

The Politics of (In)security: Reconstructing African-Asian Relations,
Citizenship and Community in Post-Expulsion Uganda

by

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Dedication

For Mom, Dad, Seerath, Rami, Shaun and Giki Masi, Waheguru da asra de naal, my literal and figurative travel companions in life.

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List of Abbreviations

Action for Development (ACFODE)

British Protected Person (BPP)

Centre for Basic Research (CBR)

Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP)

Departed Asians Property Custodial Board (DAPCB)

Domestic Relations Bill (DRB)

East African Community (EAC)

Entrepreneurship Training Program (ETP)

Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)

Hope After Rape (HAR)

Indian Association of Uganda (IAU)

Indian Women's Association (IWA)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Women's Organization (IWO)

Investment Promotion Agency (IPA)

Kabaka Yekka (KY)

Kampala Industrial Business Park (KIBP)

Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

Ministry of Financial Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED)

National Resistance Army (NRA)

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Non-Resident Indian (NRI)

Presidential Investors Round Table (PIRT)

Ramgharia Sikh Society (RSS)

Sanatam Dharma Mandir (SDM)

Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA)

Uganda Council of Women (UCW)

Uganda Investment Authority (UIA)

Uganda National Archives (UNA)

United Kingdom (UK)

United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF)

Uganda Women Christian Association (YWCA)

Uganda Women's Network (UWONET)

Chapter 1

Mapping Imperial Terrain in South-South Times

Introduction

In contemporary Uganda, scholarship on multi-racial societies and citizenship has, in large part, been foreclosed by the out-migration of settler populations through mass exodus or expulsion in the 1960s and 1970s. Through an analysis of the demise of the Ugandan Asian community and contemporary South Asian presence in Uganda, however, I argue that a mode of recognition and inclusion for new communities of South Asians is emerging, a model of “Southern citizenship” that relies upon both national and transnational frames of analysis. In doing so, this dissertation analyzes processes of Ugandan Asian and South Asian re-integration and community-making in contemporary Uganda, historical transformations in conceptualizations of minority citizenship in Uganda, and the contemporary politics of multi-racial African societies in the context of (seemingly) more liberal forms of African and global governance. Ultimately, the dissertation analyzes the possibilities and limits of African-Asian relations under “South-South” conditions in post-expulsion Uganda.

New landscapes of recognition for South Asians rely on both old and new problems. First, renewed South Asian migration and re-integration into Uganda is a result of emerging geopolitical dynamics—namely, South-South economic cooperation between African and Asian countries. Thus, I show that the reincorporation of South Asian capital and bodies in the Ugandan nation-state relies on the construction of South Asians as economic investors and national “development partners” with the Ugandan state. This particular framing of South Asians is a departure from Africanization-era debates on Ugandan Indian presence in the nation, which understood Ugandan Indians to be self-interested and immoral saboteurs of Black African economic prosperity,

ultimately resulting in former President Idi Amin's launching of the "Economic War" against Indians and their expulsion from the country. In contrast, the state constructs contemporary South Asian businessmen as "reformed" and "modern" Indians and Pakistanis who represent a new era of governance in line with modern values of cross-racial cooperation, cosmopolitanism, neoliberal enterprise and progress.

Secondly, I show that the re-integration of South Asians in Ugandan national territory is characterized by securitization practices that animate state governance and circulate within and among Ugandan Asian and new South Asian communities. As the state seeks to maximize foreign investment from "Asian" investors, it also promises bodily (corporeal) security to racialized South Asian minorities, who wish to minimize their economic and social risks and maximize their benefits under the current regime of governance. Thus, borrowing from Aihwa Ong's scholarship (1996), I demonstrate that South Asians are engaged in "flexible citizenship" practices, in which their choices and strategies to settle in or move on from Uganda are largely determined by global and economic criteria in which migrants maintain transnational networks of affiliation. In the Ugandan context, however, flexible citizenship practices among Ugandan Asians and new migrants are inflected by the historical politics of insecurity. Rather than flexible citizenship" practices, then, I explore the advent of "flexible securitization practices" among Ugandan Asian and South Asian communities in Uganda.

Ugandan Asian and South Asian community builders attempt to balance their own interests of long-term settlement in the country with the motivations of more transient migrants—all the while attempting to re-construct harmonious African-Asian relations in a post-expulsion context. Significantly, the new landscape and economy of South Asian recognition is differentiated across multiple scales of analysis: while South Asian investor-citizens are extremely visible in Uganda, recognized by the state and are able to accrue multiple rights and benefits, migrant South Asian women are largely invisible to larger Ugandan African publics, unrecognized by the legal regimes of the state, vulnerable to forms of intimate violence, and governed by colonial-era structures of racialized and communal governance.

In the pages that follow, I contextualize the contemporary moment of South-Southism in Uganda by excavating historical and anthropological approaches to the study

of South Asian presence and African-Asian relationships in Uganda. In doing so, I emphasize understandings of Uganda as a unique territorial space of both rootedness and flows of Ugandan Asian and South Asian people, commodities, capital, languages, and ideas—intersections of both settlement and mobility that have shaped the ways in which East Africans, both South Asians and Africans, have viewed their pasts, present conditions and possible futures. Before beginning my analysis of the past and present of South Asian inclusion and exclusion and the possibilities and limitations of African-Asian relations in Uganda, I move to the ethnographic origins of this study.

Journey to Mbarara Town

In 2010, I clambered upon a crowded bus from Kampala and traveled to Mbarara, a small town in southwest Uganda in the area known as Ankole (see Appendix IV). It was a grueling journey that could take anywhere from six to ten hours, even though I always made sure to board the yellow-colored “Swift Bus” from the bus park, which made fewer stops. I had made this journey for over a year now and the road was always in the process of construction, in different and disjointed sections. The contract for the road that connected Kampala and Mbarara had been awarded to an Italian multinational company. Occasionally one could see the overseers of the project in construction helmets as the bus drove by bucolic green landscapes. On this particular trip, the bus crawled along an interminable stretch of road. Heat and white clouds of dust wafted in through the windows on the over-crowded bus. As passengers, we could not decide whether it was better to shut the windows or let the dry air billow in. The woman next to me covered the small baby on her lap with a handkerchief. I covered my face with my scarf and sunglasses. As layers of white dust pelted our faces, a young man shouted, “*kati tufuuka bazungu*” (“we are all becoming whites now” in Luganda). Peals of laughter reverberated through the bus.

I was traveling in order to spend time with an African-Indian Sikh family who had lived in Mbarara for several generations. I was friends with the niece of the family, and I was now forming a relationship with her extended family in hopes of learning about the South Asian experience after the 1972 expulsion of Asians during Idi Amin’s

governance. Initially, this task proved difficult. Sahib Uncle¹ and Rani Aunty, who were brother and sister, were hesitant about sharing information with me and did not speak openly about their experiences, past or present. I felt uncomfortable about being an anthropologist among them. My presence and my gaze felt intrusive. It felt much easier to slide into a familiar routine of being part of a family and accepting the fact that there were some matters that families did not discuss.

Despite these challenges, traveling to Mbarara after time spent in busy Kampala was always a relief. Rani had been born in the family home, which was a strongly built structure that had both Swahili and Indian architectural elements to it. An ornate gate protected the inside of the compound, which, in addition to the family house, contained an adjoining flat where Rani's nephew and his wife slept. Car parts were strewn about the yard. Large banana, mango, and lemon trees surrounded a circular cement sitting area, where the men of the house had greeted visitors and cooked *nyama choma* (roast meat) in the old days. Upon entering the front door, a *sigari* (charcoal stove) was usually cooking *chapati* and the evening meal. Four rooms fell away from the center space, which was open to the sky and stars. All of this felt comfortable and familiar to me. Unlike in Kampala, I always slept peacefully on a narrow bed in one of the rooms. A Ugandan artist's rendering of Rani and Sahib's deceased younger brother, killed during ex-President Milton Obote's second term in the early 1980s, and a picture of Guru Nanak (a Sikh religious figure) adorned the wall facing my bed.

I soon assumed the position of a daughter in the family, contributing to household activities like preparing tea and taking long walks in the evening with the other women of the house. Soon, Rani Aunty began to send me on errands. A new *giani* (Sikh priest) had just moved into the *gurudwara* in town from Tanzania. She did not completely trust him, and often asked me to stop by the *gurudwara* to meet him and report back to her. In the process of this give and take, I began to build close relationships with Rani and the rest of the family. Slowly but surely, we developed an intimate understanding of each other. And in quiet and unexpected moments, Sahib Uncle would relate stories to me about the

¹ In this text, I have changed all identifying information and real names into pseudonyms in order to protect the identities and privacy of my interlocutors. Unless they are public figures, all real names have been changed into pseudonyms. I have also received permission from individuals who are presented in photos to publish them in this text.

family and his past. Despite all this, Rani and Sahib never offered me a standard chronological account of their experiences of the expulsion. Their apprehensions of their past and present experiences were always communicated in a disjointed manner that I struggled to fashion together into a meaningful narrative.

While living with this family for several weeks over a two-year research period, I began to meet long-term Ugandan residents of the town. I wanted some deeper knowledge of Ugandan African perspectives on South Asian presence and new migration to the region. *Wazee* (elderly men, Swahili) discussed their memories of both the colonial era and the many experiments in national governance that followed. They knitted these larger events with intimate details of their lives in town when Indians and Africans lived in apprehensive co-existence with each other. They also remembered when *bahindi bagenze* (when Indians went away in Luganda).

The town librarian, Patrick Tumwine, had recently introduced me to Mzee Kaishaijja, an elderly Munyankole who had moved to the town in the 1960s. One day, Mzee, wearing a large cowboy hat and driving a truck, stopped us in town and invited us to his home. We arrived at a cozy, well-kept residence in an area of the town known as "BOMA," indicating the former European colonial presence. Mzee's home, like most retired civil servants or businessmen in the area, evoked an aesthetic of "American Western-bourgeois." Polished tables were adorned with doilies and framed photographs. The walls were decorated with ornate photo frames with Mzee's ancestors and children, the *Omugabe* (King) of the Kingdom of Ankole, the Anglican Archbishop of Uganda, and several important independence-era political figures.

After offering both Patrick and myself sodas and bananas, Mzee began to offer his view on *abahindi mu town* (the Indians in town). He spoke English, but found it easier to express himself in Runyankole. Patrick offered translations as I sat across from the men and took notes. When I asked him what he thought about new South Asian migrants in the country and in the town, he responded quickly. "The new ones are in business, working for other Indian companies, trading in iron, mineral water, things like this. But slowly, slowly, they see opportunity here and start their own businesses. But you see, they are not just milking the country, the President is also milking them." Patrick turned to me and explained that new immigrants were useful for the President: they might

make money, and they even compete with Africans in petty business.” Mzee Kashaiija then took out another piece of paper, neatly drawing the main roads of Mbarara. On his drawing, he added every single colonial-era Indian commercial property with their address numbers, including religious sites. He proceeded to discuss the Ugandans who were given properties after *abahindi abagenze* (“the Indians went away” in Runyankole). In the process of talking and drawing, Mzee showed me that he had a clear understanding of the historical impact of the expulsion. This was not a “colonial nostalgia” for the past, but rather he offered an important declension narrative about the loss of an ordered system of African-Asian trading relations that had once functioned in Ankole.

My experiences with Rani Aunty, Sahib Uncle, and Mzee Kashaiija in Mbarara offer two important openings to this thesis. The first is that this writing emerges squarely from many challenges during fieldwork: an “ethnographic refusal” to discussing the events of the past by many South Asians and others affected by Africanization policies and the expulsion in East Africa, my sense that my anthropological gaze was intrusive, and the challenges of penetrating the inner space of African-Asian relations beyond public narratives of post-expulsion racial harmony in Uganda. I came to understand, with time, that it was important to be patient, and that information unfolded in cycles of clarity (as in the case of Mzee Kashaiija); and at other times in subtle ways (as in the case of Sahib). My second surprise was the intensely intimate knowledge that the elders of Mbarara possessed about the Asians that had once lived in their town. Over several years of travel to Uganda, the expulsion of Asians was discussed in curt and perfunctory terms, in many different languages. Most of my interlocutors briefly mentioned Idi Amin and the time when he “chased the Indians away,” or when “*Amin ne saanu pajatha [kadtha] si*” (when Amin chased us away in Punjabi) or “*jado apa Uganda nu shadtha si [baar nikalgay]*” (or “when we left Uganda” in Punjabi). I wondered if I had moved past these descriptions of the event, and was beginning to access something deeper. Upon returning to Ann Arbor from fieldwork, I realized that many of the challenges I encountered were ultimately related to the unfinished business of the expulsion event.

Unfinished Business: Post-Expulsion Uganda

In October 1972, President Idi Amin addressed the Ugandan nation via public address and announced his intention to expel all Asians within 90 days.² The expulsion announcement arrived after a series of trade licensing, import, and immigration restrictions aimed at the Indian commercial class during the Milton Obote administration.³ Obote's "Move to the Left" campaigns had nationalized the private assets of major Indian agro-processing family firms (Ahluwalia 1995, Twaddle 1975). Affected by economic censures, anti-Asian violence, and a heightening sense of social insecurity, Ugandan Indians were leaving Uganda and Kenya in large numbers, pending restrictions on their immigration to the United Kingdom by the British government. As a Ugandan Asian friend described to me in Kampala in 2011, a "mini-exodus" of Indians from Uganda to the UK was underway as early as 1969.⁴

The forum in which Amin launched his "Economic War" against South Asians, the "Asian Conference," was another decisive blow against the future of South Asian political, social, and economic life in Uganda. At the conference, which occurred on December 8th, 1971, General Amin addressed community leaders in a speech that described Asians' economic sabotage of Africans, their unwillingness to integrate with African society, and the lack of "Indo-African" unions, especially marriages between Indian women and African men (Amin 1972, O'Brien [Tandon]1972). That same year, Amin's call for all Asians to register and verify their official citizenship status with the Immigration Board in Uganda was another ominous step in the process of identifying and ultimately excluding the Indian minority from Uganda.

At the time of Amin's expulsion decree about 55,000 Asians lived in Uganda and began to make their arrangements to leave the country.⁵ Non-citizens (in the juridical, legal sense) were the first to leave, followed by Ugandan citizens, who thought they

² The Immigration (Amendment) Decree, Decree No. 30. October 5th, 1972. The decree was aimed at all Asians from one of "the four scheduled countries of UK, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh." See Read (1975:201).

³ Trade (Licensing) Act, 1969 and Immigration Act, 1969. See Read (1975:199-200) for more information.

⁴ Interview with Saira, Kampala 2011. Many Ugandan Asians would provide alternate readings of the temporality of expulsion that contrast scholarly interpretations of this historical event. Here, the expulsion was rendered as more of a protracted event than one that took place over three months.

⁵ Personal communication with Dr. Vali Jamal, August 2011. The total Asian population in Uganda increased dramatically over the course of the 20th century (5,000 in 1921; 14,150 in 1931; 35,215 in 1948; and 71,933 in 1959). The Asian population was 74,308 in 1969, approximately 0.73% of the total population in Uganda at this time (Read 1975:193).

would be able to stay behind based on their formal citizenship status (Lalani 1997, Mamdani 1973). The expulsion, however, was generalized to an entire racialized population of Asians, regardless of their citizenship status.⁶ Communal and religious sites were transformed into refugee processing centers as Ugandan Indians flooded into Kampala in order to be handled by the British High Commission and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). British passport holders and “stateless” Ugandan Indians were transported by air to a number of destinations.⁷ Indian citizens, on the other hand, traveled by East African rail and steamship back to India.

On November 9th, 1972, General Amin’s official deadline for Asians’ exit from Uganda, an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 individuals were still within national borders.⁸ The majority of this population was the impoverished and isolated, living in remote regions far from the central region of Buganda. They filtered out gradually over the next few years, many crossing the Uganda-Kenya border as soldiers dispossessed them of businesses and homes in early 1973. Others left out of fear: it is documented that Amin pronounced several threats against Asians if they did not leave.⁹ Significantly, some individuals would become bureaucratic “exceptions” to the expulsion process. Close to 500 South Asians lived in Kampala at various points throughout the Amin regime (1971-1979).¹⁰ A diverse set of ethnic, religious, sectarian, and caste identities and positionalities characterized this group of Asians who remained behind.¹¹ An estimated 150 of this group continue to live in Uganda today.

In the process of fieldwork, I learned that the contemporary demography of South Asians includes "Ugandan Asians" (a local term referring to those who remained in the country and those who returned from exile), mixed-race African-Indians, new South Asian economic migrants, and investors and entrepreneurs from major Indian

⁶ In my interviews, it has become clear that Arabs in Uganda left during the expulsion as well. Interview with Morde Mwerinde, Kampala, 18 January 2010.

⁷ See Lalani (1997:164-177) for a complete description of the transport of Asian refugees into temporary and permanent settlements in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA. See Adams (1974a; 1974b; Adams et al. 1978, Kuepper 1975, Mamdani 1973) for more on the settlement of Ugandan Asian refugees in the UK.

⁸ Personal communication with Dr. Vali Jamal, Kampala, 15 June 2011.

⁹ Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, 15 February 2011.

Interview with Lalbhai, Mbarara, 15 April 2010.

¹⁰ Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, 15 February 2011.

¹¹ I return to the social composition of the community that remained in Chapter 3.

multinational corporations. Indeed, an estimated 2,000 Ugandan Asians now live in the country, but are outnumbered by close to 30,000 new South Asian migrants, largely from India, Pakistan, and other localities of mobile South Asian populations in the Indian Ocean littoral, such as Dubai.¹² This upwardly mobile class of laborers, petty traders, and entrepreneurs constitute the new generation of post-expulsion South Asians in Uganda. While many originate from Gujarat and Punjab (historical locations of South Asia to East Africa migration), new migrants represent a multiplicity of ethnic and linguistic groups from other regions of India and Pakistan (see Appendix II for a list of post-1990s South Asian communal groups in the country.) Significantly, this new South Asian presence in the nation is intimately tied to the politics of South-Southism and renewed economic and diplomatic ties between South Asia and Uganda.

Thus, the major social boundary constructed among South Asians in Uganda is that of *diasporic orientation*—which translates into two very different *communities* in Ugandan territorial space. While Ugandan Asians originated from British India, became East African Asians, and experienced the violence of Africanization, de-Indianization, expulsion, and displacement during the high nationalist period in East Africa, South Asian “newcomers” derive from a post-1947 (post-Partition) South Asian context. Thus, diasporic orientation, historical experience, identity and class are the most significant social boundaries between Ugandan Asians (also known as Ugandan Indians) and new South Asian economic migrants. (See Chapter 2, Figure 10, for a regional map of these two diasporic communities in contemporary Uganda.)

Within each of these two diasporic communities, communal divisions based on religion, ethnicity, language, and caste are important social boundaries. Thus, multiple South Asian communities, disaggregated and decentralized into many social groups, exist in present-day Uganda. As I discuss further, in contrast to the heterogeneity of South Asians in contemporary Uganda, the Ugandan state and many Ugandans themselves engage in processes of racially and ethnically unifying and homogenizing all South Asians into the category of “Asians” or *bahindi*.

¹² Personal communication with Rajni Tailor, Kampala, 15 November 2008.

Why were South Asians in Uganda, especially after the vexed history of African-Asian relations and the expulsion? Some commentators have argued that, “the trauma of the wholesale expulsion from Uganda...had stamped out any hope for a long-term future [for Asians] in Africa” (Balachandran 1981:317). At the time of my research, very little had been written about the emerging South Asian population, or even about the contemporary South Asian experience in East Africa (Abidi 1996, Asiimwe 2010, Balachandran 1981). How were processes of South Asian re-incorporation in post-expulsion Uganda taking place? What were the social and economic processes of migration that compelled Ugandan Asians and South Asians to settle in Uganda? What were the modes by which they were being recognized and included by the state and the current regime of governance? How might a new South Asian population, largely composed of those who had not experienced the violence of expulsion, reconstruct communities and a relationship with the state, especially given the historical experience of “failed citizenship” in the past?¹³ Was it possible to tether Uganda’s engagement with imperial and colonial processes and decolonization and its aftermath, to processes of South Asian re-integration? Or was this a second phase of migration that required a completely different set of analytic tools? What were the possibilities and limits of African-Asian relations in contemporary Uganda?

The 1972 expulsion of Indians from Uganda continues to be a controversial subject of ongoing debate and interpretation by the East African intelligentsia, Ugandan Asians in the diaspora, and Ugandan Africans. This is not surprising, given the “unfinished business” that surrounds the event. The status of Ugandan Asians and South Asians in President Yoweri Museveni’s Uganda remains ambiguous. Although Museveni officially invited displaced Ugandan Asians to return to the country in 1994, he did so without an official restitution of formal and national citizenship.¹⁴ Rather, the President asked former Ugandan Asians to retrieve their assets—the homes, businesses, commercial estates and farms, and religious and communal sites—that had been

¹³ I borrow the term “failed citizenship” from May Joseph (1999). This notion of failing citizenship could be something unique to the East African Asian experience, which I will explore in more depth in the thesis.

¹⁴ Other presidents, such as Milton Obote and Yusuf Lule, encouraged Ugandan Asians to return as well. President Museveni, however, systematically enforced the re-appropriation and handover of properties back to returning Asians and Ugandan Asians in the Western diaspora.

possessed from them by Idi Amin's government in 1973.¹⁵ Most Ugandan Asians in the diaspora did not come back. Some individuals who remained were able to repossess their properties on their behalf, becoming major real estate tycoons in the city. However, many Ugandans continue to live in, own, or rent former Ugandan Indian properties; some were given homes and managed to retain them over years of political instability and violence.

Despite the important role that the return of private property back to expelled Ugandan Asians has played in rectifying the violence of the expulsion, there continues to be a sense that an abrupt and violent event occurred that left permanent scars on the country. In a physical sense, some of my interlocutors described that they felt a foreboding feeling of heaviness in Kampala. Bhavani, a close British Asian friend of mine who had recently moved to the country with her family from the UK, often observed and relayed her feelings to me in Kampala. On several trips that we took from Kampala to Jinja together, she remarked on the heaviness that she felt when we traveled past Namanve Forest or visited Bujagali Falls. Both sites were the former dumping grounds for Ugandans who had been killed during Idi Amin's regime.

Likewise, on my many trips to Jinja over the years, a former colonial Indian trading center and town, both Ugandan Africans and Asians expressed feelings of loss and decline when observing the ruins of former Indian residences. Indeed, the consequences of the expulsion are reflected in visual registers. The debris of old Indian homes, shops, and religious sites litter the countryside—as if a living museum of colonial era African-Asian life continues to exist alongside the temporality of the new regime. These structures dot the landscapes of the municipal colonial towns outside of Buganda. Traveling by bus to rural district towns, I took countless photos of what is commonly referred to as “Departed Asian Property.” Religious iconography can be seen on the *dukan* (shops) and *makan* (houses) of former Ugandan Asians. Most have an Indian aesthetic that signifies the class positions of various ethnic and religious communities in the colonial era. They now elicit a phantasmic character signifying a “ghost community”

¹⁵ Expropriated Properties Act, Cap. 87. Related to this, some Ugandan Asian community leaders continue to demand recompense from the Ugandan government for money that has allegedly been “eaten” by NRM political elites. According to their claims, the funds should have been distributed to working Indian families who lost their assets (homes and shops) in the expulsion crisis.

that is now gone, a vivacious Indian social, cultural, religious and economic life that once existed in tension with, yet side-by-side African societies and cultures.



Figure 2: A Ugandan Asian “ruin” in Jinja town. Photo by author, 22 May 2010.



Figure 3: Religious iconography on a former Ugandan Indian property. Photo by author, Jinja, 22 May 2010



Figure 4: A freshly painted Ugandan Indian property next to one in decline. Photo by author, Jinja, 22 May 2010.

The unfinished business of the expulsion, of course, is also related to the memorialization of General Idi Amin. Idi Amin Dada's death in exile in Saudi Arabia in 2007, for instance, sparked a series of editorials and newspaper columns on the legacy of Amin, his descendants, and the expulsion of Indians in Ugandan national papers.¹⁶ That same year, Ugandans watched in wonder as they observed "Idi Amin" (actor Forest Whitaker, in eerie likeness) filming Gilles Foden's *The Last King of Scotland* in Kampala. The association of Idi Amin with the expulsion of Asians from Uganda remains

¹⁶ "On the Road to Economic Collapse: How Money Followed the Asians out of Uganda." *The Monitor*, 18 August 2003.

"Expelled Asians React to Amin's Death." *Sunday Monitor*, 17 August 2003.

"Indians Speak Out on Amin." *The New Vision*, 23 July 2003.

"Indian Returnees Happy with Uganda." *The New Vision*, 15 August 2003.

deeply ingrained as a national and world-historical event for both citizens and exiled or expelled diasporans.

Following the organization of reunions by ex-Ugandan Asians and Ugandans in Canada and the UK, a 40th anniversary of the Ugandan Asian expulsion and a reunion is scheduled to take place in Kampala, followed by a similar commemoration of the event to be hosted by the House of Lords in London in 2013. Diasporic East African Asians frequent Facebook groups, blogs, and websites devoted to commemorating the “*dukanwalla* of East Africa” and the exodus of Asians from Central and East Africa during the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁷ Recent autobiographical and popular history writing by expelled Ugandan Asians illustrate the desires of a generation of retired “ex-Ugandan Asians” to channel their nostalgia for East African memories and attain a sense of closure with the violent events of the past (Jamal n.d., Lalani 1997, Madhvani and Foden 2008, Moghal 2010, Singh 2013). And of course, film director Mira Nair’s (1991) *Mississippi Masala* portrayed the expulsion of Jay and his family from Uganda—as well as the African-Asian love affair between Meena and Demetrius in America (actors Sarita Choudhury and Denzel Washington). The film described the struggles of the next generation of East African Asians to overcome intersecting struggles of race, class, culture, gender, and sexuality.¹⁸


The material debris of ruins on the Ugandan landscape, artistic expression in the form of fiction and film, and diasporic practices of memory making and nostalgia—all of this suggests the ongoing reverberations of the expulsion event in Uganda and its transnational diasporas. In order to understand the relationship between the unfinished business of the expulsion event and the possibilities of contemporary re-integration of Ugandan Asians and South Asians, it became necessary to excavate the origins of the concept of citizenship and its relation to the Indian minority in Uganda. It is to these questions that I turn to in the following three sections.

¹⁷ Examples include “The New Wahindi” (<http://wahindi.wordpress.com/the-new-wahindi/>), “Namaskar Africana” (<http://namaskar-africana.com/forum.php?s=d9b001ed2fd405bd2f7d2a37b30fde01>) and “Awaaz.” (www.awaazmagazine.com).

¹⁸ In her film, Nair asks her audience to query “Blackness” in the diaspora, exploring the forms of cross-racial alliances that East African Asian diasporans would establish outside of the African continent.

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Figure 5: A recent advertisement (circulated via email) for a Ugandan Reunion Event in Kampala. The event is designed to target ex-Ugandan Asians in the West, as well as other sources of investment and tourism capital. Source: Email communication from Hon. Rajni Tailor, 28 September 2011.

Foundations of "Citizenship": Imperial Formations

Normative conceptions of citizenship are typically associated with Eurocentric notions of modernity, liberalism, and progress. They usually evoke the spatial grids of territories and nation-states, ideas of autochthony and belonging to a territory and abstract political entity that has exclusive and well-defined membership, and an implicit contract between an abstract, idealized state and its citizens. Finally, it may refer to a juridical or legal status that provides certain rights, benefits, and privileges to individuals. In the following three sections, however, I provide an understanding of conceptualizations of citizenship in African studies in relation to Indians and Africans in Uganda. The terrain of citizenship is slightly different here, and it is especially complex in light of the Indian experience in Uganda.

In British East Africa, conceptions of "citizenship" must be traced to the imperial era. Scholars have argued that colonies were based on racial and ethnic distinctions that justified different standards of living between the rulers and ruled. For example, distinctions between "settlers" and "subjects" provided the criteria by which rights were allocated or denied (Mamdani 1996). Civilizational and racial criteria not only determined the political rights of individuals, but also basic issues such as the right to hold land and the freedom of movement. In British East Africa, for example, Indians occupied a "middle role" in which they were unable to possess freehold land as Europeans did, but were much more mobile and economically prosperous than Africans.

Significantly, African and Indian elites, entrepreneurs, and intellectuals responded to their lack of rights by taking up European ideologies of citizenship and mobilizing the *language of citizenship* in their efforts to claim equal membership within an abstract concept of European civilizational modernity from which they had been denied. They did so by mobilizing a wide variety of political and cultural projects. For instance, individuals engaged in Pan-Africanist and negritude political projects would mobilize citizenship claims based on racial equality for recognition and participation within the grids of colonies and metropolises. Colonized subjects also leveled these claims in broader imperial terrains—those imagined spaces of collective struggle where solidarities and alliances with other oppressed people could be forged. For example, "imperial

subjecthood" for Africans and Indians in the British Empire entailed subversive claims for the full entitlements of humanity enshrined within abstract conceptions of "imperial citizenship" (Banerjee 2010, Gikandi 1996). These claims were couched within the idioms of imperial cultures, often valorizing and reproducing ideal Victorian colonial subjects. Often, for example, British Indian subjects mobilized projects that allowed them to claim and participate within a distinct "Indian" civilizational modernity on par with, yet different from Europeans, creating further distance between "African" and "Indian" civilizations and cultures in the imperial domain.

In the Uganda Protectorate, urban personalities within the Baganda royalty and Indian "trader-turned-tycoons," would subvert colonial policies that attempted to fix them within spaces of territorial and political confinement, occupational hierarchy, and fixed racial, ethnic, and communal collectivities and hierarchies. Ham Mukasa's (1998) autobiography, *Uganda's Katikiro in England*, and Nanji Kalidas Mehta's (1966) autobiography, *Dream Half-Expressed*, illustrate the ways that colonized subjects crisscrossed imperial spaces through the modality of travel. Both individuals utilized practices of mobility, access to education, universal religious and ethical subjectivities, and economic enterprise as key tactics of imperial subversion and modes of self-representation, fulfillment and sovereignty (Gikandi and Mukasa 1998, Mehta 1966).

Indeed, integrating historians' recent work on "imperial citizenship" is especially important for our understanding of former British East Africa. "Imperial citizens" could make claims on both the colony and the metropole. Therefore, if Indian subjects could claim that they were citizens of the Empire, they ostensibly would be able to pursue the same sorts of political rights and economic opportunities as other subalterns within imperial geographies. As Banerjee (2010) observes, despite the relative privileges of Indians in relation to other colonized people in a variety of geographic contexts, Indians would never be able to attain equal status with Europeans.

The notion of "imperial formations," is a useful framework for thinking about the expulsion event and its aftermath. I borrow this phrase from Mrinhalini Sinha, who, in her work, writes that the "imperial social formation" is "the preferred term for describing the modern society that we have inherited around the world" (2006:17). She suggests that it draws attention to 1) "the historical role of imperialism in assembling different

societies into a system of interdependencies and interconnections,” and 2) “the uneven effects produced by the simultaneous connection and distinctive constitution of different societies in a globally articulated imperial system” (Sinha 2006:17). This understanding of a “globally articulated imperial system” in Uganda captures the more protracted temporality of civilizational and racial inequality that characterizes African-Asian social and political relations in today's East Africa. Ann Laura Stoler, likewise, considers the relationship between the "imperial" formation and the allocation of rights among different populations in the territory of the modern-day nation-state. She writes, “the emphasis shifts from fixed forms of sovereignty and its denials [in Europe], to gradated forms of sovereignty and what has long marked the technologies of imperial rule—sliding and contested scales of differential rights. Imperial formations are defined by racialized allocations and appropriations” (Stoler 2008:193). In post-imperial and post-colonial Uganda, South Asians benefited from the racial hierarchies and partial rights and opportunities afforded them in the context of larger imperial processes.

It is significant to note the material and legal dimensions of “imperial citizenship,” or the “imperial social formation.” In the Uganda Protectorate, Africans and Indians were considered to be “British Protected Persons,” (BPP) a formal category of citizenship that was close to, but not quite like being a “British Subject” in the British Empire. British Protected Persons were "governed by what was applied as customary law, rules largely not written down but interpreted by the colonial courts on the basis of 'native' interlocutors" (Manby 2009:27). For example, Indian BPP had rights to travel to India and Great Britain, as long as they could obtain a British passport. African BPP, on the other hand, had much less access to mobility in the Uganda Protectorate. As Uganda neared independence, British Protected Persons would have to choose between becoming Ugandan citizens of the new nation or British citizens.

The relative mobility of Indians across British imperial geography, especially in the interwar and post-war periods, would have major consequences for the inclusion and exclusion of East African Asians from national territories in the post-colonial period. Great Britain responded to the increase of migration flows from its colonies, dominions, and possessions by passing the 1948 Nationality Act, which radically limited the terms by which British Subjects and British Protected Persons could claim membership, residence,

and other rights in Britain (Read 1975). This legal mode of exclusion would have profound consequences for the limited scope of a homeland for East African Asians in the decades following Ugandan independence.

Dictators, Decrees, and the Making of Non-Citizens

The modern concept of “citizenship” manifested itself most profoundly in scholarly debates and popular discussions about the possibility of non-indigenous minority populations integrating into new African nation-states; most significantly, in Tanzania (Tanganyika and Zanzibar), Kenya and Uganda.¹⁹ The proliferation of scholarship surrounding what is framed as “the Asian Question” in East Africa grew exponentially during political leaders’ experiments with nation building after independence. At independence, heads of states designed the laws of nation-states to assert the equal rights of all “races” and “ethnicities.” As Manby observes, “new citizenship laws were adopted, largely based on models from the [European] power that had colonized them, but using the versions that had applied at home to their own full citizens, rather than in their colonies” (2009:5).

While Eurocentric citizenship laws were applied to newly independent nations, African political elites, recognizing the need to take ownership of their own economies and societies, devised and exercised a variety of political strategies to “de-racialize” centers of power. From the Indian perspective, the crisis turned around whether it was possible for an “Asian” to become an “African” in the new nation. Would Asians be able to claim a national identity on par with Africans, ultimately claiming the same rights and privileges? Or would the new African leadership seek to “level the playing field” by adopting explicit policies of Africanization and increasing opportunities for disenfranchised Africans? Contestations surrounding the future of Asian communities in new East African nations arose from ongoing ambiguities surrounding the sociological

¹⁹ Non-racial nationalist and socialist policies in Tanzania can be contrasted to the extremely violent processes of “Africanization” seen elsewhere in the region: “race-making,” exclusion, expulsion, and even extermination, such as in the context of the Zanzibar Revolution of 1967. Interestingly, the comparative dimensions of East African Asian and Arab citizenship are underexplored, particularly given Nyerere’s (initial) explicitly non-racialist policy towards Asians in Tanzania.

position of Indian themselves. Were Indians colonial “settlers” or “subjects”? If not European settlers, had they become the “visible” racialized settlers, especially in non-settler colonies like Uganda (as opposed to Kenya or Rhodesia)? Or, rather, as Mahmood Mamdani suggests, were Asians “subject races” like the Arabs of the Swahili Coast or the Tutsis of Rwanda (1996; 2001:651-664)? Finally, whether or not Asians were settlers or subjects in Uganda, would it ever be possible for them to become “natives” in the post-colonial context; i.e. would they ever be fully integrated or considered equal members of independent African polities (Ahluwalia 2001, Mamdani 1993; 2001)? And did they have a right to become fully accepted members, given the privileges that they had accrued in the colonial era?

Ultimately, Ugandan leaders and citizens viewed Indians as obstacles to racialized and economic equality. As the possibilities for Indian membership in post-colonial African societies closed, “Asians” were increasingly cast as anti-citizens. Citizenship laws were re-designed to exclude more recent Indian migrants from full citizenship rights, even if they might have had the right to naturalize as Ugandan citizens. Dual citizenship was prohibited and Indians were exhorted to take on Ugandan citizenship; they were considered to be suspicious interlopers if they retained their British passports. Moreover, the visible presence and wealth of the majority of Indians in the nation elicited Africanization campaigns that established homegrown “affirmative action” or “reservation” systems for Africans in civil servant positions, as well as the nationalization of Asian private assets. Finally, Indians were ultimately made "non-citizens" via former President Idi Amin's expulsion decree.

In Uganda, the expulsion crisis would lead to different migration trajectories for Asians who possessed different categories of formal citizenship. While some British Protected Persons (British passport holders) were able to gain entry to the UK before the expulsion decree, the British government was simultaneously instituting harsh quota systems that discriminated against the immigration of East African Asians to Europe (Read 1975). Asians who had become Ugandan citizens or were already Ugandan citizens became “stateless” refugees. Indian nationals were sent back to India. The experience of displacement, loss, and discrimination in other contexts outside of Uganda illustrated the ultimate fallacy of the Empire’s paternal (and pastoral) care of its

subjects—as well as the African post-colonial nation-state’s social contract with its former imperial “settler-subjects.”

Africanist scholars responded to the Asian citizenship crisis in East Africa by participating in a re-invigorated debate on national citizenship in East Africa. Curiously, scholarly analyses of the expulsion remained within a national frame, despite the fact that the event itself involved imperial processes of exclusion in East Africa and the United Kingdom. As the possibilities for a homeland for South Asians in East Africa closed, Great Britain simultaneously restricted its immigration laws, most significantly through the 1967 Commonwealth Immigrant Act, which profoundly limited the numbers of immigration vouchers allocated to Kenyan and Ugandan British visa and passport holders, British Protected Persons, and citizens of independent Uganda and Kenya. Indians, attempting to leave East Africa in the context of increasing economic and social insecurity, had nowhere to go (Humphrey and Ward 1974, Read 1975). In the Ugandan case, Indian subjects were “squeezed” by both “metropole” and “postcolony,” up to the very final moments of the UNHCR rescue operation in Kampala in 1972.

Scholarly interpretations of the imperial dimensions of the national citizenship crisis certainly attempted to correct analyses of the expulsion that suggested that it was a product of Amin’s decree only (Twaddle 1975). Despite this important scholarship and the international dimensions of the expulsion crisis, the fetish of the nation-state, and a concept of citizenship that remained tethered to the nation-state frame, proved itself powerful among analysts. Scholars interested in nation-state legal regimes and immigration law continued to assume that social and political protections were enshrined in concept of citizenship through constitutional law and the symbolism of legal documents.

Indeed, the bureaucratic dimensions of legal citizenship *were* significant in the new Ugandan nation. A range of material and symbolic forms, such as identification cards, work permits, licenses, passports, and birth certificates, were essential to identifying, racializing, recognizing, including and excluding the Ugandan Indian minority from the national community (see more in Chapter 3). After 1971, the proliferation of these bureaucratic forms in Idi Amin’s statecraft were all part of essential material and social processes of defining a particular Ugandan African social body and

political community.²⁰ Moreover, Idi Amin's expulsion decree indexed, in a Western sense, a "state of exception," or the suspension of formal and constitutional law for the purposes of national economic security and integrity (Agamben 2005).

Yet, material and bureaucratic technologies of exclusion, such as legal documents and decrees, are contradictory forms in the postcolony: they perform particular functions in their ability to verify and identify citizens and non-citizens, but they are also arbitrary signifiers. Legal documentation proved to have no valid discriminating power in itself, especially in regards to enshrining social and political protections for Ugandan and Indian citizen-subjects, both in Uganda and the imperial terrain. Rather than a more systematic analysis of European colonial violence, African political formations, and the role of "Western mimicry" (Babha 1994) in the formation of violent dictatorial regimes in Africa, two major assertions characterized most scholarship on the expulsion of Asians: 1) an expansive literature that dealt with the violence and barbarity of Idi Amin and his dictatorship and 2) assumptions that social and political rights were naturally enshrined in post-colonial African constitutional law. For years to come, for example, scholars continued to debate whether or not the "decree" was a violation of international human rights law (Bonee n.d., Chivers 1985, Read 1975).

Interestingly, African and Indian writers were not interested in juridical citizenship at all. They would explore the social processes of violence and exclusion inherent within imperial and nationalist conceptions of formal and juridical citizenship (Alibhai-Brown 2008; 1997, Mamdani 1973, O'Brien [Tandon] 1972, Tejani 1974). The fiction writing of these authors, loosely based on the events of expulsion and displacement, explored the more subjective processes of imperial and national exclusion and alienation in both African and European contexts. Ugandan Asian writers explored their experiences of being "shuttled" around the world, emphasizing imperial geographies of exclusion beyond Uganda. Creative writing accomplished this in more effective ways than academic scholarship (Ahmed 1997, Dawood 2001, Isegawa 2004, Naipaul 1997, Naipaul 1979, Nazareth 1972; 1991, Siddiqi 2006, Vassanji 2003).

²⁰ It is important to note that other expulsions of African "non-citizens" occurred in Uganda's post-colonial period. Both Banyarwanda and the Kenyan Luo community were expelled during Milton Obote's governance; Idi Amin also expelled the Jewish population from Uganda prior to the Asian population (after his relations with Israel deteriorated).

Post-Cold War Africanist Scholarship and the Concept of Citizenship

Anthropologists, historians, and gender studies scholars have recently contributed to a more intensive re-thinking of conceptualizations of citizenship and its attendant categories of “public sphere,” “civil society,” “citizen,” and “state” in both Western and Africanist contexts. In doing so, scholars utilize key frameworks for the exploration of citizenship: typically, the legal and constitutional grids of nations, republics, and democracies. Thus, studies of citizenship often follow one of two general trends: studies of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality that may overlap with the study of the nation and nationalism; or studies of citizenship that may explore rights, duties, or claims made by individuals and collectivities in relation to nation-states (Canning 2006:15). Much recent work in citizenship studies in Euro-American contexts is aimed at critiquing T.H. Marshall’s classic model of citizenship rights based on Western democracies, which posits the progressive acquisition of rights, parallel to the advance of modernity (Canning 2006:16). In scholarship on Europe and North America, anti-racist and feminist critiques of citizenship have labored to dismantle Eurocentric models of democratic citizenship rather than assembling alternative paradigms or models (Asad 1993; Gilroy 1987; Singh 2004). These critiques have excavated the contradictions between the universal and particular, identity and difference, nation and community, minority and individual.

In addition, feminist scholars have differentiated between citizenship as a legal status and a lived social practice—emphasizing the fact that not only formal citizens, but also those excluded from citizenship rights have taken up languages of citizenship in order to stake claims upon governments, states and national collectivities. Thus, Kathleen Canning writes that expanding “the notion of citizenship to encompass a ‘politics of desire’ ...underscore[s] that citizenship is more than a legal or national category of belonging, but also a subject position that encapsulates specific, historically inflected, cultural and social assumptions about similarity and difference” (2006:17). Most recently, new scholarship on citizenship studies in Europe and North America has begun to construct alternative models for considering the exclusionary social experience (non-citizenship) of immigrants and minorities in democratic societies. Damani Partridge’s

work, for example, has developed a model of “exclusionary incorporation” to understand contradictory processes of inclusion and exclusion for Afro-Germans and African and Turkish migrants in post-1989 Germany (2012; 2008).

While anti-racist and feminist scholars of citizenship studies have begun to develop new models of citizenship and "non-citizenship" that encompass the differentiated experiences of women, racial, and ethnic minorities in Western contexts; Africanist scholars have tended to emphasize the failures of democracy and the lack of a well-developed concept of citizenship in Africa. Scholars who critique this notion of "African lack" and the Eurocentric application of liberal and democratic citizenship models in Africa have explored the ways in which illiberal forms of “citizenship” flourished according to violent and racist colonial regimes. In colonial Africa, the violence of government operated not through “states of exception” (Agamben 2005) via the normative legal regimes of democratic (read: Western) political formations, but through “states of deferral,” or the racialized and illiberal allocation of rights, duties, and privileges across the urban and rural divides in Africa (Stoler 2008:193, see also Comaroff 2007, Diouf 2003, Hansen and Stepputat 2005, Mbembe 2001). These scholars critique Eurocentric applications of the concept of citizenship in Africa, emphasizing the subtle ways in which hegemonic Western power is reproduced when imperial and colonial violences are erased from analyses of citizenship.

After the end of the Cold War, Africanists began to reformulate their frameworks away from an emphasis on political economy to the study of governmentality. Influenced in large part by the Indian subaltern studies project, post-structuralism, the need to analyze the “failures” of African democracies, and the excesses of authoritarian regimes, these works sought to reframe both structure and agency by exploring new modalities of power, exclusion and subject-making. Here, “the political” was reframed to encompass a wide variety of cultural, social, and gendered phenomena. Scholars continued to celebrate the creativity and agency of African subjects in the context of neoliberal, disciplinary, and biopolitical forms of government. Yet even these new works produced divisions among scholars of post-colonial governmentality in Africa. The binary of “citizen” and “subject” (Mamdani 1996), for example, would produce dissent from those who proposed scrapping the modern terminology of citizenship in its entirety in their efforts to

emphasize historical, ethnographic, and linguistic studies of alternative African political formations and imaginaries. Thus, in recent years Africanists have explored national membership and belonging through ideas of moral community, writing and literacy, music and performance, education, and other dimensions of African social and cultural life (Askew 2002, Cheney 2007, Malkii 1995, Peterson 2004). Finally, the most radical critiques of the concept of citizenship were developed in tandem with a critique of the modernist project itself. African philosophers, for instance, through their explorations of the Black radical imagination, assess the possibilities of an autonomous African subjecthood liberated from the ontology of Western political formations and thought (Mbembe 2001a, Mudimbe 1988).

Recently, scholars have developed typologies of cultural, economic and political "identities" in response to the need to distinguish among different kinds of national or transnational membership in contemporary African polities and in the Sub-Saharan region *tout court* (Mamdani 2002). Indeed, the need to understand the processes by which populations are being variously included and excluded in polities is seen as increasingly vital by different types of entities: states, political leaders, NGOs, civil societies, academics. This was not only relevant during nationalist-era Africanization processes that expelled and displaced racial and ethnic groups, but even more so in the post-Cold War global order. African nations have adopted neoliberal economic reforms such that both transnational capital and migration are impeding the real and imagined boundaries of nation-states, redistributing rights and opportunities to elite urban populations and undermining the notion of a territorially bounded concept of national citizenship and social and economic rights for Africans. Thus, recent scholarship on African citizenship is concerned with heightening claims for autochthony among ethnic groups, suggesting that claims to "rootedness" in land itself have become the very "litmus test" of citizenship (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005, Geschiere 2009, Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 2010, Nyamnjoh 2006). In addition, divisions between scholars interested in the ongoing legacy of colonial rule and the structures of "neocolonialism," and anthropologists concerned with distinctly post-Cold War formations of sovereignty, governance, and human rights have produced further divisions in the study of citizenship in Africa (Englund 2006, Englund and Nyamnjoh 2004, Manby 2009, Mbembe 2003; 2001b, Nyamnjoh 2007).

I argue that all of the above scholarship suggests that there are three major stances on the use of the citizenship concept in African studies. The first is that the concept of citizenship has no analytic value because its application is Eurocentric and it does not speak to the lived experiences of Africans and other minority groups on the continent. The second is that conceptualizations of citizenship have analytic value, particularly when used in terms of "settler/citizen" and "subject" binary in order to understand the varied allocation of rights and privileges among African elites, communities, and other racialized minorities across the colonial and post-colonial rural and urban divide. The third is to develop a less rigid binary than "citizen" and "subject," using analytics that emphasize social, political, and economic processes of inclusion and exclusion based on studies of states and bureaucracies that allow scholars to analyze modes of power and governance in African polities.

The analysis that follows will attempt to explore processes of Ugandan Asian and South Asian migration and re-integration in Uganda by using the third approach, focusing primarily on detailed ethnographic method. Few of the studies discussed above have explored the multiple registers of the concept of citizenship (imperial, legal/judicial, social), nor its local-historical specificities or transformation over time. Only through ethnographic and historical analysis is it possible to document the emergence of new state and extra-state sovereignties, "citizens" and "non-citizens", or even new forms of political, social, and economic membership that do not reify the distinctions among them. Thus, in this dissertation, I argue that the experiences of South Asians in Uganda provides an opening into examining the complex registers of citizenship and the politics of South Asian presence over time. Moreover, one of my central motivations is to tether my analysis of South Asian migration and re-integration in Uganda to an analytics of security, developing a new trajectory for citizenship studies in Africa and anthropology.

South-Southism in Uganda: Theorizing African and Asian Citizenship

Recent anthropological scholarship on citizenship and sovereignty provides important analytical tools for understanding contemporary South Asian presence Uganda. Following processes of Black economic empowerment and Africanization across the

Continent, the Ugandan state is now re-inventing African-Asian relations in the context of deepening economic crisis, the effects of structural adjustment policies and emerging shifts in global sovereignty. As anthropologists have explored, shifts in global sovereignty have entailed neoliberal regimes of governmentality (Sassen 1996, Ong 2006; 1999), disciplinary and “control” societies (Hardt and Negri 2000, Deleuze 1995), and post-911 national security paradigms as forms of government (Butler 2006; 2010, Puar 2007). Since at least the mid-1980s, transnational institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, development aid banks and institutions, and transnational NGOs, have compromised the ability of African nation-states and political leaders to define the trajectories of their own economies and societies. In the context of this Western intervention (spanning a range of economic arrangements that benefit Euro-America, the influx of humanitarian aid, and militarization projects), the sovereignty of African nation-states is increasingly compromised. Yet at the same time, African nation-states have shored up their autonomy through new types of horizontal alliances with global entities that have emerged in the post-Cold War era. Indeed, social scientists such as Patrick Chabal and Jean-Paul Daloz (1999) observe that “Africa works,” meaning that urban political elites and governments are able to mobilize transnational resources, whether capital, labor, technology transfer to their benefit—at times reproducing the conditions that foster autocratic regimes and the undemocratic governance of Africans.

In post-1990s Africa, Uganda is enveloped in significant shifts in state sovereignty and political-economic organization, transformations that have dramatically changed state-society relationships in urban areas.²¹ In response to the increasing sanctions of Western governments, pressure from the Buganda establishment, and a shifting geopolitical landscape, President Museveni and state agents at government ministries such as the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), have formed new diplomatic relationships and trade alliances with Indian and Chinese governments in their effort to

²¹ I cannot argue the same for Uganda’s rural contexts, but I do suggest that there is a more biopolitical conception of “rural Ugandans” as a category and population. This conception originates within the global governance norms of supranational entities and the Ugandan state. As I discuss further in Chapter 4, Ugandan state sovereignty does not extend to national borders. Rather, multiple and contested zones of sovereignty constitute the nation (see also Jones 2009). This is often observed by urban Ugandans, who mentioned to me during my field research that, “the state is where the army is.” Nonetheless, urban state sovereignty in Buganda is strengthened by its horizontal alliances with both Western aid and development organizations and economic as well as diplomatic, political and economic alliances with Asian countries.

bring new resources into the nation and establish national and state autonomy from the West. Within the Ugandan context, two forms of government characterize urban state-society relationships: neoliberal economic governance and security-oriented governance. The new landscape of "Asian recognition" (both South Asians and Chinese) is linked to the market rationalities of neoliberal governmentality and the politics of President Yoweri Museveni's security state in contemporary Uganda—issues that I take up in further detail in Chapter 4.

As anthropologists in many different social and cultural contexts have observed, neoliberal investment regimes and the imperatives of global political economic norms have redefined the criteria for national membership, immigration policy, long-term residence, and the allocation of rights and opportunities to both formal citizens and non-citizens such as expatriates, investors, migrant laborers, and refugees. Aihwa Ong's (1999) innovative scholarship has explored the links between processes of social inclusion in nation-state contexts and market criteria by developing a nuanced understanding of "flexible citizenship" in Southeast Asia. Ong rethinks citizenship from a "bundle of rights" or a formal and juridical status. Instead, she writes, "the form and meaning of citizenship have been transformed by global markets and floods of skilled and unskilled workers crossing borders. Although citizenship is conventionally thought of as based on political rights and participation within a sovereign state, globalization has made economic calculation a major element in diasporan subjects choice of citizenship, as well as in the ways nation-states redefine immigration laws" (Ong 1999:112).

In her formulation, "flexible citizenship" refers "especially to the strategies and effects of mobile managers, technocrats, and professionals seeking to both circumvent and benefit from different nation-state regimes by selecting different sites for investments, work, and family relocation" (1999:113). As Ong observes, "such repositioning in relation to global markets...should not lead one to assume that the nation-state is losing control of its borders. State regimes are constantly adjusting to the influx of different kinds of immigrants and to ways of engaging global capitalism that will benefit the country while minimizing the costs" (1999:113). In her scholarship, she demonstrates how new populations are incorporated into nation-state contexts based on their possession of capital or other skill sets that are useful to entities both part of and beyond

the nation-state (like NGOs). Thus, citizenship is "unbundled" from a "bundle of rights." Rather, citizenship should be understood as a social process that shapes citizen-subjects according to behavioral and ethical expectations that are in line with global and neoliberal criteria (2006; 1999). In addition to Ong's work on "Asian Tiger countries" such as Malaysia and Singapore, anthropologists have explored this "capitalization of citizenship" and the strategies of "flexible citizens" in geographic contexts of intensive capital mobility such as Dubai (Kanna 2010).

I appropriate Ong's notion of "flexible citizenship" to analyze the situations of the new post-1990s "diaspora of globalization" from South Asia in the Ugandan context. While anthropologists have analyzed "flexible citizenship" in other capital-intensive arenas in Asia and the Middle East, they have yet to apply these same insights to the African context. Intensive capital flows and the migration of Chinese and South Asian migrants to Uganda are linked to shifting geopolitical dynamics that are re-defining the relationship between nations of the Global South.

The increasing economic and political intertwinement of countries of the Global South is analyzed by social scientists via the rubric of "South-South" alliances.²² The South-South framework legitimizes the presence of South Asians in Uganda to a greater extent than before. Thus, South Asian and African populations and their relationships to each other are produced within the intersections of geopolitical relations, state development projects, and futurist visions of an African modernity. In contemporary Uganda, the re-integration of South Asians in the country is intimately connected to a discursive construction of new African-Asian relationships that are part of an ideological project of South-Southism in Uganda. For example, by re-signifying the South Asian body politic as a historical and national good to Ugandans, the 21st century Ugandan state recasts the Africanization policies of Idi Amin and his 1970s Economic War against South Asians as impediments to an explicit program of multi-racial and (neo)liberal economic progress, modernity, and freedom.

²² A number of conferences on "South-Southism" have emerged in recent years. For example: "Redefining South-South Cooperation: Africa on the Centre Stage," a conference sponsored by the African Studies Department at the University of Mumbai, India between February 23rd-25th in 2008. New scholarship and academic knowledge production on South-Southism (see Chapter 2) has yet to explore the relationships among geopolitical developments, state sovereignty, and citizenship in local African contexts.

In Uganda, emerging South Asian presence, settlement, and economic enterprise does not rely on the historical restitution of formal citizenship surrounding the politics of the expulsion. Formal citizenship in the independence era, as evidenced by the expulsion, did not provide security, nor was it attached to a fundamental "bundle of rights" for Ugandan Indians in the nation. Emerging South Asian inclusion is not based on a formal and juridical notion of citizenship at all. Rather, South Asians are re-integrated back into Uganda based on their ability to bring capital with them, aiding in a process of foreign capital investment for national development (Chapter 4). In the process, all foreigners, whether Ugandan Asian returnees, elite investors or petty migrant traders, are racialized as "Asians" and discursively produced as "foreign investors" in the nation. Moreover, the "Asian foreign investor" is gendered male, producing a particular form of masculine citizenship that is recognized and valued while rendering the presence of South Asian women invisible. This flattening, or compression, of South Asian migrants into that of a masculine investor identity is the latest reconfiguration of "the Indian" in East Africa. Consequently, the possibilities for a multi-racial Uganda have both expanded and narrowed as both Africans and Indians are encouraged to "contribute to the nation" by conducting business enterprise and cultivating economic subjectivities. In turn, South Asians legitimize their presence in the nation by maximizing strategies that are in line with local and neoliberal criteria and that help them to gain racial and cultural acceptance in post-expulsion Uganda.

Race, Citizenship, and Security in Uganda

Beyond tracing the historical transformations in the lived experience of citizenship for Indians in Uganda and demonstrating the flexible citizenship practices of South Asian migrants, in this thesis, I also explore the relationships among race, security and citizenship in Uganda. Thus, I update Ong's notion of flexible citizenship by arguing that in Uganda, flexible citizenship practices, which are tied to the state's economic imperatives of South Asian re-integration into the nation, are characterized by securitization practices. Given the historical context of postcolonial exclusion and expulsion, South Asians in Uganda (both Ugandan Asians and new migrants), have

developed a number of strategies to help them shore up their sense of economic and social security in the nation without the protection of a legal citizenship with political and social rights that are enshrined in law.

In the chapters that follow, I show that South Asian re-integration in Uganda is a multiply-informed process, and that "security," as a multivalent sign and social process, has become the central register of post-1990s racial inclusion in East Africa. As a global social formation, post-911 reality, international policy, and national necessity, "security" is a powerful analytic from which to understand the dynamics of state sovereignty, governance, and citizenship. As Itty Abraham observes, the concept of "security" is a "traveling signifier" that has attached itself "to nearly every scale of human activity, from the individual to the international...from comestible (food security), natural (environmental security), financial (security/securities), and territorial (homeland security), to virtual (cyber security)...from Social Security to collective security, which is the principle behind the United Nations" (2009:22). He also argues that to understand the capacity of "security" to attach itself to many different phenomena, we must understand its "inseparable shadow": insecurity. Indeed, the expression of security always brings with it insecurity, which is contained in its meaning, and "fear and threat, danger and uncertainty are embedded in...the process of securing the object of (in)security" (Abraham 2009:22). Thus, security is "not a noun, but a verb...a continuous process of securing safety" (Abraham 2009:22).

Although we conventionally consider "security" in terms of national security, I show that, in its many registers, security is related to state sovereignty, governance, and processes of minority inclusion and exclusion in Uganda. First, I show that South Asians and Africans are governed by the capital-intensive imperatives of the Ugandan "neoliberal security state" (Chapter 4). The state promises to provide security for its citizens in order to shore up its sovereignty; it also provides security to foreigners in exchange for its resource base and the production of wealth. Furthermore, Asian re-integration (South Asian and Chinese investors, traders, and labor migrants) is rationalized by way of the need for private investment capital for national development, the *quid pro quo* being the security of foreigners' financial investments, bodies, and communities should they wish to settle in Uganda. Thus, South Asian migrants and

“Asian business” enjoy greater forms of visibility and official forms of state protection than in the past.

But other registers of security are at play here as well. If formal citizenship did not provide security for Ugandan Indians in the past, then how might foreigners ensure their security in a vulnerable state without a (Western) concept of formal citizenship as a guarantor of rights and protection? While the political leadership ensures the protection of its minority communities, in practice, the reality of post-expulsion Uganda is quite different. In Kampala, I show that affective economies of insecurity circulate among Ugandan Asian returnees and South Asian migrants. In the context of their ambiguous investor status in the nation, South Asians diversify formal citizenships within their own families, construct transnational families, partake in philanthropic practices and charitable causes, take up African partners in firms and small businesses, distribute capital to African politicians, and protect the bodies of visible and racialized Indians through community-based organizations and the institutions of community governance. Moreover, as new economic migrants travel to East Africa, they depend on the historical knowledge and experience of Ugandan Asian community leaders and long-term residents for social and political protection. Ethnographic and historical evidence provide evidence for these practices—practices that I describe as “flexible securitization practices”—and their relationship to South Asian presence in Uganda, both past and present (see Chapters 3, 4, and 5). Thus, the “politics of insecurity,” and its twin, “security,” are the central analytics I use to understand South Asian presence in Uganda.

While I am concerned with the connections between South Asians and Africans through the analytics of citizenship and security, I also explore relations of verticality and dissent between the two populations. Thus, while recent shifts in global political economy and sovereignty have allowed for new possibilities of South Asian migration and re-integration in East Africa, this is a social and economic process that is taking place in a “post-expulsion” context. While conducting fieldwork, Ugandan African and Ugandan Asian individuals discussed both the optimistic possibilities of African-Asian futures and more cynical interpretations of the new moment, focusing specifically on the “unfinished business” of the expulsion. Indeed, borrowing from Ann Laura Stoler’s discussion of ruination in post-colonial contexts, “the charge is to refocus on the

connective tissue that continues to bind potentials to degraded environments, and degraded personhoods to the material refuse of imperial projects. At issue is the political life of imperial debris, the longevity of structures of dominance, and the uneven pace with which people can extricate themselves from the colonial order of things."(2008:193). In post-expulsion Uganda, both old and emergent forms of state sovereignty and social organization orient populations within hierarchical relations of inequality, often reproducing historical problems of racial and gendered difference and exclusion. The tempo of neoliberal progress, which defines South Asians and African subjects as equal participants in an economic sphere, renders both racialized populations in existential states of anxiety, uncertainty and mistrust surrounding their newly defined relationship to each other.

In sum, contemporary South Asian migration to Uganda is shaped by three processes: 1) the (post)imperial geographies of Ugandan Indian displacement and migration from Uganda, 2) the Ugandan state's desire for investment capital in an emerging geopolitical and neoliberal economic order, and 3) the politics of historical insecurity, which compel Ugandan Asians and South Asian migrants to engage in flexible securitization practices in the absence of social and political protections enshrined in the citizenship concept in the Ugandan nation-state. I argue that in the wake of both the expulsion and the "capitalization of citizenship" (Rose 2001) the concept of citizenship in Africa is "unbundled" from its Western and legal character and constitution. Rather, racialized minority groups rely on intensive historical, cultural, and economic practices of securitization. Finally, as I discuss in the conclusion (Chapter 7), transformations in state sovereignty, governance, and citizenship reveal that South Asian and African exclusions did not end with Idi Amin's regime of mass executions and decrees. Instead, as the exercise of power is re-deployed in new ways, "Africans" and "Asians" are made and re-made as new types of subjects. The chapters that follow explore the historical progression and contemporary character of post-imperial and post-Africanization inclusions and exclusions, allowing us to update our analysis of race, migration and citizenship in Uganda. In Uganda, and among Africanist scholars, this methodology shifts attention away from an almost obsessive focus on Idi Amin, his dictatorial regime, and the

expulsion event—shifting our attention to the vulnerability of migrants, Africans and African polities in "South-South times."



Figure 6: Uganda in “South-South Times.” Above, a former Ugandan Asian *dukan* that has been partitioned into multiple shops owned and rented by Ugandan Africans and new South Asian traders. Ugandan and South Asian petty traders, entrepreneurs, and “investors” pursue the East African dream of prosperity in post-expulsion Uganda.

Colonial and Academic Legacies: Community, Race, Ethnicity and Gender

In this project, studying African-Asian relations requires clearing some sociological ground. Below, I first excavate the historical origins of social categories used to study South Asians and Africans in Uganda. Second, I provide some guiding frameworks for the categories used in this study.

As post-colonial scholars remind us, the constitution of society occurs under colonial conditions, and depends on the particular colonial sociology of the polity in question. In line with the earlier discussion of "citizens" and "subjects" in the imperial social formation, Hansen and Stepputat argue that "the colonial and postcolonial state had several faces: one was the benevolent face that allowed the proper, respectable and educated citizens to exercise certain rights, to form embryonic civil society and a public sphere that allowed for a measure of criticism of both the state, its laws, and its institutions. The other face was more authoritarian and more violent, a more naked representation of sovereign power of the state" (2005:23-24). Colonialism in Africa took on a more intrinsically violent character than in contexts like India, as sovereignty was exercised in its most elementary form on African populations that were reduced, *a priori*, to "bare life" (Agamben 2005, Hansen and Stepputat 2005). Achille Mbembe writes that colonization in Africa was a "pure act of founding violence," and that it was based on a deep and almost unbridgeable division of race inscribed in law, in economy, and in (the absence of) rights (Mbembe 2001:188). The result is what Mahmood Mamdani has described as an enduring bifurcation of the colonial state. In this model, "urban areas were under direct rule, governed by law and bestowing rights on 'civilized men' that is, white settlers and colonizers, whereas the natives living in cities only enjoyed a limited set of civil rights, such as a right to property, but also often enjoying some opportunities of education and other forms of paternalist grooming and improvement. The vast majority of the colonized populations lived under indirect rule, or under the customary law that different colonial regimes over time codified if not invented" (Mamdani 1996:16-18)

Mrinhalini Sinha, in her analysis of Indian women in colonial British India, notes that the "ideal of a liberal state that related to all its subjects as individuals even in imperial-metropolitan societies was seldom more than a normative vision of a state-society relationship. The concept of bourgeois civil society, an association of sovereign individual subjects based on law and contracts, had a precarious existence" (Sinha 2006:7). As Sinha argues, in British India, the framework for the constitution of society were not sovereign individual subjects of civil society, but "communities" that were constituted by castes, tribes, races, and religious groups. Communities were defined by

“notions of collective interest and affiliation” and invoked “collective binds and rights based on imagined ties of kinship, religion, culture, and sentiments” (Sinha 2006:7). Communities were also defined according to complex and culturally specific ideologies of hierarchy and inequality, particularly in terms of caste divisions. Thus, scholars of colonial India have explored the ways in which complex negotiations of indigenous class, caste, ethnic, and religious formation, along with the bureaucratic colonial state, produced a distinctly “modern” politics of community-based claims.

In comparison, Africanist scholars' understandings of colonial governance have largely explored the politics of ethnicity and “tribe-making” as the basic building block of post-colonial society in Africa. Mamdani's (1996) study is unique among analyses of the production of “modern” African ethnic collectivities that were invented under British indirect rule. In his work, he attempts to explore the variegated forms of subjugation experienced by different colonized and racialized subjects who moved within an imperial terrain that encompassed the metropole and its multiple possessions. In his formulation, Indian subjects in Africa, whether indentured laborers or mobile traders, occupied a privileged category of “Subject Races” (1996:20). Thus, this scholarship begins to provide analytic space for studying the constitution of Indian “colonial community” within the bifurcated and racialized colonial state that developed in British East Africa.

Therefore, in contrast to the invention of “colonial communities” in British India, Indian communities in East Africa are always interpellated by their perceived racial difference from “Africans.” That colonial governance involved illiberal and violent processes of *race making* meant that Indian subjects were always defined by their difference from, and opposition to, African subjects, and vice versa. Indian and African subjects mutually constituted each other in this dyadic relationship. In addition, the development of a tripartite racial hierarchy in East Africa, in which Indian subjects became economic *middlemen*, who traded in the service of metropolitan capital, resulted in a *gendered* notion of racial difference in East Africa. Therefore, “Indian communities,” were constructed as male or non-gendered public collectivities. These communities actively sought to preserve their civilizational and cultural differences from Africans in response to imperial processes and colonization.

Indian women, as in India, were constructed as the dependents of Indian men and unrecognized by the civil law of the colonial state's apparatus. Ethnic, caste, and religious-based identities would be constituted and articulated by the symbolic identification of Indian women with the "inner essence" of the community in question. Indian men had the right to "define" their women within particular ethnic, religious, caste, and sectarian communities (Sinha 2006:9). In the East African context, however, Indian women would be interpellated by both "community" and "race"—this "racial doubling" would produce a persistent symbolic identification of Indian women within the domestic spaces of homes—always separate, apart, and inaccessible to African men. The inaccessibility and invisibility of Indian women would ultimately result in the limits of a multi-racial and gender-inclusive nation in the post-colonial era (see Chapter 6). Moreover, as I show in this ethnography, Indian women (especially the vulnerable, victimized, and abused) continue to be governed by structures of community that bear resemblance to the colonial era.

Thus, in the East African context, Indian subjects are interpellated vis à vis the colonial legacy of particular communal identities *and* the politics of a racialized "Asian" identity. Moreover, the non-settler character of Ugandan colonial society (in contrast to the colonial contexts of Kenya, South Africa, and Rhodesia, for example) resulted in the mutual construction of "Indian" and "African" racial groups, "Brown" and "Black" always being in dialogical relation to each other.

Indeed, the colonial state sought to define a collectivity that is racialized "Asian" or "Indian"—even though the Asian population in East Africa was always amorphous and internally heterogeneous. (And likewise, the boundaries of African "ethnic" communities in Uganda were invented and instantiated within the colonial period). For instance, post-independence scholarship on Asians in East Africa is dominated by the "community" ethnographies of anthropologists, with little, if any attention to the ways in which collective ties of cross-racial ("African-Asian") affiliation were produced under colonial conditions or by other means (see Chapter 2 for examples). Likewise, scholarship by historians, anthropologists, and political scientists often utilized the racialized colonial category "Asian" without exploring the processes by which racial collectivities were produced.

Although historians are now beginning to explore histories of “racial thought” in the nationalist period more intensively by studying the hardening of racial boundaries between “Africans,” “Arabs,” and “Asians,” in the post-war period, this is only one way to analyze “difference” among bounded social groups in Uganda (Brennan 2012, Glassman 2011). Although race is the predominant mode of constructing difference between colonized subjects in the British imperial social formation, other modalities of difference are also significant. In post-1990s Uganda, for example, redefinitions of, and contestations around civilizational, religious, class, caste, gender, and linguistic identities and boundaries are significant among interlocutors who constantly produce social group boundaries in their everyday social practices. Moreover, an exclusive focus on race has precluded the study of ethnicity, which is associated with the cultural and linguistic boundaries that inform the making of social groups.

Given the colonial and academic legacies that I have outlined above, I argue that we must attend to the production of “communal,” “political,” and “economic” categories that have been used to study South Asians in East Africa by examining: 1) Uganda’s particular colonial sociology, 2) the reproduction of historical and colonial categories within academic scholarship, and 3) the *longue durée* processes of inclusion and exclusion through lenses that include but are not limited to “race” or “community.” In bypassing the academic legacy of anthropological studies of individual religious, ethnic, and caste-based communities, *and* isolated studies of the expulsion of South Asians, this study attends to the *ongoing* social, political and economic intertwinement of Africans and South Asians after the large-scale displacement of East African Asians from Africa during the 1960s and 1970s. In doing so, I contribute to an understanding of Uganda as a particular historical and contemporary space of cross-racial and cultural connection and disconnection (see Chapter 2, “Re-framing African-Asian Studies” for further discussion).

I take a social constructivist approach to the categories that I use in this thesis, while also recognizing my use of categories that may seem to reify racial, ethnic, religious or caste groups in my ethnography. Nonetheless, by paying attention to migration processes and the terminology that people used to understand themselves, I try to emphasize the construction of boundaries between social groups, and the shifting

nature of these boundaries in response to new South Asian migration. I also try to avoid the misstep of fixing my interlocutors within particular social categories, focusing on processes of social identification or the making of group boundaries instead (Brubaker 2002, Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Axes of difference, which are expressed in civilizational and migration narratives, race, culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexual identities all emerge as important to the lives of South Asians and Ugandans. Thus, rather than assuming the categories by which "Asians" and "Africans" in Uganda have been defined in the past, I highlight the vernacular categories that individuals themselves used to apprehend their place in society and in the nation. Moreover, I try to move beyond categories of social identity by exploring processes of subjectivation among Ugandan Asian and South Asian migrants.

For the purposes of clarity, I will use "Ugandan Indian" to refer to individuals who were born in colonial Uganda and identify with East African social, political and economic life. These individuals trace their roots to a pre-Partition (1947) India (prior to the formation of modern-day Pakistan and Bangladesh). "Asian" is a historical East African term used to refer to people of South Asian origin. "Ugandan Asian returnees" refer to those who experienced the displacement of the expulsion, re-settled in the West, and returned to Uganda at the time of my fieldwork. "Ugandan Asian" is a term that is typically used among diasporans who were expelled in 1972. I use "South Asian" to refer to the new generation of post-1972 migration of Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Sri Lankans to Uganda. I also use "South Asian" or "Asian" to refer to a general racialized body politic, particularly in terms of the colonial and post-colonial Ugandan state.

In this ethnography, South Asians often refer to an abstract racialized collectivity of "Ugandans." Most do not distinguish among Ugandan ethnic groups and racialize them as Black. Nonetheless, Ugandan Asians, long-term residents, and mixed-race individuals take care to distinguish among Ugandan ethnic groups (these individuals might speak African languages, trace their ancestry to African ancestors, or engage in processes of social identification with Africans).

At times, I may refer to "Ugandans" in a general sense to refer to the Ugandan political community or the Ugandan body politic. In other cases, I refer to Ugandan

ethnic and religious affiliations, social categories that are salient to Ugandans—particularly in Kampala, where the Baganda ethnic group dominates, but the Banyankole (President Museveni's ethnic group) are often in positions of state power. Likewise, Ugandan Muslims in Kampala are known for being associated with the Idi Amin regime and for having been beneficiaries of Africanization policies and the Indian property re-possession process. Indeed, Kampala is riven with a historical politics of regional, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and class divisions, issues that are discussed in broad-strokes in everyday discussions through stereotypes and humor that diffuse social tensions and anxieties.

Ugandans typically refer to South Asians as *muhindi* (*bahindi*), which some South Asians consider derogatory and exclusionary, particularly when it is used in a rough manner to refer to Indian businessmen or traders in daily interactions on Kampala streets. On the other hand, South Asian youth considered Indian men and women who used the terms *kalu* or *kaley* (Black) to be racist and exclusionary. Indeed, some youth have developed novel terminology to refer to Ugandans. Some of my interlocutors, for example, colloquially referred to Ugandans as *jadoo* or *jadooan*, (sorcery or black magic in Hindi), making references to occult and witchcraft practices among Africans, supernatural practices that many South Asians perceived to be the locus of African men and women's (unknowable) power in Buganda.

Because both Ugandans and South Asians engage in processes whereby they racially homogenize each other through discursive practice, I am interested in what Thomas Blom Hansen describes as "mutual non-recognition" between Indians and Africans in South Africa (2012:97). In Durban, he suggests that non-recognition means "a willed incomprehension, derived from a lack of desire, intimacy, and respect...Indians and Zulus...never constituted their identities by actually seeing each other, by deciphering each other's gaze...despite 150 years of 'apprehensive coexistence,' these communities never developed regular forms of conviviality or commensality, not to mention intermarriage" (2012:97). While I do not agree that Indians and Africans in Uganda never developed forms of inter-racial conviviality and socialization (see especially Chapters 3 and 6), I do find the heuristic of "willed nonrecognition" to be useful for thinking about cross-racial apprehensions in contemporary Uganda (and especially in the context of a

new class of transient South Asian migrant-traders). Moreover, while I have focused in detail on categories of social identity, I also explore the *making* of African and South Asian subjectivities in my ethnographic analysis.

Methodology and Sources

Many of my observations on South Asians, African-Asian relations, migration, insecurity, and gender are based on research from an earlier phase of work on Indian women and migration to Uganda, carried out in 2003, 2006 and 2007 (Hundle 2003; 2008). The current study is based on long-term fieldwork and ethnographic analysis conducted between 2008 and 2010 in Uganda. This project, funded by the Wenner-Gren Association for Anthropological Research and the United States National Science Foundation, was meant to be a study of cross-racial gender politics and organizing in Uganda. As I became absorbed in larger questions of migration, citizenship, and security, my research project and methodology gradually changed and adapted in the field. It also evolved in response to the challenges of trying to access the narratives of South Asians who were reluctant to talk about their experiences of the expulsion and its aftermath.

My strategy was to divide my research into three core activities. First, I conducted interviews with Ugandan Asians and community leaders, which became the basis for Chapters 3 and 5. I centered my study in Kampala in Buganda, traveling to other towns such as Mbarara, Jinja and Gulu to conduct interviews with Ugandan Asians and mixed-race African-Asian families who continued to live there (see Appendix IV for a map of provinces and towns in Uganda). Crafting relationships with key individuals from both Ugandan and South Asian communities helped me to connect with others and access information that I needed to conduct a successful research project. Community leaders were gatekeepers who introduced me to others who disclosed information about their experiences in Uganda. In Kampala, I conducted interviews with new migrant families who represented a variety of class, ethnic, religious, caste and diasporic orientations. I attended religious sites and community functions on the weekends, where I learned about the transnational dimensions of new South Asian migration and community formation. Finally, because I spent a good share of my twenties in East Africa, a number of Ugandan

and East African Asian friends inform the perspectives that I offer in this ethnography. Although I did not intend to study their perspectives, they helped me to understand the local dynamics of the re-building of South Asian communities in post-expulsion Kampala, and problems of race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality among youth (see Chapters 5 and 6). Thus, deep ethnography, and a willingness to spend time with people in many different locations and circumstances, was critical to understanding the politics of South Asian presence and re-incorporation in Uganda from all angles.

My relationship with Dr. Maggie Kigozi, the former Executive Director of the Uganda Investment Authority, allowed me to conduct research at a government parastatal in order to understand the dynamics of Asian capital and the recruitment of South Asian investors to Uganda (see Chapter 4). Finally, research on Indian women's lives and gender politics became the basis for Chapter 6. Interestingly, Ugandan newspapers played a curious and important role in articulating information about South Asian communities and Indian women that would otherwise have been unknown to larger Ugandan African publics. As I document, the Ugandan press has analyzed cases of violence against Indian women in Kampala in recent years, examining the invisible and non-citizen status of Indian women. Thus, secondary sources (the Ugandan English-language print press and other media) collected from the Centre for Basic Research (CBR) in Kampala helped me to construct Ugandan African apprehensions of the expulsion, South Asian investors, and Indian women.

After completing the long-term fieldwork, I returned to Uganda for follow-up activities: first in February 2011 to conduct follow-up interviews, and then as an intern archivist working at the Uganda National Archives (UNA) in Entebbe from July-August 2012. These moments of return were critical: they gave me a chance to follow up on emerging themes in my writing. For example, the writing phase overlapped with national presidential elections in Kampala in 2011. This event provided a glimpse of different communities' responses to the electoral process and the possibility of regime change in Uganda.

Undertaking a historical ethnography of Ugandan Indian South Asian presence in Uganda means "mapping the topography of citizenship": exploring the processes by which South Asians have been variously included and excluded from Uganda over time,

where, why and how these processes occur, and how they are connected to the larger Ugandan national body politic. In the process of researching emerging South Asian recognition and re-integration in a post-exodus East Africa, I paid attention to the discursive categories that were being mobilized by the institutions and individuals around me. For example, as Ugandan Asians embodied multiple states of formal citizenship or social identity over their lifetimes, whether from “citizen to refugee,” or “ex-Ugandan Asian to investor,” both Ugandan Asians and Africans developed their own terminology to apprehend their places in society across numerous political experiments in the Ugandan polity. For example, the emerging realities of post-1990s migration to Uganda are reflected in the South Asian slang that circulates on Kampala streets: “Ex-Ugandan Asians” refer to themselves as “returnees,” or “*repossession-walley*” (“those who have repossessed their property” in Hindi). East African Asians describe new migrants from the Indian subcontinent as “first-gen,” “parachuters,” “rockets” and “astronauts.” Regions of Indian settlement, business, and mobility in East Africa, from Mombasa to Kampala, are dubbed “N.A.S.A.” (see more in Chapter 5). Indeed, this new terminology reflects changes in citizenship categories and political economy in post-colonial India; the idea of the “NRI” or Non-Resident Indian, for example (van der Veer 2005:285-89).

Thus, at least part of my methodology developed through documenting and tracking words and vernacular signs that are embedded in everyday conversations and the legal officialdom of citizenship discourse. I have tried to connect both “emic” and “etic” analysis in the ethnography by tethering historical and vernacular signs to a more familiar global lexicon— wedding ethnographic inquiry to current analytic concepts of concern to anthropologists who study global capitalist processes, citizenship, migration and security. Moving productively between vernacular and global concepts, I craft a narrative on the past, present and future of African-Asian relations that is grounded in the continent and its former imperial territory—a narrative that is meaningful to Ugandanists, students of Africa and global history, and anthropologists of citizenship and the geopolitical.

Fieldwork Dynamics

There are significant limits to discursive analysis in this study, a domain of evidence that anthropologists consider indispensable to ethnographic study. The expulsion and larger exodus of South Asians from East Africa evoke painful and traumatic memories of anti-Asian sentiment, violence, and displacement among victims of state policies. As I explore further in Chapter 3, Ugandan Indians who remained constructed a small, insular, and multi-ethnic and religious “Ugandan Asian community” who lived in precarious relation to the Amin militaristic state. More than this, however, Indians who remained in Uganda accommodated a racially-exclusive state, a state-backed social experiment of de-colonization and de-Indianization in which racialized Asians had been cast as foreigners, outsiders, and enemies. In order to remain, Ugandan Asian men and their kin adopted strategies and techniques that severely limited their engagement with the official realm of “African politics.” Indian men retreated from political conversations, engaging in extensively insulated and protected economic and social networks, often cultivating relationships with African “big men” and entrepreneurs in order to survive (Hundle 2013). Because of the sensitivity surrounding social and economic practices during this era, accessing information from Indian men was challenging, as they had learned to become invisible and adopt strategies of silence in order to continue to live and conduct business in Uganda. Some benefited economically through the *magendo* (informal) economy that existed in 1970s Uganda; others, both African and Indian, would benefit from the fallout of confiscated Ugandan Indian property under the post-1986 National Resistance Movement (NRM) government. These controversial issues made it difficult for me to access information about the social and economic lives of Ugandan Indians in the post-expulsion period. Recent attention to Ugandan Asians from journalists and reporters interested in emerging political and economic relations between India and African countries as well as the 40th anniversary of the Ugandan Asian expulsion has made them wary of journalists and prevented them from speaking openly about their experiences.

Indeed, there were many times during the research that I felt that I was intruding upon spaces and conversations that were not meant for me. There were tensions about my presence and my gaze that only began to dissipate over long-term research. The tensions, I believe, were born out of a sense of protectiveness of the self, family, and the larger

racialized community in the post-expulsion context. Although it was quite easy for me to access the well-crafted narratives of official politics and community representatives when they discussed the return migration and settlement of South Asians and amicable African-Asian relations, it was much more difficult to access their innermost apprehensions of past, present, and future prospects of multi-racialism in Uganda.

Some of these tensions, I believe, also had to do with a sense of embarrassment and anxiety about how Indians were being perceived by outsiders. South Asians were intensely preoccupied with zones of cultural intimacy, what Michael Herzfeld defines as “the recognition of those aspects of cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but which nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality” (1996:3). This source of embarrassment and anxiety was related to their ambiguous position between disenfranchised Africans and privileged Europeans in the colonial and post-colonial era, South Asian sources of anti-Black racism and discrimination, and even the nostalgia that community members felt for the prosperous, affluent, and “complicit-with-colonialism” members of Ugandan Asian society that had existed prior to the expulsion (see Chapter 3). Indeed, all of these issues inflected the ways in which Ugandan Asians felt that Ugandan Africans might be apprehending South Asian enterprise, resettlement, and the re-building of communal organizations in the post-expulsion environment (see Chapter 5).

Because Africans and South Asians, for the most part, did not live intimately with each other in the colonial and post-colonial era, the spaces in which individuals could fully feel comfortable were within their own racial and cultural worlds, in sites of community and religious socialization such as the *samaj*, *mandir*, *masjid*, or *gurudwara* and sites of domestic intimacy like the Indian home. Building on Hansen’s analysis of Indians in Durban (2012), I found that racialization of every dimension of social life produced a cultural economy in which one experienced the self as a racialized self—a self that was already always apprehended and constructed by another (European, African, or Asian) gaze. In today’s Uganda, identities, communities, and selves are being re-made in a new economy of recognition—a gaze that does not feel completely familiar to Ugandan Asians and Africans who experienced the expulsion. In the field, for example, Ugandan Asians were subject to multiple gazes: the gaze of the President and the state, an

abstract Ugandan African or “Black” host community, other South Asian migrants who were unfamiliar and could not be trusted. Thus, I always had a sense, particularly among Ugandan Asians and long-term residents, that they were constantly anticipating the apprehensions and reactions of other people, including myself. It seemed to me that one could only be authentic in one’s private thoughts or in the inner space of the family and home. In the chapters that follow, I try to emphasize these more subtle and affective dimensions of anxiety and insecurity among my interlocutors as I interacted with them during fieldwork.

Other research obstacles appeared. Some people questioned why I would want to study the dynamics of new South Asian migration, when most of the original East African Asians were scattered in the Western diaspora. This observation was doubly mobilized in response to my professional status as a cultural anthropologist. Interlocutors even offered me more suitable topics of anthropological inquiry, such as traveling to Northern Uganda to study the conflict between the government and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in that region. My second major challenge was the persistent recommendation to analyze the new landscape of South Asian capital and migration in the context of corruption between Indian and African “big men,” or political elites.²³ In the social sciences, analysts understand patron-client relationships between minority communities and the African political leadership as a major impediment to democratization. While I acknowledge that what is described as “corruption” is a key obstacle to social and economic equality in African polities, it also needs to be contextualized as a historical and cultural practice in varying geographic contexts (Bayart 2009 [1989]). As I show in Chapter 3, the distribution of money and gifts to powerful African men, both before and after the exodus, was a central mechanism by which Indian men could carve out economic and social security for themselves. In sum, the reactions to my fieldwork project compelled me to take more notes and intellectualize the persistence of racial and ethnic tropes surrounding Asians and Africans. Indeed, one of the charges of

²³ See M.G. Vassanji’s (2003) *The In-Between Lives of Vikram Lall* for a realistic, yet fictional, portrayal of Indian “middle-men” who remained in East Africa in the 1960s and 1970s. These men often formed patron-client relationships with African political elites in order to do so. I encountered similar narratives among Ugandan Asian men who remained in Uganda throughout the Idi Amin and Obote II years of governance in Uganda.

my fieldwork methodology was to note the gendered, racial, ethnic and cultural production of Indian and African subjects *in situ*, and to observe that social issues such as corruption are loaded moral issues that are also historical problems (see Chapter 2).

The research work was also affected by the ways in which I presented myself to a variety of Ugandans. My perceived nationality, race, ethnicity, class, caste, religion, age, education, and linguistic capabilities all affected my fieldwork interactions and progress of the research work. In the context of interviews, my position as an educated South Asian woman presented challenges for some Indian and African men. At the same time, my affiliation with the diaspora of Punjabi Sikhs helped me to cultivate relationships with both Ugandan Asians and migrants. Although I grew up in the US, my ability to converse in Punjabi and Hindi, and my familiarity with Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam were important for accessing individuals and networks in the field. While I was identified as Indian, Punjabi, and from the Sikh “community” among South Asians; Ugandans, who formed an essential core group in my research, personal, and social life, found it harder to place me. I was variously identified as *mzungu* (white or foreigner), *muhindi* (Indian) “half-caste,” and “Arab” in the context of this research. Revealing my adherence to Sikhism cast me as a “*Singha Singha*” in East Africa. In Luganda, “*basingha singha*,” (Sikhs) or more broadly being perceived as a “*kala singha*” in the Kenyan and East African context provided me much social capital among Ugandans. These Ugandan and East African Asian ethnic, racial, and religious tropes are discussed extensively in Chapter 2.

Gendered norms and class divisions between Ugandan Asians and economic migrants were also difficult to navigate. Because I was perceived as an Indian woman among South Asians in Uganda, I was subject to the same norms of respectability that other Indian women confronted in their daily lives. However, conservative gender norms were loosened to some degree because of my nationality as an *Amreekan* or *Amerikani* and my position as a *bahr-walli* among South Asians (my location in the Western diaspora), my education and career aspirations. Nonetheless, at times, individuals sought to regulate my interactions and guide my work by suggesting that there were certain people whom I should talk to and spend time with, and others that I should avoid. Bourgeois and upper-caste women, particularly Ugandan Asians, shepherded me through

elite networks of information, veering me away from new migrants, who some individuals considered embarrassing because they were perceived to foment African-Asian racial tensions and did not adequately represent the dispositions and subjectivities of Ugandan Asians who had experienced the expulsion to an outsider. In addition, men and women were concerned when I transgressed race, class and gender lines by moving in public spaces on my own and via public transport. Male community elders advised me against meeting with individual men, both African and Asian.

Finally, the research work that I conducted at the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) required that I comport myself in a Western and professional manner. In contrast, fieldwork with Ugandans and Indians compelled me to dress in ways that would feel comfortable to them and myself in those settings. Thus, I often switched back and forth between Western dress and Punjabi *salwar-kameez*. In every way, the research required transgressing the boundaries of social groups that were riven by racial, class, communal, and linguistic (ethnic, religious, and caste) divisions. I spent much time and energy gauging whether or not it was safe to disclose research activities to people that might not approve my interactions—thereby risking the loss of trust in my personal relationships with interviewees or ruining my reputation and respectability among important interlocutors. Because of the complexity of these fieldwork interactions, I turned my attention to activities at the UIA or collecting secondary source material. The difficulties that I encountered forced me to be flexible while conducting field research. In the end, it also helped me learn a great deal of information.

Outline of Thesis

Each chapter in this thesis presents material that is based on five different domains of research that pertain to questions of South-Southism, African-Asian relations, South Asian re-integration, and security in Uganda. Furthermore, although the bulk of this analysis draws from research with people who identify themselves as South Asian, the material begins to define the contours of African-Asian relations that existed in the past and present. In the domain of scholarship, the deep racial segmentation of East African society has resulted in an equally pervasive division of historiography and

ethnography across “African” and “Asian” racial groups, often assumed to be fixed, objective, and natural social facts (see Chapter 2). The following chapters attempt to consider the spaces and instances in which South Asian presence is articulated in broader (Ugandan) contexts.

Finally, I have intentionally sought to disrupt the modernist and linear temporality that is common in much scholarly work on Uganda; i.e., analyzing social phenomena in the context of a pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial temporal progression, or more common in Ugandan scholarship, a linear model of revolution, rebellion, coup, and “regime change.” Instead, each chapter explores one major domain of analysis. I hope to show here how different levels of analysis are related to each other: starting with a historical and theoretical exploration of African-Asian relations on the African Continent and its diasporas, revisiting the expulsion event in 1972 through the memories and narratives of Ugandan Asians in contemporary Kampala, progressively developing an argument that theorizes the contemporary relationship between South Asian migration, community-building and security, and ending with an analysis of insecurity and its relationship to Indian women’s bodies and their vulnerability in Uganda.

A final note on the landscape of scholarship in Uganda. With few exceptions, recent post-1990s ethnographic work on Uganda is limited (Jones 2009, Leopold 2005). Most recent studies on Uganda focus on the country’s complex post-war context, often exploring the dynamics of humanitarian and militaristic intervention on Ugandan personhoods in local cultural contexts (Cheney 2007, Finnstrom 2009). Yet in Kampala, emerging expatriate migration and political economies involved in the humanitarian-aid complex, Western tourism to Africa, and even new types of academic research and consultancy organizations are occurring in the midst of extensive pan-Asian migration to Uganda. Unfortunately, the expulsion and exodus of South Asians from East Africa during the 1960s and 1970s has limited more recent academic knowledge production on African-Asian relations in East Africa, preventing the possibility of bridging scholarship on national and post-colonial East African predicaments with new dynamics of Asian capital, migration and settlement in the region.

More broadly, then, one of the key imperatives of this scholarship is to re-direct Africanists’ attention to the interconnections between Africa and Asia. In the context of

the aggressive Western humanitarian and military intervention of African territories and personhoods, this work shifts the reader's lens to those enduring relations, interactions, and disconnections between African and South Asian citizen-subjects who continue to encounter each other in post-imperial and "Global South" geographies. In the chapters that follow, I explore the durabilities of these African-Asian relations and the possibilities for African-Asian futures. My interlocutors' apprehensions of the possibilities of a post-expulsion and multi-racial Uganda—however cynical or hopeful—shed light on new dynamics of African-Asian life in "South-South" times.

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Chapter 2

South-Southism and African-Asian Studies

Introduction: Organizing Frames

In essence, the material in this chapter attempts to link the recent geopolitical formulation of South-Southism with other scholarly and activist-based approaches to the study of “African-Asian relations” in Uganda. Afro-Asianism, as Christopher Lee suggests, is “an ill-defined term that has signaled both a cold war ideology of diplomatic solidarity as well as a more general phenomenon of intercontinental exchange and interracial connection” (2010:4). In the context of East Africa, I suggest that it is important to move beyond a “triumphal narrative of postcolonial autonomy and assertion” that has characterized recent discussions of African-Asian relations in respect to “South-Southism.” It is easy to engage in redemptive narratives of racial confraternity and transnational solidarity. Broadening African-Asian relations to encompass both alliances and disconnections; both sodality and enmity, is central to understanding the multiracial politics of East Africa. As Antoinette Burton writes, “there are good reasons for [these] histories of difference, resentment, and suspicion in the Afro-Indian context, among them racialized capitalist relations, colonial-era racial histories, and entrenched practices of racial endogamy” (Burton 2012:3).

My ethnographic research is situated in relation to multiple scholarly frames that scholars have used to understand and interpret African-Asian relationships in East Africa, both past and present. The material below is organized according to “frames of analysis” that have been used to understand South Asian presence in Uganda and East Africa. It explores the trajectories, possibilities, and limits of historical and anthropological scholarship on South Asian presence. This chapter is also a starting point for thinking about the relationship between the regimes of knowledge that are produced in the university among scholars and the knowledge that is produced by South Asians and

Ugandans as they discuss, debate, and critique Asian presence in Uganda. In large part, my data is limited to the South Asians I encountered during fieldwork who offered ideas about Asian presence and absence from Uganda in a post-expulsion context: Ugandan Asians, for example, who discuss what might have happened if the expulsion had not occurred. Because of the limitations of my data, the frames below focus largely on scholarly debates. When and if possible, I consider their relationship to the discursive practices of individuals who are engaged in knowledge production on South Asian presence.

Some of these frames are very familiar: scholars and political leaders invoked them in order to reproduce or critique relations of sodality or enmity between Asians and Africans in East Africa, particularly in relation to post-colonial nationalist thought and violence. As I emphasized in the introduction, the nationalist frame is predominant and reflects the major concerns of post-colonial scholars of Uganda, as well as the broader rubric of area studies. While it is tempting to center understandings of African-Asian relations in the time-space of the nation-state—and indeed, the other chapters in my analysis are situated to both national and transnational politics—my intent here is to think both through and beyond the national frame, considering the other ways in which African-Asian relations are conceived outside of the familiar issue of national inclusion and exclusion. In other words, what happens when one “undoes” the sovereign borders of the nation of Uganda? What aspects of inter-racial confraternity, commensality, or difference become possible or impossible? What political ideologies, discourses, and signs become relevant to the study of African and Asian relationships? What sort of political projects are mobilized, and by whom?

This material also pays attention to the ways that scholars strove to comprehend the social worlds that they inherited in the aftermath of decolonization, the end of the Cold War period, and nationalist-oriented Africanization policies. These perspectives encompass key voices of the East African intelligentsia, most of whom were engaged with an array of political movements and aspirations; including, but not limited to, Marxism, Pan-Africanism, Negritude, Gandhian anti-colonialism, Nehruvian non-alignment, and other nationalist and religious-based reform movements (Mazrui 1999). In the context of rapidly shifting events, political activists and intellectuals fled Uganda or

were already in exile as they wrote and debated post-colonial happenings. In an autobiographical and deeply introspective sense, then, they critically examined their locations in the African diaspora outside of the continent as they conceptualized their political and intellectual projects. Thus, if not explicitly theorized or discussed by intellectuals, the concept of diaspora was central to the development of commentary and scholarship surrounding African-Indian relations. I return to a discussion of diaspora in the final section of this chapter.

Some of the frames discussed below are reflective of more recent turns in Southern historiography, post-colonial scholarship, and the anthropology of Africa.²⁴ I organize them according to spatial, temporal, and ideological frames of analysis, and all of them, like the discussion of Indian and Ugandan diplomatic and trade alliances illustrated above, are relevant to what would become the historical and cultural particularities of the Ugandan nation and Ugandan scholarship. In order to link Uganda-centered historical and ethnographic studies with broader conversations on African-South Asian connections in the region, I use the overarching rubric of “African-Asian relations.” By way of conclusion, I link these frames to more contemporary conversations on South-South relations and the politics of South Asian presence in Uganda. In doing so, this chapter develops a more rigorous and relevant framework for understanding the nature and character of African-Asian relations today.

South-Southism: Modi Visits Kampala

In 2008, the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, with an entourage of Indian officials and industrialists, traveled to Kampala to meet the Ugandan-Gujarati diaspora and the Ugandan political elite.²⁵ The overarching goal of the event was to

²⁴South Asian global historians, for example, have begun to shift their attention to the Indian Ocean “interregional arena” after decades of attention to nationalist historiography (see more below). Likewise, the ethnographic penchant for studies of rural life in Africa have now shifted to Africanists’ concerns with globalization, sovereignty, migration, and urban cultural formations outside of South Africa and its purported exceptionalism (Chalfin 2010, Comaroff and Comaroff 2012, Ferguson 2006, Piot 2011, Weiss 2009).

²⁵Narendra Modi is a contentious figure among critics of the *Hindutva*-oriented BJP party, liberalization policies in India, and the nexus of state politicians, corporations, and the Indian business elite. Gujarat is not only an industrial hub in India, but it was also the epicenter for communal riots and ethnic cleansing

advance Indian and Ugandan national economic cooperation and trade relations. Modi and his cadre of diplomats and businessmen also sought to advertise “Vibrant Gujarat,” an annual Global Summit and trade conference in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The Uganda-based Gujarati business elite welcomed Modi with formal speeches, cultural entertainment, and a special reception at the Indian Association headquarters, located on a plot of land that was repossessed by Indian community leaders in central Kampala. The festivities culminated with an investment conference and networking dinner at a new hotel and convention center in Ggaba, an elite residential area in the outskirts of Kampala proper. Ugandan Asian agribusiness and real estate tycoons, up-and-coming Indian entrepreneurs seeking new markets in East Africa, and a semi-skilled Indian migrant class who worked in their offices and companies, gathered at a luxury hotel on the shores of Lake Victoria. The evening lake breeze chilled the crowd as guests dined, listened to speeches, and Ugandan artists performed patriotic and cultural dances.

The event was thoughtfully choreographed. Among conference-goers, it elicited nostalgic and optimistic sentiments surrounding the past and future possibilities of Ugandan-Indian relations. The rhetoric at the dinner celebrated Gujarati business achievements and African-Indian connections in Uganda.²⁶ A community leader at the event announced, “today is a great day. We are now representing Gujarat in Uganda. But the history of Indians in this country goes back to the building of the railway.” I had attended the dinner with Ugandan Asian colleague. During the speeches, he grimaced and whispered in my ear, “he doesn’t know what he is talking about. The history of Indians in Uganda goes back to the *dhow*, not the railway!”

My friend’s apprehensions of the event seemed indicative of the responses of many Ugandan Asian residents. They were troubled by the imputation of historical inaccuracies and myths to a more authentic story of Indians and their history in Africa. At the same time, they seemed to recognize the importance of forging new relations with the

that occurred during the 1992 Hindu-Muslim riots. Modi’s pre-eminence as a driving power in the development of Gujarat as an industrial and business center in India is significant for the overseas diaspora of non-resident Indian (NRI) Gujaratis. For more on the politics of Modi in India and the diaspora, see Mehta (2010).

²⁶ Gujarati ethnic nationalism, performed and practiced via ethical dispositions of Gandhian piety, industriousness, and philanthropy among businessmen, are long enduring historical and cultural practices in Uganda and East Africa. I develop this discussion further in Chapter 5.

Ugandan government that left Amin's expulsion of the South Asian community where it belonged: in the past. Thus, unofficial histories were increasingly mobilized by business and community leaders who were at the forefront of re-inventing African-Indian relations in Uganda in the public arena. At times discussed polemically, at other times insouciantly, it was clear that the political stakes of historical claims were increasingly important in Uganda and in the geopolitical context of South-South (and South-East) relations.

For the most part, an exclusive cosmopolitan elite composed of urban Ugandans, politicians, and transnational Indian communities in Kampala discussed the possibilities of new Asian business and investment in Uganda. Yet international and local journalists were also beginning to cover the emergence of economic and regional trade blocs established between nation-states in Asia and Africa. The 50th anniversary of the 1955 African-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, re-established the principles of the Bandung communiqué in the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (Lee 2010:3). Following the 2005 African-Asian Conference, the 2006 China-Africa Summit, the 2008 India-Africa Summit; and, most recently, the 2009 China-Africa Summit in Sharm-El-Sheik, Egypt, the officialdom of a new era of "partnership" in trade and development between African and Asian nation-states has begun to emerge. From the African perspective, the possibility of autonomy from Western aid regimes and decades of failed structural adjustment programs, relief from indebtedness via Chinese and Indian capital and credit lines with little to no interest rates, and the re-establishment of national and state sovereignty via diplomatic and economic alliances with Asian countries has had widespread appeal. In Uganda, India and China's increasing role in providing foreign direct investment (FDI) and credit lines in the context of national development policies is an increasing component of the leadership strategy of President Yoweri Museveni and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) (see more in Chapter 4). Indeed, by the early 2000s, state visits and bilateral agreements between Uganda and India that promoted trade, education, and cultural exchange had been cemented.²⁷

²⁷ "India-Uganda Relations on the Right Track." *The New Vision*. 15 August 2003.

"Pakistan's Relations with Uganda Have all Along Remained Friendly and Cooperative." *The New Vision*, 14 August 2003.

"Indian Returnees Happy with Uganda." *The New Vision*, 15 August 2003.

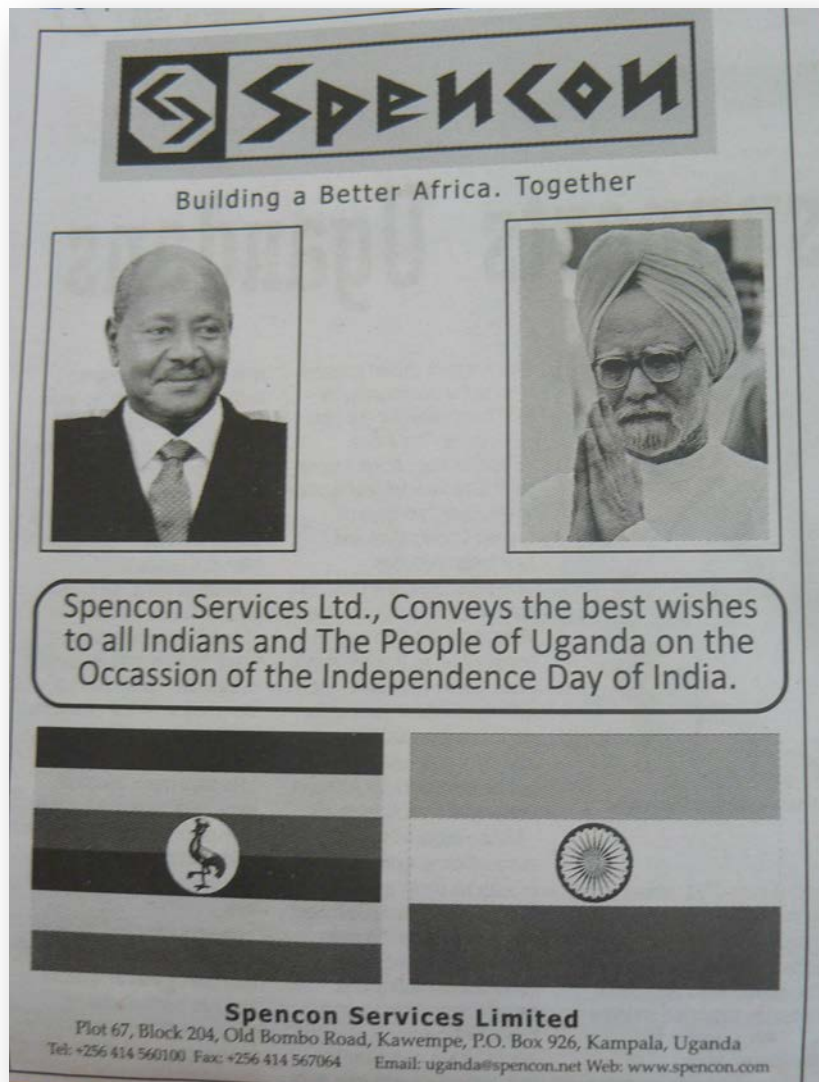


Figure 7: "Building a Better Africa. Together." One of many advertisements in Ugandan national papers that reference Indian-African cooperation, or South-Southism in Uganda. Source: The New Vision, 14 August 2009.

The migration of communities of ethnic Chinese, Indian, Pakistani and other South Asian migrants to the Ugandan national polity, in addition to emerging capital flows between Uganda and Asian countries, suggests the need for a renewed analytics of Indian-African (or "African-Asian") relations in a post-Africanization, economic

liberalization period.²⁸ Unlike the concept of “Afro-Pessimism” that was mobilized by African scholars and writers who sought to come to terms with a sense of widespread fatalism in response to African economic and social crisis (Diawara 1998), Ugandan official, elite, and popular discourses elicit optimistic narratives about the possibilities for national development and prosperity among Ugandans in the future. In this part of the world, celebratory discourses surrounding the “rise of the East and the decline of the West” and “the multi-polar world,” circulate in everyday discussions (Zakaria 2009).²⁹ In the realm of scholarship, new research on “South-Southism” and the outcomes and consequences of shifting centers of power in the global context have proliferated in the past decade (see more below).

Antoinette Burton’s (2012) recent study of the “citationary practices” in regards to Afro-Asian solidarity that are mobilized in the Indian post-colonial imaginary provides additional evidence for the ideological role that Africa plays in the politics of other nations in what is increasingly being called the "Global South." Likewise, popular apprehensions and ideologies surrounding the relationship of South Asians to Uganda, such as the above disagreement over the *fons et origio* of Indians in Uganda, were frequently debated and discussed in the context of my fieldwork. Interlocutors often reproduced, confronted and debated popular, historical, and anthropological claims surrounding Asian-African relationships.³⁰ Indeed, discursive practices regarding South Asian presence are often recycled, reproduced, and casually “cited” in the process of formulating ideological claims for Asian presence in the nation or for developing other types of political communities. Below, I discuss the significant frames of analysis that provide us with historical and anthropological context of the ideological politics behind contemporary discourses and practices of South-Southism.

Spatial and Temporal Frames: Intercontinental Connections

²⁸ I delve into the composition of these communities in Chapter 5.

²⁹ This is true in spite of urban youth’s pro-democracy protests against Uganda’s political and economic elite. I return to this issue in Chapter 5.

³⁰ As well as ethnic and religious tropes. Interlocutors engaged in social practices of gossip and rumor, especially as they discussed stories and legends surrounding the expulsion event and its aftermath, or the practices of community leaders to forge security for the racialized population of Asians that remained in East Africa (see more in Chapters 3 and 5).

Some of these frames are spatial in character, and they rely on *pre* or *post-national* spatial topographies. These alternative spatialities, or geographies of possibility, allowed intellectuals, writers, and colonized individuals to imagine social worlds of cosmopolitanism, multi-racial and ethnic inclusion, or territorial plurality that had been circumscribed by the formation of independent African nation-states and the limitations of conceptualizations of national citizenship (see Chapter 1). Writing in the aftermath of the exodus of Asians from East Africa, Tanzanian-born May Joseph argues that, “since the 1930s, various conceptual frameworks for galvanizing ideas of plurality and multicultural citizenship against mono-cultural national identities within the state have been pursued, by positing notions of a ‘third’ space politically, geographically, and historically. The idea of a third space in aesthetics, political affiliations and international political economy haunts the seamless narrative of oppressed and oppressor, colonized and colonizer, First and Third World, dominant and subaltern” (Joseph 1999:142).

Thus, the notion of the “third space,” and its attendant political communities, is critical to the ongoing imagination of harmonious and amicable African-Asian relationships on the continent. In addition, the spatial frames discussed below often map onto discrete temporal upheavals that have come to characterize the modern, secular, and Enlightenment-era period: colonialism, post-colonialism, post-modernism, late liberalism, neoliberalism. Thus, some frames are implicitly connected to key historical epochs, or temporal frames. For each frame, it is important to note the ways that “Asians,” “Africans,” and African-Asian relationships are constituted and imagined; most specifically, for the spatial territory and geographic location of modern-day Uganda.

1) Indian Ocean Cosmopolitanisms

Historians of the Indian Ocean have emphasized *longue durée* social, cultural, and economic interactions among Indians, Arabs and Africans via the medium of “dhow cultures” and mercantilist trade in the Indian Ocean and among littoral societies (Chaudhuri 1985, Sheriff 2010). This scholarship explores cross-civilizational interactions before the onset of British imperialism and the establishment of regional

colonial polities in East Africa (see Appendix III) for a visual representation of this region). It argues that the Indian Ocean was a well-integrated region of economic and cultural interchange and exchange; and that “particularly important connections of material life, politico-military organization, economic institutions, and social-religious ideology were forged across the ocean during the millennium that stretched from the eighth to the eighteenth century” (Bose 2006:15).

Implicit here is an emphasis on the mobility and cultural interaction among people within a “third space” unmediated by imperial oppressors. Sugata Bose, for example, argues,

[The] Indian Ocean is best characterized as an ‘interregional arena’...[it] lies somewhere between the generalities of a ‘world system’ and the specificities of particular regions...regional entities known today as the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, which underpin the rubric of area studies on the Western academy are relatively recent constructions that arbitrarily project certain legacies of colonial power onto the domain of knowledge in the postcolonial era...the world of the Indian ocean...has a much greater depth of economic and cultural meaning...tied together by webs of economic and cultural relationships...such areas nevertheless had flexible internal and external boundaries (Bose 2006:6).

Thus, the intellectual project of Indian Ocean scholars is to un-tether both African and Indian subjects from the violence of territorialized colonization, the development of nation-states, and its associated modernist categories through their investigations of deep time. The Indian Ocean frame explores the cultural and capitalist commercial activity of Indians and Africans according to a unique spatial and temporal “world-system.” Most historians, however, agree that the system was transformed at least twice by the Portuguese presence in Africa and the Western Indian Ocean in the 16th century, followed by a more substantial transformation of the Indian Ocean arena by the activities of the British East India Company in the 19th century. It is in this temporal transition that Indian traders and merchants were transformed into the “comprador capitalists” of the British Empire who begin to service the modern capitalist mode of production based in the Northern European metropole (Bose 2006, Sheriff 2010).

The Indian Ocean frame also encompasses temporal frameworks among Indians and Africans that contest European notions of time. Stephanie Jones, for instance,

suggests, “the building of the Uganda railway at the turn of the 19th century brought about radical shifts in the notion of territory and the conception of time in East Africa. A sense of Indian Ocean continuity and cosmopolitanism signified by the pace of the dhow and the seaward perspective was substantially replaced by a new sense of time and territory determined by the speed of the train and the inward focus on colonial ambition” (Jones 2007:1). In her work, she traces the movement between “British” and “Arbi” (Swahili-based time) in the writings of Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee, the founder of the Mombasa-based *East African Standard*. Thus, the Indian Ocean frame allows scholars to recuperate alternative temporalities based on trading and mercantile cultures and religious diasporic communities of Sunni and Shia Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs in East Africa. These temporalities flourished alongside the more linear and progressive temporalities of modernization and development that were co-constitutive of the colonial polity; and subsequently, the formation of the national time-space and national identities (Anderson 2006 [1983], Chatterjee 1993).

Sugata Bose suggests that perhaps scholars have been too hasty in declaring an “end of an era” with the rise of industrial states in the middle of the 18th century, and that continuities and unities across the Indian Ocean world persisted well into the modern era (Sheriff 2010:4). He writes, “the abandonment by most historians of the Indian Ocean as an interregional arena of analysis—on the assumption that its organic unity had been sundered—made it especially difficult to ferret out the key elements of change during the transition to colonialism. This in turn has hampered the development of a historical method that would unsettle the discredited, yet entrenched, notions of a West versus a rest and other accompanying dichotomies” (2006:20-21). Central to the argument that the Indian Ocean constitutes its own world system and interregional space across historical time and shifts in ocean sovereignty and governance are individuals’ relationship to religiosity, work, entrepreneurship, and the maritime world (Alpers 1976, Bose 2006). Bose suggests that travelers and seafarers propagated Indian Ocean cosmopolitanisms through the expansion of universal ideals via religious beliefs; most significantly, Islam. In these more romanticized narratives of the Indian Ocean world, Indian traders, pioneers, and settlers are seen to expand cosmopolitan ideas across time and space via their circular migrations to and from India. These knowledge economies encompassed

African worlds, particularly the Swahili Coast—but also into inner Africa via Indian trade networks.

A significant problem of the Indian Ocean scholarship is its South Asian bias and relative exclusion of the Western Indian Ocean and East Africans (Amiji 1983). Hatim Amiji, writing of the Swahili coast suggests, “one of the major errors of much of the historical literature on the coast of East Africa has been to view the coast in the pre-colonial period as though it were a *tabula rasa* onto which have been impressed more or less intact, certain Asiatic ‘influences’...the process of ‘influences’ which accompanied the trade was not one way,” and “...the biases of previous researchers and their preoccupation with the political, social, and economic activities of the outsiders...have tended to view the East African coast as a passive element, as a recipient of ‘influences’ from Asia, with Asia almost always being the active and more vital agent” (Amiji 1983:66). More recent studies of the Swahili coast and the “African basis” of Swahili culture, in relationship to the maritime world, are beginning to correct uneven analyses of the Indian Ocean interregional space (Amiji 1983, Sheriff 2010).

Moreover, if Indians expanded cosmopolitan ideals related to religiosity, adventure, entrepreneurship and work cultures within East African localities and among East African communities, they were also complicit in unequal power relations in their encounters with Africans, who could not always participate in the same forms of freedman mobility that Indian traders and merchants did. Relations of violence, inequality, and civilizational and racial hierarchies, of which Indians were complicit, are central to studies of the Swahili Coast and the Western Indian Ocean (Glassman 2010, Burton 2012). In recognition of these gaps, a critical branch of Western Indian Ocean scholarship explores the role of Indian merchants and financiers in the East African slave trade under the governance of the Omani sultanate, focusing specifically on Gujarati Shia Ismailis and Hindu Bhatia trading castes in Zanzibar (Alpers 2007). Even more recently, Indian scholars are recovering the histories of African slaves in the Indian Ocean arena. Some are now exploring the descendants of the African slave trade and the making of *habshi* and *siddi* diaspora communities in contemporary Gujarat and Punjab (Alpers and Caitlin-Jairazboy 2004).

What does the Indian Ocean frame mean for the study of African-Indian relations

in Uganda? First, as discussed in the opening vignette, this analytic frame allows ordinary Indians to mobilize historical lay claims about their ongoing stake in East Africa and the African Continent. Secondly, the Indian Ocean frame depicts Indian emigrants as trans-historical individuals who expanded cosmopolitan ideals to the interior of the continent. According to this vision, it is possible for Indians to participate in a political community that is connected to India and the Indian Ocean, while at the same time living and working in Africa.

In Uganda, Indian Ocean cosmopolitanisms and religiosity and its relationship to work and entrepreneurship are best expressed in the writing of trader-turned-sugar baron Nanji Kalidas Mehta in his autobiography, *Dream Half-Expressed* (1966). Similarly, Allidina Visram, the successful East African pioneer, businessman, and philanthropist who began his career by establishing a small *dukan* in the hinterland, symbolizes similar cosmopolitan ideals surrounding religious piety and the aspirations of a rags-to-riches businessman. Both pioneers maintained lifelong links with their ancestral villages by traveling back and forth between East Africa and India. In Uganda, they continue to be regarded as exemplary role models for the modern-day East African businessman; school children in Uganda often read about both pioneers in their textbooks. Thus, the Indian Ocean frame lends itself to particular celebrations of Indian heritage, religion, and civilization in Africa. In contemporary Uganda, the frame allows interested parties, and especially Ugandan Asians and new South Asian migrants, to justify their presence in East Africa as well as their ongoing relationship and connection to the Indian subcontinent without being viewed as suspicious outsiders within the nation-state.

2) The Imperial Frame: Indians as “Settlers” or “Subjects”?

The second major analytical approach to South Asian presence and African-Asian relations is the relationship between British Indian subjects and British Empire. Conventional historical narratives of Indians in Uganda often begin with the migration of Indians to the Swahili Coast and East Africa in the context of *Pax Britannica*, the partition of Africa and the development of the East African and Uganda Protectorates. Typically, British colonial expansion in the Indian Ocean and East Africa marks the

beginning of the historiography of Indians in Uganda (Mangat 1969, Tinker 1974; 1977). Old-established Indian firms in Zanzibar and on the coast took advantage of their new protection by the European administration; traders expanded rapidly into East Africa. Other Indians, such as clerks and soldiers (Indian emigrants) were recruited specifically for the purpose of opening up the interior for the British (Mangat 1969:27-28).³¹

Thus, Africanist scholarship largely supports the argument that Indians ventured into inner Africa in the context of British colonial enterprise, the establishment of the Uganda Protectorate and the construction of the Uganda Railway (Mangat 1969, Mamdani 1975:31). The railway itself has symbolic significance for understanding the relationship between Indians and Africans in East and Central Africa. As Thomas Metcalf writes, colonial officer Sir Harry Johnston described the Uganda Railway as a “wedge of India” driven into the heart of Africa (2006:188). Much of the historical scholarship on Indians in East Africa describes “the penetration of Indians into the interior” alongside the railway line from Mombasa to Lake Victoria. In the South African context, Thomas Blom Hansen describes a similar problem of “Indian penetration” in the correspondence among British officers in Natal (Hansen 2012:29-30). The phallic connotations of a colonizing Indian presence, moving from former arenas of containment on the East African coast into the “African interior,” is a symbol and discourse that shaped colonial policies that sought to control the immigration of Indians into both East and South Africa for most of the 20th century.

Despite the unwillingness of the India Office, the foreign office managed to engage a total of 31,983 Indian indentured laborers for the construction of the Uganda Railway over the period 1896-1902 (Mangat 1969:31-32, Metcalf 2006:200).³² 10-15% of the indentured would renew their contracts or return to East Africa on fresh indentures after their three-year contracts ended (Mangat 1969:37). Railway laborers, more pejoratively referred to as *coolies* by Europeans, were largely recruited in Lahore, with

³¹ The recruits included Parsees and Goans in the civil and clerical service and Punjabi Muslims and Sikhs from the British Indian army, who were instrumental in allaying Kabaka Mwanga’s rebellion and the mutiny of Sudanese troops in British East Africa in the 1890s (Mangat 1969:40-44). Significantly, the migration of Sikh troops to Uganda would contribute to future migrations of Sikhs to East and Central Africa.

³² The India Office was aware of political activities concerning the abolition of indentured labor for other overseas Indians in different parts of the British Empire; thus the Office equivocated between the claims of the indentured and its own interests.

Karachi serving as the main port of embarkation.³³ Generally, scholars agree that this surge of indentured Indian migrants was rather short-lived.³⁴ However, the indentured played other critical roles: the massive influx of Indian laborers into East Africa required the addition of close to 5,000 subordinate Indian staff who lived in the makeshift camps that proliferated along the railway line (Mangat 1969:38). Indian traders from the coast and those recruited through kinship networks from Surat and Kutch in Northeast India, followed the indentured inland as they laid tracks to Lake Victoria. Indians engaged in horticultural practices near the line; traders sold commodities in small *dukans* that fanned out from the railway. As settlements and towns were established, an array of civil servants, skilled and semiskilled laborers, and Indian soldiers in the British Army migrated to and settled in British East Africa. This large-scale transplantation of Indian labor into the interior of the continent also resulted in the imposition of the institutions of British India: legal systems, currency, administrative infrastructures, etc. Finally, the officially sponsored migration of indentured laborers provided the impetus for the future emigration of Indians into the interior of the continent.³⁵ Between 1890 and 1920, economic opportunities in British East Africa attracted between 10 and 20,000 “free” Indian migrants; this migration of “free” Indian economic migrants increased substantially during the interwar years (Gregory 1993:304, Nagar 1996:63).³⁶

Thus, Indian migration to Uganda in the late 19th and 20th centuries involved both Indian “emigrants” that served functional purposes in the colonial state, and “free” or

³³ Most indentured laborers came from the Punjab and were Muslims. Others were from Bombay, Sindh, Baluchistan, and the Northwest Frontier Province (Mangat 1969:39).

³⁴ Mangat writes, “of the 32,000 imported for the construction of the Railway, 16,312 returned to India at the expiry of their contracts, 2,493 died, while 6,454 were invalided home after being incapacitated by disease or perhaps at work—thus leaving a balance of 6,724 who failed to avail themselves of their contractual rights to free repatriation to their homes” (1969:39). The seven thousand Indians who remained would become professional artisans and merchants (Gregory 1993:3). The descendants of railway workers and artisans informed the Indian working class in Uganda, almost all would leave during the 1972 expulsion.

³⁵ The Indian Emigration Act, which effectively restricted the emigration of Indians to British East Africa, was amended several times in order to allow select streams of migrants to settle in East African territories (most significantly, in the context of indentured labor and the Uganda Railway). Mangat notes that due to an amendment in 1901, “emigration to East and Central Africa was legalized subject to the emigrants being recruited on specific forms of agreement for skilled and unskilled workers...the recruitment of Indian staff for service with the East African Administration could thus proceed virtually unhampered after this date” (1969:45).

³⁶ The Indian population in the Uganda Protectorate increased from 5200 in 1921, to 14,150 (1931), to 17,300 (1939), and finally, to 77,400 at independence in 1962 (Gregory 1993:4).

“passenger” immigrants to Uganda. And, unlike the settler and plantation colonies that were sustained on the basis of indentured labor from Southern Indian ports, like Natal, Indians in East Africa were composed of North and Northeastern Indian peasant agricultural populations that began to occupy various labor, service-oriented, and commercial positions in Africa. Thus, one can characterize Indian migration and settlement in the imperial era in East Africa as a complex affair: it involved creditors and traders (shop owners and renters), laborers and artisans (indentured and freedmen), army troops, and colonial servants. J.S. Mangat writes, “the early years of the colonial period—particularly the last decade of the nineteenth century—thus had great significance for the penetration of the interior of East Africa by Indian immigrants. This was essentially a three-pronged phenomenon—based on the association of Indian skilled and semi-skilled staff, of Indian troops, and Indian traders with the Imperial effort in the territories” (1969:61). Thus, East African Asian society, and ensuing relations between African and Indian populations, developed in the context of both coercive and voluntary migration and labor, *viz* indentured and “passenger” Indian migration to East Africa.

Nuanced analyses of these complex histories of Indian migration to East Africa and their social, political, and economic implications have yet to emerge. It is unclear, for example, what social relations among indentured and freedmen railway laborers and associated employees might have been like; nor do we know what the transition from indentured servitude to “freedom” entailed for Indians in the Uganda Protectorate. Similarly, the extent to which British Indian subjects were constrained or able to move across different parts of the Empire; namely, India and East Africa, have yet to be explored more deeply.

Rather than a more rigorous analysis of the socio-political dynamics of Indian migration to East Africa, or even the civilizational politics of this migration, anthropologists have tended to focus on the multi-racial organization of colonial society in Uganda. Following the terminology used by J.S. Furnivall and Fredrik Barths, historian Hugh Tinker and anthropologist H.S. Morris described East Africa as a “plural society” (Morris 1957b, Tinker 1977). The plural society, according to Furnivall’s formulation, is “a society comprising two or more social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit...in many tropical countries the result of the

process has been a division of labor across racial lines” (Morris 1957b:124). In the East African context, the composition of society is such that “various sections of the population are marked off from one another by criteria of physical and cultural differences...in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda, Europeans are thought to constitute an administrative, legal, and directive upper class, the Indians are said to form an economic and trading middle class, and Africans are believed, by themselves as much by other sections of the population, to be the urban and rural working classes of society” (Morris 1957b:124).

In a more politicized formulation, Yash Tandon and Arnold Raphael, writing in the aftermath of the 1972 expulsion, describe historical processes of “compound colonialism” in Uganda and other East African nations as creating a vulnerable “dual minority,” and a “trilateral minority problem” (1984[1973]:3). Tandon and Raphael note that East African Asians sought “cultural” and “spiritual” support from India, but looked to Britain for protection and economic survival. Thus, “East African Asians possessing British nationality are, in a real sense, a dual minority. They are a minority for both Britain and the East African countries, and many of their problems arise out of this peculiar predicament of theirs” (Tandon and Raphael 1984[1973]:3).

Analyses of the post-colonial predicament of the Indian “minority” in East Africa and the historical development of the “plural” or “compound colonial” society have compelled scholars to consider whether Indians in East Africa are “settlers” or “subjects.” This is especially relevant for the *non-European settler* contexts of Uganda and Tanganyika, and in contrast to the Indian proletariat in South Africa, where indentured labor migration predominated over the passenger migration of wealthier Gujarati merchants. Hugh Tinker, for example, describes Indians as “auxiliary imperialists” in his scholarship (1977). In a recent study, Thomas Metcalf (2007) argues that India constituted a central “node” or “sub-empire” within the British Empire. He writes, “the existence of the Raj...made possible British imperial conquest, control, and governance across a wide arc of territory stretching from Africa to eastern Asia. Further, with India placed at its center, the British Empire has to be imagined differently. In this vision, India is not just one among many British colonies, or a ‘periphery’ of the capitalist system, or a land of ‘subalterns’ struggling to be free. It is in addition a nodal point from which

people, ideas, goods, and institutions—everything that enables an empire to exist—radiated outward” (Metcalf 2007:1) He highlights the agency of individual Indians in expanding colonial governance in the Indian Ocean arena. Thus, in the early decades of colonization, Metcalf’s vision of British East Africa coincides with the idea of East Africa as an “America of the Hindu,” or a “land where Indian immigrants might freely settle to pursue whatever occupation they choose” (2007:165). Indeed, this argument projects a vision of Indian migration to East Africa as a social and economic process dominated by Indian class aspirations and social mobility.

In his efforts to stress the role of Indian “sub-empire,” it should be argued that Metcalf displaces the role of the British in directing and driving imperial enterprise and the activities of colonized subjects, as well as the historiography of Indian indentured labor in East Africa. In contrast, Africanist scholars have argued that Indians in African territories were also subalterns affected by many aspects of the colonizing structure. As discussed in the introduction, in Mahmood Mamdani’s (1996) formulation of the bifurcated state and “decentralized despotism” as the defining structure of colonialism in Africa, Asians and Arabs (Indian and Lebanese immigrant minorities) are “subject races,” or “colons in the settler colony” (1996:20). Indians were also colonized in that they had less rights and privileges than European settlers and colonial administrators, but various privileges in relation to indigenous Africans. For example, the racist colonizing structure allowed for the increased mobility of Indians within and across colonial territories, in contrast to East Africans. Thus, Indians are often constructed as “mobile” subjects within the lineaments of British Empire, with access to kin, credit, and enterprise in India and East Africa. By contrast, Africans are rendered as “fixed” and “rooted” autochthones in colonial territories.

The structures of colonization also entailed a colonization of consciousness, in the Fanonian sense.³⁷ As British subjects in the empire, who ostensibly could claim equal treatment with other members of the Empire, Indians sought similar rights and treatment as Europeans in the colonies. In the process, they mobilized patronizing discourses that rendered Africans as less civilized as themselves. The extent to which Indians in the decolonization era married their interests and agitation for political rights to the interests

³⁷ See Fanon (1967).

of African subjects is a question that has also concerned scholars (Gregory 1993:23). In the post-colonial era, Mahmood Mamdani has argued that the “subject” races of East Africa, in the context of processes of Africanization, became interested in defending their colonial-era racial privilege (Mamdani 1996:20). The discussion surrounding Indians’ status as “settlers,” “subjects,” “subalterns,” became extremely important as Indians sought to assert their African identity in the post-colonial era (see introduction).

What is the relevance of the imperial frame for African-Indian relations in Uganda? The imperial frame, rather than normative studies of territorial colonization or the nationalist framework, unravels established dualities of metropole and colony; colonizer (read: European) and colonized (read: African).³⁸ Rather, Indians come to occupy a liminal “third figure” position in African Studies and colonial historiography. In respect to Ugandan historiography, it becomes clear that Indians should be studied as members of the Uganda Protectorate and the broader imperial territories of which they were part. The imperial frame allows scholars to analyze both colonized South Asians and Africans as they interacted in multiple and overlapping spaces; with the possibility of recovering imperial African-Asian subjectivities.

The imperial frame is not only relevant for thinking through the constitution of colonial society in Uganda. Contemporary Uganda is composed of East African Asians (ex-Ugandan Asians), who either were or are descended from former British subjects and imperial citizen-subjects. Ugandan Asians who remained and those who returned can be understood as “post-imperial citizens.”³⁹ They constitute a complex diaspora of “colonial capitalism.” This Ugandan Asian “diaspora of colonial capitalism” is markedly different from the emerging Indian “diaspora of globalization.” The chapters that follow will unravel the perceived differences between the post-imperial Ugandan Asian diaspora and new South Asian migrants in Uganda.

3) National Communities: Indians as Citizens and Non-Citizens

The third major spatial frame relevant to the study of African-Asian relations is

³⁸ See Hunt (1999:7-8).

³⁹ In contrast to more recent migrations of post-colonial Indians and Pakistanis from the South Asian sub-continent.

the predominant frame: the nationalist frame. As discussed in Chapter 1, the national frame became deeply entrenched by East African historians in response to processes of decolonization, the formation of the independent nation-state, and processes of Africanization, particularly in the late 1960s and 1970s. In the context of increasing restrictions on immigration and business enterprise, the onus was on representatives of the “Indian community” to prove their allegiances to Africans and to an African national order via the adoption of formal citizenship after independence or other routes to participation within the national community, i.e., the redistribution of wealth to African communities, participation in Africans’ anti-colonial activism, and racial integration via exogamy and cross-racial intermarriage (see Chapter 6).

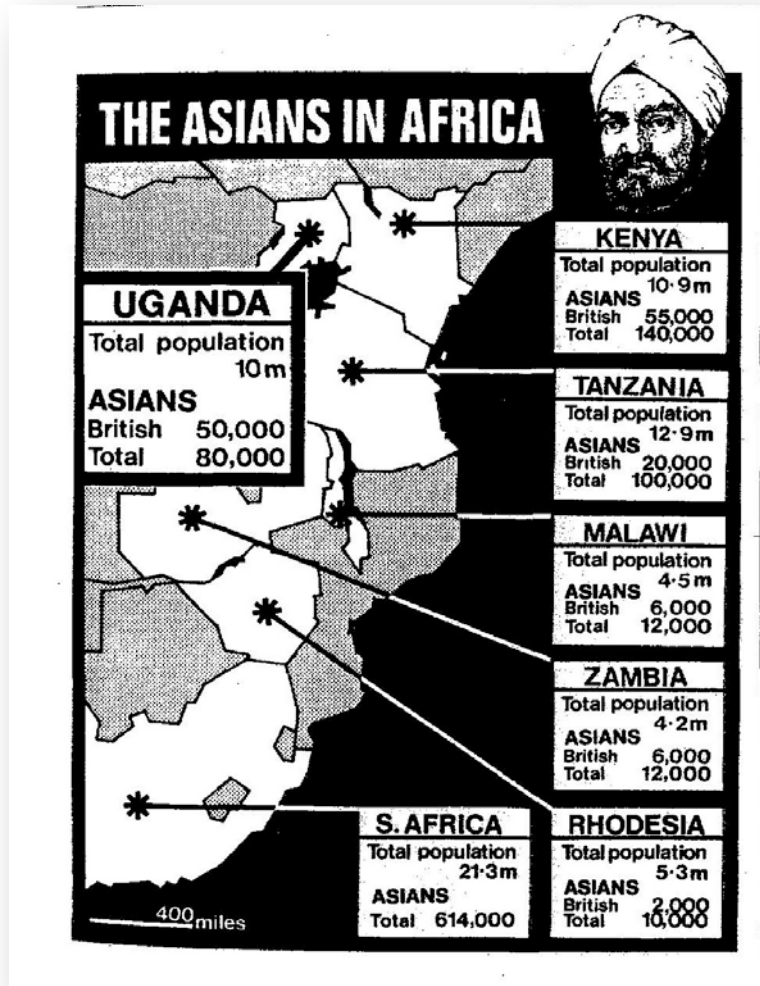


Figure 8: The Asians in Africa. An illustration that appeared in international newspapers during the 1972 expulsion crisis. It explains the complexities of formal citizenship for East African Asians. Source: Lalani (1997).

How did Indians themselves apprehend their positions in the context of African anti-colonialism? Were they sympathetic to African national anti-colonial projects; or, rather, parochial and self-interested capitalist entrepreneurs? Despite the effects of racial and social apartheid on Indian and African subjects, would it be possible to locate instances of nascent cross-racial African-Asian solidarity and experimentation within colonial polities? Numerous axes of the debate on East African Asians and other colonial “outsiders” continue to be explored by scholars of East Africa. Jim Brennan, for instance, writes that scholars of South Asian traders and laborers in the Indian ocean arena and

East Africa have “generally treated this group in three ways—in relative isolation as cultural units, as vectors of capital who exploited Africans to enrich themselves, foreign interests, and the colonial state, or as benefactors who contributed health care and education to Africans and crucially assisted African nationalists against the colonial state” (Brennan 1999:24).

South Asians did participate in moral debates surrounding their “middling” role in East African colonial and post-colonial society. Within their own communities, allegiances were often split between those with a multi-generational orientation towards national citizenship (an African identity politics), and the more transient members of mobile trading diasporas, often “on the move” around the Indian Ocean, perhaps migrating to the United Kingdom. For instance, East African Asian intellectual and political activists such as Kenyan trade unionist Makhan Singh and Ugandan activist Rajat Neogy found themselves at odds with powerful Indian entrepreneurs and agrobusiness tycoons like Nanji Kalidas Mehta and Jayant Madhvani. Tycoons highlighted their prosperity and successes in East Africa based on cultural and ethno-religious claims surrounding individual merit and agency (Madhvani and Foden 2008:22, Theroux 1996). They acknowledged, but often minimized, the impact of the colonial situation on their life chances; rather, they highlighted the ways in which they had forged their own paths to prosperity in East Africa, often emphasizing practices of philanthropy and social contribution (Madhvani and Foden 2008:22). Thus, processes of nation building in East Africa revealed a complex and divided population of South Asians, many of whom would claim an “African” national identity via formal citizenship, or move on to other prospects.

While I have outlined the dynamics of the Ugandan nationalist frame more intensively in Chapter 1, I note here that it is linked to some of the most powerful political ideologies mobilized by East African intellectuals: neocolonialism and the critique of international capitalist relations.

Political and Ideological Frames

1) Marxist Politics and Neo-colonialism

East African intellectuals, engaged in nationalist frames in their analyses of African-Asian relationships, also mobilized the politics of neo-colonialism in their critique of colonialism, largely in the 1970s and 1980s. Interested in practices of economic, cultural, and social domination of colonized countries, scholars initially focused on the ongoing nature of unequal economic arrangements between colonized countries and capital from the former Empire, particularly multinational corporations.⁴⁰ Their work was influenced by Immanuel Wallerstein's theories on the political nature of the capitalist world economy, which defined geopolitical relations between the "core" and "periphery" (what eventually came to be known as the "Third World" and the "First World"). In this formulation of the world system, "the exploitation of the periphery by the core is necessary to the reproduction of capitalism as a system" (Hoogvelt 2001:15). Analysts of "neocolonialism" sought to highlight the ongoing dependency of colonial countries on the Global North, particularly with the advent of the Bretton Woods Institutions and the discursive construction of the "developed" and "underdeveloped" world (Escobar 1994). In practice, modernization theory advocated "the convergence of less-developed societies to the Western mode," and "they also helped to strengthen the illusion of independence and of the sovereignty of the national developmental state" (Hoogvelt 2001:36-37). Dependency theorists such as Andre Gunder Frank and others sought to critique the ways that modernization theory was enmeshed in international finance institutions. They also criticized the ways that modernization theory uncritically accepted the "developed nature" of Europe and the "undeveloped" nature of the formerly colonized world, mobilizing abstract theories of societal evolution.

Rather, scholars interested in the critique of neocolonialism and dependency theory contended that the penetration of colonial capital distorted the society and economy of new nations and would result in the pauperization of the masses and extreme patterns of social inequality across the urban-rural divide in Africa. They argued that national economies were subordinated to the structure of advanced capitalist economies, that colonial countries produced primary goods for the production structure and

⁴⁰ Scholars' interests shifted to the neocolonial nature of political governance--particularly studies of the transfer of the colonial apparatus to an internally based African ruling elite—in the post-Cold War era. See especially Bayart (2000) and Mamdani (1996).

industrialization of advanced capitalist countries, and that local industrialization was prevented. Colonial countries were “externally oriented” and relied on overseas markets for capital and technology sourcing, becoming dependent on external economies (Hoogvelt 2001:38-39). Finally, dependency theorists argued that the economic structure resulted in a class alliance between foreign capital and the comprador (landed and mercantile elites). Hoogvelt argues that, “the export-orientated primary production structure found its hand-maiden in a frozen internal class structure dominated by a small landed and mercantile (or comprador) elite, whose economic interests became increasingly intertwined with those of the advanced capitalist states, and whose cultural lifestyles and tastes were a faithful initiation of the same” (2001:39).

Intellectuals, influenced by the lectures and writing of Guyanese Panafricanist Walter Rodney at the University of Dar Es Salaam, were part of a milieu at the university that studied the colonial situation and the dynamics of neocolonialism in the context of international political economy and law. Issa Shivji, Yashpal Tandon, Mahmood Mamdani, and a number of African presidents such as Yoweri Museveni, Jakaya Kikwete, and Laurent Kabila, trained or taught at Dar es Salaam.⁴¹ In the process, they refined their intellectual and political programs and formulated ideologies of the “African Revolution” through their access to a diverse global archive: Frantz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, Karl Marx, Pan-Africanists such as Kwame Nkrumah, and Negritudists like Leopold Senghor.

South Asian and African intellectuals were divided by the political ideologies of Marxism and Pan-Africanism, particularly as African leaders redefined national communities through the politics of racialized exclusion in the 1960s and 1970s. Both programs for social revolution and liberation (Marxism and Pan-Africanism) seemed to parallel the politics of “Ugandanization,” followed by “Africanization” as the first and second phases of transferring wealth and ownership of the means of production to Africans in the new nation. Asian intellectuals, for instance, generally sought to re-examine the imperialist development and dynamics of African peasant economies in the context of a metropolitan and global capitalist system of profiteering and exploitation. By

⁴¹ Shivji, Issa and Marc Wuyts. 2009. “Reflections: An Interview with Issa G. Shivji” in Pambazuka News, No. 416. January 22nd. Accessed 8/27/2012.

applying the critique of political economy and classical Marxist theory, particularly the methodologies of dialectical materialism and historical materialism, they explored the production of racialized capitalism in African economies and societies. They did so despite critiques from classical Marxists and Pan-Africanist intellectuals that Marxist theory was inapplicable to the African situation because of its lack of “classes,” and that it was a false and misguided import of Western ideology. Issa Shivji, for example, argued against this anti-Marxist argument, which he interpreted as the position of a bourgeois and idealist African intelligentsia, below:

The bourgeois version of the argument in Africa emphasizes that Marxism was essentially developed in, and, therefore, for the highly developed capitalist societies and that ‘Marxist socialism’ essentially refers to that socialism which would develop from the womb of such highly developed capitalist countries. In Africa there is no highly developed capitalism, and, therefore according to Marxism, we would first have to develop capitalism. Of course we can’t do that says the African socialists. We have to skip the capitalist stage and this means we can’t apply Marxism...in other words there is no developed capitalism in Africa and therefore the Marxist analysis of capitalism is ipso facto irrelevant. Therefore we must build on the basis of African traditions-hence African Socialisms (Shivji 1976:14).⁴²

Notably, South Asian intellectuals responded to the crisis of citizenship for Asians in East Africa by integrating Indians into their class analyses of neocolonial national economies. In doing so, they sought to point out, as Karl Marx did, that class relations were constituted not only by the relationship between man and object, but by man’s relationship to man. Thus, the production process was a social process composed of social relations of production, which heightened social tensions between Asians and Africans. In the East African context, these social-cum-class relations were racialized. As Mamdani writes, “the point about the commercial bourgeoisie in Uganda was that it was an Indian commercial bourgeoisie. In fact, from the very outset, the colonial state directed its administrative machinery towards the repression of African traders, at the same time encouraging Indian traders. For this, the state had excellent reasons, both economic and political” (Mamdani 1975:30). In Uganda, and other non-settler contexts such as Tanzania, Indian capital emerged as the “dominant territorially-based class”

⁴² Ali Mazrui (1979), in particular, was a critic of the Western importation of Marxist theory to the African situation through his discussion of Africans’ and Indians’ status as “trans-class” individuals.

(Mamdani 1975:32). Thus, intellectuals stressed that what seemed to be “race” or “ethnicity,” was, in fact “class.”⁴³

Largely, Indians constituted the commercial bourgeoisie class, or comprador capitalist class that was linked to an absent metropolitan (European) bourgeoisie. Thus, Marxist intellectuals noted that the “dominant relation between the majority of the Africans and the majority of the Asians was commercial. The African peasant met the Asian mainly as a producer and a consumer—the Asian being the trader, the middleman, and the creditor” (Shivji 1976:41). Indians, in their roles as wholesale and retail traders, bankers and creditors, ginners and industrialists, were the crucial urban “go-betweens” or “middle-men” between an African proletariat with absentee white colonials. In the process, Indians would accumulate surplus capital through a variety of cultural and ethnic strategies of thriftiness, entrepreneurial skills, and credit networks among kin members, producing significant domestic wealth in their urban-based communities. Vali Jamal estimates that in 1967, “practically the whole of the modern sector remained in the hands of non-Africans—and government-owned companies. Non-Africans received thirty-three percent of the monetary GDP, the state firms accounting for no more than five percent. Thus, even on a most conservative basis, the 1.3 percent of the population who were non-Africans received over one-quarter of the national income. These figures imply that non-African income was thirty times as great as African income and twenty times as great as average income” (Jamal 1976:611).

Thus, Indians were central to the development of the (neo)colonial economy, the constitution of and production of metropolitan wealth, and the exploitation of indigenous Africans. It must be noted that this predominant framework for understanding structural relations between Indians and Africans was an orthodox class analysis. It generally produced both Indians and Africans as objects in a racially hierarchical system in which Europeans themselves seemed abstract, distant and absent. Rather, transnational and extractive European capital needed to be uncovered and de-mystified.

A more nuanced class analysis derived understandings of Indian “middlemen” who had varying degrees of agency in a holistic and profit-oriented colonial apparatus.

⁴³ See Chapter 6 for further discussion. The conflation of “race” and “class” among South Asians in East Africa continues to characterize popular tropes of Indians in East Africa.

These analyses more successfully explored class relations as the primary conditions for social relations on the ground. Shivji, for example, writes,

...this was not merely an ecological relation, an urban-rural conflict, nor only a situation of contact between two cultures, between two ethnic groups with different economic resources, justifying the pre-eminence of one ethnic group over another...it was not only a matter of contact between two populations: the Asian and the African were integrated within a single economy, in a single society. The hub of the system...was the commercial sector which acted both as a channel through which surplus from the African producer could be pumped, and as the main centre of capitalist accumulation within the domestic society. This process of accumulation being responsible for reproducing the African as the producer of surplus and the Asian trader as the appropriator on behalf of the metropolitan bourgeoisie (Shivji 1976:43).

Two major interpretations, revolving around ideas of Indian agency and Indian culpability, can be elucidated from the literature on class formation in East African societies. I argue that the Indian commercial bourgeoisie could be apprehended as “bad capitalists” and “good capitalists.” The former position located Indians as “collaborators” and profiteers of an exploitative neo-colonial economy, particularly big capital Indian entrepreneurs and industrialists with links to British capital and banks (Barongo 1984). Others would read Indians, particularly the petty trading class and colonial servants, as colonized subjects who were “manipulated” by European interests. In this formulation, Uganda-based Indians were the convenient scapegoats, and “masks” of the “real” colonizer (Mamdani 1975, Prashad 2001). Petty Indian capitalists, the visible and predominant wholesale and retail traders in urban areas, personified the “authentic” European capitalists and profiteers of the Ugandan agricultural economy (Mamdani 1975:39).

Class analysis that sought to understand the role of Indians in the neo-colonial political economy of Uganda peaked in response to Idi Amin’s dictatorial decree and eventual expulsion of Asians. Popular assertions and explanatory models of the expulsion had explained the event as a result of long-standing African-Asian enmity: anti-Black racism among South Asians, African anti-Asian sentiment, and a base, primitive, and violent racialism (and even anti-Semitism) propagated by President Idi Amin Dada (Campbell 1975). The role of the Western media in emphasizing Amin’s character as an example of Black African primitiveness and irrationality would compel scholars to

explain the expulsion as a result of the dysfunctional colonial racialized structure of capitalism and widening racialized economic inequality. They also unearthed a longer history of anti-Asian violence in Uganda that was also related to workers' strikes against the Baganda elite.⁴⁴ In the aftermath of the expulsion, scholars and spectators would agree that despite their surprise at the expulsion announcement, due to the structural and historical nature of the relationships between Indians and Africans, it was "inevitable" (Twaddle 1975:1-14).

It is now clear that Marxist theory and class analysis served a significant role for the East African intelligentsia in the 1960s and 1970s. It revealed the inner-workings of an exploitative imperial and neocolonial political economy; it examined the structural, geographical, ecological and social relationships between Africans and Indians as they labored in the service of colonial expansion and metropolitan wealth accumulation. Finally, it exposed the ongoing consequences of extractive British capital and domestic Indian wealth accumulation in urban Uganda.

As we move into the new era of South-South relations, what will be the legacy of Marxist theory and politics, and how will it serve our contemporary understandings of African-Asian relations? By virtue of its structural analysis, scholarship on African-Asian relationships during the dependency theory era stressed binaries and dualisms of colonizer and colonized, metropole and colony, capitalist (commercial bourgeoisie class) and worker (rural peasant proletariat), "African" and "Indian." Moreover, the Indian "middleman" figure was, and continues to be, reproduced as an ongoing central East African archetype.

Thus, orthodox Marxist analysis has its fair share of problems. East African Asians analyzed social classes as if they were object and static social facts, rather than exploring social and cultural processes of class mobility and class aspiration. Ali Mazrui argues,

⁴⁴ Strikes and riots against the Indian and Baganda elite occurred in all major towns of Uganda in 1945 and 1949. The first major call for the Africanization of Indian trade was put forth by Augustine Kanya in 1954 and 1959 (Mamdani 1975:37-39). Informally, Ugandan elders referred to the anti-Indian boycotts of the 1950s as "the Battle of the Bahindi" during my fieldwork period.

What is most interesting for our purposes...is that the idea that the first major wave of Indian immigration into East Africa consisted of laborers was profoundly proletarian. It converted the Indian presence into a historical phenomenon which had its origins in the indignity of indentured labor...and yet by the end of their stay in East Africa, the Indians were identified as among the most privileged and affluent. They had passed through a historical process, stretching from the chains of railway construction to the gold bangles of bourgeois affluence. As usual, the actual truth was more complicated than the political myth. Many Asians in East Africa were in fact still laborers, sometimes repairing railway lines, sometimes constructing new buildings; many were also small artisans or clerks in banks and businesses. But on balance, their incomes were considerably higher than the incomes of average [B]lack Ugandans (Mazrui 1979:276).

I argue that other histories of Indian labor, those that intersected with, but were not those of Indian traders (indentured railway laborers, civil servant class, working class, and the domestic labor and kinship work carried out by Indian women) are erased from the predominant post-exodus narrative of African-Asian relations.⁴⁵

Indeed, economic reductionism proved to be a considerable obstacle in the scholarship on African-Asian relations in Uganda. While objective class and race-based identities allow scholars to construct general social models, they rule out possibilities for particularity, hybridity, subjectivity, and experience. Thus, one of the most profound effects of the East African exodus on scholarship on African-Asian relations is that post-structural and post-modern re-evaluations of identity, positionality, and subjectivity did not fully develop. East African Asian feminist scholars Avtar Brah (1996) and May Joseph (1999), *vis à vis* their locations in the Europe and North American diaspora, would initiate this critical work by exploring intersections of race/ethnicity, gender, class, and identity.

Finally, returning to the tensions between Marxists and Pan-Africanists, economic reductionism flattened the colonizing structure into a story of capitalist exploitation of Brown and Black people, trumping the psychological and social effects of colonial governance, as well as the making of colonial identity and subjectivity.⁴⁶ Marxists and Pan-Africanists became alienated from each other as both argued for different models of liberation politics (class-based, race-based, or both). Below, I delve deeper into the

⁴⁵ Is it possible to recover the history of Luganda-speaking, working-class (African) Indian in Uganda? Likewise, social histories of the Indian poor, indigent, elderly, and of widows have yet to be recovered.

⁴⁶ For instance, among East African writers, Frantz Fanon (1967) and Aimé Césaire (1972 [1955]) provided considerable analytic purchase for understanding the psychological dimensions of colonization in the “plural society.”

politics of Pan-Africanism and its relationship to intra-continental African-Asian relations.

2) Pan-Africanism, Bandung and Afro-Asian Solidarity

The idea of “Afro-Asian relations,” as noted above, originates in multiple historical contexts and locations. The resurgence of South-Southism and the interconnectedness of the Global South in contemporary Kampala is linked to critical historical events that shaped the trajectories and possibilities of new sovereign nations in formerly colonized parts of the world. In his scholarship, Christopher Lee (2010) uses the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, Indonesia as a central point of orientation and as a foundational historical moment for thinking through the possibilities of decolonization and African-Asian relations. Bandung signified a mode of imagining and inventing new types of political communities and trans-racial and cultural solidarities.

Indeed, the politics of Afro-Asian solidarity articulated at Bandung, the conferences that followed, and the larger Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) are part of a longer genealogy of anti-colonial activism rooted in Pan-Africanist politics in and beyond the African continent. As Lee observes, Bandung traced “an alternative chronology of world events organized by intellectuals and activists of color who had been subjected to forms of colonialism, racism, and class oppression” (2010:9). W.E.B. Du Bois, for instance, was the earliest scholar and activist to theorize beyond an exclusively Black racialized notion of the African diaspora. By envisioning alliances across populations, Du Bois’s vision of Pan-Africanism incorporated the “dark races of mankind” and “the teeming millions of Asia and Africa” (Shepperson 1960). Visions of anti-colonial and trans-racial solidarity would continue to be expressed in 20th century Pan-African Congresses. Africanist scholars who focus on the politics of nationalism often overlook the longer trajectories of Pan-Africanist projects and their efforts in carving out not only projects of Black modernity, but cross-racial politics.

However, the other side of Pan-Africanist politics was its promotion of an exclusively Black racialized project of liberation and modernity. Some Pan-Africanist intellectuals and politicians promoted a biological notion of Blackness, seeking to unify

“the Black race” across the globe. The underside of Pan-Africanism was its evolution into a fully-fledged Black nationalism and violent Africanization in the high nationalist period. Pan-Africanists who mobilized their activism as a form of Black liberation politics promoted the de-racialization and expulsion of non-indigenous settler communities (European and Asian) in the newly independent nations.

In light of the racial tensions embedded in Pan-Africanist politics, it is interesting to note that historical ideologies of Afro-Asian solidarity have been re-fashioned into the new framework of “South-South” relations among Africa, China, and India. As recent scholars remind us, South-Southism is also an intellectual project reproduced in new scholarship on Indian and Chinese political and economic interests in Africa. Writing of this recent resurgence of a romanticized narrative of cross-racial Global South solidarity, Antoinette Burton reminds her readers that, “recent attention to the urgency of economic and political cooperation between the Indian government and African states—otherwise known as south-south globalization—suggests that the time has come for new histories of “Afro-Asian solidarity” (Burton 2012:1). At the same time, it is important not to overdetermine the role of Bandung and other Afro-Asian projects that emerged in the Cold War-era in the making of contemporary South-South geopolitical and diplomatic relations. South-Southism (see below) is not simply a linear and temporal progression from Pan-Africanist and Afro-Asian projects. More important is a critical and intellectual project that recognizes the many temporalities, locations, and contexts of Afro-Asian intercontinental and trans-racial solidarity.

3) South-Southism, Continental Drift, and Alternative Globalization

The final frame of analysis is both spatial and ideological. As evinced in the opening narrative, the most recent version of the “third space” imaginary is the geopolitical re-framing of North-South relationships into a renewed focus on the “Global South” and “South-South” relations. In the wake of the 2008 economic crisis, the contraction of labor markets and casualization of employment in Western societies, formerly colonized nations, devastated by structural adjustment policies in Latin America in the 1970s and in Africa and Asia in the 1980s, have survived the crisis and

experienced growth in their economies. The traditional focus on Asia's "tiger" economies have now shifted to popular discussions of Africa as an emerging market of consumers (Mahajan 2009). Jean and John Comaroff note, "the rapid increase of foreign direct investment (FDI) south of the Sahara in the past decade—capital inflows to Africa rose by 16 percent to \$61.9b in 2008, while falling 20 percent worldwide (Guo 2010:44)—has led Ferguson (2006:41), among others, to speculate that African countries might be less sites of "immature forms of globalization" than quite 'advanced' and 'sophisticated' versions of it" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012:15).

Following emerging patterns of regional alliances among former NAM countries such as India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA), "South-Southism," now refers to the "real" and "imagined" relationship between African, Asian, and Latin American countries as sovereign allies in development. For example, the use of "continental drift" among Southern theorists refers to the need for the "South" to "learn from each other's experience and forge stronger political alliances and economic integration that they already seem to be moving towards independently..." (Gudavarthy 2009:93). In their introduction to *The Rise of China and India in Africa*, Fantu Cheru and Cyril Obil explain, "in this emerging order, China, India, Brazil and South Africa are poised to play a greater role, particularly in the retreat of the Washington Consensus and its rather poor record in Africa, in providing some support and an enabling international environment for the continent to chart its own developmental course" (2010:1).

Thus, political elites, economists, and intellectuals alike mobilize the South-South frame in order to redefine the terms of national sovereignty according to the needs of formerly colonized countries. Commentators suggest that establishing an "alternative global regime of development" will help to confront the onslaught of neoliberal policies initiated by Northern countries and actively aided by international finance institutions (Gudavarthy 2009:93). In the African context, the development of regional formations—such as the African Union (AU), New Partnership of Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the East African Community (EAC)—and their willingness to forge "lateral" alliances with other nations in the South, provide optimism that African nations will subvert millennial and neoliberal capital in its most recent incarnation of "Empire" (Hardt and Negri 2001). This nexus of

power relations refers to a horizontal and international complex of financial and international institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Group of Seven, Inter-American Bank Development Bank, USAID, and global corporations. These institutions require the state to maintain its sovereignty in order to retain its autonomy and pursue its own policies and needs. At the same time, the state “must be willing to cohabit with multiple centres of power that challenge its unitary notions of sovereignty” (Gudavarthy 2009:94).

China and India, in particular, have major consequences for our understanding of contemporary East Africa. Both Asian countries are viewed as models for development among African leaders and nations. Cheru and Obi and write,

China’s and India’s historical experience as former colonies and their spectacular development experience since the mid-1970s have raised hopes among African nations that they too can one day break away from the shackles of poverty, underdevelopment, and aid dependency. Of particular note is the re-kindling of interest within Africa in the role of developmental states and the importance of experimenting with heterodox economic policies...there is widespread belief among African policy-makers and some African scholars that China and India, with increased economic interest in Africa, can provide strategic options and a policy space that African countries have been compelled to surrender to since the 1980s in the process of implementing donor-mandated structural adjustment programmes...(2008:2)

As I develop further in the next chapter, Indian and Chinese interests in Uganda have increased substantially since the early 2000s. These political-economic shifts have transformed the possibilities of recognition and integration for those once deemed as “foreigners” and “non-citizens” in the Ugandan polity. Indeed, most theorists have not explored the links between South-Southism and citizenship, issues with which I am concerned.

But Chinese and Indian interests in Uganda and other parts of Africa also raise new concerns. The first major issue is that Chinese and Indian entities in Africa act as nouveau-imperialists rather than “partners in cooperation.” India, and especially China, which has a poorer track record in some parts of Africa, is interpreted as a competing neo-colonial power with more traditional Euro-American interests in Africa. The second major concern among intellectuals, particularly neo-Marxist scholars, is that the “South-South” frame capitulates to the rhetoric of modernization theory, development, and

African underdevelopment. According to these individuals, the “South-South” frame does not effectively challenge the ontological origins of Euro-American modernity that posits the need for the “rest” to catch up with the “West.”

Finally, as scholars have been less eager to point out, the South-South frame remobilizes historical and paternalistic civilizational narratives of Indian and Chinese corporations, capital, and businessmen developing Africa and Africans. Rajen Harshe suggests that, “recasting Indo-African ties could be a worthwhile exercise if a few general imperatives are used as guidelines. First, policy-makers in India have to shed their patronizing attitudes toward Africa. Such patronizing attitudes often stem from India’s relatively more developed status in relation to African countries” (2002:4117). Thus, while the rhetoric of the South-South frame suggests the making of lateral and horizontal networks of partnership, as Burton suggests, the unevenness between “India” as a nation and “Africa” as a continent is problematic and implicitly poses relations of verticality between Asian countries and the African continent (Burton 2012:12).

Indian scholars, aware of the limitations of the South-South frame, have responded to celebrations of “partnership in development” by suggesting that, “the locus of India’s engagement with Africa ought to be the welfare of its citizens rather than the interests of the state or the market...India and Africa have a lot to offer to the world and much to learn from each other. This learning involves institutions, communities, and individuals of all hues, and must be based on mutual respect. An important first step to realize this is for Indians to recognize the diversity of the African continent and its historical and cultural experiences” (Malghan and Swaminathan 2008: 23-24).

Gudavarthy writes, “alternative globalization has to be thus based on these three broad principles of moving beyond economic growth and trade-driven development in the economic field; differentiate between democracy and democratization in the political arena; and augment substantive solidarity and claims for recognition in the cultural domain” (2009:95).

Despite the many problems with the South-South political and economic framework, it represents the ongoing political desires of the leaders of colonized countries to imagine alternative forms of sovereignty that are not rooted in the nation-state. Indeed, the “new continental drift” has had a number of consequences at the level

of academic knowledge production and the increase of material sourced for new institutions of research interested in dynamics of the Global South. Studies on the impact of trade relations between India and Africa have resulted in academic conferences devoted to the subject in places such as the Center for African Studies in Mumbai.⁴⁷ Emerging scholarship on the contemporary and historical role of China in Africa has increased sharply in recent years (Alden 2007, Brautigham 2009, Broadman 2007, Manji and Marks 2007). Finally, “South-South” alliances and invocations of a rapidly shifting “multi-polar world” have revived interest on “Afro-Asian solidarity” among leftist cultural historians (Acharya 2008, Lee 2010, Prashad 2001; 2007). All of this suggests an emerging interest in Southern theory and practice that will have implications for anthropological studies of citizenship, capitalism, and other global dynamics.

What might the new South-South frame mean for the study of Afro-Asian relations in Uganda? In Chapter 4, I will investigate the links among South-Southism, Asian investors, and transformations in Ugandan citizenship concept via ethnographic fieldwork. Although social scientists have broadly studied the advantages and disadvantages of “alternative globalizations” in their assessment of Indian and Chinese investment and development politics in Africa, they have left unexamined the dynamics of Asian capital and migration and the historical politics of Asian presence in African contexts.

The Anthropology of Ugandan Indians: Theorizing African-Asian Relations

Ethnographic studies carried out in Uganda played a significant role in the development of Africanist anthropology. The study of African political formations and an emerging field of political anthropology originated in localized studies of African communities in the interlacustrine area (Evans-Pritchard and Fortes 1940, Gutkind and Southhall 1957, Southhall 2004 [1956], Vincent 1971;1982). Rohit Barot writes that “although the Indians have been an entirely distinct element in East Africa, and although their participation in each East African country has had far-reaching social, economic,

⁴⁷ Also, the Centre for African Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, the African Studies Department at Delhi University, and the Center for Indian Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand.

and political consequences, only a handful of sociologists and anthropologists have studied them” (1974:59). For the most part, colonial authorities, missionaries, and trained anthropologists did not regard Indians as suitable subjects for ethnographic study in Africa.⁴⁸ For example, the colonial administration’s disdain for the descendants of “coolies” in East Africa is depicted strongly in M.G. Vassanji’s fictional novel, *The Book of Secrets* (1996). In the text, an administrator regards his assignment to administer an Ismaili Indian community in German East Africa with repugnance.

Generally, historians composed surveys on the migration histories, demographics and composition of Indian communities dominated studies of Indians in East Africa (Delf 1963, Mangat 1969). In the realm of anthropology, H. Stephen Morris’s field studies of Indians in the colonial era provide contemporary ethnographers with an understanding of the dynamics of Indian township life (Morris 1959;1968). Morris, trained in the British school of anthropology, carried out field studies among Indian families in the 1950s and explored the dynamics of ethnicity, religion, caste, kinship, and work in Jinja in Busoga (1959; 1968). Significantly, Morris explored the making and un-making of joint-family systems as Indian traders attained class mobility and became affluent businessmen (1967). He also provides one of the only detailed ethnographic studies of caste politics and the transformation of caste and ritual purity in the context of intensified Indian migration to East Africa (1967; 1968). These studies were also the first to explore the politics of Indian institutional life and the relationship between the “Indian community,” larger social relations, and the colonial state. In his work on communal leaders and relations in Uganda, Morris argues that the notion of the “Indian community, as a social entity, has a tenuous existence as an unrealized ideal.” He further states, “the same is true of the ‘Hindu’ and the ‘Muslim communities.’ The structural units that significantly guide the lives of Indians are the caste and sectarian communities. These are in unending rivalry with one another in relation to a political and administrative system in which the Indians do not as of right share the real powers of taking decisions...in no sense are communal leaders trying to grasp leadership of the ‘Indian community’ as a whole. Even less are they competing with one another to take hold of the state organization of Uganda

⁴⁸ Hilda Kuper (1969) is the sole early professional anthropologist of South African Indians. Most recently, Thomas Blom Hansen (2012) has updated the ethnography of South African Indians with a study conducted in Chatsworth in Durban.

in order to speak for the country as a whole” (1957a:316). Morris, in particular, was interested in the organization of the Khoja Ismailis as a “pace-making group” and model for institutionalizing an Indian religious community in East African society (1957a, 1958).

Swami Agehananda Bharati, *née* Stephen Fischer, a South Asianist, scholar of Vedantic traditions and caste, and anthropologist from Syracuse University, is the second major ethnographer of East African Asians, including Indians in Uganda. In his work, he explores the dynamics of the “Asian minority” in the East African region, most notably in the ethnographic text *Jayhind and Uhuru: Asians in East Africa* (1972). Bharati provides a penetrating analysis of racial, communal, and caste politics among Indian populations in East Africa by asserting that there is a relationship between South Asian caste and ritual purity and anti-Black African attitudes—thereby connecting his analysis of Indian religious life to an analytics of African-Asian animosity. For Bharati, “spiritual condescension,” or “spiritual ethnocentrism” was the major cause of patronizing and negative attitudes towards Africans by Asians in East Africa (1964b; 1966; 1972). Bharati’s concern with the lack of African male-Indian female intermarriages in the context of debates surrounding Indian integration into East African society is also apparent (1965; 1972). His second major contribution is his discussion of caste and class mobility among Indian migrants, or what he regards as processes of “upcasteing” among Hindu and Shia Muslim migrants to East Africa (1972:29;108). Interestingly, Bharati is the sole scholar to adopt a Freudian analytic as he observes and converses with Indians about their increasing anxiety and insecurity in the post-independence Africanization context, or what he refers to as “negritude” (1964a;1964b). Finally, Hatim Amiji’s detailed studies of religious life among Shia Muslims in East Africa, including the Khoja Ismailis, Bohras, and Ithna-asheris, have made significant contributions to understanding the Islamic landscape of East Africa outside of Ahmadiyya (Sunni) Islam (1969; 1971; 1975; 1982).

More recent anthropological attention to South Asians in post-colonial Uganda did not emerge until the crisis of citizenship and impending expulsion and exodus of Asians became clear to researchers and scholars. For example, Michael Twaddle’s edited volume, *Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians* (1975), featured micro-

studies of religious and ethnic South Asian “communities” in Uganda that were published after the expulsion event in Uganda. In contrast to the rather apolitical nature of earlier ethnographic studies of Indians in East Africa, the volume featured a mix of explicit political analysis and personal reaction to the exclusion of Asians from East Africa. For instance, long-term researchers who worked among Indian communities in Uganda noted their surprise at Amin’s expulsion decree and their inability to predict the impending displacement and exile of Indians from the country (Twaddle 1975:1-14). More recently, anthropological studies of race, community, and economic enterprise have emerged in relation to Indians, Europeans, and Lebanese in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Rubbers 2009).

To summarize, anthropological studies of South Asians in Uganda mirrored the synchronic “village” ethnographies of African societies that were current at the time, focusing largely on traditional social phenomena such as caste, religion, and kinship. In contrast, historians of Uganda tended to agglomerate multiple religious and ethnic-based communities together by adopting the British colonial administration’s racialized framework and offering empirical studies of “Asians” in general histories and surveys. Anthropologists, who explored the particularities of cultural phenomena among various communities, often privatized Asian experience within their particular communal frameworks. In the process, they missed broader connections to Africans and African communities in their analyses. The combined effect of both anthropological and historical scholarship in Uganda was two divergent streams of analysis: the first, diachronic racialized histories of Asians; and the second, synchronic communal ethnographies of ethnic, religious, and caste groupings in Uganda. Thus, scholarship on South Asians in Uganda reveals selective data on particular communities in the late colonial and post-colonial era, followed by an effusion of historical and secondary literature on the expulsion of Indians in 1972.

Frames of Personality: Symbolic Orders and Racial and Ethnic Tropes

As discussed above, the racial segmentation of East African society was reflected in the scholarship of anthropologists and historians of Uganda. With the ascendancy of

Marxist political economy in the 1970s, the theorization of race and ethnicity, or race relations in general, was marginal. In both a material and symbolic sense; however, the anthropologist's concern is to continue to study the structural character of "Asian" and "African" relationships in the context of the colonial tri-partite racial order of things. The structural interpretation of Asian and African relationships continues to be relevant to the contemporary East African scene—race and ethnicity, for example, is mapped onto social spaces in urban Uganda.

Scholars have often noted that the organization of the "plural" or the "compound society" entailed the establishment of racial and civilizational hierarchies (Ocaya-Lakidi 1975). While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to trace the origins of racial thought in Uganda and East Africa, I note here that the origins of racial ideologies in East Africa and the reproduction of racist ideologies between African and Indian social groups tend to be located in the colonial encounter between Europeans and Africans. In his own approach to the study of racial thought in Zanzibar, however, Jonathan Glassman argues for an approach that recognizes that "raciology and other Western racisms are historically specific manifestations of a much broader trend in Western thought—and in human thought generally...drawing boundaries between peoples or ethnicity and even ranking them according to universalizing registers of inferiority and superiority have been far from unusual in world-historical terms" (2012:11). Glassman argues that if Africans, Arabs and Asians were active participants in shaping their own ideologies of difference or of racial and ethnic group boundaries, there is little to no scholarship to guide us in this intellectual endeavor.

Despite the efforts of Marxist scholars to minimize racist interpretations of historical conflicts between Ugandan Africans and South Asians in the post-colonial period, the ideologies associated with racial essentialism and racial primordialism are a predominant popular and scholarly frame of analysis. Complex processes of racialization and exclusion in the nationalist period would engender the most vitriolic "Indian" and "African" racial, civilizational, and cultural essentialism than any other historical era in Uganda. Significantly, Ugandan society, due to its non-settler nature, engendered a unique dyadic relationship between Indians and Africans in urban contexts as compared to other East African national contexts. Racist practice and the development of racial

tropes worked both ways. Indeed, scholars who commented on African-Asian animosity and enmity often discussed the absence of British settlers in their analyses. Dent Ocaya-Lakidi, for example, writes of the spectral and invisible presence of the British in his analysis of the 1972 expulsion:

...a great deal of the so-called African attitudes to Asians are in fact European attitudes assimilated and internalized by the Africans. It was often in the interest of white Britons in East Africa's colonial context to have the Asian appear in certain way to both the natives and Britons at home in England...the Asians themselves, being a colonized people and politically weaker than the British, were manipulated to serve the colonizer's economic interests by acting as middlemen between the white colonizers and Black Africans. By becoming the individuals who put colonial exploitative policies into effect, they inevitably came to take the blame for an exploitative colonial system while the real authors of the system, operating often invisibly behind the buffer, remained relatively free from black African hatred (Ocaya-Lakidi 1975:82).

Thus, predominant scholarly frames of analysis argued that "Asian" racial essentialism and anti-Asian sentiment were introduced in East Africa via the British colonial apparatus, and then imbibed and propagated by Africans in their popular apprehensions of Indians. Mangat argues further that British paternalism, moral superiority and arguments for the abolition of the Indian Ocean slave trade engendered harmful public opinion surrounding the complicity of coastal Indians with the slave trade (1969:24). He concludes that, "the adverse criticisms of the Indian community were to provide a precedent for the future and the tendency to use the Indians as a "scapegoat" would continue" (Mangat 1969:24-25). Indeed, racial essentialism surrounding the Indian character and the Indian personality would take shape most strongly in the nationalist era.

In his essay, "Anthropology and the Savage Slot," Michel Rolph-Trouillot notes that the field of anthropology fills a "pre-established compartment within a wider symbolic field, the 'savage' slot of a thematic trilogy that helped to constitute the West as we know it" (Rolph-Trouillot 2003:9). I appropriate the notion of Trouillot's "slot" to suggest that Asians occupy a shifting historical slot of ethno-racial aliens in the East African imaginary. Indeed, given the historical frames discussed above, the "Indian slot" was invented by and mediated by the colonial context and the movement of racialized labor across the British Empire. In the Uganda Protectorate, Baganda and other Africans who encountered Indians reproduced the "Indian slot" through a series of colonial

significations that endured into the post-colonial era.

Racialized tropes of Indians signified them, in large part, as trans-historical and universal Others. Indians became synonymous with affluent traders and with behaviors and personalities associated with trading practices. Ocaya-Lakidi writes, “a factor in generating certain [B]lack attitudes towards the Asians were the Asians themselves in a more direct way, without being manipulated by a third party...the Asians came under criticism by the Africans for exploitation on two grounds: as employees and as middlemen in commerce” (1975:90). Most of their social relationships (but not all, by any means) were limited to the *dukanwalla* shop owner and employee relationship. Like other outsiders and foreigners in the pre-colonial interlacustrine region, traders were viewed with suspicion and mistrust. In East and Central Africa, they symbolized external links with kin, credit, and exotic commodities. As Indian trading communities in East Africa grew, and traders became rich, racialized tropes characterized Indians as capitalist exploiters, “birds of passage” and “get rich immigrants-in-transit” who had no plans of settling in East Africa (Mangat 1969:22, Metcalf 2007:166).

Common racialized tropes of South Asians, extending forth from the colonial period, depicted them as “crafty, money-making, cunning, someone with his soul bound to his body by the one laudable and religious concern to turn his coin to his own advantage, the local Jew, unscrupulous and single-minded in the pursuit of gain, a user of false weights and measures, a receiver of stolen goods, and a ‘Banyan’ contemplating his account book” (Ocaya-Lakidi 1975:85). The trope of the “crafty Banyan” is associated with a broader historical and global genre of the Jewish merchant and associated anti-Semitism. Comparisons between East African Indians and Jews became commonplace in the nationalist period. In his well-known essay, “Hating the Asians,” Paul Theroux writes of the Kenyan situation:

‘They are just like Jews,’ ‘They’re the Jews of East Africa,’ ‘There is a pathetic Jewishness about the Asians in East Africa’—these are the comments that are made glibly by those who want to comment on the Asians but who do not understand either the Asians or the Jews...It is true that the Asians in East Africa are attacked in the same way that the Jews were (and are), but this proves nothing about the Asians. It may prove something about their accuser, for there is more than a passing resemblance to the policy of Africanization and the policy of Aryanization. The concern with racial purity, attacking a minority group on the government radio station, indicting an entire racial

group with ‘unscrupulousness...exploitation...racialist behaviour...’ is the activity of a government which, if it had anything resembling an ideology behind its discriminatory actions, would have to be labeled fascist (1967:32-33).

The Asian “slot” mutated in the post-colonial period. Civilizational accusations surrounding Indian men’s desire to “ape” or “parrot” *wazungu* (*bazungu*) rather than establish solidarity with Africans were frequent (Ocaya-Lakidi 1975). The Indian character became associated with “the apolitical”; and Indians were accused of widespread complicity with the colonial oppressor, especially when South Asian business enterprise was threatened. At the height of anti-Asian sentiment in Africa, political leaders Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, and Idi Amin mobilized a range of powerful pastoral images to identify and exclude South Asians from the larger national community. Indians would be described as “bloodsuckers” and “leeches.” Most notoriously, Idi Amin would accuse Asians of “milking the cow but not feeding it” in Uganda (Madhvani and Foden 2008:177, O’Brien [Tandon] 1972), sentiments that were echoed by Mzee Kashajja and that circulate in Ugandan imaginaries (see Chapter 1). Ali Mazrui described the general environment as an era of anti-Asian sentiment or “Indophobia” (1969). In response, Indian leaders and intellectuals found that South Asians, as the visible minority and foreign presence in the country, had become the “scapegoats” of a wide variety of political and social ills in East Africa (Mangat 1969:175).

In her recent essay in *Transition*, M. Neelika Jayawardane excavates a pernicious historical racist trope of South African Indians: that “everyone has their Indian.” According to Jayawardane, the stereotype “ultimately emphasizes the disposability or interchangeability of the Indian. It says that hustlers big and small—from the illegal *shebeen* [bar] and *spaza* [shop] owner to those who have set up shop in the headiest locations of power...all had their set-up man, their palm greaser, their apologist, their go-between” (2012:52). This South African Indian racial trope can be generalized to East Africa, particularly in the post-colonial period. It has salience for the context of the exodus of East African Asians. The ultimate “disposability” of the Indian by those in power, particularly those East African Asians engaged in nationalist and anti-colonial causes is consistent with narratives that continue to circulate in popular imaginings of the

expulsion and its aftermath. Likewise, the ultimate disposability of the Indian businessman who supplied monetary bribes and favors to political leaders in order to attain security in East African post-colonial regimes is illustrated by the trope of the African “big man” and his Indian collaborators.⁴⁹

Positive tropes, associated with essentialist racial and cultural ideologies of the Indian work ethic, entrepreneurship, thrift, and business savvy also circulate within popular and vernacular domains of social discourse in East Africa (Madhvani and Foden 2008, Marris and Somerset 1971, Mehta 1966). Historian Robert Gregory has developed a line of research that argues that Indians contributed to East African society and were essential to the development of modern institutions in East Africa via both business and philanthropy (Gregory 1992). These themes have current relevance as South Asian bodies are re-articulated into Ugandan publics by the state and as South Asian individuals mobilize claims for their settlement in African polities (see more in Chapter 5).

Racial practice worked both ways, and anti-Black racism was and is prevalent in South Asian communities, as I discuss further in Chapters 5 and 6. If Asians complained that they were racialized into an “Indian community” that was more or less a fiction, then South Asian understandings of “Blackness” and “Africans” were likewise racist. The perceived civilizational and cultural superiority of South Asians in contrast to Africans were apprehensions that extended forth from the colonial period; these ideas continue to circulate and permeate African-Asian relations in the country. Africans were infantilized, viewed as “less civilized,” “lazy” and backward (Nagar 1996:65). Racist practice is prevalent in vernacular phrasings of “*kale*” and “*habshi*” (Hindi and Punjabi), as well as exclusionary attitudes towards so-called “half-caste” communities. More prevalent in neoliberal East Africa, however, are ethnic ideologies of a thieving, lazy African worker in comparison to hardworking and meritorious South Asians, themes that are predominant in the context of Asian business and work cultures. Anti-Black racism in Asian communities is a source of embarrassment to Ugandan Asians and youth, who are constantly anticipating the gaze of outsiders who interact with the “Asian community.”

⁴⁹ M.G. Vassanji’s novel *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* represents the everyday dilemmas of the character of Vikram (Vic) who launders money for Kenyatta and his inner circle. Ultimately, he leaves Kenya for Canada when the government, pressured by international donors, establishes an anti-corruption commission and circulates Vic’s name for investigation (Vassanji 2003).

Reframing African-Asian Studies: Possibilities and Limits of the Diaspora Concept

The final frame of analysis is the analytic of diaspora. Despite the proliferation of literature on diaspora and the prevalence of diaspora discourses in the context of global capitalism and transnationalism, it is difficult to define what is meant conceptually by “diaspora” (Clifford 1994, Zeleza 2005). Rather than excavating the concept of diaspora itself, the material in this section explores what is meant by diaspora in relation to the historical, social, and political context of East Africa.

The immediate task is to trace the diaspora concept in relation to South Asian diasporas in Africa. Prior to the exodus of Asians from East Africa, anthropologists explored Indian populations or “communities” in Africa, shying away from the concept of diaspora, which rose to prominence with the advent of postmodern and poststructural theoretical innovations in anthropology, cultural studies, and literary theory.

In East Africa, Indian diaspora communities are symbolically related to the epistemological source of diaspora: the Jewish exodus described in the Old Testament. Indian diasporas were defined as bounded racial, ethnic, religious, and caste-based communities located outside of putative homelands in the South Asian subcontinent. The diaspora concept allowed scholars to investigate the formation of group boundaries (both ethnic and racial) in African socio-political contexts that moved beyond the limitations imposed by the colonial state or the nation-state. According to anthropologist James Clifford, one of the preferred interpretations of diaspora entails focusing on the “borders” of diasporas, or what it is defined against. He writes,

Whatever their ideologies of purity, diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist. They are deployed in transnational networks built from multiple attachments, and they encode practices of accommodation with, as well as resistance to, host countries and their norms. Diaspora is different from travel (although it works through travel practices) in that it is not temporary. It involves dwelling, maintaining communities, having collective homes away from home...diaspora discourse articulates, or bends together, both roots and routes to construct what Gilroy describes as alternate public spheres (1987), forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside the national time/space order in to live inside, with a difference...thus the term diaspora is a signifier, not simply of transnationality and

movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement (Clifford 1994:307-308).

In East Africa, nationalist frames inevitably interpellated South Asian communities as closed, inaccessible, isolationist and apolitical. The diaspora concept, by contrast, allowed scholars to re-conceptualize South Asian “communities” by registering that religious, ethnic, and cultural formations stretched beyond the boundaries of colonial polities and national borders; thus, diaspora communities and diasporic cultures were legitimate political formations in their own right. In doing so, scholars could explore transnational linkages between South Asian communities in Africa and religious, ethnic, and cultural communities in India without having to address the question of Asian integration or non-integration into the African national polity. Here, the concept of diaspora can be viewed as an experiment in maintaining “difference” (in terms of mobility, modernity, and cultural identity) within the nation-state frame. By contrast, Africanist scholars’ emphasis on nationalism and nation building would constrain understandings of Asian political formations within the limitations of a Western and secular construction of “politics,” leading scholars to conclude that Asian political formations and spaces were inherently non-existent or weakly developed.

The exodus of South Asians from East Africa irrevocably shifted the racial demography of European and North American nation-states. Uganda, enveloped in the global politics of the expulsion, became a source of post-war North American and British race history. The expulsion and the migration routes of Ugandan Asians to Europe and North America would produce a stream of “East African Asian” refugees and displaced migrants, what Parminder Bhachu describes as a “twice migrant” diaspora (1986). An ex-East African Asian herself, Bhachu used this term to denote the complex migration histories of East African Asians: an initial displacement from India to Uganda and a secondary displacement from Africa to Europe and North America in which migrants permanently settled.

Thus, outside of the African continent, the influx of African and Indian refugees and migrants to Europe and North America has had major impacts on the development of intellectual scholarship in the social sciences. Social theorists such as Stuart Hall at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham were already engaged

in analyses of race and racism in post-War England. The passing of the British Nationality Act, in addition to Immigration Acts in 1962, 1968, and 1971, which were designed to circumvent Black and Brown immigration and settlement from the ex-colonies in the UK, compelled Hall and others to explore the relationship between the former Empire and ex-colonies, as well as popular racial intolerance (Hall 1978). “Powellism,” a neologism for the racist social and political climate propagated by Conservative Party Leader Enoch Powell, seem to articulate a wider sense of fear and anxiety surrounding the global social movements of 1968 and the increased migration of people from the former colonies to Europe and America (Proctor 2004:83).

Scholars, engaged in the study of East African Asian diasporas in the UK and other migration processes, began to further develop the cultural studies intellectual paradigm by exploring the emergence of “new ethnicities” or “Black Britishness” (Gilroy 1987, Hall 1988). African-Indian relationships forged on the African Continent and the exodus of Asians from East Africa inflected the social, political, and cultural processes of migration and re-settlement among South Asian communities in the West. As the East African Asian diaspora responded to racial discrimination, sexism and economic privation in the UK, scholars explored the relationship between everyday life and the expressive culture and culture productions of East African Asians, especially music and film. Hall and others explored the ways that “Black” in 1980s UK moved away from a fixed and essential identity, recognizing multiple categories of ethnic difference in Britain. In relation to this work, ex-East African Asians and feminist scholars May Joseph and Avtar Brah qualified modern and empirical categories of “citizen,” and “non-citizen” with a postmodern emphasis on processes of forced displacement and migration, travel, difference, identity, cultural hybridity and subjectivity (Brah 1996, Joseph 1999).

Postmodernism, post-structuralism, and the emergence of cultural studies in the new racial and ethnic context of UK allowed scholars to re-engage with the diaspora concept as an important analytical tool. They used it to investigate emerging political, cultural, and aesthetic formations among refugees and migrants from Africa to Europe and North America (Clifford 1994, Gilroy 1987, Hall 1988). Hall, for instance, used diaspora “as a metaphorical rather than a literal concept to foreground an anti-essentialist notion of identity and representation that privileges journey over arrival, mobility over

fixity, routes rather than roots...he used diaspora to signal an aesthetic that he sees as increasingly prominent in cinematic representations...an aesthetic that foregrounds difference, hybridity, blends, and cross-overs” (Proctor 2004:131). In his work, Hall also highlights the ways in which the diaspora is always emplaced in a particular social and political context, thus he is interested in the context and positionality of diaspora identities instead of celebrating them as free-floating and nomadic subjects (Hall 1988). In sum, Uganda is linked to the development of the analytics of the diaspora among scholars such as Stuart Hall who were based in Europe. Below, the map of British Indian Ocean territory represents the movement of South Asian diasporas to and from Uganda up to the expulsion in 1972.



Figure 9: Mapping the movements of “twice-displaced” South Asian diasporas.

In his essay, “Rewriting the African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic,” Paul Tiyambe Zeleza begins to direct the reader’s attention to some of the problems of the African diasporic concept in relation to the African continent. In his desire to shift away from the legacy of Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* (1993) and the privileging of the Atlantic in the study of African diasporas, Zeleza defines four dominant dimensions of global African diasporas: the intra-African, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and Atlantic diasporas (Zeleza 2005:36). While Zeleza is adamant about expanding the geographic

dimensions of African diasporas beyond the Black Atlantic, it is unclear if and how South Asian (and even Arab) diasporas fit into his schematic. Likewise, although the exodus and displacement of East African Asians from the Continent resulted in analyses of the “twice-displaced” South Asian diaspora in Europe and North America, Uganda-based scholarship remains centered on the politics of the nation-state and the historical event of the expulsion.

Thus, I ask, is it possible to recuperate an intellectual project that explores the possibilities of a *Continent-based* African-Asian studies? Clearly, the post-colonial out-migration of South Asians from East Africa, as well as the legacy of academic scholarship on “Asians” and “Africans,” which atomized both populations as distinct, separate, and fixed racial groups has prevented the emergence of this scholarship. If it is possible to recuperate this project, what would it look like? Is it possible to study both East African Asians (post-imperial citizens) and new (post-colonial) South Asian migrants in *post-expulsion* Ugandan space? The map of the East African region below diagrams both diasporic communities in the territory of the Ugandan nation:

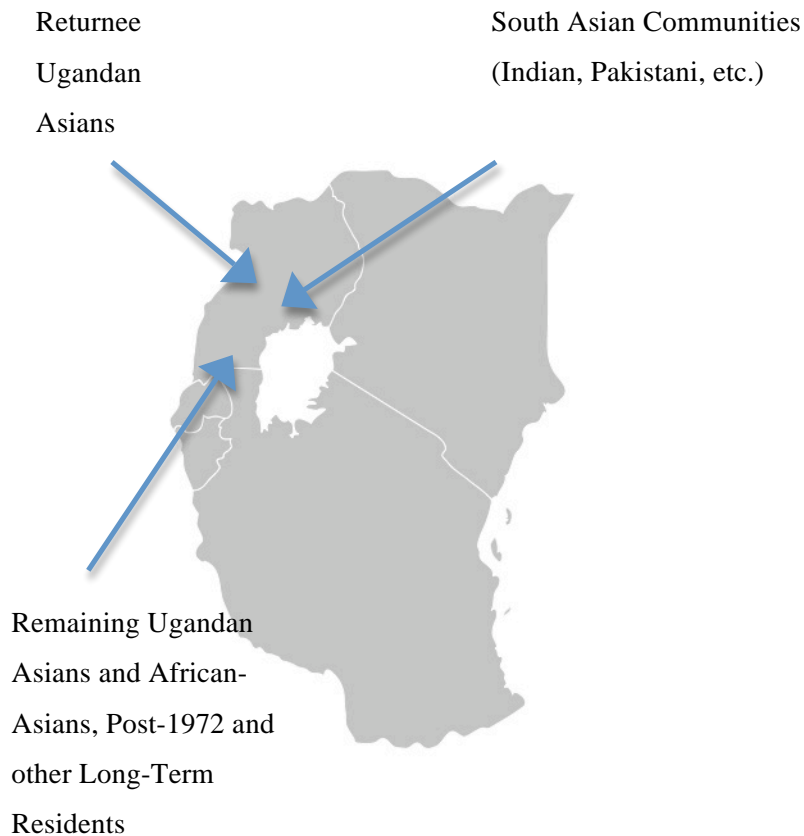


Figure 10: East African regional map. South Asian diasporic communities in contemporary Uganda.

Concepts of diaspora as they are typically utilized in African and South Asian studies can be quite limiting for the type of research I am envisioning in Uganda. Diasporas, because of their emphasis on displacement and dislocation, are often divorced from “the politics of location” (Brah 1996). Furthermore, the extent to which a diaspora community expresses a “diasporic feature”—a history of dispersal, myths and memories of the homeland, alienation from the host country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support for the homeland, a collective identity—is not always discernible or apparent (Clifford 1994). Rather than being conceptualized as *a process in the making*, a diaspora community can often assume a bounded-ness and cohesiveness that pre-defines its constitutive elements. The *idea of diaspora*, as it is theorized in scholarship and by the concerns of particular types of scholars, or as it is understood politically and polemically,

can mask elements that condition and create the possibilities for the actual diaspora itself (Clifford 1994). Thus, I use “diaspora community,” rather than a notion of “diaspora” that is divorced from the politics of the nation or a notion of “community” that is divorced from the politics of transnationalism. Specifically, I use “diaspora community” in relation to Ugandan Asian and South Asians in contemporary Uganda.

Finally, I suggest that what is missing from Zeleza’s analytic is a frame that might explore the mutual and complex interaction between “African,” “African-Asian,” and “South Asian” diasporas in East Africa and the Indian Ocean arena. As he suggests, it is possible to recover and “rewrite” the African diaspora; this depends, however, on a willingness to expand the notion of the “African diaspora,” to investigate the subjectivities of those who constitute such diasporas, and to explore the processes by which diasporic population are forged via complex, historical, political, and economic relations between South Asians and Africans. By redirecting our attention back to East Africa as a site of expulsion and exodus, it is possible to assess these relations with more clarity. In contemporary Uganda, this means exploring the ways that *Ugandan Asians, Ugandan Asian returnees and new post-colonial migrants from the South Asian subcontinent mutually interact with older and younger generations of Ugandan Africans*. Thus, for example, while Ugandan Asians often emphasize their generational commitment to the country, new South Asian economic migrants seek to emphasize that they are part of broader transnational communities.

Conclusions: African-Asian Frames in Context

The African-Asian “frames” discussed above reveal that the exodus of South Asians from East Africa has had multiple consequences for scholarship on and off the African Continent. Spatial, ideological, and political frames often encompass alternate ideas of political community that extend beyond nation-states; usually they advocate more inclusive, equal, and cosmopolitan relationships between Africans and Asians. These political imaginaries encompassed the spatialities and temporalities of the Indian Ocean world, the dynamics of the British Empire, and alliances among nation-states of the “Third World.” Thus, the chapters that follow work to re-frame African-Asian studies

by examining the shifts in state sovereignty and governance in the post-Cold War and post-expulsion era. Here, the South-South frame is the most important to understanding landscapes of recognition, re-integration, and exclusion for Asians and Africans in today's Uganda

To be clear, my methodology avoids an overly romanticized vision of African-Asian relationships; nor does it evoke the postmodern anthropologist's desire to celebrate the lives of elite cosmopolitans in urban spaces. Rather, I couple historical and political-economic analysis with the study of culture, racial, ethnic, and gendered difference, social experience, and subjectivity. Forty years after the expulsion in Uganda, is it now possible to consider South Asian subjects of analysis within the rubric of African studies, unmediated by the disciplinary interests of area studies scholars, or will they remain privileged outsider non-Africans within African studies? More recent explorations of Africa as a transformative political-economic site in an emerging global order (Ferguson 2006) suggest that Uganda is engaged in a set of contradictory forms of recognition and exclusion of South Asians in the post-Africanization milieu. The times are ripe for a re-assessment of African-Asian relations that encompasses African, East African Asian and South Asian personhoods and subjectivities in East Africa. In the following chapters, I explore the social, political, and economic processes by which South Asian bodies and capital are re-articulated into Uganda national space. How are these processes made and re-made in the mirror of the expulsion and the "frames" above? The following chapters begin to unpack these important questions; they also begin to lay the basis for future research on Ugandan African apprehensions of South Asian presence.

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Chapter 3

Exceptions to the Expulsion

Introduction: Hidden Passports and the Historical Politics of Insecurity

Because new South Asian migrants outnumber Ugandan Asians in Kampala, it was often “newcomers” who led me to the places that served as historical repositories of the cultural, economic, and ideological culture of former Ugandan Indian society. For example, I befriended Randeep, a Punjabi migrant who had been living in Kampala for four years and had been working as a manager in a construction firm. An active member in the Sikh community, he was the secretary among a committee of Sikh men who oversaw the finances and organization of the *Ramgharia Sikh Society* (RSS) in Old Kampala and other *gurudwara* (Sikh religious sites) that were once run by Ugandan Indians in small towns throughout the country.

When I told him about my research project, he connected me to Ugandan Asian interviewees; he also remembered that there were materials in the *gurudwara* itself that I might be interested in. He managed to locate a set of keys from the *gyani* (priest) who presided over the RSS *gurudwara*. The keys unlocked the “library” of the RSS—a set of bookcases and file cabinets in a separate chamber from the main prayer room. Inside, I found decaying photos of Ugandan Asians, handwritten memos and chits for monetary requests and assistance during the expulsion, ration board procurement slips, an old railway engineering manual, numerous religious texts, and an Asian community directory—replete with the addresses and phone numbers of Ugandan Indians who had once occupied the streets of Kampala.

Excitedly, Randeep remembered that several years ago he had happened upon an old black trunk of Ugandan Indian passports, discarded during the confusion of the expulsion crisis. He reached into his pocket and dialed the number of the former *pardhan*

(caretaker) of the *gurudwara*. The *pardhan*, who lived upcountry from Kampala, assured us that he would locate the passports and would be in touch soon. Several weeks later, neither of us had heard from him. As my time to leave Uganda approached, I attempted to reach the *pardhan* through Randeep again. Again, he promised to bring the old passports to me, suggesting that I meet him at the *gurudwara* the following Sunday. When I arrived the following week, I found Randeep, who shook his head emphatically. He explained that he mistrusted the *pardhan*—he had not come to the *gurudwara* and “*shyaad oho kush lukh reha*” (“perhaps he is hiding something” in Punjabi). I pressed him further and asked why. He replied that the *pardhan* seemed concerned that Indian passports might be mixed up with the discarded Ugandan passports of Indians who had been declared stateless after the expulsion decree.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, prior to the expulsion announcement, Ugandan Indians fell into three categories of legal citizenship: Ugandan citizens, British passport holders, and Indian citizens. During the exodus, Indian citizens in Uganda were repatriated to India. Yet if they had “lost” their passports, or if Ugandan immigration officials had canceled their passports, then Indian citizens could claim refugee status, taking advantage of the slipshod bureaucracy of refugee processing in Kampala. Thus, it was possible that, during the chaos of the exodus, a small number of Indian citizens had represented themselves as “stateless persons,” consequently flying off to refugee camps in the United Kingdom or another Western destination. The *pardhan* was concerned that I might discover these discarded Indian passports in the *gurudwara*: that I might ascertain that some community members had manipulated officials and flown off to Europe and America with more legitimate (i.e., Ugandan Indian) refugees.

I followed up on this issue with scholars of Ugandan Asians and other interviewees in Kampala. In actuality, it seems that the numbers of Indian citizens who discarded passports and became refugees in the UK must have been very small. What was more significant about the above incident with the *pardhan* was the way in which he was consumed by the idea that I might uncover a community secret. Concerns about whether Ugandan Indians had left as “authentic refugees,” or if they had left as “opportunistic migrants,” reflected contemporary concerns surrounding the possible malintentions of new economic migrants who were not interested in long-term settlement and

investment in the Ugandan nation. Indeed, the fact that the *pardhan* had scurried away and concealed the materials in the final moments of my accessing them illustrates the ongoing historical politics of the expulsion event within South Asian communities in Kampala. It also provides evidence for the ongoing ambiguities and uncertainties surrounding South Asians' status as quasi-members of Ugandan society. Finally, the interactions among Randeep, the *pardhan*, and myself reveals the affective economies of insecurity and mistrust that circulated within and among South Asian communities during my field research.

Discarded, hidden, and carefully guarded passports in present-day religious sites in Kampala bring me to a crucial arena of investigation during my ethnographic research: the lived memory and historical politics of the expulsion among Ugandan Asians. The material in this chapter explores my encounters and interviews with Ugandan Asians who continued to live in Uganda after the expulsion decree—the "exceptions" to the expulsion. (Among South Asians, Ugandan Asians "who remained" are often referred to as "*rehen walley*" in Hindi and Punjabi⁵⁰). While much of Ugandan scholarship has focused on the expulsion event itself, my attention to the experiences of racialized individuals after the expulsion illustrate the ways in which Ugandan Asians developed practices of security-seeking (or securitization) in relation to the Africanized nation and former President Idi Amin's state. I show the ways in which Ugandan Asians who remained constructed a new, post-expulsion, pan-religious and ethnic racialized "Asian" community during the Amin regime—those individuals who would eventually become the basis for the Ugandan Asian community in present-day Kampala. Through my analysis, I argue that Ugandan Asians who remained in Idi Amin's Uganda (and the multiple governance regimes that followed, including Milton Obote's second run as President, between 1980-1985), developed a number of pragmatic strategies to that helped them to attain economic, bodily, and social security in a context of profound

⁵⁰ The Ugandan Asians that I focus on in this chapter interpret their place in society in relation to the absence of the larger diasporic community of Indians who left during the exodus. I refer to them as "Ugandan Asians," regardless of formal citizenship status. Indeed, this group often referred to themselves as "Ugandan Asians," or simply "Ugandans." At other moments when they wanted to highlight the particularity of their identity as individuals or as a community, they described themselves as "Asians" or "Indians." Practices of naming: expressions of self-identity, describing oneself in relation to generational status, ethnic, religious, and national identity; and, finally deciding how to position oneself in relation to the more recent influx of migrants from South Asia was on-going labor during my fieldwork.

racialized insecurity for Ugandan Indians. These individual and community securitization practices, developed in the years since the expulsion, inform the dynamics of contemporary South Asian community-building and re-integration in Uganda.

After the Deadline: in the Vacuum

Ugandan Asians who remained were exceptions to the out flux of the Ugandan Indian population who began to migrate out of Uganda in the 1960s, and who left *en masse* as refugees or displaced migrants in 1972. One hundred and fifty individuals would remain in Kampala fairly consistently throughout Amin's regime. This group possessed Ugandan citizenship (by birth or citizenship naturalization during the independence period), and understood themselves as East African Asians, or Ugandan Asians. The others, particularly civil servants, were Indian citizens and temporary contractors prior to the exodus who had become long-term residents in Kampala. They occupied professional niches that were necessary to the new regime, and thus were entitled to stay on. In my interviews, Ugandan Asians and these other migrants described themselves as "exempt" from the expulsion—they possessed special permits and identity cards that indicated their exceptional status.⁵¹ These bureaucratic forms ostensibly protected them from anti-Asian racialized violence, identified them as legitimate members of Amin's state, and rendered South Asians who remained legible to state agents and bureaucracies.

⁵¹ Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, 15 February 2011.



Figure 11: Idi Amin pictured with Ugandan Asians after the expulsion deadline. The photo circulated in email forwards among Ugandan Asians in Kampala and the British Ugandan Asian diaspora in 2011. Its origins are unknown. Some of my interviewees suggested that Amin invited “exempt” Ugandan Asians to a reception at Command Post in Kampala sometime between November 1972 and 1974. Photo courtesy of Bharat and Kusum Gheewala, August 2011.

As the above photo suggests, men constituted the majority of Ugandan Asians who received official exemptions from the expulsion exercise. Indeed, Indian men played an important role in the expulsion because many, as I discuss further in Chapter 6, worked to relocate female kinfolk outside of Uganda or East Africa well before the November deadline—they believed that it was unsafe for Indian women to stay on with them. Thus, Indian men were part of a masculine cultural ethos that included the militarist culture of Amin's regime: ministers, security officers, soldiers, rebels, bureaucrats, and businessmen who engaged in the *magendo* (informal) economy. Often, I found that Ugandan Asian men reproduced masculine ideologies of strength, courage, and risk-taking in their narratives of this era by emphasizing their personal relationships

with Amin and his ministers, or by relating adventures in their business and entrepreneurial undertakings to me.⁵²

The project of attaining security for themselves, family, and community members was of utmost importance. The notion of “security” had multiple and shifting meanings in Amin’s Uganda, and in relation to Indians who were exempt from the expulsion. Security referred to the absence of the threat of violence. It could signify an existential recognition of the individual self via official state documentation. But it could also index bodily or corporeal safety, economic stability, or the protection and social reproduction of the Indian community who remained. Finally, men routinely evoked a broader notion of security that was related to the heavy handedness of the regime. They often discussed Amin’s ability to govern for almost a decade, the numerous bureaucracies and state agents engaged in information-gathering activities, and the strong military presence in Kampala.

The small, tight-knit group of men who remained often described Kampala at this time as a “vacuum.”⁵³ For South Asian men, the “vacuum” symbolized the end of Asian business enterprise and commerce, but also the spectral, ghost-town quality of a “de-Indianized” Kampala in the 1970s.

⁵² Interview with Sahib, Mbarara, 15 November 2009.

Interview with Ali Jafar, Kampala, 24 February 2011.

⁵³ Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, 15 February 2011.

A country haunted by 'Asians' ghosts

By Charles Oryango-Obbo

THE natives in this community are proud, aristocratic, peaceable and foreigners' allege, lazy. The only thing they seemed to do well, as the joke used to go, was produce beautiful daughters and Jolous sons. The weather is mostly mild, and the mornings foggy.

Welcome to Mweenge, between the years 1967 to 1973. Mweenge is a country of Kabale district, and has features which are rare in any other part of Uganda. The country comprises some four or so steep hills, and there is hardly a naturally flat stretch 100 metres long. The roads wind around the hills and fall off precipitously into swampy valleys, then up a slope again. All around, the land is virgin and sparsely populated.

In the Mweenge of that time, there were two places that ticked. One was a hill called Butiti, which was to all purposes then a missionary colony. Here you found the good primary school, the efficient dispensary, an imitation-beroque Catholic Church, and the boys in bell bottoms and girls in miniskirts and Afro-hair do.

The Holy Cross Brothers then ran the Butiti College where my old man worked as an educationalist. Butiti was a pleasant, albeit clubby and exclusive place. It was 1973, and a wide field that had been dug into the base of the hill. In the evenings, the missionaries and expatriate joggers here and laid off golf balls. That used to bore our parents.

So we honed our skills on the basketball court, and afterwards

would wind up with a dip in the swimming pool. The silence of the evenings would always be broken by the younger missionaries as they raced around the hills on their Yamaha scramblers. Then every Friday night, without fail, there was the Friday evening movie - those were the years of John Wayne (the Duke) and Kirk Douglas.

The second place where you could catch a little action was a small neat street trading centre, four kilometres from the college. It had four blocks on each side of the Fort-Portal to Richende road which ran through the middle of the trading centre.

All the shops, except one and the post office, were owned by Asians (or to use the local misnomer, 'Indians'). Every Friday evening we went to one of the larger shops owned by my old man's friend called Nangi. We picked up the week's groceries, a chunk of it being my old man's several packets of cigarettes and beers.

I think the then lively and argumentative UPC newspaper The People (it was edited at that time by the British journalist Daniel Nelson) used to arrive on Friday evenings. We picked that too, but it was heavy stuff which only the old learned folks read. The main reason we were zealous about the Friday shopping was that the immensely popular Nigerian illustrated magazine Spearman also used to arrive on the last Friday of every month, if my memory serves me usefully.

Spearman, the title character, was a dashing bow-tied detective with a 'ladog' assistant called Lemmy who always worked from

a position of disadvantage to defeat his arch-enemy Zolko who wore an eye patch. Typically, Spearman would be shown dating all the beautiful girls except his graceful secretary Tandi who always cold-shouldered him. We were always both perplexed and angered whenever she pooh poohed our hero.

So on the rare occasion when she would offer him a hearty kiss of gratitude, we would throw a children's party to celebrate the event.

Fort Portal town the 'capital' of Kabale, was about 35 kilometres away from Butiti. On both sides of the road meticulously maintained tea plantations disappeared into the horizon. In the middle of the plantations were islands of mansions where the mostly settler (and some foreign plantation owners) led a life of embarrassing luxury. To the innocent and young eye, in Butiti and along the stretch of road from there to Fort Portal, heaven surely looked like it had met earth.

Then in 1971 Idi Amin staged his coup. But, for a while, the bliss here remained undisturbed. In 1972 he expelled the Asians. Nangi, my old man's friend, left Butiti before Christmas of 1972 - he was the last Asian to leave. The tea plantation owners also started to leave. The local boys came to town and took over the shops. One was evicted and another began.

Years of decline

I clearly remember that the arrival of Spearman started delaying and soon, it never arrived at all. The People newspaper too hardly

came anymore. I noticed that no one seemed to read anything seriously beyond the cartoon section of The Uganda Argus. On some Fridays, there would be no beer for the old man. Being a little boy, I did not notice that things were beginning to break down. At the end of 1973, we left Butiti.

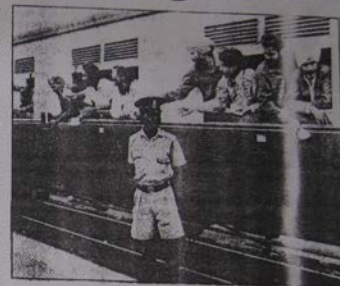
Nine years later, in 1982, I returned to Butiti with a group of Kenyan friends with whom we were touring the country. The silence of a graveyard gripped the place. At the College, some buildings were collapsing, the basketball and swimming pool were no more. The roads in Mweenge county were impassable.

But my greatest shock was when we got to the Butiti trading centre and later travelled to Fort Portal. Virtually all the shops on one side of the road had disappeared.

In their place was a small forest of elephant grass. On the opposite side of the road one derelict store block remained, but its shop doors were closed. There was also the old Post Office building in an advanced state of decay. Its door was half-open. The door of the shop attached to the post office was open, but the shelves were empty. On the verandah sat a fat woman with a resigned look on her face, and a little girl who was selling about three clusters of yellow-ripe bananas and paricakes (kakabajaka). Nearby, a horde of children with their bottoms peering through their torn shorts were trapping white ants.

At along the road to Fort Portal, the previously well-kept tea plantations had turned into forests as thick as Mabira. The only sign of activity along this 35-kilometre stretch of a previously vibrant expanse was the little girl selling paricakes and the little boys trapping ants.

There used to be perhaps a hundred tea bushes neatly all around up the sorry way that this Butiti did. This is the story of what came to pass after (General) Idi Amin expelled the Asians in 1972: launched his "economic war" and the "native" Ugandans came to terms with their newly "inherit" system which the Asians had "exploited"



Ugandan Asian gazes on route to India, Pakistan and Britain in 1972, but the bottle over their 'abandoned' property goes

issue a "curse".

Obviously when the Asians return, many of the present occupants of these properties will be evicted, and naturally they will hate it. However, many of these "native" occupants just rundown the premises. Some say they paid rent to the DAPCB which should have maintained the properties. The DAPCB officials however drank, ate, smoked away and married second and third wives on the rent that they collected.

Because the properties are so decayed and dilapidated, the DAPCB is making history by organising the largest junk sale of the century. And as is normal practice, those who created the junk should not be given an opportunity to buy back some of the properties of abandoned properties.

The first is the legitimate one of what happens to someone who had improved on a property but is now not able to raise the money to buy the property. Shouldn't he be compensated since the improvements he made on the property may con-

tributed to the advancement of the country. However, today these arguments are no longer compelling. For starters, most of Ugandans have pillaged this country with a ferocity that was rare or perhaps equal to what the Asians did before 1972. But at least we can say for the Asians that they left some investments for us to build over.

Since and before 1972, we've also seen local nationalities (tribes) standing in the way of the progress of other nationalities, much the same way some people would say the Asians did to the "natives". Yet no one hears that because tribe X "ate alone" and blocked the progress of others or that national Y "did not share" and blocked the progress of others.

Similarly, we have seen a lamentful example that loyalty to a country is deeper than the skin. So many Ugandans have been and are so loyal to this country despite of this being "natives" track. The moral is simple: there is no virtue or villainy which is the

Figure 12: "A Country Haunted by Asians' Ghosts." Weekly Topic, 20 April 1990. An editorial that points to the spectral quality of Ugandan Indians' property, left behind after the expulsion decree and displacement of Ugandan Indians in 1972.

Some Ugandan Asians were already elite businessmen or civil servants of strategic importance to Amin's government. They had extensive personal connections and networks with powerful Ugandan African men, and may have already been plugged into a broader system of capitalist enterprise, patronage, and social exchanges with soldiers and officials such that they were able to negotiate their stay after the deadline. This group was able to accrue enough power through financial and other forms of social capital that they could receive protection from Amin's army. By aiding other less fortunate Ugandan Asians who remained, they would become community leaders who forged spaces of safety and protection for Indians in the context of the rapid loss of Asian spaces in Uganda.

A few civil servants continued to work in the ministries to which they had originally been assigned prior to the deadline; and possibly, prior to Amin's governance in 1971. Ram Singh, for example, was responsible for negotiating the exemptions of a number of Sikhs who worked as contractors on development projects in the Ministry of Defense.⁵⁴ Singh agreed to continue working in Uganda as long as his colleagues stayed behind with him. This group formed an important interface between remaining Ugandan Asians and the government. Other Ugandan Asians who remained could depend on this group to help them with the numerous day-to-day challenges of living in Uganda: harassment and monetary extortion by soldiers, the negotiation of employment and/or travel permissions, financial security, and the fear of looting or kidnapping. Furthermore, Ram Singh negotiated with the Departed Asians Property Custodial Board (DAPCB) to retain religious institutions in Kampala, Jinja, and Entebbe among the remaining Ugandan Asian community in Kampala (see below). The group would invest their resources and energy in the reproduction of religious and community life and would engage in community securitization practices throughout the 1970s.

Other well-connected Ugandan Asians remained aloof from the remaining community. These individuals, who were often described as “whiskey runners” or “drivers” by the Ugandan Asian men that I interviewed, were extremely mobile men who engaged in entrepreneurial trade—often importing scarce and valuable state-sanctioned commodities as the regime progressed.⁵⁵ Some may have engaged in smuggling practices of coffee and other valuables such as minerals out of Uganda, activities that were common in the context of the *magendo* (informal) economy.⁵⁶ Typically viewed as self-interested capitalists, whiskey runners and others who invested their energies in monetary

⁵⁴ Ram Singh and Sahib, both high-ranking contractors in the Ministry of Defense, received permission to hire labor from Punjab on a number of construction projects throughout the 1970s. Ram Singh was one of the most prominent Asians during the regime: he was the Chief Engineer of the Ministry of Defense. I was not able to track down and interview Ram Singh, and unfortunately he passed away in early 2011. He had migrated out of Uganda and lived with his grandchildren in California at the time of his death. Interviews with Tara Singh, Jinja, 26 February 2011 and Hardeep Singh, 21 February 2011.

⁵⁵ Whiskey, cigarettes, and other luxury goods. Other Ugandan Asian traders became the sole importers of staple items such as sugar and salt.

⁵⁶ Some Ugandan Asian traders and other capitalist entrepreneurs were also rumored to engage in various forms of smuggling. Some interviewees would describe this group as “opportunists,” leveling moral critique at them. Simultaneously, because everyone was engaging in labor, business, or enterprise that would be considered illegal for Indians at this time, the line between what was legal and illegal, or moral and immoral, was not always clear.

accumulation became the focal point for moral discourses about the ethics of business and Indian and African businessmen during the 1970s. Indeed, for those who stayed behind in Uganda and lost their businesses, or for those who were already impoverished before the expulsion, staying behind could provide new types of financial opportunities. This was a distinctive African-Asian business culture unique to the conditions of Uganda in the “vacuum.”⁵⁷

Other Ugandan Asians, who were less successful in sorting out a way to make money, traveled in and out of Uganda, seeking to maintain a foothold in the country. Many left permanently in 1979 and/or the early 1980s, after Uganda National Liberation Forces (UNLF) forces ousted Idi Amin from Kampala. Some immediate kin and other relations of Ugandan Asians who remained were able to come back after the expulsion and help others who were running businesses and protecting Ugandan Asian property. And finally, as I note below, mixed-race African-Asians and Indian women informed the complex landscape of those who continued to live or returned to Uganda during the regime.

There was little influx of South Asians from Europe or India to Uganda during the period 1971-1979. Nonetheless, one of the key contradictions about Idi Amin and this period is that he began to seek the emigration of South Asian professionals to Uganda as early as 1974 (Tandon 1979).⁵⁸ Aside from business entrepreneurs and civil servants; South Asian doctors, engineers, technicians, managers, and other types of professionals informed the demographics of Ugandan Asians who remained. One interviewee noted that between twenty and thirty Sikh families returned to Uganda as laborers for the government and private companies involved in construction projects by 1976.⁵⁹ “Fortune-seekers” and other South Asian and East African Asian migrants began to settle in

⁵⁷ The expulsion resulted in the formation of new indigenous Ugandan urban class of business entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, exempt Ugandan Asians continued to engage in business, particularly trade.

⁵⁸ Some scholars note that India did not allow citizens to come to Uganda after the expulsion crisis in 1972. Professor Syed Abidi writes, “[the] intelligentsia of Uganda ran away from the country, creating a serious gap in the civil service, judiciary, and education sector. Amin was forced to bring plane-loads of teachers, accountants, magistrates, pharmacists, and medical doctors from Bangladesh and Pakistan in 1974.” Namaste, Indian Association of Uganda, Newsletter. 2005 Vol. 1. Accountants often became financial managers of corporations and government parastatals such as the Coffee Marketing Board.

⁵⁹ Interview with Sukh Singh, Kampala, 15 October 2009. This is undoubtedly after the first coup attempt against Amin in 1976, and the period when Amin’s Uganda has entered serious economic crisis.

Uganda more aggressively by the early 1980s, particularly after the coup that ousted Amin.

Ugandan Asian and African-Asian Apprehensions of the Expulsion

During my fieldwork, Sahib (see Chapter 1), his wife and three sons lived in an extended family set-up in two homes, one in Mbarara in southwest Uganda and the other in Kampala. Sahib had retired from government and transport work and was focusing his energies on business ventures with his sons; the first, a safari lodge for tourists in Queen Victoria National Park; and the second, a foam-mattress factory that was to be built on a plot of land on a dirt road that connected Mbarara to the border of Tanzania. Although Sahib had won his fair share of government bids for various transport and construction projects in the past three decades, his profits were in decline and he was now in competition with new Indian firms and construction companies based in Kampala, forcing him to expand into new arenas of enterprise and manufacturing.

At times it seemed to me that he, like other Ugandan Asian and mixed-race men, was working through an internal process of reconciling his present situation with past events. On one late-night trip to the factory construction site, Sahib asked me what my thoughts were on the upcoming presidential elections. I offered my opinion that President Museveni would most likely win the election, but that young people were unhappy with his policies. He responded that Ugandan youth had not lived through what people of his generation had experienced: oppressive dictatorships, expulsions, and looting. But at the same time, he said that he understood their feelings. Idi Amin, he said, was the only president who had looked after the needs of his own people. "Of course," Sahib stated, "it was not right to have expelled Asians in the way that he had, but he created opportunities for Africans. Asians did not treat Africans properly." Many Ugandan Asians, African-Asians, and Ugandans such as Mzee Kashaijja (see Chapter 1), echoed similar sentiments. Another Ugandan Asian friend disclosed that he felt that Asians had been expelled because they thought they were better than Africans, an interpretation that pointed to Asians' complicity with anti-Black racism. Many Ugandan Asians, however, avoided explicit discussions of race relations and anti-Black racism among Ugandan

Asians, even expressing nostalgia for the prosperous Ugandan Indian community of the pre-expulsion days. Gurbaksh Singh, for example, observed that, "*kehenday si ke jo loog Uganda rehenday si, oho sab to amir hundey si Afreeka da vich*" ("people used to say that people from Uganda were the richest Asians in Africa" in Punjabi.) He also recalled that Punjabi men who married women from Kenya or Tanzania arrived in a *baraat* (the groom's wedding party) that was full of Mercedes Benzes from Uganda.

Memories and nostalgia for former Asian wealth were prevalent in many of the narratives of Ugandan Asian men who were confronted by landscapes of decline of Ugandan Asian properties and even their own family's assets. During my fieldwork in Kampala, many Ugandan Asians, both returnees and long-term residents, discussed how they "worked the hardest," and had helped explore, "open up," develop, and build the infrastructure of the country, both in Kampala and outside Buganda. Ugandan Asians thus had major stakes in the future "development" of the country, and these stakes contributed to their claims for belonging in President Museveni's Uganda. Claims for belonging in Uganda generally had to do with individual and familial achievement across generations irrespective of governance regime. As other scholars have pointed out, beliefs about "ethnic succession," or the notion that "having made important contributions across generations, and thus being owed a moral debt by society, minorities and ethnic immigrants believe they have a right to become full citizens" (Ong 2003:3), was a critical component of many of the narratives of Ugandan Asians who remained.

Refusing to Leave and Staying Behind

In Kampala in 2008, Ugandan Asians continued to discuss "who stayed" and "who left" in relation to Amin's expulsion decree, particularly as a retired and elderly generation of expelled Ugandan Asians and new migrants began to settle in the city. Ugandan Asians often cautioned me to pay attention to who was an "original" Ugandan Asian in my research—they warned me that many people had arrived in Uganda just prior to the expulsion or were solicited to work for the government just after the expulsion deadline. Thus, they had managed to "fit themselves" into a more authentic category of Ugandan Asians that claimed historical and ancestral origins to Uganda. My

interlocutors suggested that the claims that newer migrants made about their life experiences in Uganda during the regime should not be taken as seriously as theirs. Likewise, discourses over the loss of wealth among expelled Ugandan Asians in 1972 and the creation of new forms of wealth by those who remained "in the vacuum" were sensitive, controversial, and hushed conversations.

Some Ugandan Asians made a number of interesting claims about their responses to the expulsion announcement and crisis. Mixed raced African-Asians, for example, unsettled assertions about the wholesale racial exclusion of Asians from Ugandan citizenship in the early 1970s. African-Asians could strategically embed themselves within African and South Asian communities. Some claimed that they had simply "refused to leave Uganda." For instance, Sahib and Rani's father was a Jat Sikh who had worked in the British civil service, married a Munyarwanda woman from the region, and settled in Mbarara permanently in the 1930s. After most Mbarara Asians left Uganda towards the end of 1972, Sahib and Rani explained that they had refused to leave. On one of my visits to the family home, Rani stressed, "I am a Ugandan—why would I have left? My mother was African." Sahib similarly noted, "Indians ran off because they were afraid" (here, he was largely referring to Gujarati Hindu and Khoja Ismaili men). In emphasizing their Banyarwanda and Punjabi ethnicity and their Sikh religion, they elevated their own courage and temerity. Both sought to underplay the overarching role of the state as the ultimate arbiter of their presence or absence in the country.

They also sought to downplay the practical negotiations and accommodations that they were involved in during the expulsion crisis, particularly the personal relationships they had cultivated with Idi Amin and other important political leaders and bureaucrats before the expulsion announcement. In other conversations with Sahib in Mbarara, for example, he described hunting expeditions with Idi Amin when he visited Ankole on a regional tour; at other times he talked about his lorry transport business and affiliation with the Ministry of Defense, which provided him and members of his family protection and important legal documentation that they used throughout the 1970s.⁶⁰

⁶⁰Sahib and his family were involved in the "transport business." They brought trucks and lorries to Uganda, and contracted many vehicles for Amin's government. Later on, they would apply and accept contracts from international organizations such as the UNHCR—even helping to transport Rwandan refugees from Goma in 1994.

Thus, although Sahib and Rani sought to stress their Ugandan (African) identity, their relatively elite economic position was under threat in the 1970s. The post-expulsion ambiguity of being an African-Asian translated into grounded struggles over personal and religious property in their hometown throughout the decade. For the most part, Sahib could rely on protection for himself and his families from ministers, businessmen, and soldiers in Amin's government. Nonetheless, as the *mafutamingi* (beneficiary) class of soldiers became more autonomous and began to loot Indian homes and shops after 1973, Sahib and Rani were forced out of their home until they could sort out a way to keep it through their government connections.⁶¹ Sahib lost yet another family home to appropriating soldiers in the mid-1970s. While driving with him in his jeep in Kampala in 2010, he wistfully pointed out a large home on a verdant piece of land to me—property that Sahib had acquired at the height of his financial success before the expulsion.

In response to the appropriation of their assets after the expulsion, Sahib and the rest of their family developed the strategy of temporarily relocating outside of Mbarara during rebel insurgencies and looting. He sent his female family members to Rwanda or in Mombasa first, and a male member of the family would always return to town when it was safe to do so. Thus, despite their connections with Amin and other government officials, their formal Ugandan citizenship, their mixed-race African ancestry and identity, Sahib and Rani's privileges, accrued over the colonial era, resulted in intense economic and social vulnerability for their family throughout Amin's Uganda.⁶²

Other stories and rumors circulated about Indian men who refused to leave during my research. Ugandan Asians I interviewed often discussed the temerity of their friends during the expulsion period, a time when Indian men had little autonomy and rights. Jassa Singh, a British Asian Sikh returnee, described how a Punjabi government contractor refused to leave Uganda:

⁶¹ *Mafuta mingi* is a Kiswahili phrase, loosely translated into "much oil" or "fat." It was used in 1970s Uganda to refer to the soldiers and ministers connected to Amin's regime who appropriated wealth from the Ugandan Asian assets and state coffers.

⁶² Field notes, Mbarara, November 2009. It is also important to note that individuals were more concerned about the security and social reproduction of their own families during times of intense social and political conflict in Uganda. During times of relative peace and stability, individuals invested their energies in community building and securitization practices (see more below).

J: Hardeep refused to go because he had done some work in Masaka. I think he had built a town hall. And the government owed him about half a million shillings. So he said no, you pay me my money, and I'll go. You don't pay me my money, I won't go. And this is actually what happened. He actually refused to go because they refused to pay his money. He said you pay me my money and I'll go. You don't pay me my money, I'm going to sit here. And he sat.⁶³

In the end, it is not clear how Hardeep was able to get an exemption pass, with whom he negotiated, and how he managed to stay on after the expulsion. In this case, Amin's government did give Hardeep an exemption—he rolled over into his next job and continued to live and work in Kampala. It is possible that Amin still considered his skills necessary to his regime, and thus the processing of his exemption was expedited. Yet these stories of indignant, stubborn and steadfast men who refused to leave on the grounds that they had not been compensated for contracts or other types of labor continue to circulate in Kampala, even informing the claims of those who rationalize conducting business enterprise in Uganda today. It also reflects the unwillingness of many Ugandan Asian men to discuss the role that the distribution of money, goods, and other systems of patronage that may have played a role in their strategies to stay on during many unstable governments. Certainly, stories about Indian men's decisions not to leave are an expression of their desires to maintain personal dignity in the context of their disempowerment and emasculation during the Africanization period.

Confronting Formal Citizenship: Bureaucratic Verification and the Management of Documents

A Ugandan Asian friend connected me to Rajivbhai, an elderly gentleman related to one of the most prominent Lohana Hindu business families in Kampala. I called Rajivbhai, intending to speak with him myself. Instead, his son picked up the phone and asked me what I needed. I explained to him that I wished to speak to Rajivbhai, and a mutual friend had connected me to him for my research. He hesitated, and then suggested that I meet his father in thirty minutes at the office where they worked.

⁶³ Interview with Jassa Singh, Kampala, 26 February 2011. Although he “refused” to leave, he also became part of a group of Punjabi Sikh civil servants that was hired to work in the Ministry of Defense.

Soon after, I arrived, sweaty and disheveled, at a small and dimly-lit foreign-exchange bureau on Kampala Road. Rajivbhai's son directed me to a back office where his father, a petite and frail elderly man, sat behind a desk and an old computer that hummed loudly. On the desk and spread before him were the daily Ugandan newspapers. Several artistic renderings of Hindu deities such as Krishna and Ganesh and black-and-white photos of family members were placed carefully on the corners of his desk. Rajivbhai welcomed me and explained that although he was retired and his sons oversaw the family business, he came to the office everyday and attended to religious and philanthropic activities, such as the free clinic that his family had recently opened a few streets away. In a mix of Hindi and halting English, he described to me, over two hours, his life-story, focusing specifically on how he had managed to stay behind in Uganda after the expulsion decree. The loud ringing of Rajivbhai's desk phone and cell phone often interrupted us. Nonetheless, when listening to the interview afterwards, I was struck by Rajivbhai's discussion about the bureaucratic mechanics involved in the process of becoming a non-citizen in 1972.

By 1972, the wife and children of Rajivbhai left Uganda for the UK. Rajivbhai, a third-generation Ugandan, had traveled to Kampala from Kasese in southwestern Uganda in order to have his documents (birth certificate, passport, property and business licenses) checked by the appointed verification committee at the Immigration Department in Kampala. Unlike the nullified passports and documents of other Ugandan Asian citizens during the expulsion period, his citizenship was "verified." Officials issued Rajivbhai a red-colored identity card.⁶⁴ With his citizenship authenticated by Amin's state, he began to help other Ugandan Asians and Indians citizens leave Uganda. After the deadline, he returned to Kasese to continue with his business and lived with an Indian friend for extra protection. As the government expropriated remaining Asian businesses, Rajivbhai returned to Kampala.

R: Citizens were asked to close their shops. I sold my shop to a Ugandan in Kasese before I moved to Kampala. This was in '73 January.

⁶⁴ I am uncertain if other possible "enemies" of the state carried identity cards as well. It is also unclear to me when exactly they were issued or re-issued.

AKH: But did you have an exemption pass?

R: No, I was a Uganda citizen. I had a card. *But...I didn't need a card. Only they had to prove that you are a Ugandan. Then they give you a card.* You see, Amin was...first he said people holding Indian or British passports should go...then after that he said that even citizens who remain behind will have to go to Karamoja.⁶⁵ They must have a second home. If you are in Kampala, you must prove you are a Ugandan, and you must have a second home, in Karamoja or where you are living, say in Kasese, somewhere nearby. You know...this was a tactic. He was trying to scare away those Ugandans who remained behind. But he didn't enforce that...he was just talking that...but many Asians left because of that fear. Ugandans. But for us, we didn't leave. We remained behind, we said no, we'll stay behind.

They gave us a red card, but I had a Ugandan passport. A card was like an exemption. It means your file in immigration is verified...because some people may have gotten hold of Ugandan passports but their records may not be proper in the files. But you see they put people to verify your record in Immigration, they put laymen from Makerere University who did not know the law, who didn't know... so they disqualified many people who were *real Ugandans* saying that *you are not Ugandans*. Your records are this and this. So they left. Many cases, they happened like that.⁶⁶

Amin's state issued identity cards to Ugandan Indians as early as 1971 during a formal census of Asians in Uganda (Mamdani 1973). As Rajivbhai explains, the exercise continued throughout the expulsion crisis, and thus Ugandan Asians who remained after the deadline possessed a number of different documents—passports, birth certificates, business licenses, and property titles that they used to help authenticate their Ugandan formal citizenship. Although most scholarship on the expulsion crisis focuses on the personal politics of Idi Amin as a political and national leader, little work has paid attention to the emergence of multiple "modern" and "Western" bureaucratic technologies in Amin's state.⁶⁷ Thus, although institutions and officials in charge of verification committees, ration boards, and the Departed Asian Properties Custodial Board (DAPCB) were central to the consolidation of Amin's state and the making of Asian non-citizens, bureaucratic technologies of enumeration such as lists, cartography, town maps (particularly of Asian property), writing and records, and other forms of material documentation have been far less examined and taken as serious objects of study and

⁶⁵ It is documented that Idi Amin threatened "verified" Ugandan Asians that any remaining Asians would be sent to Karamoja. Symbolically, Amin interpreted Karamoja as a space of exclusion for Indians, who had always lived in urban areas in Uganda.

⁶⁶ Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, 21 February 2011.

⁶⁷ I use "bureaucratic technologies" in reference to Michel Foucault's treatment of the modern European state and his discussion of "biopower."

inquiry in their ability to recognize, organize, govern and exclude subjects. These bureaucratic forms were especially important in dividing formal Ugandan Asian citizens from non-citizen Indian—just prior to the expulsion decree that was applied to all racialized Asians, regardless of their formal citizenship status.

Rajivbhai's description of his situation at the deadline in 1972 is typical of many Ugandan Asians who stayed behind. They were already formal citizens (Ugandans) whose presence was made legible to Amin's state through the creation of yet another document: red-colored identity cards. Anthropologists have noted that documents, like other forms of material culture such as uniforms and buildings, are central to the everyday representation and the reproduction of the state and its power (Das 2004, Hansen and Stepputat 2001). In addition, bureaucratic practices that index formal proceduralism such as "citizenship verification" inform the ways in which subjects come to imagine and understand the power of the state. In Kampala, material forms emerged through the formalization of bureaucratic processes: through checking key documents (birth certificates, land and business titles, passports), and the imposition of new forms of documentation for "verified citizens" (identity cards, special visas, permits) in the post-72 era. Thus, *all* Ugandan Asians who remained in Amin's Uganda carried red identity cards and were subject to routine checks of their documentation throughout the regime.

In sum, the materiality of Amin's state was central to the project of allowing Indian men to remain in the Black Africanized nation. Paperwork that indicates citizenship status or other identifying criteria continues to be important to Ugandan Asian and South Asian migrants in Uganda, as I discuss further in Chapter 5. Indeed, in our interview, Rajivbhai seemed to grapple with the contradictory nature of his racial inclusion and exclusion in Amin's regime. He diminished the legal significance of the identity card that he received by the verification committee, emphasizing that he was a Ugandan citizen. He was also perturbed by the arbitrary nature by which some Ugandan Asians lost their citizenship. Thus, while Ugandan Asians acknowledged the power of formal bureaucratic practices and documents to recognize citizens of Amin's regime, they also stressed that these documents were ineffective in recognizing "real Ugandans."

Other Ugandan Asians with whom I spoke emphasized that unlike other Indians, they were formal Ugandan citizens, and thus they were able to stay on. Lalbhai, who

continued to live in Mbarara, noted that he “was a citizen,” that “he was working,” and that his “citizenship had been verified as proper.” Lalbhai was a friend of Sahib’s, and I met him and his son on one of my trips to Mbarara. Through most of our conversation, I sensed that Lalbhai wanted to focus less on his experience of the expulsion and the 1970s, and more on the present-day struggles of his Ugandan African neighbors and friends in Mbarara, such as their troubles accessing credit and paying off debts. Nonetheless, he eventually did discuss the expulsion. He explained to me how and why, as an Ismaili Khoja, he managed to stay on after the expulsion deadline.

L: I never left...we stayed because during the exodus...we were citizens. We were working here. At that time we were doing mining business and farming. We verified that our citizenship was proper and then we stayed, and they never harmed us or anything. And we stayed here. But few people stayed here, about ten families only. After ‘73, after six months they [soldiers] had taken their businesses. For us, they never harassed us in the mining business. And we stayed. There was no problem. We stayed, all four brothers here.

AKH: Did you have an exemption pass?

L: No, not an exemption pass, we were citizens. You know, at that time, they used to make verifications. There was a deadline, it was 9 November I think, so we went to the RDC office, that time it was the DC office. Then they verified us.

Ok, so how many Asians are mining here? We were about...twenty. Then for the others, their businesses were slowly, slowly taken. So then they went off. For us, they never took our mine. If it was taken, then we also would have gone, see? But we stayed here. And we lived in our home, right there on High Street.⁶⁸

Lalbhai emphasized his legal status as a formally recognized Ugandan citizen in Amin’s regime; he thus alluded to the opening that was created for him and his brothers to remain in Uganda. Yet he also acknowledged that his stay was connected to his family’s involvement in the mining business. As a financially lucrative activity, mining would ostensibly produce profits for Amin’s government and other officials connected to the industry. This incentive, and perhaps other business negotiations, created an opportunity for twenty Indian men to remain behind. Both of these narratives highlight a central conundrum among Ugandan Asians who were exempt during Amin’s regime. Both Rajivbhai and Lalbhai acknowledged the role of formal bureaucratic practices in

⁶⁸ Interview with Lalbhai, Mbarara, 15 April 2010. Translation from Hindi.

recognizing them during the Amin regime. Yet both also indicate that the substantive meaning of bureaucratic verification was less important than its aesthetic form and procedure. Rajivbhai observed that [they] “didn’t need identity cards...they just had to check.” Both acknowledged the profound unbundling of formal citizenship from biological birthright and nation-state identification as the citizenship of other Ugandan Asians was revoked and canceled. Thus, Ugandan Asians who stayed inhabited the interstices of modern citizenship (as signified by bureaucrats, institutions and the officialdom of documents) and a compromised sense of their own inclusion—perhaps even an understanding that their presence in the regime was of strategic interest to the government (as in the case of Lalbhai).

Significantly, Ugandan Asians who remained were engaged in the project of procuring and managing important documents for themselves, their families, and community members throughout the expulsion crisis and afterwards (see more below). Moreover, emphasizing one’s formal citizenship status and its verification became a central mode by which Ugandan Asians who stayed could continue to make claims about living in the country and conducting business. Highlighting one’s citizenship status, its verification, and presenting a red identity card in Amin’s state served as a practical response to anyone who might question their presence in Uganda in the context of the absence of the South Asian population writ large.

Forging Security: Securitization as Cultural and Economic Practice

1) Exchange of Favors and Negotiations

After the deadline, Rajivbhai explained to me that while he and other Ugandan Asians had lost their businesses in rural areas and moved to Kampala, others had managed to retain possession of their businesses in the Kampala region. He explained that these men had money and “couldn’t be touched.” For example, Rajivbhai’s Shia Muslim friend owned two petrol stations in Mpigi that required specialized expertise and

large amounts of “cash money” to run.⁶⁹ Another influential Sikh industrialist had an “entire platoon” guarding his sawmill and workshops throughout the 1970s and 1980s.⁷⁰ These men carved out protected zones to continue business by forging alliances with local government officials and soldiers and by distributing large amounts of money in exchange for protection. These types of relations (monetary or other rewards in exchange for economic and bodily security and protection) became especially important for Ugandan Asians who lived in more isolated places away from the larger group of Indian men who resided in Kampala. Thus, the distribution of financial capital and the gifting of other types of commodities to soldiers and ministers became central practices in the project of forging South Asian presence in the 1970s.

Ugandan Asians like Rajivbhai could also continue to live in the country as long as they found a way to earn money and cultivate relationships with bureaucrats. For example, Rajivbhai’s uncle in Jinja owned several general stores. Through his personal connections, his uncle managed to procure goods, retain possession of the shops and stay on. Rajivbhai could have linked up with his uncle. Instead he decided to remain in Kampala, moving in with an Indian friend who had four empty rooms in his house. Below, he describes how he and his friend managed to earn money:

AKH: How did you survive that time?

R: Ahhh...That is a story. You see, initially for two, three years we were doing foreign exchange business. You know, we had some acquaintances, Europeans friends who would give us their checks...we gave them Uganda shillings, and we would send away those checks to our friends in UK, to put into their account...and we asked them to pay. So we buy from X, send to UK, Y buys from us, and he pays to their account in UK. So we were getting some money that way. But that was not much. But at least it was keeping me going. We didn’t have that problem.

Then in ‘76, a minister in Amin’s government wanted somebody to look after his business here. He had also grabbed a business. Minister. He had a plastic, polythene bags factory and socks factory. He wanted somebody to run it. So he asked one of my friends whether “you got somebody who can manage my business,” because I was jobless in a way. So my friend told me that the minister wants someone to take over as the manager. I said, I don’t mind. My condition is that I must get my wife’s permit by the immigration

⁶⁹ Rajivbhai stated that the petrol station did not have “ready goods to steal, take, enjoy.” Instead, it required large amounts of “cash money” to keep petrol there. Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, 21 February 2011.

⁷⁰ Interview with Jassa Singh, Kampala, 26 February 2011.

department. And my children. If they give me the permit then I will work for you, otherwise I can't work. Minister says don't worry we will get it, so he talked to the Minister of Internal Affairs. He was the Minister of Information. They are friends. So the minister says, ok we will give permit to his wife. They give me the permit, and I called my wife, while Amin was here, in '78 January. So two of my sons came with my wife.

I was living at that time in the *gurudwara*. *Jat*.⁷¹ I had four rooms there. In the *gurudwara* there were no Sikhs living there except the priest. They gave me four rooms. Rented. One, two, three, four. So my wife came with children. We were living there. We lived there, about one and a half years, two years in *gurudwara*. Then we rented a house in Kanjokya Street. Then I started working with an Indian in Amin's time. He was lucky to get a business run by a Ugandan..he gave him the business. He knew me, so I joined him, and I worked with him for how many months? Ten months, or eleven months... because by '79 April, Amin left. So April to December '79 I didn't have any fixed job, but still as I said I was doing some work here and there. I was getting money. I was sustaining myself. No problem.⁷²

Rajivbhai describes the illicit currency exchange business that he and his Indian partner pursued to earn money. By networking with an Indian partner who had connections in the UK, both sent British currency out of Uganda, earning profits through the handling fees that they charged customers. European officials, diplomats and other businessmen (Indian and African) became their customers. The second significant aspect of this narrative is Rajivbhai's depiction of Amin's ministers who had "grabbed" former Indian-owned businesses. As scholars have described, the appropriation of Ugandan Indian property after the expulsion quickly devolved into an exercise of personal enrichment for Amin's high-ranking governmental officials and soldiers (Kasozi 1994, Rubongoya 2007). Many Ugandan Asians who remained described the ways in which they were jobless or began to conduct (what had become) illegal work on the side (currency exchange and other forms of trade) in the early years of Amin's regime. Eventually, however, many found regular work as business managers, running former Indian-owned businesses that had been repossessed by the government! Ministers who spent their time attending to official duties and their new businesses negotiated with Ugandan Asians to take on the work of business management.⁷³

⁷¹ "*Jat*" or *Jat Sikhs*. Rajivbhai refers to the Singh Sabha *gurudwara* they attended in Kampala prior to the 1972 expulsion of Asians.

⁷² Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, 21 February 2011.

⁷³ Rajivbhai mentions a friend of his who likewise "gets lucky" and becomes responsible for a former Asian owned business. Thus it seems that at least some Ugandan Asians who remained were able to buy back former Asian-owned businesses from Ugandans. Others eventually bought expropriated Asian

Finally, Rajivbhai negotiated the offer to manage a minister's business. He agreed to work on the condition that he obtained special visas, permits; and eventually, identity cards for his wife and children to return to Uganda from the UK and live with him. His family returned to Uganda in 1978; and thus he managed to achieve financial security and re-establish his family in the country again. Other Ugandan Asian men who were concerned about being separated from their displaced families reached similar agreements with a variety of officials. Eventually families (Indian wives, children and other family members) trickled back during the 1970s, especially as it became more common for Ugandan Asians to negotiate visas and permits from various ministers in the Immigration Department. Ugandan Asians and government officials such as ministers participated in reciprocal exchanges with each other that did not exclusively involve money, "goodwill" or bribes, but could involve the exchange of Indian men's management or business skills for immigration documents. Moreover, while officials at immigration were not happy to endorse Asians who were coming back to Uganda during Amin's regime, high-ranking ministers could; under special circumstances, or for their own strategic needs, authorize the return of some of them. Rajivbhai's story describes how some returnee Ugandan Asians re-settled in Uganda merely six years after the expulsion in 1972.

2) Men's Inter-Racial Socializing and Gift-Giving

While men like Rajivbhai sorted out ways to earn money, find work, and re-establish family life in Uganda, community leaders also worked to construct lasting and loyal relationships with their government connections. One-on-one socializing between Indian and African men, as well as larger gatherings in more public spaces, involved cooking meat, sharing food, and drinking whiskey. Some Indian men had access to public spaces like clubs and discos that were frequented by military officers. Others avoided these places and entertained ministers and army men in their homes. Mini, the daughter

property. The circulation of terms such as "opportunist" and "beneficiary" among Africans and Indians in contemporary Kampala is one of the consequences of the expulsion of Asians in 1972.

of a Punjabi Sikh construction worker and his Ugandan wife described her memories of the 1970s:

M: I was a child. We were not walking outside. We were indoors. And even food was a problem because we couldn't get everything. We would use what was there. During that regime...Dad would continue with his work, going, coming. But he was given everything. Like cement he would get in loads, building materials in loads, because he was constructing government work. He would also go to the Minister of Information. The minister would come home. Dad would prepare meal for them. Slaughter a goat for them. And we would enjoy the feast, enjoy feast with my Dad at home. And other ministers would come. But mostly we would know the Minister of Information. But others would come, the colonels, the military. Life was not easy for him, but he made it.

AKH: But he had to make friends with people in the government...

M: To survive... if you have contacts in the government, you have safety. You have a bit of safety."⁷⁴

Mini's father frequently entertained ministers and high-ranking army men at their family home. Even at a young age, she understood that her father cultivated these relationships in order to protect the family in the regime. Jassa Singh, a Ugandan Asian returnee, likewise described forms of masculine socialization between Indian men and African ministers and army men in the 1970s and 1980s:

J: Then you had this guy called KM. In fact, he was probably the kingpin during the 70s. He was the sole importer of sugar, salt, and cooking oil. You couldn't touch this guy. Yeah, yeah. Patel. Patel. You couldn't touch this guy. But he was a very nice man, a gentlemen. But in those days, there were such few people. In the evening, you would go to his house, and he would be in his *lungi* [sarong] cooking. And he would love doing it. You know, a bottle of whiskey and he would start cooking his chicken curry. That was the only social structure we had. Just sitting with somebody...that was the score.⁷⁵

In our interview, Jassa Singh also described his late-night visits to the homes of ministers with yet another Indian "kingpin."⁷⁶ He and a fellow Indian industrialist brought bottles of whiskey with them to every meeting, and even bottles of wine for the wives of ministers. The gifting of whiskey bottles and other luxury items to army men and bureaucrats was important to the maintenance of relationships and networks, and thus

⁷⁴ Interview with Mini, Kampala, 23 February 2011. Translation from Hindi.

⁷⁵ Interview with Jassa Singh, Kampala, 21 February 2011.

⁷⁶ Interview with Jassa Singh, Kampala, 21 February 2011.

one's own security and protection in Amin's regime. Luxury items pleased sovereign officials, provided a form of social lubrication during important conversations that involved requests for special favors and other negotiations, and displayed respect and deference to Amin's inner circle.

3) Editing Networks and Managing Appearances

In our interviews, Ugandan Asian men typically observed that Amin "had no problem with Asians" after the 1972 expulsion period. They were often critical of Western commentators' interpretations of Idi Amin and talked about their encounters with him throughout the 1970s. Jassa Singh, whose father had remained in the country past the deadline stated, "You must remember, the Asian issue was a very small issue. It was only '72, '73. After that, don't forget, you have the PLO, and the Libyans who brought their planes here...he [Amin] started leaning more towards those issues. So this [Asians] was not an issue anymore."⁷⁷

Generally, Ugandan Asians with whom I spoke stressed that they enjoyed "security" during Amin's regime, in contrast to the violence they experienced between August-October 1972, the unstable states that followed Amin's coup, and Milton Obote's second regime between 1980 and 1985. At least three repressive state institutions (the Bureau of State Research, the Public Safety Unit, and the expanding military police) could suspect, detain, and shoot to kill *kondos* (robbers), who were Indian men's biggest fear at this time. As one interviewee noted, "you could walk in the town, you could walk in the town alone without any problem."⁷⁸ Sukh Singh, who lived in the *gurudwara* in Old Kampala during the 1970s, noted that the keys to the front gates of the *gurudwara* were always chained to the gate and left open to the public.⁷⁹ Other Ugandan Asians left their doors open or unlocked to show potential *kondos* that "there was nothing there to take," and that they had the protection of police and soldiers. Leaving keys in one's gates

⁷⁷ PLO, or the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Jassa Singh refers to Amin's interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and foreign relations with the Middle East and Libya in general. Interview with Jassa Singh, Kampala, 21 February 2011.

⁷⁸ Interview with Virdee, Kampala, February 2011.

⁷⁹ Interview with Sukh Singh, Kampala, 15 November 2009.

and doors was one symbolic technique that Ugandan Asians who remained developed in order to avoid being targeted by potential robbers.⁸⁰

Nonetheless, men did describe incidents of violence during Amin's regime. Below, Rajivbhai describes this era as a time of "peace" in comparison to the expulsion period. In his narrative, killings of Indian men were rendered as exceptional events.

R: In Amin's time, safety was there, and security was there. You can walk at 12 o'clock at night alone. Nobody would accost you, nobody would disturb you. So that was there. In Amin's time, when Amin declared the expulsion of Asians, army people throughout the country killed about seven, eight Asians. I lost one of my cousins who was in Katwe area. They abducted him someplace where he had gone to do some business or collect some money which Ugandan traders owed him. We have not seen his body even. Nobody has seen it. So there were such instances. About ten people must have died, about ten, twelve during Amin's time. That is during the expulsion. Then after the expulsion about three, four people died. One Sikh died in Mengo. But they say it was the thieves who came to rob him. There was an Indian Ismaili, they came to grab his car, and he was mentally not active, or slightly thick, so he resisted, and they killed him. Young boy, about eighteen, twenty [years old]. So like that about four, five people died during Amin's time. But I don't think Amin has got anything to do with it, it was his soldiers, like that. But it was generally not bad.⁸¹

Jassa Singh, Virdee, and Hardeep also discussed the deaths of some community members who remained as exceptional events in a larger context of relative security. Aside from Jassa Singh and the women I spoke with, none discussed violence against Indian women with me, particularly during the expulsion and its aftermath from 1972-1973.⁸² Men rendered community members who had been murdered as "accidents." Virdee, for example, stressed periodically throughout his interview, "I am not saying that people [Indians] did not die...they did. But if it happened, it was because someone drank too much alcohol, a soldier got angry, and shot him. Things like that."⁸³

Despite the propensity of Ugandan Asian men to avoid discussions of violence or minimize the impact of violence in their everyday lives, my conversations with them

⁸⁰ Interview with Sukh Singh, Kampala, 15 November 2009. During Obote's second regime, Ugandan Asians would describe hiding in their homes and using candlelight at dark. The years 1979-1985 is described as a time of major insecurity and the possibility of the most feared types of violence (murder and rape) against Ugandan Asians.

⁸¹ Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, February 2011.

⁸² Interview, Jassa Singh, Kampala, November 2010. He noted that his father was "frog-marched" to a police station and soldiers harassed his mother for three days in 1973. After this experience, he said that his father "wanted out" [of Uganda].

⁸³ Interview with Virdee, Kampala, February 2011. Translation from *Punjabi*.

revealed that they were deeply engaged in social practices that revolved around their awareness of the anti-Asian social context and the security situation during the 1970s. The most important strategy was to obtain information from Ugandan friends and contacts in or close to Amin's inner circle. For example, Ugandan Asian men knew that it was important not to be seen in particular places or with individuals who were under investigation by Amin's intelligence services. During our interview at Makerere University, Dr. Syed Abidi described narrowly avoiding a meeting with a well-known professor in Lusaka whose home had become a meeting point for anti-Amin exiles.⁸⁴ Similarly, Ali Jafar, the father of a close friend of mine, described a number of close encounters during the regime to me: interactions with suspected Ugandans that could have resulted in his death.⁸⁵

Generally, Ugandan Asian men stressed that it was important "not to discuss politics," and "as long as you didn't talk about politics, you were safe, you had some security."⁸⁶ Thus, their ability to remain in the Africanized state depended upon constructing themselves as outside the realm of "politics" (which became defined as anti-Amin), and reifying themselves as businessmen.⁸⁷ Because Amin had banned all political activities among civilians, living under his regime meant that Indians continue with their life and work and not discuss (and therefore be complicit with) incidents of violence. Civil servants rarely discussed public executions, disappearances, and other rumors of violence that were inevitably circulating in Kampala during this period. They stressed that they reported for work duties and stayed near home and religious sites. Those involved in business activities avoided political discussions, people, or places that could put them in a poor situation. Ali Jafar, a trader and tailor who sewed several of Amin's suits prior to the expulsion, describes pleading with Amin in 1973 to not promote him to

⁸⁴ Professor Syed Abidi, personal communication, Kampala, February 2011.

⁸⁵ Meeting with Ali Jafar, personal communication, Kampala, January 2010.

⁸⁶ Interviews with Rajivbhai, Hardeep Singh, and Tara Singh, Kampala and Jinja, 2009-2011.

⁸⁷ Particularly as a minister, permanent secretary, or other high-ranking official close to Amin. This point is interesting, and I return to it below. Ugandan Asians often described their engagement with "politics" as a practice of being openly critical about a politician's policies, particularly about the expulsion. It is interesting that even civil servants imagined themselves as outside "politics," tending to interpret their labor for the government as continuous with the type of work they would do on a private basis (especially contractors in the Ministry of Defense). Ugandan Asians who stayed also tended to view Idi Amin as a complex and often misinterpreted leader by the outside public.

the position of Ugandan ambassador to Zaire. He told him, “Please, I am not a politician, just a simple businessman.”⁸⁸

Forging South Asian Spaces: Religious Sites

Amin’s Economic War involved two aspects: the first was the expulsion of non-citizen Asians, followed by a large number of Ugandan Indians. The second part involved the expropriation and re-allocation of private property from Ugandan Indians to Africans. In order to systemize the allocation of close to 5,500 Asian properties, Amin established a governmental body called the Departed Asian Properties Custodial Board (DAPCB) in 1973. “Properties” (homes, schools, commercial enterprises, industrial factories, and other assets) were re-distributed quickly: at first in a systematic way, and then among Amin’s inner circle. Other Asian properties were owned communally prior to the expulsion: these included the devotional sites of various religious communities and societies. In Uganda, Ugandan Indian community leaders built religious institutions in conjunction with commercial properties that were rented out to help fund the needs of congregants of *mosques*, *gurudwara*, and *mandir*.⁸⁹ Thus, South Asian religious sites in Uganda were (and are) often located next to plots of land with go-downs, halls, or other commercial spaces that are owned by religious committees and rented out to retailers or other types of businessmen.

In the early 1970s, Amin’s interest in unifying various Islamic sects in the country, and his increasing interest in supporting Islamic interests and influences both within Uganda and internationally, compelled him to allocate all Asian (Sunni and Shia) mosques to the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (Kasozi 1994). As Ugandan Asians explained, mosques of various Islamic groups (the Shia Ismaili community, Bohra community, Khoja Shia Ithnashari community, and the Uganda Sunni Muslim Association) were “lost.” During the ninety-day expulsion period, the few remaining Asian mosques such as the Aga Khan’s Ismailia *jamatkhana* in Kampala were raided and

⁸⁸ Interview with Ali Jafar, Kampala, February 2011.

⁸⁹ Interview with Tara Singh, Jinja, 23 February 2011.

looted.⁹⁰ Ugandans also temporarily “took over” several Sikh *gurudwara* and Hindu *mandir* in Kampala and across the country.

Notably, a few Hindu and Sikh religious sites in Buganda and Busoga were exceptions to the large-scale expropriation and re-distribution of Asian property. Amin’s Chief Engineer in the Ministry of Defense, Ram Singh, had agreed to stay in Uganda and continue to work in Amin’s government after the expulsion on the condition that *gurudwara* and *mandir* “would not be touched.”⁹¹ Thus, seven religious sites remained intact and were never officially allocated to or expropriated by the central government, the army, or individual Ugandans.⁹²

After the expulsion, Ugandan Asians were able to focus their attention away from their families and begin investing their efforts in the re-construction of communal and religious structures for themselves. For instance, Ugandan Asians were concerned about continuing religious practices in sacred religious sites. Community securitization practices developed in tandem with the use of these sites for religious practice. Thus, Ugandan Asians who remained were not only involved in individual practices to secure their own financial and family security. Their survival in Uganda also depended upon the cooperation of the remaining community of Asians.

Kamaljeet Singh Virdee, an elderly Sikh gentlemen, had much to share with me about “*nabbe din ki badth*” (“after the ninety day period” in Hindi). Virdee was a well-known figure in the community who had come to the country as a construction laborer in 1969. Eventually he married and settled in Kampala. After working for some established construction companies, he found work as a civil servant in Milton Obote’s government. After the 1971 coup, Virdee and several other colleagues, with the help of Ram Singh, retained their positions in Amin’s government. He found himself employed in Amin’s

⁹⁰ Nusrat and her family decided to leave Uganda after they learned that the Ismailia *jamatkhana* in Kampala had been broken into and looted. Interview with Nusrat, Kampala, 1 March 2011.

⁹¹ Interview with Tara Singh, Jinja, 23 February 2011.

⁹² Ugandan Asians continued to attend and live in two major *gurudwara* in Kampala (the Ramgarhia Sikh Society and Singh Sabha *gurudwara* in Old Kampala and on Sikh Street, the Singh Sabha *gurudwara* in Jinja, Shikhar Bandi Mandir and Sanatan Dharma Mandir (SDM) in Kampala, and the Ramgarhia *gurudwara* and *mandir* in Entebbe. In Kampala, the large Sri Swami Narayan Mandir was expropriated and converted into a school; the Ismailia *jamatkhana* was allocated to the Uganda Supreme Muslim Council. These religious sites comprised seven major devotional institutions out of a vast religious landscape across Uganda: hundred of formal and informal (temporary or within homes) Asian religious sites across Uganda existed prior to 1972.

government just at the moment of political transition, and during a time when many Sikhs were leaving Uganda. Once it was clear to him that he would remain in the country after the expulsion announcement, he took on an active role as a community leader. Notably, during the 90 day period, Virdee moved into and lived in the Ramgharia Sikh Temple in Old Kampala:

V: Singhs, we must have been fifteen, twenty. Mostly we were working in defense. Or there were some businessmen who said we are not going. Now the *gurudwara* was opened in '69 on Guru Nanak's *Gurpurb*, then in '70 they all went. After the *gurudwara* opened in '70, it was myself and there was one other uncle who was here, now he is in London. We were left at the *gurudwara*. Next to the *gurudwara* was a plot, a flat, and we looked after that. Then at the same time, another Singh was laid off. He was looking after the Singh Sabha *gurudwara*, and was the *pardhan* there. And we were all in this *gurudwara*...but in the evening...all of us...Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, we all, either in the *gurudwara* or the *mandir*, we would get together and try to solve problems.

In the evening we would go check the Singh Sabha *gurudwara*. We would check the *mandir*. Since we had vehicles from the Ministry of Defense, we didn't have many problems...we were working in defense. First we would check Singh Sabha *gurudwara*, then the *mandir*. After leaving there, we would take a round through the town. If we saw any Asians with problems we would help them and bring them to *gurudwara*. If there was a new person (Indian) who just came, then we would keep him in the *gurudwara* with us. If there was a visitor who came, like from Kenya, we would keep him or them in the *gurudwara*. Like this, 90 days, almost 90 days passed.⁹³

In Kampala, *gurudwara* and *mandir* became the basis for community, social and religious life for Ugandan Asians who remained after the expulsion period. Significantly, Ugandan Indians were already using the Ramgharia Sikh Society *gurudwara* as a community center during the expulsion crisis in 1972. Towards the end of the expulsion period, it became a United Nations (UN) refugee-processing center for stateless Asians and a camp for displaced Asians who were leaving their homes, traveling to Kampala, and leaving the country (Mamdani 1973). Ugandan Asians who remained helped others at this time. After the deadline, they simply moved into the *gurudwara* and continued to live there throughout the 1970s. Virdee continues his narrative below.

V: In 1974...I brought my family in November. Then after that, three or four families stayed in the *gurudwara*. We just continued to run the *gurudwara*. Last month, about a

⁹³ Interview with Virdee, Kampala, February 2011. Translation from Punjabi.

month and a half ago...there was one lady who was a Muslim...she just passed. She, more than anyone else, did all the *seva* [volunteer work] in the *gurdwara*. *Gurdwara, Singh Sabha, mandir, Ramgharia, whatever...* In every place, she was right there. At six am [he, referring to her husband] would wake his wife. She would wake the others...at six am she would make *roti*, make *pere*...she would get everything ready...everyone...black, half-caste, everyone was there together [working].⁹⁴

Above, Virdee describes the routine of women and others who cooked food for the daily meals of the families in the *gurdwara*, as well as *langar* (communal meals after prayers in the *gurdwara* and *mandir*) on Sundays. “*Rotiyan bananey*” (making chapati) and “*perey bananey*” (making balls of dough for *chapati*) were two repetitive practices that emerged from his narrative several times. Other interviewees discussed the problem of Amin’s ration system for food allocations, and the ways in which Ugandan Asians would buy foodstuffs from the informal market, smuggle in their own food from Kenya, or use connections to obtain extra ration allocations for items such as milk, flour, butter, and sugar that were required for communal meals every Sunday. Rajivbhai, for instance, discussed the challenges of obtaining Indian foods such as *dal* and spices like *gharm masala*. He explained that at first Ugandan Asians would “buy spices in bulk” from Africans who had taken over Indian shops. “Spices were not as fresh, but still we could use them,” he explained to me. Later, they would bring Indian groceries from Kenya.⁹⁵ Mini remembered that Indian foodstuffs were brought in from Kenya once or twice a month, and that it “was gone within three days.”⁹⁶ She also noted that her father was able to use his connections to get allocations from the government for whatever he needed; he then distributed food to the larger community. Virdee described that Indians who realized there was a shortage of Indian foodstuffs suddenly became involved in the “food business.” He started laughing, and remarked, “*sadey log hat dey nahin, nah?!*” (“Our people cannot stop doing business, can they?” in Punjabi).

At many points in our conversations, Ugandan Asians were nostalgic about the “love” and “unity” among South Asians from various religious, ethnic, and caste denominations in the post-expulsion and Idi Amin era. Indeed, it was true that Amin's racialized state had resulted in “left-over” Ugandan Asians and long-term residents, as

⁹⁴ Interview with Virdee, Kampala, February 2011. Translation from Punjabi.

⁹⁵ Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, February 2011.

⁹⁶ Interview with Mini, Kampala, February 2011.

well as the discursive construction of a community of generally ethnic South Asians who had lost their formal communal organizations. Yet, practices of exclusion also operated within this generally ethnic “Ugandan Asian” community. Subaltern figures, without names or descriptions, characterized their stories. Virdee, for example, remarked, “*kaley, half-caste, sarey ithey katey hundey si*” (“Blacks, mixed-race people, they all used to live here together” in Punjabi). It was not clear to me who “half-castes” and “Blacks” in the *gurudware* could be. Certainly, many African-Asian families had remained behind after 1972, and those that identified as Hindu and Sikh through their father’s lineage would have frequented the Asian religious sites. It is also possible that other African-Asians who identified as Muslim or those who had converted to Islam after 1972 sought community and security with other Ugandan Asians in the *gurudware*.⁹⁷

Virdee’s narrative also describes people cooking and preparing food together across racial and religious divisions. Africans in the *gurudware* might have been associates of Ugandan Asian families, contacts that lived in the *gurudwara* in exchange for domestic work and cooking, or even *askari* and others who were around for extra security measures. Thus Indian religious sites could have been a home or even a source of revenue for some Ugandans who created networks of protection for Asians who lived in the *gurudware* and *mandir*.

Despite the cross-ethnic and religious environment within *gurudware* and *mandir*, it is clear that Indian women, mixed-race community members, and Ugandan Africans who worked within and/or lived in the religious sites were “hidden” and invisible figures. Indian women lived inside the *gurudware* and did not move outside the city unless they were in the defense vehicles of civil servants like Virdee and Ram Singh. Thus, while religious sites served to protect Ugandan Asians from outside violence, they could also be re-signified as sites of detention and confinement. Women, like the few Indian children that were born in 1970s Uganda, continued to spend all their time indoors throughout the 1980s until the onset of political stability in 1986 (see more on Indian women's restricted mobility in Chapter 6).

⁹⁷ Virdee and others noted that “some Indians had converted and become Muslim” during the 1970s. Interview with Virdee, Kampala, February 2011. In small towns outside Buganda, it seemed plausible that the few Sikhs and Hindus who remained may have converted to Islam in order to curry favor with local officials and soldiers. Sikh/Hindu to Muslim conversions in the 1970s is a taboo topic of conversation.

In sum, Asian religious sites in Amin's Uganda were important for several reasons. First, they became residences for Ugandan Asians who became dispossessed of their original homes. While there is a long history of congregants sleeping and resting within religious sites for the purpose of pilgrimage after long journeys in East Africa, some of the practices that developed among this Ugandan Asian community were novel and unique to the regime. For example, Ram Singh's cadre of construction workers and civil servants in the Ministry of Defense decided to live in the *gurudwara* together. It was an affordable place to stay, but it was also a "safe house"—Ugandan Asians could live together in a communal space to shore up their sense of security by seeking a strategy of safety in numbers. Moreover, as families and other returnees began to filter back to Uganda throughout the 1970s, travelers and newly arrived Indians could find a place to stay. As the community grew, religious sites became meeting points, informal community centers, and places where one could obtain information about Idi Amin, the army, possible rebel movements, and the security situation in general.

These sites also provided opportunities for new types of cosmopolitan community formation. Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh congregants attended religious functions together, often organizing trips and traveling to the remaining *gurudwara* and *mandir* in Jinja and Entebbe in a large group. Mini, Virdee, and Rajivbhai would all note that this was a time when Asians of different religions, ethnicities, castes, and sects had to come together and "cooperate."⁹⁸ Finally, religious sites provided a way for Ugandan Asians to continue their devotional practices.

Performing Community: Strategic Visibility

Religious sites, just like the homes and businesses of Ugandan Asians without adequate connections or protection, were under constant threat of appropriation or intrusion by autonomous and/or defected soldiers. When I asked Ugandan Asian community members about the histories of the *gurudwara* and *mandir*, they always stated

⁹⁸ Interviews with Virdee, Rajivbhai and Mini, Kampala, 2010-2011.

that they had been able to keep them in their possession.⁹⁹ Other information suggested that this must have been a much more dynamic, fraught and contested process.

AKH: Did anyone ever come inside [the *gurudwara*]?

S: They used to come inside...once some Ugandans came, and they wanted to open a disco here in the hall...even Amin came once, and they say that he had to see how many people are here on a Sunday. We were always twenty to fifty people in the *gurudwara*.¹⁰⁰

Sukh Singh, who traveled in and out of Uganda throughout the 1970s, confirmed that soldiers, government officials and other Ugandans would enter, explore, and possibly search the *gurudwara*. Did community members host, be-friend, bribe, or live with some of their interlocutors? It is not clear from the interviews I conducted, and it is also not clear when soldiers who visited the *gurudwara* wanted to convert it into a disco. Yet this is not surprising given the context of property appropriation from early 1973 onwards—when many former Indian properties such as community centers, hotels and restaurants became beer halls and after-hours discos frequented by Amin’s expanding military network. Sukh Singh remarked that even Idi Amin himself visited the *gurudwara* to check and see how many people were using the space. Others would refute this story, suggesting that Amin’s ministers were the only people who entered the *gurudwara*.¹⁰¹ Pramesh, whose mother and father became the caretakers of the Sanatam Dharm Mandir (SDM) in Kampala, also mentioned Idi Amin’s visit to the *mandir* to me. There, he stood before a large statue of *Sri Krishna*, and exclaimed that this was a holy place and should not be repossessed.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ “*Sade kol rehe gaye se,*” or “[the properties] stayed with us.” Translation from Punjabi.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Sukh Singh, Kampala, October 2010. Translation from Punjabi.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Virdee and Tara Singh, Kampala and Jinja, February 2011.

¹⁰² According to personal communication with Pramesh, July 2011.



Figure 13: Outside view of Sanatam Dharma Mandir (SDM), Market Street, Kampala. Photo by Author, 10 November 2008.

As Sukh Singh and Virdee described to me, Ugandan Asians who remained developed a routine amongst themselves during the 1970s. The central objective among community leaders was to mobilize all remaining Ugandan Asians to attend religious sites. By visiting different sites each week, the community could assert their presence in religious sites despite the attempts of other Ugandans to appropriate property from them. Thus Asians not only performed their community to outside observers through religious gatherings, but they also had to display that religious sites were being used for the purpose of serving the religious needs of the community only.¹⁰³ Ugandan Asians

¹⁰³ The discussion of the ramifications of property expropriation, allocation, and re-appropriation by returnee Ugandan Asians is a set of complex issues that unfortunately has been dealt with in rather limiting terms in the little scholarship that exists on this issue. See Olokya-Onyango (1987) for some discussion on the consequences of property expropriation, allocation, and re-allocation. I argue that it would be useful to

managed to retain some religious properties, maintaining the continuity of some South Asian spaces after the expulsion. However, as Sukh Singh describes below, forging community spaces depended upon the continuity of claims to these properties on a week-to-week basis.

S: Many of the Sikhs who were here, and some people from the Hindu *mandir*, they were helping each other...because you know, the government said that if you are not running these places, they are going to take them over. So all the communities, they decided to plan functions together, one Sunday over here, one Sunday in *mandir*, one Sunday in Singh Sabha, one Sunday in Entebbe, one Sunday in Jinja, just to show them that we are continuous with our properties.¹⁰⁴

Virdee described his movements between his job sites and religious spaces below:

V: At that time I was working in defense, on Mubende side. I was in charge of Mubende side, Mubende and Kawempe, I would go there...like if I went today...we would come back once or twice in a week. If I went on a Sunday, I would stay there on Monday, and come back on Tuesday. If I went on a Monday, I would come back on Wednesday. Why...I was alone...I was the only Singh there (at that time). Then I would come back [to the *gurudwara*]. In 1974, I was the first man in Uganda who received a dependent pass.¹⁰⁵ That I could bring my family. The government gave me the ticket, the government did everything, and my family came.

When the other Singhs found out they also wanted their families to come. Like this, four, five families of Singhs came together and lived in the *gurudwara*. Like this, we looked after the *gurudwara*, and every Sunday we had a program. We kept a schedule that one Sunday we would be at *Ramgharia gurudwara*, one Sunday at Singh Sabha *gurudwara*, one Sunday in the *mandir*, one Sunday at Jinja *gurudwara*, one Sunday at Entebbe *gurudwara* or in the Entebbe *mandir*. Like this, the *gurudwara* kept going. Then in '76 the government began to fight with Obote. And us, after our work, if we had time in the evening, we would move around [the town]. Total, we were...there was Property Service K.¹⁰⁶ The wife and husband stayed over there [referring to the *mandir*]. Downtown Forex

think about through the symbolic implications of Asian spaces (homes, businesses, places of devotional worship) that were rendered as “inaccessible” to Ugandan Africans, and/or as places where wealth, goods, and other valuables were “hoarded” by “exploitative Asians” in 1972. Thus, for Ugandan Asian who remained, showing that religious sites were being used for devotional practices only, in addition to leaving the gates of these places unlocked, was a way for Ugandan Asians to express that their presence should not be misconstrued as a threat, that they agreed with Amin’s policies, and that they were part of; and could be trusted, by outside society—particularly Amin’s intelligence services.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Sukh Singh, Kampala, October 2010. Translation from *Punjabi*. “We had to show them that we were attending/going to our properties.”

¹⁰⁵ Here, Virdee refers to the dependent passes he was able to attain for his wife and children from the immigration department.

¹⁰⁶ One of the most distinguishing features of this narrative is the propensity for community elders and long-term residents to describe each other by the names of the businesses that they either formerly owned (pre-1972) or owned in the present. Thus, Virdee refers to two Ugandan Asian families who remained in

Bureau...he was at the *Singh Sabha gurudwara* with his children...meaning in the evening we would look to see that all our people were together. Nobody was saying, oh, this is a Muslim. Or this is a Pakistani. At that time, there was none of this. At that time everyone was in unity. And if anyone was missing, for two days, four days, if he went outside without telling anyone, after two days we would start looking for him.¹⁰⁷

Above, Virdee describes communal living among several families in the *gurudwara* and the weekly religious programs they carried out in Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe. Since the congregants at these functions were largely Hindus and Sikhs, religious practices involved *kirtan* or *puja*, followed by *langar*, or communal meals.¹⁰⁸ Secondly, Virdee narrates the community “patrolling” practices that developed among the men who lived in the *gurudwara*. As civil servants in the Ministry of Defense, he and his colleagues could make use of government vehicles while they drove about Kampala. By establishing their presence and position in the government among the army, soldiers, and police, patrolling the city served several purposes: Virdee and other civil servants could gather information about events in Kampala, which would then help them to make informed decisions about their day-to-day safety as individuals and as a community. Information could be collected and disseminated at the *gurudwara*, which served as a meeting point for Ugandan Asians who were living in different parts of the city. Finally, Virdee and the other men could make themselves available to any other Ugandan Asians who might be in trouble—these were typically men whose documents had been confiscated, were being held at the Central Police Station (CPS), or had been taken to an unknown location.¹⁰⁹

Kampala as “Property Service Ratani” and “Downtown For-Ex Walla.” It was commonplace to hear the names of individuals and business families be replaced with business and corporate names during my fieldwork. This could index the ways in which families have grown apart in the years since the expulsion, particularly as some families became more wealthy and successful than others. But it also reveals the significance of Asian identity being intertwined with the businesses that individuals and families nurtured over generations.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Virdee, Kampala, February 2011. Translation from *Punjabi*.

¹⁰⁸ *Kirtan*, or Sikh musical recitation of scriptures from the *Adi Granth*. *Puja*, or Hindu devotional ceremonies. *Langar*, shared meals among congregants.

¹⁰⁹ Ugandan Asians could disappear, and this was always a bad situation. During the 90-day expulsion period, Indian men were frequently kidnapped, beaten, robbed, and often asked to bring soldiers back to their homes for more looting.



Figure 14: Outside façade of Ramgharia Sikh Society (RSS) *gurudwara*, Old Kampala. Ugandan Asians who remained during the Amin regime lived in the RSS throughout the 1970s. Photo by Author, 10 November 2008.

Thus, Ugandan Asians used *gurudwara* and *mandir* as living spaces, as informal community centers, and as places for the circulation and dissemination of information on the political scene during Amin's regime. More importantly, they served as a space for the consolidation of security and protection, simultaneously allowing for community reinvention and maintenance among Ugandan Asians. Finally, although Ugandan Asians I spoke with never explicitly discussed the personal significance of religious spaces, the continuity of weekly Sikh and Hindu religious practices must have helped them to create an alternative space that counteracted the larger context of social and political violence that men were embedded in and vulnerable to during this time.

Women's Lives in Amin's Africanized State

I had access to few Ugandan Asian women who were exempt from the expulsion.¹¹⁰ Some returned to Uganda and joined their husbands or fathers after a temporary absence from the country during the expulsion crisis. They continued to live in Kampala with their families and formed social groups and networks with other Indian women who migrated to Uganda later and joined them. Many women lived together and with their spouses in the *gurudwara* and *mandir* in Kampala. Ugandan Asian men remarked that their women and daughters were safe during my interviews, yet my conversations with them also revealed that they had spent an inordinate amount of time preoccupied with the safety and protection of women, particularly after the violence of the expulsion period. Attention to women's practices and men's discourses and ideologies about women reveal more complexity in the relationship between South Asian presence and registers of social, economic, and bodily insecurity during the Amin regime. Gender is intimately linked to men's practices of forging autonomy and physical security for themselves and their families in 1970s Uganda.

Mini, who is mixed-race Punjabi and Mutoro, was only eight years old when her father prepared feasts for visiting ministers and colonels in their family home during the 1970s. Although her memories of this period are vague, she remembers staying confined in a back room of her house during these visits:

M: Because my dad was one person...my father was one person who would not let us...us being girls...he would face them [ministers and soldiers] himself. But for us, we are locked up in one room. What would happen between them, we wouldn't know what goes on there. So we would be in a room locked up until everybody was gone, and then we would come out.

AKH: He would keep all the girls there?

M: Yes, at home. Just "keep quiet and don't talk," he would say. Because we were ladies...and I don't think there were many ladies then.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ I interviewed two Indian-African women who are Sikhs, one Hindu woman, and another Sikh woman. I asked male interviewees about their female kin when I had the opportunity to do so.

¹¹¹ Interview with Mini, Kampala, 24 February 2011. Translation from Hindi.

Mini also emphasized that she spent most of her time indoors during her childhood, and when she attended school, she was escorted to school and brought home directly. Within her own home, when ministers or soldiers visited her father, she stayed inside a locked room in the back of the house. Although the gendered segregation of domestic spaces and the construction of separate and distinct male and female domains are common in both Asian and African homes, during Amin's regime, Ugandan Asian men were the key intermediaries between outside society (ministers, soldiers, Amin himself) and private spaces (Asian homes and religious sites). Asian homes, previously regarded private and inaccessible, needed to be accessible to the personal contacts of Indian men.

While Ugandan Asian men were visible in their daily movements, and even used visibility strategically to claim Asian spaces, Indian and mixed-race women were invisible and inaccessible to the bureaucratic and official contacts of Ugandan Asian men. Mini's father locked her and her mother and sisters in the back room of the family home during meetings. Whether or not soldiers and ministers were an actual threat to women, Ugandan Asian men were motivated to keep their wives and daughters in confined spaces and in silence due to their fears and paranoia over violence against women (see more in Chapter 6). Likewise, Indian women who lived inside the *gurdwara* rarely moved outside unless they were in the defense vehicles of civil servants like Virdee and Ram Singh. Thus while religious sites and homes served to protect exempt Ugandan Asians from the possibility of violence, they could also be re-signified as sites of detention and confinement. Women, like the few Indian children that were born in Uganda in the 1970s, continued to spend all their time inside domestic spaces and religious sites throughout the 1970s and 1980s until the onset of political stability in 1986. During periods of extreme political violence, such as the 1979 coup that ousted Amin and ushered in the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) government, Ugandan Asian men immediately transported women across the border into Kenya.

Not all women were confined to domestic spaces or religious sites. Some Indian women became strong community leaders and cultivated extensive networks with Africans in order to protect and provide for their families. Miraben, for example, returned to Uganda from the UK in 1975 after she received a dependent pass and an identity card. Immediately after her arrival, her husband was taken away by soldiers and jailed in

prison for nine months. In our interview, Miraben described how she continued to live in her husband's home with one of her sons, other male relatives, and her daughter. She took up a number of entrepreneurial activities in the absence of her husband: she began a stitching and tailoring business from her home, she procured visas, passports, and travel documents for people in the community through a cousin at East African Airways, and she tutored both Ugandans and Indians in English and Gujarati languages at home. Miraben was well-respected and well-liked by Ugandans she interacted with, and she explained to me in Hindi, "all Africans called me Mama. When sugar was there, they brought it to my place first and asked, 'Mama, *unataka sukari?*' They gave it to me first, and then I distributed sugar to all the Asians."¹¹² She also took the lead in organizing religious programs and procuring foodstuffs for communal meals among Ugandan Asians at the *mandir* and *gurudwara*.

Intimate relationships between Indian men and Ugandan African (Black) women were another prominent feature of this era. Although Kampala fell in March of 1979 to the UNLF government, Virdee remembered that an announcement was made in Kampala that all people who were associated with Amin should leave the city as early as January 1979. Ugandan Asians left Kampala in the ensuing violence. While Indian women and children had already been relocated out of Kampala in carpools, a few men, like Virdee, remained in Uganda until it was safe for them to come back to Kampala:

V: At that time I was in Masaka. The guerilla war started, it kept going, the fighting. Masaka was taken in 1979. By the end of '79, '80 they reached Kampala. They took over Kampala. They took over the capital on 25th January. On the 20th...about 18th, 17th January...I sent the children to Nairobi. I also went [at that time]. We left on the 24th at night. All the Singhs, all the Gujaratis who were here. The government announced, that all of Amin's people should leave. He had also left by then.

Then we stayed in Tororo...myself and some other Singhs were there. One was Makhan Singh, another was Niranjn Singh...both of them have died. We, the three of us, lived there, and his [the friend's] wife was 'half-caste.' She was his girlfriend, and she was Muslim. She was very kind. She said, she would say, "you three...I am an African I will take care of you." At that time we didn't have a ration or anything like that. What she would do is that she would go somewhere close to Tororo station and would bring millet. We would roast it and eat it and that is how we lived. We stayed for a month, a month and a half. Then with a lot of difficulty we came back to Kampala, but then there was so

¹¹² Interview with Miraben, Kampala 26 August 2011.

much violence. By five, four o'clock all of Kampala was closed, even the Ugandans who were running *dukans*...[would go home].¹¹³

My conversations with Virdee revealed the importance of Indian men's relationships to Ugandans, and particularly Black women during the 1970s. In this instance, as Indian men's carefully organized networks of security and protection gave way to disorder, they became dependent on a Ugandan woman to procure millet for them to eat as they went into hiding. After Amin's Uganda had fallen, Indian men again found themselves in vulnerable positions: both as racialized and visible subjects and as people who could be identified as allies of and civil servants in Amin's government. Thus, men's dependence on Ugandan women is significant. It also illustrates Indian men's autonomy in their cultivation of relationships with women of a variety of social positionalities (racial and religious), in comparison to the limited mobility and confinement of Indian women. Finally, despite the importance of Ugandan African women to Indian men's lives during this period, they remained in the background and invisible in many of their narratives.

Conclusion: (In)security as Social Practice and Cultural System

The Ugandan Asian population who continued to live in Uganda after the expulsion can be divided into three groups: powerful businessmen with industrial know-how and personal connections to Amin, small-time traders who cultivated relations of protection with more powerful Indian and African men, and civil servants who worked in ministries. Exempt Ugandan Asians shored up a fragile and splintered sense of autonomy via their relations with government officials, often becoming important community representatives or big men. Patronage networks, relations of commensality, shared masculinity, strategic visibility and invisibility, community patrolling, and an obsession with Indian women and their bodies—all of these inter-racial and intra-community practices shaped the social and moral order of post-expulsion African-Asian life in Uganda.

¹¹³ Interview with Virdee, Kampala, February 2011. Translation from *Punjabi*.

This chapter has also explored the ways in which Ugandan Asian and African-Asian mixed-race men and women who remained in Kampala developed a number of responses and strategies in order to shore up their sense of personal, familial, and community security and survive in the de-Indianized Ugandan nation-state. Security-seeking practices flourished in multiple domains of every-day life: the search for economic enterprise and sustainment, bodily and corporeal protection, and within the social realm through dwelling in Asian spaces.

Indeed, as my interviews with Ugandan Asian and mixed-race men and women reveal, the vulnerable and tenacious nature of South Asian communal and social life, practices of security-seeking, and the racialized Indian self that emerged during the Amin era—these complex dynamics underscore the very basis of African-Asian relations in Uganda today. The experiences of individuals who remained in Idi Amin’s regime and the insecure regimes that followed illustrate the ways in which a cultural system of security seeking proliferated after the expulsion decree and exodus. Similar securitization practices characterize contemporary South Asian migration and community-building processes in Kampala, providing further evidence for a cultural model of South Asian re-integration into Uganda that is tethered to the politics of (in)security.

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Chapter 4 Real vs. Fake Investors

Introduction: From "Refugee" to "Investor"

At the level of official policy and discourse, the signs and symbols of contemporary African-Asian race relations in Uganda have been reversed from the anti-Asian sentiments, Africanization policies, and exclusion of Ugandan Indians in 1970s Uganda. As discussed in Chapter 2, the ideological frame that allows South Asians to be recognized and re-integrated within the contemporary Ugandan national polity is the "South-South" frame and the demands of national economic development initiatives. Thus, neoliberal economic development and the search for private capital investment have resulted in the discursive and racialized construction of Ugandan Asians and new South Asian migrants as "Asian" investor-citizens who are critical to the development and modernization aspirations of the Ugandan political leadership. This post-expulsion inclusion of South Asian (as well as South East and East Asian populations) also relies on the biopolitical production of Ugandan Asian and South Asian individuals as economic-oriented and capital-bearing individuals. The result is an intense reification of "Asians" as a business community in the aftermath of the expulsion and in contemporary Ugandan political, and social life. Indeed, parallel to the initiatives of the colonial state that sought to recruit Indian labor and capital for the development of the interior of the African continent, South Asians continue to be incorporated into the national territory based on distinctive economic criteria: their possession of capital and putative future-oriented ability to invest in and develop the nation. Aihwa Ong, following Friedrich von Hayek, refers to these instrumentalist figures as *homo economicus* (Ong 2007:10).

This chapter traces these dynamics by exploring one major path to national re-integration for Ugandan Asians and South Asian migrants in post-expulsion Uganda. Namely, I explore the state's engagement with South-South geo-political relations via a

state ministry called the Uganda Investment Authority, or UIA. The UIA is a government institution that exemplifies the integration of African countries like Uganda within the exigencies of a neoliberal global political economy. It also illustrates transformations in nation-state sovereignty since the 1970s (Chapter 3) and the norms of neoliberal and security-oriented governance. Significantly, however, the practices of investment agents at this institution are also intertwined with local, cultural, and historical ideologies surrounding the politics of South Asian presence in Uganda. I will demonstrate that urban South Asian identities revolve around three major sociological categories that emerge in and around bureaucratic, institutional, and social space: Indian “traders,” wealthy “tycoons,” and the new neoliberal category of “foreign investor.” Moreover, discourses and practices of securitization are central to the project of reintegrating “Asian” capital and bodies back into the Ugandan national territory. South Asian entrepreneurs and state agents interact with each other in a context of post-expulsion insecurity, assessing the intentions of each other’s motivations, and seeking benefits while minimizing possible risks.

In effect, the ethnographic research discussed in this chapter maps the shifts from the pre-expulsion “petty bourgeois Asian commercial class” (Mamdani 1975, see also Chapter 2), to the post-expulsion “leftover” Ugandan Asian civil servants, traders, and entrepreneurs (see Chapter 3) to the present-day formation of an investment-oriented South Asian business community in Uganda. In a post-Africanization and urban neoliberal milieu, I show how racially and culturally marked “Asians,” along with “Asian” entrepreneurial values, are re-signified and translated into a public good for the nation and the Ugandan African citizenry at large. Interestingly, the state’s production of Asians as part of a “foreign investor” citizenry, dominated by Indian nationals, has resulted in the racial aggregation of Ugandan Asians, new South Asian migrant-traders, and elite South Asian investors. In the process, all geographic, national, religious, ethnic, and other social identifications of these distinct groups, in addition to histories of migration and displacement, are effaced. Thus, I argue that one of the effects of both neoliberal and security-oriented governance is that the Ugandan state tolerates, recognizes, and re-incorporates South Asians, as long as they have been discursively transformed into “development partners,” “investors,” and/or “entrepreneurs.” State

agents also seek to recast the anti-Asian politics and policies of the Idi Amin era, promoting a vision of a secure, cosmopolitan, and racially inclusive Uganda to foreign investors.

This emerging mode of recognition for South Asians also entails new processes of racialization and exclusion. As the state seeks to maximize and accumulate capital investments into the country, it simultaneously excludes foreign migrants who are colloquially referred to as “fake investors” or “investors who trade.” These practices hinge on earlier governance regimes that were characterized by protectionist Africanization policies that sought to uphold the rights of the indigenous Ugandan African population. Moreover, the new investment regime disenfranchises urban Ugandans from the same rights and privileges afforded to foreign investors.

At the conclusion of the chapter, I return to the issue of citizenship. What are the individual stakes of state agents, Ugandans, and new South Asian migrants who desire national development, prosperity and social and class mobility? What are the stakes of Ugandans who respond to new circulations of Asian capital and the presence of South Asian migrants? How might new processes of South Asian re-integration actually play out on the ground in the context of the historical insecurity of minority citizenship in Uganda? How are the politics of race, ethnicity, and culture intimately related to these social and economic processes? I begin this analysis by first exploring the current political leadership’s mode of governance in central Uganda and its official policies towards its South Asian population after the expulsion.

“Mzee with the Hat”: Governing the Neoliberal Security State

In conventional post-colonial Ugandan histories, the year 1986 marks a sea change: it symbolizes the restoration of political order, bodily security for the masses, and a shift in the mode of governance from previous regimes.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, both economic and political studies of Uganda are often relegated to different realms of scholarly analysis, thwarting our ability to understand the complex intertwinement of

¹¹⁴ Despite the launching of the National Resistance Army by a youthful and revolutionary Yoweri Museveni in 1981, the NRA was unable to take Kampala and successfully remove Milton Obote’s UNLF government until 1986.

economics *and* governance and their manifestation in different parts of the country (Collier and Reinikka 2001, Hansen and Twaddle 1991;1998, Mugaju 1996, Tripp 2010).¹¹⁵ Therefore, the material in this section excavates modes of governance in urban Uganda without *a priori* constructing boundaries between “the political” and “the economic” domains.

The shift from the autocratic “politics of exhortation” and the bureaucratic statecraft that characterized Idi Amin’s mode of governance (Peterson n.d., Peterson and Taylor 2013), gave way to a new political, moral, and social order led by President Yoweri Museveni and the National Resistance Movement (NRM). Museveni’s legitimacy was underscored by his ability to discipline the army that he helped educate and train. In doing so, he helped to undercut a historical pattern of army and military men who terrorized and victimized Ugandan civilians. By restoring social order through the army and governmental institutions, the stage was set for a pragmatic, methodical, and progressive vision of a future Uganda that involved the disciplining of citizens. Upon restoring political security to the country, the second largest challenge that the political leadership faced was the economic reconstruction of the country. Three decades of civil war had ravaged much of Uganda’s infrastructure, including the Uganda Railway, government buildings, and urban architecture in Kampala and southwest Uganda. Most visible on the Ugandan landscape, former Ugandan Indian assets had become severely run-down in the intervening years between the 1972 exodus and the NRM’s coup. They had also become a national symbol of the graft, corruption, and patronage that had seeped into the moral character of the Ugandan population. Indeed, the historical event of the expulsion remained a major blight on Uganda’s international record.

Although Museveni espoused Marxist ideology as the basis of his political practice, his efforts to re-construct an independent Uganda were undermined by larger global and structural forces. His experiments with a barter economy and a socialist-dirigist vision for the country were undermined by the crisis of the Ugandan economy and international pressure to adopt structural adjustment programs (Museveni 2007 [1997]:183-186). To the consternation of Uganda’s leftist intelligentsia, the NRM’s

¹¹⁵ With few exceptions. See, for instance, Joshua Rubongoya’s analysis of NRM politics that integrates both economics and governance in his analysis of “regime hegemony” (2007).

economic philosophy shifted considerably. President Museveni himself has written defensively about his decisions to implement economic liberalization: according to his rationale, without a modern industrial sector and a diversity of social and economic classes from which to organize, Ugandans will continue to mobilize around colonially-crafted ethnic and sectarian lines. Moreover, marginalized and isolated from the global economy, and without economic opportunities, ethnic divisions will continue to fester and lead to further social divisions and violence among Ugandans. Thus, Western governments and international donor agencies worked with Museveni because of his vision for national development, modernization, and industrialization. Uganda quickly became the West's "poster child" of success because of its successful implementation of massive macroeconomic reforms; it also became fully integrated into an expansive donor-driven aid economy (Whitworth and Williamson 2010:26).

Neoliberalism, as an ideology, is normatively associated with the doctrines of Reganism and Thatcherism in 1980s Euro-American contexts. In these contexts, neoliberalism, as economic practice, was used to attack the bureaucratic welfare state. In a global context, however, neoliberalism was used to set up and gain access to overseas markets, supporting a "Washington Consensus" that shifted international economic planning from nation-states to regional trading blocs that disenfranchised the Global South (Harvey 2005). Aihwa Ong argues that the "main elements of neoliberalism as a political philosophy are 1) a claim that the market is better than the state at distributing public resources, and 2) a return to a primitive form of individualism: an individualism which is competitive, possessive, and constructed in terms of consumer sovereignty." Thus, "neoliberal reasoning is based on economic (efficiency) and ethical (self-responsibility) claims" (Ong 2006:11).

In the African context, the appropriation of neoliberal ideology and practice must be understood in the context of the ideological imperatives of "development discourse." As Africanist anthropologists have demonstrated, discussions of national "underdevelopment" and the need to progress and to modernize are hegemonic ideologies that have deeply-felt social, cultural, and psychic effects on individuals and societies (Escobar 1996, Ferguson 1994;1999; 2006). In Uganda, developmental narratives are based on a liberal and progressive temporality that is often reflected in academic

scholarship (Cheney 2008, Tripp 2010). In popular rhetoric and in scholarship, Idi Amin's Economic War and the expulsion of the Ugandan Indian commercial class is the central historical event that led to Ugandan "underdevelopment." Accompanied by ethnic-based violence, patronage and the illegal economy (*magendo*), Ugandan "underdevelopment" was further characterized by a generalized social and moral breakdown among the populace. In these national narratives, the expulsion event precipitated further violence and the breakdown of Ugandan moral character under the Amin state.

I argue that two modes of global and state governmentality intersect with each other in contemporary urban Uganda; both of them inflect the politics of contemporary South Asian presence in the country. Following Michel Foucault, "governmentality" refers to "the array of knowledges and techniques that are concerned with the systematic and pragmatic guidance of everyday conduct" (1991). It involves a range of practices that "constitute, define, organize, and instrumentalize the strategies of individuals, that in their freedom, can be used in dealing with each other" (Ong 2006:4). My first concern here is with neoliberal governmentality as a mode of implementing liberalization policies based on neoliberal and development ideology. Following Aihwa Ong, neoliberal governmentality "results from the infiltration of market-driven truths and calculations into the domain of politics...neoliberal rationality informs actions by many regimes and furnishes the concepts that inform the government of free individuals who are then induced to self-manage according to market principles of discipline, efficiency, and competitiveness" (Ong 2006:4).

In relation to Uganda, scholarship that has analyzed the economic impact of the expulsion has emphasized post-1970s regression and decline, highlighting the need to "develop" rural African horticultural and pastoral modes of production into a fully modern agricultural sector. This development vision is based on the possibility of a second, post-expulsion "industrial revolution" of the nation and the re-development of the industrial and manufacturing bases in the country (Museveni 2007 [1997]; 2000). This hypothetical "second industrial revolution" will (putatively) depend on a private sector led economy that is open to foreigners and based on foreign direct investment. Indeed, with few exceptions, most analysts have marginalized and neglected the activities of

Ugandan traders, entrepreneurs, and businessmen in the intervening years since the expulsion; they have also largely ignored the productivity of the informal economy and African modes of production that operate extensively in urban and rural Uganda.

Thus, the first phase of neoliberal development in Uganda encompassed structural adjustment policies that were designed to open markets, restructure the public state sector and privatize government parastatals in order to increase "market efficiency." The second phase of neoliberal development policies in Uganda, which I investigate in this chapter, are associated with increasing corporatization in the country and the state's aggressive recruitment of foreign investors and foreign capital as a program for national development. Moreover, neoliberal governmentality is expressed in the ways in which Ugandan citizen-subjects are exhorted to internalize and maximize the personality traits of investors and entrepreneurs (self-sufficiency, self-responsibility, business savvy, and industriousness) that will allow them to become productive members of society.

The second mode of governmentality that is critical to understanding social and economic organization in Uganda is that of security. The notion of security I invoke here has to do with the ability to live free from violence: the prevention of bodily or corporeal insecurity that occurred in historical times of war, conflict, and displacement. Significantly, much of the legitimacy of the NRM relies on its ability to provide security for its citizenry. Political scientists, who often attempt to locate African countries within continuums of authoritarianism and democratization (Tripp 2010), tend to neglect the significance of security in their analysis of governance. While scholars have focused on the ways in which the NRM established a participatory form of democracy in Uganda through process of decentralization and the introduction of local councils in rural areas; in practice, Ugandans give up many formal rights in exchange for the continuation of security-driven policies that govern the nation. Thus, although the military is present in the lives of everyday Ugandans, many Ugandans also observe that the days when soldiers would arrive unannounced to one's home and shouted, "*fungua mlango*," ("open the door" in Swahili) have passed. The idea of returning to this era of bodily insecurity invokes fear and apprehension among Ugandans. Thus, the NRM's promise of providing security to its citizens allows the political leadership to continue to govern its citizenry.

President Museveni and the NRM have also mobilized declension narratives of the Amin years in order to marshal support for their leadership. Thus, it is around the bases of national security and national economic development that the political leadership has been able to legitimize itself and mobilize widespread and long-term popular support. The major *quid pro quo* of both economic development and security for Ugandan citizens was the suspension of political parties and the right to associate politically from 1986 until 1995 (the infamous “No Party Democracy” political system). Here, NRM supporters argued that the security of its citizens, economic development, and poverty eradication were more important than “modern,” Western, democratic values such as term limits and political demonstrations (Halsteen 2004:109-111). Their arguments are also based on futurist, *in potentia* scenarios: without “modern” social classes in Uganda, NRM supporters argue that Ugandans are apt to organize along ethnic lines which will quickly devolve into violence (Halsteen 2004:107-108). According to this vision, Ugandans are always on the brink of descending into uncivilized and primitive “chaos.”

Moreover, national, state, and academic discourse on models of governance in Uganda are often reduced to a “Western” versus “African solutions to African problems” binary (Halsteen 2004:113-115). This binary circulates within media publics, among the intelligentsia, politicians and foreign researchers. Activists from opposition political parties and the Ugandan intelligentsia, influenced by previous political struggles and the increasing currency of global human rights to address all manner of issues such as gay rights, HIV/AIDS, and domestic violence, advocate for the adoption of liberal, democratic, and individualistic values in the country (Englund 2006, Halsteen 2004:117-118). The political leadership, on the other hand, accepts donor money while it criticizes the neo-imperialist agendas of human rights advocates and NGOs that operate in the country.

President Museveni’s extension of his own term limits just prior to the 2006 elections, his defeat of opposition political parties in 2011 (despite disagreement from international observers), harassment of opposition party leaders and political activists, and increasing authoritarian practices such as media censorship in his third and fourth terms, have resulted in major conflicts between NRM elites and opposition supporters. During my fieldwork, Ugandan youth, influenced by regional political events such as the

Arab Spring, often discussed the possibility of revolutionary change and the democratic election of a new leader. These same youth, however, doubted the political opposition's ability to provide security and "development" to Ugandans. Friends often explained that the increasing authoritarianism of Museveni was preferable over the possibility of violence and increasing economic insecurity with a new political leader. Thus, in a context of increasing economic and social vulnerability for Africans in a global context, African youth choose among limited choices. During the 2011 election, for example, friends who observed the militarization of the city opted not to vote in the election. They remained home for fear of possible riots and political clashes on Kampala streets.

Thus, the imperatives of economic development and security are intertwining ideologies and practices that allow Museveni and the NRM to assert the legitimacy of their rule, the sovereignty of the state, and to produce an abstract Ugandan national collectivity that is on the road to prosperity and modernization. What is also becoming clear is that the political leadership, through its interest in Asian models of economic development, is open to exploring paths to development that are not entirely dependent on the "West." Given all this, we can consider President Museveni's state as a vulnerable regime that is able to negotiate different types of transnational capital from different global regions. In doing so, Museveni attempts to shore up the Ugandan nation-state's sovereignty in a context in which Ugandan sovereignty has been severely compromised by the effects of colonial rule, global economic exclusion and the imperatives of donor-driven development. Attempts to transform rural peasants and the urban proletariat (*bayaye*, Luganda) into modern entrepreneurs and salaried wage-earners, and to re-incorporate South Asians and other Asians as investors and job creators are the *sina quanon* of security-oriented and neoliberal forms of governance in the Museveni-era.

Finally, my understanding of the mode of governance that operates in Uganda today cannot be complete without exploring the cultural politics of African leaders. Museveni's tenure over Uganda for twenty-six years is inflected by his personal biography and social vision, topics that scholars have addressed elsewhere extensively (Museveni 2007 [1997], Rubongoya 2007:60-62). But it is also important to consider the mode of power that national leaders possess in relation to the subjects that they govern: national governance is characterized by bureaucratic practices and technologies of

government, but also by the personality politics of individual leaders. This can be observed in the “cult of personality” surrounding the President: the framed photographs of the national leader that adorn the homes and businesses of Ugandans and South Asians, the constant memorialization of the “Bush War” that ousted former President Milton Obote and brought the NRM to power, and the omnipresence of the President in the nation. Indeed, one of the unique characteristics of Museveni’s governance involves his penchant for touring rural areas of the country and conducting educational lessons and lectures with common folks in relation to the NRM’s Ten Point Programme.¹¹⁶

During my research, many South Asian businessmen and other long-term residents discussed anecdotes and stories of the President, demonstrating the significance of the national leader in their lives. Frequently, they cited the President’s decision to invite them back in order to legitimize South Asian presence in Uganda. At times, it seemed to me that the President was lurking everywhere in my field research. When I returned to Uganda in 2011 for a brief follow-up trip during national elections in the country, I visited Mini, the daughter of an early Sikh settler and Mutoro woman who had lived in Uganda during the Amin years. Sitting in Mini’s home one afternoon in mid-conversation, she suddenly looked at her phone and began laughing loudly. She had received a text message from a number that was composed of all number 7’s. The text message read, “The Man in the Hat Thanks You.” The President is colloquially referred to as “M-7” in Kampala, and his trademark is the large khaki hat he wears. Mini had voted for the NRM earlier that week and she was overjoyed to receive a personal message from the President himself.

Mercantile Cultures, Family Firms, and the Return from Exile

Amin’s Economic War and the exodus of Ugandan Indians resulted in the displacement of the Indian commercial trading class as well as several elite family firms that had dominated the commercial, industrial, and plantation sectors of the economy in Uganda. Popular and scholarly narratives of Ugandan Asians’ return to the country tend

¹¹⁶ See “The Ten Point Programme of the National Resistance Movement” (Museveni 1997:221). It is loosely based on South Africa’s Freedom Charter developed by the African National Congress (ANC).

to begin in the Museveni-era, or post-1986 Uganda. Yet it is important to note that a small group of about 500 Ugandan Asians and other long-term residents remained in the country, allying themselves with the Amin regime (see Chapter 3). Some emerged as important entrepreneurs during this era. These “tycoons” did not come from prominent industrial families. Rather, they started out as petty traders who gradually combined trade with other types of labor and entrepreneurship, taking advantage of trading monopolies and the *magendo* (illicit or informal) economy that proliferated in Amin’s regime to create individual wealth (Hundle 2013). Thus, entrepreneurs who gained wealth from the Amin era are perceived as “new money” business families in Kampala.¹¹⁷ Rumors often abound that this wealth was earned through immoral means or ill-gotten ways. These accusations are reflective of popular discussions of moral decline that occurred among Indian and African businessmen in the 1970s.

Certainly, all entrepreneurs, whether African or Indian, took advantage of the *magendo* economy and engaged in some form of profiteering throughout the Amin era. As Mahmood Mamdani observes, “it is surely an irony of the post-1972 period that it created a multi-racial group of African and Asian capitalists in Uganda” (1993:272). Indeed, the past is the past among these entrepreneurs, and the transition to NRM governance has allowed wealthy Indian businessmen who prospered during the 1970s to re-invent themselves. Today’s Indian “tycoons” are community, business, and industry leaders; at times they are even solicited for political advisor-ship roles. All of them have close ties to President Museveni and the NRM leadership. Because of their reliance on and patronage of African leaders across several regimes, new money Indian tycoons have thrived under uncertain economic and political environments.

While “new money” Ugandan Asian businessmen are critical to understanding the transition to NRM governance, so are “old money” family firms. My use of “family firms” here refers to the traditional model of Indian business enterprise that emerged in colonial East Africa and the Indian Ocean: trading networks, based on family and extended-family kinship ties, which gradually expanded into corporate firms in which members of nuclear and extended families were partners and majority share-holders.

¹¹⁷ These include the Mukwano Group of Companies, Dembe Car Sales and Dembe Trading Enterprises, Ruparelia Group of Companies, and Tirupati Developments in Uganda. See Chapters 3 and 5 for more information on Indian entrepreneurship in Uganda after the expulsion.

After the 1979 coup that displaced Idi Amin, the UNLF government, led by President Milton Obote, invited the Madhvani and Mehta business families, two of the most important Gujarati Lohana family firms in Uganda, to return.¹¹⁸ Both family firms had owned the two largest sugar plantations in Buganda and Busoga (called Lugazi and Kakira, respectively). Significantly, neither family firm returned as a Ugandan company, but as subsidiaries of multinational companies that expanded over the intervening years since the expulsion (Ahluwalia 1995:215). The Madhvani Group, for example, had already shifted its base of operations to the tax havens of Bermuda and the Isle of Man prior to Ugandan independence in anticipation of Africanization and political unrest in the new nation (Madhvani and Foden 2008:99). Thus, in order to increase their profits and increase the security of their investments and minimize capital risks in an unstable political environment, family firms sought to rehabilitate Uganda's sugar industry on a joint-venture basis with the government. Because the state was an active participant in the sugar industry, both firms were able to utilize significant amounts of capital borrowed from international donors and agencies, further minimizing risks to capital investments in the new regime (Ahluwalia 1995:215). In the process, business leaders of both family firms re-established personal relationships with President Milton Obote.

Furthermore, Ugandan Asians, resident in Britain and North America, traveled to Uganda during this period in order to reclaim property from the Departed Asians Property Custodial Board (DAPCB) through a legal act called the Expropriated Properties Act, passed by Obote in 1982.¹¹⁹ Significantly, the vast majority of Ugandan Indians who left Uganda in 1972 were renters and owned no fixed property in Uganda—those who did own fixed assets were small proprietors (Mamdani 1993:272). Expelled small-time proprietors in the diaspora were largely interested in compensation rather than the repossession of their properties (1993:1972).¹²⁰ Thus, the men who did return to

¹¹⁸ Both entrepreneurial families began to reconnect with earlier regimes after the coup that displaced Idi Amin. They were unable to make real progress on their confiscated assets and industries until Obote's second regime, however.

¹¹⁹ 1983 Expropriated Properties Act, Cap. 87. Idi Amin established the DAPCB in 1973 (see Chapter 6 for further discussion).

¹²⁰ Only 2000 small-time proprietors filed repossession claims with the Uganda High Commission after the passage of the Expropriated Properties Act in 1982 (Mamdani 1993:272). This could also, of course, be related to lingering feelings of mistrust that families in the diaspora had for Uganda and interacting with Obote's regime once again.

Uganda were there because of their interest in repossession. They owned large-scale property: industrial, commercial and residential in Kampala and many small district towns scattered across Uganda.

While the 1982 Act was largely unsuccessful in bringing back expelled Ugandan Asians to settle and re-invest in the country, it was re-invigorated in the early years of the Museveni-led NRM regime. This time the government was more successful in processing paperwork and returning property and assets back to its original Ugandan Asian owners. In the process, Museveni sought to attract foreign investment back to Uganda by exhorting expelled Ugandan Asians to return to the country, repossess their property, and invest in the nation (Abidi 1996:53). He did this by traveling to the embassies of the adopted countries of expelled Ugandan Asians and by re-establishing diplomatic relations between Uganda and India through a “memorandum of understanding” (Abidi 1996:57). The NRM regime effectively dealt with the problem of graft and violence connected to Asian properties and the Departed Asians Property Custodial Board, although many lingering problems remain.¹²¹ In sum, although the government was successful in returning properties, they were not so successful in enticing Ugandan Asians in the diaspora to return and re-settle in the country.¹²² With the departure of small businessmen, artisans, and salary earners during the expulsion, the remaining population of Ugandan Asians is comparatively more prosperous.¹²³

After repossession, Ugandan Asian family firms were more deeply entrenched in the NRM government and allied with Museveni’s politics. Critical to the national reconstruction process, Ugandan Asian business leaders advocated for reforms or concessions that were amenable to a liberal business environment and that would help them reconstruct their businesses. In doing so, Ugandan Asian family firms began to re-invest in the manufacturing sector, agricultural processing, banking and foreign exchange dealings, insurance, hotel and restaurant industry, pharmaceuticals, and printing and

¹²¹ Interviews with Ruth Oligio, Kampala, 20 May 2010 and 25 February 2011.

Interview with Morde Mwerinde, Kampala, 18 January 2010.

¹²² The repossession process began in 1983 and culminated in 1997 with the handover of 4,063 properties to Ugandan Asians in Uganda and abroad. Interview with Morde Mwerinde, Kampala, 18 January 2010.

¹²³ The remaining prosperous Ugandan Asian community and new economic migrants have resulted in tensions between original Asians and “newcomers.” See Chapter 5.

publishing sectors (Abidi 1996:54-55).¹²⁴ In addition, the Aga Khan Fund for Development played a major role in the reconstruction of Uganda's economy by investing in a number of large-scale development projects (Abidi 1996). Finally, several other ex-Ugandan Asian business families returned from UK or East Africa and were able to repossess properties and assets and reinvest capital in them.

Ugandan Asian family firms who returned are part of an elite and cosmopolitan class of city tycoons and socialites in Kampala and abroad. Returnee family firms are regional economic machines, employing thousands of Ugandan workers and often funding local development projects or college scholarships in the towns that their factories and offices are located. Significantly, Ugandan Asian business families who returned are able to legitimize themselves as contributors to the nation through discourses of shared colonial oppression with Ugandan Africans, the experience of the expulsion, and claims to an Asian-African (East African Asian) and Ugandan identity. Economic claims about their role in Ugandan national development and high proportion of tax contribution to the state allow them to further legitimize their presence via their economic activities. In sum, Ugandan Asians who remained, and those who returned, view themselves as a distinct class of African entrepreneurs markedly different from new Indian businessmen and other migrants from the South Asian subcontinent.

However, the expulsion event had severe consequences for social bonds among biological kin, friends, and business partners within the Ugandan Asian community. Many "old money" Ugandan Asian family firms are engaged in disputes surrounding property, wealth, and inheritance in the context of the dispossession of their properties by the Ugandan government, followed by repossession (Madhvani and Foden 2008:157-163). Likewise, problems of generational succession among family firms that returned after the expulsion and the ongoing uncertainty of Uganda's socio-political context are issues that are vaguely hinted at, often emerging in moments of community crisis (see

¹²⁴ "Returnee" Ugandan Asian family firms include the Jobanputra family (Pearl Estate Uganda Ltd and Picfare Industries), Kotecha (Uganda Cotton) Family, Alam Group of Companies, Fairways Group of Companies, Fourways Group of Companies (Diamond Trust Bank), Horizon Group of Companies, House of Dawda, Madhvani Group of Companies, Mehta Group of Companies, Mukwano Group of Companies, Priamit Group of Companies, the Rafiki Group of Companies Rwenzori Group, and Shumuk Group of Companies (Abidi 1996:55-56). They continue to follow the historical East African Asian family firm business structure by which numerous commercial enterprises, managed by different members of the extended family, are under one large family holding company.

Chapter 5). Rumors circulate about the past, present and possible futures of elite Ugandan Asian families in the country. Some Ugandan Asian tycoons are embroiled in public scandals, viewed as local celebrities, and even rumored to broker their investments and contracts with politicians in the President's inner circle, reproducing a historical pattern of security-seeking via financial patronage across many regimes.¹²⁵ The scandal, intrigue, and rags-to-riches stories of Uganda's historical family firms are characteristic of the voyeurism and gossip reserved for Ugandan political elites and business tycoons in Kampala.

Notably, in the narratives of family firms who returned to Uganda, the event of the expulsion is interpreted as a time of community and personal crisis, an era of adversity that is overcome by historical, cultural, and spiritual resources from pioneering ancestors (Madhvani and Foden 2008). As I discuss further in Chapter 5, Ugandan Asian family firms are admired by new migrants and traders from the South Asian subcontinent—new migrants who seek social and class mobility in Kampala. The state also uses Ugandan Asian family firms as examples of successful business models to Ugandan African businessmen and women (see more below). Finally, the new era of neoliberal investment capital for development has begun to undermine the historical pattern of the East African Asian family firm business model, supplementing traditional forms of Gujarati and Punjabi ethnic entrepreneurialism with official and state-led forms of investment recruitment.

¹²⁵ "Taxpayers to Lose Billions to Sudhir." Sunday Vision, 6 September 2009.
"Karim has 7 Days to Repay CHOGM Cash." New Vision, 28 October 2009.



Figure 15: The President welcomes returnee Ugandan Asians to Uganda at a reception at the State House in Entebbe, Uganda, October 2009. Photo courtesy of Bhavisha Gheewala.

Futurist Temporalities and Asian Capital in Uganda

In addition to the Ugandan Asian family firms that returned and invested in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, industry, and the service sector, ethnic Indian, Pakistani and Chinese migrant entrepreneurs are part of the new landscapes of Asian capital in Uganda. (I use “Asian” here in a broad sense to refer to both South and East Asian capital and entrepreneurs, the two dominant geographic origins of ethnic entrepreneurs in the country). South Asian traders revived their entrepreneurship networks and migrated into Uganda from the 1980s onward. Economic liberalization reforms, open immigration policies, and networks of information, resources and credit among Gujarati traders made it fairly easy for a newly-arrived trader to begin a small

retail shop in Uganda once again.¹²⁶ Business owners, in turn, found it easy to convince extended family members from their home villages in India to work in shops. These shops quickly fanned out into networks of retail businesses, often expanding into the colonial towns of former Ugandan Indian settlement. All of this, of course, is very similar to historical patterns of Gujarati entrepreneurship and chain migration that Mzee Kashaijja traced for me in Chapter 1.

Increasingly, however, new South Asian traders are traveling to East Africa outside of traditional chain migration networks. They might begin by working in unskilled trades, but are often successful in finding jobs in established Indian firms, where business-owners employ Indian and Pakistani men in order to shore up economic security. In addition, young South Asian men who are petty traders and work as shopkeepers may eventually move into salaried employment at an Indian firm (see more in Chapter 5). Ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs and traders arrive, on the other hand, largely travel and settle to Uganda via chain migration. They are now renting former Indian-owned shops in central Kampala and dominating some key arenas of trade and enterprise.¹²⁷

There are reasons for South Asians' new employment opportunities in Uganda. During the 1990s and 2000s, multinational Indian firms began to expand their investments into Uganda. TATA Uganda Limited, which engages in the import and sale of motor vehicles and pharmaceuticals, is one example. These new firms employ Indian expatriate labor for upper-level management, as well as Indian employees for semi-skilled labor such as management, accounting and IT (information technology). Firms in Uganda often seek Indian employees using websites such as www.monstor.com or www.nokri.com (job in *Hindi*) to hire chartered accountants or other skilled professionals. Returnee Ugandan Asian family firms often follow suit and seek Indian labor through similar employment sites.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ The state instituted an open licensing system for traders in the 1980s. See Rubongoya (2007).

¹²⁷ The landscape of Chinese capital in Uganda involves ethnic Chinese trade networks, private companies, and Chinese national corporations engaged in major construction deals in exchange for mineral extraction with the Ugandan government. For more information see Lee (n.d.).

¹²⁸ Personal communication with Farida, Rafiki Ltd., 15 August 2009.

In sum, while Ugandan Asian family firms are still recognized as the most important and committed investors in the country, generally racialized “Asian investors” (both Indian and Chinese) are increasingly part of the East African scene. These new entrepreneurs are not integrated into the Gujarati ethnic networks of Ugandan Asian returnees or other East African Asians. Rather, foreign businessmen are being solicited for investment to the country in a more generalized way—through diplomatic connections, trade conferences, and the global re-branding of Uganda. During my fieldwork, increasing Indian and Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) was beginning to make its mark on the Ugandan landscape. In 2008 alone, Uganda had received \$77 million dollars in investment from India and \$44 million dollars in investment from China in various economic sectors.¹²⁹ Indian, Chinese, Arab, and European firms compete for multi-million contracts in sectors that are flagged as attractive for investors: IT or telecommunications, tourism, entertainment, agribusiness, construction, and property development. A small boom in what is commonly referred to as “development” appeared during my fieldwork in Kampala. There are now at least six different telecom companies competing for the Ugandan market, and five new luxury hotels appeared in the city during my fieldwork research period.

In today’s Uganda then, it is not returnee Ugandan Asian family firms who are the most important “investors” on the Ugandan scene. Rather, a new topography of Indian and Chinese capital, migrant networks, and individual businessmen has been foisted upon an older dispensation of African-Asian commercial relations, plantation economies, and the *magendo* economy of 1970s Uganda (see Chapters 2 and 3). In concert with global and neoliberal policies of investment, the state discursively defines all foreigner populations (especially those from South and East Asia) as “foreign investors.” Thus, “Asians” are defined by the new social category of foreign investor regardless of their historical, geographic, diasporic, national, or ethnic affiliations, or even, as I observe below, the amount of capital they possess. This new inclusivity is based on a foreigner’s *potential* economic contribution to the country, whether they are an “investor” or not. As a mode of recognizing the bodies of minorities, it is also based on a progressive national

¹²⁹ Figure from Uganda Investment Authority newsletter, Vol. 1, Issue 3. A focused “investment policy reform agenda” occurred among policy makers from 2000-2006. Average FDI inflows increased from 204 million in 2001-2005 from 127 million in 1996-2000 (UNCTAD 2007:1).

rhetoric that celebrates racial and ethnic cosmopolitanism and promises economic and bodily security for foreigner populations. Finally, four decades after the expulsion, the state is now engaged in a generalized search for investment and recruitment of Asian investors who are not embedded within traditional mercantilist networks and who have no historical connection to Uganda or Ugandans.

While both Chinese and Indian foreign investment seems to have had a noticeable effect on Kampala city, the same cannot be argued for the rest of the country. Even in Kampala, Ugandan writers, critical of “cosmetic development,” critique the unstable and sudden appearance of new real estate properties in the city. Indeed, capital investments to Africa, in general, are extremely idiosyncratic and specialized within certain enclave economies. As James Ferguson has observed, investments to Sub-Saharan Africa have increased over the years, but only within certain sectors. He argues, “what is noteworthy is the extent to which this investment has been concentrated in secured enclaves, often with little or no benefit to the wider society” (Ferguson 2005:378). Capital investment is also highly uneven. In the case of mineral resources extraction, for example, “capital jump[s] from point to point, and huge areas are simply bypassed” (Ferguson 2005:379). Thus, it is important to note that the urban center of Kampala and the trading towns linked to it in southeast Uganda form a unique historical and contemporary territory of capital networks among Indian traders. To some extent, these networks of capital are being resuscitated, but they are largely untouched by larger scale development projects and investment. Thus, in contrast to Buganda and the southern part of the country, Asian capital and investment has a more limited presence in Northern Uganda, a region that is dominated by the presence of transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Investment Promotion Agencies in Africa and Uganda

In order to understand relationships among the state, new South Asian migration and capital, and historical transformations in Ugandan Asian and South Asian inclusion and exclusion, I conducted research for a period of almost eight months at the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) in Kampala. The UIA, a new government agency, is a crucial site for understanding transformations in urban state sovereignty in Africa and the

redistribution of rights and privileges among non-indigenous foreigner populations in Uganda. It was established in 1991 in tandem with the Investment Code Act, a legal reform that worked to de-nationalize certain key Ugandan institutions, establish a ministry of investment, and formulate policies to attract foreign investors to the country.¹³⁰ These reforms, of course, were implemented in the context of larger processes of economic liberalization in Uganda.

Interactions between state bureaucracies and foreigner populations can also be studied in other contexts. For example, I was successful in obtaining interviews with state officers in important agencies such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Central Police Station in Kampala. However, it was too unwieldy a task for me to explore interactions between lower-level bureaucratic institutions and South Asian economic traders and migrants due to issues of corruption and research permissions. Moreover, to conduct such a study would require me to investigate the history of these bureaucratic institutions. Customs, immigration, police bureaucracies, and other national ministries originate in Uganda's colonial era, with surprisingly little transformation in the bureaucratic practices of dealing with migration flows and foreign populations. Moreover, the liberalization and privatization era in Uganda has significantly downsized the government and public sector. Civil servants in Kampala cannot earn a living wage and institutions continue to function by violently governing the urban African population. In recent years, and especially in the context of national elections and conflicts between the state and the Buganda kingdom, it has become clear that the repressive and militaristic technologies of security, surveillance, and governance that proliferated during Idi Amin's regime continue to be utilized by various organizations in the NRM-led order. These technologies of governance serve to establish and preserve national security by

¹³⁰ The Investment Code Act of 1991 is still controversial. UNCTAD has recommended that the Investment Act be overhauled and revised so that the requirement to license foreign investments with the UIA be abolished and replaced with voluntary registration. UNCTAD has also recommended that the UIA's activities be focused towards investment promotion rather than regulation of foreign investment activities (UNCTAD 2007:3). Currently, the UIA suggests that investors continue to license and register their businesses, although it is not mandatory. Moreover, the staff of UIA has been reduced and geared towards investment promotion rather than follow up and regulation of foreign investors. The politics of protectionist Africanization policies versus liberalization policies continue to manifest in debates over the Investment Code and informal regulatory practices at the UIA.

repressing social rebellion and unrest; they also serve to legitimate the NRM regime to the broader Ugandan population.¹³¹

In contrast to these other state bureaucracies, the UIA is an outlier in the complex colonial and post-colonial Ugandan state apparatus. In Uganda, the structural adjustment package brokered between President Museveni and the IMF and the World Bank entailed the establishment of an entirely new and unprecedented national ministry for investment called the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA). Indeed, one major consequence of the structural adjustment era in Africa was the establishment of a number of investment promotion agencies (IPAs) in both African countries and across much of the post-colonial world.¹³² The UIA is a copy of a global template of national agencies that has been set up to help attract and facilitate foreign investment in a number of countries, most successfully in southeast Asia.¹³³ In Uganda, the World Bank originally funded the UIA in order to handle and regulate private investment capital flows. The agency is now the central government institution in charge of managing and directing flows of foreign capital, including capital from investors from Asian countries. The leadership of the agency also makes crucial decisions surrounding tax incentives and immigration policy for managerial expatriates and corporate labor in the country. Most recently, the UIA was rated as “one of the best investment promotion agencies in Africa” in 1995 and “the best agency in Africa and the Middle East” in 2000.¹³⁴

The central function of the UIA is to “promote and facilitate investment in Uganda, advise the Government on policies conducive to investment, and provide information on investment issues” (United Nations 2004:51). The investment code stipulated that the UIA should be a government agency that is presided over by a board of advisors that oversee foreign investment in the country. It also provided guidelines for the functions of the UIA, the appraisal of investors and allocation of investment licenses, the

¹³¹ See Rubongoya (2007) for more on the NRM and its politics of legitimacy. Rumors about safe houses and torture chambers in Kampala persist. Personal communication with Dr. Sara Ssali, 10 August 2011.

¹³² Dr. Ann Pitcher suggests that more developed African economies such as South Africa and Mauritius did not adopt stand alone privatization agencies, but all moved to IPA, or investment promotion agency, from the mid-1980s to early 1990s. She also suggests that there was a general template that the World Bank used for IPAs, and that it was “tweaked” by local governments and officials in the African context. Personal communication with Dr. Ann Pitcher, 4 January 2012.

¹³³ Particularly Malaysia and Singapore.

¹³⁴ By Corporate Location Magazine. United Nations 2004:52

terms of investor licensing, and issues surrounding investor incentives and investor protection. Thus, the priorities of the UIA are “policy advocacy, project facilitation, image building, and investment promotion” (United Nations 2004:52). UIA agents encourage foreign businessmen to apply for an investment license, which is required by law under the 1991 Investment Code mandate.¹³⁵

According to Uganda’s legal framework, a “foreign investor” is “an individual who is not a citizen of Uganda, a company in which more than 50 percent of the shares are not held by a citizen of Uganda, a partnership in which the majority of partnerships are not citizens of Uganda, or a joint-partnership in which the majority of partners are not citizens of Uganda.”¹³⁶ UIA agents have the authority to determine whether or not an individual is a foreign investor in the event that they do not fit into any of the above categories. Ideally, and according to the Uganda National Vision put forth by the NRM, licensed investors will contribute to the development of the nation through the development of key sectors of investment promotion: agricultural production, forestry, mineral resources, and tourism (United Nations 2004:31). In doing so, state agents expect that investment-led development will bring both jobs and skills development for Ugandans. The state, in turn, will attract long-term and committed business to Uganda as well as an increasing its tax base and domestic revenue. A private sector led economy, with a focus on foreign direct investment, is ostensibly a win-win situation for both the nation and the investor.

I was drawn to the investment agency because of its possibilities for understanding transformations in post-colonial state sovereignty and governance in Uganda. As a relatively new government agency, it illustrates critical departures from colonial-era governance. While the UIA is closely intertwined with the economic development initiatives of the Ministry of Financial Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), the Ministry for National Development, and the National Visions of President Museveni himself, it is also embedded in a network of global

¹³⁵ Most recently, UNCTAD has recommended that the licensing of investors should not be a legal requirement anymore.

¹³⁶ Investment Code Act, Cap. 92

governance norms.¹³⁷ In relation to my own study, its entwinement with the dynamics of larger global political economy made it an ideal site to observe the imperatives of the state and its relationship to racialized foreigners. Moreover, I realized that the UIA is an important site from which I could explore Uganda's contemporary relationship with South Asia and other Asian countries. Finally, the institution illuminated post-Cold War shifts in state sovereignty in Africa, neoliberal governance norms, and the emerging contexts under which foreigners were being included within the national framework.

Indeed, like other investment promotion agencies on the continent, the UIA is an ideal site to understand "Africa" as a meaningful category in the world, especially as foreign investors come to interact with investment promotion agencies in the Continent (Ferguson 2006:5). Finally, the UIA revealed the complex workings of sovereignty and governance within the African bureaucratic state complex; my research with state agents also illustrated the conundrums of gatekeeper states and bureaucratic gatekeepers in Africa (Cooper 2002:156-190). For example, during my fieldwork, the UIA was becoming more autonomous from the World Bank's donor funding—funding for its activities was beginning to be funneled more directly through the Uganda national budget. Thus, the institution was in the process of becoming a more sovereign entity by making more of its own funding decisions, especially as state agents found that they could invest more time in traveling to investment conferences—developing networks with foreign businessmen from Asian countries.

Research at the Uganda Investment Authority

Initially, I was skeptical of my ability to conduct ethnographic research at the UIA. Could I remain impartial enough to conduct research at an elite institution that promoted neoliberal economic development? Was there anything new to learn from an institution embedded within the global developmental paradigms of the IMF and World Bank? Would I be able to develop a broader historical ethnography of South Asian presence in Uganda through this research? I changed my mind, however, during my first

¹³⁷ See (2007) Poverty Eradication Action Plan, (2009) National Development Plan, (2009) National Vision Framework, and (2009) Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework.

visit to the UIA in June of 2009. I was exploring some of the institution's grey literature in their makeshift "library," a former conference room that doubled as a break room for the staff at the UIA. Stella, a recent Makerere graduate and intern at the agency, poked her head in the room and mentioned that Dr. Margaret (Maggie) Kigozi had arrived and I could meet with her. This was a fantastic opportunity.

Dr. Kigozi is an important female political leader in Uganda. Affectionately dubbed as a "NRM lady," Kigozi was part of a generation of Ugandan women who supported a young and revolutionary Yoweri Museveni in his campaigns to oust President Milton Obote's during his second regime of governance over the country, from 1980-1985. Kigozi had trained as a medical doctor and had worked in private sector business with her late husband before fleeing Uganda during the worst years of violence. Once President Museveni had established his legitimacy as a national leader and assumed governance in 1986, Kigozi returned to the country from exile. Like other female politicians and entrepreneurs during this period, she established herself with the Movement through focused work on gender-related issues and the empowerment of "grassroots" Ugandan women. She organized workshops and forums that taught women how to become financially independent and sustain themselves through small-scale entrepreneurship and petty trade. Indeed, Kigozi's role in helping Ugandan women become visible in public space and enter the labor force was instrumental to the creation of a new post-1990s generation of empowered Ugandan women, laying the foundations for what would become a massive Ugandan women's movement throughout the 1990s (see more in Chapter 6). Given her business acumen and leadership skills, the President appointed Kigozi to the position of Executive Director of the Uganda Investment Authority in 1991.¹³⁸

Outside of her work as the director of the UIA, Kigozi often toured the country and participated in speaking engagements. She is considered to be a positive role model for Ugandan women and girls who seek higher education and careers. She is also regularly featured on TV programs, radio shows, and newspaper articles. Hailed as one of Uganda's foremost beauty and fashion icons, Kigozi is known as a "half-caste" or mixed-race Muganda, referencing her Ganda and British ethnicity. Her poise, diplomacy and

¹³⁸ Dr. Kigozi retired from her posting and from the UIA in 2012.

intelligence, traits that characterize many Ugandan women leaders, have helped women take up prominent roles in national leadership over the past several decades. I was taken by the possibility of learning about her earlier experiences as a revolutionary “NRM lady” and her apprehensions of Uganda today, perhaps even gleaning some more knowledge about the incorporation of political elites into long-standing African governance regimes.



Figure 16: Dr. Margaret Kigozi with other members of the UIA Executive Board at the “Diaspora: Home is Best” Investment Summit, Kampala. Photo by author, 29 December 2009.

At our initial meeting, Kigozi was supportive and encouraging. She consented to my request to conduct research at the government parastatal: observing investment delegation meetings, the day-to-day work of the institution, and conducting interviews

with UIA employees. She urged me to pay attention to the different sectors of investment that Uganda was promoting for investment; she also suggested that I visit the successful investment projects that had been launched in recent years, many of which were Indian or British Asian (ex-Ugandan Asian) projects. Undoubtedly, this had to do with negative press that the UIA and the government continued to receive over “failed” or incomplete investment projects. Recently, the media had exposed high-profile cases of foreign investors who had pulled out of major investment projects.¹³⁹ In Kampala, Ugandans often complained about empty lots surrounded by corrugated iron fences in prime city locations: ostensibly, “investment projects” that had displaced residents and failed to materialize. In response, the UIA was working hard to recruit “committed investors” and development-friendly projects; it also wanted to improve its national and global image. This, in addition to the persistent criticism from opposition party politicians to the NRM that foreign investors and investment were not adequately addressing development concerns, unemployment and poverty, as well as piling evidence for corruption within President Museveni’s inner circle, were additional motivations for UIA employees to improve the performance and image of the UIA. For all these reasons, I believe that Dr. Kigozi was compelled to welcome researchers and journalists to the agency in order to keep the standards of the institution high and provide feedback to her on UIA activities.¹⁴⁰

Conducting fieldwork at this institution would require a different ethnographic lens than more traditional sites for anthropological studies of sovereignty and citizenship such as international borders and customs. It entailed exploring the nexus of emerging institutions and modes of governance, Ugandan “gatekeepers,” flows of capital, and expatriate entrepreneurs. All of this required participant-observation and extensive note taking. Thus, amidst my other research activities, I visited the UIA almost every day for almost a nine-month period. Eventually, I sat at a desk near the Ugandan staff, and was

¹³⁹ “Government Offers Shs4b to Shimoni Investor.” Daily Monitor. 6 April 2009.

“Shimoni Land Saga Rages On.” Daily Monitor. 6 April 2009

“Investor Reaps Shs30b From Government.” Daily Monitor. 9 November 2009.

¹⁴⁰ Indeed, I have offered feedback to Dr. Kigozi during various points of my fieldwork; I also intend to give her copies of all of my writing pertaining to the UIA. Kigozi retired from the position of Executive Director at the UIA in 2012; it seems that some of the dynamics of the parastatal have changed since her leave.

able to use the workspace to take notes and keep up with my other fieldwork activities. In the process, I observed potential investors when they visited the agency and met with investment agents; I also often bumped into Ugandan Asian friends who came by the office to deal with issues pertaining to their businesses. I also attended UIA investment promotion events and participated in city tours with agents and investors. In addition, I helped the Ugandan staff with their work when they were over-extended. In the process, I became close friends with many individuals who worked at the agency; establishing “fictive kin” relations with many Ugandan women at the UIA who looked after me. Dr. Kigozi herself affectionately called me a “daughter of Uganda.”

Because of my special interest in new South Asian investment to Uganda, I largely observed the activities of the Investment Promotion Division, or IPD, at the UIA. I became friends with a lively group of Ugandans who were senior investment officers at the agency and who possessed fascinating personal and political biographies and career trajectories. For the most part, I worked closely with and learned from Peace, David, and Michael, three Ugandan colleagues who usually handled South Asian investors. All three had established long-term relationships with Ugandan Asian businessman and resident Indian entrepreneurs who worked with the UIA in order to handle bureaucratic issues relating to their businesses. Annette, a mid-career Ganda woman who handled East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) investments and visiting investment delegations from these countries, also became a close friend of mine who helped me to understand the dynamics of broader Asian interests in Uganda. Finally, I developed relationships with a group of Ugandan women who handled communications, media, research, and event planning at the parastatal. These Ganda women balanced long hours at the UIA with the needs of their families in Kampala; they worked with advertising and design consultants to create attractive promotional brochures and websites that advertised Uganda as an “investment destination.” They also planned all major investment conferences and handled programming events sponsored by the UIA.

A number of other employees worked in departments such as Finance and Administration, or oversaw other specialized projects. These employees had significant responsibilities, but did not have day-to-day interactions with investors and politicians. While Dr. Kigozi and Annette possessed significant roles in hosting potential investors

and brokering and managing investment deals with (usually male) investors, the gendered labor of Ugandan women who inhabited the lower ends of the labor hierarchy at the agency was critical to the day-to-day functioning of the parastatal.

Ugandan men at the UIA worked in other crucial departments: “Investment Facilitation,” “Aftercare,” and “Lands.”¹⁴¹ I had little access to the men and women who were involved in high profile and politically-sensitive decisions: decisions having to do with the licensing of foreign investors, tax schemes, immigration, and land and property allocation to foreigners. These individuals oversaw critical processes that concerned the actual mechanics and formal procedures of foreigners establishing themselves and their businesses in Uganda. Ten Ugandan investment officers had major responsibilities: approving or rejecting investment licenses, managing investment capital flows, providing permits, visas, land and property titles, etc. All of these individuals were extremely educated, had long-term professional political or business careers in Uganda and/or the diaspora, and were in close contact with Dr. Kigozi and the Deputy Executive Director of the agency. This core group of Ugandan bureaucrats and decision-makers were central to the gate-keeping practices of the Ugandan state. Even though they were less accessible to me, I did manage to interview these individuals, even occasionally observing their work in meetings.

In addition to this latter group of powerful investment decision-makers, investment promotion officers, and media and events specialists, the UIA employed a staff of thirty men and women who labored as secretaries and drivers. Three to four Ugandan men organized cars and rides for investment agents and investors, and several secretaries and procurement officers were in charge of the release of funds for investment meetings and obtaining food, cars, and supplies for major events. Finally, a number of young Ugandan women (in their early to mid-twenties) worked as “interns” at the UIA—this was part of Dr. Kigozi’s policy of mentoring and supporting young women in developing their professional careers and gaining some experience working in a professional environment before entering Uganda’s workforce. Due to Dr. Kigozi’s female leadership of the UIA, the significant numbers of Ugandan women who worked at

¹⁴¹ All of these departments handled the actual logistics of helping facilitate the foreign investment: obtaining land and property and following up with investment projects to make sure that enterprises are up and running, etc.

the UIA presented a challenge, or at least a balance, to Ugandan men in positions of power in other departments at the UIA.



Figure 17: Promoting investment and recruiting investors: a UIA booth at the East African Community Investment Conference at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. Photo by author, 29 July 2009.

Despite the many social relationships that I developed with the staff at UIA, I also ran into difficulties. Research did not always proceed smoothly. My initial presence at

the UIA aroused suspicion among many investment agents who were uncertain if I could be trusted and who were unsure of my motivations. I was always concerned about my obtrusive presence when attending meetings, taking notes, and asking questions at the UIA. I had a sense, as in other realms of ethnographic research, that there was acceptable material to research and taboo topics that were enveloped in silences. I ruled out the possibility of recording interviews and meetings, opting to take extensive field notes instead. Finally, it was not always clear to me, as most anthropologists would agree, where my research began and where its limits appeared. My analysis below incorporates these ethical research conundrums, and I note them when and where relevant. Below, I knit together both mundane and exceptional experiences at this investment-oriented parastatal to provide evidence for the shifting contours of citizenship and sovereignty in relation to South Asian presence in Uganda.

Mechanics: The Investment Pipeline

The UIA is located on the second floor of a recently constructed building called Twed Plaza in Nakasero (see map of Kampala, Appendix V). Surrounded by restaurants, hotels, NGOs, and office parks frequented by expatriates, Nakasero is also the location of the Uganda Parliament, the national courts, the Central Police Station (CPS) and institutions that served as sites of detention and torture during the violent regimes of the 1970s and 1980s. Twed Plaza, however, is designed to usher in a new era. Heavily gated and secured, armed *askari* (guards in Swahili) sit at the front of the building. The building is one of three in Kampala that operates with an elevator. The first floor houses UMEME, the national electricity company, the second the UIA, and the third floor is rented by Hua-weii, a multi-national Chinese telecom company. Two male Ugandan teenagers guard the back gate of the building for a daily wage. On the ground level is a parking lot for the vehicles of employees and several new four-wheel drive vehicles that are used to transport potential investors when they visit Uganda. At the far end of the parking lot is a small canteen stall. Here, a Ganda female entrepreneur has set up a small restaurant with three to four young male and female cooks. They prepare *chapati*, *matoke* (steamed bananas), *samosa*, *ebijanjala* (beans), meat and sodas for employees who work

at UIA and UMEME at lunchtime. Private vans escort Chinese employees who work at Hua-weii to lunch at one of a few local Chinese restaurants. The same vans transport the employees from their residence to the office every morning, dropping them off at their homes at night.

On the second floor of the building, a waiting room and reception area separate the offices of the UIA. One must pass through electronic doors that require a magnetic strip to open in order to access the back offices. A television set, usually tuned to a national news station, blares from the early morning to the close of the office around seven o'clock in the evening. Outside the secure doors is yet another *askari*, who often gazes down through the glass windows to watch the *boda-boda* (motorbike) drivers, *matatu* (taxis), and automobiles as they navigate the cavernous potholes and ochre dirt on the road below. A Ganda receptionist, greets guests and potential investors as they arrive. He welcomes them and asks them to wait for an investment officer to arrive from the back offices. The officer then greets the investor and escorts him or her to a meeting room. Upon entering the secured doors, the offices of the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, and a large boardroom for investment delegation meetings are situated to the right of the entryway. Four partitioned meeting spaces and a back office with a large number of offices, computers, and shared workspaces for UIA employees and investment officers are on the other end of the agency.

In comparison to other national ministries in Uganda, the UIA is presented as a modern and secure space to its visitors. The combined technologies of an elevator, security devices, *askari*, a television with cable news, air conditioning, a formal receptionist, and “investment agents” who are beckoned to the reception area to greet individuals as they visit the office, establishes an atmosphere in which business meetings can take place in a modern and Euro-American environment. The agency is set up to host all types of visitors: small business-owners, medium to large enterprises, elite investment delegations, and major transnational corporations. Although the UIA stresses its focus on foreign investment and foreign investors, it also doubles as a public government building, and thus operates on a walk-in level as well. Long-term businessmen, both Ugandan and South Asian, often visit the agency with their questions and concerns. Some are individuals who have heard of the UIA and who are interested in “doing business,” or

finding people who do business (*abantu bakola business* in Luganda). Some seek business partners who might invest in their own businesses. They often sit in the waiting room and leaf through promotional material while they wait to meet with an agent.

Before meeting with an investment officer, visitors are asked to fill out an information form with a section that explains the reason for their visit. Investment officers who are summoned to the reception area greet the potential investor warmly, and lead him or her past the secured doors and into a small private meeting room. After their initial meeting, the officer fills out the rest of the form and enters it into a database on their personal computer at the office.¹⁴² During the meeting, an investor may ask specific questions about investment policy, specifics on a particular sector of interest for investment, or how to obtain and apply for an investment license. An investment officer may also bring a representative from the Uganda Revenue Authority or the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the meeting. These individuals handle more specific questions about taxes or visas for expatriate staff. Finally, UIA agents provide special glossy brochures with facts about Uganda, Uganda's pro-investment political leadership, and the advantages of investing in the country. For the most part, investment agents do not stray from a homogenous and technical script that conveys information about a sector of investment and positive generalities about Uganda. A typical meeting ends with an exchange of business cards or a request to fill out an investment license form by a visiting businessman.

Although the UIA is officially a government agency, UIA agents, in their everyday discussions and meetings with potential investors, seek to distinguish the ministry as a place where "business and politics" do not meet as they putatively do in other government parastatals. According to the vision at the UIA, the "business" of investment facilitation, corruption and the politics of the outside world should not

¹⁴² The database is used to track information on the nature of investors who visit the agency: the name of company, place of origin, sector of interest, reason for visit, whether or not the potential investor has requested an investment license, etc. Thus, the database keeps track of all investment inquiries, whether or not the investor actually decides to apply for an investment application and begin a project in Uganda. The database also contains information on the actual investors who have been officially licensed by the UIA and the status of their investment "project" (i.e. start-up phase, license requested, immigration, building and land permits, etc.) Quarterly and annual reports from the data are then generated, often indicating "real" vs. "planned" investment.

become an obstacle to planned investment projects and the future successes of both foreign businessmen and Ugandans who will benefit from a new investment project. Indeed, agents transformed the agency into a space where political ideology was not a point of focus or discussion; but rather, a space in which the neutral and objective practices of “doing business” could move forward unencumbered by negativity and regression associated with popular apprehensions of politics in Uganda: corruption, greedy and self-interested politicians, and popular protest at the expense of self-enterprise and production. According to this vision, nothing should impede the progress of new capital investments in Uganda after the Idi Amin era, and especially the investments of foreign businessmen who represent multinational companies.

The key point is to emphasize that the UIA itself is run like a business: as a privatization-oriented agency, the institution should emulate the consumer-oriented practices of private business. For example, the UIA’s central organizing principle is to “make investors happy.” This slogan was often repeated by the executive director of the UIA in meetings with the staff and in email communications: Dr. Kigozi would often urge investment agents to be hospitable, warm, welcoming, and attentive to the needs of possible investors. Investors should be handled efficiently, should not be kept waiting, and should be treated to the expertise and professionalism of UIA investment officers. In contrast, if a businessman attempts to use his or her own networks to navigate Ugandan bureaucracies on his own, he might encounter “unprofessional” behavior associated with the corruption and personal indulgences of the former era. Peace, a Muchiga woman from Kabale who handled investors in agriculture, often made similar observations to me. During breaks at the UIA, I accompanied Peace on small errands in the city markets, about a twenty-minute walk from the agency. During our excursions to buy small items for Peace’s children, she often complained about the lack of “customer care” and unprofessionalism of small Ugandan business-owners. In doing so, she appropriated the terminology of the UIA to contrast the environment at the agency with Ugandan enterprise and trade in the city.

Agents at the UIA work with individual businessmen, assisting them in applying for an investment license or registering their company by obtaining the necessary permits, documents, access to land, and property titles in order to begin a business. The

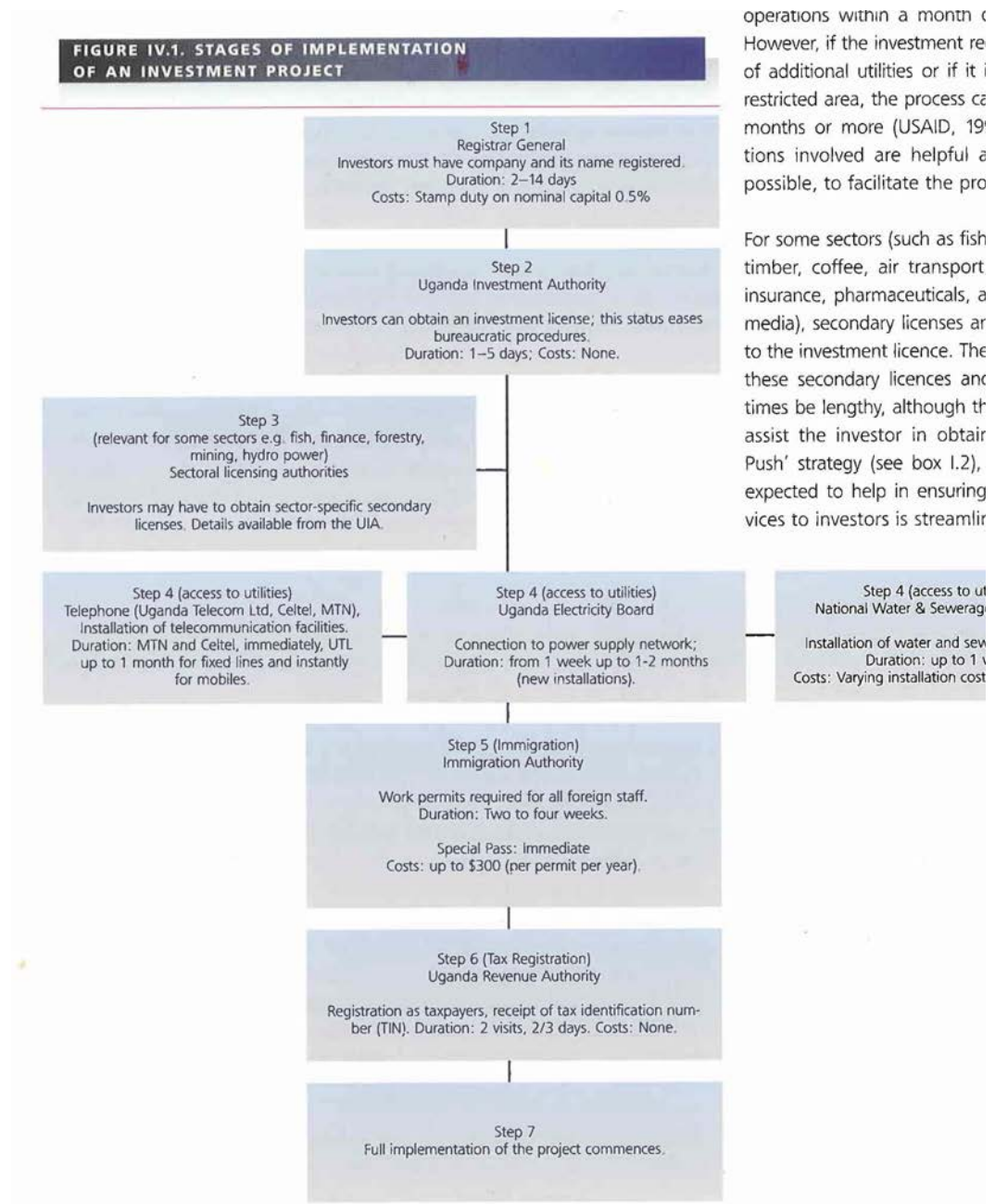
investment facilitation aspect of the agency functions like the “one-stop shops” that are often found at other investment agencies. More specifically, the Ugandan government adopted a “Team Uganda” approach to foreign investment, whereby all public institutions play a role and cooperate with each other in order to facilitate foreign investment. Thus, the UIA has “created a network with all relevant government agencies to provide services to investors” (United Nations 2004:52). In addition, “client charters” were prepared for twenty-three organizations in Uganda that deal regularly with investors (UNCTAD 2007:2).¹⁴³ The client charter helps to streamline the bureaucratic steps that foreigners usually deal with when setting up a business or investment project in Uganda, a process which varies according to the type of planned investment in question (United Nations 2004:55). In adopting the client charter and reducing bureaucratic delays, the government has developed a consumer-friendly approach to foreign investors, whereby foreign investors come to enjoy important economic and social rights and privileges that ordinary Ugandan businessmen do not have access to.

At the time of my research, a government representative from the Uganda Revenue Authority (customs and tax), Ministry of Internal Affairs (immigration), and Ministry of Lands (property and land titles) all had desks at the UIA. They were immediately available for investors who wished to license their companies and businesses at UIA. In theory, this helps to prevent the hassle that an investor might experience should he or she visit individual bureaucracies in Kampala by him or herself. It limits the possibility of corruption in monetary transactions between foreigners and Ugandans, prevents the illegal licensing of businesses, and helps streamline the process of investment for foreigners who are unfamiliar with Uganda. In sum, it helps support a secondary goal of the government, which is to formalize businesses run by foreigners and reduce tax evasion or other economic malpractices.

By offering services such as speedy formal investment licensing, personal consultations with investment officers, business networking in an investor’s sector of investment, and immigration, taxation consultation, land and business title services, all

¹⁴³ A “client charter” is a “brief schedule of procedures, costs, and time involved in securing a service from such an agency. The charters are placed on public notice boards where investors and the general public can easily access them for needed information. The intention is to reduce red tape, corruption, and other malpractices in dealing with investors” (United Nations 2004:52).

within the space of the agency itself, the government seeks to attract and retain investors and capital investment as quickly and efficiently as possible. Investment licenses, if approved, are typically processed within a target time frame of one to five days (United Nations 2004:55).



operations within a month. However, if the investment requires additional utilities or if it is in a restricted area, the process can take months or more (USAID, 1999). Conditions involved are helpful as far as possible, to facilitate the pro-

cess. For some sectors (such as fish, timber, coffee, air transport, insurance, pharmaceuticals, and media), secondary licenses are required to the investment license. These secondary licenses can sometimes be lengthy, although they assist the investor in obtaining a 'Push' strategy (see box 1.2), which is expected to help in ensuring that services to investors is streamlined.

Figure 18: Facilitating investment efficiently at the UIA. Each step includes a projected time line. Source: United Nations (2004).

Indeed, one of the key concepts I first learned about at the agency was the “investment pipeline.” The investment pipeline refers to the large volume of individuals who inquire about investment opportunities in Uganda and set up meetings with investment agents, regardless of whether or not they invest. Many visitors are not businessmen who work in a specific sector, rather any visitor may request information about sectors of capital investment or potentially profitable areas for doing business in the country. Thus, investment inquiries do not necessarily translate into planned, or “actualized” investment. In our interview, Michael, an agent at the UIA who largely works with South Asian businessmen and investors, estimated that for every one thousand investor inquiries, one planned investment materializes in Uganda.¹⁴⁴ The sheer number of meetings with investors (in addition to the record-keeping that accompanies every meeting), the surveillance of approved investors, and the management of walk-in inquiries from foreign businessmen, Ugandan African businessmen and traders, NGOs, and journalists, demand much time and energy from investment officers—officers who are increasingly over-extended at the agency.

Securing Uganda for Foreigners: The Investment Script

Elite investment delegations are managed differently by the UIA than more ordinary businessmen who sauntered into UIA offices. Elite delegations are made up of teams of multinational corporate representatives who have been formally invited to Uganda by the political leadership to learn about investment opportunities—or because an investment deal is already in the making. Here, overseas Ugandans—ambassadors, politicians, and Ugandan professionals in the diaspora—in addition to Uganda-based UIA agents and other ministers, have networked with business and political leaders of other countries at “investment conferences” and industry trade shows. Delegations come to Uganda on special invitation from Dr. Kigozi and other politicians (even the President) who have coordinated their schedules so they will be able to host the delegates. These

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Michael, UIA offices, Kampala. 25 July 2009.

international meetings are planned weeks and months in advance, and thus proper time and effort is allotted for designing and preparing the itinerary for the scheduled visit of an international delegation. The reception of investment delegations from East Asian countries, including Chinese national companies, were often met with much political officialdom, ceremony, and media coverage. Political leaders, such as the ministers for foreign investment, and even the President himself, might attend these events. Meetings with formal investment delegations can involve a series of business negotiations in a special boardroom at the UIA, with Dr. Kigozi herself, and with the UIA agent that is assigned to the investment delegation. Meetings often end with the presentation of cultural gifts from the visiting delegation to Dr. Kigozi and UIA officers. UIA officers then arrange a special host dinner at an up-scale restaurant for the visiting delegations. Often, investment negotiations can occur in the middle of casual socializing and small talk at dinner.

Over the course of long-term ethnographic research, it became clear that the practice of procuring foreign investment is a carefully controlled and choreographed process. When an investor arrives at Entebbe International Airport, they are driven to their hotels or to the UIA offices in shiny and recently washed land rovers. Potential investors initially meet with the charismatic executive director and the investment agent assigned to the visiting investment delegation. The UIA staff warmly welcomes them to Kampala, and initial conversations and presentations about investment opportunities in the country are made. UIA officers review an official script surrounding investment opportunities in Uganda, often recycling a power point presentation that describes the incentives of investing in the country. The script emphasizes such factors as the low labor costs in Uganda, the mild and comfortable weather, and the widespread use of the English language and English language literacy among Ugandans.¹⁴⁵ The appointed investment agent may take potential investors on city tours to “success stories,” or successful foreign-owned businesses and industries in Kampala (often, Ugandan Asian). There is usually a fancy dinner at a restaurant that offers the best view of the city. As the

¹⁴⁵ English is the formal business language used at the UIA, despite the informal Luganda and Lugandanized-English that is often used in the back offices at the institution.

visit continues, state agents set up meetings between investors and other relevant government official or members of the private business sector.

UIA agents continue to enforce a clear separation between the realm of “business” and the realm of “politics,” especially in the case of more elite investors who are considering conducting business in Uganda and who attend meetings with superior officers at the UIA, firms and factories in the city, and representatives of other government ministries. Even though investment delegations want to explore other firms and ministries, investment officers steer potential investors towards the investment facilitation officers at the UIA as much as possible. In doing so, they keep investor meetings with politicians and ministers brief and for the purposes of learning information about the sector of investment only. UIA agents never discussed with me that other ministers and politicians could be involved in brokering investment deals with foreign businessmen. On the other hand, they often constructed a social vision of the urban world outside of the agency as a place where corrupt and informal business was rife—a world where potential foreign investors could be duped by exploitative bureaucrats or ordinary comen, known as *karepe* or *bayaye* in Luganda.

Indeed, agents showed concern about the ways in which foreign businessmen expressed their desires to talk to many political representatives and institutions in Kampala in order to feel that their financial investments and businesses would be secure. Rather, agents sought to assure potential investors about the security of their investments without having to partake in these extra measures. In doing so, UIA employees sought to recast the dynamics of Ugandan society away from the *magendo* (informal) economic system of the past—away from popular apprehensions that politicians and businessmen were “bedfellows” in Uganda.

Just as agents encourage potential investors to take part in the one-stop shop at the UIA, they also ask them not to set up their own meetings with ministers or other political elites. In doing so, they make sure that potential investors are supervised for long periods of time, and that they avoid moving about the town on their own. UIA agents and drivers actively work to show the most “developed” and elite parts of Kampala to investors, while directing them away from the polluted and populated urban center, taxi parks, and markets of central Kampala. In the process, the city that exists outside of the agency and

investor-friendly areas, is constructed as anti-modern, backwards, and corrupt, a place of disorder in which the modern-day businessman may encounter a Ugandan peasant, trader or a conman on the street. Thus, the cultural project of “making investors happy” involves conveying a specific vision of Uganda to potential investors: beautiful and tropical, safe and secure, developing and replete with potential and opportunities, cosmopolitan; and significantly, a place where investors and their employees can attain a comparable lifestyle as their home locations. Finally, in managing and controlling the potential investor’s experience of Uganda—an experience that stresses the safety, prosperity, productivity, transparency, and political security of the country—agents seek to liberate Uganda from its associations with the former President Idi Amin, ethnic and racialized violence, and the expulsions of foreigners and the Ugandan Indian entrepreneurial and commercial class in the 1970s.

At the UIA, meetings between state agents and investment delegations revealed the motivations of state agents to recast Uganda as a cosmopolitan and politically and socially secure space for foreigners. UIA agents seek to “rebrand” Uganda’s association with Idi Amin and the expulsion of Asians through their constant refrain that the current political leadership is progressive, socially inclusive, and oriented towards development. Nonetheless, I often observed Chinese and Indian businessmen expressing their concerns over the security of their financial investments, property, and their own bodies, often referencing their knowledge of the 1972 expulsion of Asians in their concerns to agents. Agents, in turn, worked to reassure them that Uganda was safe for their business, that Ugandans were friendly and welcome to foreigners, and that businessmen would have no problems with capital outflows and the repatriation of capital to their home countries. They often assured investors that Kampala and towns outside of Buganda were safe for expatriate labor and their dependents (women and children), promising bodily security to the families of expatriate businessmen.¹⁴⁶ Finally, they repeatedly asserted that Amin’s actions had not benefitted anyone: neither Asians nor Ugandan Africans. UIA agents also assured potential investors of Uganda’s progressive and development-oriented leadership and that security measures would protect investors from any problems. Through their

¹⁴⁶ Fieldnotes on meeting between Chinese Economic Council and Dr. Maggie Kigozi, UIA Offices, Kampala, 17 March 2010.

everyday discussions with potential investors, and through their reconfiguration of Uganda's internal social geography, its regional significance, and its place in the world, state agents actively sought to recast the politics of Africanization in Uganda's past, establishing new possibilities for a racially-inclusive future.

Thus, recasting Idi Amin's Uganda is the central practice of state agents at the UIA. Whether via the carefully orchestrated process of transporting and guiding potential investors through a modern and politically secure Uganda, or through assurances and promises of social and physical security for foreign investors, potential investors are licensed and expatriate businessmen and other foreigners make Uganda their home. As discussed in the introduction to the thesis, the notion of "security" is not only a global social formation, necessary for the defense of the nation-state, or even a mode of governance in Uganda. It also operates in other registers of discourse and practice, underlying the rhetoric of racial, cultural and social incorporation for capital-bearing foreign investors, economic and labor migrants, and formerly expelled Ugandan Asians. The promise of security to foreign investors, of course, is not unique in the context of the influx of international capital in a range of authoritarian states and regimes of political violence. Yet, given the historical experience of expulsion experienced by Ugandan Asians and other business communities in Uganda, the constant discussion surrounding the security of foreigners' business investments and capital, their land and properties, and their bodies was remarkable.

Branding Uganda: the Social Geography of an Investment Destination

From 2008 to 2011, UIA agents and employees were aggressively involved in a project of "branding Uganda" globally. Developments in the region such as the reunification of the East African Community (EAC), a regional block for trade and investment, and increasing donor funds into the interlacustrine region induced a form of regional national competition.¹⁴⁷ EAC countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi) are often slotted against each other on international economic indicators and

¹⁴⁷ Especially to Rwanda, where donor money has funded a number of infrastructural and technology projects in the post-genocide era.

business rankings such as the World Bank's "Doing Better Business Index." During my research period, the general sentiments of investment agents was that Uganda had fallen behind on its economic reforms and that UIA employees had to work harder to promote Uganda to potential investors. The UIA had to become more competitive because of Uganda's regional disadvantages: unlike Kenya and Tanzania, it was a landlocked country, which drove up transport costs and taxes on imports and exports, compelling transient and mobile investors and corporations to invest in other EAC countries. Indeed, investors without historical ties or connections to Ugandan business are fickle and capricious. As Jim Ferguson notes, the "foreign investor view" of Africa is one in which the investor does not distinguish among the historical, cultural, and political-economic contexts of different countries. Rather, the category of "Africa" itself is more salient (Ferguson 2006:6-7).

UIA agents responded to these emerging trends through a discursive and material project of re-constructing Ugandan national space to foreign businessmen. For example, agents often referred to Uganda as a "hub" country. In meetings with potential investors, agents usually worked with large regional Uganda maps that were displayed in the halls of the institution or in meeting rooms. Utilizing these maps, they explained to investors that Uganda was an important "gateway" to very inaccessible locations in the African interior. Time and time again, UIA officers stressed that Uganda was a hub country because it shared international boundaries with five countries: Kenya and Tanzania to the East and Southeast, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the West and Southwest, and South Sudan to the North. On the few occasions when UIA agents invoked Ugandan traders, they noted that African traders had a "monopoly" on trade in the region (agents described South Sudan and Eastern DRC as key territories, or markets, that were "virtually untouched" by trade and other enterprise.) Here, agents pointed out to foreign investors interested in manufacturing that their exports would reach consumer populations above and beyond Uganda's population of 30 million and growing.

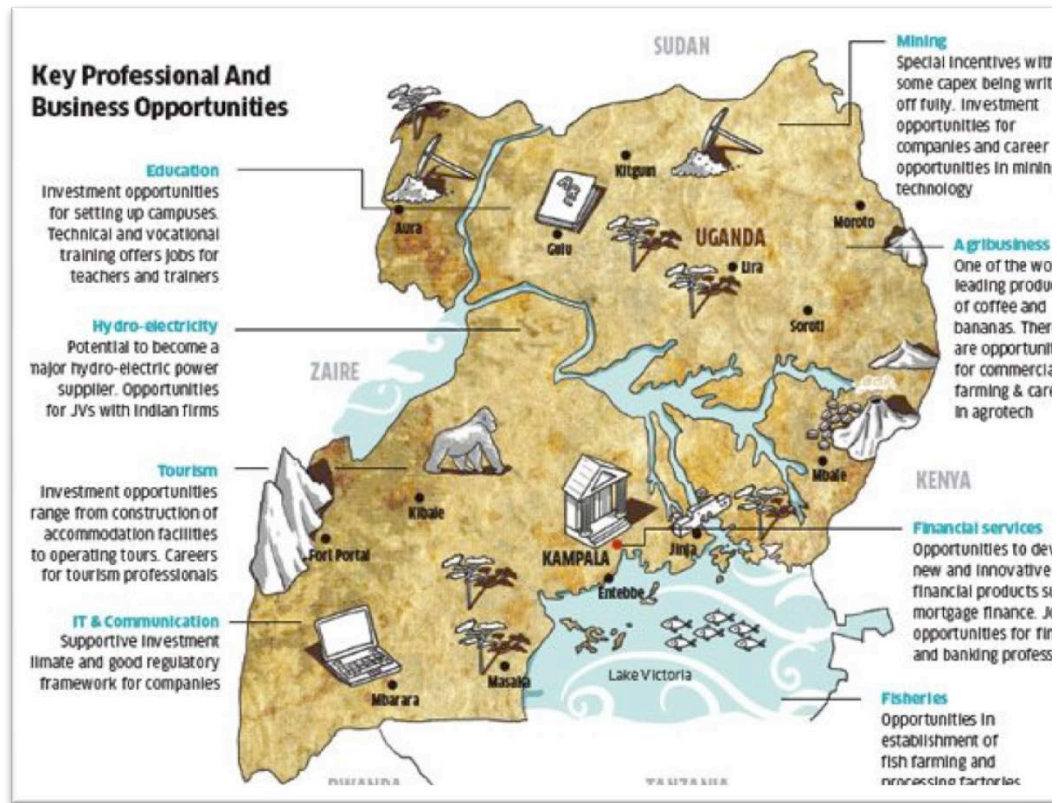


Figure 19: Recasting Ugandan national space as a “hub” for foreign investment. This advertisement appeared in an Indian online news source. Source: “Immigration Hotspot: Uganda Becoming Popular with Indian Professionals and Companies” in *The Economic Times*, Published April 17th 2011.

Indeed, population figures became another important way to emphasize the possibilities of a growing consumer market in East Africa. Agents discussed the large size of the Ugandan population and the East African Community in general. In doing so, they transformed the rural peasantry into a market of consumers with purchasing power for the commodities of possible foreign investors. In doing so, they transformed Ugandans into a consumer-oriented citizenry with cash to spend and Uganda into a renaissance, “hub” country with infinite market capabilities. These possibilities hinged on a futurist temporality—a temporality that depended on the prospects of Uganda as an investment destination on the verge of industrialization and modernization.

The discursive transformation of former President Milton Obote and Idi Amin’s Uganda into a “hub country for investment” also has material parallels. The topography

of Ugandan national space is in a process of physical transformation. In the early 2000s, the government decided to establish industrial parks that are one-part export processing zones (EPZ) with tax privileges for expatriate manufacturers and one-part standard business parks. The industrial and business parks will have high quality infrastructure and amenities for foreign workers, as well as other regulatory perks to aid in the process of jump-starting manufacturing and industry in the country (UNCTAD 2007:16). Parks are reserved for foreign investors and businessmen who will use them to build factories for the manufacture of commodities, for office parks, residences, and shopping centers. The government has earmarked land for the development of twenty-two industrial parks in the main districts of Uganda in conjunction with the World Bank and its donor funding. Industrial park land lies within or just outside of former colonial-era towns such as Mbarara (see Chapter 1). Ugandan residents who lived on these lands have been compensated and resettled in exchange for the government's possession of land.



Figure 20: A UIA parks agent describes the plans for the Kampala Industrial Business Park (KIBP) to a group of visiting investors in a conference room. Photo by author, 5 August 2009.

The largest industrial park, Kampala Industrial Business Park (KIBP), is located in Namanve, eighteen miles outside of Kampala, just off of the Jinja-Kampala highway. The park is now located in what used to be Namanve Forest, the dumping-ground of Ugandan bodies during the Idi Amin massacres of the 1970s (I referred to this site in the introduction, when I discussed the foreboding feelings that many of my interlocutors felt when we passed by this site). Nowadays, all one sees is a vast stretch of red-brown earth; all vegetation has been razed. Two factories (a Ugandan Asian Ismaili-owned steel manufacturing outfit, and a Punjabi construction company) sit on the vast tract of empty land. Although the park is in an early stage of development, and very little construction has begun, much of the delay seems to be due to the oversight of World Bank donors, who are funding the project. In the meantime, the land is managed by the UIA, which has

the power to grant land to foreign investors for factories and enterprises. During my fieldwork, several long-term Ugandan Asian business families had applied for land in the park; many, however, expressed doubts about when the park project would be completed.



Figure 21: Kenyan Asian investors exploring land options in the KIBP for a possible factory in Uganda. Photo by author, 5 August 2009.

State agents' framing of Uganda as a "hub," in addition to the razing of forest lands and other structures related to the former regime, are part of a larger political and ideological project of re-mapping Uganda's social geography. This political project is intimately related to current economic and developmental initiatives that pivot around the economic and social decline that occurred during Idi Amin's regime. Thus, the project of constructing a hospitable environment for foreign investors ultimately reverses the policies of Idi Amin's Economic War against the Ugandan Indian population.

Branding Uganda as an attractive investment destination in order to capture capital and foreign investors from global markets is critical to the everyday activities of the UIA. In recent years, the UIA has shifted its activities away from the regulation of investors once they have been licensed and are operating in Uganda. More and more intensively, UIA funding is geared towards practices of investment promotion and "image building." Ugandan employees in public relations work with advertising consultants to create investment profile literature and advertisements for the new investment-friendly Uganda. The public relations section of the UIA creates special brochures and advertisements to publicize Uganda's environmental and natural resources, its labor force (as cheap labor and English literate), its tourism possibilities, its manufacturing sectors, agro-processing industries, emerging raw sources such as oil and biofuels, and most recently, its cultural heritage and royal kingdoms.¹⁴⁸ Several regional investment conferences and promotional events with special guest speakers, popular hip-hop and Ganda musicians, and the media took place during my fieldwork. Some of these events were geared towards foreign investors, while others were produced specifically for entrepreneurial Ugandan youth and Ugandans in the diaspora.¹⁴⁹ After I returned to Ann Arbor to complete writing this thesis, many Ugandan friends reacted with outrage at the notorious Kony 2012 campaign; which, they felt, portrayed and reproduced damaging stereotypes of primitive African violence, on par with globally manufactured representations of Idi Amin. The Kony 2012 campaign, they felt, posed an obstacle to recent efforts to re-brand Uganda's global image.

Racializing Investment: The Cultural Politics of Asian Capital

During informal conversations at the UIA, I asked state agents to explain why the government had shifted to such an aggressive policy to seek foreign investment. Beyond larger processes of global economic exclusion that compel African states to seek capital, UIA agents often compared the long-term benefits of a foreign investor conducting business in Uganda rather than a more transient non-governmental organization (NGO)

¹⁴⁸ These include promotional brochures, videos clips, and DVDs that are distributed at investment conferences and other events.

¹⁴⁹ The Ugandan Diaspora "Home is Best" Investment Summit in 2010 is an example.

or other forms of donor funds. They explained that the political elite valued private business, rather than NGOs, because they brought capital to the country, created jobs, and increased the national tax base. Interestingly, the emphasis on creating a clear distinction between the realm of “politics” and the realm of “business” also manifested itself when agents encountered entities outside of the private sector at the UIA. At the UIA, agents often encountered representatives of non-governmental organizations (and organizations that had transformed into for-profit enterprises) who had become interested in obtaining investment licenses. Agents responded by expressing their interest in private-sector business and industry only—they did not consider NGOs as “serious business.” As David, an agent who worked in investment promotion, observed during our interview, “we are interested in investment projects that are going to make an impact, that are going to stay here, that are going to create jobs for people...projects that are going to contribute to the development process.”¹⁵⁰

When I asked UIA agents about what kinds of investment and investors they preferred, they always stated that they were interested in attracting any investor regardless of national origin, race, or ethnicity. David, for example, often emphasized to me, “a good investment is a good project that has follow-up.”¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, I found that most UIA officials agreed that due to Uganda’s historical relationship with Ugandan Asians, Indian capital and Indian investors were the top national-origin ethnic investors, outranked by the UK, US, Kenya, Canada, and South Africa.¹⁵² Even British and Canadian foreign direct investment included investment by expelled Ugandan Asians who had become successful in the diaspora, and had returned home to Uganda to invest.¹⁵³ Many investment agents expressed their comfort with working with both Ugandan Asian and new Indian investors. Michael, an investment officer who worked closely with both groups, explained to me that there were cultural specificities involved

¹⁵⁰ Interview with David, UIA offices, Kampala, 15 September 2009.

¹⁵¹ Interview with David, UIA offices, Kampala, 15 September 2009.

¹⁵² According to statistics compiled by the United Nations (2004:15). This data reflects planned investment from the top ten countries from 1999 to 2002. Indian capital has now outranked American capital and is only exceeded by the UK. UK investment is also composed of expelled Ugandan Asians. A recent report indicates that China, India, and Eritrea topped the list of highest investors in Uganda (Kasasira 2011). I am currently in the process of studying and compiling data on Ugandan Asian family firms, British Ugandan Asian investment, and Indian and Chinese investment. After doing so, I will be able to provide more definitive statistics on shifts in the origins of foreign investment over time.

¹⁵³ Interview with Dr. Maggie Kigozi, UIA offices, Kampala, 10 July 2009.

in dealing with Ugandan Asian and Indian investors. He expressed to me that he “understand[s] how they work,” and “I feel that I am now part of the families.”¹⁵⁴

Agents also expressed that they preferred investment from an “Asian” investor rather than a “Westerner,” echoing the anti-imperialist rhetoric that is part and parcel of the new South-South rhetoric of African-Asian connections (see Chapter 2). The rationale for such a large influx of Asian capital is that private capital, outside of donor banks, is a more effective platform and tool for national economic development. Agents often stated that Indian and Chinese capital was more successful in terms of long-term investment and “social commitment” to Uganda and Ugandans than the three previous decades of Western humanitarian donor aid. Indeed, the renewed importance of Asian capital for economic revitalism in Uganda hinge on the economic decline that occurred after the 1972 expulsion of Asians *and* the failures of aid-driven economic development in many regions in Uganda.

Ugandan Asian family firms and Indian and Pakistani entrepreneurs who came up after President Idi Amin’s regime have been able to cultivate close relationships with the NRM and government contacts, particularly at the UIA. Through the personal connections that Ugandan Asian and South Asian businessmen have with UIA employees, many of these firms have been successful in expanding their businesses into corporate chains, obtaining investment licenses for new types of businesses, and successfully attaining special visas and immigration passes for Indian and Pakistani workers from home villages in Gujarat or other parts of South Asia. Their success in post-1990 Uganda could not have been feasible without the long-term relationships and connections with key members of the state apparatus who have helped them secure tax incentives and official documentation such as investment licenses.

Thus, Ugandan investment officers are not the only actors involved in fashioning Uganda as a politically and socially secure and modern post-expulsion “investment destination” in order to attract new foreign investors and entrepreneurs. Ugandan Asian returnees, Indian tycoons, and Ugandan politicians co-produce Uganda as an “investment destination” and land of opportunity among business networks in India. A few Ugandan Asian and Indian agro-industry, manufacturing and real estate entrepreneurs work with

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Michael, UIA offices, Kampala. 25 July 2009.

Dr. Kigozi, the President, and other members of the Ugandan leadership by participating in international investment conferences in India. These key individuals have been responsible for bringing “big” Indian investment to Uganda. Moreover, Nimisha Madhvani, the daughter of the late Jayant Madhvani and granddaughter of Muljibhai Madhvani, is now the Ugandan High Commissioner to India. Thus, key Ugandan Asian family firms and long-term resident Indian entrepreneurs who became successful in the years since the 1972 expulsion of Ugandan Indians are now the “public face” of investment and national development policies in Uganda. They are part and parcel of the formation of trans-Indian Ocean investment networks: an emerging form of capital investment that is not dependent on traditional ethnic Indian trading diasporas in Uganda and East Africa, but on the ability of Ugandan Asian businessmen to establish political and diplomatic connections with the Indian government and woo Indian corporate capitalists to Uganda.

Key Ugandan Asian family firms and tycoons serve as economic advisors to the president. They often participate in UIA investment conferences and trade shows, as well as the Presidential Investors’ Roundtable (PIRT), an annual meeting that brings together the President, key ministers, and captains of industry in a formal forum to discuss both national development and investment policy.¹⁵⁵ During my own interviews with heads of family firms in Kampala, Indian businessmen often re-iterated to me that they had been invited by the UIA and the President to participate in the Presidential Investor’s Roundtable. They eagerly presented me with conference programs and photos.¹⁵⁶ During my research period, the UIA began to plan another event called the “Investor of the Year Award.” Indian family firms and other foreign investors, some of whom may have partnerships with Ugandan businessmen, are celebrated and acknowledged for their contribution to the country during a public media event. These moments of public recognition of Ugandan Asian and Indian businessmen in Uganda are important for legitimizing Asian presence to the country—both to South Asian and Ugandan African communities and publics.

¹⁵⁵ The PIRT works on the regulatory environment, infrastructure, education, ICT, agribusiness (UNCTAD 2007:1).

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Shalendra, Kampala, 15 April 2009.

Real Vs. Fake (*Kiwani*) Investment: Regulating Investors

In assessing investment license applications, investment officers act as gatekeepers who explore a diverse range of criteria before deciding to approve or reject an investment project. The UIA stipulates that investors are businessmen who have at least 100,000 dollars of planned capital investment to inject in the country (this include machinery and building infrastructure such as offices and plants). Capital must be deposited in the Bank of Uganda, and it can be distributed over time. It is critical to note that the law does not provide for a minimum capital requirement in order to obtain an investment license, but the UIA “has applied a ‘silent’ threshold of 100,000 for foreign investors and 50,000 for local investors” (UNCTAD 2007:5). This threshold helps to minimize the investment pipeline and discern committed investment from foreign businessmen who may contribute to capital flight from the country.

Secondly, investment officers evaluate the possible contribution of the planned investment project to the goals of national economic development. They explore issues such as “the generation of new earnings or savings of foreign exchange through exports, resource-based import substitution, or service sector activities; the utilization of local materials, supplies, and services; the creation of employment opportunities in Uganda, the introduction of advanced technology or the upgrading of indigenous technology, and, of course, the general contribution to locally or regionally balanced socio-economic development.”¹⁵⁷ Finally, the UIA appraises investment applications by exploring whether investors will “employ and train citizens with a view to ‘Africanization.’”¹⁵⁸ Agents require that investors provide explanations for the need for expatriate staff, if any.

Thus, the investment code features *some* regulatory guidelines for the protection of Ugandan businessmen and Ugandan citizens. This occurs at the discretion of government agents. In practice, it is very difficult to monitor the performance of private companies after they have been licensed. Caught between the goals of meeting targets for capital investment and protecting Ugandan citizens, investment officers must approve

¹⁵⁷ Investment Code Act, Cap. 92

¹⁵⁸ Investment Code Act, Cap. 92

investment projects and regulate investors that may engage in economic malpractices without little institutional or staff support to do so.

There are important nuances to the standardized script of social interaction and meetings between investment agents and possible investors. Even though a businessman may or may not invest in Uganda, he is called an “investor.” Thus, investment agents are engaged in practices of sorting out whether or not an investor is likely to be committed to doing business in Uganda. They do this by assessing the investment potential of businessmen who walk through the doors of the UIA. Here, investment agents are interested in sorting out “real” investors from “less serious” ones. In the event that state agents are skeptical of the intentions of a visitor or the queries that he or she makes, agents engage in a long session of interrogating visitors.¹⁵⁹ Agents can also use conversations with visiting businessmen to assess Uganda’s investment environment in comparison to other countries. In the process, they attempt to discern the motivations of foreign businessmen. In some cases, businessmen may have to shore up their legitimacy as a potential investor by bringing their business cards, business portfolios, and even business partners. In some cases, foreign businessmen bring Ugandan African businessmen and entrepreneurs with them in order to assert their authenticity as “serious investors.” I found that this was especially the case with Indian, Pakistani and Chinese businessmen who were seeking investment licenses and who wanted to portray their legitimacy and commitment to the country.

Agents sometimes complained to me when businessmen did not take their time learning from UIA agents, but instead immediately asked about what sort of tax incentives the government was going to offer them for their business.¹⁶⁰ I observed this several times in investment meetings with Indian and Chinese businessmen. Peace, who often worked with foreign businessmen interested in large-scale agro-processing and the production of consumer commodities in Uganda, observed one afternoon, “I don't like it

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Tom Burzingura, DED, UIA Offices, Kampala, 24 July 2009.

¹⁶⁰ While the initial Investment Code Act authorized tax breaks and government incentives for almost all forms of investment projects, revisions have been made to formal law that only allow for incentives for special types of investments. In practice, and as I explore further, the issue of allocation of tax incentives has become a serious issue of contention among UIA agents who attempt to create standardized procedures and legal frameworks for the investment process, but are undermined by the political leadership who “meddle” in UIA affairs.

when investors talk about what are the incentives for them, right away, right at the beginning. How do we know if they are really interested in Uganda, how do we know if they will stay here?" In one meeting with a possible investor at the UIA, Peace responded to a businessman's queries about the possibility of government incentives by saying plainly, "the incentives are there. We are helping you to start your business here." She also stated, "this is a place for business, we do not do politics here."¹⁶¹

In fact, investment projects do not always materialize, and businessmen may not be investors, but "fake" investors (*kiwani*, Luganda). A *kiwani* investor may have pooled funds through a variety of resources and obtained an investment license without the intention to invest. A project does not emerge when investment agents follow up on the business plans of investors. Another issue among South Asian businessmen is agreeing to proceed with an investment project according to the stipulations provided by UIA agents. As one UIA investment officer related to me, conflicts occur when South Asian businessmen agree to employ a certain number of Ugandan laborers, but then use their own channels among immigration officers to hire Indian or Pakistani laborers in their businesses.

In actuality, although foreigners are required to obtain an investment license with the UIA, some do not do so. International organizations have recommended that the UIA make it optional for investors to obtain a license from the UIA. UNCTAD, for instance, has placed pressure on the UIA to require investors to "register" with the agency rather than going through the regulatory motions of receiving an investment license. Therefore, UIA agents are under pressure to undermine protectionist policies and practices surrounding the licensing of foreign investors and the facilitation of foreign investment: especially as UIA activities become more centered on investment promotion rather than investment regulation and aftercare.

In principle, all sectors of investment are open for FDI. However, foreigners who engage in wholesale or retail commerce (trading activities), the personal service sector, public relations business, car hire service, bakeries and food processing, postal and telecommunication services, and professional services are not entitled to investment

¹⁶¹ Fieldnotes, UIA offices, Kampala, 17 March 2010.

incentives. These arenas are promoted for Ugandan African entrepreneurship only.¹⁶² In practice, however, there are many foreigners who engage in petty businesses in these areas of entrepreneurship. In keeping with the stated guidelines, however, agents often emphasized to me that they did not work with foreigners who engaged in trading practices. Nonetheless, the Investment Code legal framework continues to define foreign businessmen who engage in trading practices and petty entrepreneurship as “foreign investors.” Foreign “investors” who trade do not need to obtain an investment license, but they are required by law to incorporate and register a company.¹⁶³

At the UIA, agents often regarded petty traders or other types of urban entrepreneurs who sauntered into the office and asked questions about investment opportunities as “not serious,” or *kiwani*. In these instances Peace and David often exclaimed, “*oyo mussajja tali serious!*” (“That man is not serious!” in Luganda). On the other hand, Indian, Pakistani, and Chinese businessmen who visited the UIA also had to be approached with respect and treated as potential investors. Thus, UIA agents often engaged in gate-keeping practices more frequently with South Asian and Chinese businessman than any other visitors at the agency. This is precisely because Indian and Chinese businessmen are the most apt to engage in traditional ethnic entrepreneurship practices such as kinship-based trade in the city; according to some Ugandan Asian businessmen that I interviewed, they are also the most apt to cut corners given their familiarity with the competitive business climate of India and economic and social vulnerability in Uganda (see more in Chapter 5). Thus, in practice, “investors” may be *kiwani*: they can be informal traders who have not registered or deposited stipulated amounts of capital in the Bank of Uganda.¹⁶⁴ As I explore further in the next chapter, this

¹⁶² United Nations (2004:67).

¹⁶³ In addition, traders must deposit \$100,000 or its equivalent in the Bank of Uganda. These funds should be used specifically for the direct importation of goods (containers) or direct purchase of goods for business in Uganda. Upon remittance of capital, traders receive a certificate of remittance from the Bank of Uganda, after which they can apply for an entry permit from the immigration department. The last and final step involved in becoming a formally recognized foreign trader is to file an application to the local authority where the business is going to be run in order to obtain a trade license. In practice, of course, the 100,000 dollar capital requirement for foreign traders is a “soft” regulation.

¹⁶⁴ Chinese traders have been able to obtain visas from the embassy in Beijing by obtaining permission from the executive director to visit Uganda. A UIA officer described that this has been a major conflict at some point. Chinese traders and other business entrepreneurs used the pretense of “investor” to obtain visas to Uganda from Beijing and come to Uganda. She then described that the Chinese would the “disappear” in the markets. The major point is that there is a huge range of social practices occurring at the UIA and in

has consequences for Ugandan African and South Asian (and increasingly Chinese) traders in Uganda. For example, non-indigenous traders often claim that they are foreign investors and that the government has invited them to Uganda in order to become successful entrepreneurs and investors. These claims allow foreign traders to legitimize their presence and economic practices in the country.

What is clear is that Uganda's foreign investment regime is slippery. The label of "investor" is often applied to both "real" investors and "fake" traders. More importantly, the signifier "investor" indexes one's foreigner status. In Uganda, this foreigner status is often racialized and ethnicized as South Asian or Indian. The foreign investor has become equivalent with foreign presence in the country, whether or not the so-called "investor" actually invests in the country. Although enormous energy and efforts have been expended to develop the UIA and attract foreign capital, many individuals claim that most "serious" capital investment came back already via returnee Ugandan Asians and Ugandan Africans who had been expelled or exiled from Uganda. As Peace explained to me, the presence of foreigners who are traders is tolerated in the country because it is possible that they will become "serious" investors in the future.¹⁶⁵ Meanwhile, foreign traders contribute to an economy of low-level corruption that is beneficial to urban Ugandan bureaucrats. The value placed on foreign investors has also resulted in the general devaluation of African and Indian traders in Uganda. Older forms of Indian-African commerce, commerce that relied on inter-cultural exchanges and trading relations between wholesalers and retailers, is devalued in the new investor-based economy of social relations. Finally, among Indian and Pakistani petty traders and entrepreneurs, the road to becoming a "big-time" investor and "tycoon" is one of few paths to racial, cultural and social acceptance in Uganda.

From *Muhindi* (Indian) to *Munaiife* (Colleague): Reforming Indian Businessmen in Post-Expulsion Uganda

Kampala that are less than the ideal of what "successful" investment or successful "investors" in Uganda are supposed to be.

¹⁶⁵ Agents supported this idea by giving me examples of successful Indian traders-turned tycoons.

Above, I have outlined the effects of both shifting global political economy and the new governance regime on the possibilities of South Asian settlement and economic enterprise in Uganda. I show how, in the post-1990s context, the government has constructed Ugandan Asians, new Indian and Pakistani businessmen, and other foreigners, as “investors.” This process had occurred in tandem with aggressive economic liberalization policies that have increased the mobility and migration of foreigners as the state pursues FDI (foreign direct investment) for the national development process. Below, I discuss some of the stakes involved in the process of “recasting” Idi Amin’s Economic War against Ugandan Indians, as well as the broader stakes of crafting a new relationship between Ugandan citizens and South Asians in the country.

Idi Amin’s Economic War against Ugandan Indians and their eventual expulsion from the country relied on a number of accusations surrounding Indians’ malpractices in the economic realm of 1970s Uganda. These included Indians’ purported disloyalty to government training and jobs, abuse of exchange control regulations, the use of overseas accounts, hoarding of goods and profits, smuggling, undercutting and unfair competition with African traders, corruption, tax evasion, and keeping businesses within families and extended kinship networks (Amin 1972:2-4). Much of the legitimacy of the current investment regime relies upon state ideologies that suggest that former Ugandan Asians and new Indian and Pakistani businessmen have transformed into moral and socially conscious businessmen. According to this discourse, which was often repeated by UIA agents and Ugandan Asian business leaders, contemporary Ugandan Asian and South Asian businessmen have reformed themselves and do not engage in the economic malpractices that setback Ugandans in the past.

As I discussed in the introduction and in Chapter 3, Ugandan Asians who remained in Amin’s Uganda engaged in entrepreneurial forms of business that operated almost entirely in the informal, or *magendo* economy. In one of my early conversations with Dr. Kigozi, she pointed out to me, “Ugandan Asians who stayed on after the expulsion were able to capitalize on the environment, their political connections, and take advantage of there being no corruption. Now, the stakes are much higher for them. The economic landscape of India has entirely changed. Investors who at some point invested

only ten thousand dollars in the early 1990s can now invest four million dollars.”¹⁶⁶ Thus, the Indian businessmen of the 1970s are not of the caliber of the renowned and elite Madhvani and Mehta business families in today’s Uganda. Instead, Indian men who remained in Amin’s regime are perceived to be post-expulsion “left-over” Indians and African-Indians who engaged in whatever economic enterprise they could access to survive. Indians during Amin’s regime “came into money” by monopolizing imports on consumer goods, and their economic exchanges were always inflected with patronage of African elites (whether described as “corruption,” “bribes,” or “goodwill” to government bureaucrats and politicians.) The Amin era was a time when there was no systemicity, and an Indian trader could become a “tycoon”—by luck, patronage, or other immoral means. Therefore, there is a sense among UIA agents that Indian businessmen who lived in Uganda prior to President Museveni’s governance did so under vulnerable and unstable economic and social conditions. The businessmen of the 1970s did not engage in good business practice because the entire country was in moral and economic decline; thus their economic practices remain concealed and hidden (in contrast to the transparency of modern-day business in Kampala). Indians, at this time, were not “investors,” not in the way that the state now constructs Indian and Pakistani men as investors through empowering historical, ethnic, and cultural ideologies Asian business values and South-South cooperation between Indian and African businessmen. Rather, the Ugandan Indian businessmen of the 1960s and 1970s were the *bahindi* that had been “chased away” by Idi Amin.

Despite the social anxieties surrounding the system of patronage that proliferated between Indian businessmen and African entrepreneurs, politicians and soldiers in the 1970s, Ugandan Asians and other Indian tycoons are promoted and displayed as examples of successful investors who engage in healthy and socially-conscious business practices—they have developed productive investment projects, enterprises, and industries that add to the wealth of the nation and empower Ugandan people.¹⁶⁷ Even if their investment capital is rooted in the 1970s *magendo* economy during an era of social and moral breakdown, the UIA seeks to promote “clean business” among South Asians

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Dr. Maggie Kigozi, UIA offices, Kampala, 21 July 2009.

¹⁶⁷ Ugandan African tycoons such as Charles Mbire, James Mulwana, and Gordon Wavamunno are also displayed as role models for a new generation of Ugandan entrepreneurs.

and other foreign investors within the space of the investment agency. For example, one UIA representative expressed to me that Ugandan Asian family firms such as the Madhvanis and Mehtas are “modern Indians.” “Modern Indians,” ostensibly, are reformed, and no longer engaged in the same forms of economic malpractices and anti-Ugandan practices as in the past.¹⁶⁸ Rather, they were often referred to as *mwesimbu*, or trusted, genuine, and honest businessmen in Luganda.

In sum, the UIA promotes an ideology that Asian business practice has progressed from the economic malpractices and conspicuous consumption of the pre-expulsion past—as well the idea that the immoral ways in which Indians and Ugandans *bagwa ebintu* (“to come into wealth” in Luganda) during the Amin years is no longer relevant. According to the UIA and its investment agents, Indians are no longer *bahindi*; they have become *banaiife* (colleagues in Luganda) of Ugandans. Official and public scripts of South Asians and Africans as “partners” in business and development, whether via the ideological project of South-Southism or the grounded practices at the UIA, are powerful and compelling. As I discuss below, however, they are not wholly accepted by a new generation of Ugandan youth in Kampala.

Ugandan Responses to the New Investment Regime

How might Ugandans respond to the new Asian-oriented investment regime? From the UIA’s point of view, Ugandans have much to learn about “Asian work cultures and business values. The state and its citizens should admire the economic success, professionalism, and political prestige of foreigners who work within the nation’s borders.”¹⁶⁹ For example, although UIA agents do not work with Ugandan traders and businessmen, they do carry out an “entrepreneurship training program” (ETP) for Ugandan men and women who are interested in acquiring business skills.¹⁷⁰ The training’s objective is to instill and present knowledge about entrepreneurship to urban

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Tom Burzingura, DED, UIA offices, Kampala, 24 July 2009.

¹⁶⁹ Gijbert Oonk, communication via email.

¹⁷⁰ The entrepreneurship training discussed above is implemented by the UIA and funded by ICEIDA, the Iceland Development Agency. Trainers in the program are usually graduates from Makerere Business School in Kampala.

middle-class Ugandans. Trainers travel to rural areas and train individuals to begin small businesses and enterprises. The program helps participants to develop entrepreneurial skills and instills neoliberal values such as innovation, individualism, and productivity within Ugandan citizens. It also instills cultural values that are commonly associated with Gujarati trading and Punjabi work cultures in East Africa: hard work, savings culture, risk-taking, and family values.

Entrepreneurship trainers often use Ugandan Asians such as the Mukwano and Madhvani Indian family firms as examples of successful entrepreneurs with work cultures that are desirable for Ugandans. In one role-playing exercise that I observed, Ugandan participants were asked to approach an imaginary “city tycoon” and pitch a business idea to the tycoon. After they did so, they were to ask for funding from the tycoon and exchange business cards. Entrepreneurship exercises, as I expected, devalued traditional African networks of economic activity and modes of value production. The exercises place the onus of financing a business on an individual’s ability to woo investment, discounting structural and material explanations for Ugandans’ lack of access to credit or finance. This program, along with other events such as the recent “Financial Literacy Week” and the formation of new entrepreneurship associations and private sector foundations are increasingly common in Kampala.



Figure 22: Group activities. A brainstorming session at a UIA sponsored Entrepreneurship Training Program (ETP) in Mbarara. Photo by author, August 2009.

While some Ugandans readily wish to gain entrepreneurship skills, others are not as hopeful. Many are less confident in President Museveni's neoliberal and foreign investment regime. Urban job creation for Ugandans within the private sector is still extremely low compared to the numbers of unemployed urban Ugandans.¹⁷¹ Moreover, it is well-known that many Chinese and Indian employers and firms bring their own semi-skilled employees to East African countries in order to manage Ugandan labor and increase their sense of social and economic security of their businesses in a foreign environment. Finally, trade liberalization had brought about vicious competition between homegrown Ugandan traders and Indian and Chinese ethnic traders in Kampala city. During my fieldwork, historical problems of racialized economic competition were

¹⁷¹ I have been unable to find any reliable statistics for this indicator. Ugandans' poverty rate, according to the United Nations, is about forty percent of the population.

emerging again. *Kiwani*, or fake, investors seemed everywhere and anywhere. That even low-level Indian and Pakistani traders were deemed “investors” irked Ugandan businessmen in the city. Emerging “Aminism,” a local colloquialism that is used to refer to anti-Asian sentiment, was resurging in the city during times of acute political and economic crisis. The cartoon below, for example, depicts stereotypical portrayals of “African” and “Asian” vendors in Kampala. A Ugandan entrepreneur, who is selling *rolex* (a popular snack in Uganda consisting of cooked egg in *chapati*), complains about being undercut by an Indian competitor. He wonders at why an Indian is conducting petty business in Uganda, while the trader responds that Ugandans do not have the exclusive right to conduct *kyeyo* (petty labor or trade, Luganda).



Figure 23: Debating South Asian presence in Uganda. Source: The New Vision, 11 July 2011.

Thus, although the state frames all South Asians as investors, it allow certain capital bearing subjects particular privileges such as tax incentives, while it regulates the bodies of Indian and Pakistani labor migrants and traders who do not have capital and can claim little to no protection from the political center. These labor migrants and traders are

outside of the geographies of movement that I traced for the foreign investors who visit the UIA. Rather, they are integrated within city space and are more economically and socially vulnerable than an elite investor. This contradiction is interesting: it means that in order to protect the financial investments of Ugandan Asian family firms and capital-bearing South Asian entrepreneurs, the state must promise security to all foreigners, whether they are actually investing in the country or not. The result is a reconfiguration of South Asian bodies as investors under the market rationalities of the investment regime. South Asians increasingly come to embody capital itself as they are constructed as investors in the nation. The official protection of foreigners creates resentment among urban Ugandans, who do not understand how Indian and Pakistani traders could possibly be “investing” in Uganda (Kweisga 2011, Magga 2011).

Even more problematic are *kiwani* investment projects. When I talked about the research I was conducting at the UIA with some Ugandan Asian friends, many stated that the whole premise of the UIA was a fraud, and that these “so-called investors” as “liars and thieves.”¹⁷² Ugandan Asian returnees, several of whom had been burned by the property repossession process in the early 1990s, felt that no real and sustainable investment had been in the country since the years of the expulsion.

Indeed, there is a marked disparity between “planned” and “actualized” investment in Uganda.¹⁷³ Significantly, international pressure on UIA agents to direct their efforts away from investment regulation make it extremely difficult for the few officers at the UIA to follow up on planned investment projects. It is clear that the current model for economic development that relies on FDI has many problems, particularly as protectionist policies give way to liberal trade, investment, and migration policies. In fact, although there has been an increase in FDI from China and India, overall FDI to Uganda has decreased over the past few years.¹⁷⁴ Finally, the investment regime reifies foreigners as investors, producing South Asians as economically oriented individuals who are excluded from other domains of social and political life in Uganda. Elite foreign investors

¹⁷² Interview with Jassa Singh, Kampala, 26 February 2011.

¹⁷³ I am still in the process of assessing data on planned versus actualized investment, and therefore I am unable to provide statistical indicators at the time of writing.

¹⁷⁴ “Uganda Investment Slow Down.” Daily Monitor. Accessed 17 December 2012.

possess the most rights as petty South Asian traders and Ugandans are further excluded from the benefits and privileges of an urban-based investment regime.

Conclusions: Transformations in South Asian and Ugandan Citizenship

Above, I have mapped out the modes of neoliberal and security-oriented governance that operate in present-day Uganda by exploring global governance norms, transformations in urban state sovereignty, and the personal politics of President Yoweri Museveni. I have shown how research at a government parastatal, the Uganda Investment Authority, reveals transformations in state sovereignty that have occurred since the post-Cold War era; namely, that the Ugandan state has begun to engage Asian nations, investors, corporations, and capital in a more aggressive way in order to shore up its autonomy from development aid and other Western sanctions. Thus, renewed South Asian capital investment, entrepreneurship, and migration to Uganda is inextricable from broader South-South geo-political processes, suggesting that a new paradigm of recognition for investors, and especially non-Western investors, is emerging in Uganda. In the process, Ugandan Asians and South Asians in Uganda are racialized and gendered as male investors serving particular economic and developmental functions in the Ugandan nation. Finally, the recruitment of foreign investment depends on intensive discourses and practices that seek to emphasize political security in Uganda and the safety of racialized investors and their capital in a post-Africanization and post-expulsion context.

Indeed, the new investment regime is connected to the emergence of particular rights, privileges, and entitlements to racialized foreign investors at the expense of Ugandan citizens themselves. The rights of foreigners increasingly depend on economic criteria: the amount of capital that can be brought into the country. In doing so, the state crafts the South Asian population as investor-citizens and economic subjects, extending an entrepreneurial notion of citizenship to the Ugandan population at large. While the state attempts to incorporate likely investors into the nation, they also seek to regulate *kiwani* or fake investors, or petty South Asian traders and small-time businessmen who travel to and reside in Uganda. Ugandans themselves are engaged in an array of

subversive practices such as strikes and popular protests in order to resist emerging racialized inequality in the new investment, economic development, and security-oriented regime.

Finally, the material in this chapter allows us to understand the shifting meanings attached to the signifier “Asian” in the Ugandan national context. The new investment regime is tied to implicit notions of the reform of Ugandan Indian businessmen from the pre-expulsion era. “Asian” values are translated as a public and national “good” as the state attempts to create Ugandan African entrepreneurial subjects and craft a particular image of Uganda that transcends its reputation and association with the dictatorship of Idi Amin. Thus, the new construction of Asian investors seem to represent a progressive, modern, cosmopolitan and secure Uganda, while “fake” investors harken back to a previous era of immorality and dishonesty—traits that characterized social and economic relations between Ugandan Africans and Asians prior to NRM governance in Uganda.

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Chapter 5

Community Failure, Community Reform

Introduction: Community or Communities?

In the previous chapter, I showed that official state policy has constructed Ugandan Asians and new South Asian migrants as “investors” and “partners in development” with the President in a revolutionary process of national reconstruction and re-industrialization. This transformation has involved much ideological and symbolic labor: during the independence era of 1960s and 1970s Uganda, the Ugandan Indian, or “Asian” community was perceived as an internal other that had exploited and undermined the progress of the indigenous Ugandan African population. The Africanization and left-leaning socialist policies of national leaders such as Milton Obote and Idi Amin allowed them to decolonize and de-racialize the oppressive structures that marginalized Ugandans, imagining new futures for Ugandan autonomy in the independence era.

In contemporary Kampala, on the other hand, global, national, and state neoliberal economic discourses celebrate a post-Africanization (and post-Idi Amin) era. In the context of President Museveni’s national project, both Africans and South Asians are reframed as entrepreneurial and business savvy individuals with potential to contribute to the nation. Both can pursue the same opportunities to “make money” and “do business” (*okola business*, Luganda). Uganda acts as a host country for South Asian migrants, who are tolerated, recognized, and re-integrated in post-expulsion Uganda on the basis of their economic contribution, possession of capital, and ability to shore up their identity as “investors.” Indeed, most Ugandan Asians and South Asian migrants in the country are not formal Ugandan citizens. Instead, they are non-nationals with UK or Indian citizenship who engage in a variety of practices to shore up their legitimacy as individuals and as a racialized community.

In Chapters 1 and 2, I observed that anthropologists and historians who studied Indians in East Africa during the colonial and post-colonial era analyzed South Asian collectivities as either a racialized “Indian community” or as distinct and heterogeneous religious, ethnic, and sectarian communities. Scholarship on the “Indian community” reflected historical processes of indirect rule in British India that were transplanted onto the East African context. Indian men represented and gave voice to the Asian social body, which was governed internally according to communal and sectarian divisions and interests. On the other hand, H.S. Morris, an early ethnographer of Indians in Uganda, argued that the notion of the “Indian community, as a social entity, has a tenuous existence as an unrealized ideal” (1957:316). Processes of racialization—whether via the colonial state or via the practices of Indian community leaders who ascribed to racist ideologies of difference—aggregated all ethnic, religious, and caste-based communal groups into the discursive category of “Asian” or “Indian.” However, the structural units that guided the lives of Ugandan Indians were always communal religious, sectarian, and caste-based organizations. Thus, the organization of colonial society meant that Indians in Uganda were first divided across communal lines and then racialized into a homogenous, if fictive, Indian “community” in order to be recognized by the colonial state.

Former President Idi Amin’s 1972 expulsion decree and ensuing urban “de-racialization” broke down the tri-partite colonial racial order of social and economic life in Uganda. But was Amin also successful in destroying colonial inventions such as racial and ethnic “communities”? Are communities still organized according to colonial norms of racialized and ethnicized governance, in which South Asian leaders craft relations with the political center? In this chapter, I show that South Asians must continue to organize themselves as a racialized collectivity or “community” in order to be recognized by the state, particularly in times of national political crisis. At the same time, processes of racial homogenization co-exist with the heterogeneity of Ugandan Asian and South Asian migrant communities in contemporary Kampala. Through ethnographic analysis, I show how Ugandan Asian and South Asian communities internally organize themselves, revealing the ways in which they attempt to reform themselves and imagine themselves as part of new types of social collectivities in the nation.

In order to carry out this analysis, I first map out the migration of four distinctive groups of South Asians to Uganda, exploring their apprehensions of return migration to the country. First, I consider returnee Ugandan Asians who were expelled by Idi Amin and accepted President Museveni's "invitation" to return and invest in the nation. The second group is composed of long-term resident Ugandan Asian and South Asian men and women whom I describe as "community builders." Third, I explore the trajectories of flexible economic migrants who travel to Uganda from India and Pakistan. Fourth, I explore the apprehensions of a new generation of East African Asian youth as they struggle to gain racial and cultural acceptance in Uganda. Through my analysis of these four groups I reveal the ways in which a racialized South Asian "community" struggles to re-invent itself in the post-expulsion era. In doing so, I explore shifts in the significance of formal citizenship since the independence era, examining how individuals make claims for settlement in the nation by means outside of juridical citizenship. Furthermore, I show how these claims, in addition to processes of community formation, inherently rely on the politics of securitization. I argue that the reintegration of South Asians and South Asian community building is inherently tied to practices of securitization in the context of ongoing racialized vulnerabilities for minority groups in East Africa.

Setting the Scene: Ethnography and Urban Culture in Kampala City

Kampala can best be described as an uneasy confluence of Western expatriates and NGO-workers, Ugandan Asians, ethnic Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani migrant-traders, an emerging Ugandan middle class, and the Ugandan urban proletariat. Within these groups are more social divisions, creating a cosmopolitan population of ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic groups in the city. The class divisions among social groups can be symbolized by the distinction between "uptown" and "downtown" Kampala. The main thoroughfare, Kampala road, is a spatial boundary that divides the elite areas of the city from the dense markets, shopping complexes, and taxi parks in central Kampala. The taxi parks border "Old Kampala," or the former urban areas that were reserved for Indian residence and commerce under the auspices of the colonial state. Presently, one can observe large numbers of low-income Indian and Pakistani migrants

who rent former Ugandan Indian residences. Taxis, or *matatus*, crawl slowly up and down the hills that surround the city center. They transport working Ugandans to further destinations—into the urban slums and the sprawl that surrounds Kampala city. The impoverished of the city live in the “valleys” and liminal spaces in between the many hills that surrounded the city center, or outside of downtown area in vast and unfurling slums extending outwards in all directions from the center (see Appendix V for a map of Kampala).



Figure 24: View of Kampala city "development" from Kisenyi slum. Photo by author, 8 September 2009.

Wedged in between old Indian *dukans* (shops), commercial banks, and religious sites are new cafes and restaurants (or “restos,” in Luganda slang). Two popular shopping malls, Garden City and the Nakumatt Shopping complex in Kololo, along with smaller chain grocery stores (usually Kenyan and South African-owned) are located in outlying

areas such as Ntinda and Bugolobi (see Appendix V). These complexes are popular sites for “time-passing” among an emerging middle class of Ugandans, youth, and foreign migrants.

The new South-Southism, evoked by the likes of Narendra Modi in Chapter 2, is expressed in an emerging urban aesthetics of “Afro-Asian global.” Nightclubs in Kampala often play Bollywood and Arabic music, Ugandan and East African pop, and American Top 40 hits. In tandem with the new South Asian migration to Kampala, both American and Bollywood films are available at the sole movie theater in the city. Although city “tycoons” have also frequented nightclubs and beer halls in Kampala, sites of urban consumption and recreation have proliferated and expanded in the past ten years. Ugandan youth are involved in get-rich schemes such as gambling, lotteries, and e-commerce. For instance, five licensed casinos owned by foreign businessmen have been independently licensed to operate in downtown Kampala. A number of sports-betting chains have flourished in recent years, particularly in university and nightlife areas such as Wandegaya, Kabalagala, and Kansanga in Kampala (see Appendix V). “Get-rich schemes,” along with the intense emergence of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches and worshipping in Kampala, evince a renewed emphasis on the neoliberal individual’s own role and responsibility in making his or her life’s fortune, both material and spiritual.

Urban Ugandans’ experiences of the liberal economy are experienced through their interactions with foreign traders, the consumption of exotic goods in the market, and travel to new destinations for trade activities. Cheap consumer goods from Asia flooded into Kampala’s markets from the late 1990s onwards. On many weekend afternoons, I accompanied Ugandan and Indian friends on long walks through the markets in search of commodities such as cell phones, clothes, purses, shoes and sunglasses from origins as diverse as Guangzhou, Beijing, Dubai, Mumbai, and Hyderabad. The Chinese market, called “*kikubu market*”, or corridor market in Luganda, is especially popular for hunting down Chinese cell phones that can load more than one sim card. Chinese shoes were also a popular consumer item and object of urban controversy in Uganda. The substandard quality, but cheap prices for a variety of fashionable and trendy shoes, compelled many Ugandan women to buy them. Often, the heels on women’s shoes would break apart in the middle of town, much to the humor of passersby. Substandard foreign commodities

compelled yet more discussions of the *kiwani* (fake) nature of items that one found in Kampala markets.



Figure 25: Kikubu Market, also known as the Chinese “corridor” market, in downtown Kampala. Photo by author, 27 August 2009.

Other commodities that have had a profound social impact on Kampalan life are cheap second-hand cars from Japan and Singapore. Pakistani traders dominate the trade

of cars in Kampala. It is possible, for example, to observe the sudden appearance of “floating” informal used car markets on several major roads in the city. The booming market in second-hand cars has made it possible for many Ugandans to “raise funds” to own their own means of transport. Kampala’s deteriorating road infrastructure network, congested with *matatus*, *boda-bodas* (motorbikes), and cars driven by Ugandans, expatriates, and South Asian and Chinese businessmen, results in a constant stream of social commentary on “the jam” (traffic) and the size and depth of potholes, especially during heavy rains.

While conducting research in Kampala, I lived in a three-story flat in the historically Muslim neighborhood of Kibuli (see Appendix VII for a map).¹⁷⁵ Gujarati immigrants had rented the ground floor of the flat and ran a popular grocery called the “Super Super Market.” The old Kibuli mosque was located right behind my flat, and I awoke to *namaaz* and the crowing of roosters most mornings. In addition to the mosque, a number of private and public primary and secondary schools, a teacher training college, a hospital, and a police training school occupied Kibuli hill. Beyond the Ugandan Muslim population, a number of Ethiopian, Somali, and Sudanese migrants had moved into Kibuli and had opened several restaurants or other businesses in the area. Given the predominantly Muslim population in my neighborhood and the proximity of the mosque, Eid and Ramadan were important festivities in my area of the city.

In front of my flat, a long road, that had once been paved, but was now ridden with potholes, supported two lanes of traffic in opposite directions. Carpenters’ workshops, squatter settlements, and the dilapidated stalls of petty vendors that sold everything from *halal* meat to *dawa* (medicine), occupied the road I lived on. When I met with interviewees or took part in other activities (I participated in a Lingala exercise dance class at a gym in the city center three days a week), I took the lumbering *matatus* down the rutted road into the central taxi park, changing into other taxis in order to reach my final destination. Over time, the commute to the taxi park became longer and longer. As the taxi parks became congested with traffic, the conductors began to drop the passengers and myself further and further away from the park, forcing us to walk the rest

¹⁷⁵ Prince Badru Kakungulu, a member of the Buganda royal family, owned most of Kibuli hill and donated the land to Uganda’s Muslim community.

of the way to the taxi park. Thus, angry fights between passengers and conductors became on the journey to the taxi park became part of my everyday routine. Because the entire process of leaving my flat and reaching my final destination could take up to two hours or more, like many Ugandans, I eventually resorted to calling a *boda-boda* or taxi to pick me and drop me off to locations when I could not spare the time.

Rumor, Silences, and Social Anxiety

Beyond the excitement of airtime advertisement campaigns, Chinese shoes, and Nokias, uncertainty haunted the city's atmosphere. As the 2011 presidential elections approached, the government's security initiatives tightened. The military presence in the city was profound. Soldiers and police were often stationed at public spaces: they checked bags, car trunks, and asked questions. Investments in corporate and residential security, especially in the form of private security firms, were increasing at an alarming rate. On my walks in and out of the flat I tried to avoid the open-air trucks of Ugandan men who wore security uniforms and carried large rifles—even the occasional youth who sauntered past me, lackadaisically carrying a rifle. Whenever the city roiled with popular protests, or *kavuyo* (Luganda), the government responded aggressively and immediately by sending tanks and armed troops to quell resistance. The government frequently dismissed so-called “disturbances” and “riots” initiated by *bayaye* (the urban poor).

“Security” is not only a matter of global geopolitics and national security. In this thesis I also consider security and insecurity to be a social form: a “structure of feeling” that is central to the production of Ugandan social life (Williams 1977:128-135). Many Ugandans live with an ongoing sense that they are being watched, that their conversations must be censored, and that any political agitation or critique may be suppressed at any moment. They constantly anticipate the possibility of violence and feel the gaze of the NRM and President Museveni in their lives. Many of these social tensions are expressed in everyday discourse. In his work on Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) activities in Acholiland in Northern Uganda, for example, Sverker Finstrom argues that “rumors are part and parcel of war...rumors verbalize a wartime ontology of stress and uncertainty” (2009:68). Rumors, silences, and gossip also abound in post-conflict central Buganda and

Kampala city, which has been the locus of unstable regimes since the independence era, followed by President Museveni's hold on governance since 1986. During my time in Kampala, I heard many stories related to the nefarious and panoptical presence of the state. Because I rode motorbikes, many individuals warned me that *boda-boda* riders were spies of the state (conversely, I was also told that they were agents of the Buganda establishment who spied on the state). Rumors about the locations of "safe houses" where political activists and journalists are detained and tortured are discussed routinely. Stories about the activities of *Al-shabaab* terrorist groups in the country, thought to be seeking revenge on Ugandans for their activities as mercenary soldiers in Somalia, circulated in Kibuli and in town. Indeed, I often felt that the entire city was beset by mal-intentioned outsiders who could not be trusted: Banyankole from the West who were aligned with the President and the political elite, Rwandese fleeing from the International Criminal Court (ICC), Congolese refugees, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) sympathizers, Westerners with neocolonial motivations. Registers of social insecurity were often expressed through practices of witchcraft and the increasing incident of child sacrifice in Buganda during my fieldwork. (In one harrowing incident, a taxi driver who dropped me home late one night warned me that the "city tycoon" who had initially built the flat that I lived in practiced child sacrifice, and had buried the remains in the foundation of the building.)

Social anxiety also characterized the lives of Ugandan Asians, South Asian migrants and other racialized migrants. This went beyond the everyday concerns of security that expatriates and elites are usually pre-occupied with in weak or unstable political regimes. Long-term residents and returnee Ugandan Asians expressed uncertainty about their present situations based on their historical experiences of social, political, and economic exclusion in the past. Many of them discussed their concerns about trusting President Museveni, the state, Ugandans, and even kin with me. Understandably, these feelings of mistrust leaked out in their interactions with me, and my relationships with several close Ugandan Asian friends went through trying times until I had established trust over many years. South Asian economic migrants were similarly concerned about security in their everyday lives as they absorbed knowledge about the Amin regime and the vexed relationship between the state and Asian communities in the past.

Much of this anxiety was related to the ways in which South Asians felt that they were being perceived by the gaze of an abstract Ugandan collectivity that was merely tolerating their presence. A further register of the gaze affected Ugandan Asians, who considered their identity to be different than new economic migrants. Ugandan Asians anticipated the ways that Ugandans perceived them as a racialized community, especially the practices of new South Asian economic migrants. Indeed, it took me quite some time to understand the complex and multiple gazes that operated in my fieldwork space. As I discussed in Chapter 1, I had hoped that it would be easy to access the inner apprehensions of Ugandan Asian communities who had experienced the expulsion and who were working to re-construct a new relationship with the state and with Ugandans. Once I understood the deep emotional politics of contemporary race relations in Uganda, I began to sort out appropriate ways to conduct fieldwork and establish relationships with people in the field.

Post-expulsion South Asian migration has had a marked effect on *munnokampala* (one who comes from Kampala in Luganda). In Kampala today, one finds multiple streams of social critique and commentary aimed at the influx of Indian and Pakistani businessmen, capital, and the possibility of wealth accumulation among Ugandan Asian and South Asian elites versus the stated objectives of national economic development. Ugandans are deeply engaged in heated conversations surrounding quasi-celebrity Indian and African business tycoons in the city, which quickly transform into discourses about scandal, corruption, embezzlement, the occult, violence, and greed. Discourses surrounding the moral politics of wealth accumulation and conversations surrounding Idi Amin's decision to expel Ugandan Asians from the country continue to circulate in the city. Stories, songs, and general social commentary on Indians and Africans, tycoons and migrants, and wealth and privation, animate urban social life. Elite entrepreneurial businessmen are both revered and criticized in Ugandan urban society. Thus, while some regard city tycoons as controversial and immoral capitalists, others also viewed them as role models for the type of wealth and financial success they sought to achieve; i.e. as harbingers of "rags to riches" success stories.

Below, I map out the trajectories of migration for racialized Ugandan Asians and South Asians in Uganda. In the process, I explore the affective registers of insecurity,

anxiety, and embarrassment that permeate the lives of returnees and migrants in Kampala. While the material below delves into spaces of cultural intimacy among South Asians, I situate the ethnography within the broader politics of insecurity that affect the everyday lives of both Africans and Asians who live under the NRM government. These are issues that I will return to at the end of the chapter.

Ugandan Asian Return Migration: Post-Expulsion Mistrust

To reiterate, in the 1990s, the re-construction of an Asian minority presence in President Museveni's nation-state involved two related processes. The first was the return of selective forms of capital investment via the return migration of important Ugandan Asian family firms from the diaspora (see Chapter 4 for further discussion). The heads of family firms re-established key manufacturing houses, established close relations with the political elite, and became the largest taxpayers and employers in the country (outside of the government). The second was the return migration of individual Ugandan Asian men who sought to repossess "lost" properties between 1991-1994. Some men re-established businesses and settled in Kampala, bringing their families with them. Others returned on a part-time basis while they maintained households in Western countries. Overall, however, Ugandan Asian return migration was characterized by the return of wealthy and elite family firms, with few middle-class Ugandan Asians re-settling in the country after the property repossession exercise.¹⁷⁶ Interviewees and other scholars remarked that Ugandan Asians had reconstructed lives for themselves in the Western diaspora, and had little or no interest in re-establishing ties to a country that had exiled them in the past.

Throughout the 2000s, a few more Ugandan Asian families had resettled in Kampala. Some had returned due to the economic recession in the West and personal financial difficulties. Several Ugandan Asian men, typically divorcees, had come to settle in Uganda for their retirement. For them, this was a journey of self-exploration, a way to revisit their lingering memories of the past and reconcile their experiences of displacement and forced migration in their senior years. Some attempted business

¹⁷⁶ About two thousand original Ugandan Asians have returned to Uganda. Personal communication with Dr. Vali Jamal.

enterprises in the city, but most had their own funds from which to support themselves. Some Ugandan Asians who had repossessed their properties in the previous decade collected annual rent through property agents based in Kampala and used this money for additional funds.¹⁷⁷

In an effort to cast themselves as culturally and socio-economically distinct from new Indian and Pakistani migrants in Uganda, most Ugandan Asians tended to live and socialize in elite areas of Kampala. Ugandan Asians, both long-term residents and return migrants, could afford expensive vehicles and drove them about the city. (New migrants, on the other hand, took public transport, pooled money to buy a shared car, or bought and drove motorbikes to move about the city). Ugandan Asian elites tended to socialize within their own groups and with an older generation of Ugandan African friends. They occasionally overlapped with new migrants in religious places of worship or at community festivals such as *Eid*, *Diwali*, and *Holi*; or even the India Independence Day celebration sponsored by the Indian Association and Indian Embassy each year. Overall, however, the experience of being born and brought up in Ugandan Indian society, as well as the experience of expulsion, formed clear boundaries between those who self-identified as Ugandan Asian (and thus had an orientation towards national citizenship) and the new generation of upwardly mobile South Asian “newcomers.”

Ugandan Asians also displayed a range of attitudes to the state that governed them. One afternoon, Sukh Singh, a third-generation Ugandan, began to discuss his apprehensions of President Museveni at his family home.¹⁷⁸ Sukh Singh emphasized that it was not Museveni who had invited the Asians back to Uganda, but rather Milton Obote.¹⁷⁹ “Museveni,” he said, “did not support our community.” He began to relate a story that a Sikh friend, who was traveling from Kasese to Kampala in the early 1980s, told him. A young Yoweri Museveni boarded the bus that Sukh Singh’s friend was traveling on. At some point in the journey, Museveni bought a bushel of bananas for everyone, passing one banana to each passenger. When the bananas reached Sukh Singh’s

¹⁷⁷ Some viewed these annual rents as “retirement nest eggs” and used the savings to fund trips to Uganda as a vacation for themselves and their children who had never lived in Uganda.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Sukh Singh, Kampala, 14 November 2009.

¹⁷⁹ Here, Sukh Singh refers to Milton Obote’s second regime, from 1980-1985, and his passing of the Expropriated Properties Act in 1983.

friend, Museveni said, “we will not give you one.” Sukh Singh connected this anecdote to his broader apprehensions of President Museveni’s authentic apprehensions of Ugandan Asians and South Asian migration to the country. Indeed, he leaned over to me when re-telling the story, emphasizing that Museveni gave properties back to Asians because the international community was pressuring him and would not support him as a political leader until he did so. (Other Ugandan Asians, of course, refuted these ideas and suggested that President Museveni succeeded in handing back properties to Ugandan Asians because he believed that they were Ugandans like anyone else.) Nonetheless, Sukh Singh's stories and interpretations revealed to me the inward feelings, or what anthropologist James Scott (1990) describes as the “hidden transcripts,” of mistrust and anxiety that some individuals felt about their re-integration into the country.

“Returnees” also described their doubts and anxieties about their return to the country to me. Ugandan Asians who had left in 1972 and spent time abroad did not feel that they fit in comfortably with the Ugandan Indians or the African-Indians who had remained in the country and never re-settled in the West. Nor did they identify with the new group of South Asian migrants from South Asia. Nusrat, a woman actively involved in Ismaili community politics and the agro-business industry in Uganda, discussed her experiences of the expulsion, refugee resettlement in Vancouver, and eventual return migration to Uganda with me. As a young student at Makerere in the 1960s, she was active in Islamic politics and in the Africanization debate that was current at the time. Just prior to the expulsion, she wedded her husband, a fellow Ismaili student at the university. After the expulsion announcement, they temporarily relocated to Nairobi where they awaited news to find out if they would be able to return to Uganda. Eventually, they relocated as refugees to Vancouver, Canada, where they began a new life and raised two daughters.¹⁸⁰

One afternoon, I met Nusrat for tea at a small canteen across from a new shopping mall in Ntinda, a residential area in the northwest part of the city. The traffic and noise from the street outside almost drowned out Nusrat’s voice on the recording that I made this day. While describing the process of coming back to Uganda, she broke down into tears:

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Nusrat, Kampala, 1 March 2011.

N: For my husband and I, we moved to Richmond where we now live. By July of 1973 we moved there and paid back every penny they had paid us. So generally we settled. I got a job with this agency and moved on. So then the UN thing came, then the Uganda High Commission in Ottawa even tried to contact us. So him [her husband] and I had valid passports but we just blanked ourselves out from what was happening here [Uganda]. Then in 1992, my brother contacted my husband. And said, you know, I have been there [Uganda], there are lots of opportunities. Come.

He went. Everyone gathered at the Fairway [hotel]. He saw that the farm was totally down. And um...when he came back he said there is some way of repossessing.

I for one, was so broken, because I felt the Ugandans whom I had been so close to, Ugandans I had been so close to...at the end of the day who stood by us? Nobody. At the end of the day, no one said...in the heart of the heart, as today I still think, that...on the surface investors and all, but...

Like many others with whom I spoke, Nusrat stopped herself from completing her thoughts on what she perceived are the inner apprehensions that Ugandans have of Ugandan Asians who returned after the expulsion. She also alluded to the idea that Ugandans had not welcomed Ugandan Asians back whole-heartedly. Later in our interview, she expressed uncertainties regarding the practices of the new investment regime that was inviting South Asian migrants to economically invest and develop the nation. She was disappointed in the government's attitude towards Ugandan Asians and new migrants, which she described as simply a process of handing back property and creating investors. She was especially concerned about the possibility of "regime change": Kizza Besigye, who represented the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), was the strongest opposition leader to President Museveni and widely perceived as being anti-Asian among Ugandan Asian and South Asian communities in Uganda.¹⁸¹ Ultimately, she explained to me that she would assess the results of the upcoming elections. If President Museveni continued to govern, she would remain in Kampala with her husband, particularly since she had an active lifestyle in Uganda and took care of a farm with her husband.

Others expressed more positive hopes for the future. A more recent Ugandan Asian returnee, Bhavesh, is an example of a third generation Ugandan Asian who resettled in the country with his family. His forefathers were Kenyan Asians who had

¹⁸¹ The FDC and its supporters are widely perceived as being anti-Asian by African-Indians, new South Asian migrants, and long-term Ugandan Asian residents. Anti-corruption laws and reforming labor and trade issues are major political platforms among FDC politicians and their constituents.

gradually moved in-land and settled in Uganda. Bhavesh and his five brothers lived in Uganda and Kenya during the 1960s and 1970s, gradually leaving their homes behind to seek refuge in the UK after the business restrictions of 1960s Kenya and the expulsion in Uganda. Bhavesh traveled back to Uganda in the mid-1990s during the repossession process in order to claim his brothers' assets from the government. In the process of traveling back and forth between the UK and East Africa and overseeing his family's properties, he gradually became involved in an energy infrastructure project in the new regime. Below, he describes returning to the UK after completing the project in Uganda:

B: Everybody was well off...but I personally had a bit of a financial setback in the UK. So I managed the properties, and the assets are now first class. The only thing is that the drive-in cinema, which was like a family symbol, got sold. But those [other] assets are still there. And I think with reasonable success. Bhavani [my daughter] decided to start her tourism business here. And, finally, we established here, rather than staying in the UK. We thought, you know, spend two, three years here.¹⁸²

Bhavesh's children, finding ample opportunities to explore and establish new businesses in Kampala, decided to join their mother and father in Uganda. Although the move to Uganda was meant to be a temporary and an experimental arrangement, the family has decided to remain long-term given the relative political stability of President Museveni's governance and his pro-Asian policies.

From Formal to Flexible Citizenship

The issue of Ugandan Indians' formal citizenship at the time of independence was one of the key factors that led to national leaders' assessment of Indians as either allies or enemies of the nation. Indians' decisions to apply for British citizenship or for British passports during the decolonization era led national leaders such as Milton Obote and Idi Amin to question Indians' participation in the newly independent Ugandan nation. In the context of political and economic exclusion, Ugandan Indians began to repatriate money overseas through a system of taking multiple citizenships within one family. Uganda Asians who remained in the country during Idi Amin's regime typically attained

¹⁸² Interview with Bhavesh, Kampala, 19 May 2010.

exemption status if they already had Ugandan passports or Ugandan citizenship—many would also obtain British passports, just like members of their families, who were in transnational locations. In 1980s Kenya, one study stated that, “805 of the Asian families in East Africa now have close kin in one or more place abroad, through whom money is siphoned off” (Balachandran 1985:325).

In the aftermath of the expulsion, Ugandan Asian “returnees” possess British, Canadian, or American passports.¹⁸³ Due to their historical experiences of exclusion and displacement, they often emphasized to me that it was important to have a “back-up plan” in the event of future political instability. Taran Singh, for instance, is originally a Kenyan Asian from Nakuru. He had moved into Uganda in the early 1990s with his family. I met him at the Singh Sabha *gurdwara* in Kampala, where we talked about his involvement in re-establishing the Sikh community and religious institutions in the country. Later in the week, I met him in his office in the Industrial Area in Kampala. Over tea, we sat and talked about his construction firm and new Indian businesses in Uganda. Abruptly, he shifted the conversation to a discussion about his apprehensions of African mistrust against Asians in East Africa. He spoke plainly, “they see us as not totally committed, not loyal. They don’t trust us because we don’t keep our eggs in one basket. Most Asians will keep their UK passports.”¹⁸⁴ Taran located the origin of anti-Asian sentiments in Ugandan Asians’ refusal to take on Ugandan citizenship and invest completely in the country after the expulsion.

Like Taran, other East African Asian businessmen are well aware of these historical issues and their impact on themselves and their families, their business prospects, and processes of community building. Even if men did not possess formal Ugandan citizenship, I often found that they sought to underline their allegiances to the nation in everyday Asian spaces such as workplaces and offices. Rather than possessing Ugandan citizenship, most had become “permanent residents” of Uganda and thus they possessed official Certificates of Residency.¹⁸⁵ Returnees often stressed their East

¹⁸³ Most of the Ugandan Asian returnees I interviewed possessed British national citizenship. Some Kenyan Asians had moved into Uganda in the early 1990s and were also part of my interview samples. Taran Singh, for example, possessed Kenyan national citizenship.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Taran Singh, Kampala, 25 February 2011.

¹⁸⁵ Becoming a permanent resident requires ten years of continuous residence in the country and an application that vouches for the character of the individual seeking residency. Interview with Ronald Obel,

African Asian identity and rights to residence and business in Uganda by casually mentioning their residency certificates or their applications for dual citizenship. On one weekend drive from Entebbe to Kampala, Balwant, a Punjabi youth and friend whose family had remained in Uganda during the Amin years, excitedly took out his Certificate of Residency from his wallet and presented it to me. He had recently applied for it and was overjoyed that his application was approved. “But aren’t you born and raised in Uganda?” I asked him. “I don’t really need it,” he explained, “but it’s a good idea to have it.”¹⁸⁶ South Asian men also hung framed photos of President Museveni next to portraits of Karim Aga Khan, Sathya Sai Baba, Guru Nanak and other Sikh gurus, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, and other community and religious figures in their offices in workplaces. These portraits were often carefully positioned and framed next to “Certificate of Residency,” building, and business permits. All of these material and symbolic forms served to legitimize Asian places of business and Asian presence in Uganda.

Significantly, some Ugandan Asians who had always remained in the country stressed that they were Ugandan and had Ugandan passports rather than British ones. Practices of self-positioning in relation to formal citizenship revealed the fraught historical relationships that many had had with official documentation such as passports, birth certificates, and other types of permits and licenses (see more in Chapter 3).

Others were extremely interested in the possibility of attaining dual Ugandan citizenship, which has recently become available on a case-by-case basis for those Ugandan Asians and South Asians who could prove that they had at one time been citizens of Uganda, were born in the country, or were productive members of society who were committed to long-term investment and settlement in the nation.¹⁸⁷ Munawwar, for

Kampala, 11 February 2011. These are loose regulations, as paperwork is easily obtained through bribes and patronage relations between migrants and bureaucrats.

¹⁸⁶ Fieldwork notes on meeting with Balwant, 15 March 2010.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Eunice Kisembo, Kampala, 18 May 2011. The process of attaining dual citizenship requires that applicants provide proof of former citizenship, residency, or other documents attesting to the fact that they had once owned property in the country. Interestingly, the dual citizenship law is only available to East African Asians, Ugandan Asians and businessmen who have become permanent residents of the country. Ugandan dual citizenship excludes Indian nationals. The question of dual citizenship may become moot for East African Asians, particularly if the East African Community becomes an integrated economic and political region, adopting only one passport and a single currency. Interview with Ronald Obel, Kampala, 11 February 2011.

example, who had moved from India to Uganda during the early years of the Museveni regime, felt that dual citizenship would allow South Asian businessmen to travel and expand their businesses and investments across the East African region.¹⁸⁸ When I asked Bhavesh if he would ever be interested in applying for dual citizenship and attaining Ugandan citizenship in addition to his British citizenship, he shrugged his shoulders and replied, “I am not sure it would be so useful for me. If I could apply for a Kenyan citizenship, since I was born there, maybe that would be more useful because it would help me to travel.” Bhavesh and his family imagined that they would stay in Uganda as a family in order to start businesses together while saving money by living cheaply in Uganda and still managing a good standard of living. In the event that things did not work out for them, financially or otherwise, they would return to the UK.

Jassa Singh, a Ugandan Asian, scowled when I asked him if he would ever take up Ugandan citizenship via the government’s inauguration of dual citizenship.¹⁸⁹ As a British Asian who had returned from Uganda, he preferred to converse with me in English, saying, “I don’t want it. Because...I have been hurt before, and I don’t want to go through it again. I know how my mother, how my father felt. I will not do it. Me, I am here just like everyone else, to make my money, and carry on.”¹⁹⁰ Despite Museveni’s official policy of welcoming Ugandan Asians to the country, some men who had returned felt it was impossible to “trust” the state with all their investments. Ugandan Asians, like the previous generation of pre-expulsion Ugandan Indians who forged strategies to shore up their sense of security when they were excluded from national citizenship, invested in other practices of economic and social security in order to feel comfortable and safe in Uganda. Similar logics of mistrust towards larger society and the state explained why some businessmen preferred to take a chance and hire Indian labor in family firms rather than Ugandan labor.¹⁹¹ As Jassa explained to me, “there are a lot of Asians that are here for the simple reason of security rather than execution.”¹⁹²

All of this material suggests that both Ugandan Asians and South Asian migrants

¹⁸⁸ Interview with Munawwar, Kampala, 28 February 2011.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Jassa Singh, Industrial Area, Kampala, 26 February 2011.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Jassa Singh, Industrial Area, Kampala, 26 February 2011.

¹⁹¹ Other Ugandan Asians, and especially youth, contested these practices and explained that they would only trust Ugandans and preferred working with Ugandans in their businesses. See more below.

¹⁹² Interview with Jassa Singh, Industrial Area, Kampala, 26 February 2011.

and entrepreneurs increasingly engage in practices of “flexible citizenship.” Following the work of Aihwa Ong (1999), “flexible citizenship” refers to the ways in which “mobile managers, technocrats, and professionals [seek] to both circumvent and benefit from different nation-state regimes by selecting different sites for business, work, and family relocation” (1996:112). In turn, the subjectivities of these individuals are shaped in relation to the neoliberal criteria of nation-states, and the ways in which individuals shift in between “different scales and cultural worlds in constructing their identities” (Kanna 2010:101).

While Ugandan Asians are considerably more invested in the Ugandan nation because of the ways that they emphasize their generational ties to the country and long-term investment and commitment to the nation, Africanization policies in post-independence East Africa have compelled most Asians to adopt and increasingly practice flexible citizenship strategies. This is especially the case given the ways in which Asians seek to maximize their personal and family security. Many Ugandan Asians and long-term residents, for example, cultivated a base in Uganda, but also sent their children abroad to boarding school, traveling back and forth between Uganda and other destinations in which they had cultivated business interests. These multiple destinations may be based on the formal citizenships of extended family members, who had diversified their citizenship status during the exodus period. Gurbaksh Singh, a Ugandan Asian and the owner of a Punjabi construction firm in Kampala, described his confusions about how to organize his family to me in our interview. He wanted his children to grow up in the country, at least until university, when he would send them to boarding school. He also felt that his wife was more comfortable living outside Uganda, so he was considering traveling back and forth between Uganda and India for the next several years. He explained to me that this was not preferable and he did not like traveling, but many Ugandan Asian men had begun to organize their families transnationally since the expulsion era.¹⁹³

What is clear is that South Asians do not attain a sense of personal and familial security through formal citizenship—rather they have developed a number of strategies to help shore up their sense of economic and social security in a region where they have

¹⁹³ Interview with Gurbaksh Singh, 15 February 2011.

historically been a vulnerable population. These strategies include diversifying formal citizenships within families, repatriating capital to other countries, and maintaining transnational families. Elite families employ strategies of flexible citizenship that involve much travel between multiple destinations. Given their lack of capital, migrant South Asians employ less of these strategies and are more vulnerable to economic, social, and political fluctuations in the country. Finally, Ugandan Asian and South Asian community builders employ a number of strategies that allow them to craft security on a broader, community-based scale in the nation. They do this through emphasizing their economic investments in the country, through charitable donations and philanthropic practices, crafting alliances with the political leadership, and investing in practices of bodily and community securitization during times of political crisis. Because Ugandan Asians and South Asian migrants, for the most part, do not seek Ugandan formal citizenship, I term these practices, in totality, “flexible securitization practices.” Flexible securitization practices characterize both Ugandan Asian return migration and new South Asian migration to the country (they are practiced to a lesser extent by Ugandan Asians who remained in Uganda).

Among community leaders, the reform of the Ugandan Indian community from its past mistakes is a critical component of its strategy to integrate into the nation. I turn to these issues in the next section.

“Community Builders”: Re-fashioning Community-State Relations

In the early 1990s, a small group of businessmen residing in Kampala recognized the need to create a formal institution that would serve the interests of a diverse and growing population of South Asians in Uganda. This institution would also allow the Museveni-led state to formally recognize the collective interests of South Asian minorities in Uganda. Key community leaders first formed the “Asian Federation,” which would act as a representative of Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, and Bangladeshi nationals in Uganda. The Federation, however, soon fell apart due to the lack of coordinated

leadership.¹⁹⁴ Indian businessmen who broke off from this larger group formed the Indian Association of Uganda (IAU), which now acts as the umbrella group for a number of community organizations in Kampala.¹⁹⁵ The IAU undertook several initiatives: establishing harmonious relations and networking with the Ugandan political elite, looking after the welfare of Indian nationals in the country, and, most importantly, dealing with the “unfinished business” of the expulsion that continued to affect Ugandan Indian individuals and communities.¹⁹⁶ Women leaders also revived the Indian Women’s Association (IWA) and the International Women’s Organization (IWO) in the early 1990s.¹⁹⁷

The IAU, IWO, and a number of other smaller communal organizations seek to establish a working relationship among Uganda’s emerging South Asian population, the state, and a larger Ugandan African national collectivity. In large part, the IAU constitutes the “public face” of Uganda’s Indian minority by representing the highest proportion of the South Asian demography, who are Indian national citizens. Male community elites represent the interests of a diverse constituency to the NRM government. They have also created an official relationship with the Indian High Commission in Uganda. Finally, business leaders, who double as community representatives, oversee a larger network of decentralized Indian cultural, religious, and sectarian associations that have proliferated in Uganda since the early 1990s (see Appendix II). IAU leaders describe the IAU as an “umbrella association” that establishes a relationship between communal associations and the Ugandan state. As the overarching Indian institution in Uganda, the role of the IAU is especially important during times of political and community crisis. Male leaders have considerable authority, often guiding and advising new economic migrants and businessmen in Uganda. Community builders who were not original Ugandan Asians and who had not experienced the expulsion noted that they learned much from Ugandan Asian residents in the city.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Munawwar, Kampala, February 2011; and Nalin, Kampala, 1 March 2011. The divisiveness within the Asian Federation seemed to reflect post-partition politics in South Asia. Pakistani and Indian businessmen formed their own political associations.

¹⁹⁵ See Appendix II for data on South Asian community associations in post-expulsion Uganda.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Nalin, Kampala, 1 March 2011.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Uzma, Kampala, 15 November 2008.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with G.S. Singh, Kampala, 22 February 2011.

In the early 1990s, IAU leaders were largely concerned with repossessing communal property that Idi Amin had allocated to the central government or other beneficiaries in 1973. As I discussed in Chapter 3, Ugandan Asians who remained behind during Amin's regime retained possession of *mandir* and *gurudware* in Kampala through establishing their presence in these institutions and practices of community visibility. However, Amin's state allocated most Ugandan Indian property to Ugandans associated with Amin's inner circle. Thus, the central Ismailia *jamatkhana* in Kampala, other religious sites of worship, Ugandan Indian schools, and other shared communal spaces such as social clubs, were legally handed back to the Ugandan Asian community under President Museveni's support of the 1983 Expropriated Properties Act.¹⁹⁹ As several of my field contacts intimated, although official repossession had been acquired, community leaders continue to encounter obstacles to the repossession of former Ugandan Indian property. In the recent past, members of the Ugandan army inhabited and resided within former Ugandan Indian spaces, and community builders had to engage in practices of "goodwill," or offering monetary gifts to individuals, in order to remove army men and attain physical repossession of properties.²⁰⁰ Thus, IAU community leaders were largely occupied with the repossession of communal property, an exercise that required significant economic operations and the financial contributions of businessmen and community leaders on the ground. Struggles over communal property acquisition continue today.²⁰¹

Property repossession is important because it allows Ugandan Asians and emerging South Asian communities to claim a material stake in Uganda. Repossessing one's family property or communal property allows one to claim a Ugandan heritage, and vice versa. It is also associated with social and political legitimacy for South Asians that is located outside the economic realm of economic investment practices. For example, Ugandan Asian families routinely pointed out Indian-style architecture in the urban landscape to me, explaining that their friends or forefathers were involved in the construction of schools, temples, or other property. Many Ugandan Asians, for example,

¹⁹⁹ Expropriated Properties Act, CAP. 87

²⁰⁰ Interview with Billu, Kampala, 21 February 2011.

Interview with Morde Mwerinde, Kampala, 10 January 2010.

²⁰¹ Interviews with Ruth Oligio, Kampala, 15 May 2010 and 25 February 2011.

discussed the work of the East African *fundis* (generally, Ramgharia Sikh carpenters and builders who were associated with the Uganda Railway) in the construction of communal sites in Kampala. These evocative statements were the central mode by which Ugandan Asian returnees and community elites signaled the historical contribution they had made to larger Ugandan society in the midst of overarching historical narratives of Asian exploitation of Africans. Finally, communal spaces such as religious sites, schools, and social spaces provided newly arrived economic migrants with a base from which to build from, resuscitating new communal organizations. They were key legitimizing spaces from which new South Asian collectivities could re-establish themselves in the country.



Figure 26: Repossessed Ugandan Indian property. Rented by a small community of Hare Krishnas in Kampala. Photo by author, 2 April 2010.

The community building process, however, was not without controversy. Communal interests overlapped with the motivations of individual businessmen who became involved in what is often cynically referred to as the “property business” among Ugandan Asians in Kampala. Some businessmen took advantage of the repossession

exercise to cultivate their expertise in the buying, selling, and renting of Indian properties, particularly those that had been owned by expelled Ugandan Asians in the diaspora. Thus, some financially successful community leaders are also well known “property agents” who may have transferred titles and ownerships of properties to themselves. Beneficiaries of property repossession have become well-known Kampala real estate tycoons. Returnees, long-term residents, and business leaders are embedded in debates and controversies surrounding the repossession of Indian property, which has created considerable strife and mistrust among returnees and Ugandan Asians who remained in the country during the Amin regime.²⁰²

Both “property business” and communal property repossession evince the significance of moral politics surrounding wealth accumulation and distribution among South Asian individuals and communities in Uganda. The community re-building process relies on extensive financial operations—such as philanthropic donations from businessmen and community leaders. Individuals negotiate, debate, and discuss the circulation of capital that may benefit community initiatives and the larger “Ugandan society,” often critiquing the accumulation of wealth among individuals and family firms. This is because philanthropy, in addition to investment-oriented national development, is an important practice that helps to offset claims about the accumulation of capital among foreigner communities and among elites within communities. Increasingly, wealthy family firms such as the Madhvani Group are engaged in philanthropic and social welfare initiatives that benefit both Indian and African communities in Uganda.²⁰³

While community builders invest in the re-construction of communal groups (religious, ethnic, and caste) groups, they are also concerned about appearing “inward-looking” or becoming politically vulnerable because of the decentralized nature of South Asian communal organizations. Given the lessons of expulsion, they seek to create a strong alliance and open communication between the IAU and the Ugandan political leadership. Community builders involved in IAU work explained that they were

²⁰² See Chapter 3, “Mercantile Cultures, Family Firms, and the Return from Exile” for further discussion.

²⁰³ “Indian NGO Gives Kamwenge sh100m.” *New Vision*, 25 August 2003.

“Indians Support Charitable Causes.” *New Vision*, 15 August 2003.

“Indian Association Supports Ugandans.” *Saturday Vision*, 15 August 2009.

“Indian Association Helping to Aid Needy Communities in Uganda.” *Sunday Monitor*, 15 August 2009.

interested in unifying all communal organizations under the IAU—working together to build a strong and prosperous "Indian community" that will contribute to the nation and to the broader NRM vision of building a prosperous and productive Ugandan society. Additional organizations, such as the Indo-Ugandan Friendship Society, and activities like corporate inter-racial training for Indian businessmen by Ugandan Asians, provide further evidence for community builders' attempts to reform African-Asian relationships since the expulsion.²⁰⁴ The IAU, then, seeks to promote and elevate South Asian groups as economic and cultural forces that contribute to a holistic, diverse, cosmopolitan, and productive nation.

Not all Ugandan Asians align themselves with community builders. While the IAU attempts to represent a unified image of the Indian community to the state and project positive images of South Asians to the "Ugandan African community," it is also a racially exclusive organization that reaffirms racialism and distinction from Africans. Some Ugandan Asians returnees, learning from the lessons of the expulsion, did not invest or participate in racially exclusive community organizations or community events, preferring to socialize in their own groups and participate in philanthropic practices on their own terms.

“Rockets”: Geographies of Possibility and the East African Dream

Community leaders estimate that between 20-25,000 “new” South Asian migrants (traders, laborers, expatriate employees and their “dependent” Indian wives and children) live and work in and around Kampala and in small towns across the country. Leaders have petitioned the government to conduct a census of “People of Indian Origin” (P.I.O.) for several years without success.²⁰⁵ Significantly, migrant Indian and Pakistani nationals outnumber Ugandan Asian returnees, who number around two thousand individuals.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Interview with G.S. Singh, Kampala, 22 February 2011.

²⁰⁵ Estimates suggest that the South Asian population is nearing 30,000 people and that they are largely new economic migrants. There may be between 6,000-10,000 Chinese migrants in Uganda. Neither the Ministry of Internal Affairs nor the Uganda Bureau of Statistics could offer any clear figures on the South Asian population in Uganda. Similarly, when I visited representatives at the Indian Embassy, I received estimates but no clear figures on the numbers of new economic migrants. Due to the nexus of corruption among immigration officers in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Indian employers, and new migrants from India, it

Thus, the demographic composition of today's South Asians include a small and wealthy class of "returnees" and a predominantly lower-class population of South Asian economic migrants. Class divisions and labor occupation hierarchies are strongly pronounced among new South Asian communities. Ugandan Asians often refer to them as the "first generation" in order to signify the reconstruction of Asian social, political, and economic life after the events of the Ugandan Indian expulsion in 1972. Formal and informal traders, petty entrepreneurs, and the unemployed are regarded as "newcomers" or "fortune-seekers." In an even more colloquial (and perhaps pejorative) manner, "newcomers" are described as "rockets," "parachuters" or "astronauts" because they are migrants from the South Asian subcontinent who "land" in East Africa by chance or choice, often "flying off" to other (final) destinations. This evocative terminology of space-age travel signifies the intense mobility and flexibility of migrants. Indeed, the figure of the "rocket" is central to East African Asian folk models of South Asian presence in East Africa.²⁰⁷

"Rockets" occupy the lowest rungs of the contemporary South Asian labor hierarchy, which also points to a larger devaluing of trade and trading cultures in Uganda. Indian and Pakistani men who are hired for specific positions in Ugandan Asian firms and other businesses are at the next level of the class hierarchy. Many eventually leave firms and begin their own businesses. New migrants admire the financial successes of Ugandan Asians and other long-term resident private business owners, industrialists, and "city tycoons," who are at the top of the class hierarchy among South Asians.

was impossible to obtain any clear figures. Government bureaucrats and academics both expressed frustration about the state's inability to produce population figures, citing this as a problem among other refugee groups in Uganda. In response to increasing calls from urban Ugandans to regulate refugee communities and foreign workers, the government is working on an e-registration initiative. At the time of my research, the head of the IAU, Hon. Rajni Tailor, was attempting to commission a census funded by Indian business leaders. Personal Communication with Rajni Tailor, Kampala, 15 November 2008.

²⁰⁶ 2,000 original Ugandan Asians (returnees and people who stayed in the country). Personal Communication with Dr. Vali Jamal, Kampala, October 2008.

²⁰⁷ I first heard the term "rocket" when visiting family friends in Nairobi, Kenya. On an outing to Diamond Plaza, an outdoor shopping mall with several Indian-owned shops and restaurants, an aunty explained to me, "*Inu sab 'N.A.S.A.' kehendey kyo-ki ithey rockets kam kardey nay.*" ("Everyone calls this N.A.S.A. because this is where the rockets come to work," in Punjabi) Personal communication with Sukhi Dhani, Nairobi, 15 October 2009. N.A.S.A. is related to ideas of flexible migrants as astronauts, parachuters, and rockets. East African cities are often referred to as a "launching pad," or a place that an economic migrant may utilize to temporarily "land" somewhere else.

Economic migrants, or “rockets” may engage in multiple forms of labor and business entrepreneurship practices, even all at once. A migrant will do this while negotiating visa applications and visa interviews for other destinations of migration and settlement. A migrant may remain in Uganda if he is able to conduct business successfully, or he may seek employment in the hopes of starting his own business and becoming a “tycoon” on his own. If he is successful, or without any other options, a migrant may be able to gradually integrate within existing Indian and Pakistani communities and networks. By virtue of their flexible dispositions toward mobility and opportunity, the “rocket” is in a perpetual state of travel. They chase dreams of financial success, prosperity, and “the good life,” most preferably in Europe or North America.

Ideologies surrounding transient and noncommittal Indian men in East African colonial and national contexts are not unprecedented, of course. As discussed in Chapter 2, suspicions surrounding Indian presence in East Africa as a transient and impermanent presence permeated the core of British colonial policies towards Asians in East Africa. At the same time, colonial policies sought to restrict the permanent settlement of Indians, essentially leaving migrants vulnerable to contradictory migration policies enforced by the colonial state. Furthermore, in the 1960s and 1970s, non-citizen Indians who sought class mobility through individual business enterprise in Uganda became the primary targets of Idi Amin’s expulsion decree. Ugandan Asians who had formal citizenship, or were anxiously awaiting the outcomes of pending citizenship applications, contrasted themselves to these more transient and opportunistic Indian migrants who were not interested in Ugandan formal citizenship. Ugandan Asians emphasized their long-term settlement in East Africa, social contributions to indigenous Ugandans and the development of the country. In today’s Uganda, by contrast, the state seems to support policies that allow for the impermanent residence of transient migrants and flexible securitization practices. Essentially, while the state regulates new migrant communities, South Asian migrants are organized and governed according to communal structures that are directed by community builders.

Significantly, the “rocket” is a gendered figure. Typically, Indian and Pakistani men engage in trans-Indian Oceanic journeys, stopping in other destinations such as Dubai, until they gradually relocate to East African cities such as Mombasa, Dar Es

Salaam, Nairobi, and Kampala. A migrant usually begins working in trade because it is a business that requires a relatively small investment for Indian men with access to credit and kinship networks to borrow from; it is also a business that is easy to get into and leave. (Trading practices, of course, have also been part of the life trajectories of almost all successful businessmen and “tycoons,” both Indian and African, in East Africa.) Informal and illegal migrants who enter wholesale trade or work in retail off the books are able to accumulate savings and repatriate capital to India quickly.

South Asian wholesale traders, retailers, shopkeepers, and other entrepreneurs in businesses such as currency exchange and banking are visible on Kampala streets and in other small towns in the country. Often times kinsmen such as brothers, brother-cousins, and men from the same home village in India or Pakistan may live together and work together out of the same rented retail shop.²⁰⁸ Traders may be legal or illegal immigrants, paid a salary by their family or expected to work for food, rent, and living expenses, which are provided by the business owner. For the most part, trading licenses, work permits, and visas are taken care of by employers and kin. Interestingly, traders often live, work, and operate from the traditional pre-expulsion Ugandan Indian parts of town, and even from former Ugandan Indian *dukans*. I was surprised, when walking in small district towns such as Mbarara and Mbale, to find new “first generation” migrants selling goods in the expelled-Indian’s shop.²⁰⁹ During my walks in Kampala, I could almost imagine the activities of commercial Indian wholesalers, retailers, shopkeepers, clerks, and other entrepreneurs who once dominated urban social life in colonial and post-independence Uganda. The continuity of racialized urban space in Kampala might provide further explanations for why South Asians are often perceived as trans-historical and unchanging figures among Ugandan Africans (largely, Baganda in Kampala).

Eventually, most informal traders become “formalized”: they attain (trading) permits, visas, and business licenses.²¹⁰ Wholesalers travel and bring goods from destinations such as India, China, and Dubai. New Indian and Pakistani migrants who are

²⁰⁸ As discussed in Chapter 4, traders have resuscitated ethnic and religious-based kin networks that stretch to the Indian subcontinent. These are largely Gujarati Khoja Ismaili and Lohana trading networks.

²⁰⁹ New South Asian traders now rent from Ugandan African proprietors that inherited Indian property during the Africanization era. They may also rent from formerly expelled Ugandan Asians who repossessed their property in the early 1990s.

²¹⁰ In Uganda, these are known as “Class G” permits, visas, and licenses to signify the trading class.

wholesalers and shopkeepers may bring kin members to Kampala. Just like the earlier colonial and post-independence period of Ugandan Indian commercial business, a wholesale business may begin in Kampala, and then gradually extend into retail stalls and rented shops in a network-like web across the country into the district towns of Jinja, Iganga, Mbale, and Mbarara. Family members become proprietors of shops in order to sell their goods to Ugandan traders, who, in turn sell to Ugandans in the rural hinterlands. South Asian retailers who do exceptionally may be able to establish a large store for general merchandise with exotic imported commodities for the home (*kyakala*, loosely translated into “the good life” in Luganda), gradually expanding into a franchise chain.

New migrants, often fearful of their surrounding environments, prefer to hire kinsmen in positions of financial accounting and labor management. For some traders and upwardly mobile businessmen, employing kin members as employees in business enterprises enhances their sense of economic and social security in the context of racialized insecurity.²¹¹ Rigid racialized labor hierarchies may be enforced in the retail shop setting, and Ugandans are usually employed in less desirable labor positions.²¹² In order to cut costs, traders may store their wares from a container shipment in the same flat that they reside in. Groups of foreigners may live together in flats in order further cut costs and enhance their sense of security.

Precarious Travel: Vulnerable Migrants and Community Tensions

I often attended *mandir* and *gurudwara* on the weekends with several of the families that interviewed and had come to know over the years. Large numbers of young unmarried Indian men from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds attended religious prayers and came for meals at weekly functions. One Sunday, my friend Balwant and I left the *gurudwara* and headed off to the local mall to hang out. I asked

²¹¹ On the other hand, and as I discuss further, some Ugandan Asians and especially Asian youth prefer to work with Ugandans and other African business partners in order to enhance the security of their businesses. These issues will require further research: I plan to conduct a set of interviews with business owners in order to find out if there are generational differences that map onto the use of African business partners.

²¹² Indeed, economic migrants are generally unwilling to trust Ugandan Africans with money and accounting in their businesses. This is in marked contrast to Ugandan Asians and East African Asian youth, who find it difficult to trust Indian economic migrants and “investors.”

him about the men that seemed to attend temples in increasing numbers every week. He explained to me that they were rockets. “You know, people who have “v” and “w” problems,” he explained. I laughed. “Not language problems. Visa, work permit,” he stated. Balwant explained that “rockets” were becoming a strain on long-established community builders and elders. They had begun to complain to the Indian High Commission in Uganda about the increasing frequency by which South Asian men were being “dumped” in Uganda. “Fake” travel agents and employment recruiters trafficked Indian men illegally out of India, leaving them stranded in Uganda with an entry tourist visa.

This happens because travel agents in India often dupe young men to pay large sums of money for their flights and visa fees, promising them a job in a Western destination. They may forge visas on real or fake passports for adventurous young men who are willing to do anything to leave their home village contexts. In reality, Indian “agents” and employment recruiters bring migrants to non-European destinations with easy access to entry visas. East Africa and other countries on the Indian Ocean rim and in the Middle East are preferred destinations. An agent may con the young male into a “stop over” in an African country, promising another flight to a European destination in the future. It is unclear to what extent young men are aware of their illegal movement across borders. Long-term residents of Kampala estimated that at least half of young Indian migrants in town were victims of “trafficking;” or perhaps even co-conspirators in illegal schemes to cross borders and attain the dream of living and working in a European country.

This “Indian Ocean con” is not unprecedented. Like indentured labor recruiters in the colonial period, “agents” have long conscripted Indian men to work in foreign destinations that were known or unknown to them. Although urban centers on the Swahili coast have historically been the most important sites of Indian immigration to the African continent, the recent post-election violence in Kenya and tightening immigration policies for South Asians in Europe and North America have resulted in the heightening mobility of South Asian men to the interior into Uganda. For instance, flights from Entebbe to the Gulf States, Gujarat, Mumbai, and Guangzhou move daily on a number of routes. Ugandan Africans themselves are increasingly engaged in trade and entrepreneurship in

China and India, establishing overseas African migrant communities in Asia (Osno 2009).

Trafficked South Asian men are poor, having spent much of their savings on their journey out of India and Pakistan. In Kampala, they have overstayed their tourist entry visas, becoming illegal migrants. Some might have passports with forged visas, others might have forged travel documents. The Indian High Commission, which represents the interests of its Indian nationals, cooperates with the immigration police to deport individuals with forged passports and visas. In some cases, the commission may provide new passports to trafficked men who are able to demonstrate that they have found work in Uganda, will contribute to the country, and will be able to pay for work permits and long-term visas. When confronted by Ugandan immigration officers, some young men even acknowledged that they “dumped” their passports and accused Ugandan Asian and Indian business owners of holding their visas in order to escape fines or deportation (in some cases, Indian business owners do hold the passports of migrant employees). Most often, men could not or did not want to leave and travel back to India or Pakistan with illegal or forged visas; nor did they have money to pay fees for new visas or passports from the Indian High Commission. Thus, some men simply stayed on in Uganda in a state of legal and social liminality. They continued to see themselves in the process of ongoing travel, staying present to their circumstances, but constantly fashioning new schemes for work, business, travel, and migration.

What happens to a trafficked migrant, without legal papers, who arrives in Uganda? If he is not deported, he stays on in Uganda. Without money, job, or a real wage, migrants take up any form of work. Community elites and religious leaders work as informal social workers to help sort out their problems. Large numbers of men may pool resources together and rent a small flat. The best-case scenario is to network with established Ugandan Asians and long-term resident Indian businessmen in the city. As Balwant explained to me, to be hired by an established Indian businessman with a company in Kampala is the best option for them. An socially conscious Indian boss who practices ethical business will take care of his employees. He will apply for and pay for a long-term visa and work permit for his employee, and may even pay for housing and transport. Regular employment means regular salaries. As one young Punjabi migrant

who worked in trade explained to me, “the best thing is to get employment, then you have security. Then you can become successful and maybe start your own business.”²¹³ Self-sufficient men with financial means and official recognition by the state can then begin sending capital back home and providing for families in India or Pakistan.

Some men evaded my questions about how and why they had come to Uganda. Many of them quickly pointed out to me that they had intended to go *bhaar* (a “Western” destination such as UK, Australia, Canada, etc). Perhaps due to their vulnerability to illegal immigration schemes, or even their complicity in such schemes, most men did not divulge how much money they had spent on their “golden ticket” to the West. They were embarrassed by their predicament, and ashamed that they had ended up stranded in Uganda instead of “making it” in the West. Indeed, it was dishonorable to go back to India or Pakistan after having lost money and with no money. Thus, most trafficked men envisioned themselves in the process of on-going travel, dreaming of migrating to Europe and North America for long-term settlement. In the meantime, they integrated themselves into South Asian social and economic life in Uganda. Some had already attempted and failed to enter Western countries, and used Uganda as a base from which to continue applying for visas or securing regular work. They often legitimized their ongoing residence in Uganda by emphasizing that their present circumstances were acceptable to them. Some men expressed that Uganda was a better option for them for the time being because one could become “someone.” Many expressed that they were able to live a better “standard of life” in Uganda than in India or in Europe because of the unstated racial hierarchies in the country and the privileges that the government afforded Indian businessmen. Some men, who more or less espoused anti-Black racist attitudes, even claimed that they “would never want to have to work as hard as Indians in the West do.” In the West, Indian men would be discriminated against, and would have to work for White Americans or Europeans.

Anxiety characterizes the disposition of a “rocket.” Rockets, like other African migrants and refugees in Uganda, pass through temporalities of legality and illegality. The men I spoke with emphasized that the main difference between them and other illegal African migrants was that they were racialized as “Asians” and foreigners,

²¹³ Fieldnotes on meeting with Balwant, Kampala, 15 March 2010.

becoming visible sources of capital for Ugandan immigration officers and other agents who embodied the state and its regulatory policies. Indeed, the state's efforts to control and regulate the influx of poor economic migrants consumed much of the discussions of new migrant communities. Most were concerned with how to handle immigration officers, immigration raids, and the harassment of Indian men and families. They were also preoccupied with the bureaucratic formalities of living in Uganda: obtaining work permits, visas, residency certificates, and even sorting out how to bring Indian wives from their home villages. Among a small sample of young men that I came to know over long-term field research, most had been living in the country illegally for ten years or longer. Many overstayed visas and did not pay the escalating fees for work permits. If they were caught, they paid bribes to state officials, which was preferable because it was cheaper than actually paying fees for permits and residency certificates. Thus, most men seemed to recognize that the bureaucracies and documentation that regulated their lives were advantageous to both migrants and Ugandan officials. They often shrugged their shoulders dispassionately and pronounced, "*sub kuj hota Uganda mein*" (everything happens in Uganda in Hindi), accepting the state of things for South Asian migrants.

Migrants are initially unaware of the historical context of the 1972 expulsion of Ugandan Indians and the Ugandan political scene. During times of political insecurity and community crisis, however, when the physical bodies of foreigners are threatened, economic migrants come to learn about the country's political context and the history of African-Asian racial and class tensions in Uganda. Many begin to educate themselves about Indian exclusion during the 1970s, watching DVD documentaries about Idi Amin that circulate in Kampala markets, or discussing popular stories and rumors about historical events in their social networks. In order to shore up their legitimacy, migrants who had no legal papers often asserted that the President had invited them to Uganda, emphasizing ethnic and cultural claims about the need for Indians' work values and business acumen for national development. These assertions allowed migrants to reconcile the drawbacks of a relatively insecure life with the larger imperatives of the state and its project of national economic development.

Ugandan Asians, I found, were often troubled by the dynamics of contemporary South Asian society. "Rockets" provoked anxiety among those who sought to forge a

new and cohesive “South Asian community,” as well as a positive relationship between South Asians and Africans in the post-expulsion milieu. A claim that Ugandan elders, both African and Asian, made was that in contrast to the pre-expulsion community of Ugandan Indians, new migrants were a “lower caliber” group that had “no class” or “values” from the old society.²¹⁴ Joshua Muvumba, a Munyankole resident and historian of Ankole, observed that the colonial and post-independence Ugandan Indian community in Mbarara town was a healthy and functioning society and economy.²¹⁵ Ugandan Indians’ social world was replete with multiple economic classes of Indians who were employed by the colonial government and service industry but were also individual entrepreneurs (industrialists and commercial traders). Indeed, the new generation of South Asians is largely composed of petty traders, migrant laborers, and employees who work in Ugandan Asian family firms and other Indian businesses. No South Asians work in Uganda’s civil service, and only four Ugandan Asian men have attained political positions in either the government or the Buganda *lukiko* (the Kingdom of Buganda’s government). Ugandan Asian women’s roles in official politics are even more limited.²¹⁶ Moreover, Ugandan Asians distinguished themselves from lower-class traders and migrants by categorizing them as “rockets.” In the process, Ugandan Asians claim an authentic, Ugandan national identity and observe that new migrants are un-invested in the nation. Ambiguities surrounding who an authentic “Indian” in Uganda is and what his motivations may be are critical to the internal politics of mistrust within racialized South Asian communities.²¹⁷

Moreover, some Ugandan Asians criticized prominent Ugandan Asian and Indian tycoons who utilized economic migrants to buttress security in their firms and keep labor accountable to Indian employers. Thus, new economic migrants are exploited and socialized into a system that further exploits Ugandans in a racialized labor hierarchy. Ugandan Asians are especially ill at ease with anti-Black racism among “new” South

²¹⁴ Personal Communication with Sahib, Kampala, 25 February 2011.

²¹⁵ Interview with Joshua Muvumba, Mbarara, 10 February 2010.

²¹⁶ Currently, there are two South Asian members of parliament who represent NRM (Kampala) and Independent (Tororo district) political affiliations. Rajni Tailor is a member of the Baganda *lukiko* parliament. Pradip Karia was a former member of the Kampala City Council. Nimisha Madhvani is the appointed Ugandan ambassador to India in New Delhi.

²¹⁷ This is particularly salient among Ugandans, who are not benefitting from the neoliberal economy in the way that even impoverished and working Indian migrants are.

Asian migrants, and the ways in which migrants quickly re-institute colonial racial hierarchies in their businesses. This creates further problems for Ugandan Asians (returnees and residents) who attempt to re-establish and reconstruct harmonious relationship to Ugandans in their businesses and in everyday social interactions. As Nusrat expressed to me, “they [new migrants] don’t want to learn from people who have lived through an expulsion.”²¹⁸

Others expressed more optimistic opinions about new South Asian migration and re-integration into Uganda—assessing the possibility of a healthy African-Asian economy and society in the country. Sachin, a fourth generation Ugandan Asian and community leader explained to me during our interview, “look, these are not the most productive members of Indian society that come here. Many of them could not hack it out in India. Many of their ethics are different, for them, it’s about making a quick buck. There isn’t that sense of being responsible to a community. But, this is just Uganda’s growing pains. The people we call ‘N.A.S.A.’ or ‘S.O.B.’ (“straight off the boat”) are doing just what our forefathers did three, four generations ago. Things are coming up and only going to get better...”²¹⁹

Community builders like Sachin seek to re-construct South Asian communities by integrating “rockets” and other business entrepreneurs who decide to live in Uganda long-term. Well-heeled members of the IAU, or committee members of Kampala’s religious communities, increasingly act as improvisational social workers by helping trafficked men sort out their predicaments: they usually give them a room to sleep or direct them to a place where they can stay as a paying guest. At times they help them to find an odd job to earn money to get back to India. Gradually, many trafficked become absorbed in more formal and paid work, working in Ugandan Asian firms and industries. If they were extremely fortunate, one could find an employer who would pay for the young man’s work permit and other living expenses, in addition to paid salary. Thus, community builders negotiate the challenges of new economic migrants and the historical legacy of the expulsion of Ugandan Indians—all the while struggling to enhance their sense of racialized security as South Asians re-settle in post-expulsion Uganda.

²¹⁸ Interview with Nusrat, Kampala, 1 March 2011.

²¹⁹ Interview with Sachin, Kampala, 1 March 2011.

What are Ugandan African apprehensions of new South Asian economic migrants? As discussed in Chapter 4, urban Ugandans both protest the presence of foreign migrants and the government for constructing traders and laborers as “investors” and not protecting the rights of Ugandan traders. Ugandans express grievances directed towards “rockets,” who are able to enjoy forms of financial and social mobility quickly, tapping into networks of credit, employment, and transnational mobility that Ugandan traders are not be able to access. Trade associations increasingly protest practices of *mwenda okusala*, or the competitive under-cutting of commodity prices by Indian and Chinese traders. Recently, they have even filed court cases against the Kampala City Council.²²⁰ Newspapers regularly feature editorials that debate the role of Indians and Pakistanis (and other foreigners) in the Ugandan economy, usually expressing grievances that new economic migrants are able to access skilled jobs easier than Ugandans, even when Ugandans are more educated and have more adequate training

In response to protests from Ugandans, the government, acting through the Ministry of Internal Affairs in charge of immigration has gradually increased costs for work permits for “Class G” businessmen, or traders.²²¹ However, many South Asian employers in Uganda observe that the increase in work permit fees has simply resulted in more informal traders, evasion of official work permits, and the enhancement of patronage relationships between immigration officers and Indian traders in Kampala. Thus, “low-level” South Asian businessmen, a population that the state refers to as investors, have come to represent a source of capital and revenue for state bureaucrats. In the process, economic migrants are promised the repatriation of capital to India or Pakistan, a flat fifty-dollar visa entry fee upon arriving at the airport, and security and protection from Museveni’s pro-Asian government.

²²⁰ “Notice to Intended Defendants in Respect of Illegal Foreign Traders.” Pearl Impex (U) LTD, Safinet (U) LTD, Mrambi Central Stores and Others, Afristock Company Ltd vs. Kampala City Council.

²²¹ In 2003, work permits (Class G) for foreign businessmen (Asian traders) cost 700 US dollars or 1.4 million Ugandan shillings per year. In 2008, in response to increasing competition from Asian traders and the need to protect Ugandan African traders in Kampala, the Government, vis à vis the Ministry of Internal Affairs, had increased work permits for Asian traders to 1000 US dollars per year and 3000 US dollars for three years (3-6 million Uganda shillings). In 2009, they were increased to 1500 US dollars per year, or 4500 for three years. Interview with Eunice Kisembo, Kampala, 15 May 2010.

Forging Community Security

Thus far, I have traced the dynamics of an intensely complex and racialized South Asian “community” as it is viewed by the state and Ugandans; I have also mapped the internal politics of South Asian communities that are divided between Ugandan Asian returnees and long-term residents and a new generation of economic migrants. Community-building processes are ongoing, and for the most part, the institutionalization of various religious, caste, and sectarian groups into formal associations suggest parallels with the colonial set-up of decentralized communal and racialized governance. However, there are important differences. Community builders who have re-established the IAU and IWA in Kampala seek to reform African-Asian relations on a broader scale by participating in the broader national community: be it through national holidays and cultural festivals and philanthropy and charitable events for Ugandans. Yet not everyone agrees with the practices of community elites who guide the process of South Asian re-integration. Moments of political and social crisis in the country have exposed fractures and tensions among individuals in the IAU and other business leaders. These moments have also revealed the significance of security-seeking practices to community builders and their constituents.

In April 2007, the Mehta Group, Ugandan Asian owners of one of the largest sugar plantations and manufacturers in the country, announced plans to expand its operations and convert a portion of land located in Mabira Forest, a national park located between Kampala and Jinja, into agricultural land for sugar cane cultivation. The President supported Mehta Group’s plans for expansion, providing the land concession to the firm. What followed was a planned demonstration in Kampala against the land giveaway. NRM opposition members from the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), environmental activists, and NGOs organized the protest. The government co-signed on the planned demonstration, planned a marching route for protestors, and provided bodily security for protesters. As speeches and chanting continued, the demonstration became violent and took on a xenophobic tone, particularly as a passing Indian businessmen on a motorbike almost collided into individuals marching in the protest. Passing Indian businessmen were physically attacked and at least one Indian trader was killed. The army

opened fire on the crowd and killed three Ugandan protesters. As the media took camera footage and photographs of the demonstration and ensuing violence, it was apparent that protesters were carrying xenophobic and anti-foreigner signs that stated, “All Asians Should Go,” “All Indians Back to Bombay!” and “Mehta Do You Want Another Amin?”²²²

Community leaders responded immediately. They worked to secure South Asian spaces in Kampala, including temples, mosques, and places of business. Indian men activated their connections with the police, and women in the marketplace were escorted to the Central Police Station where they waited until family members could pick them up and it was safe for them to travel to their homes. In our interview, Nalin, a community leader and business entrepreneur, described that a phone tree constructed by IAU board members had alerted South Asians in and around Kampala that the city had been shut down and Indians and Pakistanis were vulnerable to physical attacks.²²³ The phone tree urged South Asians to remain home or at their places of work until they could be escorted to safety (similarly, during the election period in 2011, fliers posted at temples in Kampala alerted congregations to remain at home and take extra precautions while moving about the city). As the crowds dissipated and calm returned to the city, community builders, the President, representatives from the Mehta Group, and the state began intense talks to respond to the violence. IAU leaders called Mr. Mehta directly, expressing their disapproval of his bid to expand sugar operations at the expense of the land and harmonious relations between South Asians and Ugandans in the country. They quickly disassociated themselves with the actions and remarks of the Mehta group.²²⁴ The President met with South Asian leaders, assuring them of their bodily safety and security in the nation. He also denounced xenophobic violence against South Asians in public speeches and in his own editorials in the national newspapers. State representatives of the Uganda Investment Authority (Chapter 4) were extremely concerned with the ways that inter-racial violence had impacted the image of Uganda as an investment destination safe that is safe and secure for foreign businessmen in the post-expulsion context.²²⁵

²²² Three Dead, Several Injured as Mabira Demo Turns Violent in City.” Daily Monitor, 13 April 2007.

²²³ Interview with Nalin, Kampala, 1 March 2011.

²²⁴ “Indians Attack Mehta, Tell Him to Go to DR Congo, Sudan.” Sunday Monitor, 15 April 2007.

²²⁵ “Racism with Affect Investment, Says UIA Boss.” Sunday Monitor, 15 April 2007.



Figure 27: “All Indians Back to Bombay.” The resurgence of anti-Asianism, or “Aminism”, in Kampala in 2007. Source: Sunday Vision, 29 April 2007.

The event forced South Asian leaders to confront the vulnerable position of Indian and Pakistani minorities in the country. Without formal citizenship and without recourse to legal protections, leaders realized that the history of patronage relations that Indian men had cultivated with government and army officials had not provided adequate security in this situation. The phone tree, along with other modes of communal governance, illustrate the ways in which community builders increasingly take on the role of providing security to their constituents. Tellingly, in their address to the President, community builders asked that they be recognized as an “official tribe” of Uganda on par with their “Ugandan brothers and sisters.”²²⁶ Munawwar, a member of the IAU and the head of an accounting firm in Kampala observed, “We don’t want any political

²²⁶ “Memorandum to be presented to the President of the Republic of Uganda His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni at Meeting with Asian Community on Thursday April 19th at Hotel Africana, Kampala.” Courtesy of Munawwar, 28 February 2011.

favors...but if [the government] recognized us as a tribe...at least we will feel we are welcome, we will feel part of this country, more so than we do at the moment.”²²⁷ Indeed, as my interviews revealed, some community builders sensed the importance of moving away from security-seeking practices based on patronage relations or “political favors” with the state, seeking to ally themselves with the majoritarian politics of Ugandans themselves. Yet at the same time, their framing of the “political” was away from South Asian involvement in formal political positions or the realm of official politics: community builders often urged their constituents to remain impartial and to “not get involved in Ugandan politics.”²²⁸ Thus, South Asian practices of social and political re-integration are most directly related to the enhancement of an investor-citizen identity engaged in national development (i.e. being a tycoon and a philanthropist).²²⁹ In the process, South Asians community builders engage in practices of maximizing their physical security in the regime, often providing guidance to more vulnerable migrants. Asian spaces, such as both homes and businesses, are protected through investments in corporeal security, such as *askari* and the gates that surround apartment complexes and office buildings.

Racial and Cultural Acceptance, Ug-India Style

Ugandan political discourse and state rhetoric about the role of youth in the making of a post-conflict, progressive, and developed nation is a central feature of post-1990s Uganda—particularly given that the majority proportion of the Ugandan African population is composed of children and youth (Cheney 2008). As I discussed in Chapter 4, Ugandan Asian business families are upheld as national role models for an abstract entrepreneurial Ugandan body politic. In a recent speech at the funeral rites of Ugandan

²²⁷ Interview with Munawwar, Kampala, 28 February 2011. I'm not sure about the use of "tribe" in this context. I asked Munawwar about why he used this term in his speech. It seems to me that he was seeking to construct the "Indian community" as a separate ethnic collectivity on par with Ugandan ethnic groups like the Baganda, Banyankole. Yet, he was unwittingly using racist and outmoded terminology, once mobilized by colonial-era anthropologists. In this sense, the use of "tribe" signifies to me the ongoing relations of "mutual non-recognition" between South Asians and Africans in Uganda that I discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

²²⁸ Interview with Munawwar, Kampala, 28 February 2011.

²²⁹ Indeed, this form of social identification is also related to processes of subjectivation: the making of investor-citizen subjectivities among South Asian elites and migrants.

Asian tycoon Manubhai Madhavani in Jinja in 2011, President Museveni extolled the rise of a new Asian and African entrepreneur class after the 1972 exodus. In his speech he stated, “[A]long with the New Generation Asians—Tilda, Britannia, Alams, Mukwanos, the Roofings—these Young Lions have taken our economy to the cutting edge of technology. Today, Uganda is well positioned to be the hub for the booming countries surrounding us.”²³⁰ In his political discourse, the President and other Ugandan elites refer to the post-expulsion expansion of the Ugandan Asian and Indian entrepreneurial class as the “young lions” of the nation. Thus, the visibility of Ugandan Asian and other youth in urban spaces, in the media and in business and entrepreneurial settings elicit state discourses surrounding Uganda’s trajectory for the future and a renewed relationship between Indians and Africans that is based on economic cooperation and partnership. Ugandan Asian youth are constructed as “reformed” or “modern” Indians. They represent the possibilities of an Asian population (that coexists with Ugandans in a national order) and that has transcended the historical and social ills of civilizational discourse, racism, elitism, caste-ism, and social distance from Africans. Thus, the “young lions,” are important personas in Uganda’s post-expulsion and futurist imaginary.

The new era of economic opportunism and racial, ethnic, and cultural cosmopolitanism in the city is expressed via the presence of large numbers of East African Asian youth who have recently migrated and resettled in Uganda after their education in the UK and other Western contexts. The children of formerly displaced Ugandan Asians, or the children of East African Asian families who moved into Uganda from Kenya and Tanzania in recent years, “EA youth” symbolize the next generation of post-expulsion entrepreneurs. Although I never conducted formal interviews with youth (many of them were my close friends), they offered me a glimpse of the making of post-expulsion African-Asian life and the possibilities of South Asian reintegration in contemporary Uganda.

South Asian youth in Kampala are a small yet visible urban population, and class status and diasporic orientation divide them internally. They consist of four major groups: 1) the children of Ugandan Asians who remained in the country, 2) the children of “ex-

²³⁰ Speech forwarded to me by Vali Jamal, 12 April 2012. The “New Generation Asians” refer to returnee Ugandan Asian family firms and ex-Ugandan Asian British firms that have re-invested in Uganda.

Ugandan Asian” returnees and expatriates, 3) East African Asian youth that moved into and settled in Uganda with their families in the post-1986 era, and 4) the children of new “first generation” Indian and Pakistani migrants who are born in Uganda and have attended racially integrated schools in Kampala. During one of my initial trips to Uganda, a Khoja Ismaili friend explained to me that among South Asian youth in Kampala, there is a “*muhindi-mzungu* (Indian and White or European) group, a *muhindi-muhindi* (Indian) group, and a Punjabi and mixed group.” The young man was articulating what he perceived to be the racial, ethnic, and class divisions that informed the composition of South Asian youth groups: a group of elite and transnational Ugandan Asian youth who had attended boarding schools with Westerners, an authentically “*muhindi*” group which was composed of the children of wealthy Gujarati East African Asian and Ugandan Asian businessmen, and a largely working-class group of Punjabi and mixed-race African-Asian youth. Youth socialized together based on their shared cultural, educational, life-style, and class-based experiences.

Interestingly, although South Asian youth consider the term *muhindi* to be derogatory and exclusionary when it is mobilized by Westerners and Ugandans, they often appropriate it (like the use of “rocket”) within their own circles, reclaiming its use and utilizing it in subversive ways that asserts the historical, social, and cultural legitimacy of “Indian-ness” in Uganda.

The children of Ugandan Asian returnees grew up transnationally—they spent their lives in Africa and in Europe, having attended boarding schools and university abroad. Upon the completion of their education, many Ugandan Asian youth opted to return to Uganda and join family businesses. Living in the traditional joint-family system in Kampala, Ugandan Asian youth (especially men) contribute to the growth and expansion of family businesses, but also increasingly pursue their own independent careers and entrepreneurial pursuits. Many men, at extremely young ages, are able to lead entire businesses on their own, managing large numbers of Indian migrant and Ugandan employees. Some men reproduced unequal racial, class, gender, and sexual relations in their occupational roles of heading major family businesses. At times, they expressed that they had chosen to settle in Uganda, because one could “have a good life, and an easy lifestyle” as opposed to the challenges of living in the UK. Implicit here is the idea that

men could avoid the forms of racism and discrimination that South Asians were subject to in the UK and American context, particularly after 9/11 and the War on Terror. This problematic trope of Uganda being a place for an “easy lifestyle with warm weather,” evokes the civilizational narratives of an earlier era—an invisible and laboring Black underclass that will willingly work for South Asians as employees and domestics. Thus, rather than critiquing the structural racism between Indians and Africans that continues to persist in Kampala, some youth reproduced historical tropes of Uganda as “the America of the Hindu,” legitimizing unequal racial hierarchies while pursuing their personal dreams of class mobility, power, success, and wealth.

Beyond the long hours that they spend at places of business, Ugandan Asian youth are engaged in an active social life and are consumers of an increasingly entertainment-centered urban nightlife. Youth are often featured in the media, which covers the lives of Kampala-based “tycoons,” or *binojjo* (“a big money guy” in Luganda slang), celebrities, musicians, and other artists in socialite sections of newspapers and local magazines. On any given night, one can find South Asian youth socializing in restaurants, bars, dance clubs, and casinos. They share these same spaces with a growing population of more transient Western expatriates. Ugandan Asian youth, keenly aware of this, seek to differentiate themselves from other expatriates, highlighting their historical connections to the country. Many of them, in a joking manner, described themselves as “Ug-Indians” who lived in the new “Ug-India.” Thus, while Ugandan Asian youth differentiated themselves from other South Asian economic migrants or “rockets,” they also sought to identify and socialize with other Ugandan Asians and long-term residents almost exclusively, once again re-affirming racial hierarchies while constructing a unique diasporic community for themselves in Kampala.

Attending a party one night in a Kampala suburb, I found myself in conversation with a young male in his early twenties. Coming from a prestigious Lohana business family in the area, he expressed to me his confusion about his identity. “Look,” he said, “to Ugandans I am not Ugandan, and to Indians I am not Indian...so who am I? I am somewhere between Uganda and India and England and Australia. It’s good because I have had so much exposure to other cultures, but at the same time I don’t belong to any. I don’t know...I have had many conversations with my father about it.” He was rather

more articulate than other youth that I knew--many were ambivalent or indifferent about their ostensibly important role in contemporary Ugandan society, often resisting or avoiding a deeper analysis of structural racism, the expulsion, or the future of South Asian and African relations in the country.

However, some young men did express their anxieties about race relations and economic inequality to me. In our conversations at nightclubs and restaurants, men occasionally related instances in which they had experienced or perceived to have experiences aggression or hostility in their interactions with Ugandans in the city. A close friend of mine, Hakim, recounted an argument he had with a Ugandan driver in Kampala who threatened him that “another Amin is coming.” He abruptly shifted our conversation to a discussion about the problems of “rockets” in Kampala, noting that most of them were not interested in working with Ugandans, which was causing anti-Asian animosity in the city. Hakim and his business partner had co-invested in a nightclub with Ugandan African colleagues, highlighting that they trusted their business partnerships and friendships with Ugandans more than immigrant Indians. Most Ugandan Asian and East African Asian men acknowledged that creating multi-racial networks, particularly in business was important—they also felt more comfortable with the Ugandans that they had grown up with than with the new migrant South Asian presence in the city which felt unfamiliar to them and could not be trusted.

Other youth who were born and grew up in Museveni's Uganda are the second major group of South Asian youth who tend to socialize with each other in Kampala. Most attended integrated mixed-race schools in the post-1986 era, and they possessed African-Asian subjectivities in that they regularly socialized with Ugandans, spoke Luganda and Swahili in addition to Indian languages, and often switched back and forth between languages in the context of constant inter-cultural exchanges in their everyday lives. Thus, while elite Ugandan Asians and youth tended to socialize within South Asian-exclusive groups, working-class Indian youth who had grown up in Kampala and attended integrated schools were comfortable with their Indian and African friends.

Many of these youth, especially Indian and mixed-race men, expressed an “Afro-Asian aesthetic” that is both global and apparent on Kampala streets. This aesthetic configuration manifests itself in the form of music, expressive culture, fashion, style, and

linguistic practice. In urban Kampala, the idiom of Blackness, hip-hop and U.S. African-American street culture has gained the most purchase among African and Asian youth. Ugandan and Kenyan musicians, in addition to other East African and African American hip hop and rap musicians, have widely influenced the new generation of Ugandan youth to adopt a global hip hop style in their street wear and everyday aesthetic. Ugandans, from students at Makerere to *boda-boda* operators, prefer to comport themselves in urban street wear in order to fashion themselves as part of a Continent-wide, global and modern idiom.

Modes of dress, attire, and self-representation are equally significant to the Indian youth that grew up in Kampala. Among working-class South Asians, the urban style was a way to express that one was “modern,” integrated in a global system, and part of an urban collectivity that relied on constant interchanges and commonalities between Ugandan and Indian youth. These youth often explored hip-hop fashion trends by shopping in the same markets that Ugandan youth did: seeking jeans, t-shirts, sneakers, and other trendy accoutrements. Punjabi Sikh youth, for instance, often experimented with bandanas and braids to keep their long hair wrapped and away from their face, rather than wearing the traditional East African *dastars* (turbans) that their fathers and forefathers wore. The hip hop style, in addition to other class-based markers of social status, such as taking public transportation rather than driving one’s own car, allowed working-class Indian youth to position themselves as *non-mzungus* (not expatriates). It also allowed them to demarcate themselves as “not Indian” (an Indian from India), but an East African Asian. Through their everyday practices, whether through self-representation, aesthetic style, and linguistic practice, youth distanced themselves from the gaze of outsiders who associated them with the exploitative Asian commercial class that had been expelled and other negative associations surrounding the figure of the *muhindi*. At the same time, they differentiated themselves from transient and elite expatriates such as Ugandan Asians who had been raised and educated in the UK—as well as others who could not participate in or understand the tensions and anxieties that pervade African-Asian life in Kampala.

Conclusions: Rebuilding South Asian Community

In this chapter, I have explored the historical transformation of South Asian citizenship from “formal” to “flexible” citizenship, in which Asians’ historical exclusion from political membership in East Africa has left them as majority UK, Indian and Pakistani citizens and Ugandan non-nationals. Therefore, most long-established East African Asian families engage in flexible securitization practices whereby their kinship networks and business investments are transnational and they have diversified formal citizenships within nuclear and extended families in order to shore up economic and social security in contemporary Uganda. Given Ugandan Asian and new South Asian migrants’ statuses as formal non-citizens, they invest in security-seeking practices that span economic, social and cultural practices—including the establishment of connections with and patronage of African political elites, philanthropic practices, and asserting themselves as economic and cultural forces in order to fashion racial acceptance.

Newly emerging South Asian communities continue to be predominantly Gujarati and Punjabi, yet also consist of a new demographic of South Asians from different regions of India and post-colonial Pakistan and Bangladesh. For the most part, South Asian communal organizations replicate the form and constitution of the colonial era: as ethnic, religious, and caste or sectarian based exclusive community groups. Indian community leaders have reconstructed the Indian Association of Uganda (IAU) as an “umbrella” organization that acts as a mediator between its constituents and the state and as a representative of communal organizations to the larger Ugandan state. While the IAU contributes economic capital through charitable practices and cultural capital to the nation through its religious and cultural festivals, it is also a racially exclusive organization. Through community leaders’ philanthropy, charitable activities and engagement with social issues, the IAU attempts to reconcile its exclusiveness with a broader vision of harmonious African-Asian relations in post-expulsion Uganda.

Although community leaders are rebuilding racially-exclusive communal organizations and a racialized and abstract South Asian collectivity at large, they are simultaneously concerned about their vulnerable position during times of political and social crisis. The anti-Mehta Group demonstration that occurred in 2007 revealed that there are fractures in the unitary image of a racialized South Asian community as a group

of investment-friendly businessmen. Some community builders resisted the state's and other leaders' practices of minoritization by addressing the Ugandan political leadership and asking them to recognize the South Asian minority as a social collectivity on par with African ethnic groups.

Finally, community builders are especially concerned about transient economic migrants, often pejoratively referred to as "rockets." These are legal and social liminal subjects who orient themselves to destinations beyond the Ugandan nation and do not invest in social, cultural, and national practices of "contribution," integration, or community-building. They envision themselves as in a process of ongoing travel. In some cases, "rockets" who secure financial stability and see options for class mobility become long-term residents, integrating themselves within South Asian society. Community leaders affiliated with IAU increasingly act as mediators between economic migrants and the state. The differences between a smaller and wealthy group of Ugandan Asian returnees and a transient and lower-class population of flexible South Asian migrants has contributed to relations of mistrust within South Asian communities at large.

Thus, while some Ugandan Asians, such as the male community leaders of the IAU that I interviewed, seek alliances with new South Asian migrants to Uganda in order to secure and rebuild their communities, other Ugandan Asians remain apart from community-building exercises, remaining within their own circles or with Ugandan African friends. Due to their historical experiences of exclusion, community builders and leaders invest in practices of securitization and the physical protection of South Asians—practices that occur outside of the purview of state governance. During moments of political crisis and unrest, for example, economic migrants, their wives, and children rely on the IAU and other communal organizations to provide them protection.

Finally, the struggles and reflections of East African Asian youth reveal the ways in which they seek to preserve positive images of South Asian cultural identity while constructing progressive African-Asian relations. In sum, the chapter has revealed the complex inner dynamics of South Asian communities, its construction as a racialized and cohesive "community" by the state and by community builders, and fraught processes of community re-building. Ultimately, in the context of post-expulsion and neoliberal

economic Uganda, this chapter explores the ways in which South Asians and Africans exist in tenuous relation to each other within the territory of the nation.

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Chapter 6

Vulnerable Bodies: *Bakazi Bahindi M'Uganda* (Indian Woman in Uganda)

Introduction: the Joshi-Sharma Case and Gender Politics in Uganda

In 2003, I recovered a series of articles at the Centre for Basic Research (CBR) that reported the death of an Indian woman in Kampala. The articles, dated from 1997 to 1999, confirmed that a thirty-five year old Gujarati woman had been killed in a mixed race working-class flat in the Old Kampala neighborhood. Renu Joshi had migrated to Uganda from India in the early 1990s upon her marriage with a Uganda-based Indian trader. She was the mother of two young children, ages three and six, and her husband and his relatives owned and operated a nearby supermarket that dealt in Indian foodstuffs and other merchandise. She spoke little English and spent much of her time at home or at the local Sanatam Dharam *mandir* and Sikh *gurudwara*. On the night of her death, Joshi's husband called community leaders to his home, where they discovered her body. Her husband and brother-in-law attempted to explain to leaders that the death was a result of overmedication from malaria, and they suggested that her body be taken to the nearby Hindu crematorium as soon as possible.²³¹ An elder woman from the Lohana community arrived to wash the body and conduct Hindu rituals and prayers. However, Joshi's husband tried to prevent the woman from removing the nightgown from her body. Eventually, community leaders discovered scars, burns, and bruises under Joshi's nightgown. Cremation plans were interceded. The wives of community elders arrived at the house, and Ugandan neighbors collected outside as rumors spread that Joshi's husband had beaten her to death. By the next day, the initial postmortem, which had stated that the cause of death was an overdose, was considered fallacious. Community leaders summoned an additional doctor to undertake a second post-mortem. Finally, a

²³¹ "Corpse Shocks City." *The Sunday Vision*, 28 December 1997.

team of seven doctors, in the presence of Winnie Byanyima, a leading Ugandan women's rights activist, and representatives from two Ugandan women's organizations, Hope After Rape (HAR) and Action for Development (ACFODE), carried out the final postmortem that determined Joshi's cause of death.²³² It was clear that this was a case of domestic violence.²³³

Indian women, wary that the case might be covered up, and that bribes could be passed between family members and state officials, linked up with the activists and the media in order to make sure that Sharma would be put on trial and brought to justice. The Old Kampala police finally arrested and remanded Sharma and his brother. What would follow was a long and drawn out trial that involved the presence and activist work of both Indian and Ugandan African women. Both groups of women, affiliated with a number of women's organizations, would attend court hearings together over several months to ensure justice for Joshi and her family.²³⁴ Together, they engaged in a silent protest to intimidate Sharma and the judge, preventing corruption and the exoneration of the criminal-trader.²³⁵ In doing so, they took a stand against wife beating across Indian and African communities in Uganda.

As I studied the news reports, I noticed that the intensity of media coverage surrounding the Joshi-Sharma case was extreme. Photos of Joshi's body, taken at the post-mortem as evidence of domestic violence and femicide, were leaked to journalists and printed repeatedly in national papers. Following the discovery of Joshi's body at her home, six months of front page articles in two prominent English language print national newspapers, *The New Vision* and *The Monitor*, discussed details of the case, usually reprinting one especially gruesome photo of Joshi's half-bare and bruised body. These photos are not attached here, lest they be viewed as voyeuristic. The spectacle of Joshi's battered body was conveyed not only through photos taken at her post-mortem, but with headlines such as "Corpse Shocks City: Asian Community Blocks Cremation, Electric

²³² "When Investors Tried to Cover Up a Murder", *Sunday Monitor*, 4 January 1998.

²³³ "Indian Murdered Wife, Says Police." *New Vision*, 30 December 1997.

²³⁴ "Renu Joshi Murder: Women Set for Demo," *New Vision*, 9 January 1998.

"Kooky Inquiries Complete," *New Vision*, 10 January 1998.

"Women Group Lobbies Against Kumar Bail," *New Vision*, 31 July 1998.

²³⁵ Sharma continues to serve his jail sentence in Kampala. In the past, when attempts have been made to acquit him, Ugandan African and Asian women lobbied against his release at the Ugandan courts.

Shocks Suspected;” “Indian Murdered Wife;” and “When Investors Tried to Cover up a Murder.”²³⁶

The frequency of publication of the photos of Joshi’s body, in addition to the headlines, was fascinating to me. Given the context of newly emerging South Asian communities and community-building processes, as well as community leaders’ intense fears surrounding the gaze of the state and an abstract Ugandan African public, the fact that an Indian woman’s body, naked and vulnerable under a bare sheet, had become available for public consumption was unprecedented. Print publics seemed captivated by an Indian woman’s naked, vulnerable, and victimized body—normally clothed and proper, traditional and conservative, and (implicitly) inaccessible to African publics. The case continues to circulate in the social memory and social life of Kampalans. Recently, Ugandan youth have appropriated the case of domestic violence in their creative use of urban slang. In Luganda, it is commonplace to here the phrase “*akoze kukee*” (a reference to Joshi’s husband, Kooky Sharma) to discuss the practice of wife beating in Ugandan African communities.

I was drawn to the events and interpretations surrounding the Joshi-Sharma case because it provoked one of the first major public discussions about the place of Indian women in post-independence and post-expulsion Uganda. Indeed, in terms of my own research methodology of understanding the reconstruction of African-Asian relations in post-expulsion Uganda, newspapers played a curious and significant role in articulating information about South Asians that would otherwise have been unknown to broader Ugandan publics. Likewise, newspapers helped me to assess Ugandan African apprehensions of South Asian “community problems” such as wife-beating and other forms of gender-based violence.

For instance, accompanying the photos were detailed articles that discussed the Joshi-Sharma case and debated the problem of “the Asian woman” in Uganda. Some editorialists suggested that there was a need to protect Asian women: Asian women were one aspect of the population that had been ignored and were suffering. An anonymous editorial entitled “Asian Women in Danger” notes that, “there is a whole section of

²³⁶ “Corpse Shocks City.” *The Sunday Vision*, 28 December 1997.

“Indian Murdered Wife, Says Police.” *The Sunday Vision*, 30 December 1997.

“When ‘Investors’ Tried to Cover up a Murder.” *Sunday Monitor*, 4 January 1998.

people who are not closely scrutinized by the law—expatriates and the Asian community. Somehow the assumption is that these people’s lives are governed by their own ‘peculiar culture’...these people have made crime and atrocity a private affair.”²³⁷ Joshi’s predicament elicited important questions for me: how could one analyze the place of South Asian women in a post-Africanization and post-expulsion social and economic context? If Ugandan Asian and migrant South Asian men had been constructed and recognized as “foreign investors” and investor-citizens by the state, were Indian women investors as well? If not, were they recognized by the state, and what sort of rights could they claim? To what extent did colonial-era communal governance norms affect women’s lives? Or were women staking claims to new types of urban spaces and thus new forms of governance? And finally, why were Ugandan African women involved in issues of gender-based violence among South Asian women?

The case illustrates some of the central issues underlined in previous chapters of my analysis: the complexities of a racialized and ethnicized population that is divided between Ugandan Asian returnees and an aspiring class of flexible South Asian migrant-entrepreneurs. Both groups are preoccupied by their new-found visibility and personal and communal securitization practices in a new investor-based economy of recognition in Kampala. Thus, in contemporary Uganda, “Asian” is symbolically coded and gendered as a male foreign investor. Editorials and articles that chronicled the development of the Joshi case would cast Indian women as invisible outsiders beyond the purview of the governance norms of the state and civil law. Moreover, newspaper editorialists and activists often viewed Indian women as isolated victims of Indian men in domestic environments. The articles perpetuated tropes of Indian men’s immorality, criminality and pathology—a riff on the ongoing colonial stereotype of East African Asian men as iniquitous, dishonest, and violent outsiders.

Finally, the femicide provoked, among Ugandan African women, a series of editorials surrounding gender-based violence and wife beating. Gender politics in Uganda are important because of the efforts of Ugandan women activists, since the 1990s, to reform legal regimes that govern the lives of women into laws that are based on liberal

²³⁷ “Asian Women in Danger.” *The Monitor*, 30 December 1997.

citizenship frameworks of universal human rights and cross-cultural gender equality.²³⁸ Ugandan activists' concerns surrounding cultures of violence against African women and the increasing anti-woman and anti-homosexuality attitudes of the state (since the 2000s) have compelled them to advocate for a universal Domestic Relations Bill that provides protection for all women who are victims of multiple forms of gender-based oppression and violence.²³⁹ Activists who became involved in the Joshi-Sharma case cited the universality of gender-based violence across racial, ethnic, and cultural communities—arguing for broader legal protections for women. Thus, even today, Ugandan women activists increasingly make claims for victimized Indian women, effectively crafting claims for an inclusionary politics for South Asian women and a nonracial and gender-equitable Uganda. The Joshi-Sharma case illustrated a key moment in which women, Ugandan and Indian, began to recognize the individual rights of non-citizen migrant women, cultivating nonracial spaces of gender inclusion.

It is all too easy, of course, to idealize cross-racial women's activism according to a romanticized vision of nonracial African-Asian solidarity that has been mobilized in other historical and political contexts in East Africa and the Indian Ocean (Chapter 2). As Ugandan activists described to me, cross-racial activism is not without its tensions (see more below).²⁴⁰ Yet these fleeting moments of cross-racial women's organizing in the context of overarching narratives of African-Asian enmity and racial and economic inequality reveal some of the unexplored possibilities for multi-racial Uganda's future.

Indeed, the events surrounding the Joshi case underscore the significance of integrating gender as a critical category of analysis in the historical ethnography of African-Asian relations in East Africa. Through historical, ethnographic, and media analysis, the material in this chapter begins to chart a course for the study of South Asian womanhood in East Africa as a gendered, racialized, ethnicized, and sexualized phenomenon. A secondary purpose of this chapter is to emphasize the gaps in the study of gendered phenomena in Ugandan ethnography and historiography in general. Gender

²³⁸ See Tripp (2000) and Tripp and Kwesiga (2001) for studies on the history and politics of Ugandan women's activism.

²³⁹ See Von Struensee (2004) for more information on the proposed Domestic Relations Bill. The Uganda Parliament tabled the Bill in 2008.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Jackie Asimwe, Muyenga, Kampala, 15 May 2010.

Interview with Dr. Sarah Ssali, Makerere University, Kampala, 23 May 2010.

and sexuality studies in Uganda is still a nascent field, and it remains Buganda-centric (Hanson 2002, Musisi 1991; 1992; 2001; 2002).²⁴¹ Existing scholarship explores gender ideologies among the Baganda and elite women's political organizing in the late colonial and post-colonial period. The material in this chapter will begin to formulate a more rigorous scholarship on South Asian women in relation to this existing scholarship. The final section revisits cases of violence against Indian women, drawing our attention back to contemporary challenges that link both South Asian and African women in urban Uganda. Women's responses to the Joshi case and others like it reveal how Indian women grapple with their newfound visibility and mobility, all within a context of post-expulsion racialized insecurity in Uganda. Thus, this chapter explores the gender, sexual and cultural ideologies that have preserved and challenged larger racial, ethnic and communal-based group boundaries over time. It also explores the possibilities of new types of alliances across racial and ethnic boundaries in the post-expulsion era.

The following section provides a brief overview of the colonial state's treatment of Indian and African women in the Uganda Protectorate and the development of racialized and ethnicized gender and sexual ideologies in the colonial era. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the social category of "Indian" in the East African context, is marked as "male." The non-settler dynamics of the Uganda Protectorate resulted in a strong dialogic relationship between the "Indian" and the "African." These categories were assumed to be male, and operated in public or secular social space. Indeed, as Felicity Hand observes, "little has been written about the wives and daughters of dukahwallas" (2011:100). Aside from Richa Nagar's scholarship on South Asian women in Tanzania (see below), there is little research available on Indian women's lives in the East African context.²⁴² The gendered construction of Indian as male is clearly evoked through the notion of the economic "middleman." The overarching focus on the Indian commercial bourgeoisie and the figure of the Indian trader by Marxist scholars has resulted in the virtual erasure of South Asian women in East African scholarship (Nagar 1997). By

²⁴¹ Uganda's 2009 Anti-Homosexuality Bill has compelled the development of new scholarship and activism surrounding gender and sexuality studies in recent years. See, for example, Tamale (2011).

²⁴² Some information can be gleaned through women's memoir writing. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's *The Settler's Cookbook: A Memoir of Love, Migration and Food* (2008) and *No Place Like Home: An Autobiography* (1995) are two texts that explore both the politics of the expulsion and transnational migration from the perspective of a Khoja Ismaili woman in Uganda.

moving beyond the “race as class as gender” paradigm traditionally used to analyze African-Asians in Uganda, I integrate the complex dynamics of factors such as colonial governance, transnational migration, class, caste purity, and religion to argue that the politics of African-Asian relations in Uganda are as much a gendered and sexual phenomena as about the race and class politics of the expulsion in 1972.²⁴³

Migration, Marriage, and Gender in the Early Colonial Period

Scholars of colonial India have analyzed the ways that women were relegated to the domain of customary governance by virtue of their position as the “dependents” of Indian men in the eyes of the British colonial state. Moreover, ideologies and practices of Indian women's inferior status to Indian men, stemming forth from religious cosmologies that emphasized the preservation of women's chasteness and purity, and further instantiated in caste/class hierarchies and dowry-based marriage exchange systems within agricultural contexts, have long been analyzed by a host of gender scholars and anthropologists (Bachetta 1994, Goody and Tambiah 1973, Kishwar and Vanita 1984, Nabar 2003, Sarkar 2010, Sangari and Vaid 1990). Of significance is that women in colonial Indian society formed the symbolic “inside” of ethnic, religious, and caste-based communities. In the context of the bifurcated colonial state, which was divided by civil (secular) and customary (non-secular) domains, the patriarchal norms of men within the social organization of the community governed the everyday lives of Indian women (Sinha 2006:8-9, Sunder Rajan 1993; 2001).

In colonial East Africa, Indian women were likewise unrecognized by the colonial state that operated in the civil or secular domain. Thus, Indian women were unable to make claims on the colonial state through the social categories that tended to be utilized by their male counterparts. Significantly, I argue that Indian women formed the “symbolic inside” of particular sectarian, caste, ethnic, and religious-based communities, as well as the “inside” of the racialized “Asian” community. Cultural and colonial norms that regulated Indian women's sexual purity and honor were reinforced in East Africa as

²⁴³ See Chapter 1 and 2 for further discussion about the mapping of race, class, and gender onto Indian communities in order to understand African-Asian relations in Uganda.

community leaders sought to preserve South Asian cultural and religious systems. On the other hand, gendered norms of sexual propriety were loosened for Indian men, who enjoyed both racial and class privileges in East Africa. The racialized and communal “doubling” that Indian women were subject to in East Africa meant that they were governed by communal and patriarchal norms in local communities, but were further removed from their African female counterparts through processes of racialization and cultural norms of Indian women's chasteness (as opposed to African women's perceived sexual openness).

In order to understand the ways in which these racial, cultural, gender, and sexual ideologies and norms were practiced, it is important to explore the relationship between migration and marriage in East Africa. There is substantial information on the migration trajectories of the earliest Indian traders to the Swahili Coast, particularly those areas that were under control of the Omani Sultanate prior to the British annexation of the East African Protectorate (Mangat 1969). In addition, Richa Nagar has extensively analyzed the ways that Indian migration and marriage practices were shaped along religion, caste, and class differences on the Swahili Coast (Nagar 1998; 2000). Most significantly, religious differences between Muslim and Hindu migrants were critical to the early phase of settlement on the coast. For example, Nagar observes, “Shiite Muslim traders from Ismaili, Ithna Asheri, and Bhora sects felt a religious affinity with the Islamic culture of Zanzibar and the Swahili coast, and the Sultans’ encouragement stimulated kin-chain migration from Gujarat, Kathiawar, and Kutch to Zanzibar. The constructions of ritual purity and pollution among Hindu trading castes of Bhatias, Lohanas, and Jains, on the other hand, initially discouraged the permanent settlement of Hindu families in Zanzibar. These Hindu castes were characterized by strict social taboos against Muslim ways, especially their non-vegetarian dietary habits. Hindu-ness and caste purity for upper classes was defined in opposition to the Muslim ways and the Islamic environment of Zanzibar and the Swahili coast was thought to threaten and pollute this purity” (Nagar 1998:125). Thus, rather than settling permanently in Africa, upper-caste Hindu traders traveled back and forth between India and Zanzibar.

In the Ugandan context, we know less about the ways that religious differences among Indian migrants affected their likelihood of settling in the region of the Uganda

Protectorate in the pre-colonial or early colonial era The territory is landlocked and further inland than Kenya, Tanzania, and the Swahili Coast. Settling in Uganda was attractive to those migrants who already had extensive kin and trading networks that extended to the coast, and who could travel back to India to find marriage partners. What is clear is that the voluntary migration of Indian traders to Uganda, independent of the colonial context, did not occur to the extent that it did on the Swahili Coast, Zanzibar, and in the Indian Ocean littoral. The formal end of the slave trade and the opening of the Uganda Protectorate compelled the majority of Indian male migration to Uganda, particularly the migration of middle-class men from Northwest India, to engage in retail and other duties as civil servants for the British. The East African Railway construction process (from 1895-1914) constituted the second major wave of migrants to East Africa and Uganda. In this case, indentured servants on three-year contracts that could be re-engaged were largely Sunni Muslims and Sikhs from the Punjab region, as well as other low-caste Hindus from Kutch and Kathiawar in Gujarat.²⁴⁴

What is critical here is that the migration of Indian men to Uganda and East Africa was a gendered process: it did not involve the large-scale migration of Indian women, as in colonial plantation societies like Natal (Tinker 1974;1977). Rather, an Indian male to female sex ratio imbalance characterized early Indian migration to East Africa. In order to find marriage partners, Nagar suggests that in Tanzania, high-caste Hindu men and Shia Muslims with financial means traveled back to India to marry women from their traditional home villages (1998:125). Moreover, religious affiliations played a key role in determining whether or not Indian women would settle in East Africa. Nagar writes that, “while Muslim women increasingly accompanied their husbands to Tanganyika and Zanzibar, higher-caste Hindu men from upper and middle classes considered Africa as ‘alien’ and ‘unsafe’ for women, and believed that women would be under better care if they stayed behind in their husbands’ extended households” (1998:125). The construction of Africa as “alien” and “unsafe” in the Indian imaginary was, of course, based on civilizational narratives that were intertwined with Hindu

²⁴⁴ As I discussed in Chapter 2, railway workers who remained in Uganda were a semi-skilled working class group of artisans, carpenters, and transporters. They were an essential core of colonial labor and the colonial political economy.

cosmologies (ritual and caste-based notions) of purity and pollution: Africans and Muslims were often regarded as “polluted” because of their meat-eating and alcohol-drinking.

For Indian women who did settle in East Africa, Nagar observes, “the discursive constructions of ritual purity and pollution were both gendered and caste-based, and higher-caste women were regarded as the main custodians of the family’s purity” (1998:125). Women could not eat or drink anything touched by an African, a Muslim, or a low-caste Hindu. For those women who remained in India, they “shouldered the burden of maintaining religious and caste ‘purity,’ and in the early 20th century upper-caste Hindu women stayed back in India to guard themselves and their families against pollution. Men generally went back to India to marry, and their wives stayed behind from the beginning with the men making frequent trips back and forth” (Nagar 1998:125-26).

It is also clear that among men with means to afford it, women traveled back and forth between East Africa and India, often returning to India for childbirth and for the education of the children (Nagar 1998:126). In middle-class Hindu families, the economic and social uncertainty of the East African context contributed to women staying back in India. Often high-caste Hindu men whose wives stayed back in India brought back low-caste servants with them because Africans were considered too polluted to take care of tasks such as washing, cooking, and cleaning at home (Nagar 1998:126). The safeguarding of religious, cultural, and racial purity was not a major consideration in migration decisions among lower class Hindus and Muslims, however. Nagar observes, “Poor women whose husbands went to work in Zanzibar or Tanganyika looked after their families in India for a few years until their husbands could pay for the women’s passage. Unmarried working-class men were usually able to make enough money in 2 or 3 years to be able to go home and marry and return with their brides. As the families of low caste Hindus and Muslims increased, they started supplying a range of services to prosperous Asian families...” (Nagar 1998:126).

In the Ugandan context, there is evidence that suggests that high-caste Hindu men with means were able to travel back to India to bring partners with them (Madhvani and Foden 2008:32-36). Shia Muslim men may have already been able to find women within their larger communal and kin networks in the East African region at large. In addition to

those men who brought women from India, interracial marriages and partnerships between Indian men and African women did occur. Communal groups, however, regarded sexual and intimate relationships between Indian men and African women as immoral. In the Tanzanian context, Nagar writes, “not all lower-class men could afford to return home to get brides who could fulfill their sexual needs and take care of their households. For these men, African women served as a ‘refuge.’ Poor men from Sunni Ismaili, and Ithna Asheri communities among the early settlers, and from the Ramgharia Sikh community among the later migrants, frequently cohabited with African or racially mixed women...prosperous Asian businessmen, irrespective of their marital, religious, or caste status, frequently had sexual relationships with Swahili women out of wedlock” (Nagar 1998:126).

In the absence of Indian female partners, Indian men in early colonial Uganda engaged in interracial sexual relations, partnerships and even marriage. The colonial office, however, actively sought to regulate and limit sexual partnerships between Indian men and African women in urban areas (Kyomuhendo and McIntosh 2006:77). In Buganda, the colonial state and the Buganda *lukiko* (government) attempted to restrict the migration of Ugandan women from villages to urban centers, areas in which they might possibly enter into intimate relationships with Indian men. For example, Aidan Southhall and Peter Gutkind’s ethnography of Kisenyi, a Kampala suburb, documents a range of intimate relationships (marriage, prostitution, and concubinage) between Ugandan women and their Indian lovers (1957:40-41;78-79).²⁴⁵ Gender studies scholars also suggest that the colonial state and missionaries’ objectives to produce Ugandan nuclear families based on agricultural production in the rural areas and Victorian ideologies of domesticated African women, limited women’s mobility to urban areas (Kyomuhendo and McIntosh 2006:77).

²⁴⁵ Poor and working-class Indians lived in close proximity to African women. Gutkind and Southall argue that in many cases, it was advantageous for Indian men, mostly Muslims and Goans, to marry African women at this time. They write, “though these unions are often not marriages in the strict sense either by African custom, Indian custom, or in civil law, some showed considerable durability...owing to the virtual impossibility of non-natives owning *mailo* land, coupled with the restrictions the Buganda Government has attempted to place on the residence of non-natives, or their ownership of property there, an Asian can acquire a more stable housing accommodation by relatively permanent co-habitation with an African woman than in any other way” (1957:26).

Further research in colonial archives may reveal if interracial unions and sexual relations between Indian men and African women were more common in districts outside of the central region of Buganda.²⁴⁶ It seems plausible that the colonial state was invested in the migration of Indian women to Uganda to enter marital partnerships with Indian men at particular moments in Ugandan history. These shifts in migration policy would have occurred in response to changing political economic developments in Uganda and an increasing urban population of single Indian men. In the context of growing rural to urban migration in the late colonial period, single African women and single Indian men were marked as disruptive communities that transgressed the moral order of racially distinct nuclear families and communities that the colonial state sought to organize in the Protectorate. As the Indian population in the Protectorate increased, men who lived in Uganda began to marry Indian women more frequently by accessing community, ethnic, religious, and caste networks in the region. The arrival of larger numbers of Indian women in East Africa during the second decade of the century would normalize interethnic and inter-religious marriage patterns that reinforced endogamy in general (Hand 2011:104).

In sum, the sex imbalance between Indian men and women in the Uganda Protectorate, the increasing urban Indian male population, and heightening rural to urban migration of Ugandan women compelled the development of colonial practices and ideologies that further enhanced racial and social divisions in colonial society. In addition, social and cultural norms of purity and pollution, especially among upper-caste Hindu traders, would serve “to naturalize and reinforce religious boundaries between Hindus and Muslims, the caste and class boundaries between upper and lower caste Hindus, and the racial, religious, and class boundaries between Asians and Africans” (Nagar 1998:127).

In her scholarship, Ann Laura Stoler argues that the arrival of white women in settler colonies in Asia and Africa “coincided with the embourgeoisement of colonial communities and with a significant sharpening of racial categories...white women

²⁴⁶ My preliminary data suggests that many early Sikh (Ramgarhia and Jat) settlers, either former indentured railway workers or colonial servants, adopted African wives from the southwestern region of Uganda (Banyankole and Banyarwanda women).

needed to be maintained at elevated standards of living, in insulated social spaces cushioned with the cultural artifacts of ‘being European’ (1997:19). Racial segregation helped to buttress white women’s prestige and preserve racial hierarchies. In the non-settler context of Uganda, the arrival of more Indian women on the continent also served to insulate the Indian community and preserve strict racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual boundaries. Nagar has noted that the intersection of patriarchy, racism, and class constructed Indian women as either the embodiment of purity and virtue or as excessively religious and orthodox. In contrast, “the African woman was perceived as the oversexualized ‘Other’ who was readily available to quench the [sexual desires] of Asian men” (Nagar 1998:127). African women would gradually be perceived as real and symbolic threats to the purity and prestige of Indian women, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh marriages, and the Indian home.

Thus, gender, religious, and cultural ideologies of Indian womanhood, combined with the racialized context of East Africa, reproduced Indian women as the locus for “Asian” sexual, cultural, and racial purity. Hand writes, “the ideology governing gender relations continued to be based on the necessity to control and safeguard women’s sexual purity[...] men’s honor and social status being heavily dependent on it. In the East African context this translated into an excessive enclosure of the various Asian groups within their own communities for fear that their daughters (wives) would be led astray by African men” (Hand 2011:107). The colonial state’s policies of social and racial apartheid would further instantiate taboos surrounding inter-racial intimacy: Indian male-African woman and Indian woman-African male relationships.

Gender Ideologies and Practices in the Late Colonial Period

Recent work by Ugandan gender scholars has explored the relationships of Ugandan women to African men, missionaries, and the colonial state (Kyomuhendo and McIntosh 2006, Musisi 2002; 1992). This scholarship provides a broad understanding of the ways that gender ideologies and practices shaped Ugandan women’s lives in urban and rural areas. In their cross-ethnic, regional, and class study, *Women, Work, and Domestic Virtue in Uganda, 1900-2003*, Kyomuhendo and McIntosh (2006) argue that

the development of a “domestic virtue” model was central to shaping the ideal Ugandan woman. Patriarchal interactions among the colonial office and its administrators, the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS), and the Buganda *lukiko* were central to policies and social practices that produced the virtuous and domesticated Ugandan woman. Kyomuhendo and McIntosh suggest that the “domestic virtue model was based upon patterns already present in Buganda...but it was a strategy reinforced by British colonial administrators, whose late Victorian patriarchal views accorded well with those of many African men” (2006:15). Key assumptions of the domestic virtue model were that women were expected to marry and provide services for their husbands, they had practical duties related to the domestic realm such as growing and providing food, they were submissive to male authority and did not make decisions except about minor domestic matters, and that if a woman went out into the world on her own, she would be regarded in sexual terms (Kyomuhendo and McIntosh 2006:14). Additional scholarship by Nakanyike Musisi suggests that the civilizing colonial project of domesticity was central to the molding of the virtuous Ganda woman (1991;1996). In a later period, the domestic virtue model would adapt into a “service career” model in order to accommodate the social work and philanthropic activities of elite and educated Ugandan women.

In general, there is a well-developed discussion on the domestication of African women and the consolidation of patriarchal gender norms under the European Victorian gender model in the field of African gender studies (Hansen 1992, Hunt 1999). Less scholarship in African gender studies has explored the social lives of African women who were considered iniquitous or immoral due to their position as unmarried women in urban environments (Hodgson and McCurdy 2001, White 1990). Musisi has critiqued normative colonial gender ideologies of the elite, domesticated, and virtuous Ganda woman by examining historical constructions of “bad women.” These were social types referred to as *empala kitale* (“unruly girls”), *bikazikazi* (“undesirable women”), and *banyangavu* (“bad in all respects”) in Luganda (2001:172).

Conventional Ugandan gender history excludes other types of liminal persons or “immoral” women that traversed racial and ethnic boundaries. The children of Indian-African unions, often referred to as “half caste” in British English, or *jotawa* or *chottara*

in Hindi and Gujarati, were seen as ambiguous figures who transgressed a rigidly defined colonial racial and cultural order. In her memoir of Ismaili Khoja society in 1960s Kampala, Yasmin Alibhai-Brown writes, “the children of the [B]lack/Asian liaisons would be called *chotaras*, a word that we used to denigrate people and describe anyone who wore bright colours like luminous pink and green. Terror of contamination and failure encouraged the transformation of Asian women into porcelain ornaments, symbols of purity and wealth, exactly like middle-class Victorian women” (1995:57). In the early colonial period, it was often thought that “mixed” women were considered to be beautiful and more suitable sexual partners for Indian men than “pure” African women. After the arrival of more Indian women in Uganda in future generations, “half-caste” mixed-race women served as threats and polluting persons for high-caste and bourgeois Hindu women who reproduced both the colonial moral order and Hindu religious order of intra-racial, ethnic, religious, and caste endogamy.

Nonetheless, intimate liaisons between Indian men and African women were frequent in the late colonial and post-independence era. When the Indian population in Uganda was at its maximum, the “half-caste” community was also at its height. The mixed-race children of Indian fathers who already had Indian wives were often cared for financially, but were not officially recognized as legitimate children like “pure” Indian children.²⁴⁷ Dr. Sarah Ssali suggests that the children of Indian men and African women, particularly in out-of-wedlock cases, formed their own communities, often joining Nubian and Swahili communities in Buganda.²⁴⁸ For instance, the mixed-race children of Hindu fathers usually converted to Islam, were raised by their African mothers, and joined Swahili communities in Kampala. (On the other hand, when Indian fathers wedded African women, their children became part of Indian religious, ethnic, linguistic, and caste communities via the patriarchal line of ancestry). In sum, if “bad” Ugandan women informed one component of urban immorality in the late colonial and post-colonial

²⁴⁷ Personal communication with Dr. Vali Jamal, 15 November 2008.

²⁴⁸ Interview with Dr. Sarah Ssali, Makerere University, Kampala, 23 May 2010.

period, then unrecognized “half-caste” communities also disrupted the ordered nature of racial, cultural, and gender boundaries in Uganda.²⁴⁹

African and Asian women’s gendered practices are another important arena of scholarship in Ugandan gender history. This literature deals with the development of women’s organizations and women’s activism (Tripp 2000; Kwesiga and Tripp 2002). Tripp has expanded the discussion of the domestication of Ugandan African women into “virtuous” and “respectable” women by suggesting that the politics of domesticity were not all bad (2002:23-24). She suggests that urban domestication did not only reify strict gender roles for Ugandan women, but that certain forms of Christian missionary education provided opportunities for Ugandan women’s access to education. Elite Ugandan women, often attached to the traditional kingdoms of Uganda, managed to attain a Christian education, English literacy, and learned homemaking, crafts, and other skills. In a later period, these women would utilize these skills to become teachers and volunteers. By the 1940s, a core group of elite English-speaking Ugandan women with education and social mobility had emerged in Kampala. Tripp argues that this group’s professional and leadership skills would serve them in struggles for gender equality in the next generation (2002:36). Related scholarship has examined the ways that the domestic virtue model, service, professionalism, and philanthropy circulated not only among African women, but among European and Asian women as well.

Indeed, Indian women *first appear in Ugandan historical record* in the late colonial period: from the early 1940s to 1962. Tripp’s scholarship explores the public roles and lives of educated and elite Asian women who actively participated in civic and associational life during this era (Tripp 2010; 2001). Elite Asian women were involved in the Indian Women’s Association (established in Uganda in 1939), as well as the multi-racial and elite Uganda Women’s Council (UCW). By the 1940s, elite European, Asian, and African women began to work together in political associations such as the UCW, formally adopting “nonracial” strategies in order to pursue particular political and social

²⁴⁹Alternatively, Indian communities may have also utilized the presence of mixed-race communities as a tool of integration during the high nationalist period of the 1960s and 1970s. This issue will require further research.

ends.²⁵⁰ Sugra Visram, an important Khoja Ismaili Ugandan Asian woman, emerged as a woman leader during this period. Visram married into the reputable Allidina Visram family and became intensely involved in the politics and activities of the IWA, the UCW, the Buganda *lukiko*, and the *Kabaka Yekka* (KY) party (Awaaz 2011). Given her education and social status, she was able to move between racially marked communities, forming relationships with both Europeans and Ugandans. Visram's ability to challenge racialist ideologies of African and Asian difference was most clearly displayed by her fluency in Luganda and her participation in Ganda politics.

Visram is often celebrated as the quintessential model of an Indian woman who was able to transcend racial and community politics in order to create alliances with different communities, participate in public and civic life, and subvert Indian women's symbolic location within the home and the community. However, women such as Visram also subscribed to the domestic virtue model. Her ability to transgress communal and patriarchal politics depended on her marriage into a prestigious and bourgeois Ismaili family that helped to mold her into a "respectable Indian woman." Tripp, for example, reports that Visram and her husband attended Christmas dances sponsored by the Uganda Women Christian Association (YWCA) and the UCW in the 1960s, where Visram was "the first Asian woman to dance with African men" (2000:44). Clearly, this was only possible because of Visram's elite class position, education, and her marriage into a wealthy Shia Muslim Indian family. Visram's social position was characterized by strict cultural and gender ideologies that prescribed intra-caste and intra-religious marriage, sexual morality and purity, and respectability or honor (*izzat*, Hindi).

The scholarship above generally focuses on elite urban women in colonial Uganda. Given the absence of studies of class differentiation among Indian communities in the Ugandan historiography, Indian women are usually framed as the bourgeois and domesticated dependents of Indian men, inaccessible to African men, inhabiting private spaces within the urban Indian home. We have little to no information on the histories of working-class Indian women and the possibility that they might have transcended racial boundaries through other types of public interactions with African men. Thus, Indian

²⁵⁰ It is unclear that this is a nonracial position, as it seems that racial divisions and hierarchies still existed, even among elite women's groups. Perhaps multi-racial might be more appropriate here.

women are symbolically identified with the productive family unit of the petty bourgeois commercial class. Interactions between Indian women and Ugandan Africans seem to have occurred within domestic spaces. They were characterized by unequal racialized and gendered master-servant relationships in the home (i.e. Indian housewife and African domestic), in which African men were infantilized and referred to as "houseboy."²⁵¹ If working-class Indian women led public lives and had public interactions with African men, there is little supporting evidence for these practices.²⁵²

Finally, Indian women emerge in the late colonial historical record in the arena of legislative reform. In the post-colonial period, a key shift, which paralleled transformations in the status of women in the independent nations of India and Pakistan, occurred for Asian women in East Africa. By the early 1960s, educated and elite women were beginning to organize with European and Ugandan women to reform Indian family law. Ugandan civil courts did not formally recognize Indian family law, rather, domestic issues such as marriage and inheritance were relegated to the domain of customary authority, or the "native" (African) and "non-native" (Indian) courts. Indian women successfully managed to pass the Hindu Marriage Ordinance in 1961, which would begin to recognize the claims of Hindu women under Ugandan civil law. For the widowed, abused, and abandoned, this was a critical moment: Indian women would now be officially recognized as individual and legal persons in Ugandan courts, rather than the dependents of Indian men who were empowered by the colonial state to govern Indian women within community-based frameworks. If women were governed by communal and patriarchal norms in the colonial era, independence-era legislation marked a significant transformation for them, as they came to be formally recognized as individual persons who could make claims based on universal, civil and liberal law. The passage of the Hindu Marriage Ordinance Act in 1961 would compel reforms in the already existing Marriage and Divorce of Mohammedans Ordinance (Brown 1988:27). These shifts would

²⁵¹ For a fascinating fictional portrayal of Indian woman-African male domestic dynamics, see Binyavanga Wainaina's (2009) essay, "A Day in the Life of Idi Amin Dada." The sexual relationship between an Indian housewife and African domestic named Idi Amin symbolizes the emasculation of Indian men in their own dwelling spaces (see more below in "Indian Women and the Politics of Insecurity.")

²⁵² This is in marked contrast to indentured labor plantation societies like colonial Natal in South Africa.

occur in the context of a broader reform of native personal laws that affected the lives of African women (Brown 1988).

Thus, it is possible that the 1960s was the era in which Indian women first began to imagine themselves as a gendered constituency in the new Ugandan nation: apart from colonial and normative constructions of them as the dependents of Indian men, or as embedded within a racialized “Asian community.”²⁵³ By the mid-1960s, however, Indian women’s activism surrounding family law began to diminish. Increasing anti-Asian sentiment, Africanization policies, and the narrowing possibilities for Indian economic, political, and social life in Uganda would subordinate Indian women’s political mobilization to the needs of the family and the racialized South Asian population at large. The impending expulsion would tighten the patriarchal control and guardianship over Indian women as Indian and African men discursively constructed them as the communal property of Indian men. To the consternation of ordinary African men and nationalist leaders alike, Indian women were inaccessible to African men. They symbolically maintained rigid social boundaries between “African” and “Asian” communities. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, Indian men’s heightening fears surrounding miscegenation and their apprehensions of African men’s sexual violation of Indian women’s bodies compelled them to begin relocating their wives and daughters outside of East Africa.²⁵⁴

Indian Women and the Politics of Insecurity, 1962-1972

Indian men’s anxieties surrounding the sexual integrity of Indian women and their bodies emerged strongly in the decolonization period. Indeed, debates and discourses surrounding ideologies of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality are key arenas of study for understanding the politics of post-colonial nationhood (Taylor 2008). If independence and decolonization began to sharpen the boundaries between “insiders” and “outsiders,”

²⁵³ It is not clear if mixed race women from Indian-African unions participated in these practices. I can only speculate that mixed race women were non-elite and excluded because they disrupted racially bounded categories in both the Uganda Council of Women and the racially exclusive Indian Women’s Association.

²⁵⁴ In my informal conversations with East African Asian women from Uganda and Tanzania have led me to believe that Indian men were primarily concerned about the sexual violation or forced marriages of their female kinfolk with African men. I will need to conduct more interviews with East African Asian women in the diaspora to find further evidence to support this claim.

formal “citizens” and “non-citizens,” and “Africans” and Indians,” then Indian women’s bodies become the symbolic and material battleground for debates surrounding Asian inclusion and exclusion in the nation. Although the narrative of Black economic empowerment, urban de-Indianization, and the expulsion is a familiar tale, the material in this section explores the racialized, gendered, and sexual dynamics of debates surrounding the possibilities of Indian citizenship that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s Uganda.

Ethnographic work carried out in 1950s Uganda on Indian families in Jinja suggests that families had begun to transition from extended joint-families to nuclear family/corporate family firms as the population increased and became wealthier (Morris 1968). Additional information on Indian womanhood, marriage, kinship, and the family is unavailable in this early ethnography. However, we do know that the 1960s represents the beginning of the breakdown of the Indian family in Uganda. Preliminary data from my Uganda-based interviews suggests that the first “mini-exodus” of Indians from the country occurred during the late 1960s, after the passing of the Trade Licensing Acts, which restricted the business activities of the Indian commercial class in Kenya and Uganda (in 1968 and 1969, respectively). Unfortunately, census data on the Indian population and the expulsion does not account for the gendered nature of South Asian out-migration from East Africa (Ghai and Ghai 1965, Ghai and Ghai 1971, Tandon and Raphael 1984[1973], Twaddle 1975).

In the context of heightening anti-Asian hostility and violence, Indian men felt it prudent to send Indian women out of the country first. Discussions surrounding the social exclusiveness of Indian communities, their unwillingness to integrate with African communities, and the “inaccessibility of Asian women” to African men were frequent discourses that circulated in public spaces during this era. Indian men’s anxieties surrounding their female kin coalesced around the possibility that African men might sexually violate “their” women, particularly since inter-racial exogamous relationships have historically been Indian male-African female rather than Indian female-African male in East Africa. The idea that Indian men regularly had intimate relations with Ugandan women, and that they did not reciprocate by allowing African men to marry or partner with Indian women seemed to have infuriated former President Idi Amin. For

example, Hugh Tinker has documented the gendered nature of Idi Amin's demands for Indian national integration in the early 1970s. He writes, "General Amin made speeches exhorting the Uganda Asians to identify more closely with the country, introducing the familiar theme of intermarriage. He indicated that he would be glad to marry the widow of Mulji[bhai] Madhvani's son, Jayant, after the latter died in 1971; the widow deemed it prudent to depart to the United Kingdom" (1977:158). That Jayant Madhavani's widow, Meenaben Madhvani, had refused Amin's marriage proposal was more than a mere personal insult: it signified the unwillingness of the "Asian" community at large to integrate with Ugandans and become part of the nation.

Amin's opinions on Indian-African sexual intimacy and intermarriage are further articulated in his address to Indian men who attended the Asian Conference on October 8th, 1971 in Kampala. Amin expressed a number of grievances that he and his government held against "Asian groups of Uganda":

Having made the above point on the general disloyalty of some members of your community to the Government, I now wish to turn to probably the most painful matter around which public statements and correspondence in the press have centered. That is the question of your refusal to integrate with the Africans in this country. It is particularly painful that about seventy years have elapsed since the first Asians came to Uganda, but despite that length of time, the Asian community has continued to live in a world of its own to the extent that the Africans in this country have, for example, hardly been able to marry Asian girls.

For example, a casual count of African males who are married to Asian females in Uganda shows only about six such couples. And, even then, all the six married these women when they were abroad and not here in Uganda. The matter becomes even more serious when attempts by Africans within Uganda to fall in love and marry Asian girls have in one or two cases even resulted in the Asian girls committing suicide when it was discovered by their parents that they were in love and intended to marry Africans. In the few cases where there have been moves by Asian girls to love Africans, it has been done in absolute secrecy. I, as well as you yourselves, certainly know that these girls are under their parents' strict instructions never to fall in love with Africans.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note that many Asian men in this country love and live with African girls without unfavorable pressure from the parents of these girls. This is the sort of attitude [which] I would welcome because it points the way to integration between Africans and Asians. Asian parents should leave their sons and daughters free to integrate with Africans, instead of imposing upon them social restrictions that are completely out of date (Amin 1972:3).

He ends his speech by commenting on the colonial past, linking gender and sexuality to larger issues of racial and cultural integration in the nation:

I am aware that one of the causes of the continuing distant social relations between Asians and the Africans in the country was the policy of the colonial Government which ensured that the Africans, Asians, and Europeans had entirely separate schools, hospitals, residential quarters, social and sports clubs, even public toilets, with the facilities reserved for the African being of the poorest quality and hopelessly inadequate. We, have, of course, now changed all this, but there are Asians who still live in the past and consider, like the former colonialist Government, that the Africans are below them. This living in the past cannot help Asians in any [way], nor can it foster the desired harmony and unity among races in Uganda (Amin 1972:3).

Ali Mazrui's writings on Idi Amin and post-colonial Uganda argue that Amin attempted to construct a national community based on racial self-reliance, where citizenship was based on kinship and shared descent (1976; 1977). According to Mazrui, the expulsion was a result of the need to preserve a racially pure state and relieve Africans of their economic dependence on Indians. For example, Amin's several marriages to Ugandan women from different ethnic groups and regions of Uganda revealed the symbolic importance of affinal connections in the construction of the nation. Similarly, Amin's wish to marry the widow of Jayant Madhvani was not only indicative of his personal lusts and desires for Indian women, or even his resentment against Asian self-segregation, but it may have symbolized a route to national integration for Indians in Uganda.

Indeed, the idea that national and social integration could be achieved via kinship, or the intermarriage of traditionally endogamous racial, ethnic, and communal groups, was central to the ethos of post-colonial East Africa. In the post-colonial Tanzanian context, Nyerere's nonracial platform for national integration incorporated ideas that Asian women should intermarry with African men (Joseph 1996). The violence of the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution, in particular, reverberated among Indian minority communities in East and Central Africa. President Karume's reign over Zanzibar (1965-1972) entailed policies of African intermarriage with Asian, Arab, and Persian women.

Increasing the number of intermarriages was thus an explicit goal of Karume's public policy in Zanzibar (Nagar 1996:67-68).²⁵⁵



Figure 28: Idi Amin attends a mixed-race wedding in Gulu in 1977. Source: *Uganda: the Rise and Fall of Idi Amin. From the Pages of Drum.* (Seftel 1994).

²⁵⁵ Nagar observes that in 1966, Karume “made it a crime punishable by six years in prison, caning and fine for a woman to refuse a marriage proposal, unless the man who proposed had contagious syphilis, TB, or leprosy” (1996:68). Both anti-Asian violence and the forced marriages of Asian women in Zanzibar resulted in the smuggling of women to the mainland or back to India. The Asian population of Zanzibar declined to only about 3500 by 1972, and was largely composed of Asian men (Nagar 1996:68).

Indian men's responses to Amin's observations on Indian women and interracial marriage revealed two major themes: First, Indian men would respond that interracial marriage and the mixing of societies would take time to develop as decolonization in Uganda progressed. Secondly, Indian men expressed their reservations about miscegenation by advocating a "multiracial plural society" rather than a "mixed-race" society (O'Brien [Tandon] 1972:34-37). In their desire to advocate for a multi-racial society, Indian men mobilized ethno-cultural claims that both "Asians" and "Africans" possessed differing customs and religions. They also suggested that intermarriages would create a future society of "half-castes." This would be a third minority that was neither "Asian" nor "African," and would thus be considered "less than." In the latter context, Indian men appropriated and mobilized racist, Eurocentric ideologies that devalued mixed-race people in the colonies. In this interpretation, mixed-race individuals were considered to be a threat to the preservation of an Indian (and perhaps also Hindu and Islamic) civilizational, cultural, and moral order.

Finally, Indian community leaders concluded their response to Amin's accusations at the Asian Conference in 1971 with a strong plea to end the sexual molestation of Indian women:

Lastly we are greatly concerned that Your Excellency's speech has been distorted by the criminal elements within Uganda as a license to molest Asian women. A large number of incidents throughout the country where hooligans have attacked, insulted, and molested Asian ladies. We are, of course, certain that this was not desired by the Authorities but we would urge Your Excellency that strong action be taken against the culprits concerned (O'Brien [Tandon] 1972:37).

In all contexts, Indian men would assume the role of speaking for and assuming responsibility for the plight of Indian women. In his recent memoir, Manzoor Moghal writes, "Amin's obsession with Asian girls was well known amongst the Asian community and it was believed that his rejection by an Asian girl to whom he had proposed marriage had inflamed his anti-Asian sentiments...in the wake of these rumors it was seriously suggested in some Asian circles that efforts should be made to find a suitable and willing Asian bride for the President. Such a union, it was thought, would go a long way towards diffusing the explosive anti-Asian situation in Uganda. But the theory

was never tested as no volunteer could be found” (2010:87). In the same text, the author describes another occasion involving “a most inappropriate entertainment for the President—an Indian dancing performance by a group of young and pretty Asian girls.” Moghal observes, “the girls danced beautifully in front of the President and his Ministers to their obvious immediate delight, but the long-term consequences can only have been to further enrage Amin” (2010:88).

Ugandan public discourse about race, gender, sexuality, and social integration was a discussion that took place among men and between men. It was largely Indian men who represented the interests of “their women,” at least in public debates and in discussions about national and social integration with political leaders and Ugandan publics. Indian women’s visibility in public spaces concerned Indian men; conversely, Indian women’s invisibility in public space was perceived to outrage African men, particularly Idi Amin. Women were held to be the property of male kin and the community. In the context of the 1971 Asian Conference, it was male Indian community leaders who discussed, debated and critiqued Amin’s exhortations for increased inter-racial marriages and partnerships between Indian women and African men (Moghal 2010, Taylor 2008). Thus, the Indian women’s body emerged in multiple contexts, but always in relation to men’s debates over South Asian inclusion or exclusion in the nation.

Where were Indian women’s voices in these debates, and if so, what might their positions have been? My conversations with Ugandan Asian women did not reveal significant information about their own desires and visions for a multi-racial Uganda during this critical historical era. Instead, women were largely preoccupied by memories of Indian women’s constrained mobility and independence just prior to the expulsion. If women were beginning to experience autonomy in public spaces in the independence era, they reiterated that they experienced tightening patriarchal norms in the late 1960s and 1970s prior to their exile. They adapted daily routines in public space, such as going to the market or to religious sites, due to new security concerns in Kampala, spending most of their time indoors and in domestic spaces.

Indian women also discussed the reality and their imagined fears of sexual violence by African men in the early 1970s. In the months leading up to the expulsion, and during the three-month expulsion period itself, isolated incidents of violence against

Indian women, in addition to other forms of anti-Asian violence that encompassed both men and women, began to circulate in Kampala. While women recognized that some of these incidents may have been rumors, they were aware that rapes of Indian women did occur during this era. Nusrat, one of the last women to leave Uganda before the 9 November 1972 deadline, described the fear of sexual violence among Indian men and women in her interview with me:

N: We had a farm in Luwero District. A couple of times he [my husband] was coming back from there. Over there, there is a substantial Asian-Indian population, non-Ismailis and Ismailis. They would always stop him to ask if he had any news from Kampala...because what happened was that these people were not so educated. So where you had selective visa awards like with Canada and US, they didn't make it, right? Then some of them were Ugandans and they didn't know what to do with their citizenship. They were always stopping him because he was kind of a leader. He was always very good to these people.

So a couple times he stopped and they said they were are in very, very, bad shape because two of their women were raped by soldiers and that was happening in those areas, but they were helpless.

It so happened that you had your communal groups. We had our council, Indian Association, because of the way the pandemonium was, everyone became more self-centered to look after your family and get them out... so with that news coming in, um, we were very concerned about the security of women...and, uh, what we told such people was that if they saw a need to move into Kampala, we could probably take care of them, because we had our house, they could stay there. But such was their plight because one time I did go with my husband, and, um, the way they were continuing, it would be soldiers breaking in and stealing everything. And, right in front of their men folk do what they did [referring to sexual assault of women].²⁵⁶

The sexual violation of Indian women during the expulsion has been documented in interviews carried out among the expelled refugee population of Ugandan Asians in the UK (Adams and Bristow 1979). Cultural factors usually compelled women not to share their experiences of violence with researchers. Therefore, it is not clear to what extent the sexual assault of women actually took place. What is more significant is the paranoia among South Asian communities surrounding African men's perceived violation of Indian women's bodies.²⁵⁷ In this colonial racist trope, European and other

²⁵⁶ Interview with Nusrat, Kampala, 1, March 2011.

²⁵⁷ In another interview, Mini emphasized that Indian women were raped during the 1985-1986 coup, and that women who had suffered such traumas were relocated outside of Uganda in order to recover. Interview

women were thought to need protection from the irrational and primitive sexual urges of colonized men (Stoler 1997:20). In British East Africa, especially colonial Kenya, the notion of “Black Peril” referred to the “professed dangers of sexual assault on white women by Black men” (1997:20). Among East African Asian communities in the 1960s and 1970s, the perceived sexual threat of African men was usually not discussed, but ever-present. Due to the historical memory of the assault of women during the Zanzibar Revolution and the insecurity of women’s bodies in Amin’s Uganda, Indian men were often preoccupied by the possible sexual threat of African men. Significantly, and as Stoler has pointed out, “Black Peril” in colonial East Africa not only referred to perceived sexual threats from African men, but it also “connoted the fear of insurgence, of some perceived non-acquiescence to colonial control” (1997:21). In Uganda, the alleged sexual aggression of African men was symbolically linked to the de-Indianization of the post-colonial state. Indeed, as I discussed in Chapter 3, the masculinity of Idi Amin, the expulsion event, and the sexual assault of Indian women all combined to symbolically emasculate and disempower Indian men.

In sum, although the independence era began with Indian women’s activism to reform personal laws inherited by the colonial state, within the span of the decade, fears and anxieties surrounding the insecurity of women’s bodies became the most significant Ugandan Indian community concerns. The era of high nationalism and anti-Asian sentiment ended an important period of Indian women’s organizing and participation in public spaces in East Africa. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Indian women and children would leave Uganda first, while their male kin stayed behind to wrap up professional, business, and other obligations before leaving. By November 1972, the

with Mini, Kampala, 23 February 2011. Thus, while some women emphasized security concerns surrounding Indian women’s bodies in 1972, others would link security concerns within a broader time frame of social and political insecurity until the onset of political stability in the mid 1980s. Yusuf Dawood explores themes surrounding the trauma of the expulsion and the sexual violation of Indian women by Amin’s soldiers in his historical novel, *Return to Paradise* (2000). In her own research on Zanzibari Asians, Richa Nagar writes, “of the 36 Zanzibari Asians I interviewed during 1991-93, few emphasized economic or political insecurity as the main reason for leaving the island. Rather, they stated they could not remain on the island because Zanzibar was no longer a safe place for Asian women” (1996:67).

deadline for the expulsion decree, Indian women were entirely displaced. In the years that followed, only small groups of Indian men would remain in the country.²⁵⁸

Post-Expulsion Uganda: South Asian Women Return Migration

The contemporary landscape of South Asian women differs significantly from the years preceding the expulsion. As I outlined in the previous section, Indian women, particularly the elite and educated, had participated vigorously in communal and religious associations, the IWA, UCW, and other forms of associational and public life. Elite women first participated in religious, sectarian, and caste-bounded social groups. In some instances, their interactions would traverse other social group boundaries such as race and class. Educated women worked in roles that were considered proper and moral for Indian women. Most women had to marry in order to pursue higher education and participation in broader civic and public life in Uganda. Generally, urban Indian women were associated with domestic spaces and domestic work, and when they engaged with Africans, it was in the context of the master-servant relationship in the bourgeois urban Indian home.

The few women who lived in Uganda during the 1970s and 1980s were not visible in urban public spaces, and lived under the protection of their male kin (see Chapter 3). Indian families were embedded in the violent structures of the Idi Amin period: families sought to avoid drawing attention to themselves, and men were extremely vigilant about protecting women's bodies. During moments of political violence and conflict, men re-located Indian women to Kenya or other safe havens in the region.

Likewise, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the presence of Indian women in Uganda was ephemeral. As described in Chapter 4, Ugandan Asian men were the first to return to Kampala in order to participate in the property repossession process. Zubeda, an Ismaili woman who currently lives in Kampala, was able to reconstruct a history of South Asian women's return migration to Uganda in her interview with me. She was born in

²⁵⁸ Some Ugandan Asian men successfully brought their wives and female kinfolk back to Uganda. See Chapter 3 for further discussion.

India and had settled in East Africa in 1986 after her marriage to a Ugandan Asian who had returned in order to repossess his property. Below, she discusses the reconstitution of the Ismaili community, focusing on women's situations in particular:

Z: So in 1991 we officially opened our mosque...the *jamatkhana* was repossessed. That is when our numbers, they also increased. In 1994, we were very few. We were six women, and probably thirty men. We were married to Ugandan Asians. Ok, let me say three of us were married to Ugandan Asians, three of them were returnees, after the exodus...and then we used to get together, so we had that part of our social life...So we had our own groups, but we mingled with other communities...like the Sikh community, the Hindus, and the other Muslims. We were close to each other.

We knew, actually at the time, I think at that time most of us knew what was going on in another woman's life. Because we were very few, and we were isolated, and the situation was so bad...so you had to help each other...ok, in certain cases, I think people fear to help each other...because there was no...how do I say...there were no elders around...or we didn't have the government backing us. In this sense there was no protection. So it was like a lost community in itself.²⁵⁹

Zubeda described the South Asian community as being "lost." Most women observed that they did not feel secure in Uganda until President Museveni allowed Ugandan Asians to repossess their property, thereby formally recognizing the Ugandan Asian community and the interests of the Asian minority in the country. Even then, however, Indian women had no "elders" or leaders to represent them as a constituency. Below, she comments on the state of women's situations during this ambiguous decade of return migration to Uganda:

Z: Actually in 1986 when Museveni took over, things changed rapidly...women, let me say, Ugandan women got their voice in getting education...and I think this President gave women a lot of prominence as far as economic growth was concerned...he promoted the women in all spheres. Then the laws started. People started recognizing the laws for women, the rights of women...that is when you could think that yes we are safe...we can talk to someone and we can get protection...like before it was...oh, you don't talk about it...and even if you talked about it, nobody would hear you...and even if they heard you...they don't want to deal with it, or they wouldn't like to help you if you were an Asian or a Ugandan woman.

The political situation was so bad, and each one cared for her own family, the safety of her own family. The economic situation was so bad...there was no security, isn't it, at the same time? So it was only when Museveni took over in 1986, then it took them a little

²⁵⁹ Interview with Zubeda, Kampala, 28 February 2011.

while to evolve...to come out...then Asian women started coming here in numbers. The repossession had started and Museveni supported the Asians.

The return migration of Indian women during the wave of property repossessions, which spanned the early to mid 1990s, allowed Indian women to begin re-establishing themselves within communal and gender-based institutions and organizations. Community builders, for example, repossessed the Indian Women's Association (IWA) building and re-instituted the IWA during this period; several women that I interviewed recalled their active engagement with the IWA by 1996 and 1997.²⁶⁰ Overall, the return migration of Indian women involved both returnee Ugandan Asian women, as well as the new wives of Ugandan Asian men who were resettling in Uganda or had remained in the country throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Significantly, mixed-race Indian-African women played crucial roles in the reconstruction of the new Museveni-led national order. These "NRM women" (National Resistance Movement), as they are referred to, had links with both Indian and African communities, and therefore represented the concerns of constituencies from both groups. They enjoyed more visibility and mobility than Indian women, often forging relationships with key Ugandan leaders that served African and Indian communities in local politics.

Today, the landscape and demography of South Asian women in Kampala is even more intricate. Women can be divided into five groups that loosely reflect the data that I collected as I encountered women in various communities and conducted fieldwork with them.²⁶¹ The women are divided by the expulsion event: most significantly, by diasporic orientation and generation. The first group consists of the wives and female kin of Ugandan Asian returnee family firms. Many of these women work in family businesses and lead transnational lives across Uganda, the UK and other locations. Generally, this group is the most educated and elite—many had experienced the expulsion event as young women and therefore became educated in the West. I refer to these women as Ugandan Asians to signify their status as displaced Ugandan Indian women.

²⁶⁰ Interview with Uzma, Kampala, November 15th, 2008.

²⁶¹ Some of these women are long-term contacts from a previous study that I conducted on Indian women in Kampala. Hundle (2003; 2006).

The second group consists of women who never left Uganda (including mixed-race women) and those who managed to migrate back to Uganda during the late Amin years and early Obote regime, often experiencing the transition to the Museveni-led NRM government. These women came from working-class families and were able to integrate themselves more fully into a wider range of Asian, African, and mixed-race communities due to their linguistic skills and the inter-cultural exchanges that they relied on during years of political unrest. The third group of women consists of the wives and kin of the professional class of new South Asian entrepreneurs and migrants who have moved into Uganda in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Many of these women are still young wives and mothers, raising a new generation of youth in integrated Black and Asian schools (see Chapter 5). Many of these women participate in community activities and social events and are part of a gendered labor economy that is crucial to processes of community formation. Some may even participate in the workforce themselves—generally, gendered labor such as secretarial work and/or handling accounts in Indian firms and small businesses.

The fourth group of women includes the migrant wives of the South Asian laboring and trading class. Traders who have attained permissions and visas for their wives will most likely stay on in Uganda for some time, particularly if they have multi-year contracts to work for a company or firm. These women are less visible in public spaces than the other groups of women—they are vulnerable to the conditions of their migration, marital, and domestic arrangements. Many migrant women, like traders themselves, have overstayed their visas and are susceptible to fines and other forms of harassment from Uganda police. Migrant Indian and Pakistani women, nonetheless, continue to contribute to household incomes by operating within Kampala's informal economy. For example, some women bring goods from India—such as textiles and jewelry—and sell them out of their homes. Others have opened informal beauty salons out of their homes, offering their services to a more elite population of Ugandan Asian women.

The final group consists of young South Asian women. Within this group are the elite daughters of returnee Ugandan Asians and East African Asian and mixed-race women who have been born and raised in Uganda. Ugandan Asian women are educated

and transnational women. Increasingly, they work in family businesses or are beginning to establish their own businesses outside of the family fold. Ugandan Asian women often pointed out to me that they were different from the other East African Asian women around them. Due to their Western upbringing they imagined themselves as more “modern” than the women who had been raised in Uganda. Several pointed out to me that they even spoke differently (men and women who grew up in Uganda had strong Ugandan accents in their spoken English).

East African Asian women are part of the first generation of youth who are now growing up in Uganda (see Chapter 5). Their parents may come from India or Pakistan, but they have been socialized as East African Asians. These women are typically working to middle class and may have attended mixed-race schools or worked in mixed-race places of business. This latter group of women struggled with different challenges than the daughters of returnee Ugandan Asians: it was difficult for them to pursue or obtain opportunities in higher education, careers, and marriages in East Africa.

Navigating the New Uganda: Indian Women and Community Policing

Young women often felt uneasy about the manner in which they should conduct their everyday lives, especially outside of the communally sanctioned spaces of the home or religious sites. I argue that the recognition of, reconstruction, and integrity of South Asian communities in Uganda continues to be intimately linked to the prestige of Indian women and the sexual purity of their bodies. For example, men’s anxieties surrounding the ambiguous status of South Asians in Uganda was often displaced and inscribed onto the bodies of young Indian women. These anxieties were heightened in the context of women's increasing mobility, their interactions with African, Indian, and Pakistani men in public spaces, and the post-expulsion discourses of racial, cultural, and social integration proposed by President Museveni and the NRM. Thus, Indian women’s increased mobility was a central issue among most South Asian families that I spent time with during my field research—community builders, especially men, were preoccupied with the control of young women's movements in public spaces. According to the men and women who governed the mobility of Indian women, young women’s activities

might lead them to interact with outsiders that were not from their own racial, religious, ethnic, and caste groups. Indeed, a community builder at the Indian Association of Uganda (IAU) explained to me in our interview that the most profound challenge that South Asian families were facing was the increasing occurrence of inter-communal marriages, i.e. marriages across religious, ethnic, caste and linguistic communities. Marriages between Indians and Africans in the post-1990s context were less frequent, and thus were not usually commented on.²⁶²

Over the course of ethnographic research, I formed relationships with women of several different class, ethnic, and religious and educational backgrounds. Young women who grew up in the post-expulsion milieu, generally between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, often looked up to me as an elder sister and role model. I believe that this was because they were beginning to feel the effects of tightening communal and patriarchal structures as the South Asian population was increasing in Kampala. They viewed me, as an American-born Punjabi woman, to embody many of the privileges of mobility, higher education, and interracial and inter-cultural interactions that were inaccessible or forbidden to them. Indeed, the fact that I was conducting my own research project, interviewing members of their families, and traveling back and forth between Kampala and my life in the US, was considered adventurous, exciting, and novel among my female companions. As our relationships grew, young women presented their concerns to me about the community patrolling and regulation of their bodies and activities in Ugandan public spaces, particularly when they were observed to be interacting in public spaces with men who were perceived to be outsiders of their community or racial background.

Social norms among South Asian women dictated that women's bodies ought to be controlled and disciplined until the time of marriage. Most women recognized and accepted that these were frameworks that they had to accept and navigate in their daily lives; and that the period before a young woman's marriage was the most challenging because of the oppressive domestic and communal structures that organized their lives.

²⁶² South Asian women who had married African men were typically not part of contemporary South Asian communities in Kampala. The mixed-race children of Indian men who had married African women, on the other hand, were part of South Asian communities.

Yet young women also transgressed conservative gender ideologies by exploring African (Black) and South Asian city spaces in Kampala, desiring higher education, choosing their own dating and marriage partners, and even participating in salaried employment in Indian firms and small businesses.

Many women expressed sentiments similar to Tania, a young Punjabi Sikh woman who attended the Aga Khan High School in Old Kampala. Tania expressed that most Indians were “going backward,” and that Ugandan [Africans] had more “developed” thinking when it came to women: they were more “open-minded.” She was adamant that new South Asian migrants were causing problems among established and long-term resident families by spreading gossip and rumors about the putatively transgressive behaviors of young girls—especially those girls who ventured into African spaces or spent time with men.²⁶³

Ambreen, a young Ismaili woman, echoed similar sentiments. She had recently graduated from school and was taking courses in accounting at a local training center. She also worked part-time at an accounting firm in Mukono, outside of Kampala. I met with her one day after a mutual friend connected her to me, suggesting that I meet her because of her involvement with a youth group at the Ismaili *jamatkhana* in Old Kampala. In our conversation, she expressed her concerns about the role of men's gossip as a form of social regulation of young women in the Khoja Ismaili community:

A: Before it was really different, it was like any other foreign country I would say. But after the people from India and Pakistan, they traveled here...for example, if you go to *khaney* [jamatkhana], if you are to go to mosque. Now, you see, people have this mentality which is not so...which does not match with the young people of today. Like, in our *khaney* there are some mission classes that teach you about religion and stuff. It's like socializing, boys and girls. But then when you go to *khaney*, the men will say oh look at this girl, she is just talking to this guy.

AKH: Is it usually happening in *jamatkhana* or outside as well?

A: No, I don't think people outside are concerned. I think it's mostly in the community itself. You sit there and the only thing you are talking about...its like...oh you know, "this girl, I saw her there with this guy. I think she is pregnant."

²⁶³ Interview with Tania, Kampala, 19 February 2011.

I have a friend. She had...ok she had her own personal relations [a boyfriend]. Some other men saw him somewhere. The thing went around, then all of a sudden they are saying the girl is pregnant. The next month she went to Pakistan. She went just for a holiday or something. Then they are saying, "she has traveled to Pakistan to get [an] abortion." It is mainly because they are not educated....²⁶⁴

Sonia is a 23-year old Punjabi Sikh woman who came to Uganda from India as a child with the rest of her family to join her father, who was living and working in the Ankole region. Because she has mixed-race family in the country, her views on being a young Indian woman in Kampala were more explicitly couched in terms of her social interactions with both Indian and African youth. One night, I joined her on the sofa in their family home in Kampala where I was staying for a week's time to conduct follow-up research activities. It was late after dinner, and Sonia's mixed-race male cousins sauntered past us with their jackets on, getting ready to head out to the bars for the night. During the course of our conversation (in Punjabi and English), we were interrupted several times by Sonia's aunty, who provided us with many instructions for clearing the room and locking up the home before we retired for sleep.

S: But even guys...they are very free. You can go to club at night, you can have African girlfriends, you can even have your African friends and you bring them in the family, they know them, they are easy. But if you are an Indian girl, if you have your African friends, they will have to know who are they, from where are they, what is their background...even if they are *girls* they have to know who they are...you can't go to club...you can't be out of the house for late time...they have many restriction on girls compared to guys...

AKH: Why do you think it is like that?

S: Just because they feel girls hold the respect of the parents a lot compared to guys. Because if a guy makes a mistake, the people talk, but they keep quiet. But if a girl makes a mistake it is equal to the father to die. Because it is really so shaming. People can talk. And they can even make the guy, the father, to be so uncomfortable in this society to leave. You know, wherever you go, then they are like, "you see that one? You see, that one, his daughter married an African." The father faces a lot of humiliation from a girl compared to guy. That's why they are like that. In Kampala, in the community. This *gurudwara* or others...you know we are very few Indians in Uganda. So they stay like they are brothers and sisters. So once someone makes a mistake you can easily know. Even for other Indians it happens. Once an Indian girl or guy has made a mistake, you

²⁶⁴ Interview with Ambreen, Kampala, 27 February 2011.

can know. You can face humiliation here. Then everyone knows. But for guys they really don't mind. But a girl, they talk a lot. Even just a mere dress code. You go in an Indian party and you are dressed badly, you are a chapter of Indian society for one or two weeks (laughs). So that's how it is in Kampala.

AKH: Do you find it stressful living here?

S: Yeah. Because I have really seen, girls really have to hide a lot. Sometimes you don't want to hide from your parents, eh? But you just feel how they will take things, they will end up taking them badly, so you hide. Most of my friends who are Indians, eh? They compromise a lot. They just take it as their custom. They have to be like this. If their parents say you are not supposed to put on jeans and blouse, they will never put on. They will take it as their culture. That's how they are supposed to be.

For me, I feel different here. You feel...I think it's like...when you are walking you are carrying some big bag of responsibilities. When you do something, you first think a lot. If I do this, how will it be? Like sometimes you want to walk out, you want to go out with your friends, they are all going, like maybe to watch a movie or for the beach. And they ask you, let's go.

You say no, it's not because your family is strict or something...but what if I go and they snap me [take a photo]...and put me in the newspapers, how will the community react? What if I am going and someone else is looking at us, and our parents come to know then how will they react? What if you go there and something wrong happens? So you find you have a lot of responsibility...you have to think a lot before you act. Like here, African ladies don't [have to] think much. If they want to go out, as long as the guy has invited, they will walk. But for us, we don't.²⁶⁵

Like Sonia, many women I encountered in Kampala were concerned that their photos would be taken in public places and circulated in local or national newspapers. Photos of young Indian women in local newspapers violated social mores about the prestige of women. If a woman was seen with a young Indian or African male, she had violated norms surrounding Indian women's sexual purity and honor. She had also rendered herself visible and vulnerable to community gossip, violating her family's honor.

During my fieldwork, two major social events that reflected the emergence of new South Asian communities in Kampala occurred. First, the Indian Women Association began promoting and hosting an annual "Miss India Uganda" (and Mrs. India Uganda) beauty pageant. Secondly, ZTV, an India-based cable television network, hosted and broadcasted a *desi* (informal for South Asian) dance party at a well-known nightclub in Kampala, to be aired on ZTV in East Africa and India. Both events were organized by

²⁶⁵ Interview with Sonia, Kampala, 18 February 2011

community builders in order to place Uganda's diverse South Asian communities on the map in the East African region. The events were the talk of the town. Yet they also caused both excitement and anxiety among young women. They were especially conflicted about the Miss India Uganda beauty and talent competition. Many of them wanted badly to participate in something new and exciting in Kampala; they also wanted to be proud of and express their Indian and Ugandan heritage. Yet they were also concerned about upholding the family, and in particular, their father's honor—acknowledging that their participation in a beauty pageant would require displaying their bodies and becoming visible to the larger South Asian and Ugandan public.

Beyond issues of public visibility and community patrolling, young women were also concerned with other day-to-day struggles. A large number of Indian female entrepreneurs, including returnee Ugandan Asian women, were part of the South Asian business community of "investors." Many young women sought to delay their marriage and wanted to pursue higher education and professional careers in Uganda. Many obstacles made this difficult, however. If Indian men were concerned about their daughter's movements in public spaces, they were also worried about sending their daughters to Ugandan universities after they finished their primary and secondary education, places in which they might ostensibly mingle and socialize with African men. During my entire fieldwork, I knew of only one Indian woman who attended Makerere University, a predominantly Ugandan African public university. Most Indian migrants chose to send their sons and daughters to universities abroad—to destinations like India and Malaysia. Their children would be able to attain a high standard of education that was also financially affordable to middle-class Indian families while simultaneously remaining within norms of communal governance.

Some women in Kampala complained that their parents were hesitant to send them abroad for school, particularly if they had no relatives to look after them. Thus, most young women had resorted to taking accounting or computer training courses and pursuing associate degrees at private educational institutions in Kampala. Attaining these skill sets were important to women because it allowed them to delay marriage and pursue a career in Uganda without having to move and be away from their friends and family.



Figure 29: Navigating Multi-Racial Uganda. A mixed-race African-Asian woman in Uganda discusses her Uganda-based TV show, *Indian Secrets*, in an interview with the Ugandan press. Source: New Vision, 1 April 2007.

While married women's pursuit of higher education after their completion of school was considered socially acceptable, unmarried Indian and Pakistani women who pursued work and careers in Kampala were subject to a different set of gender ideologies. Although young Indian men were expected to participate in family firms and businesses, working to middle-class Indian women who worked in office contexts should be married

in order to remain within the bounds of Indian women's prestige. Unmarried Indian women who worked in close proximity to men, whether Indian or African, in office places violated proper gender and sexual norms.

If the former, pre-expulsion, African-Indian encounter occurred in the context of the *dukan* (the shopkeeper/employee or "boy" relationship), or in the home, (the master/domestic servant relationship); in post-expulsion Uganda, it is young Ugandan African women who often work for their Indian bosses as secretaries and office assistants. These office relationships always carry the possibility of cross-racial sexual intimacy. Although it was commonplace in Kampala to hear about Indian men's intimate relationships and sexual affairs with their African female secretaries, it was considered morally improper for unmarried Indian women to work in such contexts. Young women were aware of these gender and cultural norms, and worked to maintain proper and professional behavior in the workplace. Nonetheless, many Indian youth gossiped about Indian women who worked for Ismaili bosses in their companies, suggesting that women had sexual relations with their employers—often destroying the reputation and social prestige of young women.

In some cases, young women who step outside of behavior norms by engaging in premarital dating are policed by their families or harassed and slandered by other men in the community. The effects of gossip and community policing are especially virulent for women with mixed-race backgrounds, who are already subject to a different set of race-based sexual ideologies than young women who are constructed as "purely" Indian. Joti is twenty-four years old and identifies as a South Asian woman, although her mother is half-Punjabi and half-Ugandan (her grandfather, a Ramgharia Sikh, married a Ugandan woman from Toro in the 1940s). Joti is fluent in Hindi, Gujarati, Swahili and Luganda, and has completed all her schooling in Uganda. She now works as a construction site manager for an Indian property firm. In our discussions she often explained to me what it meant to be an Indian woman or a "half caste" woman in South Asian society. The gendered and racial ideologies that she described laid emphasis on the sexual morality and purity of Indian women, while norms of sexual purity were loosed for mixed-race women, who were considered to be more desirable, sexy and "hot." Joti often repeated that half-caste women could go with anyone: with *bazungu*, *bahindi*, *baganda*, yet "they

did not have the same respect as Indian women, and were not brought up with the same values.”²⁶⁶ Moreover, mixed-race women like Joti who had Indian fathers were expected to marry an Indian man of the same ethnicity and religion, preserving the Indian line of descent in their own families. Thus, mixed-race daughters who were brought up in Indian homes by their fathers were inculcated with the religious values of the father, were socialized to identify with their "Indian culture," and were expected to conform to gender and sexual ideologies that sought to preserve the prestige of Indian women. Joti did not share her apprehensions about her grandfather's marriage to a Ugandan African woman from Toro with me, nor did she discuss whether she would be interested in dating Ugandan men, although she often spent time with African male friends.

Young women's final set of concerns surrounded their future prospects in Uganda. Most women wanted to settle down near the families, friends, and communities that raised them. At the same time, they acknowledged that there were many limitations that might prevent them from doing this. In order for women to remain within the acceptable social and cultural norms of intra-caste, ethnic, and religious endogamy, their families searched for marital partners for them in India, the East African region, or *bhaar* (“abroad,” meaning Europe, North America, and Australia, in Hindi). Women were adamant that they did not want partners from India or Pakistan—rather they wished to find suitable partners in Uganda or Kenya who understood the East African way of life. However, because of the relatively small size of South Asian communities in Uganda and the limited partners for both young men and women, most women acknowledged that they would eventually leave when it was time to marry. Many complained that it was unfair that Indian men were able to stay in Uganda and work in the family business without having to relocate away from their families and social networks.²⁶⁷

Gender-Based Organizing: Violence, Culture, and Citizenship

²⁶⁶ Interview with Joti, Kampala, 23 February 2011.

²⁶⁷ Often, they noted, men hoped to marry women from India rather than Uganda. Indian men's gender ideologies of Asian women portrayed women from India as more docile, homely, and domesticated than independent East African Asian women.

The contemporary landscape of racial, gender, and sexual politics in Uganda helps us to understand the cross-racial feminist organizing that emerged in the context of the 1997 Joshi-Sharma case with which I began this chapter. The resurgence of South Asian migration to Uganda, has indeed, led to renewed national debates about gender-based violence in Indian, Pakistani, and other South Asian communities. Violence against women in the form of femicide, dowry deaths, the removal of young girls from schools, marital pressure, and physical abuse within homes has led to an increased awareness of South Asian gender-based violence in the Ugandan print press and radio. Popular debates about violence against South Asian women evoke popular discussions about the “Asian community,” but also more complex discussions that deal with notions of the “universal” and “particular;” “tradition” and “rights;” “culture” and “custom.”

During the Joshi-Sharma case, Ugandan African women leaders Winnie Byanyima and Jackie Asiimwe, graduate students from the Women and Gender Studies Department at Makerere University, and other activists from the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA), worked with South Asian women leaders to ensure that Joshi's death was not in vain and that Sharma would be tried fairly in the Ugandan courts.²⁶⁸ In the first major display of cross-racial and ethnic solidarity in the post-expulsion era, South Asian, Ugandan African, and even expatriate European women who were members of the International Women's Organization (IWO), attended multiple court hearings and staged silent protests in order to prevent Sharma from posting bail or being acquitted. Engaged in activism surrounding the Joshi-Sharma case were a number of prominent organizations and NGOs involved in the Ugandan women's movement since the early 1990s: Action for Development (ACFODE), FIDA, Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), and Hope After Rape (HAR).²⁶⁹ Indeed, Ugandan women leaders guided elite Indian women through the practices of social activism by organizing the silent protest at the courts in Kampala.

²⁶⁸ Winnie Byanyima is a leading Ugandan women's activist (of Ganda ethnicity) and a former Minister of Parliament that was affiliated with the NRM. Jackie Asiimwe worked for UWONET and a number of international women's organizations. FIDA-Uganda is a feminist and Marxist-oriented legal advocacy group and non-governmental organization that continues to advocate for abused South Asian women in Uganda.

²⁶⁹ See Tripp (2000).

After Joshi's death, two Gujarati Ugandan Asian women leaders expressed their concerns about violence in South Asian communities on an Indian radio program called "*Ap Ki Pasand*" ("As You Like It," *Hindi*) in the late 1990s.²⁷⁰ They then established an activist group called the Asian Women's Support Group and a hotline for women in Uganda who were being victimized by their spouses or other relatives and needed help.²⁷¹ As Jackie Asiimwe described to me in Kampala in May 2010, the same South Asian and Ugandan women leaders who mobilized together during the Joshi-Sharma case in the early 1990s continue to come together when any new cases of violence against South Asian women emerge.²⁷² Indeed, there are no violence prevention initiatives such as domestic violence shelters for South Asian communities, although some new culturally-sensitive workshops and activities among the IWA and South Asian youth are beginning to emerge.²⁷³ For the most part, however, women's informal activist networks emerge when a woman is already having a domestic dispute and when she seeks out Ugandan domestic violence organizations such as FIDA for help—indeed, when it is already too late to prevent violence against women.

²⁷⁰ Interviews with Jayani and Jigna, Kampala, 30 August 2003.

²⁷¹ Interview with Jigna, Kampala, 15 August 2003.

²⁷² Interviews with Jackie Asiimwe, Kampala, 15 May 2010 and 20 August 2011.

²⁷³ Especially Ismaili youth involved in the Aga Khan's initiatives for the empowerment of Shia Ismaili women in East Africa.



Figure 30: Multi-racial women organizing in response to the femicide of Renu Joshi. Source: "Kooky Inquiries Complete." *The New Vision*, 10 January 1998.

Although both Ugandan African and Asian women worked together during the Joshi-Sharma case, cross-racial organizing is not without its tensions. South Asian leaders are concerned about the participation of Ugandan NGOs and Ugandan activists in domestic violence issues, particularly if the media and press brings undue attention to the internal dynamics of South Asians—those social issues and problems that community gate-keepers are embarrassed and anxious about making visible to outsiders (see my discussion of the politics of “cultural intimacy” in Chapter 1). The publication of the photos of Joshi’s body that I referenced in the beginning of this chapter seemed to be the greatest affront to the women I spoke to. They noted that it was an undue invasion of privacy, and conveyed a sense of embarrassment and fear that the case had drawn attention to the negative aspects of South Asian society in Kampala. The possibility that

negative images surrounding a non-cohesive and racialized “Asian community” that was in the process of re-establishing itself in Kampala might emerge was troubling to women and other community builders. Some women, for example, strongly expressed to me that the femicide of Renu Joshi was a tragic aberration and an exceptional event. The husband of Joshi must have been pathological or “half-insane.”²⁷⁴ The case did not represent the “Asian community” at large, nor did it represent the way that women were treated, particularly the Ugandan Asian population in Kampala. Men and women were also concerned about public apprehensions and representations of the case because of their emphasis on Indian women as victims of licentious, criminal, and pathological South Asian men. Most troubling was that among a particular section of bourgeois Ugandan Asian women, violence against women in South Asian communities was naturalized as a problem among the emerging laboring and trading classes of South Asian migrants only. These women sought to downplay the structural dynamics that may have led to Joshi's femicide while blaming new economic migrants for their violent behaviors.

Therefore, not all South Asian women were engaged, passionate activists. Many elite Ugandan Asian women with whom I spoke felt it was best to distance themselves from the case.²⁷⁵ They declined attending the court hearings that other activists from the Indian Women's Association and the International Women's Organization organized and attended. Some did this because they had received counsel from their husbands or others that it was not a good idea to get involved in the affairs of other families—i.e. there might be retribution for their actions, and “one could never be too careful.” Cultural tendencies, rooted in patriarchal structures that prevent women from speaking about abuse in their homes, were reproduced within the structures of community governance in Uganda.

It became clear to me, through both media representations of and interviews with South Asian women, that the “Asian community” should only be portrayed in certain ways. Most importantly, the community builders that I discussed in Chapter 5 are also gate-keepers who seek to portray an image of the South Asian minority presence in Uganda as an important “business community” of investor-citizens that contributes

²⁷⁴ Interview with Guneet, 15 July 2006. Interview with Pallavi, 20 July 2006.

²⁷⁵ Interview with Saira, 30 August 2003.

economic capital and cultural and social diversity to an emerging modern, developed, and cosmopolitan Uganda.

Culture, Custom, and Difference

Some South Asian leaders condemned practices of gender inequality but also mobilized claims that gender practices had to be contextualized within the norms of “Asian culture” and “Asian religion” that themselves required unique laws. In 2006, the father of 22 year-old Navpreet Kaur pulled her out of school. Navpreet was expected to stay home until her parents successfully arranged her marriage. A Ugandan friend attempted to locate a job for her in a local shop in town. Her parents refused to allow her to work, and Navpreet ran away from home. Both Navpreet and her friend asked for help at FIDA-Uganda (the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers), an NGO where Navpreet described to Ugandan activists that she had been physically and psychologically abused since childhood, and that her parents were pressuring her to marry rather than allowing her to pursue further education.²⁷⁶ Indeed, Navpreet had been pulled out of several other schools, most recently due to fears that she was having an affair with another student. After fleeing from her home, she resided temporarily at the home of a prominent Ugandan woman activist. She feared the involvement of the Indian Women’s Association (IWA) in her case.²⁷⁷ Eventually, the IWA was called to FIDA and Indian women leaders began to pursue an arbitration process between the young woman and her family. All parties eventually settled upon an agreement whereby the young woman would be sent to a boarding school near Kampala and away from her family where she could complete her education. Women from the IWA raised and donated funds for the young girl in order to support her school fees so that the family would not be liable for the expenses.²⁷⁸

The Navpreet Kaur case was covered and discussed in the Ugandan press almost immediately. What ensued was a series of articles that debated universal or culturally-

²⁷⁶ “I am in Trouble for Rejecting Marriage.” *The New Vision*. January 19, 2006.

“Indian Women Intervene in Forced Marriage Case.” *The Monitor*. March 10, 2006.

²⁷⁷ Interview with Jackie Asimwe, Kampala, 15 May 2010.

²⁷⁸ “Indian Women Intervene in Forced Marriage Case.” *The Monitor*. March 10, 2006. Interview with Abida, Kampala, 30 August 2003. Interview with Uzma, Kampala, 15 November 2008.

specific legal frameworks for dealing with women's domestic lives in Uganda. One angry editorialist observed that Navpreet was not a minor and should be able to "take her own decisions."²⁷⁹ This was written in response to articles that reported Navpreet's father's and other Indian women's claims that "Indian culture [is] not up for debate..." and that "being in Uganda does not mean we should disrespect our Indian laws."²⁸⁰ A prominent Ugandan women's activist, Jackie Asiimwe, responded to the articles and editorials by stating that "Ugandan laws affect both citizens and non-citizens...according to the 1995 Constitution and Marriage Act, forcing anyone into marriage is a crime and anyone can be deported."²⁸¹ Asiimwe followed her statement by noting the "need to advocate for a clear family law in order to protect women...this case reveals the gaps in our legal regime...[it is] unfortunate that the Domestic Relations Bill has not passed."

While debating whether or not Ugandan laws should be applied to migrant non-citizen South Asian women, activists used the Navpreet Kaur case to advocate for the proposed (2003) Domestic Relations Bill (DRB). The DRB, which is meant to criminalize the actions of perpetrators of abuse to a greater extent than before and provide protections to women of all communities in Uganda, regardless of their citizenship status, racial, ethnic and religious affiliation, was tabled by the Parliament in 2008. Influenced by the urgency and momentum of a global women's movement that was ushered in by the UN Decade of Women, Ugandan activists couch the DRB within a framework of liberalism and women's universal human right to live free from gender-based violence. In the context of the Navpreet Kaur and Joshi-Sharma cases, Ugandan activists mobilize the human rights framework to suggest that both African and South Asian women, regardless of citizenship status or nationality, have the right to live free from violence.

Activist women began to face opposition from Indian leaders who suggested that the DRB Bill was based on a model of African marriage practices, and did not address the various forms of customary law that have applied to Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim communities in the past. A prominent Ugandan Asian lawyer suggested that Asian women were not oppressed in the way that they had been represented in the media, and

²⁷⁹ "Come on, Deepa, Be More Serious." *The Monitor*, 20 January 2006, page 10.

²⁸⁰ "I am in Trouble for Rejecting Marriage." *The New Vision*, 19 January 2006.

"Indian Women Intervene in Forced Marriage Case." *The Monitor*. 10 March 2006.

²⁸¹ "Indian Dowry Woes: Test for Law-Makers." *The New Vision*, 31 January 2006.

that women must respect their parents.”²⁸² She suggested that “parents who choose partners for their daughters mean well, and usually pick a man based on his family history...Navpreet is too young to take decisions on her own.”²⁸³ She also argued that the DRB bill was problematic because it would ostensibly retract the Customary Marriage Act, Hindu Marriage and Divorce Act, and Marriage and Divorce Mohammedans Act. In short, she argued that the DRB “does not define what custom is.”

Thus, the lawyer suggested that customary law should not be done away with. Rather, she advocated for the preservation and reform of custom in line with the cultural specificities of particular communities. Her position protected and defended cultural particularity and laws that apply to particular groups. In doing so, she advocated for the importance of different legal regimes for different social groups, constructing forms of “difference” that pose obstacles to Ugandan African activists’ non-racial ideologies of the universal rights for all women. Thus, some South Asian women leaders, who represent the interests of their constituencies, actively protect and preserve the boundaries of emerging South Asian communities, ultimately preserving the boundaries of a “South Asian community” and “culture” that are re-establishing themselves in the post-expulsion era. Finally, notions of “Asian culture,” “custom,” and “tradition” are reified both within larger Ugandan publics and by Indian leaders themselves. Perhaps, this desire to retain the sanctity of an “Asian culture” and cultural difference is related to historical concerns surrounding the dissolution of Ugandan Indian society and its eventual destruction in the country.

In the end, this assertion of cultural difference is considered an affront to Ugandan women, particularly as Ugandan advocates at FIDA-Uganda find themselves more and more involved in cases of violence against South Asian women. Often, it is South Asian women like Navpreet Kaur who contact FIDA for fear that family and communal structures, or even the IWA, will reinforce cultural traditions that young women oppose. Because FIDA’s leaders are aware that Asian community leaders want to be discreet about cases of violence, FIDA advocates take on a “watchdog” presence over Indian community builders and the IWA. They do so in order to make sure that no further

²⁸² “Does the Proposed Family Law Solve Any Dowry Problems?” *The Monitor*, 5 February, 2006.

²⁸³ “Indian Women Intervene in Forced Marriage Case.” *The Monitor*. 10 March, 2006.

injustices or violences are propagated against women within communal structures, particularly since women have little access to money or other sources of support beyond their immediate kinship networks. They also seek to prevent corruption between perpetrators of abuse and the Ugandan police or judges at courts.

While the IWA recognizes the importance of FIDA in helping to address cases of violence, they also view Ugandan activists as insensitive to privacy issues. Moreover, some community builders and activists claim and define a unified notion of an “Asian community” that has issues particular to “Asian culture,” actively seeking to preserve racial, cultural, and gendered boundaries in Uganda. According to the IWA, FIDA and other Ugandan organizations that operate within a framework of universal human rights and gender quality tend to underemphasize matters of cultural particularity. All this suggests that some Asian community leaders want to keep Asian women’s issues apart from the violence that occurs against the broader Ugandan female population.

Conclusions: African-Asian Gender-Based Coalitions?

While I argued in Chapter 4 that the latest configuration of the "Indian" was that of the capital-rich foreign investor, it is clear via my ethnographic, historical, and primary source material that lower class migrant Indian women are invisible and not recognized as investor-citizens with privileges and rights on par with South Asian men. Rather, Indian women are legally recognized as the "dependents" of Indian migrants and expatriates. Rather than being governed by civil law, Indian women's situations are mediated by domestic and communal contexts that are constituted by patriarchal structures. By and large, cases of violence against South Asian women continue to be handled within families, by the organizing committees of temples within various Asian communities, by the Indian Women’s Association, or not at all. While Ugandan laws that are meant to protect women are applicable to non-citizen Indian men, in the absence of a Domestic Relations Bill, and without the reform of family laws that have been implemented since the colonial era, cases of violence against migrant women will continue to be privatized within the structures of the “community” and by the South Asian leadership at large.

The Joshi-Sharma and Navpreet Kaur cases, however, presented important opportunities for Ugandan activists to advocate on the behalf of universal rights-based feminist initiatives for all women in Uganda—African and South Asian. Indeed, the same newspapers in which I found sensationalized images of Joshi’s body contained educational notices about gender-based violence, editorials denouncing violence against Ugandan women, and advertisement campaigns for the Domestic Relations Bill to larger Ugandan publics.²⁸⁴ In public commentary, Ugandan activists not only used evidence of abuse in South Asian communities to proclaim the universality of violence against women. African women’s claims for gender equality in the domestic realm vis-à-vis state-level legal reforms also incorporate marginalized, isolated and socially invisible migrant South Asian women within a Ugandan national framework based on freedom from gender-based violence. That some victims of abuse are beginning to approach Ugandan organizations directly means that women are locating more empowered African women to represent them and their rights for freedom from violence and abuse. The post-1990s context reveals that there are new landscapes of institutions and agencies (organized around liberal politics) that women can access—rather than being contained within communal and racialized forms of governance.

Yet the recognition of non-citizen migrant South Asian women within broader Ugandan publics is also rather brief and intermittent, reserved for instances in which violence against Indian women becomes visible to Ugandan authorities and NGOs—thereby precluding possibilities for the prevention of violence that more thoroughly incorporate South Asian women within larger gender-based violence prevention initiatives in Uganda. Unfortunately, South Asian women leaders, concerned about making visible community issues, as well as attracting attention to a newly emerging "Asian community" in a post-expulsion era, pose challenges to Ugandan women's activism surrounding violence against Indian women. Although some Ugandan women activists and Indian community leaders possessed strained relationships with each other, both acknowledged the broader challenges they were facing with the government and the

²⁸⁴ “Domestic Violence Not Family Matter.” *The Monitor*, 2 December 1998.

“The Renu Joshi Murder, Justice Has Been Done,” *The New Vision*, 25 January 1997.

“This Death Must Not Be Forgotten,” *The New Vision*, 30 December 1997.

ways that they had worked together in the past to protect Indian women in Kampala. If women find ways to work with each other, then the occurrence of cross-racial activism among African and South Asian women in response to cases of violence against women present possibilities for novel feminisms, political agendas, and a movement away from an exclusively market-based, “investor” identity for South Asians in Uganda.

Finally, in this chapter, I emphasized the politics of insecurity surrounding Indian women's bodies in multi-racial Uganda, both past and present. Historical and ethnographic evidence suggest that young women's bodies, in particular, are the locus for broader racial, cultural, and gendered struggles surrounding South Asian presence in the nation. The cases of violence I discussed above, in addition to the racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual dynamics of Indian women’s lives in the past and present, reveal the urgency of integrating a gendered analysis in our understanding of African-Asian relations in Uganda.

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Chapter 7

Conclusions: South-South Conditions and African-Asian Relations

Introduction

In the context of the financial crisis and global recession that began in 2007, as well as the renewed emergence of political and economic alliances between countries that are part of the Global South, I became interested in official discourses and rhetoric surrounding the possibilities of African-Asian relations that had begun to circulate in Kampala during my fieldwork (2008-2011). South-Southism, as a geopolitical project, political and economic ideology, and discursive practice in Uganda, seemed to usher in optimism surrounding a new era of partnership between African and Asian nations and between African and South Asian individuals in post-expulsion Uganda.

At the same time, there was a curious disconnect between official and elite discourses about South-South relations and cross-racial economic partnership and the more vexed historical politics of racial animosity, economic disenfranchisement of Ugandans, and South Asian exclusion in post-colonial East Africa, particularly in the context of decolonization and intensive processes of nation-building in the 1960s and 1970s. For example, transnational South Asian business enterprise that re-instantiates racialized labor hierarchies and legitimizes the repatriation of capital outside of Uganda—as well as community reconstruction processes that re-affirm logics of racial, ethnic and cultural difference between “Asian” and “African” social groups—were well underway in Kampala. Yet, paradoxically, the Ugandan state seemed to be recruiting foreign direct investment from Asian countries such as China and India and aggressively welcoming both Ugandan Asians and South Asians back to the country.

As I began to observe and take notes on processes of Ugandan Asian re-integration and South Asian migration to the country, I sought to analyze both the form and social practice (the lived experience) of citizenship that was emerging for South Asians in a post-Africanization and neoliberal economic Uganda: what I describe in this text as “post-expulsion Uganda.” How were processes of South Asian re-incorporation taking place, particularly in the context of former President Idi Amin’s Economic War against Asians and his expulsion of the Ugandan Indian population in 1972? In order to begin analyzing these questions, I sought to historical transformations in the Ugandan state apparatus, shifting dynamics of state sovereignty, governance, and both the lived experience and discursive construction of minority citizenship over time through ethnographic and historical method.

First, I came to understand Uganda as a historically specific *space*: a space that is inhabited by a new generation of Ugandan youth who are coming of age in President Museveni’s National Resistance Movement government (in power for 27 years), a post-imperial diaspora of Ugandan Asian long-term residents and “returnees” from Europe and North America (return migrants), and a new generation of economic migrants from post-colonial South Asia. Urban Kampala is the site of these intersecting “diasporic communities.” It is also an urban milieu that is characterized by the “unfinished business” of the expulsion, a space in which new forms of racialized anxiety and personal and community insecurity circulate because of the emerging economic order of recognition for South Asians and their new-found visibility as a racialized minority in Uganda. I also argue that urban Uganda must be analyzed as a unique historical site of both South Asian “rootedness” (as in the material culture of Ugandan Indian property and religious infrastructure in urban landscapes, or the “leftover” Ugandan Indians who remained in Kampala after the expulsion decree, see Chapters 1 and 3) and “mobility” (the out-flow and in-flow of complex diasporic communities of racialized and ethnicized Ugandan Asians and other South Asian migrants over time).

In doing, so I suggest that there is a need for a Continent-based African-Asian studies that encapsulates the complexity of South Asian diasporic communities in contemporary Uganda, as well as more recent transformations in South Asian inclusion and re-incorporation in East Africa. This mode of analysis moves beyond the categories

of *social identity* that have conventionally been used to study South Asians and Africans in Uganda—instead it has become important to analyze processes of *subjectivation*, or the making of African and South Asian subjectivities and identities through different scales of power; i.e. processes of global, state, and community governance.

In the process of conducting ethnographic and historical research with Ugandan Asians who remained in the country, with South Asian “community-builders,” with Indian and Ugandan women involved in initiatives to protect migrant South Asian women from domestic violence, and in the process of participating in ethnographic research at the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), I began to ask more pointed research questions: namely, *what analytics should be used to assess new South Asian migration and community-building in Kampala? Are South Asians investing in their communities, in new relationships with Ugandans, in both, or neither? How have the experiences of national re-integration for South Asian men and women differed? And finally, what are the possibilities and limitations of reconstructing African-Asian relations in a post-expulsion and post-Africanization Uganda?*

This last question, in particular, stemmed from my own political motivations and interests in the possibilities of cross-racial solidarities and/or an alternative aesthetics of belonging that are based on universal and cosmopolitan ideals of community and social participation. These possibilities derive from my interest in a litany of works that have critiqued essentialist racialized identity politics and the bounded territoriality of the nation-state; or works that have analyzed alternative imaginaries of freedom and the possibilities of African-Asian solidarities in diasporic contexts outside of the violence of colonial territories (Gilroy 2000, Kelley, Prashad 2007; 2000; 2000, Singh 2004). In the process of analyzing my ethnographic and historical data, I came to terms with both the possibilities and limitations of renewed African-Asian relations in Uganda. Thus, advocates of South-Southism, whose discourses are often characterized by triumphal narratives of cross-racial solidarity and economic sovereignty for formerly colonized individuals, might consider the importance of ethnographic research conducted in grounded historical, local and cultural contexts. My research, in particular, had utilized the analytics of sovereignty, citizenship and security in order to understand the lived experiences of Ugandan Asians and South Asians who are living under South-South

conditions—as well as the effects of new processes of South Asian inclusion and migration on Ugandan Africans.

Findings

In order to answer my research questions, I utilized the analytics of state sovereignty, citizenship and security to frame my understanding of post-expulsion South Asian minority citizenship in Uganda. In Chapter 1, "Mapping Imperial Terrain in South-South Times," I contrasted scholars' interpretations of imperial citizenship; modern, Eurocentric, and national conceptions of citizenship; and transnational, flexible citizenship. I applied these insights to an understanding of minority citizenship in Uganda by tracing the scholarly use of the concept of citizenship as it was applied to Indians in Uganda. Finally, I contrasted these interpretations with historical transformations in the application and practice of citizenship in Uganda—as well as the social experience of exclusion for Ugandan Asians and contemporary inclusion for South Asian migrants. Significantly, I showed that the form of mobility and rights that Ugandan Indians enjoyed as former British "imperial citizens" were radically reduced in the context of their transformation into "non-citizens" in the new Ugandan nation in the 1960s and 1970s. In the post-expulsion and post-1990s era, by contrast, I demonstrated the "unbundling" of citizenship from its legal and juridical character, as well as its association with a "contract" between the state and particular political, social, and economic rights for African and South Asian citizen-subjects in Uganda.

Through historical and ethnographic study of former President Idi Amin and President Yoweri Museveni's bureaucratic statecraft, I argued that most Ugandan Asians and South Asians in contemporary Uganda are "flexible citizens" whose choices to stay or leave Uganda depend upon market criteria, their own individual assessment of risks and benefits for themselves and their families, increased opportunities for mobility in the Indian Ocean arena, and their transnational connections to "home" countries. Thus, "flexible" and transnational South Asian migrants seek to maximize their benefits from the nation-state while they attempt to migrate to other nations for permanent settlement. In contrast, Ugandan Asians are more invested in the nation-state, tending to emphasize

their generational connections to Uganda and their identity as East African Nations. Significantly, then, both national and transnational models of citizenship exist among Ugandan Asians and South Asians in Uganda.

In Chapter 2, "South-Southism and African-Asian Studies," I explored the historical and anthropological frames of analysis that scholars have used to analyze African-Asian relationships in relation to the territory of Uganda. I argued that emerging "South-Southism" in the Indian Ocean region is transforming geopolitical and economic relations between African countries and the South Asian subcontinent. The discursive and material apparatus of "South-Southism," as expressed via international investment conferences and aggressive ideological rhetoric, presents new political and economic opportunities for Uganda's political leadership and emerging landscapes of recognition and re-integration for South Asians in Uganda.

Chapter 3, "Exceptions to the Expulsion" explores the historical politics of racialized insecurity among Ugandan Asians and others who became bureaucratic exceptions to former President Idi Amin's 1972 expulsion decree. Ugandan Asians who remained in the country during the 1970s and in the regimes that followed Idi Amin's governance developed a number of practical strategies to shore up their sense of personal, family, and community security in the context of widespread social, economic, and bodily (corporeal) insecurity. During this era, Ugandan Asian men developed a sense of themselves as racialized selves, retreating from politics and forging a new pan-Asian cross-religious and ethnic community of "Asians." They also engaged in forms of economic enterprise and the distribution of capital and gifts in order to maintain social networks with African politicians and other "big men." The chapter provides further evidence for the relationship between citizenship and security in post-expulsion Uganda—the securitization practices of this era inform the economic and social practices of contemporary Ugandan Asians and new South Asian migrants who are engaged in processes of community building in Kampala.

Chapter 4, "Real vs. Fake Investors," argued for the emergence of a neoliberal and security-oriented governance in President Museveni Yoweri's National Resistance Movement (NRM) order. As my evidence, I explored the post-1990s advent of a government ministry called the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) in Kampala. I

analyzed this institution as an emerging (post-Cold War) site of global sovereignty and global governance norms that is connected to the developmentalist imperatives of Museveni's statecraft. I examined the role of state agents in this institution to recruit South Asian and East Asian investment in order to bring foreign direct investment into the country. As a strategy of economic development, the state seeks investors in order to respond to increasing global economic marginalization and Ugandans' vulnerability and poverty in both urban and rural areas in the country.

Through ethnographic research, I demonstrated the ways in which state agents construct both Ugandan Asians and new Asian businessmen as "investors" in the country—producing a new discursive construction of South Asians as investor-citizens in Uganda. In doing so, the state also engages in processes of homogenizing, racializing and ethnicizing Ugandan Asians and South Asian businessmen and trader-migrants as an abstract South Asian social body. This new economy of recognition for Ugandan Asians and South Asian migrants entails important processes of subjectivation; i.e., individuals come to see themselves as investors in the nation in order to gain racial, cultural, and social acceptance in post-expulsion Uganda. Moreover, although the state constructs South Asian migrants as "investors," many of them are petty traders and small-time businessmen. Nonetheless, the legitimacy of the UIA and its ideological project rests upon the idea that even petty traders from India or Pakistan can become "big men," "tycoons" and investors in the nation. In response, disenfranchised Ugandans argue that *kiwani* ("fake" in Luganda) investors have overrun the country, further excluding Ugandans from opportunities to conduct businesses and enterprise in the city. Finally, I examine how state agents engage in historical and ideological projects of constructing Ugandan Asian and new South Asian investors and entrepreneurs as "reformed" and "modern" Indians who will not participate in the immoral economic malpractices that compelled former President Idi Amin to expel them from the country.

Chapter 5, "Community Failure, Community Reform" traces the attempts of Ugandan Asian and South Asian community leaders to rebuild communal organizations and construct harmonious relations with the Ugandan state—while responding to the post-1990s influx of transient South Asian economic migrants. I also reveal the ways in which community builders are involved in a number of strategies to maximize racialized

security in the post-expulsion milieu. Significantly, I borrow from Aihwa Ong's (1999) notion of "flexible citizenship" by suggesting that South Asian migration, economic enterprise, and settlement in Uganda is characterized by securitization strategies that are intimately related to Ugandan Indians' historical experience of exclusion and expulsion from Uganda. In the post-expulsion and post-Africanization context, Ugandan Asians and South Asian migrants do not seek political security through formal citizenship, but through a range of securitization practices such as the diversification of citizenships, the repatriation of capital to other countries, and the use of African business partners, etc. (Comparatively, South African Indians, who also enjoyed apartheid-era racial and economic privileges, became more fully integrated members of the independent South African nation-state in 1994 without having to engage in the same sort of techniques of securitization.) Thus, I argue that a new model of "Southern citizenship" is emerging for Ugandan Asians and South Asian migrants in Uganda—one that is based upon the advent of "flexible securitization practices."

I shifted my attention to the differential experiences of South Asian men and women migrants in Chapter 6, *Vulnerable Bodies: Bakazi Bahindi M'Uganda* (Indian Women in Uganda). Cases of violence against migrant South Asian women, publicized in the Ugandan English print press and in other forms of media such as Indian radio shows, provided me with source material from which to study African responses to South Asian migration. Cases of gender-based violence within South Asian communities also elicited the first public discussions of Indian women in Ugandan society since the independence and Asian expulsion era. This source material also allowed me to develop an understanding of migrant South Asian women's position in the nation in relation to the state's recognition and inclusion of Ugandan Asian and South Asian investor-citizens and the overwhelming visibility of South Asian men. By contrast, Indian and Pakistani women are less visible in urban public spaces and are not recognized by Ugandan legal regimes.

In order to analyze South Asian women's situations in contemporary Uganda, I explored the historical context of insecurity and anxiety around Indian women's bodies, focusing specifically on the intersecting roles of racial, ethnic, gender, class, and caste ideologies that created distinctions between Indian and African women in the colonial

and post-colonial era. Significantly, I explored the ways in which racial, ethnic, and cultural differences were sexualized in colonial and post-colonial Uganda, producing differing and unequal gender ideologies for Indian and African women. Moreover, in the post-independence era, African men's (perceived) sexual access to, or (perceived) inaccessibility to Indian women's bodies, became the locus for public debates surrounding the inclusion or exclusion of Ugandan Indians within the Ugandan nation.

Post-1990s Uganda, however, is an environment that is characterized by transnational South Asian migration. Thus, I explored the racial, ethnic, gendered, and sexual landscape of Kampala through ethnographic analysis and by focusing on the experiences of young Indian women as they begin to navigate a multi-racial Uganda under the new regime of governance. Instead of being recognized by the state, I show that Indian women, particularly those that are subject to forms of domestic violence, continue to be regulated by the colonial-era structures of religious and ethnic communal governance. Young women struggle with emerging patriarchal structures of community governance—structures that have emerged in response to women's increasing urban mobility in African spaces and their interactions with men from different racial and communal backgrounds.

Young women increasingly seek forms of protection and guidance from Ugandan women's rights organization, particularly when community organizations such as the Indian Women's Association (IWA) fail to protect women. Community leaders are concerned about the role of Ugandan activists and the media in making the "internal" problems of South Asian communities, particularly domestic violence, visible to larger Ugandan African publics. Nonetheless, both elite and educated South Asian and Ugandan have worked together on domestic violence cases to seek justice for abused Indian women. Interestingly, victimized South Asian women are becoming an important resource for Ugandan women activists who make liberal claims for universal gender equality for all women regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or formal citizenship status. All of this reveals the possibilities of gender-based claims for South Asian recognition in Uganda. Despite these possibilities, however, in large part, the IWA seeks to preserve cultural and racial difference between South Asian and African women by handling cases

of violence within the structures of communal governance instead of within African women's organizations.

Renewed South Asian migration to Uganda suggests that rather than using the heuristic of "citizen" (or settler) and "subject" to understand the relations between Africans and Asians, analytic tools that explore shifting geopolitical dynamics, global governance norms, state sovereignty and governance, and community governance are all needed in order to allow us to understand the production of new types of membership and exclusion in African societies, particularly as the needs and demands of African nation-states shift over time. Indeed, renewed South Asian migration and integration in Uganda is connected to emerging South-Southism and the increasing economic vulnerability and exclusion of African countries from a global economic order. In turn, President Museveni and the NRM seek to create new alliances within the Global South in order to shore up their autonomy from Western countries and institutions, engaging with new types of resources and regional entities. These emerging forms of sovereignty, which extend beyond the territory and formal borders of the nation, are linked to a neoliberal and security-oriented model of state governance in Kampala. This is a mode of governmentality that seeks to transform all Ugandans—African and Asians—into entrepreneurial and modern citizens who will add value to a nation that is (putatively) on the verge of its "second" industrialization in the post-expulsion era. In the process, the state's policies of seeking foreign direct investment (FDI) further devalues Ugandan African citizens who engage in traditional forms of value production through pastoral and agricultural lifestyles in rural areas; they also devalue the initiatives of African businessmen who have relatively limited access to business and trading advantages and opportunities as compared to South Asians in urban areas.

The historical specificity that I have brought to understanding contemporary South Asian reintegration in post-expulsion Uganda allowed me to develop an analysis of the ways in which the politics of security and insecurity inflect processes of South Asian migration, community-building, and the reconstruction of African-Asian relations in contemporary Uganda. In doing so, I update our understanding of the politics of South Asian presence in East Africa in a post-Africanization context. Thus, rather than studying South Asians through more familiar or traditional frames of analysis such as "diaspora,"

or “community,” I understand how South Asian incorporation is part and parcel of complex global, national, and local-historical processes. Indeed, I demonstrate how contemporary South Asian re-integration is intertwined with the unfinished business of the 1972 expulsion and the *longue durée* historical politics of African-Asian relations in East Africa.

The research also reveals the significance of emerging forms of liberal citizenship claims that are based on neoliberal economic criteria (as in the case of the Asian investors, Chapter 4) or on human rights criteria (as in the cases of abused and victimized Indian women, Chapter 6). These emerging modes of South Asian re-integration and recognition exist side-by-side and in tension with historical forms of South Asian presence in East Africa that were based on labor and trading economies and relied on racialized hierarchies in which Indians possessed more rights and privileges than Africans—indeed, these are historical continuities that persist in present-day Kampala. Ultimately, this work allows us to understand the political, social, and economic processes involved in the re-structuring of African-Asian relations in the context of intensive shifts in global political economy and global and African state sovereignty and governance.

Possibilities and Limits

Indeed, in a social context in which racialized communities did not interact with each other or know each other intimately because of processes of colonization, practices of racial and cultural self-segregation, or through processes of decolonization, de-Indianization, and expulsion—how might have (and how will) “African” and “Asian” communities interact with each other at all?

Initially, I was optimistic that the new post-1990s context of South Asian migration to Uganda and the increased mobility of South Asians within different parts of Kampala city would allow me to conduct research that assessed the possibilities of cross-racial and cross-cultural interactions. Through ethnographic research, however, it became clear that the geopolitical and state rhetoric of South-South and African-Asian cooperation does not necessarily translate into local practices of cross-racial conviviality

and social intimacy. Rather, in a post-expulsion context, the historical politics of racialized insecurity for minorities—Ugandan Asian returnees and long-term residents, South Asian trader-migrants, and elite investors from South Asia—present obstacles for the reconstruction of South Asian communities which re-affirm racial exclusiveness and the possibility of African-Asian relations. More importantly, in Uganda, “South-South times,” or living under South-South conditions, translates into the simultaneous homogenization and fragmentation of South Asian collectivities, intensive practices of flexible trade and labor migration, the tenuous and vexed politics of community rebuilding, practices of racialization for both “Asians” and “Africans,” the reconstruction of racialized labor and economic hierarchies, and the increased social vulnerability and insecurity of Indian women and their bodies. Moreover, because the population of South Asians in Uganda is still fairly small, it may be too early to tell what forms of community building, practices of national integration, and new forms of cross-racial affiliation might eventually emerge.

The significant limitation of this study is its predominant focus on the ethnography and historical analysis of Ugandan Asian and South Asian migrant experiences over time, rendering Ugandan African apprehensions of South Asian presence secondary to the experiences and interpretations of the central interlocutors in my research and writing. Emplacing “Asians” and “Africans” in the same frame is work that I plan to continue developing as I further integrate Ugandan historiography and vernacular Ugandan apprehensions of Ugandan Asians and the new South Asian minority presence in my future scholarship. For instance, what are the responses of a new generation of post-expulsion Ugandan youth who grew up under the post-1986 National Resistance Movement to South Asian presence in the country? Do their apprehensions differ from Ugandans who experienced the post-independence regimes of Milton Obote and Idi Amin? These questions will require further Luganda-language based ethnographic research.

Despite this, my research points to significant arenas in which I feel that South Asians and Ugandans are beginning to encounter and interact with each other: via nascent cross-racial gender activism, the practices of East African Asian youth, the interface between “community builders” and African leaders, practices of philanthropy and other

practices of contributing cultural capital to the nation, and even in Ugandan Asian men's narratives and memorialization of their interactions with African men in Idi Amin's regime in the 1970s. More research on the racial and cultural politics of East African Asian youth and on practices of philanthropy among "community builders" in Uganda is needed to more fully understand the politics of emerging multi-racialism in the country. All of the above material suggests that there are important stakes to analyzing both "South Asians" and "Africans" within the same "frame" in Uganda. Indeed, considering South Asian and African social groups in terms of hierarchical relationship and connection, rather than as separate and isolated "communities," provide renewed openings for an African-Asian studies relevant to the multi-racial dynamics of contemporary Uganda and East Africa at large.

Broader Interventions

Exploring how South Asian presence and absence has been variously apprehended, organized, and critiqued over time allows us to understand how African nation-states like Uganda—nation-states that are not explicitly organized around multi-racial politics such as South Africa—incorporate, manage, and negotiate foreigner and minority populations in a post-Africanization, security-oriented and neoliberal economic order. I have also shown that studies of citizenship in the African context are fruitful when they are connected to grounded ethnographic research and analyze state sovereignty and modes of global and state governance, illuminating the ways in which the exclusion and inclusion of particular social groups vary according to global, national, historical and local-cultural contexts and criteria. In the process, I hope to have re-introduced a discussion on multi-racialism and the status of racialized minority groups in contemporary East Africa.

In sum, this scholarship makes significant contributions to the area studies disciplines of African and South Asian studies; race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality studies; global political economy, anthropological studies of the state; and the anthropology of sovereignty, governance, citizenship, and migration. Moreover, the analytics of South-Southism, citizenship, and security that I have used in this text provide

an approach to understanding the lived experiences of Ugandans, Ugandan Asians and South Asians migrants as they respond to the contradictions of historical insecurity and South-South relations—ultimately exposing both the possibilities and limits of African-Asian relations under South-South conditions.

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Appendix I

Critical Events in Postcolonial African-Asian Ugandan History

1962	Ugandan independence, Milton Obote becomes President. Commonwealth Immigrants Act is passed in the UK
1969	Trade (Licensing) Act is passed in Uganda, restricts Asian commercial activities
1969	Immigration Act is passed in Uganda
1972 August 4	Idi Amin's Immigration (Amendment) Decree (expulsion) is announced
1972 October 9	Deadline for expulsion of South Asians
1972 November	Headcount of remaining South Asians begins
February 1973	Formal dispossession and re-allocation of Asian assets under the DAPCB
1974-1978	Remaining Asians negotiate exemptions and visas
1979	Tanzanian People's Defence Forces (TPDF) with Ugandan allies oust Amin from Uganda. Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) is installed. Remaining Asians leave Uganda.
1979-1980	Yusuf Lule and Godfrey Binasia sworn in as Presidents and deposed
1980-1985	Milton Obote governs Uganda (Obote II regime). Asians come back, continue to use tactics and strategies for living
1983	Obote Passes Expropriated Properties Act
1985-1986	Tito Okello military government reigns

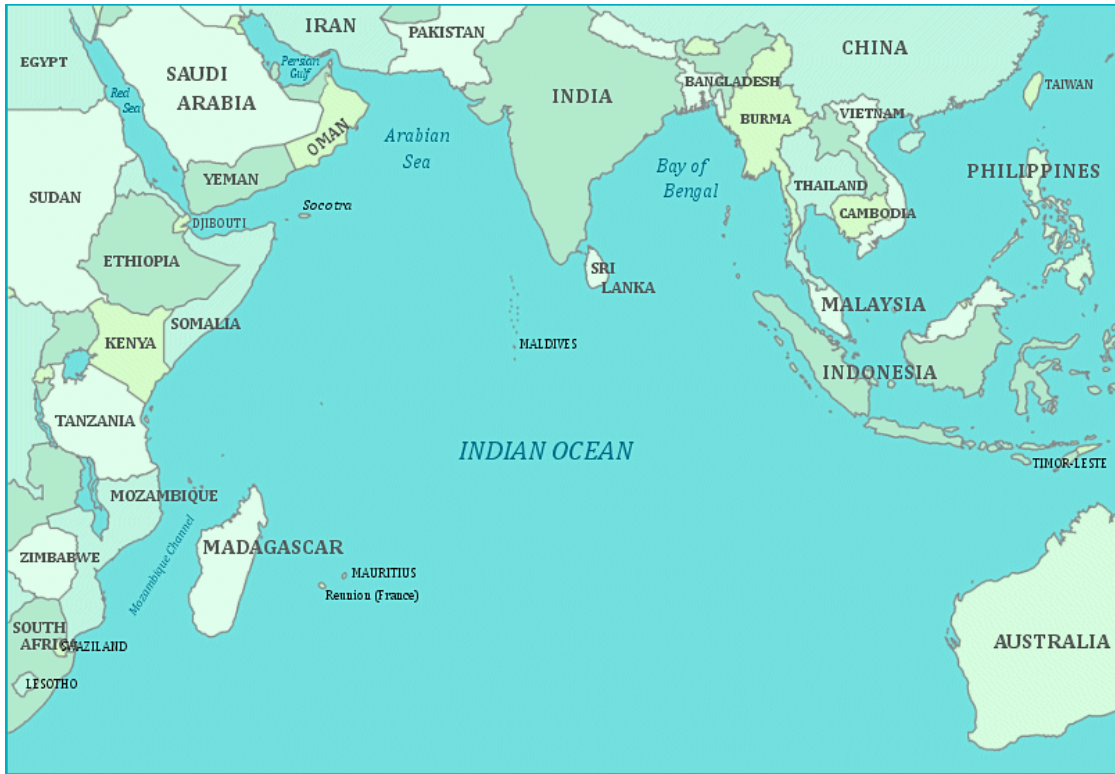
1986	NRA overruns Kampala and ousts Tito Okello's military junta, Museveni sworn in and appoints a decentralized government called the NRM
1991	The Investment Code becomes operational and the UIA is established
1993-1994	Museveni invites expelled Asians to return and re-institutes Expropriated Properties Act. Formal Property re-allocation begins. Influx of returnees
1995	New Constitution is written and enforced
2000s	Influx of some returnees who settle, influx of transnational capital, new corporations, migrant workers, informal traders, trafficked men
2005	Chinese migrants begin to settle in Uganda
2007	Anti-Asian riot related to protest against Mehta Group/SCOUL "land grab" of Mabira Forest
2008	Dual Citizenship Law is passed, excludes Indian nationals who may apply for long-term residency
2011	Museveni re-sworn as President, marks 25 years in power
2012	Forty Year anniversary of expulsion is marked by proposed Uganda Asian Reunion in Kampala and House of Lords Debate and commemoration activities in the UK

Appendix II

South Asian Community Associations in Uganda

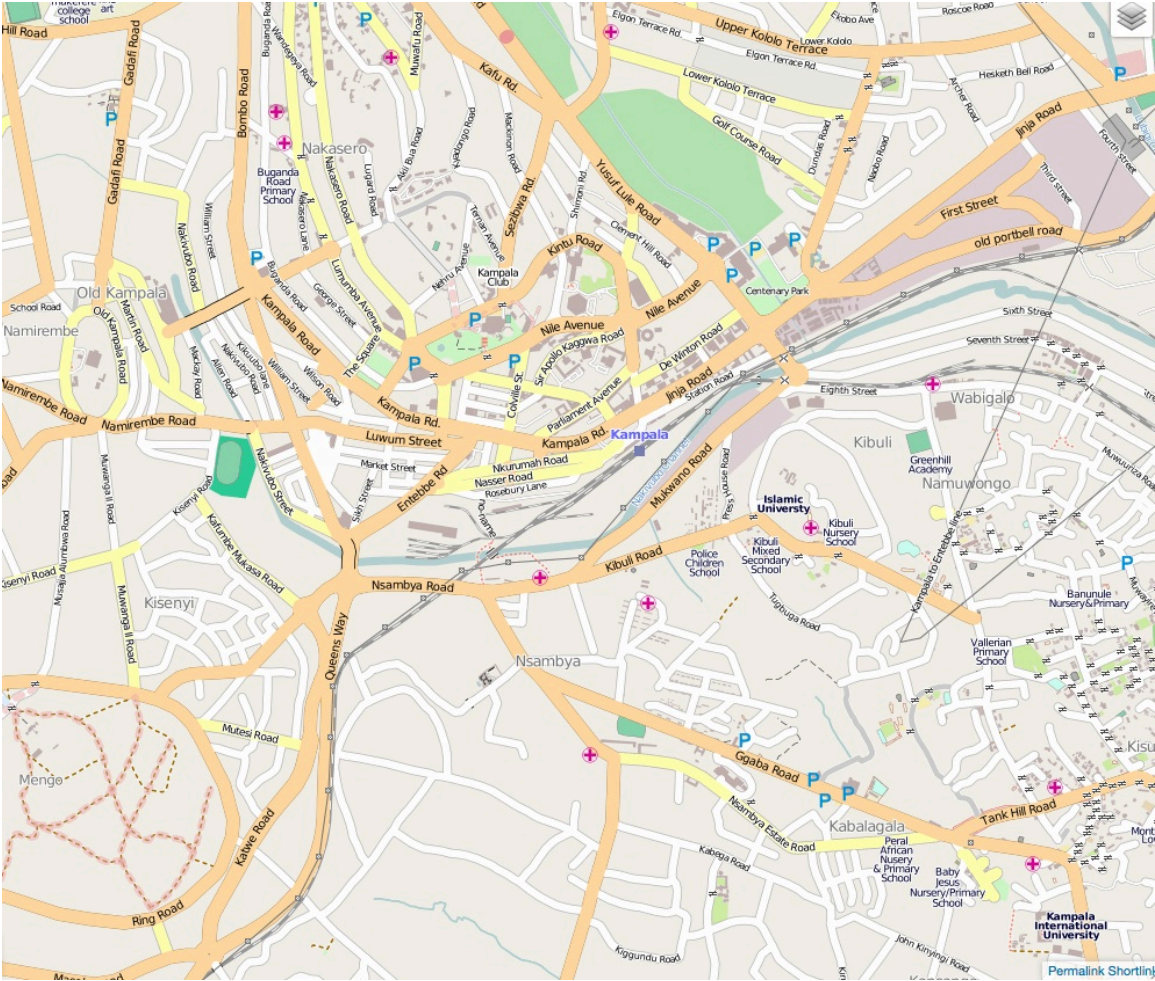
South Asian Community Associations (Post-1986)	Surat District
Indian Association Uganda (Kampala and Jinja)	Sindhi Community of Uganda
Andhra Cultural Association	Shree Swaminarayan Mandir
Shri Akhil Uganda Brahma Samaj	Punjabi Cultural Society
Bengali Association	The Social Service League (Seva Samiti)
Bhatia Samaj/Kutchi Bhatia Samaj	Tamizh Sangam
Dawodi Bohora Jamaat Corporation	World Malayalee Council
Indian Catholic Community	Youth League
Ismailia Muslim Community	Rajasthani Association
Indian Women's Association	Arya Samaj Uganda
Jain Samaj	North Indian Cultural Association
Khoja Shia Ithnasheri Jamat	Uganda Brahma Samaj
Kalashree	Ramgarhia Sikh Sports Club
Kerala Samajam Uganda	Sikh Association Uganda
Karnataka Sangha	Sikh Youth Federation of Uganda
Lohana Community	Goan Catholic Community
Maharashtra Mandal	New South Asian Religious Institution (2000s)
Patidar Samaj	Naguru Sikh Gurudwara (Ramgharia)
Patidar Shishu Kunj	Entebbe Mandhir (Brahmin)
Ramgharia Sikh Society	Kololo Jamatkhana (Khoja Ismaili)
Shree Kutch Satsang Swaminarayan Temple	Old Kampala Mosque (Sunni)
Shree Sanatan Dharma Mandal Temple	Kampala Shirdi Sai Baba Center

Appendix III



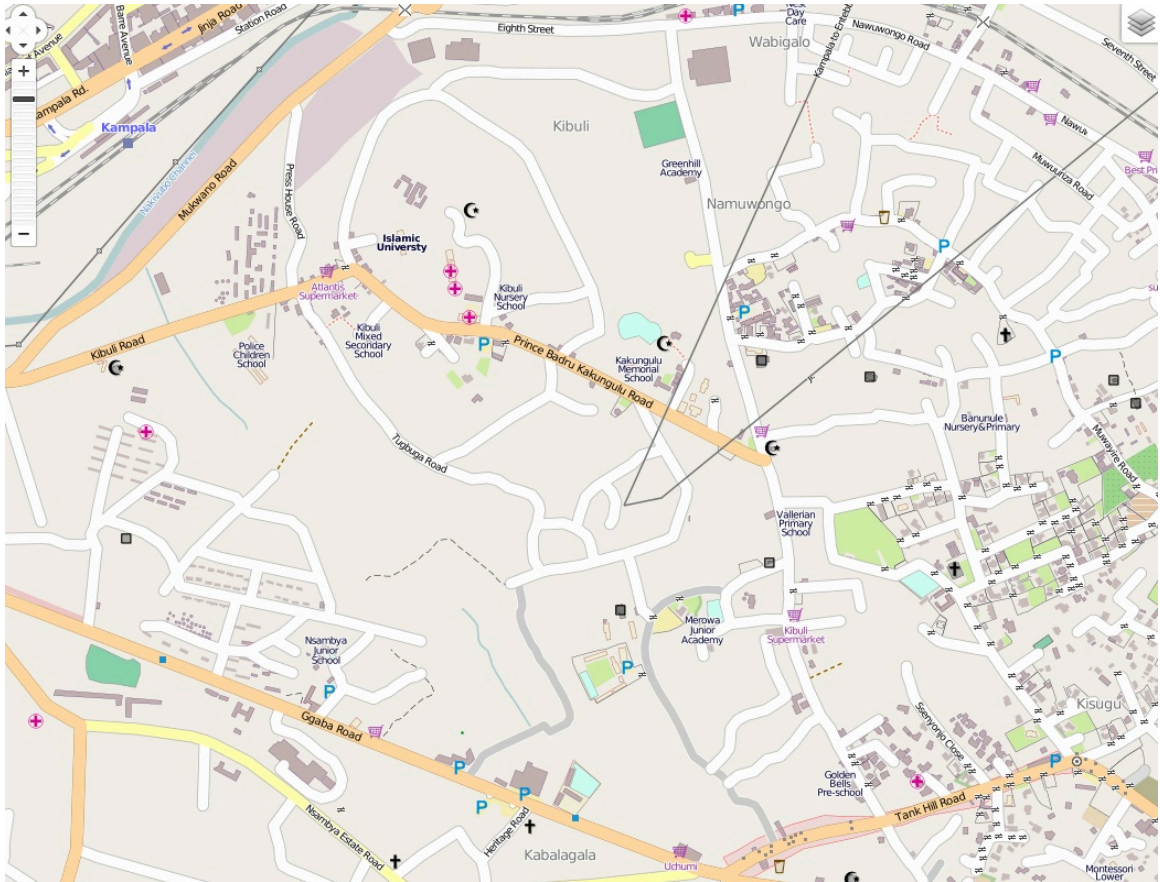
Map of Indian Ocean Arena.

Appendix VI



Central Kampala. Source: <http://www.openstreetmap.org/>

Appendix VII



Kibuli Hill, Kampala. Source: <http://www.openstreetmap.org/>