Articulating an Indian diaspora in South Africa: The Consulate General of India, diaspora associations and practices of collaboration

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A B S T R A C T

Engagements between sending states and their diasporas have come under increasing critical scrutiny. Whilst political geographers have driven critical analysis of national level policies, debates have largely overlooked the broader range of actors, transactions and practices involved in implementing national policies in a geohistorically diverse array of diasporic contexts and settings. Over the last decade, the Indian government has invested significant resources in overseas diplomatic missions, consulates and high commissions to administer its diaspora outreach strategies. This paper examines the role of the Consulate General of India (CGI) in Durban, South Africa, focusing in particular on the networks of agents, associations, groups and political actors involved in collaborating with the CGI Durban in diaspora outreach practices. This paper draws on two periods of fieldwork in Durban between 2004 and 2005 and was supplemented by ongoing visual and textual analysis of news articles, promotional material, reports and websites. Using the concept of articulation, the paper highlights the discursive and performative practices involved in bringing together the agendas of the GOI with those of South African Indian diaspora associations through the outreach practices of the CGI in Durban. It argues that articulatory practices are essential to resolving some of the subjective and embodied dilemmas and contestations of belonging inherent in South African Indians' participation in diaspora outreach initiatives. Investigating how articulation contributes to drawing diverse and even competing agendas together makes room for further understanding the ways in which diaspora outreach practices can travel across a wide network, and the diverse agencies that can become catalysed in the process.

Introduction

In a recent speech, Narendra Modi, the newly elected Indian Prime Minister, announced new measures aimed at transforming India into the "land of dreams" for diasporic investors (Mandhana, 2014). In doing so, he continued to build upon shifts in the Government of India's (GoI) diaspora policies that have undergirded structural economic reform with the (re)making of overseas Indian populations into a deterritorialised global citizenry (Raj, 2015). The GoI is only one of many governments that have, over the last twenty years, deployed a range of policy-making and outreach tools designed to colonise diasporic communities[1] as a domain for the extra-territorial extension of state power (Collyer and King, 2014). In this paper, I explore specific sites of

exchange between states and their diasporas, past studies of which (e.g. Mani and Varadarajan, 2005; Mullings, 2011) have produced a rich tapestry of insights into the underpinning logics of governments' diaspora policies. Nonetheless, there is also a need to account for the local contexts in which diaspora policies are implemented, received and translated by diasporic populations embedded in 'host' countries so as to better understand specific policies' successes and failures (Délano, 2011). The messy actualities of overseas populations' diasporic identifications, which may not always be coherently aligned to an 'origin' country, means that diaspora outeach practices may not always find resonances (McCann, 2010; Scully, 2011). If, as Mullings (2011: 424) agues, a key aim of scholarly investigation should be to analyze how diaspora policy formations "seek out, and recognize as legitimate . . . competing viewpoints and diverse identities", then a focus on sites of exchange become a critical area for analysis.

Specifically, this paper focuses on the outreach practices of the Consulate General of India (CGI) in Durban, South Africa. The CGI Durban is one of three (including Johannesburg and Cape Town) emerging in post-apartheid South Africa as important actors not

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only in the negotiation of new global South geopolitical alignments but also South African Indians'[2] post-apartheid diasporic subjectivities. India's consular relations with South Africa were only restored in 1993 after a 30-year diplomatic suspension of travel and trade. Whilst reconnecting with India through the outreach practices of consulates is an important element in the production of new post-apartheid subjectivities, South African Indians are simultaneously still negotiating a liminal citizenship (Landy et al., 2004). In analysing the outreach practices of the CGI Durban, this article utilises the concept of articulation to explore how governments collaborate with diaspora groups. Articulation references the bringing together of diverse elements – including non-human natures and materialities – with often divergent or temporally dissonant trajectories and intercalating the convergences between them (Featherstone, 2011). I argue that the CGI Durban's collaborations trace, performatively, the interconnections between the GoI's diaspora policy trajectories and the trajectories of South African Indians' post-apartheid subjectivities. As an articulatory practice, such performative tracings are essential to resolving some of the subjective and embodied dilemmas and contestations of belonging inherent in South African Indians' participation in diaspora outreach initiatives.

The argument unfolds in three parts. First, the paper discusses the evolving geopolitical and economic contexts of India's relationship with South African Indians that have informed the role played by consulates and embassies. Second, the paper explores the fractures and contestations that have emerged, on the one hand, between South African Indians for whom Indian diasporic connections undermines the legacies of anti-apartheid struggle, and on the other, diaspora associations for whom diasporic connections offers an exciting route for reasserting Indian identity in the post-apartheid era. Finally, the paper explores the ways in which outreach practices of the CGI in Durban are performatively and discursively articulated with South African Indian subjectivities as a means of asserting the value of diasporic engagements to promoting the past and future contributions of South African Indian to South African nation-building. The paper concludes by calling for further research that attends to the multi-dimensional array of agencies – both human and material – legitimizing engagements with government's diasporic outreach practices.

Diaspora and governmentality

Rather than contemporary forms of transnational migration leading to the now clichéd 'end of the state', so-called 'sending' governments' diaspora policies are a key tool in states' hegemonic assertions of power extra-territorially (Collyer and King, 2014). An essential part of the political process through which the state enfolds overseas populations into relations of reciprocity is establishing definitions of what kinds of diasporic subjects belong and should be counted as part of new imagined transnational political communities (Dickinson and Bailey, 2007).

In contrast to more celebratory accounts of diaspora strategies, especially in development policy literature (e.g. Ratha and Shaw, 2007), analysis of the selective incorporation of overseas populations into the orbit of a sending state utilises a rather more critical governmentality approach to explain how governments assert hegemony over populations beyond their sovereign jurisdictions (Gamlen, 2014). Diaspora strategies take their force and acquire legitimacy from constituting diasporic overseas populations as self-governing good partners and loyal extra-territorial members (Péllèrin and Mullings, 2013; Ragazzi, 2014; Délano and Gamlen, 2014). Governing technologies that extend beyond the state (such

as dual citizenship, migrant bonds and extra-territorial voting rights) act as constellations of power/knowledge that are able to be reproduced across a wide network through socially embedded institutions and forces (Varadarajan, 2014). Typically, the focus of the diaspora governmentality literature has been on the biopolitical rationalities regulating skilled expatriates (Larner, 2007), but also significant are gendered middle-class diasporic subjects with concerns surrounding economic development of the home country (Mullings, 2011).

Rather than conceiving of state power as moving unproblematically from 'above' to 'below', or from the 'global' to the 'local', governmentality captures the "fragile relays, contested locales and fissiparous affiliations" through which elements become combined together (Rose, 1999: 51). Governmentality is a useful theoretical approach in highlighting the mobility and flexibility of diaspora strategies as they are transacted across a wide geographical network and through a multidimensional array of logics. But, because of this, diaspora governmentalities are also fragile and contingent, and can be easily dismantled or destroyed (Gamlen, 2013). Often, this is because of a failure to make convergences with a diversity of experiences and agendas, as Scully's (2011) study of the Irish state's contested discourses of Irish authenticity showed. It may also be because diaspora organising around the complex socio-geographical intersectionalities of diasporic subjectivities through, for instance, hometown associations, offers more legitimate alternatives (Moya, 2005; Mercer et al., 2008).

Building on the above approaches, this paper is concerned with how diaspora strategies acquire legitimacy and are sustained in contexts of fragility and contestation. As Li (2007) argues, much of the governmentality literature fails to account for the ways that policy assemblages are secured, and the agencies required to draw heterogeneous, often disparate, elements together particularly where there is dissent. As a way of capturing the processes by which a divergent array of actors, materialities and subjects become catalysed in implementations of diaspora strategies in local milieus, this paper explores specifically the role of articulation. Articulation, as Hall (1980) elaborates on it, captures the ways in which elements or structures with different, temporally discontinuous, or often counter-factual historical trajectories, can be brought together into a differentiated unity that allows for multiple possibilities or outcomes (Featherstone, 2011). Indeed for Li (2007) most of the political labour of governmentality as performed by a range of actors involves the practices of articulating and re-articulating heterogeneous elements into a range of different configurations. The concept of articulation also captures the ways in which the meanings of different elements become transformed as a result of being articulated with one another, modifying the identity of the individual elements so that these elements can be used by a variety of actors for a range of different demands and purposes (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985).

In this respect, articulation draws attention to the spatial practices and experiences of a wide range of actors as they attempt to generate articulations between different structures, and order components to realise widely divergent, even conflicting, goals (Yeh, 2012). This use of articulation suggests the value of exploring the spatialities and sites in which articulatory practices take place (Featherstone, 2011) and from what "angle(s) of vision" different elements become combined together (Li, 2007). This paper's use of articulation therefore is posed as a response to Mullings' (2011) call to take more seriously how diaspora strategies become legitimized amongst diasporic subjects with a diversity of voices. It does so by developing an understanding of the multidimensional relations of power and agencies involved as a range of actors performatively and discursively articulate governmental diaspora strategies together with diasporic subjectivities and histories via the outreach practices of consulates and embassies.

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[2] The term South African Indian is used to respect South Africa as the country of origin and nationality.

Methodology

The paper emerges out of a research project examining the outreach practices of the Indian Government in KwaZulu Natal (KZN), South Africa, which was undertaken in two periods of fieldwork in 2004 and 2005. 26 interviewees (including academics, local government officials, community leaders, Indian consular staff and South African Indian newspaper and radio-station staff) contributed to the overall study. The fieldwork also involved extensive observational work, attending, for example, local events, celebrations and public meetings organised by the CGI and diaspora associations. As part of the research, I interviewed several of the organisers and attendees before, during and following events to capture their impressions. These periods of fieldwork were supplemented by ongoing visual and textual analysis of news articles, promotional material, reports and websites.

Indian diaspora policy-making trajectories

Following a broader period of neoliberal macro-economic reform, the GoI has since 1991 implemented a series of policy initiatives designed to encourage inward investment particularly from wealthy skilled Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) based in North America, Australasia and Europe. In 2001 the policy recommendations of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora (HLCD, led by the Hindu nationalist ideologies of the Bharatiya Janata Party government) aimed to more broadly re-imagine the Indian diaspora as a de-territorialised global Hindu nation inclusive of People of Indian Origin (PIOs) as well as NRIs (Edwards, 2008). Building on the policy recommendations of the 2001 HLCD report, in 2005 the GoI established a separate Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) as a joined-up administrative nodal point (MOIA, 2009a; Hall, 2012). The MOIA, a separate division of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), now administers a range of diaspora initiatives including: the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas conference (PBD, launched in 2003), Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI, launched in 2006), granting limited investment rights; "Tracing the Roots" (launched in 2008), and the "Know India Program", launched in 2004 (see www.moia.in and Hall, 2012). Recently, regional "mini" PBDs have been held to encourage more productive meetings between PIOs and local state and non-state actors (Singh, 2010). The overall aim of the MOIA has been to realise diaspora investment-driven strategies with inculcations of an extra-territorial political re-imagining of Indian national membership (Varadarajan, 2014). Not only was this made more explicit in Narendra Modi's recent speeches, but his proposed policy measures moved further towards constituting the diaspora as citizens of India rather than members with a limited set of rights (see Mandhana, 2014).

India's diaspora initiatives since 2001 are a radical departure from the Nehruvian–Gandhian nationalist sentiments of the 1950s that annexed people of Indian ancestry in British colonial territories from the national polity (Chaturvedi, 2005). Nehruvian–Gandhian sentiments were of course informed by Mahatma Gandhi's own minoritization in South Africa under the limited citizenship rights granted to Indians there by the British colonial government. According to Hofmeyr (2014), this fomented Gandhian ideologies of PIOs as belonging to a greater Indian civilisation (cf. the arbitrary, territorially-bounded citizenship of the British Empire), within which 'colonial-born' Indians constituted the outer boundary markers. 'Colonial-born' Indians were eventually erased from discourses of Indian civilisational heritage in order to render those residents in India at the time of Partition as sovereign, independent citizens (Chaturvedi, 2005). However, within the BJP's 2001 ethnic, rather than territorial, redefinitions of Indian national membership, connections are increasingly being traced between 'new' diasporas

(overseas Indians and their descendants who migrated after independence) and 'old' diasporas (overseas Indians and their descendants who migrated to British colonial territories before independence).[3] These connections are critical to discursive constitutions of an imagined global Indian diaspora connected to its Indian centre across space as well as time (Dickinson, 2012), one that can be seen to enhance the status of the Indian nation-state globally, encourage further diasporic investment and assert leverage over governments and potential non-PIO investors (Hall, 2012).

Promoting India's visual and material heritage is an important element in discursive performances of a global India. A key institutional actor in this regard is the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The ICCR is an autonomous division of the MEA, founded soon after Independence with an aim to "promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people" and "foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries" (www.iccrindia.net). The ICCR currently has 35 'Indian Cultural Centres' (ICC) globally through which the ICCR sponsors a varied programme of international scholarships, exhibitions and exchanges of individual and group performers in dance, music, photography, theatre, and visual arts. In 2006 the ICCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the MOIA so that the MOIA could utilise the ICCR's network of ICCs to "support Indian performing arts, languages and culture in the diaspora and promote dynamic interaction between India and overseas Indians" (MOIA, 2007).

The goals of the ICCR – and now the MOIA – are realised through collaboration with embassies and consulates, which administer ICCs overseas. ICCs perform different functions depending on their location, histories, methods and approaches (Hall, 2012). In South Africa, there is one High Commission of India (HCI) in Pretoria and three CGIs in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town (see http://www.indiainsouthafrica.com/). The CGI Johannesburg was established shortly after diplomatic re-instatement in 1993. A HCI was established in Pretoria in 1994 and a CGI in Cape Town in 1996. In 2011 an ICC was established under the remit of the CGI Johannesburg, partly in response to the increasing population of South African Indians in the city through internal migration, but also because of its increasing role in projecting India's soft power in South Africa, a strategy that Thussu (2013) argues is crucial within the GoI's emerging South–South geopolitical and economic agendas.
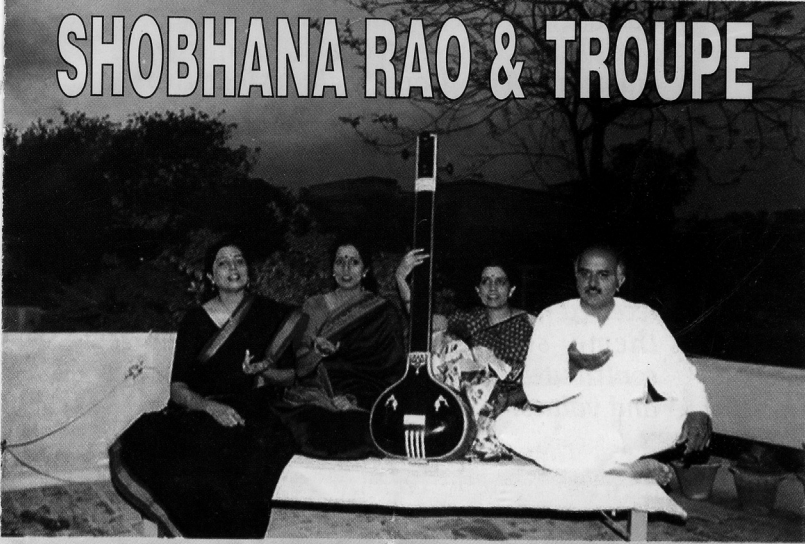
Whilst the ICC Johannesburg has focussed on soft power initiatives, the Durban ICC (established 1994) has long-standing collaborations with local South African Indian groups. The HLCD reported in 2001 that whilst there was little demand amongst South African Indians for tools like dual membership, there was a desire to re-establish transnational connections for the purposes of tourism and education (HLC, 2001: 86). Since 2004, the ICC Durban has administered various MOIA initiatives, but it also plays an important soci-cultural role for South African Indians in the wider province of KZN through its provision of Indian language and cultural education programming (see Fig. 1 for an example). The ICC promotes and collaborates not only with local Indian educational, linguistic and Hindu cultural diaspora associations,[4] but also a

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[3] This picture is of course complicated by circulation between all of these different sites, such as 'twice migration' from East Africa to North America and Europe and back again (Frenz, 2012) and recent migration from South Africa to Australasia (Rule, 1994).

[4] The diaspora associations referred to in this paper are those that support, facilitate and promote South African Indian language teaching, classical musical traditions and entrepreneurship. These are distinct from (but often converge with) organisations working within Indian Islamic transnational public spheres (see Kaarsholm, 2011). Owing to the vicissitudes of apartheid diplomatic isolation, resistance struggles and Nehruvian–Gandhian diaspora policies, South African Indian diaspora associations do not have an overtly political function in relation to the Indian state, unlike Indian diaspora associations found in other contexts (e.g. Fair, 2005).
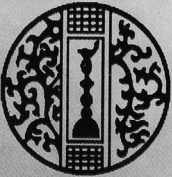
Fig. 1. Advertisement for an ICCR sponsored performance in South Africa.

wider range of local Indian performing art schools, business-people, and key opinion formers.

Durban is a strategic location not only because of the large population of Indian South Africans but also because of its symbolic importance in the history of India–South Africa relations.

Currently 48% of the South African Indian population live in the Ethekwini municipality whilst around 80% live within the wider province of KwaZulu-Natal (Statistics South Africa, 2010). The restrictions on the inter-provincial movement of Indians during apartheid resulted in this concentration (Maharaj, 1997) and

Durban has long been a fluid milieu of Indian cultural and religious diaspora organisations, radio stations, newspapers and broadcasters and entrepreneurs. Durban is also the place from which Mahatma Gandhi began the Indian resistance campaign against apartheid in South Africa. Until recently, the CGI in Durban occupied a highly strategically symbolic location in the Old Durban Railway Station House. This is a significant local historical landmark where Gandhi boarded the Pietermaritzburg train and was subsequently removed, leading to the beginnings of his non-violent *Satyagraha* movement that would lead ultimately to Indian independence.

Whilst historically the Indian Council for Cultural Relations' promotion of India's rich artistic heritage through the CGI in Durban has played an important socio-cultural function for the South African Indian community, the GOI is using increasing interest in India amongst the diaspora in South Africa to attain economic outcomes. Inaugurating the 2010 PBD Africa in Durban, the Overseas Indian Affairs Minister Vayalar Ravi exhorted PIOs in Africa to strengthen economic ties:

> "For Africans of Indian origin, the bonds tying them to the land of their origin have hitherto been social and cultural. In the changing economic paradigm, you must increasingly look at India as a land of economic opportunity".
>
> [MOIA, 2010a]

The CGI Durban has been an important element in fulfilling this goal through its involvements in wider outreach activities, particular those related to facilitating India–South Africa economic investments. Since the early 2000s, the CGI Durban has continued to host business summits, trade shows and promote transnational trade delegations. More recently, the network of ICCs in South Africa are being co-opted into the GoI's increasingly influential and well-resourced Public Diplomacy division because of growing pressure from both the Indian and South African governments for concrete economic outcomes from their new geopolitical collaborations. As I explore next, it is within these changing trajectories of diaspora outreach practices, in which the role and activities of the CGI Durban are increasingly governed through the global economic visions of the MEA, that the histories and complex subjectivities of South African Indians are becoming articulated in new ways.

Resisting diaspora strategies

South African PIOs have multiple historical origins, producing a heterogeneous complex of Indian geographical identifications. Migration from India to South Africa began around 500 BC, intensifying under Natal's indentured sugar plantation labour system in the nineteenth-century (Kuper, 1960: 1). Emigrants can generally be divided into two types: indentured labourers who arrived in South Africa from South and North-East India between 1860 and 1911; and Gujarati 'passenger' traders circulating within long-established Indian Ocean economic networks (Bhana and Brain, 1990). One feature of this geographical complexity is the diversity of South African Indians' religious and vernacular composition (variants of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity; and Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Hindi and Arabic linguistic communities). The Indian-origin population numbers some 1.3 million, approximately 2.6% of the South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2010), and has long considered South Africa their permanent home: in 1960, 95% of the South African Indian population was born in South Africa (Ginwala, 1985: 3). Furthermore, South African Indians lost contact with family, kin and specific geographical origins in India as a result of the longevity of apartheid and diplomatic isolation, the conditions of sea-passage and

indenture, and the reinvention of caste identities on arrival in South Africa (Landy et al., 2004; Ebr-Valley, 2001).

Whilst the previous section showed how GOI diaspora engagement practices are increasingly folding South African Indians discursively into their global diasporic visions, the ambivalences of being Indian in South Africa present challenges to GoI agendas as they traverse the South African historical, geographical and political context. A major concern for South African Indians is how reconnecting to India can be resolved with South African citizenship (Radhakrishnan, 2005). Considered to be temporary residents until permanent citizenship was granted to them in 1961, the 'spectre' of anti-Indian rhetoric of apartheid (expressed, for example, in the 1949 African riots against 'privileged' Indians) continues to be reproduced in post-apartheid popular culture and press, augmenting South African Indians' sense of vulnerability (Ramsamy, 2007). Underwriting this, Ramsamy (amongst others) argues, is a liminal identity position whereby South African Indians are perceived not to be considered 'African' enough owing to their mercantile and indentured colonial migratory histories, and indeed, continuing diasporic identifications with another country. For example, Singh (2010) notes the continued use of the term 'Indian expatriate' in recent South African political speeches even though most PIOs were born in South Africa and consider it their home.

An ongoing sense of Indian minoritization led, at least early on, to outright resistance against MOIA diaspora outreach practices. The extent to which Indians should consider themselves part of an Indian diaspora and linked symbolically and materially to India as a diasporic homeland became a highly fraught subject of debate in the Indian public sphere (Hansen, 2005). Fatima Meer, in a speech at the 2003 Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, contested the idea that Indians in South Africa should feel part of a larger Indian diaspora:

> "[Diaspora] is a word I abhor ... We, Indian South Africans, have had to struggle hard to claim our South Africanness and that is something that we jealously guard. We are not a diaspora of India in South Africa because we claimed South Africa for our own".
>
> [Meer, 2003]

For South African Indian anti-apartheid activists like Fatima Meer, rejection of Indian diaspora membership is central not only to assertions of South African membership in the contemporary period but also to avoid delegitimizing the contributions of Indians to anti-apartheid organising. Shedding Indian ethnic identities in favour of a broader black consciousness undergirded the alignment of Indians with black communities during apartheid liberation struggles, and so becoming part of an Indian diaspora could undermine both South African Indians' past contributions to nation-building and their identities as South Africans (see also Desai, 1996).

However, for others, there has been a parallel process of re-asserting Indian ethnic identities through the material and symbolic reclamation of Indian diasporic ties. Both during and after apartheid, the domain of Indian artistic and visual culture became an important realm through which South African Indian diasporic cultural associations were able to assert agency in a system of white exploitation and domination. Whilst formal relations of trade, travel and diplomacy between India and South Africa only resumed in 1993, before then South African Indians participated in the so-called 'suitcase trade' with India via Mauritius, enabling people and goods to circumvent the formal restrictions of the diplomatic boycott (Landy et al., 2004). During apartheid, classical Indian song, dance and language teaching organised by specific vernacular, caste and religious associations sustained the

circulation of Indian artists (Bhana and Bhoola, 2011). The strictures of apartheid played an important role as the vernaculars associated with these broader regional distinctions disappeared almost entirely with the enforced teaching and use of English in Indian schools, heightening the importance of transnational artistic exchange in sustaining internal ethnic boundaries (Landy et al., 2004; Bhana and Bhoola, 2011). The resumption of diplomatic relations with India allowed South African Indians the ability to (re)assert ethnic identities within new, and as Radhakrishnan (2011) argues, exciting, transnational circuits. These circuits have offered South African Indians new agencies within post-apartheid redistributive economic agendas that have disadvantaged South African Indians in the fields of education and employment and delegitimised both their past exploitation under colonialism and apartheid and contributions to nation-building (Singh, 2010).

Articulations of an Indian diaspora in South Africa

In this section, I show how diaspora cultural associations and the CGI Durban performatively and discursively articulate South African Indian and GoI trajectories together in an attempt to resolve some of the above fractures, and allow for a range of possible, even competing, future outcomes to be realised. In doing so, I draws attention to the historical fragments, elements and subjectivities that are deployed within performative and discursive articulatory practices, and how in the process, the meanings of those elements are being transformed.

Performing and staging the Indian diaspora in South Africa

The mainstay of the Durban CGI's diaspora outreach work is its collaborations with the ICCR and local Indian cultural associations in promoting and arranging performances by visiting India artists. Whilst there are many different types of South African Indian organisations, the majority of the CGI Durban's collaborations are with Indian cultural and religious associations, most of which were established by Indian migrants and their descendants between the 1920s and 1960s. For the most part, these organisations are diasporic insofar as they have always maintained a degree imaginative material and cultural links to India through, for example, organising visit artists or promoting Indian language education. Typically, the ICCR in Delhi arranges for delegations of visiting Indian artists and performers, the Durban Consul General and Vice-Consul Generals would attend the functions as distinguished guests (often giving speeches), whilst the local ICC would collaborate with Indian diaspora associations to arrange the venue and invite local dance schools and musicians to perform alongside the Indian visitors. Local performers would be most likely be drawn from dance and music schools practising Indian classical performance traditions but often would encompass Bollywood-style performances, and increasingly, Zulu artistic heritages.

The CGI Durban's strategic alignments with local South African diaspora associations in KZN converges with attempts by Indian diaspora associations to convince the South African Indian public of the value of diasporic engagements in maintaining Indian regional and ethnic identities. Rather than promoting specific caste traditions, as was the case in the early twentieth century, these organisations draw on regional Indian framings in their promotion practices (e.g. Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu or Hindustan) (see Bhana and Bhoola, 2011 for a fuller explanation of the dynamics of this evolution). One reason for maintaining and celebrating regional Indian identifications through the CGI outreach activities is the persistence of negative regional Indian stereotypes circulating within the South African community in Durban that Ganesh (2010) has argued often erupts periodically in skirmishes over

the perceived unfair representation at joint cultural events and other activities. Perhaps the most illustrative example of this is Jay's[5] discussion of his Tamil organisations' participation in the civic celebrations for the Indian president's first official visit to South Africa in 2004.

> "My primary reason [for getting involved] was that well some other diaspora associations [...]it feels as if they do not care to celebrate Tamil heritage and culture (...) we are part of the Indian diaspora in South Africa too".

Jay's discomfort has arisen primarily because of a perceived dominance of Northern Indian traditions in the Indian public sphere (Ganesh, 2010), where public performances and manifestations of Tamilness are aimed at reaffirming the credibility of Tamil culture (Hansen, 2012: 73). Furthermore, amongst pressures to articulate Tamil identities as Indian under the political discourse of the 'Rainbow Nation' (Radhakrishnan, 2005), participation in the extra-territorial reach of the Indian state allows organisations such as Jay's to sustain Tamil culture as a distinct element within the wider Indian diaspora in South Africa.

Whilst many internal divisions around language and region remain, diaspora outreach collaboration takes place in a fluid milieu of Indian diasporic subjectivities. There are overlaps across regional, religious and vernacular differences owing to the strictures of apartheid that institutionalised the development of a common conservative Indian public sphere through worship, rituals and festivals and Indian media (Hansen, 2012). For example, the Islamic festival of Muharram in South Africa incorporates Hindu rituals and scriptural elements as a result of broader institutional constructions of a unified Indian community under apartheid (Vahed, 2005). Furthermore, coalition-building across inter-ethnic divides arose to mitigate some of the worst excesses of apartheid (Bhana and Bhoola, 2011). A broad sense of Indianness continues to persist to serve not as a location for a desired return, but as a strategic point of reference politically and culturally in the face of dramatic post-apartheid changes (Landy et al., 2004; Vahed and Desai, 2010).

Collaborating with the diaspora activities of the CGI Durban is linked to processes of ethnic boundary (re)making, both in terms of specific regional Indian identity, as discussed above, but also more broadly as people of Indian origin in order to maintain and assert a shared sense of community. In particular, the physical spaces of ICC performances are perceived by diaspora associations to allow people to experience the affective geographies of the auditory forms of classical Indian artistic expressions such as devotional songs, ragas and bajans. Describing the performance of Shobana Rao held at the Guajarati Kendra Hall in 2005, Venita said:

> "It's just nice to be in a different world for a few hours, one where I can just relax and enjoy the music and [...] I can transport myself to a different place. Away from everyday life".

These embodied registers of classical performances that connect PIOs to India forms part of what Gilbert and Lo (2010) call sites of "polycultural exchange [and] a zone of heightened affect" (155) that "performs and activates a wide range of links with homeland and hostland" (151). In this specific example, whilst the mainly Gujarati-speaking audience might be unfamiliar with the words and musical style, here the embodied, material and sensory qualities associated with Indianness become legitimized, performatively, as a site for diasporic engagement and collaboration.

For the CGI in Durban, this simplified version of South African Indian's geographical identifications with India, one that crosses

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[5] At participant's requests for anonymity, all names have been changed except where the individual was speaking in their public capacity.

internal divisions and is rendered in embodied forms, serves as justification for their continued outreach practices. The Durban Vice-Consular General at the time, Mr. Purushotham argued that:

"Despite their long history in South Africa, Indians here are part of India's history . . . [our cultural programming] allows this to be recognised and to say to people here – look these are your roots. This is where you are from [. . .] through the ICC activities they can get to know India better".

This process of acknowledging South African Indians' ancestry on the subcontinent in a general, rather than specific, territorial sense is another example of the GOI's broader reclamation of diaspora space as its own (see also Dickinson, 2012). Across a range of contexts, the mythologisation and reification of an ancestral homeland is a crucial part of maintaining and developing diaspora engagement strategies since it fosters an imagined deterritorialised political community (Ho, 2011). Since South African Indians are unlikely to remit, tracing connections between South African Indians' ancestral pasts and present identities through embodied performances of Indianness is critical to the GoI's enfoldings of South African Indians into the broader India diaspora. The embodied material practices of the GoI diaspora outreach practices works precisely because it aligns with the motivations of its collaborating associations aiming to deploy cultural–material fragments of Indianness in reasserting a range of different Indian subjectivities.

For those using ties to India to continue to (re)define the internal and external boundaries of Indianness, convincing the South Indian public sphere of the value of collaborating with the GoI has meant performing under the disciplining gaze of South African Indians' contributions to building the 'Rainbow Nation' (see also Radhakrishnan, 2005). Part of this involves discursively tracing the connections between the histories of the two countries. As Singh (2010) also found in his study of the 2010 PBD Africa, this can be seen in the ways that historical anti-apartheid figures from South African Indian history become brought in as key elements in discursive articulations of a shared history. Consular General, Mr. Purushotham said:

"Dadoo, Naicker, Gandhi are all important because of the leadership role they played. They led the way and gave Indians initial guidance in the apartheid struggle [. . .] There are deep historical connections between our countries and our events build on that and say to the locals look at the contributions Indians have made to this country".

Here the CGI uses discursive articulations of transnational geohistories (drawing in particular here on Gandhi as a key transnational migrant linking Indian and South African Indian histories together) to justify ongoing diaspora outreach practices. This is also achieved materially. For instance, the Indian Government via the Indian High Commission in South Africa has since 2002 made ongoing attempts to organise for the repair of Gandhi's former ashrams in South Africa. Recently, the government of Madhya Pradesh pledged Rs. 1 crore ($215,000 USD) to continue the Indian High Commissions' efforts to organise renovations of Tolstoy Farm using local community organisations (The Hindu, 2014). In this way, historical figures have come to take on new meanings as discursive symbols of past and present Indian and South African relations rather than as important actors in their own right within South Africa and South African Indians' apartheid struggle histories.[6]

India–South Africa histories are also articulated performatively through cultural programming that reflects the mutual complementarity of Indian and South African artistic expressions (Radhakrishnan, 2005). Fusion India–Africa intercultural performances are gaining wider popularity amongst South African Indian choreographers, artists and dance schools because they pose a radical challenge to the boundedness of Indian and African cultural traditions (see Radhakrishnan, 2003 for a detailed ethnography of one such performance). Whilst there are a diversity of artists across South Africa bringing Indian–African artistic heritages together in performances, exhibitions and festivals, both diaspora associations and the ICCs are also bringing such artistic expressions into the CGI's outreach practices. One recent initiative of the HCI, in conjunction with the CGIs in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg (amongst other partners), is the annual 'Shared History: The Indian Experience' festival (http://sharedhistory.co.in/). Such inter-cultural collaborations are designed to promote a wider sentiment disposing South Africa to India. Speaking of his organisation's participation in the festivities for Indian Republic Day in 2004, Vinod says:

"We don't just want the Indian community to come, but we want to reach all sections of South African society. African people are attracted to Indian music and dance so we try to encourage these artists to come also. For example, at an Indian Republic Day event we hosted in conjunction with the consulate, two Zulu boys from the Balima Naidoo music school sang songs in Tamil. Everyone was so moved by their performance".

For Vinod, becoming part of the Indian diaspora also means resolving competing loyalties and affiliations by articulating the place of Indian diasporic culture within the broader context of South African multiculturalisms. These assertions in part validate the activities of his organisation over time and ensure its continuing relevancy to the wider South African and South African Indian population.

Discursive articulations of Indian transnational life within the multicultural tenets of South African nation-building have allowed some tensions to be resolved, but this is not without contradiction. For example, smaller CGI Durban events that constituted solely of visiting Indian artists and groups performing traditional instrumental or dance arrangements were highly praised by interviewees for the artists' authentic rendering of classical musical forms. More expansive performances that included inter-cultural elements were praised in opening speeches for their contributions to multicultural understandings and for showcasing the long history of Indian–African collaboration but there was evidence that such events were merely symbolic gestures. For example, in one such event a Zulu choir appeared merely as a short interlude between a performance by a local Indian dance academy and the visiting Indian group (see also Radhakrishnan, 2003). Indeed, Vahed and Desai (2010) describe these kinds of transnational spaces as 'new laagers' (defensive camps) because they continue to reproduce racial segregation. Thus the ways in which the CGI Durban and diaspora associations draw on and reproduce India-African fusion elements in their outreach practices very often transforms them far from the original intentions of the wider set of South African Indian fusion choreographers and artists.

Imagining Indian–South African futures

The ways in which organizations and the CGI Durban use classical performances to perform the historical and geographical hybridity of the South African Indian self is useful not only for stabilizing the complexities, fluidities and contestations surrounding outreach activities, but this can also be utilised in imagining a range of future outcomes. In particular, amongst South African

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[6] See Raman (2004) for a discussion of South African Indians' own mythologisations of Gandhi and Dadoo within transnational expressions of belonging.

Indians there is a desire to project an image of the community as upwardly mobile transnational middle-class professionals far removed from their indentured, rural poor origins (Radhakrishnan, 2011). For diaspora associations attempting to convince the wider South African Indian public of the value of collaborations, articulations of such potential future possibilities is a key strategy. For instance, discussing a Kuchipudi performance arranged by the Durban CGI, Devi stated:

"India is going to be a world power of the future, like China . . . I like that we are a part of it [. . .] If India is successful then we don't need to be ashamed of where we come from [. . .] there are lots of stereotypes about Indians as backward coolies but now we can be seen as forward looking, as global leaders. I think events really help us, because they showcase our rich cultural heritage, where we have come from, what we have achieved, where we can go".

'Coolie' was a colonial and apartheid label for Indians that connoted backwardness, manual rural labouring and servitude, a derogatory term that continues to persist in post-apartheid South Africa. India's contemporary South African connections are perceived to have the power to rewrite this past. This process of rewriting 'coolie' history by collaborating with the CGI can be thought of as what Hansen (2012) has described as a broader process of fetishization, whereby India – its symbols, objects, and representations – is bound up with purifying what is a messy and 'unwieldy' cultural identity. As Hansen writes, in South Africa "various ideas and experiences of Indianness always needed to perform a labour of abstraction [. . .] to make themselves possible and plausible" (p. 203). Collaboration with the CGI is highly desirable because of the type of India the CGI condenses and represents which, in the above quotation, is a modern global geopolitical and economic power. In this case, this process of becoming part of the Indian diaspora through collaborations with the CGI on staging Indian musical traditions is perceived to enable articulations of South African Indian modernities, and project a different kind of future for South African Indians than ones previously marked by inadequacies.

Whilst the example above demonstrates the subjective dimensions of South African Indian trajectories being articulated through collaborations with the CGI, these articulations also contains elements of symbolic capital that can be used for future gain. As Kleist (2008) and Faria (2011) found in their studies of, respectively, Somalian and South Sudanese hometown groups, people engage with diaspora associational life in order to project of a range of different kinds of gendered and classed subjectivities. In KZN, constituting oneself as a global Indian is increasingly a status symbol (Singh, 2010), whether that is through public sphere participation (Hansen, 2012) or via consumption practices that include Indian Satellite TV, trips to India, religious pilgrimage, and participation in Indian classical language, education and dance classes (Vahed and Desai, 2010). This can be seen in perceptions of the prestige conferred through the GoI's annual *Pravasi Samman Awards*, which are given to those who have contributed to the welfare of the Indian community and/or India's image overseas through their excellence in the fields of business, philanthropy, arts, and community service (MOIA, 2009b). In 2010, Dr. TP. Naidoo, the founder of the Indian Academy of South Africa (established in 1967) was awarded a Pravasi Samman Award for his work promoting Indian culture in South Africa (MOIA, 2010b). In a press interview he said that it was

"an awe-inspiring experience to receive this award from the head of the largest democracy in the world [. . .] The award is held in great esteem and wherever I went after receiving the award, people treated me with dignity and congratulated me.

The media had splashed the news overall major networks on radio and TV. I dedicate this award to the South African Indian community who despite tremendous trials and tribulations continued to triumph against all odds to hold their own on the world stage".

[Artsmart, 2010]

In the process of accruing symbolic capital, here Dr. Naidoo reinscribes the trope of the global Indian onto the rest of the South African Indian population, even if that trope finds little resonance amongst disempowered working class Indians still living in former Indian townships and who have suffered disproportionate forms of economic disadvantage under apartheid and again under post-apartheid Black Economic Empowerment agendas (Vahed and Desai, 2010). Whilst the Durban ICC is not explicitly tied to any particular class agendas (unlike the MOIA), the types of classical Indian traditions they promote tend to be popular amongst middle-class South African Indians living in gated residential communities and for whom classical traditions present an opportunity for articulating embeddedness in what Radhakrishnan (2011: 18) calls a "globalized Hinduism". The processes of articulating collaborations with the GOI, either through the architecture of the MOIA directly, or indirectly through the CGI Durban, draws in, performatively, an inconsistent representation of the upwardly mobile globally successful South African Indian.

Another crucial element essential in performatively tracing together the CGI's outreach practices with South African Indian subjectivities in order to realise the project of escaping a 'coolie' past is the role played by South African Indian print cultures and newspapers. One example is the Sunday Times' pull-out section "Extra", which is an Indian-focused lifestyle and news supplement. Whilst there are many different kinds of South African Indian newspaper and print cultures (including The Post, which has a long history of circulation amongst the Indian working classes in former townships), the Sunday Times supplement is distributed primarily to newer middle-class gated residential areas in KZN. The editor described his readership thusly:

"we want our content to reflect the Indian community as an affluent and increasingly successful community of people. Our market is a well-educated, sophisticated audience, and our goal is to target the top end. Our areas of circulation, mainly in Musgrave and Umhlanga, would reflect this".

Newspapers are crucial in reproducing the script of the upwardly mobile, successful South African Indian subject by circulating the symbolic capital gained from CGI collaborations beyond the physical realm of performance spaces. One way in which the Sunday Times "Extra" does this is through its 'City Swank' column, which reports on various events held by the ICC and the CGI in Durban. Photographs of the attendees will appear, usually accompanied by a description of the event, the notable dignitaries who attended and the clothing worn by attendees. For example Noreen (30) a journalist who covers such events said:

"Sometimes we include a description of the saris the women were wearing, such as whereabouts in India they got their saris from, what kind of materials they were made from, things like that. People like to read about the glamorous silks and jewels of India".

Here the 'City Swank' column both produces and projects a coherent image of the South African Indian as constituted through Indian consumption practices. Projecting an image of an economically successful and upper class Indian is tied to the newspaper's own commercial agendas, making KZN print cultures a crucial medium for the construction and expression of global Indian diaspora in South Africa.

Moving away from coolie labels of the past and accusations of disloyalty that remain rife in stereotypes of South African Indians circulating in the wider public sphere (Ramsamy, 2007) also involves discursive articulations about what a closer India–South Africa relationship could bring materially. The KZN Government used the 2004 visit to the region by the President of India as an opportunity to articulate the potential for mutual economic benefit between India and South Africa through the shared histories of both India's and South African Indians' role in the dismantling of colonialism and apartheid (e.g. Ndbele, 2004), naturalising future strategic geopolitical and economic alignments. South African Indian diasporic identities were perceived to be critical in these collaborations. This can be demonstrated through for example, the way that the Durban mayor, Logie Naidoo (a South African Indian) articulated the benefits of Indian diasporic sensibilities. He said:

> "On my last visit to Chennai, I attracted Ramco, an IT company, to Durban and they invested [...] It's important I maintain links to India to assist the South African community [to] provide a platform of mutual benefit to both countries. I use my identity, origins and position to work on the links between India and South Africa and build links and extract benefits for South Africa".

Here Logie Naidoo gives South African Indians agency in influencing the development of closer economic collaborations and investment and development potential, and in the process validates the practices of those participating in wider India-South African transnational and diasporic activities.

This performative rendering of Indian–South African mutuality is an attempt to emplace Indian diasporic sensibilities as critical economically to the future of South Africa and to the possible achievements of the KZN region. The Indian diaspora has long been a central component in the KZN tourist authority's marketing of itself as a multiracial province, one that exemplifies the Rainbow Nation. For example, the KZN Tourist authority describes Durban as "our Little India" where you can

> "walk in the incomparable footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi; marvel at the southern hemisphere's most ornate, gilded temple and largest mosque; rub shoulders in trinket-filled bazaars [and] allow imagination free rein in a space filled with [...] the avant-garde fusion of East-meets-Africa".

> [www.zulu.org.za]

Furthermore, many KZN ministries recognise the importance of the CGI in Durban, whether that is fulfilling its mandates of support for the cultural diversity of artistic expressions in the province (such as in Fig. 1, above) or in boosting jobs and economic activity. For instance, at the PBD Africa held in 2010, the CGI Durban hosted an 'Opportunity Africa' business roundtable with local KZN government representatives, South African Indian business professionals and the MOIA to discuss the role that PIOs in South Africa could play in stimulating the economic sectors of India and KZN (OIFC, 2010). However, the successes of the CGI Durban in achieving economic outcomes from collaborations with South African Indians is made possible at all because of colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid redistributive agendas that rendered perceptions of South African Indians as "facilitators of economic development ... custodians of good management and entrepreneurs with commendable investment skills" (Singh, 2010: 31). Therefore, articulations that draw on Indian diasporic connections as a base for consolidating future economic outcomes are deeply embedded in the historical intersectionalities of race and class in South Africa.

Conclusion

This paper drew on case-study evidence to show how the trajectories of South African Indian diaspora associations and Indian governmental institutions are articulated together through the practices of the Consulate General of India in Durban. Each of the actors involved are actively negotiating their own political, economic and subjective trajectories within emergent India-South African geopolitical landscapes whilst simultaneously responding to the contestations and challenges brought about by these alignments. The paper showed how a multifaceted range of articulatory practices, namely the staged, performative and discursive tracing of connections between these different trajectories, are involved in legitimizing the idea of South African Indians as members of an extra-territorial Indian citizenry. The success of these articulatory practices depends on their ability to realise outcomes that allow South African Indians to stake a claim to being an integral component of the heterogeneities of South Africa's history and future.

The examination of articulatory practices of the GoI and diaspora associations presented here has four wider implications. First, rather than privileging the calculable economic agendas of wealth creation and flows of opportunity (e.g. Larner, 2007; Mullings, 2011), articulatory practices catalyses a multidimensional range of spatial and temporal agencies from across a wide network. The agencies discussed here are lived, embodied and emotional because they are related to resolving past, current and future tensions and debates around South African Indian subjectivity. This is not to dismiss the neoliberal economic orderings that also underpin articulatory practices – since these are also seen in the narratives above – but to recognise the ways in which the multidimensional agencies associated with extra-territorial diasporic political practices are crucial to the reproduction, transformation and longer-term durabilities of economic agendas.

Second, the performative articulations of India–Africa connectivities seen in the narratives above demonstrated the importance of materialities to the production of diasporic space (Tolia-Kelly, 2004) since the types of materialities described (specifically those associated with classical Indian cultural traditions) constituted a means through which both the GoI and diaspora associations could reach into and rework contested diasporic subjectivities. Although the sorts of material cultures involved were not mainstream or populist (for a further discussion of Bollywood in the outreach practices of the CGI in Durban see Dickinson, 2014) the qualities and characteristics of the musical styles and artistic expressions involved in articulating convergences between the GoI and South African Indians were interpreted as significant to multiple different agendas related to nationality, citizenship, and belonging. A further focus on materialities could have wider appeal to scholars of diaspora strategies by encouraging a relational ontology of the political, one attuned to the significances, spatialities and materialities of human and more-than human co-constitutive practices and relations (McFarlane, 2009; Dittmer, 2013). Further work that examines the materialisation of state–diaspora relations is needed to show how diasporic policies can be challenged and reworked as they penetrate into the many different spatial registers of encounter that contribute to holding state–diaspora assemblages together.

Third, the above account of how embassies and consulates act to articulate a relationship between diasporic populations and an ancestral homeland demonstrates the ways that diasporas are becoming increasingly enrolled into contemporary practices of public diplomacy (Rana, 2009, 2013). The academic literature has, on the whole, focused on the diaspora strategies that governments use to cash out the remittances and investment potential of overseas populations. This paper has shown that diasporic

populations also constitute important, but overlooked, subaltern political actors (Sharp, 2011) involved in mediating geopolitical exchanges between India and South Africa. Subaltern political actors – and the embodied, more-than representational and material relationalities of their lives – are increasingly the focus of wider scholarship examining the orchestrations of geopolitics (e.g. Craggs, 2014). More nuanced accounts are needed of how governments find ways of including and managing the diversity of diasporic voices and agendas as the role of diasporas within states' extra-territorial political engagements evolves.

Finally, in investigating the enrollment of South African Indians into the diplomatic practices of the CGI Durban, this paper also demonstrates the importance of conceptualising consulates as not simply administrative offices for extra-territorial population administration. Rather, the CGI Durban is one location from which a wider range of mundane and everyday spaces, such as concert halls, temples, music venues, dance academies, and former homesteads, are reworked into sites for public diplomacy. The shaping of such oft-neglected ordinary spaces into diplomatic sites is, as Neumann (2013) argues, "at the very heart of diplomatic work" (p. 5) since diplomacy is a social as much as political practice.[7] Whilst the sites explored in this paper are those enrolled by the CGI Durban and its collaborating organisisions, they are just a few of a wider set of interconnecting spatialities in which South African Indian diasporic subjectivities are expressed and negotiated (see Dickinson, 2014). The ability of the CGI Durban to embed diaspora outreach practices into the varied social worlds that South African Indians inhabit is critical not only to the future successes and failures of such practices, but also to realising the GoI's wider geopolitical goals.

Acknowledgements

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