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Occasional Papers
No. 6 2002

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**The Ugandan Asians
in Sweden:
Twenty-five Years after the Expulsion**

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The Ugandan Asians in Sweden—Twenty-five years after the expulsion

This essay is to be published in H. Bradley and S. Fenton (Ed.s), *Ethnicity and Economy*. 2002

Introduction

Modern immigration to Sweden divides into four rather distinct phases. 1) Refugees from neighbouring countries 1940—48; 2) Labour migration from Finland and Southern Europe 1949—71; 3) Family reunification and refugees from Third World Countries 1972—89; 4) Asylum-seekers from South-eastern Europe and the Middle East 1990—present. The positive experiences of employing refugees in the workforce during the war led Swedish industry to recruit skilled labour from Finland and Southern Europe after the war. Sweden never adopted a guest-worker policy like Germany. Migrant labour was expected to settle permanently and to assimilate culturally into mainstream Swedish society.

It was not until labour migration was stopped in 1972 that a rethinking of migration and cultural policies occurred. Integration replaced assimilation as the goal of incorporation. Minority rights were recognized. Mother-tongue instruction was guaranteed children from non-Swedish speaking homes. These policies were based on the experiences of labour migration, but what the policy-makers did not anticipate was the economic decline in the 1970s resulting from contradictory goals and demands in the welfare state, global capital flows and the 1970s energy crisis. Earlier labour migrants had jobs but no real cultural recognition. Later arrivals enjoyed certain cultural rights but had no jobs. The Ugandan Asians appeared at this turning point of policy and of the economy. They were the first Third World refugees to be accepted with no prior links to Sweden, and a test case as it were of the new policies. What can we learn from their story?

The expulsion

Some 70,000 Asians of Uganda were forced to leave the country in 1972. They represented a community that had originated with the British colonization of the East African territories in the late nineteenth century. Indentured labourers had been brought from India, mainly from Punjab, to build the railway from Mombasa on the Kenyan coast to Lake Victoria. Traders from Gujarat followed establishing trading posts along the line. Some labourers remained when the task was completed but most returned to India. The Gujarati speaking tradesmen remained however, and encouraged relatives to come to Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda to set up new businesses. Migration from Gujarat to the Asian communities in East Africa continued right up until these territories achieved independence in the early 1960s. Although the Asian communities by then controlled much of the economy they were marginalized politically. They distrusted leaders such as Milton Obote, the first president of Uganda, who strove to develop an African brand of socialism. Many were therefore reluctant to naturalize to Ugandan citizenship when the opportunity arose. Quite a few maintained their status as British protected persons despite the fact that this status no longer entitled them to settle in the UK. Still, a significant number of Asians opted for Ugandan citizenship, anticipating that business would carry on as usual. Quite a few actually welcomed the coup staged by Idi Amin in 1971 when Obote was thrown out of power. The expulsion a year later was aimed at Asians who were British protected persons in the first place. In the chaotic situation that arose even those who were Ugandan citizens were deprived of their passports and turned stateless.

The world was taken by surprise, but international relief operations were quick to act. In the exceptional circumstances the UK accepted those who were British protected persons. Canada

and the USA accepted quite a few with good academic and professional qualifications. Sweden was one of several European countries to accept those who were stateless. Approximately 800 persons arrived in Sweden early in December 1972. Family reunifications took place the following months. Thus the initial Ugandan Asian community numbered approximately 1,000 persons. They represented different sects and castes within the main cleavage between Hindus and Muslims.

Research on the Ugandan Asian exile

Research on the Asian communities in East Africa has primarily been carried out by historians and anthropologists (Mangat 1969, Gregory 1971 and 1993, Ghai & Ghai 1970, Morris 1968). A retrospective study of class structure in post colonial Uganda was carried out by Mamdani (1976). Mamdani, who grew up in Uganda, has given a personal account of his experiences of the expulsion, the international relief action, resettlement in the UK and his encounter with British racism in *From Citizen to Refugee* (1973). Other reports have been given by O'Brien (1972), Kuper (1979), Mazrui (1979) and Twaddle (1975).

Over the years various studies of the Ugandan Asian resettlement have been undertaken in Britain, Canada and the US. Adams, Bristow and Pereira have presented the results of their research on social adjustment problems in a number of articles (Adams 1973, 1975; Adams, Pereira & Bristow 1978; Bristow, Adams & Pereira 1975; Bristow 1976; Bristow & Adams 1977; Pereira, Adams & Bristow 1978). With the benefit of hindsight it appears today that these researchers expected to find adjustment problems and consequently that is what they found. Other early studies were reported by Kohler (1973), Cole (1973) and Kuepper, Lackey & Swinerton (1975). Tambs-Lyche, a Norwegian anthropologist, did some comparative work on the Ugandan Asians who were accepted in Norway and Britain (Tambs-Lyche 1980). He concluded that conditions of resettlement were very different, not unexpectedly due to the existence of the large Indian and Pakistani sub-cultures in England.

About ten years subsequent to the expulsion another type articles started to appear. These indicated that the Ugandan Asians seemed to be doing well academically, professionally, business-wise and economically (Bose 1982; Adams & Jesudason 1984; Tandon 1984; Bhachu 1985; Robinson 1993). Robinson (1986, 1988) analysed the situation for the Asians in the British labour market. Helweg & Helweg (1990) showed that a successful integration in the labour market was also typical of the East African Asian communities in the US. Most of the literature on the Ugandan Asians before as well as after the expulsion is descriptive. The work by Mamdani, and perhaps Morris, represent exceptions.

Defining the group

In 1973 I interviewed members of some thirty Ugandan Asian families in a Swedish refugee camp about their background, the expulsion, their feelings about the flight and their thoughts about resettlement in Sweden (Westin 1975). Later in the 1970s I met the same respondents several times (Westin 1986). The current study is a follow-up of social and geographical mobility twenty-five years and a generation later.

In several countries where the Ugandan Asians resettled the qualification *Ugandan* (and even *East African*) is gradually losing in importance. A generation has been born in the west without any personal experience of or attachment to East Africa. It is an open question whether the Ugandan and/or East African Asian groups are gradually merging with other migrants from India and Pakistan in terms of organisations and infrastructure. In 1997 there were approximately 15,000 migrants from countries of the Indian subcontinent residing permanently in Sweden, 10,000 of whom were from India. Only about 1,500 persons are

affiliated with the Asian Cultural Societies tracing their origins in Sweden back to the Ugandan expulsion.

The names and addresses of most Ugandan Asians in Sweden are listed in a telephone directory compiled by the Asian Cultural Society in Mariestad, one of the centres of Ugandan Asian settlement. The latest updated edition of the directory was issued in conjunction with the twenty-five year anniversary of the expulsion. In a short preface the expulsion is mentioned as the event that triggered the Diaspora, and hence the origin of the Asian Cultural Societies in various Swedish towns. The preface, however, also addresses itself to members who have come later from India and Pakistan, as well as to those of the younger generation who are born in Sweden. This is important identity information.

Everyone listed in the directory does not have a personal background in the Asian communities in Uganda as such. Indeed, many on the roll, and family members of those listed in the directory, have come from India, and in a few cases from Pakistan. Some have even come from the UK, Kenya, Tanzania and Norway. Most importantly, a large number of family members are born and raised in Sweden. The Ugandan Asian label, then, refers to the *origin of the communities* in Sweden. The Asian Cultural Societies (as the communities refer to themselves) do not include or embrace all migrants from the Indian subcontinent, only those who experienced the expulsion themselves, their descendants, and later arrivals who through family ties identify themselves with and are accepted as members of the Asian Cultural Societies.

The roll of names in the directory are organized according to towns of residence and heads of household, predominantly middle-aged and elderly men. This directory proved to be the only practical way to locate families with a "Ugandan" Asian background currently living in Sweden. Official registration and census data provide insufficient information to locate and identify members of the community. Immigrants are registered only by country of birth and citizenship. Later arrivals as well as descendants of the original refugees born in Sweden would have been impossible to identify by way of census data. In the case of Muslims, an additional problem would have been to distinguish Asians from Africans with access only to information about country of origin and names.

In 1997 a questionnaire was distributed and addressed to first names listed for the 343 households in the directory. More than 85% of the returned questionnaires were answered by males. Normally this would be seen as a bias. However, the information that we asked for was not personal but rather "structural", that is to say, concerning the whereabouts of the family and household in the social and geographical land- and timescape. We did not seek to uncover individual attitudes or values. The level of non-response was 45% which is high. Only 177 questionnaires were returned. There is, however, no systematic bias in the geographical distribution of the respondents as compared to non-respondents. Distributions with regard to religion and age correspond fairly well to estimations made by members of the Asian Cultural Society in Mariestad.

Indicators of social mobility

Education, housing and occupation were used as indicators of social position in this study. These indicators have limitations, because in a questionnaire of the kind employed here these variables are taken out of the context of real life with its complex dialectics of ideology, identity negotiations and status attribution. The subjective and interpersonal dimension of values, status evaluation and prestige is missing in our attempt to determine social position. Another complicating factor is that we are dealing with change over an extended space of

time—over three generations, and between three continents. This means that only rather crude indicators will work as a kind of least common denominator.

The respondents' parents are referred to as *generation 1*. The respondent and his/her spouse are referred to as *generation 2*, and their children as *generation 3*. Each generation in this sense covers a wide range of years. Those classified here as belonging to the same *generation* do not necessarily belong to the same age cohort. There is, however, a centre of gravity. Typically generation 1 was born in India, generation 2 grew up in Uganda, and generation 3 has spent most of its life in Sweden.

Formal education

Practically all those referred to here as generation 1 had their schooling in India. It is more surprising that almost half of those belonging to generation 2, that is to say the respondents themselves and their spouses, also had their primary schooling in India (and in what is now Pakistan), the other half in Uganda. Most of those belonging to generation 3 have had their schooling in Sweden, in some individual cases in Uganda. Broadly speaking, the educational opportunities have differed considerably for the three generations. What they appear to have in common, though, is the belief that education promotes the chances of social mobility. All generations appear to value education highly.

Table 1. Highest completed formal education. Distribution in percent.

		Primary level 0-6 years	Secondary level 7-12 years	University level	
1	Father	71	8	21	100
	Mother	82	15	3	100
2	Respondent	29	51	20	100
	Spouse	34	52	14	100
3	Son 1	13	62	25	100
	Son 2	13	54	33	100
	Daughter 1	12	58	30	100
	Daughter 2	18	53	29	100

The information given in table 1 is consistent with the trend over the past three or four decades that the number of years people have to spend in education and training is constantly increasing. A large majority of the respondents' parents (generation 1) had about six years of schooling. For mothers it was generally less than three years. Surprisingly many males of this first generation, however, had had some university level training. The relatively high degree of university attendance has only increased marginally for males but substantially for females for the following generations. Partly these distributional differences between the generations may

be explained by social mobility. Mainly, however, the differences between the generations are attributable to the universal extension of the number of years one has had to spend in school to qualify for given occupations and positions. A final comment: The marked gender difference in access to higher education for the first generation has more or less levelled out for the third generation. Twenty-five years ago Ugandan Asian families maintained rather traditional gender values stressing the husband's bread-winning role and his wife's more domestic responsibilities. These customary roles have not prevented women of the second and third generation from pursuing secondary level, and not infrequently university level studies. Gender roles still differ in many respects from the Swedish ideal stressing equality, but as far as higher education is concerned, young Asian women have not been discouraged to study.

In western welfare states education, has tended to be a powerful indicator of social class, in whatever way one chooses to operationalize it. However, this is more obvious in cross-sectional studies of a national population than in cross-generational studies, one reason being that education as an indicator of social position in the generational context is rather blunt to structural and societal change. For obvious reasons changes of life circumstances that occur in adult life do not and cannot affect the educational status that one once attained in young years.

Housing

In Sweden as elsewhere the neighbourhood and type of housing one lives in are salient markers of social position. In contrast to most European cities, inner-city districts in Sweden are not run-down ghettos housing immigrants, ethnic minorities, unemployed, socially disadvantaged groups and working class populations. Inner-city districts have been taken over by more affluent segments of the population. The working class, immigrants and others low in the social hierarchy usually live in housing estates on the outskirts of the city developed in the construction boom in the 1960s and 1970s. The material standard of these flats is generally quite good but the neighbourhoods as such are characterized by poor social infrastructure—run-down schools, lack of jobs, unsatisfactory public transport, high unemployment rates, high crime rates and widespread social welfare dependency. Increasingly these housing estates have become identified as "immigrant" ghettos. Without exception the (Ugandan) Asians were provided with living accommodation in the immigrant-dominated neighbourhoods.

Obviously the structure of the Swedish housing market differs considerably from the situation in Uganda before the expulsion, and in India before that. Climatic differences come in to the picture, but so do also differences in the right to land ownership, the availability of free-hold land, leases etc. It is virtually impossible to construct a table on some common denominator that accounts for changes in accommodation over the generations. Suffice it to say that the typical situation within the Asian community in Uganda was to own one's housing.

The questionnaire provides information about the types of housing one has had, the periods of time and places (towns and countries). It is possible to trace individual migratory careers through the moves people have made during the course of their lives. So let us look back. We see for instance that most respondents spent their childhood years in East Africa although a surprisingly large share appear to have been born in India/Pakistan. The periods of time in question are the four decades before the expulsion in 1972, mostly the 1950s and 1960s, and coming to an end for quite a few of the respondents with the expulsion. The first home in which an overwhelming number of the respondents lived as children was owned by the family. The second childhood home for almost half of the respondents was in Sweden. Initially rented accommodation was the only option. The period of time in question is the early 1970s after the expulsion. Those who were slightly older may already have moved around

with their parents, or left their childhood home in conjunction with marriage in East Africa before the expulsion. Quite a few mention refugee camps as their second or third childhood "home". Those who arrived in Sweden in the early seventies had spent time in various European refugee camps before being placed in a Swedish camp. What these accounts taken together amount to is a drastic change of living conditions as a result of the expulsion—having to abandon privately owned homes in Uganda, forced into cramped refugee camp accommodation with little privacy, and then in Sweden to be dispersed and resettled in rented flats in low-status neighbourhoods of the kind mentioned above.

Most people have moved once or twice during the twenty-five year period in Sweden. One motive has been to distance oneself from the immigrant-dominated neighbourhoods. An informant of mine once mentioned that the Asians in one of these neighbourhoods at first were mistaken for Romanies (Gypsies), something the Asians found extremely offensive. The aggregated outcome of these moves is an increasing proportion of privately owned homes. Since social infrastructure is organized according to spatial criteria (health services, social services, day nurseries, schools etc.) moving to middle-class dominated neighbourhoods in privately owned housing was a cause and effect of social mobility.

Occupational status

As a sociological variable occupational status is more attuned to on-going changes of one's life situation than education (treated as a variable) is. However, the same reservations apply about comparing social positions over time as for education and housing. The sequence of occupations may serve as an indicator of change in social status, but one has to bear in mind that status varies over time, educational opportunities differ for different generations and life situations can sometimes change radically within the course of a few years. A comparison over time is nevertheless justified, not in the least because many middle-class families tend to think about career improvements over generations.

In this study occupations are classified roughly into four different status categories:

- I. Occupations requiring academic qualifications such as doctor, lawyer, teacher, audit, chemist, librarian, etc., and positions clearly related to responsibility for large companies, managing director, financial manager and the like.
- II. Subordinate occupations at an intermediate level, as for instance nurse, technician, salesperson, non-academic engineer etc., administrative/clerical work at an intermediate level, and family owned enterprises on a small to intermediate scale.
- III. Skilled workers and crafts—assistant nurse, auto-mechanic, tailor, carpenter, truck-driver, assistant clerical positions etc., as well as shop-keeper, trader in small business with no employees.
- IV. Unqualified labour in industry or service—unspecified factory work, waitress, janitor, cleaning staff, hospital orderly, shop assistant etc.

Table 2 illustrates changes in occupational status that the (Ugandan) Asians in Sweden have experienced.

Columns I through IV give the distribution of occupational status. Rows 1 and 2 are father's and own occupation before the expulsion. This table shows social mobility between father from India and son/daughter in Uganda (1→2). It also shows the drastic change of occupational status brought about by resettlement in Sweden (2→3). Row 3 is theoretical. Regardless of people's qualifications and experiences from Uganda, the Swedish labour

Table 2. Distribution of occupational status in percent

	I	II	III	IV		
1. Father's occupation	6	55	17	22		
2. Own occupation before Sweden	20	60	9	11	before	1972
3. Initial resettlement in Sweden	0	0	0	100	1973	1976
4. First occupation in Sweden	0	8	30	62	1977	1985
5. Second occupation in Sweden	0	12	40	48	1981	1991
6. Third occupation in Sweden	0	17	35	48	1985	1991
7. Current occupation	7	29	16	48		1997
8. Occupation one hopes to get	10	63	24	3		future

market authorities treated the Asians as though they were only unskilled labourers. Unspecified factory work were the only jobs available from the start. Over the years there has been a gradual mobility to occupations of higher status. Rows 4 through 7 clearly outline that about half of the Asians have improved their occupational status. However, almost half of the respondents have remained in unqualified positions at the lowest rung of the occupational hierarchy. These persons were predominantly middle-aged or even elderly when they came to Sweden. This contrasts markedly to one's hopes and expectation (row 8).

Summing up, the evidence points to a social mobility in terms of education for the young (third) generation, a geographical mobility (often only within the town of residence) to middle-class neighbourhoods, and an improvement of one's occupational status for about half of the population. Jointly these indicators support the hypothesis that the Ugandan Asians as a distinct community in Sweden are "migrating" from an initial position of unskilled labour in working-class and immigrant dominated housing estates to occupations of higher social prestige and middle-class neighbourhoods. In turn this supports the view that as a community the Ugandan Asians seem to have done better than most other migrants and refugees from non-European countries. These results are consistent with findings made in various British and American studies.

Explaining the Asian integration

Why do the Ugandan Asians appear to have done economically and professionally well in Sweden when so many other immigrants from Third World countries are marginalized—politically, economically and in the labour market. One obvious factor is *time*. The Ugandan Asians were the first non-European refugee group to be accepted in Sweden. Collectively they have had time to merge into society and to work out their forms of integration, to clarify their

collective goals, to achieve a deeper understanding of how things work in Swedish society, and to develop appropriate instruments to achieve their goals. Those who were in their mid-life when they came in 1972 and 1973 could go part of the way, but as we have seen, many have remained in unqualified factory work. Mastering Swedish was an obstacle to many of the middle-aged and elderly. Time implies that the young generation, those who came as children and those born in Sweden, don't face the problem of a foreign language or having to learn to deal with subtle codes, alien practices and unknown rules. Time, however, is not the only answer. Comparing the situation for the Chilean refugees, the first whom arrived less than a year after the Ugandan Asians, is instructive. Collectively the Chilean refugees have faced greater problems of integration (Mella 1991).

For the Ugandan Asians the factor of *timing* was also to their advantage. In the early 1970s there was a demand for labour. The Asians didn't have to face a period of long-term unemployment as so many later refugees have had to do. Although they were dissatisfied with factory work, it nevertheless provided them with an entry into the labour market. Timing was beneficial to the Chileans too, but they were generally unwilling to accept factory work. Many were young academics who were convinced that the Pinochet-regime would be short-lived. The relative freedom of university studies enabled them to engage in resistance politics in exile (Lundberg 1989). The Ugandan Asians hoped that the course of events could be reversed, but they realized at the same time that a return to Uganda would not be feasible for many years to come—if ever.

Spatial location is a third factor. Whereas the Chileans only accepted to settle in major cities, the Ugandan Asians preferred to settle in small towns. In the early 1970s, the choice to settle in small or medium-sized industrial towns was more opportune. It was easier to acquire an understanding of the workings of Swedish society, to establish useful contacts, and to exploit the structure of opportunities there.

An explanation of the relative success of the Ugandan Asians in Sweden has to look at the structural conditions in Swedish society and its minority and integration policies, as well as at the developing infrastructure of the refugee community itself, its organizational forms and self-understanding.

Integration policies

After World War II a period of uninterrupted economic expansion followed during which the Swedish welfare state was consolidated. The demand for manpower could not be covered by domestic sources. In the 1950s and 1960s labour was imported from Finland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey. The authorities regarded this set-up as a temporary solution to the demand for labour. In the mid-1960s, however, they became concerned about future societal effects of the on-going immigration. Trade unions also became concerned about the number of migrants and competition for jobs in the future. In 1972—the year of the Ugandan expulsion—the Labour Organization in Sweden (LO) recommended that the import of labour should be discontinued. The Social Democratic government with its historic ties to the trade unions complied (Westin & Dingy-Kyrklund 1997).

Sweden accepts and resettles refugees as part of its commitment to the UN. The small number of refugees reaching Sweden in the 1950s through to the 1980s was treated as part of the general labour migration. Refugee resettlement was therefore the responsibility of the National Board of Labour. Regardless of professional qualifications, merits or skills, the Board of Labour resettled refugees by providing jobs for them in industry. A sociologist, for instance, could be retrained as a welder. Turners and machine operators were others in

demand by industry in the 1960s and 1970s. This was the situation for the first Ugandan Asians. They were placed in camps for a couple of months for medical check-ups and basic language training, and then hustled off to various towns. Within four months most of the refugees had left the camps and all able-bodied men and quite a few women were working on the assembly lines.

In 1975 a policy for incorporating the immigrant population into mainstream society was taken by parliament. It focused on *integration* and was thus a break with the notion of assimilation, that had never been expressed as a policy as such but had just been taken for granted as a *sine qua non* for persons of foreign origin who wished to settle in Sweden. The three pillars of the new policy are summarized by the terms *equality*, *freedom of choice* and *partnership*. Equality is the fundamental principle. It implies that foreign citizens residing in Sweden on a permanent basis enjoy the same social, educational and economic rights as Swedish citizens. They also have the right to vote for local and county government. Freedom of choice implies that immigrants are free to identify with their culture of origin or to blend into Swedish culture. This is an individual right. It does not mean that Sweden recognizes ethnic group rights. It did imply, however, that provisions for mother tongue instruction in the schools were made, and that such classes were organized wherever there was a sufficient number of pupils. The concept of partnership is a typically Swedish solution to the problem of loosening the hold over people while at the same time maintaining a subtle control. In essence it means that "you are free to express your cultural identity in whatever way you wish as long as you do it according to Swedish standards and norms". In other words, some basic values of Swedish society—equality, justice and democracy—are non-negotiable (see Hammar 1985; Ålund & Schierup 1989; Westin 1996).

A corner-stone of Swedish integration policy has been to encourage migrants permanently residing in the country to naturalize. The requirement for Swedish citizenship is five years of residence. Stateless persons are entitled to apply after four years of residence. Citizenship is seen as one of the essential means of integration because it brings people into the polity. Practically everyone affiliated with the (Ugandan) Asian community is now a Swedish citizen. Most naturalizations were concentrated to the years 1976 to 1980. Practically everyone who was made stateless applied for Swedish citizenship at the first opportunity.

In the early 1970s Sweden was one of the most economically and technologically advanced countries of the world, second only to the USA. It was a well developed welfare state striving to reduce economic and social inequalities. The Swedish model was admired internationally since it seemed to combine the best of the two competing economic and political systems—a system of state planning within a market economy, and a liberal democracy housing a well-developed corporate structure in which major interest organizations had a considerable stake in political power. Sweden was neutral and non-aligned and could therefore play an international role between the two power blocs well beyond its population size and economic strength. Things have changed since then and Sweden has slipped back to a more modest position, distanced economically today by many European states. Sweden is a highly centralized nation-state, that was exceptionally ethnically and culturally homogeneous before the on-set of post-war labour migration.

Consolidating the community

Some data: More than half of the respondents of the questionnaire arrived in Sweden within two years of the expulsion. Within five years three quarters of them had settled in the country. Thereafter an average of a few individuals have come to Sweden per year, mainly by way of

marriage. This is the only gate open since refugee status is no longer applicable. Very few belonging to this particular group have been granted permanent residence on grounds of work.

The situation for the first arrivals was as follows:

- a. In many families members had been separated from one another in the chaotic rush out of Uganda
- b. The expulsion was experienced as a severe trauma. Everyone suffered personal, cultural and economic losses
- c. Nobody had been able to bring any material possessions or economic assets to Sweden
- d. Very few were personally acquainted from Uganda or India
- e. Very few had anything but an extremely rudimentary knowledge of the conditions in Sweden
- f. Previous academic and professional qualifications were no longer applicable
- g. Practically everyone experienced a drastic change of social status
- h. Practically everyone experienced a crippling loss of one's sense of agency and initiative

These givens complicated the restoration of an exile community. In most people an almost instinctive reaction was to try to reconstruct what had been lost through the expulsion. The first and foremost priority was to locate dispersed members of one's family. The Swedish authorities and international relief organizations could bring most families together within the space of a few months. In some cases it was more drawn-out but eventually family reunifications were sorted out. But then what?

Let us try to place ourselves in the position of the refugees. Within three months the entire Asian society in Uganda had collapsed, disintegrated and vanished. What do people do in such circumstances? How do they react? Those accepted by the UK could link up with the East African Asian communities already existing there, and eventually carry on with their lives. They had been through a rough time psychologically, but communities of the kind that the Asians were accustomed to were well established in places like Leicester. Basic infrastructure of the Asian type of communities already existed. This must have been a source of consolation. In Sweden on the other hand the reconstruction of an Asian community was a lot more complex because the number of potential members was small, they were divided and there was virtually nothing to build on that was even remotely familiar to the Asians. People were conscious about their identities and the status associated with jati and sectarian membership, as these categories had applied in East Africa. A very first step of the process of reconstruction, then, was about defining oneself in relation to others. This was done in a situation in which the customary markers of identity that had been significant in the East African context lacked roots in Swedish society. There was no corresponding social structure to support them. This could lead to unexpected, unpredictable and problematic outcomes. The attribution of status was thus open to change.

Let me give an example. A former teacher of high standing in Kampala was not in the best shape physically. He was short of stature and ailing in health. He found factory work extremely demanding. His earnings were thus well below the average. A former student of his

who had not done particularly well at school was strong and physically fit and was soon earning good money. In this new situation the relative status of these two men was confused and problematic.

It soon became clear that the communities based on sect and jati membership that had come into existence in East Africa were not functional in Sweden. People recognized that they couldn't continue to assert these distinctive identities against one another. Hindus of different caste and jati backgrounds found ways to co-operate so as to achieve joint aims and common goods. So did Muslims of different sectarian denominations. The local Swedish authorities generally took a benevolent view to requests for grave-yards, temples and mosques voiced by spokesmen for the Hindus and Muslims respectively. Cultural support was another domain that the authorities understood. Local libraries received extra grants to purchase Indian books, journals and films. In the educational field the organization of mother-tongue instruction (in Gujarati) provided jobs for a few qualified teachers. In time most people seemed to be able to deal with the traumatic events of the expulsion. A sense of common destiny evolved. Friendships developed across boundaries that normally would have been difficult to bridge in Uganda. Most people realized that there would be no "return" to Uganda and that settlement in the UK, Canada or the USA was—realistically—out of the question. Within the course of some six or seven years most people understood that they would have to make the best of a life in Sweden.

An important explanation for the relatively smooth integration of the Ugandan Asians in Sweden was about social cohesion within the group. Consolidating the Asian community meant exploiting the opportunities that the Swedish integration and immigrant policy provided for the benefit of all, and hence forming organizations to promote common interests once these were identified. This meant downplaying differentiating factors—caste and jati, sect and religion—and promoting or emphasizing factors that were common to all. This reorientation didn't come about over night.

Differentiating and common factors

The Ugandan Asian community in Sweden is approximately one third Muslim and two thirds Hindu. This reflects the situation in Uganda before the expulsion. Sectarian distinctions are mainly typical of the Shia Muslim community (Ismaelis, Daudi Bohoras and Ithnasheries), but only about half of the Muslim respondents state that they belong to one of these sects. This may be due to a reluctance to disclose sensitive identity information in a questionnaire. It contrasts however to the willingness to inform me about sectarian affiliation in the 1973 interviews. On those occasions everyone belonging to the Muslim community made their identity quite clear. In lists prepared by the authorities that year the Muslims were classified according to age, sex, family position *and* sectarian affiliation. The latter was something the Muslims themselves must have pointed out, not information that Swedish authorities would have asked for on their own accord. The apparent reluctance to reveal one's sectarian identity in the questionnaire contrasts moreover to the situation in Uganda before the expulsion. Surprisingly few mention affiliation with the Ismaeli community which was the sect with the strongest sense of distinctiveness in Uganda.

Similarly the Hindu community in Uganda was divided in a number of competing communities based on caste and jati distinctions (Brahmins, Lohanas, Patels, Mochis etc.). In the 1997 questionnaire a majority of the Hindus also refrained from referring to caste or jati categorizations. Even for Hindus, then, it appears to be important to downplay divisions within the community. Emphasizing sectarian or jati distinctiveness in the Swedish context is

seen as an obstacle to achieving common goals. People have generally accepted that co-operation rather than competition is necessary for a small vulnerable community to survive.

A gradual reorientation and adjustment is taking place to life in a modern welfare state. Religion is not practised as actively as before, family size is conforming to the Swedish norm, husbands participate in housework which used not to be the case, etc. These are experiences that all the Asians have in common, regardless of one's former position in Uganda. The changes are largely determined by the economic and structural realities in Swedish society—wage levels, income taxes, social security, housing conditions, educational opportunities, the labour market, and so on. Sectarian and jati distinctions that were the driving force of economically and politically competitive communities in East Africa are downplayed. This is not to say that people aren't aware of the traditional categorizations, but they just aren't functional in the Swedish context for this small and rather vulnerable group.

Common language is an obvious factor uniting a majority of the Asians—Hindus and Muslims alike. The Asians were multilingual in the East African setting. English was the language of education, organizations and politics, and was used to some extent in business. Swahili was otherwise the main language of commerce and trade. Gujarati and the other Indian languages were primarily spoken at home. An overwhelming number of respondents—more than 90 percent—grew up with Gujarati as their family language. Children were naturally socialized into these languages.

All but one respondent mention that the language spoken mutually by parents (generation 1) was an Indian language, predominantly Gujarati. In one's own family (generation 2) spouses communicate with one another in Gujarati (or one of the other Indian languages) in 87 percent of the cases. Swedish is used by about eight percent. Finally 25 percent of the respondents mention that the language spoken by their children in mutual conversation is Swedish. Indian languages still predominate (70%). Proficiency in Gujarati—for many also Hindi and Urdu—enables people to share Indian/Pakistani cultural works—media, films, videos, books and above all music. In turn the demand for cultural products is a motivating force for joint organizations. Traditional clothing is an obvious marker of cultural identity. More than a third of the respondents regularly wear ethnic clothing. Practically all families cook Indian/Pakistani food. Jointly the Asians constitute a small market for Indian/Pakistani music, films, clothes and ethnic food.

In the long-term perspective Swedish will inevitably increase its hold over the young generation. In a generation to come the use of Swedish within families is likely to have increased. Siblings who have attended Swedish day care nurseries may continue to communicate in Swedish long after they have left day nurseries.

Demographic prospects

The total population of the "Ugandan" Asian community in Sweden is increasing at a very slow pace. This contrasts to the trend for other refugee communities in Sweden (Syrian Christians, Kurds, Iranians, Chileans, Somalis etc.) for whom immigration on grounds of refugee status is accepted. Young families have adapted to the western norm of only having one or two children. There are compelling economic reasons to limit the size of one's family for persons with moderate incomes. Yet the Asian families in Sweden still have a birth-rate above the average for Sweden. In East Africa, on the other hand, families of six to eight children were not uncommon. Families arriving from Uganda in 1972 and 1973 were often large. Indeed, it was claimed in the 1960s that the Asian communities in East Africa were among the fastest growing populations in the world. A second reason for the slow population

increase is a constant drain of young people to the UK, USA and Canada for purposes of marriage and studies.

In the long run the slow growth of the community is a threat to its survival. The drain of young people needs to be balanced by an in-migration. This can only be done through marriage. Most marriages (75%) reported in the questionnaire have taken place after 1972 in Sweden. In East Africa the Asians as a rule observed strict principles of endogamy. Ideally marriages were arranged. For most Hindus a marriage partner would have to conform to a set of criteria with regard to family, villages of origin, jati and caste. Differences of status between families would be given due consideration in negotiations about dowries. Similar rules applied to the Muslims, though for them sectarian membership was the most important criterion. In East Africa the Asian communities were sufficiently large to provide a pool of eligible marriage partners. Still it appears that for a number of reasons finding marriage partners in Gujarat was frequently practised. Bringing in a marriage partner for one's son or daughter from Gujarat was a means to ensure continuity of one's business, but in a wider context also of one's community. In the 1960s the marriage institution was gradually modernized. Love marriages were accepted as long as the liaison conformed to the rules, or could be defined as doing so, and provided that parents could reach an agreement on the intricate balance of the value of dowries in relation to prestige. The rules were a front, an ideal that one was supposed to adhere to. There seems to have been leeway for unorthodox solutions by redefining the identity of the groom or bride.

During the early years in Sweden arranging appropriate marriages was of the great concern to parents. They became more active than before in finding suitable marriage partners for their sons and daughters. This return to traditional ways was a response to one's vulnerable position. Families needed to be strong and consolidated. The traditional rules represented moreover an opportunity to expand the community by bringing in new members. In the 1970s most families thus stressed the importance of observing the marriage rules of the community to which they belonged.

According to the 1997 survey practically all marriages within the Asian community have taken place with persons accepted as members of the Asian community. Quite a few of the respondents were married before they came to Sweden but 75 percent of the marriages in generation 2 have taken place after the expulsion in Sweden. In most of these cases spouses were brought from India and Pakistan. It has proved more difficult to find a partner from the UK willing to marry in Sweden than vice versa. It is easier on the other hand to find marriage partners in India and Pakistan fitting the traditional criteria who are willing to come to Sweden. A few marriages with Swedes have taken place but these seem to be exceptions, and it appears that these persons quite often become marginalized to the community.

Respecting the rules of endogamy means reasserting the importance of caste, jati and sect. Although India is modernizing rapidly, modernization has not basically affected life in small-scale society in rural villages and small towns. Traditional values and classifications still determine much of social life. Bringing in marriage partners from Gujarat in accordance with the customary rules can be somewhat problematic because it goes against the adaptive strategy of downplaying traditional categorizations. It is something of a Catch 22 situation. The Asians seem to live in two different worlds—traditional divisions of rural Gujarat and the emerging ecumenical community in Sweden. This small ecumenical community is a practical and functional solution to constraints that the international system of states has placed on the movement across international boundaries and that affects this group of people who by a freak of fate happened to end up in Sweden.

The community in Sweden, however, has access to a transnational hinterland by means of which both modernizing and traditional dispositions can be lived out. The Ugandan Asian Diaspora is a typical transnational community if ever there was one (Hannerz 1996). The Asian community in Sweden is highly dependent upon contacts with other Asian communities abroad. Most respondents (97%) have visited the UK many times to see family and friends. Many (70%) have also visited India/Pakistan for the same reason. The contacts with East Africa—Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda—are less frequent. Thus the Ugandan Asian community in Sweden is part of a broader Diaspora.

In the discourse on global Diasporas and transnational connections the use of modern technological means of communication is pointed out (Castells 1996; Hannerz 1996; Morley and Robins 1995). To some extent this holds true for the community in Sweden. The telephone is the most used means of communication. E-mail seems to be on its way but has not come in common use yet. It is used above all by younger respondents. Just on half of the households surveyed were linked to the internet.

Conclusions

The Asian communities in Sweden are centred on three principal towns—Mariestad, Jönköping and Trollhättan—with additional smaller settlements in a handful of other small towns. Comparatively few have moved to major cities—Stockholm or Göteborg. Geographic mobility is concentrated to the towns mentioned above—people moving within them, between them or to them. Young people of Ugandan Asian origin get along with young Swedish people but generally they don't mix on a personal level. They prefer to keep to themselves, their clubs, associations and social life. The reasons are partly discrimination, but also a self chosen separateness. Those who do mix with Swedes on a more familiar, personal and regular basis may face the risk of becoming marginalized. In 1993 a mosque in the town of Trollhättan was burnt down by racists. This mosque had been built by the Ugandan Asian Shia Muslim community as the first regular mosque in Sweden. It has been rebuilt after the fire. As all others of non-European origin the Asians have experienced the increase in militant racism during the 1990s.

This brings us back to the telephone directory which was our point of departure. The directory only lists those who *identify* themselves as members of the (Ugandan) Asian communities in Sweden and who are *accepted* as members by these communities. Individuals who don't identify themselves with these communities even though they may have been victims of the expulsion, and those who aren't accepted as members for some reason, are not listed in the directory. The directory excludes those who have chosen to remain outside the (Ugandan) Asian communities, and those who have been rejected or denied membership. The roll of names in the directory, reflecting the body of people behind it, indicates that the vast majority of migrants from India and Pakistan are not associated to the Asian Cultural Societies referred to in this directory.

The roll may be seen, then, as a statement of self-defined collective identity. Although the *Ugandan* label is rarely used nowadays in (public) self-references, the collective memory of the expulsion is emotionally highly significant and a source of distinctiveness. Using Cohen's terminology, the expulsion turned the earlier Gujarati trade Diaspora into a victim Diaspora (Cohen 1997). It was a traumatic event binding those who experienced it at first hand, their descendants and relatives by marriage together into a distinct group. Social cohesiveness within the Ugandan Asian community which is the principal explanation for the successful social mobility is rooted in the *common experience of the expulsion trauma* which has been

reinforced in recent years by *virulent racism* of which the Ugandan Asians have had their share as victims.

The first Ugandan Asians to come to Sweden arrived the very same year that labour migration was stopped. They soon found jobs in factories as there still was a demand for unskilled labour. To many it was frustrating that their previous experiences of trade and business and their academic and professional qualifications were not recognised. Running a shop or a small business was something that many hoped to achieve as it was thought to provide a degree of economic independence of the kind the Asian communities had enjoyed in Uganda. Factory work proved to be an opportunity to learn something about the subtle codes governing work and occupation in Sweden. Eventually several families did set up private businesses.

The history of the Asian communities in East Africa is one of how culture and economy are intertwined. In this case it was about how the Asians exhibited a strong sense of continuity with their roots in rural Gujarat in family life, social life and language, while at the same time these communities were highly flexible in adapting to the colonial society in their economy, politics and educational institutions. The small Ugandan Asian community in Sweden is an appendix to the wider South Asian Diaspora in Britain and North America. There is reason to project that a similar intertwining of culture and economy is taking place in the Diaspora. The Asian communities in the West are fully integrated into modern society and all aspects of its economy. Still there is a strong sense of unique identity and cultural continuity that may be traced back to the Gujarati origins. Culture and economy, continuity and change.

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ISSN 1403-428X

ISBN 91 87810 62 X