

Roots and Routes

Monthly Newsletter of the
Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism



GRFDT

Global Research Forum on
Diaspora and Transnationalism

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EXPLORING THE DIASPORIC MALAYSIAN INDIAN'S NATIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH MULTI-VOICED STORYTELLING IN MUTHAMMAL PALANISAMY'S, *FROM SHORE TO SHORE* (2002)

KAVITHA GANESAN



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Editor's Message

Dear Readers

Greetings from GRFDT Team

The current edition of the Newsletter related to the theme of "Migration and Refugee Crisis" is a timely and apt publication related to some of the most recent events taking place around the world. With the recent events related to Ukrainian and Syrian war, there has been new forms of displacement and migration. In the case of Ukraine, there is an increase of internal migration or the so called IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) who are forced to migrate to other parts of Ukraine due to the Crimean occupation of Russia. Further, one of the most recent and widespread phenomena related to migration is taking place in Europe, where huge amounts of Middle Eastern population and more specifically Syrian people are migrating. The huge migration of Syrian people to parts of Europe is the direct result of many years of war and current menace of ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). The value of this edition becomes more useful since it directly touches the issues pertaining to the current migration and refugee crisis in Europe.

It has also become more important since the recent Paris attack has highlighted the need to take the menace of war and terrorism in Middle East and more specifically in countries of Iraq and Syria very seriously. The Paris attack which killed 130 people highlights how war, terrorism, migration and refugee crisis are all interrelated to each other and one has to have a holistic view to understand all these issues. The current edition also contains two wonderful book reviews related to historical and contemporary events. The first book review related to historical and mythological aspects of Parsi migration to Sanjan a place in Gujarat is a well analysed review work. The second book review deals with the topic of identity and culture of Indians in America. In a holistic perspective this edition of the Newsletter for the month of September and October, 2015 will provide readers and its audience a good insight about theme and topics covered in this issue.

Happy reading!

Rajiv Mishra and Rakesh Ranjan
Editors



Displacement in Modern Ukraine

Since March 2014 Ukraine has faced massive internal displacement of people that the country never witnessed before. On 22 September 2015, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine registered 1,492,814 people to be internally displaced (MSPU, 2015). The two factors responsible for the problem of IDPs were: annexation of a part of Ukrainian territory (the Autonomous Republic of Crimea) by the Russian Federation and, the beginning of anti-terror operations in Luhansk and Donetsk regions (administrative-territorial unit in Ukraine). The two groups of the IDPs in Ukraine are different from each other in terms of region of previous settlement, size, reasons for displacement, level of preparation post displacement (planned or spontaneous), psychological state (experience of staying in an active conflict zone), region of current settlement, life strategy (will to integrate in a new place of living or to return home) etc.

A group of the IDPs from the Crimean peninsula (the first group) is characterized by relatively small numbers of people: as of 27 September 2015 it numbers 21.3 thousand people according to the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU, 2015). The major reason that led to their movement from Crimea was unwillingness to reside in an occupied territory. This group of IDPs included political activists, Crimea Tatars, journalists, students and people whose professional activity was linked to Ukrainian licenses (such as lawyers, accountants, pharmacists, small businessmen etc.). Mostly their movement was planned. The economically developed cities of Ukraine were places of destination for this group. At the beginning of 2015, there were 4.7 thousand IDPs from the Crimea in Kyiv city, 2.9 thousand in Lviv and 2 thousand in Odessa region (UNHCR, 2015). Such numbers provide evidence in favour of the long-term plan of the IDPs (from Crimea) to integrate in new places of settlement.

The second group of the IDPs from Luhansk and Donetsk regions was formed after the beginning of anti-terror operations by the Ukrainian armed forces. Every escalation of conflict each time has led to new waves of the IDPs from these regions. As the State Emergency Service of Ukraine reported, the resettlement of 938,000 people from Luhansk and Donetsk regions took place in September 2015 (SESU, 2015). Given the kind of circumstances that led to their displacement, this group of IDPs remain most vulnerable and in need of financial assistance. Moreover, the largest part of this group consists of retirees, children and disabled persons. Their settlement strategy is different from the IDPs from the Crimea. They move out from the conflict zone to the nearest regions and waiting for the military conflict to end and returning home. That is why the main regions of destination of this group are Donetsk (535.1 thousand people), Luhansk (210.9 thousand), Kharkiv (185.6 thousand) regions (UNHCR, 2015). Some IDPs from this group visit the conflict zone regularly in order to look after

their property.

Some Ukrainian people are seeking asylum abroad. According to the Kyiv regional representative of the UNHCR, in August 2015, there were 1.120 million Ukrainian citizens seeking asylum or had other forms of stay in neighboring countries. A substantial part of their population (81.3%) stays in the Russian Federation (the RF) and 383.3 thousand were asylum seekers and 528.200 people have other forms of stay (UNHCR, 2015). The Federal Migration Service of the RF reported in 2014 that most of the Ukrainians applied for temporary protection status. More than 93% were granted that status and only 4% were recognized as refugees (FMS, 2015). Belarus and Moldova are other popular countries of destination for Ukrainians.

The number of asylum seekers from Ukraine in the European Union has increased. In the fourth quarter of 2014, the number of Ukrainian citizens applying for asylum was twenty times more than their number in 2013. The main countries of destination for Ukrainian asylum seekers are Germany (19%), Poland (16%), Italy (15%), France (10%), and Sweden (9%). However, the rate of recognition as asylum seekers remains quite low (22%, out of which 16.1% were recognized as refugees) as the entire Ukraine is not affected by military conflict (Bitoulas, 2015) (Lyman, 2015).

Ever since the beginning of the massive displacement, the Ukrainian state authorities have tried to solve the most emerging issues. For the first 6 months there was some progress. Thus, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine assumed the role of coordinator for the central and local authorities' social support measures for the IDPs. A governmental telephone «hot line» was created; social protection agencies were mobilized; procedures of receiving pension and insurance benefits through social insurance funds were simplified; employment services for the IDPs were provided by the Ministry. Recreation and retreat centers were provided for the IDPs as temporary accommodation. The passport services for the IDPs from the Crimea were replaced to the State Migration Service offices on the mainland. The procedure for transferring students from the universities in Crimea to other Ukrainian universities was simplified by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The issues of resettlement, health care, education of children in kindergartens and schools, employment and retrieval of lost documents were assumed by the Regional State Administrations.

The national legislation for the IDPs has been developing at a slow pace. The main legislation regarding the rights and freedoms of the IDPs was adopted only in October 2014 after long negotiations and with assistance from

international organizations and NGOs. As a result it meets international standards of the UN and covers such spheres as registration of the IDPs and forming the IDPs data base, registration of resettlement, employment, pension benefits, social insurance, social services, education, voting rights, the right to return to the previous place of residence etc. The Law highlights the importance of international cooperation as well as involving non-government organizations for solving the IDPs issues more effectively.

However, some important issues remain unattended. Among them is the system for registration of the IDPs and their statistics. While the Cabinet of Ministers' Resolution "On registration of internally displaced persons from the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine and anti-terrorist operation area" was adopted, there is lack of data about real number of the IDPs in Ukraine. People in general do not trust the state system and do not want to waste their time in bureaucratic procedures. Therefore, only the IDPs who need state financial support apply for the IDP status. As a result of this, the real figure of IDPs remains unknown and is likely to be higher than the official numbers.

The most important issues for the IDPs are settlement and employment. At the beginning of displacement state sanatoria and local churches received the IDPs. However, only 10% of the IDPs live in compact locations. The majority of these people rent accommodations or lives with relatives (RCIDP, 2015). Since October 2014, the Ukrainian state provided monthly-targeted financial support to the IDPs to cover livelihood, including housing and other utilities. However, the legislation places some limitations according to property owned by the IDPs. For instance, IDPs who own real estate in the areas of Ukraine not affected by war, have more than one car, etc. are not eligible to apply for financial assistance by the state. As a result, as of September 2015, only 498,300 families have received state financial support (MSPU, 2015).

Due to the economic crisis in Ukraine, the IDPs suffer from unemployment. The efficiency of the State Employment Service is low. As of September 2015 only 38.6 thousand IDPs have applied to the Service for assistance in employment. However, only 7.8 thousand of them found employment. The main reason for this is that job vacancies do not offer acceptable salaries for the IDPs. On the other hand, Luhansk and Donetsk regions have their own specific labour market such as coal mining and metal industries that dominate the regional economy. Thus, workers from these industries can not find jobs in other regions of Ukraine. In order to solve the problem, the Ukrainian state provides retraining courses for the IDPs and tries to stimulate employers to sign on people from this group on the basis of compensation offered by the state. However, these measures need to have additionally allocated funds and donors.

Another new issue that has appeared in connection with the forthcoming local elections is related to the registration of place of residence for the IDPs. According to this legislation the IDPs must not change the registration of their permanent place of residence in order

to receive IDP status. At the same time, this provision violates the rights of the IDPs to vote and participate in local elections at their new places of settlement. From this point of view the current legislation needs to be amended. The Draft Law ensuring the IDPs participation in the forthcoming local elections has been registered with the Ukrainian Parliament. However, it still remains unclear how far the Parliament would be sincere in adopting this amendment.

The difficult economic situation and massive displacement have consolidated the Ukrainian society and led to unprecedentedly high levels of cooperation between the state and local authorities, NGOs, international and national voluntary organizations. Such level of cooperation provides additional expert capacity for adopting new legislation, attracting financial and organizational resources. Currently, the State, international organizations and voluntary groups are the three main pillars in charge of the whole process of solving the problems of the internally displaced persons in Ukraine.

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Syrian Crisis and Migration as the Recourse for Existence

It takes lots of courage to stand up for our rights but it takes everything to fight for our existence. People who are victims of war and terrorism are not fighting for their rights but for their mere survival. Although migration is not a recent phenomenon it has been in existence since time immemorial however in the present context large numbers of people are using it as a mode of their survival. It has occurred throughout human history for various economic, social, political and environmental reasons, beginning with the movements of the first human groups from their origins in East Africa to their current locations in the world. Migration basically refers to the movement of people from one place to another often across a political or governmental boundary that can be temporal or permanent, and it may be voluntary or forced. Migration can be internal that is within the country or external being outside the country due to various push and pull factors. To begin with the current scenario of migration in context of Syrian war and terrorism, however it is pertinent to differentiate between a migrant and a refugee.

Migrant makes conscious choice to leave the country not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work or better lives elsewhere. Refugee is a person who is residing outside the country of his or her origin due to fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, or political opinion. Syrian war is one among the worst of humanitarian crisis that people have witnessed in recent years. Families are struggling to survive within the country or flee to the neighbouring countries for safety and subsistence. Many are migrating to Europe where the numbers are increasing on daily basis, which is mainly related to the fact that people are looking for safety, shelter and work in the developed countries of Europe.

Syria has been dragged into such a situation since last more than four years when civil war broke out against the Syrian government beginning in March 2011, part of the Arab Spring. Situation became worse when the government cracked down violently against the peaceful protesters that led the rebels to fight against the regime and the newly formed Free Syrian Army. More than four years after it began 250,000 Syrians were killed mostly civilians and their lives were totally disrupted, infrastructure destroyed and they were left with mere choices either to migrate or to succumb to the war. More than 11 million have been forced out of their homes as forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad and those opposed to his rule battle each other - as well as jihadist militants from Islamic State. The turmoil within Syria created space for new extremists group growing out from al-Qaeda in Iraq known as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) who have become one of the most cruel and barbaric group against humanity. Their effective use of internet for recruitments, fundamentalist propaganda and

brutal killings of innocent people has secured widespread attention. Many developed countries have pledged to wipe out the terrorism from the parts of Middle East. What is more interesting is to look into the facts that have opened new avenues for debates and discussions about the rise of ISIS and their stronghold in various parts of Iraq and Syria. Infact it has been established that US occupation of Iraq and its funding to the armed rebels in Syria provided opportunity to the ISIS militants to carry out their war of terror against the whole humanity.

ISIS has shown its ruthlessness and violence through spree of killing various ethnic groups, beheadings and attacks on people in various countries. Syria is one of the most affected countries being enveloped by terrorism leading to mass exodus of people within and outside the country. The extreme agony the Syrians suffer cannot be fully encapsulated in the eyes of camera or in the debates. The only assurance the world can give is to bring them into the fabric of more secured and protected domain and give rights to live their life in a dignified manner. However, major challenge before the world is to unite and narrow the differences between divided opinions among different nations against one common goal to fight terrorism. To stop and defeat monstrous group like ISIS the world needs to use the resources of the developed countries efficiently stepping on one platform and reducing endless western military interventions in the Middle East. This would also require a change in policy of western countries related to Middle East and more specifically having holistic perspective to deal with violence in the name of Islam.

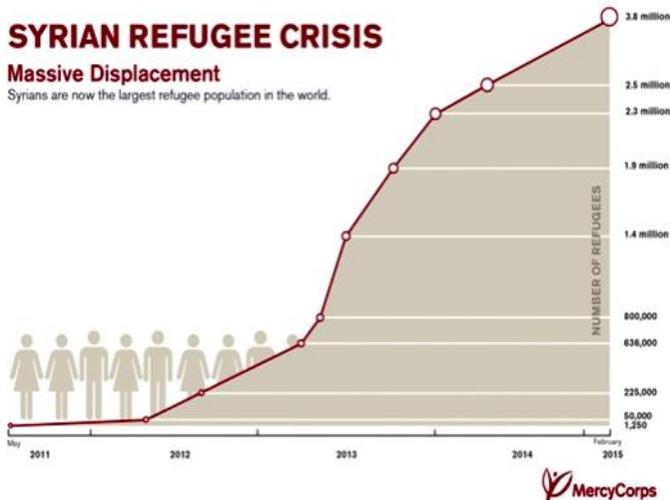
Migration and European Union

How hard it must be for the people to flee their homeland leaving behind all the memories of years spent with families and friends carrying only terrifying and unwanted memories of dead bodies, blood and disordered region. Isn't it hard for us just to read and see pictures of injured children, their crying parents and people lying in the pool of blood? Than how unimaginable it must be for the victims who have seen all these happening before them and who are helpless as well as hapless to witness and bear it. Only solution for them is either to succumb to the terror or to migrate to a safer zone as refugees. Syrians have migrated in millions to their neighbourhoods which they find more feasible and easier to reach and settle. The majority of Syrian refugees are living in Jordan and Lebanon, where Mercy Corps has been addressing their needs since 2012 and these small regions constantly find it hard to sustain large refugees with limited resources. Large numbers enter Turkey and from there many also take a dangerous trip across Mediterranean Sea to Greece expecting to find a better future and resources in Europe.

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Massive Displacement

Syrians are now the largest refugee population in the world.

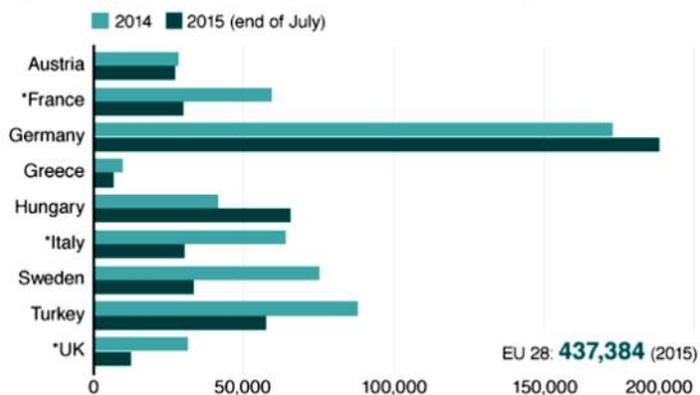


Source: MercyCorps

The graph shows the exponential growth in refugees from 100,000 in 2012 to 3.8 million in 2015. Millions of Syrians are scattered throughout the region, making them the world's largest refugee population under the United Nations' mandate. Syrian refugees were maximum in the neighbouring countries but their migration to European countries is accelerating on the daily basis. Europe is experiencing one of the most significant inflows of migrants and refugees in its history. The promising opportunities available in these countries while nothing but civil war and terror, back in their homes made Syrians flee in large numbers. Since under international law, no one can be sent to a place where they face a real threat of being victimized or seriously harmed and injured by others. People perceiving such threats can ask for asylum which means a legal permission to stay as a refugee with its rights and benefits. Although it cannot be denied that the real victims of war and terrorism should be placed any place of their choice in which they feel secure however not every asylum seeker will be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum seeker. In this regard EU has spent years building the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) so that the rights of refugees under international law are protected in its member states. The system sets out minimum standards and procedures for processing and assessing asylum applications, and for the treatment of both asylum seekers and those who are granted refugee status. Still many EU states have yet to properly implement these standards and relocate refugees to those countries which have few arrivals. The crisis within the Europe to tackle the refugees on the one hand and reluctance of some of its countries to provide space and protection to asylum seekers on the other has created difficulties in managing the refugees. The scale of the crisis has put huge pressure on some destination countries, particularly Greece, Austria, and Hungary. At least 350,000 migrants crossed the EU's border in January-August 2015, compared with just 280,000 during the whole of 2014. Germany receives by far the most

asylum applications in the EU and says it is expecting 800,000 refugees to arrive this year.

Asylum applications submitted in selected European countries



Source: UNHCR, UK 2015 stats Home Office.

People are using routes which prove fatal for their lives to reach the Europe especially Mediterranean sea in an overcrowded, unstable boats which have already drowned many of them making their lives even more difficult. Overland crossing to reach safe borders further traumatises the refugees since they have to walk long miles with children and belongings, face the risks of snipers, other shooters and kidnappers. Their sorrows do not end here even if they get through they have to seek asylum or face a reluctant government to cater their needs and rights. Many European governments are hesitant to accommodate large number of refugees for the fear of domestic disintegration and are raising security issues. Also, they fear the demographic dynamics within the countries can give rise to another sort of problems like competition for the scarce resources, struggle for employment opportunities and various other need based things. European governments are struggling to co-ordinate their response to the influx. Large movements of migrants from country to country quickly fuel suspicions that some politicians are trying to shift the burden on to their neighbours.

Resolving the Migration Crisis

What is the solution to the migration crisis? When the peace in the world will prevail and the terrorists group like ISIS will be wiped out? How the world will combat terrorism which has pinched almost every other country? How crucial are the roles of western countries in bringing an end to the war and terrorism? These are the questions which are frequently highlighted or discussed upon in every other debates and media. Countries like Iraq and Syria have been bleeding to death inch by inch every day, however no countries have taken serious steps to come forward unitedly to bring an end to terrorism. Conversely, the recent attack in Paris which killed 130 people suddenly shattered the western world and brings them to the reality out of their imagination that no country is safe from terrorism not even with highly sophisticated security systems. People across nations have criticised the partial treatment of countries hit by terrorists through

social media and academic writings illustrating the example of Paris attacks which gathered worldwide attention. On the other hand attacks in small regions and less developed countries failed to secure even condemnation from world leaders.

One thing the Paris attack did was to bring forward foes and friends on one platform and to share common concerns regarding terrorism and war hit areas. Major blocks like America and Russia brushing aside their enmity have decided to take steps to narrow down terrorism and bring peace in countries like Syria. Their joint commitment against terrorists have created new hopes among the people in general and refugees in particular who are longing to live a life of peace and stability. The solution to migration crisis will only come when whole world together fights against various fundamentalists groups in any country being threat to the harmony and safety of the people. Till the crisis is resolved or till Syrians feel safe in their place, strengthening the common asylum policy needs to be based on solidarity towards those needing international protection as well as among the EU Member States are necessary. Also developing a new policy on legal migration in view of the future demographic challenges the EU is facing, the new policy needs to focus on attracting workers that the EU economy needs, particularly by facilitating entry and the recognition of qualifications. European Union fears that porous border may lead to attacks in these countries which may not be the case due to lack of evidence since such no countries have yet perceived threat from refugees seeking asylum. Countries which do not have large number of refugees should welcome people from conflict ridden regions like recently Canada who plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees.

It would be appropriate, philanthropic and law abiding to settle as many refugees as the countries can sustain so

Call for Papers: Special editions of the GRFDT Newsletter 'Roots and Routes on 'Forced Migration and Refugee Crisis'

GRFDT is further planning to bring out more special issues related to "Forced Migration and Refugee Crisis" for the coming months of November and December, 2015. We are planning to publish some special short articles and book reviews related to this issue.

Some of the key issues, we are planning to cover are:

- Displacement from ISIS war zone
- Migration from Middle East to Europe
- Migration from Africa to Europe
- Migration crisis in South-East Asia
- Mexican migration to North America

that no people live without some basic rights. The solution really does not lie in raids that often miss the target and take toll on civilians lives like what happened when strikes followed by Paris attack were made, but rather the world powers should work on long term resolutions and strategic thinking that guarantees minimum loss of innocent lives. Committed cooperation of the world leaders can change the future discourse in favour of innocent people. Countries that are bearing the wrath of ruthless, coldblooded and inhumane group like ISIS and its strategic killings. Unless and until countries of the world unite, coordinate and show seriousness towards every terrorists attacks migration of mass exodus will keep mounting to which whole world will be responsible. At this juncture one can only think of a line 'united we stand, migration will fall'.

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- Any other instances of forced migration and refugee crisis

If you are interested, please submit articles and/or book review of approx. 2000 words to newsletter@grfdt.com.

The Newsletters will be available in print as well as online format. If you are willing to submit articles and/or book review, please write a line of confirmation to editor@grfdt.com as soon as possible. Please visit below mentioned link to download our previous newsletters. <http://grfdt.com/newsletter.aspx>

Regards
Rakesh Ranjan and Rajiv Mishra
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Transnationalism.
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The Zoroastrian myth of migration from Iran and settlement in the Indian diaspora

Williams, Alan. 2009. The Zoroastrian myth of migration from Iran and settlement in the Indian diaspora: text, translation and analysis of the 16th century Qesse ye Sanjan, the Story of Sanjan. Brill publications. ISSN no. -0169-8834. ISBN no.- 9789004176980

In formation of a diasporic identity culture and history are two things that play a pivotal role. Texts and oral histories are the embodiment of culture and history. If the memories of past get blurred, texts revive them. Sometimes memories are formed through texts only. Therefore, it is essential to interpret and analyse texts because their authenticity can only be checked through rigorous research. Alan Williams' book 'The Zoroastrian myth of migration from Iran and settlement in the Indian diaspora' is one such attempt to interpret and examine a 16th century text, which forces readers to reflect whether Qesse ye Sanjan is a mythical narrative or a historical one.

Qesse means story and Sanjan is a place in Gujarat, so Qesse ye Sanjan means story of Sanjan. The author translates, studies, analyzes and re iterates the importance of Qesse ye Sanjan. Having done an extensive study on this poem, Williams asserts Qesse ye Sanjan is an important manuscript, perhaps the only text, documenting Zoroastrian migration from Iran to India and formation of 'Parsi' community.

Qesse ye Sanjan(QS) is quite familiar among Parsis, but scarcely studied. Also, previous texts on translation and analysis of QS have been insufficient; therefore, the purpose of the author is to give a new and satisfactory analysis of QS. Author reiterates that the rationale of the book is the presentation and study of the manuscript and not rebuilding or restoration of Parsi history

The book is divided into 6 chapters, including introduction and conclusion. Along with purpose of the study, background of author and his family, Chapter 1 includes composition of Qesse ye Sanjan, important themes of the poem, lenses through which the poem has been analysed etc.

After having dealt with Authors background, Williams asserts that the importance of QS has increased manifold in the 21st century due to spreading of the community across the globe. QS re-estates the morals and beliefs of their past, which no other document of their origin in Iran and emigration to India provides for. Therefore, QS is their sole text on formation of their identity.

Williams analyzes the text in a chronological manner through the events of which author, Bahman, tells his story. He also made a synoptic Chart of the Narrative Struc-

ture of poem, which makes it easy for readers to understand the structure of a complex and multifaceted poem. According to this chart, the tale mainly highlights the following things: the journey to Sanjan, India; the battles fought along with a Hindu ruler against a Muslim invader; the history of the Zoroastrians till the Muslim invasion and the depiction of the survival and flourishing of the Zoroastrian community after the invasion of Sanjan.

Third chapter is devoted to translation and transcription. Along with translating the poem from Persian to English, author has also made a chart of romanised transcription system.

After having translated the poem from Persian to English, he moves to his fourth chapter. He describes the narrating structure of the poem, gives a detailed account of the meaning of its verses and also examines Bahman's frame of mind and personal and social orientations at the time of writing different verses.

Analysis in chapter 5 forms the crux of author's work, where he analyses whether QS should be interpreted as a clock or mirror. Williams stresses that the text has been seen as a source of chronological information, like a clock or a timetable for many years. Against clock model, Williams very convincingly introduces the concept of mirror. According to which, QS should not be seen more than as a representative of two interrelated things: Bahman's own interests and traditions that he followed.

This book is not only an account of author's primary research and analysis. In fact he has brought to readers a very interesting debate of different scholars on rival chronologies regarding the date of Parsis arrival in India. These are traditional chronology, historical revision and the literalist reading. The dates of Parsi arrival in India are different in all types of chronologies.

A fascinating point is reached in the analysis of QS, when Williams concludes calling it a mythical narrative. The myth of a journey starting from exodus of Zoroastrians due to fear of persecution to transformation of Iranian Zoroastrians into Indian Parsis after having fought in support of Hindu Raja against Muslim invader in Sanjan and finally successful settlement in India. This heroic process has been called a mythical narrative, which has played more important role in enriching their story than what a historical narrative based on facts would have. However, the author fails to give the account as to why is it that a myth has been given so much importance that it empowers historical narrative describing actual human events.

Williams has reiterated at many places that he intends to present text of QS and not narrate Parsi history. But, the book does explain Parsi history along with presenting the text.

Nevertheless, Williams has presented a very thought provoking analysis of QS while putting emphasis on the role that mythical stories play in formation of ethnic and religious identities especially in the case of diasporas. Mobility and distance reinforced the need for formation of a common identity of Parsi diasporic community, which is acquired from the manuscript of QS as it presents mythical story as well as imageries of homeland.

Apart from creating a new edition of the poem in an English version, the book provided a detailed commentary on the text, discussed its narrative structure and deliberated in mythological and religious dimensions of what is considered a foundational document of Parsi Zoroastrian culture.

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Review by Arsala Nizami, Ph.D. Student School of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Studies, IGNOU, New Delhi. Email: arsalanizami@gmail.com

American Karma: Race, Culture and Identity in the Indian Diaspora

Bhatia Sunil, American Karma: Race, Culture and Identity in the Indian Diaspora, 2007, New York: New York University Press (ISBN 978-081-4799-581)

The book provides an account of Indian Diaspora's struggle with their identity in The United States. In their tryst with America, the book explores the journey of the Indian diaspora community in maintaining, resisting and reinventing their identities. The process of negotiating with identities have been used by the author to ascertain whether the Indian Diaspora's fit in the model of acculturation proposed by Berry and Colleagues, which talks about the fourfold effect of acculturation i.e. assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization. To study the process of acculturation and formation of identity, the author has relied on the concept of voice rather than using some static parameter. The concept of voice was used to capture the ongoing simultaneous dialogical movement between the voice of feelings that are at once assimilated, integrated, privileged and marginalized.

The negotiation of identity by Indian diasporas has been studied using the dialogical approach in the construction of otherness. Three ways of construction of otherness has been used i.e. generic otherness where voice appropriated by the participants confirms to the feeling of being different; marked otherness where certain objects, behavior, appearance etc are the markers of the difference such as thick Indian accent, bindis, sarees, turban etc; and disruptive otherness, which is associated with the deep feeling of alienation and marginality as a result of racism and ethnic bias. These markers of otherness have been used to detail out the instances in personal as well as professional lives of the Indian diasporas. Several respondents provided contradictory views with respect to the experience of racism when interviewed at different time span. Moreover the respondents view their professional life to be resistant of racism as compared to their personal life where several instances of racism were narrated by them. Scientific work environment based on meritocracy was seen as the probable reason for the same.

Author thus explores the experience of racism by situating the voices of assignation and assertion in the model

minority discourse of the diaspora. The Indian Diaspora under the effect of being called as a model minority by the American society asserts the incidence of racism as that of a universal nature, which is present in some form or the other. Hence, differentiation rather than discrimination is something, which they believe, exists. Moreover, since the respondents held the belief that merit transcends color, hence as per them, merit in the American society has rewarded them better.

The author challenges the model of acculturation and concludes by asserting that the Indian diasporas do not fit in any of these watertight compartments of assimilation, separation, integration and marginalization. Their voice represents their shifts from being both privileged as well as marginalized at different circumstances and marks towards their continuous negotiation with their hyphenated identity. This calls towards the need to redefine the development of migrant identity as a negotiated and contested process rather than a static and singular one.

The book is based on ethnographic study, which was carried on for a period of 16 months in New London, Connecticut where the author himself resides along with several other Indian Diasporas, thus was a participant observer in his study. By making extensive use of interview data and narratives, the author has very well documented the account of the daily life of the respondents in America. The questions posed for interview from the respondents were quite innovative and could cull out the maximum information.

The chapter which elaborates on the methodology adopted in the study, the author has provided a detailed account of interaction with the respondents, meeting with gatekeeper, positional dilemma of the researcher and issues confronted by the respondents; hence affecting the observation of the ethnographer. The blurring of the boundary between the field and home has been very well captured in the book. The study was conducted using thirty eight samples from Indians working in white collar jobs who belong to the elite group with high salaries and regards in the society, while other Indians working as cabdrivers, cooks, mechanics etc were excluded from

the sample. Thus, the study is representative of the experiences and narratives of only higher class working Indian professionals and not the complete set of Indian Diasporas.

Although the contents of the book were enriching and informative, there seemed to be a repetition of the ideas back and forth. The author also tried to connect to the context of individual respondents in later part of the text by making use of their pseudo-names. As a reader, it would have been beneficial if a tabular representation of the names of the respondents with some basic information could have been elaborated in the appendix of the book in order to refer to it, in case the name reappears in the text again.

One of the important aspects, which were missing in the text, was the role of gender and the simultaneous elaboration of the account where gender, race and culture are interwoven in the diasporas in American Society. Though the author accepts the lacunae in the existing literature on Diaspora studies which ignores the role of gender in the process of acculturation, the author ends up contributing just few paragraph on the role of gender, whereas it

would have been more informative and interesting had a separate chapter on gender been included.

Similarly, the title of few chapters does not completely justify the content in it. The last chapter titled Imagining Homes had just few pages which were in sync with the title of the chapter. Similarly the third chapter titled Des Pardes in the American Suburbia had contents which departed from the message invoked by its title.

Overall the book is highly informative, rich in contents and interesting to read. It is especially helpful for the research scholars and academicians in the field of migration and diaspora as it successfully links the empirics with the theoretic. With extensive use of literature and a detailed review on the different form of ethnographic study, which is being used in the contemporary periods, the book can also serve the purpose of the academicians in the field of research methodology.

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Call for Papers

9th International Conference on Migration and Development

Migration Policy Centre, European University Institute, Florence, 13-14 June, 2016. Deadline for submissions: 15 January 2016.

The French Development Agency (AFD) Research Department, the World Bank Development Research Group (DECRG) and the Migration Policy Centre of the European University Institute (MPC-EUI) are jointly organising the 9th International Conference on Migration and Development". The conference is devoted to investigating ways in which international migration affects economic and social change in developing countries. Possible topics include the effects of migration on poverty, inequality, and human capital formation; social networks and migration; diaspora externalities; remittances; brain drain; migration and institutional/technological change. A selection of papers from the conference will be considered for a special issue of The Journal of Economic Geography.

Keynote speakers:

Massimo Livi-Bacci, University of Florence
Gianmarco Ottaviano, London School of Economics

Submission guidelines and timetable: submissions of full papers (pdf files) are expected by January 15, 2016. Submissions should be sent to migdevconference@eui.eu

Decisions will be communicated by February 25, 2016. Travel (economy class) and accommodation in Florence for up to three nights will be covered.

Organizing Committee: Cyrille Bellier (AFD), Rohen d'Aiglepierre (AFD), Philippe Fargues (MPC-EUI), Çağlar Özden (World Bank), Hillel Rapoport (Paris School of Economics and MPC-EUI), Alessandra Venturini (University of Turin and MPC-EUI)

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<http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/9th-Migration-and-Development-EUI2016-Call-for-Papers.pdf>

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The papers should be structured through numbered main headings (in all caps bold), subheadings (in upper/lower bold), and sub-sub-headings (in normal italics). Spellings of frequently used words should be consistent all through the paper.

Notes/ Foot/End Notes

Notes should be numbered in Arabic numerals as superscripts inside the text, and their details should appear as end notes. Tables should appear along with their data sources (if not generated from author's own research) in the appropriate places inside the text.

Notes for tables should be marked with (*) and should appear at the bottom of the table.

References Style

Reference cited in the text should follow the author-date system (e.g., Cohen, 1997) and should be properly referred to at the end of the text in the following style.

Books/Edited Books

Cohen, R. (1997). *Global diasporas: An introduction*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

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Grossman, M. (2010). *Diaspora knowledge flows in the global economy, E-Leader Budapest 2010*. <http://www.g-casa.com/conferences/budapest/papers/Grossman.pdf>. Accessed on 12 Apr 2013.

Contacts

The complete paper can be submitted to the Editor, Working Paper Series, GRFDT, Email: editor@grfdt.com

Recently Published Books

Multiculturalism, Migration, and the Politics of Identity in Singapore

Lian Kwen Fee (Ed.)

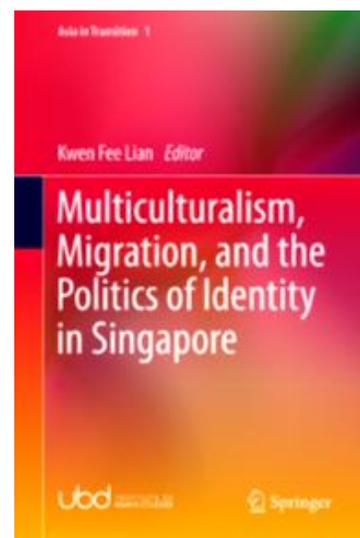
Series: Asia in Transition, Vol. 1

- Emphasizes the concept of Multiculturalism in the fields of Asian Sociology and Southeast Asian Studies
- Provides an Asian perspective on Multiculturalism in Singapore
- Elaborates on how the concept of Multiculturalism has been reworked historically through state policies and in practice in Singapore
- Offers new and interesting insights into how people negotiate living with cultural difference and diversity in an Asian context

This edited volume focuses on how multiculturalism, as statecraft, has had both intended and unintended consequences on Singapore's various ethnic communities. The contributing authors address and update contemporary issues and developments in the practice of multiculturalism in Singapore by interfacing the practice of multiculturalism over two critical periods, the colonial and the global. The coverage of the first period examines the colonial

origins and conception of multiculturalism and the post-colonial application of multiculturalism as a project of the nation and its consequences for the Tamil Muslim, Ceylon-Tamil, and Malay communities. The content on the second period addresses immigration in the context of globalization with the arrival of new immigrants from South and East Asia, who pose a challenge to the concept and practice of multiculturalism in Singapore. For both periods, the contributors examine how the old migrants

have attempted to come to terms with living in a multicultural society that has been constructed in the image of the state, and how the new migrants will reshape that society in the course of their ongoing politics of identity.



International Migration in Southeast Asia

Lian Kwen Fee, Md Mizanur Rahman, Yabit bin ALAS (Eds.).

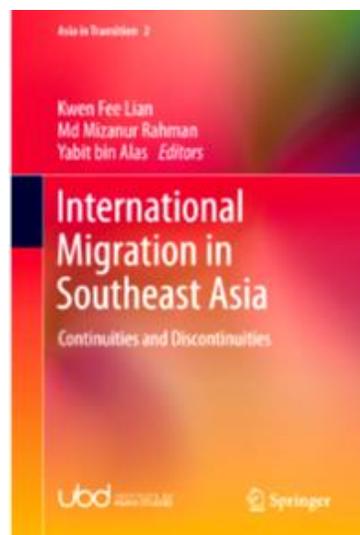
Series: Asia in Transition, Vol. 2

- Approaches the field of international migration from an intra- and inter-regional migration perspective
- Reveals new and old patterns of international migration in the region and discusses its complexities
- Offers an Southeast Asian perspective on international migration

This book is a collection of work by migration scholars and researchers who are actively conducting fieldwork in Southeast Asia. It presents a wide variety of current research and approaches the field of international labor migration from a regional perspective, acknowledging that the migration process goes beyond local and national boundaries and is embedded in regional and global interconnections. The chapters capture the complexity and richness of the migration phenomenon and experience, which manifests itself in a multitude of ways in a region

well known for its diversity. The collection highlights the continuities and discontinuities in the linkages that have been forged through the movement of people between sending and receiving societies. Such linkages are explained by distinguishing between migration that has been sustained by a colonial past and migration that has been precipitated by globalization in the last two decades.

The diversity of issues in the region covered by this volume will encourage a rethink of some of the conventional views of migration scholarship and result in a more critical reflection of how we approach migration research.



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