Abstract

This paper looks at second-generation immigrants and the effects of 'inevitable' assimilation on their transnational ties. The dominant concept of transnationalism is strongly influenced by the experience of transmigrants moving back and forth between the sending and receiving countries or by immigrants involved in transnational activities. Research on second-generation Hindustanis in the Netherlands shows that their transnational ties are strong due to the ethnification of their community. However, their transnational ties are changing. The second-generation Hindustanis have a source culture and are developing new ties, while loosening relations with their parents' country. Thus, transnationalism is assuming new forms, calling for a typology of different forms of transnational relations.

Keywords: transnationalism; ethnicity; integration; assimilation; Indians; Bollywood

1 Introduction

Debates about the future of ethnic minorities in Western countries centre around two related positions: assimilation and multiculturalism. The most influential view on assimilation is Gans's 'straight-line' (1979): each generation, immigrants come closer to the dominant culture through acculturation. Immigrants may retain aspects of their ethnicity, but these are symbolic and intended for ethnic identification. In a later article (1994: 579), Gans makes clear that 'this ethnically-inspired, leisure-time activity does not preclude or bar genuinely felt emotional involvement in ethnicity'. However, progress toward the melting pot is inevitable, although there may be difficulties along the way.

The literature on assimilation and multiculturalism displays two interesting 'turns'. The first is the increasing emphasis on the persistence of ethnic traits in the assimilation process (Gans 1994; Alba and Nee 1997; Kivisto 2003). According to that reasoning, assimilation does not exclude ethnic identities. However, this position is at odds with the common ideal of the melting pot consisting of, as Alba and Nee (1997: 832) put it, 'an idealistic vision of American

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society and identity arising from the biological and cultural fusion of different peoples'.

The other turn is the introduction of segmented assimilation (Portes and Zou 1993) to describe the diverse possible outcomes of the adaptation process. Empirical case studies illustrate the theory and highlight the consequences of the different contextual situations facing today's second generation (Portes et al. 2005).

Recently the tension between multiculturalism and assimilation has gained new impetus, this time from discussion about the nature of transnational immigrant communities. There is a 'straight line' from the assimilation discussion to this current controversy about transnationalism, the ties immigrants maintain with their countries of origin. In this way, the departure from the homeland is made less permanent, even in the most literal sense, as the migrants regularly return 'home'. The term is also used in a wide variety of contexts – Vertovec (1999: 449-456) found six – some of which are hard to reconcile. Irrespective of the fogginess surrounding the concept, there is one major implication when assimilation theory is applied to transnational communities: in due course, the ties between transnational communities will loosen and eventually disappear. The 'fading away' of transnational communities should be discernable with second-generation immigrants. This position suffers from a narrow definition of transnationalism (which will be discussed further) and the use of nation states as the unit of analysis. When ethnic communities are taken as the unit of analysis, the outcome assumes different forms.

This paper points to a new development: diasporic peoples (e.g. Hindustanis) reconnect through journeys and the entertainment industry to the homeland of their forefathers (India). The 'reconnection' resembles transmigrants spanning different borders (Basch et al. 1994: 7), but the difference is that these sojourners have never lived in the land of their forefathers. The impact of mass entertainment (e.g. Bollywood) comes close to the idea of a 'mediascape' (Appadurai 1998: 35): a large and complex repertoire of images, narratives, and ethnoscapes available to

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viewers throughout the world. Bollywood culture and its impact is much more than entertainment as is argued below.

The paper argues that the loosening of second-generation transnational ties is mediated by the ethnification of the community, and that, therefore, assimilation is not inevitable. It explores the example of second-generation Hindustanis now in the Netherlands, descendants of former indentured labourers from Surinam (South America). The younger generation of Hindustanis has become detached from Surinam but 'realigned' with India, the result of ethnification influenced by Indian culture. When global ethnic communities are substituted for the nation state as the unit of analysis, the bipolar model of sending and receiving states is dropped. As the analytical orientation shifts, new forms of transnationalism come into focus.

In the next section, conceptual and methodological issues are discussed and symbolic ethnicity is questioned. In Section 3, the paper explores the idea that immigrant communities, rather than individuals, can be subjected to globally driven ethnification and ethnically incorporated in the transnational community. In Section 4, this argument is specified for the second-generation Hindustanis. Data were collected through intensive participation in community life, studying glossy magazines, visiting public festivals, and attending religious and community meetings, supplemented with an internet survey. The numerical data are interpreted in the context of these observations. The sense of belonging, consumption of 'Bollywood' culture, and Diaspora orientation is explored. The conclusion discusses the implications of these findings for second-generation transnationalism.

2   Concepts and Issues

The concept of transnationalism lacks a precise definition, yet the social phenomenon is clear. Several authors have pointed out that there are a multitude of terms (Vertovec 1999; Kivisto

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2001; Levitt and Waters 2002); the most current are: transnational communities (Vertovec 1999), transnational spaces (Faist 2000), transnational social fields (Basch et al. 1994), global 'oecumene' (Hannerz 1996), transnationalism (Portes et al. 1999), and transnational involvement (Snel et al. 2006). These terms are used interchangeably with 'transnational networks' and 'cross border activities' and are generally used loosely.

Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004) argue that the current concept neglects the role of trans-state action in determining citizens' opportunities. While true for political migrants, this argument cannot be generalized. In the 'older' literature on transnationalism, the focus was on migrants literally living in two places: transnationalism was created by transmigrants whose opportunities depended on interstate relations. Levitt and Waters (2002: 11) point out two other forms: people who move infrequently but are integrally involved in a single sending or receiving setting, and people who never move but live within a migrant cultural context. This observation is of paramount importance to the role of the second generation.

The second generation, in Western countries, is growing up in totally different technological conditions than its predecessors. Many have pointed to the technological preconditions required for the further development of transnational communities: video, satellite TV, Internet, mobile phones, fax, improved transportation, etc. Not long ago such technologies were unavailable to consumers at large, let alone to socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

Another crucial difference is the increased prosperity in transnational communities. Without such prosperity, money transfers, travel, sending goods 'home', or 'keeping in touch' would be unaffordable. The minimal literacy demanded by modern technology points to a difference in educational attainment between the generations (cf. Al-Ali et al. 2001: 597). This difference coincides not only with a difference between countries of origin and countries of residence, but also between first and second generations within the country of residence. A further condition, which is rarely mentioned, is the degree of individualization. In addition to

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prosperity, technology, and education, a certain amount of social detachment is required to move and get in touch with other communities.

Given these differences between the first and the second generation, it would be surprising to find only one kind of transnationalism. The question about the durability of transnationalism is sometimes raised, though usually in passing and hesitantly (see, for example, Faist 2000: 239; Vertovec 2001: 577). Echoing assimilation theory, some authors argue that the second generation will be lesser transnationalists. Gans (2007: 153) defines assimilation as 'the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences', implying that assimilation and ethnicity are mutually exclusive. However, his earlier concept of symbolic ethnicity, acknowledging the evolution of new ethnicities and rejecting a straight-line assimilation, may be at odds with his later position (Gans 1994). Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004: 1178) take the same position when they reject transnationalism as determined by the particular ties of immigrants, emphasizing that 'states and the politics conducted within their borders fundamentally shape the options for migrant and ethnic trans-state social action'.

Lee (2007) studied second-generation Tongans, measuring the decline of transnationalism through the decreasing money transfers to Australia by Tongans living abroad. Although her focus on money transfers restricts her thesis, Lee makes clear that this second generation's ethnicity is also waning.

In contrast to Gans, Kivisto (2003: 18) argues that assimilation implies transformation of immigrants and their communities, possibly without the loss of their ethnic distinctiveness. According to him, assimilation and transnationalism are competing theoretical models and should be seen as interrelated. This position inflates the concept of assimilation tremendously: every form of incorporation may be labelled as assimilation since its countervailing force, ethnicity, is incorporated into the definition. This redefinition of assimilation at best blurs the distinction between the concepts.

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Basch et al. (1994) affirm the durability of transnationalism, arguing that because family networks underlie dense transnational connections, transnationalism will continue as an arena of social relations. Haller and Wandolt (2005) also found continuities in transnational involvement, although their research yielded different transnational patterns.

The unit of analysis and its level of abstraction are important. Portes et al. (1999: 220) defined transnationalism as the proportion of the community that is involved in cross-border activities. This definition presents two problems: the fact that individuals are the unit of analysis and the fact that the concept is limited to those involved in such activities. The first point is not clear: networks, individuals, governments, NGOs, and multinational enterprises are also mentioned as the unit of analysis. Portes et al. do not exclude the possibility of ethnic communities serving as a unit of analysis, but if so, it is pointless to look at the percentage of individuals involved in transnational activities. This would mix two levels of abstraction.

Portes et al. also rejected 'sampling on the dependent variable', that is, 'focusing on instances where the phenomenon is present, but not on those where it is absent': a methodological weakness, since a representative sample would show that only a small section of a community is involved in transnational activities. Their survey of studies does indeed show that the percentage of migrants involved in transnational activities does not exceed 20 per cent (Portes 2001: 183). In a later study among the second generation of various ethnic groups, Rumbaut (2002) found that the level of transnational attachments (visits to the country of origin and annual money transfers) remained below ten per cent. Such an interpretation of transnationalism leads to an 'operationalization' that is too restricted, a phenomenon also germane to the other literature.

The interpretation of numerical size is a problem, since the activities of a limited number of people may affect the entire community. For example, only a limited number of people will be involved in staging visits by pop stars from Turkey to the Netherlands, but a larger share of

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the community will attend the performances and so participate in the transnational activity, rendering the criterion of 'number of people involved in transnational activities' superfluous.

A second problem is inherent in the word 'activities' and the subsequent delineation of the empirical field of research, encompassing entrepreneurs, labour migrants, 'circular migrants', political refugees, and other enterprising people who perform activities for the benefit of the migrated community or the country of origin, activities that are strongly tied to civil society and long distance nationalism. These people also live in two societies. The fact that this is the case for a limited number of people is a reflection of the limited definition of transnationalism.

The same limitation characterizes the concept of cross-border activities. Many young migrants are connected with their country of origin through the Internet and other electronic media (Appadurai 1996). However, the visual media are not only another channel for the diffusion of media flows, but also for culture and, hence, cultural 'consumption' (Thompson 2002). Concepts like 'orientation', 'identification', and 'imitation' capture this reality better than cross border 'activities' or 'relations'.

These approaches also overlook the fact that the majority of the community may be incorporated in transnational spaces, without its members acknowledging or defining it accordingly due to powerful global factors. The ethnic development of the community may be of greater importance in defining transnational activities than the sum of individual activities. This is a broader concept than the idea of 'capabilities of migrant or exile groups to participate in activities that transcend national borders' as suggested by Al-Ali et al. (2001: 581). The position adopted here is that ethnic evolution is more specific and lies at the basis of continuing transnational ties among the second generation.

3   The Ethnification of an Indian community

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Dutch Hindustanis are descendants of indentured labourers who were shipped to Surinam between 1873-1914. Their emigration from Surinam to the Netherlands started in the 1950s and 1960s and grew steadily. Based on data provided by the Central Bureau of Statistics and a couple of surveys, Choenni and Harmsen (2007) generously estimated the size of this community in the Netherlands as between 110,000 and 140,000 in 2006. The majority of Hindustanis settled in The Hague, with smaller numbers settling in Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Rotterdam. Modern communication technologies seem to have reduced the need and desire to live in close proximity to relatives. Moreover, increased education has led to greater social and geographic mobility. The strong emphasis on schooling and career often leads to smaller families, heralding a change in traditional Hindustani family life.

Hindustanis do have the reputation of being a well-integrated ethnic minority. The most important markers of integration in the Netherlands are educational and professional performance. The level of education among Hindustanis is slightly lower than that of the white population as a whole but higher than that of other ethnic minorities, the most remarkable progress being made by second-generation Hindustani women. Hindustanis are also a favourable presence in the labour market, although the gender difference in education is not reflected in the labour force. In 2002, about 70 per cent of the potential Hindustani male labour force (ages 15 to 65) was employed, roughly the same percentage as among the white male population. Employment rates for women were about 50 per cent. Notably, 11 per cent of men were in school or at a college or university, as compared to 16 per cent of women (Gowricharn and Choenni 2006).

Hindustanis are subjected to several diverging cultural processes; the two dominant are assimilation and ethnification. The description below is based on years of intensive participation in Hindustani community life and endless discussions with professionals and members of the community. The assimilating influence of Dutch society is observable in at least three respects.

Individualization. This is revealed in two ways. First, extended families become nuclear families, although they do tend to live in one neighbourhood and thus preserve an extended family network (Mungra 1990). The group or former group identities are interpreted less rigidly, as persons within families become socially and emotionally more independent, claiming more freedom. Individuals become more flexible and traditional patterns are followed less strictly.

Role changes. Individualization goes together with adjustment of social roles. This happens initially for the relationship between men and women, a development that is not restricted to the younger generation. First generation men participate in household activities, which is new in traditional Hindustani family patterns. They (generally) become more sensitive to the desires of wives and daughters. Youngsters make more demands on their parents, are more rational or more calculating in their behaviour, and therefore are better equipped to survive in the host society. The change in individual roles in families has been described as a form of 'emotional democracy', which is taken as moral progress in interpersonal relationships as emotions gain relevance (Van Stokkom 1997).

Language. The Hindustanis' language is Sarnami, a mingling of Bhojpuri and Hindi that developed in Surinam and absorbed Dutch, English, and Surinamese words. Since Dutch is the official language in both Surinam and the Netherlands, it is no surprise that most educated Hindustanis speak Dutch at home. In cities with large concentrations of Hindustanis, such as The Hague, youngsters use Hindi as a way to strengthen ethnic identity. Loss of language happens in spite of the increasing consumption of Bollywood movies.

Concomitant with its assimilation, the Hindustani community ethnifies. Ethnification is a

poorly developed concept. 'Institutional completeness', the capacity to meet needs within the community and thus avoid seeking satisfaction outside the community, fosters ethnification (Kivisto 2003: 20), hence the significance of the community's institutional infrastructure. As used here, ethnification refers to the modified reproduction of the ethnic community, taking the form of institutionalization and the establishment of cultural identity. Hindustanis have succeeded in building an institutional infrastructure (Bloemberg 1995). In 2008, there were an estimated fifty temples, eight Hindu primary schools, and efforts being made to establish a secondary school; there is also a training college for *pandits*.

Hindustanis have broadcasting time for their own radio and television programmes (Organization Hindu Media or OHM), and the community is strengthened by commercial radio stations from every major city in the Netherlands, as well as local, non-religious Hindustani television, which broadcasts in both Sarnami and Dutch. Indian movies and songs are popular, and the availability of satellite television and the Internet strengthens the impact of Indian film culture. Besides the magazine published by OHM, there are religious periodicals and an increasing number of glossy magazines.

Officially, Hindus are represented by the National Hindu Council (Nationale Hindoe Raad) established in 2004. Independent of religious institutions, the welfare organization Lalla Rookh, named after the first ship that carried British Indian indentured labourers to Surinam, looks after the interest of Surinamese Hindustanis. The public visibility of Hindustanis is restricted - amidst urban architecture, *mandirs* are almost absent - conversely, it is striking that on religious festivals Hindus can be observed in the streets; the Holi festival is one example and Divali, when it is common to organize marches and to walk with torches through the streets, is another.

The influence of India is also indicative of growing ethnification. Trips to India through specialized travel agents are popular within the Hindustani community. These journeys are a combination of pilgrimage, tourism, and the quest for family roots. To a lesser degree, India has

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become a country for education and for religious but also for secular professions. Marriages between Indians and Surinamese Hindustanis also occur in this transnational community. Major religious events held in India are visited by many Surinamese Hindus, and the Hindu media usually show great interest in such events. Orientation to foreign centres is not restricted to India; Britain and former plantation colonies such as Fiji and Mauritius, which had been characterized by the 'indentured labour' of former British Indians, are also known for these 'diaspora journeys'.

The cultural links with India have always kept alive the awareness that Hindustanis are part of a major civilization (Gowricharn 1990). The diaspora past has not only been continuously invigorated by emphasis on immigration history (in Surinam as well as in Holland), but also by commercial Indian culture. Bollywood films – which can be described as commercial advertisements of Indian culture comprised of the major elements, such as Indian songs, music, dance, and behaviour – together with the interest in Hindi and religion, constitute an effective frame of reference, enabling Dutch Hindustanis (and also those in Surinam) to identify with and appropriate Indian culture. The Internet enhances this development; the growing number of Hindustani websites and the numerous possibilities to chat with Indians overseas signify that group identities are co-determined by transnational forces.

Transnational relations, communication technologies, and increased purchasing power have made it easier for Hindustanis to establish contacts with Indian communities elsewhere, boosting tourism to India and other diaspora Indian communities. As a result, Indian movie stars, scholars, and religious leaders increasingly visit Western countries – most often the United Kingdom and occasionally the Netherlands.

The number of Hindustani glossy magazines and websites is on the rise, as is the wide variety of venues where young Hindustanis meet: discos, beauty contests, singing and costume contests, and conferences on political and religious issues. The most popular leisure activity is

dancing and listening to music at wedding parties. Hindustanis also celebrate the annual Milan festival, with its fair-like atmosphere, and the annual Hindustani film festival, both having their centres in The Hague but also organized in other major Dutch cities.

'Cultural entrepreneurs' have also emerged: the need to display ethnic identity creates demand for culturally specific goods. Ritual artefacts, clothing, jewellery, cosmetics, etc. can be purchased, as well as music from India and attributes for Indian dance. This ethnification includes the older as well as the younger generations.

4. Results: the second generation

Apart from official statistics, other numerical data for this research were obtained by placing a survey on several Surinamese-Hindustani websites in the Netherlands popular mainly with young people and strongly focused on 'going out', dating, and Hindustani identity and culture. It should be noted that using websites as sites of data collection might lead to the conclusion that the community is merely ethnifying. However, in the previous section the processes of assimilation (individualization, role changes, language) together with the ethnification of the Indian community are described using qualitative data, making the Internet survey data supplementary.

The survey started with a brief introduction explaining the aim of the research. It had pre-set answer categories, with options for filling in deviating answers ('other'). The response was overwhelming: within a fortnight, over 958 people had responded, yielding 942 relevant cases. The respondents consisted of 340 males and 602 females (16 unknown). Thompson (2002: 410) reports that, in the US and the UK, it is predominantly South Asian women that maintain relations in a virtual community, which may explain the over-representation of women in the sample.

Two-thirds of the respondents were between age 17 and 25; the modal class (36 per cent) was between 17 and 20 years old; approximately 12 per cent were under 17 years of age; 11 per cent were between 25 and 30 years old; and 10 per cent were over 30. Thirty per cent of the respondents were employed; 39 per cent were enrolled in school; and 29 per cent were both employee and student. Well over two-thirds of the respondents were born in the Netherlands and the others in Surinam. Half of those born in Surinam came to the Netherlands in the mid-1980s; the other half arrived after this period and must have been – considering the respondents' age distribution – very young indeed when they came.

This method of collecting data has much in common with postal surveys. In both cases, the interviews are not face-to-face and the interviewer cannot continue to ask questions or respond to facial expression, tone, hesitation, etc. On the other hand, the respondent has full anonymity; consequently, there is no hierarchy or constraint between researcher and respondent. The latter may answer questions with full freedom and without inhibition. Not all questions were completed: item non-response did occur. For most questions (by far), response figures ranged between 800 and 900, the lowest figure being 689. The response remained high, although the reported N is not constant.

Cultural identity

In almost every discipline the concept of identity is defined differently (cf. Verkuyten 1999). Rather than discussing several definitional options, and since this research explores useful items that fit the second generation, here the concept of identity remains loosely defined. In order to describe the cultural identity of Hindustani youth, the survey focused on their cultural self-image, using five questions (paraphrased here):

1. Do you feel Hindustani?

2. What does 'Hindustani' mean?

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3. How much time do you spend with your family?

4. Which community do you belong to?

5. What language(s) do you speak?

For the first question, an overwhelming majority (79 per cent) said they did 'feel Hindustani', 14 per cent indicated 'not really', and a small percentage (4 per cent) of the total number of respondents said they did not feel Hindustani. What, then, were the defining elements of their identity? The respondents were asked to indicate five things they considered typically Hindustani and specify the three most important ones. Every respondent could indicate more than one item, so the total number exceeds the number of respondents. The answers have been summarized in the table below.

TABLE 1

The top three characteristics were religion, culture, and food. The concrete denotation of 'culture/norms and values' remains unclear, though it is obvious that these young people distinguish themselves culturally or wish to do so. Foods that were often mentioned included *roti*, *doksa* (duck curry), and *dahl* (lentil soup). If the first and second columns are compared, the shift in the top three is remarkable. The significance of religion and culture increases and that of food decreases. A similar shift is notable for family ties that count as an important characteristic of being Hindustani.

Like most migrants, Hindustanis have also tried to institutionalize their culture. The most important informal institution by far is the family. Despite individualization, 42 per cent of the respondents said they spent the most time with their relatives; 36 per cent spent the most time with Hindustani friends and acquaintances; and roughly a third do so with other friends. It is unclear to what extent they do this on a voluntary basis. Hindustani youth in a small village in

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the east of the country will feel more compelled to step outside their own circle, whereas

circumstances are less compelling in the bigger cities of the Netherlands.

Once it was clear what made these young people feel Hindustani, the next step was to

examine which community they felt they belonged to. For a quarter of the respondents, this was

'Surinamese Hindustanis', the most important reason being that they were born in Surinam; for

approximately 60 per cent, it was 'Dutch Hindustanis'; 2 per cent said 'Indian' and 'British

Hindustanis'; 7 per cent replied 'other'. The response to the differentiation between Surinamese

and Dutch Hindustanis was remarkable. Youngsters in both categories called themselves

'Hindustani', yet the majority felt they were members of Dutch society. This differentiation

shows a clear break in identification with the parent country Surinam.

This identification with Dutch society is also reflected in the remarkably low percentages

for language. The minor command of the Hindustani language can be attributed to the fact that

the second generation of Hindustanis speaks their parents' language less fluently than the first

generation. This is shown by the high percentage (44 per cent) that indicated they only spoke

Dutch at home; 51 per cent spoke Hindustani and Dutch, and only 4 per cent indicated they

exclusively spoke Hindustani at home, a trend also reported in other research (cf. Van der

Avoird 2001).

Bollywood

The migration of young people to the Netherlands in the 1980s coincided with the rise of new

technologies: video, DVD, Walkman, and the Internet. These quickly became 'home

technologies', enabling people to watch films or listen to music on their own, with relatives, or

with friends, at any convenient moment of the day. While the impact of Bollywood on Indian

diaspora communities is highly under-researched, recent Dutch studies reveal that it goes much

further than just entertainment. Bollywood contributes to the retention of language, identity,

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fashion, gender role patterns, and social intercourse (Gowricharn 2004; Verstappen and Rutten

2007; Mukherjee 2009). Outside the Netherlands, Bollywood similarly impacts other diaspora

communities (Kaur and Sinha 2005).

Identity is expressed in cultural orientation and can be assessed by looking at the

respondents' preferences in music and film. Almost half of the youngsters (47 per cent) said

they listened more to Indian than to Western music, 17 per cent indicated the reverse, and 37 per

cent said they listened to both. A quarter of the respondents said they watched less than one film

per month, 60 per cent watched 2-8 films, and 16 per cent watched more than 8 films per month.

Out of all viewers, 56 per cent said they watched Indian films more often than Western films.

Sixty-three per cent said they regularly read something on Hindustani subject matter (religion,

film, or other topics); the others said they did not.

For some time, it has been popular to enrol children in Indian dance classes – both

classical and modern – at an early age. By downloading music and films, Hindustani youngsters

can rehearse dance routines, and their increased prosperity enables them to purchase the

expensive clothes that go with them. Young girls display their dancing skills and dresses at

Hindustani parties. The influence of the Indian film culture is wide-ranging: male and female

roles, taste and aesthetics, ways of expressing emotions (sadness, pleasure, anger), all of these

and similar aspects of cultural transfer predominantly take place through Bollywood. From their

living rooms and with the aid of the Internet, the younger generation of Hindustanis actively

appropriates the Indian film culture. Respondents were asked whether they felt more Hindustani

because of the Bollywood songs and films: 41% answered "yes", 31% said "a little" and for

28% the answer was "no".

Bollywood's marked socialization affected virtually three-quarters (72 per cent) of the

respondents, although 86 per cent do not feel more Hindustani than their parents. Considering

the forces for assimilation, the 'countervailing' impact of Bollywood is tremendous. To the

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question of what interests them most in Indian film, the five most frequently mentioned answers were the songs (67 per cent), the plots (64 per cent), the actors and actresses (55 per cent), the dance routines (51 per cent), and the costumes (50 per cent).

The fusion of the Bollywood and the Dutch Hindustani culture cannot be reflected more conspicuously than in the regular beauty, singing, and dancing contests, such as the Miss Hindustani contest, Miss Sari Holland contest, Miss Sarnami contest, Miss India Netherlands contest, etc. There are also the countless spiritual meetings (often held in adjacent European countries), the successful annual cultural events such as the film festivals in The Hague and Amsterdam, the numerous Hindustani public festivals (called Milan), and the shows given by travelling Bollywood stars and other cultural celebrities in various cities. It has become common for Hindustanis to travel to England for a weekend to watch a Bollywood star's show. To the question of attending special Hindustani occasions, the respondents answered: weddings (74 per cent), discos/dancing parties (48 per cent), public parties (39 per cent), cultural events (39 per cent), shows (32 per cent), religious meetings (27 per cent), and other (12 per cent).

Diaspora orientation

Even more important, perhaps, than the visits by film stars, musicians, religious scholars, and other celebrities is the flourishing travel business to India or, increasingly, to other places where Hindustanis live, such as Mauritius and South Africa. The question 'Which groups of Hindustanis are you most interested in?' was answered as follows: Surinam (55 per cent), India (31 per cent), the UK (4 per cent), and Other (10 per cent). Over the past few years, 19 per cent of the respondents went to India, 44 per cent to the UK, 9 per cent to Mauritius, 2 per cent to Fiji, and 3 per cent to South Africa. Bear in mind that these are youths, and not all can travel on their own; 71 per cent intend to visit or revisit these places in the future.

In addition to distinguishing between Surinamese and Dutch Hindustanis, the respondents

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were also asked which communities they most felt affinity with.

TABLE 2

As was to be expected, Surinam scored high: three quarters of these youngsters feel related to

their parents' home country. That is a very high percentage compared to the 10 per cent found in

Rumbaut (2002: 90). Even when the category 'a little' is dropped, 'feels related' remained

remarkably high. The percentage that felt 'barely' any affinity may indicate that part of the

second generation is disconnecting from its parents' homeland. However, the affinity with India

is surprising: over half do feel related to India. Considering that almost 50 per cent of these

youngsters were younger than 20, this identification with India is remarkable. This orientation

towards Hindustani communities outside Surinam and the Netherlands, therefore, signifies a

new development.

Eighty per cent of the respondents said they had contacts in Surinam. Over the past five

years, 48 per cent had actually visited Surinam. One third visited more than once, 9 per cent

visit every year, and 72 per cent regularly send parcels to relatives and friends in Surinam.

Thirteen per cent of the respondents said they had contacts in the UK, 21 per cent in India, and

21 per cent elsewhere. To find out if these visits to other countries have a functional goal, such

as a show, the survey asked 'do you ever go to shows and festivals in the UK and India?' In

asking this question, it was understood that many respondents were still under parental

authority, so the next question was 'would you like to do so?'

TABLE 3

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Most respondents (84 per cent) said they did not go to such events, but well over half said they would like to do so, and one-fifth would sometimes like to do so. The respondents were asked whether they preferred to go to Surinam, India, or the UK, and to rank their preferences first, second, and third. The results show that the weaker their orientation towards Surinam, the stronger their orientation towards India and the UK. This pattern supports the previous indications that the second generation is 'departing' from Surinam and re-establishing links with India and other Indian diaspora communities.

5.   Conclusions

This paper explores whether second generation immigrants will be carriers of transnationalism. The answer is conditional on the degree of ethnification of the immigrant community in question. Taking the Hindustanis in the Netherlands as an example, this process of ethnification is described and specified for the second generation. The persistence of the transnationalism of this second generation is of theoretical interest. The broad ethnification of the community, albeit on specific domains, and the high percentages reflecting its participation in transnational Indian communities, enforces the argument that communal ethnification is of paramount importance to the continuation of transnational ties.

Therefore, the thesis that the second generation's transnationalism will decrease with its integration into the host society is strongly conditional upon the definition of transnationalism. If the main criterion is the actual involvement of individuals, then ties with the country of origin or the parents' country of origin may indeed loosen. This decrease is likely to be noticeable in the first generation too, though its integration into the host society does not exclude transnational orientations (cf. Snell et al. 2006). If, however, the definition is participation in an ethnified community like the Hindustanis in the Netherlands, and thus indirect participation in

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the transnational community, then the proposition of the decline of second-generation transnationalism is untenable.

It follows that another determinant of the second generation's participation in the transnational community is the extent to which the local community has ethnified. This is not only conditional on the size of the community; ethnic strength derives from 'institutional completeness' (Kivisto 2003: 20; cf. Levitt 2002; Alba and Nee 1997). While this cultural infrastructure enables the preservation of recognizable life styles, it does not exclude the emergence of new ethnicities. On the contrary: in many respects - language, attitudes towards violence, gender, education, and work - there is a discernable Westernization. To put it differently, assimilation is partial and so is ethnification (cf. Brubaker 2001).

This development hardly fits the concept of symbolic ethnicity, since there is no talk of assimilation and of a symbolic 'residue' of the original culture. Since the community life is changing as a result of the ethnification process, the impact of the Internet, Bollywood, and diaspora orientations are much more than electronic flows: they have a profound socializing impact on youngsters and on community institutions (Kaur and Sinha 2005). There is no strategic interest behind fostering 'symbolic ethnicity' as ethnification is a genuine part of community life (cf. Macias 2004). Alternatively, the ethnification of the community may be caused by some kind of segmented assimilation, although this idea is hardly tenable since it presupposes some kind of social exclusion. As outlined before, the second generation Hindustanis belong to the most successful ethnic minority in the Netherlands, by Dutch standards. The concept of segmented assimilation does not fit this community.

The second finding is that transnationalism is changing. In most accounts of the alleged decline of second generation transnationalism only two countries are taken into account: the sending and the receiving country; it is systematically taken for granted that nationally bounded societies are the natural unit of analysis (Wimmer and Schiller 2003: 579). This two-nation

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perspective easily feeds the conclusion that second-generation transnationalism is declining

since the attachments are either on the side of the sending or the receiving country. The case of

the Hindustanis deviates in another respect from this 'model', as has been argued before

(Voight-Graf 2004): the interrelations of ethnic communities have many strands. As a result,

there is no zero sum game where a detachment from the sending country means an attachment to

the receiving country. The transnational 'behaviour' of the second generation turns out to be

more complex.

These findings need to be qualified since there are two specific conditions that prevent the

generalization of these results for other ethnic groups. First, diaspora Indians are neither looking

for a 'home' nor do they wish to return (Singh 2003: 4). This is especially true of Indians in the

Caribbean for whom India is not a real option as a receiving country, in contrast to Indians in

Africa and Asia (cf. Rutten and Patel 2003). Hence, this is a global, multi-polar situation where

ethnic communities feel part of an imagined community (Anderson 1991). This situation is

different from most transnational communities that comprise just two nations or ethnic groups.

The second condition relates to the effective ties migrants have with dominant cultural

centres that function as 'source cultures' rather than as 'home'. For Hindustanis, this is India,

and more specifically Bollywood. The presence of a prestigious source culture functions as a

stable point of reference, while a successful cultural industry (Bollywood) provides a continuous

supply of cultural products. These ties are different from those with Surinam. A powerful

'source culture' supplies a tremendous amount of ethnically specific commodities and services,

strengthening identity. Since not all ethnic groups can rely on such a source culture or cultural

centre, the development of transnational ties will vary for each ethnic group.

On the other hand, the 'multi-polar' model characterizes more ethnic communities as

social conditions in the European Union favour the dispersion of immigrant communities. Turks

and Moroccans, to mention two other major Dutch ethnic groups, have diaspora communities in

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neighbouring countries: Belgium, Germany, France, and Spain. The contacts between these

European ethnic communities give rise to new forms of transnationalism, similar to that of the

Hindustanis. As a result, transnationalism will change and take new forms. This expectation

does not include all minorities of 'European origin'. It will also depend on the transnational

capacities of the groups (Al-Ali et al. 2001), or, more precisely, the degree of ethnification and

the disposition of a source culture: a concept that comes close to that of a 'transcultural capital'

that shapes the different relations between the communities (Dahinden 2005: 202).

These changes require new or redefined concepts. Assimilation is a central concept that is

puzzling, despite earlier attempts to redefine it and incorporate ethnic elements. New concepts

are needed that fit new realities and new ethnicities, including changing patterns of selective

acculturation (Falicov 2005). Another issue that requires further research is the impact of

ethnification on life choices such as school, employment, marriage, and business. As an

extension of this development, the forces that foster shifts in the nature of transnational

communities should be explored. These different developments of ethnicity and

transnationalism will no doubt affect the patterns of cultural plurality in Western societies.

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Tables

Table 1: Typical Hindustani characteristics (in %)

	Most mentioned	Three most important
Religion/Hinduism	11.7	16.3
Culture/Norms and values	13.3	16.0
Food	15.5	13.2
Family ties	5.4	9.4
Music and dance	5.6	5.0
Community parties	5.8	5.7
Bollywood culture	6.2	5.4
Language	3.0	4.0
N =	3,544	1,965

Table 2: Most affinity with Hindustanis in Surinam, India, and the UK (in %)

	Surinam	India	UK
Yes, very	16	8	2
Yes	33	17	7
A little	28	29	17
Barely	23	46	74
N =	883	878	879

Table 3: 'Do you go to shows and festivals in the UK or India? Would you like to?' (in %)

	Do you visit?	Would you like to?
Yes	5	57
Sometimes	10	20
Usually	1	-*
No	84	23
N =	873	726

* this category was not included in the second question