

REFLECTIONS ON CONNECTEDNESS AND ALIENATION THE CASE OF SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA(N)S IN GREAT BRITAIN

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Abstract

(Im)migrants need to go through a complicated process of adaptation which presupposes levels of alienation and/or connectedness towards the 'host'/'home' country influenced by external or personal factors. The generation factor divides levels of connectedness and of alienation as younger diasporics may be more connected to the 'host' country and view their country of origin as simply a point of reference. Another influential factor is the transnational families' fear of ghettoization (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002). The paper analyses diasporics' levels of connectedness and alienation towards the 'home' culture and the factors that influence these levels and are sometimes reflected by pieces of writing or films of the South Asian diaspora in Britain. The second part of the paper addresses the thorny topic of European identity in connection with diasporic communities/groups living in UK with a view to how 'connected' or 'alienated' these may feel towards this new type of identity.

Keywords: connectedness, alienation, identity, diasporic, immigrant, cosmopolitan.

1. Introduction

Being 'connected' or 'alienated' may not seem relevant concepts until, connected (sic!) to other concepts such as 'identity' and brought into a particular socio-political, cultural (and not only) context, it reveals complexities that need to be addressed. Thus, the theme of diasporic community, diasporic group or diasporic subject is re-visited in this analysis of 'connectedness and alienation' of minority diasporic communities/groups from the Indian subcontinent in Great Britain, as part of the European Union, one of the states for whom it took a long time until it eventually agreed to join the EU. This is an important detail, as Britain has been seeing itself as a multicultural state while economic reasons were in fact decisive factors in its (non)joining the European Union.

This paper does not discuss the influence of the South Asian indentured migrants that came to the UK. Instead, it is the new South Asian, mainly the Indian,

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diaspora made up of the men and women, sometimes accompanied by children, who migrated in the twentieth century that is analysed here. The author is well aware of the complexities posed by the multitude of especially (but not only) ethnic and religious communities of migrants and will address them accordingly though without getting into specific details for each of the above.

A few questions are being asked with a view to finding answers to: how are 'connectedness' and 'alienation' defined? What are the factors that influence their meanings and changing in meanings among diaporans of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries living in the United Kingdom? How 'connected'/'alienated' are they to the concept of European identity? The paper also looks at the criss-crossing lines between 'connectedness' and 'alienation' in the context of 'home'/'host' culture (or country) as well as of that constituted by the very factors that influence these meanings such as the type of migration, generation, fear of ghettoization, professional qualifications, willingness to maintain networks (as part of transnational families), cultural/ethnic/religious background, the regulations of the host country and even potential benefits coming from the 'home' country.

2. Immigrant between 'Connectedness' and 'Alienation'

It is generally understood that being more 'connected' to a country or to a culture implies getting more 'alienated' from another. This is simply another way of restating the dichotomy West/East, 'us'/'them', 'good'/'evil', and so on. Before combating this view of the binaries that divides the world into two distinct parts without leaving room for any gaps in between, let us see what 'connectedness' and 'alienation' refer to. Therefore, I will start from a dichotomy but I will continue by trying to dissolve it while bringing into play some significant actors. It is only true that *generally* a(n) (im)migrant wants to be connected to his/her country or culture for various reasons – very well known by now. This 'connectedness' is based on a certain awareness of his/her sharing with the 'people' (either community/group or nation) left behind of cultural values, religious beliefs and practices, social norms and practices, lifestyle or even the belief of belonging to a certain collective identity. It is almost expected that when shared beliefs and values are no longer found in the country of destination, the individual will feel 'alienated' and even displaced, uprooted from what used to be his/her 'home'.

Consequently, 'connectedness' is (re)defined. The experience of migration must be viewed and understood from its very beginning that is from the initial point in which the potential migrant has already formed some perspective upon the country of destination and its culture. As I was arguing in an article presented in the Sixth International Conference 'Diasporas' in Oxford 2013, based on an idea brought about by Mala Pandurang, potential (im)migrants or, better yet emigrants, are not totally isolated individuals who have no idea about potential countries of destination, namely the West. The theorist discusses the specific case of Indian

girls and women who may become 'emigrants' by choice (in order to continue their studies) or by need (in order to marry someone already settled there). In the latter case, it may be a mix of choice and need as some girls envisage marriage abroad as the best option for a girl from the East for a supposedly better life.

To return to the analysis of the (im)migrants' 'connectedness' or 'alienation' in general, one may apply the same logic: (im)migrants leave with a series of expectations about the new culture forged by their exposure to the various media, the Internet, friends and relatives' trips and stories about the West. Pandurang discusses the disappointment that some potential (im)migrants/emigrants may feel when in the West because of the distorted superior image generally promoted through means of communication and entertainment. However, one must not overlook the fact that the West may be also distorted by Eastern lens that project a negative image of the West, possibly in full opposition to the positive one of the East. In this case, migrants who expect the West to completely lack values (i.e. 'their' values) may discover that this is not true. Therefore, emigrants/(im)migrants' expectations and the reality of their migration experience influence their degree of connectedness and/or alienation with one or the other culture. When they experience the new culture by themselves, the dichotomy 'connectedness'/'alienation' may become blurred as other factors come into play. There may be situations in which emigrants/(im)migrants' (positive) expectations are not met or, worse, when they face instances of racism and discrimination. The latter generate emigrants/(im)migrants to feel alienated and to wish to enhance their 'connectedness' with the 'home' country/culture that they instantly idealize but that they did not value as much before migration. In other words, the level of 'alienation' increases when in unfavourable situations; 'connectedness' becomes a goal.

The emigrant/(im)migrant *connects* by creating networks within and outside the ethnic/religious community of which s/he is part of as a diasporic individual. Examples such as Southall, a suburb in London or Brick Lane, a street in London, speak of the emigrants/(im)migrants' tendency to *connect* by creating communities that share cultural practices, religion, language, as well as by re-creating spaces that are familiar to what they used to know before migration. The city's actual architecture may also be altered because of the immigrant communities or groups' need to give shape to their need of 'connectedness' and to diminish feelings of 'alienation'. There are now many mosques and Hindu or Sikh temples, some very impressive because of their architecture and size, that speak not only about the need for recreating and reinforcing 'connectedness' but also, in the case of impressive huge buildings, about the financial power of some members of the community who indirectly contribute to one's degree of 'connectedness' with 'home'. Brick by brick (sic!), these people's feelings of alienation can be removed and replaced by a renewed sense of 'connectedness' with the 'homeland'.

Imbalances of power are still responsible for the division of the world. They have divided it into the powerful and the powerless during the colonization of India by the British Empire. After India's Independence in 1947, with more and more people migrating to the UK, imbalances of power changed their dynamics. As some migrants from the subcontinent, especially from India, became financially powerful, they also became significant factors in redefining India. The infusion of capital and financial support brought them political power. Thus, 'connectedness' between diaspora and the 'homeland' reaches another level.

One aspect of alienation has not been discussed here though – the feeling of alienation increased by one's impossibility or unwillingness to speak about his/her experience as an (im)migrant or, better yet, as a diasporic. Vijay Mishra has called this phenomenon 'the impossible mourning' – an alienation one almost *has to* feel. There is no way out of it because the subject constantly feels a primal loss (of the 'homeland') and is always attached to an experience perceived as traumatic. This is an instance in which one cannot know if the subject will ever be cured or, moreover, if s/he wants to be cured (Mishra, 2007: 9). Diasporic communities that do not feel accepted by the new country's population or that had to migrate because they were under serious political and/or military threat, are more likely to fall into this category. They cannot, or better yet will not be cured because pain is constantly present – an ingredient that nurtures their feelings of alienation combined with a tendency to idealize the loss to the point where it becomes the very food that nurtures the diasporic's trauma. Under these circumstances, there are very feeble chances for social cohesion in the country of destination.

The UK has been oscillating between creating community cohesion and developing a multicultural society. The 2001 riots and the events of 2005 in London increased the major population's suspicion towards people of different ethnic background, especially Muslim. Therefore, the politics put emphasis on community cohesion in order to diminish potential threats and thus promote assimilationism in favour of multiculturalism. When one suddenly becomes the dangerous unwanted dubious Other, even if s/he previously was well integrated in the host culture, the same individual may now reject it as a reaction to her/his being turned into the Other. Immigrants cut the links – the 'connectedness' – with the host culture and may even adopt radical views. There are films and novels of British Asian film-makers/writers who emphasise this aspect (see the young boy in *My Son the Fanatic* or Karim in *Brick Lane*). In the first example, the boy – initially a well integrated second – generation immigrant about to marry a white girl suddenly changes his behaviour and view of life when he realises that his fiancée's parents will never respect him and his family because of their ethnicity, religion, and status as immigrants. In the second example, second-generation Bengali man, becomes more and more involved in organising the community of Muslim immigrants from various countries who live in Hamlet Towers. The events of 9/11 in the US and the reactions to it in the UK make him aware of the dangers

it may imply for anybody who is or appears to be a Muslim. Both characters move away from the culture they have been born in, creating another sort of 'connectedness' – one based on religion and ethnicity. A new situation has been recently created among young Muslim girls in Great Britain. In the context of the Syrian War and the formation of the Islamic State, combined with the opportunities opened up by the Internet and popular websites used mainly by the youth, such women skillfully use sites such as ask.fm or Twitter in order to get into contact with potential husbands, IS fighters, whom they believe to be 'real men' and the gate to what they consider freedom. The author of an article in *London Evening Standard*, Joshi Herrmann, quotes Sara Khan, head of the counter-extremism group Inspire and organizer of the Twitter campaign #makingastand: "Most mosques in this country fail, unfortunately, to provide strong Muslim education to Muslim men, let alone women – many don't even let women in. So the question arises: where do young Muslim women find out about their faith? For the girls, a lot of it is going on the web", (p. 23). Khan insists therefore on the need of young Muslim girls to be integrated within their own communities, to feel like they *belong*. Thus, although they live in the so-called 'free' 'Western' world, the real freedom in their view is back there, 'home', a home defined by extremist religious behaviour that translates into violence. Quite confusingly, or on the contrary, illustratively, the article is accompanied by three pictures that show both white and non-white Muslim women, one (white) using modern technology and another (non-white) as already being accompanied by her IS fighter-husband carrying a gun. Pictures, more than words, have an impact on those who look at them as they carry powerful messages that are not explained but only displayed. I will not get into a discussion on racist differentiations between white and non-white women in Great Britain but one has to notice how the media, although it presents points of view from representatives of non-mainstream groups (such as Sara Khan), it also displays pictures that perpetuate discrimination and racism.

On the other hand, some immigrants do not create connections with other immigrants of the same community as they are more future-oriented. These are generally parents of second-generation immigrants who face a series of problems (cf. Barn 2008). Although they want to ensure the transmission of their mother tongue to their children, there is currently lack of fluency among these parents, they believe that their children will succeed in school if they only speak the language of the host country (in this case English) (id.). Their 'connectedness' with the 'home' culture/country is therefore seriously affected by their fear of ghettoization that may trigger non-participation in the diasporic community life and non networking within the community (cf. Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). Similarly, it may generate conflict between members of the same ethnic community who do not share the same lifestyle and social practices.

One example of members of the same community whose 'connectedness' has been affected by lifestyle and goals in life is Gautam Malkani's novel (2006), in which

the groups of boys who hang out together bully another second-generation British Asian who drives a nice expensive car and listens to blur, a well-known typical British pop music band. The dialogue between the youngsters and their behaviour are not proof of their 'connectedness' despite their shared ethnicity/race, reason for which the young man is called a 'gorra' (white). Another example of non-connectedness is the writer Monica Ali herself whose novel and film version of the novel were not welcome by the Muslim community living in Brick Lane. Born in a middle-class family, of an English mother, Ali was accused of inauthenticity and of depicting a community which she did not understand. The level of 'connectedness' between the writer and the community – which was *assumed* to be described in her novel although, one must not forget, hers is still just a fictional world that may be inspired from reality – is affected by the real (not fictional) community's rejection of the author's portrayal of a persona which the community deliberately took upon itself. Would anyone assume that the interruption of 'connectedness' between the writer and the community made Ali feel alienated in anyway? The scandal only generated more fame for the author who could now express her views about the British multiculturalism while mocking the British policy on community cohesion in filmed interviews (filmed interview)².

'Connectedness' and 'alienation' are two elements that affect (im)migrants' lives. The dichotomy 'connectedness'/'alienation' generates other dichotomies that separate 'us' from 'them' or 'West' from 'East'. It may also reflect the differences between generations of immigrants who have different past experiences and future goals. Or it may include members of the same ethnic community who are no longer primarily connected by ethnicity, religion or race and who are rather disconnected because of their wish to be more integrated or even assimilated in order to achieve social success. Consequently, someone does not only choose to be 'connected' or feel 'alienated' but there are several factors that contribute to these situations.

3. The South Asian Diaspora in Great Britain and European Identity

This section only tentatively approaches the issue of South Asian immigrants living in the UK and the concept of European identity. Firstly, European identity in itself is a topic that generates debates over the actual existence of such an identity at present. Secondly, diasporas have generally been theorized in the context of various 'host' countries, namely nation-states, rather than in the context such as the one of a formation like the EU. Therefore, although being fully aware of this difference, the researcher tries to find potential connections between these diaspora(n)s and potential meanings of European identity. By taking on this responsibility, the researcher insists that it is only in the view of pushing the

² For details, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWrwbwbdKqpE> (viewed 30/09/2014)

meanings of ‘connectedness’ and ‘alienation’ of such immigrants in a much wider context, which – although full of risks – needs to be explored.

In his article from 2009, Hartmut Kaelble starts by giving a historical description of what we call ‘European identity’ in relation to the formation of the European Union and identify a major point in time, namely the mid 1980s when the Soviet Empire collapsed followed by the reunification of Germany. This is the time, in accordance with the criticism formulated by theorists such as Habermas or Umberto Eco, when European identities were politicized (Kaelble, 2009: 194). In truth, being ‘a political construction project’ (Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009: 3) that included both national and supranational elites, the emergence of a collective European identity was little less than problematic (cf. Checkel and Katzenstein). The very trait it is assigned – ‘collective’ – is reminding one of homogeneous societies based on uniformity. Another of its characteristics – being a construction of the elites – is also critical in a discourse on diversity and opportunities for all.

In order for an entity such as a ‘European identity’ to be more visible and active in the public sphere, a series of strategies have been adopted. It is acknowledged in (id.) that the same news started being broadcast simultaneously in the media of different nation-states, adopting a rather European perspective instead of a national one; the rise of new European symbols including the European flag, the European anthem, the common currency (valid for some countries of the EU but not all of them), the focus put on the knowledge of more than one foreign *European* language, and the rise of experts in domains such as law, economics, or politics. The increase in decision-power of the EU made possible EU interventions in several national policies: external/internal security, social policy, cultural policy, consumer policy, immigration – to mention just a few. Due to its interventions in the daily lives of the people living in European countries as well as because of its tendency to become ‘a new giant national state’, to develop ‘feelings of identity’, and maybe construct ‘a common enemy’ (Esterházy 2005:78, qtd by Case 120), ‘European identity’ is still being criticized and there are debates on people’s choice among several options and on the contest between or coexistence of different concepts of ‘European identity’ (Kaelble, 2009: 198).

By further analysing the so-called ‘identification with Europe’, Checkel and Katzenstein (2009) mention five types of identification: with superior Europe (political warfare, education, social organisation etc.); with inferior Europe (accompanied by fear of decline posed by Europe’s colonization of migrant waves and the rise of the Islamic world); Europe as an actor in the modernization of the world; the acceptance that Europe has both positive and negative traits; the significance of Europe’s internal diversity, the so-called ‘European unity in diversity’ (Kaelble, 2009: 199). The authors admit that this internal diversity is in fact a paradox as, although it is appreciative of the different ‘others’, one of

Europe's greatest achievements is 'a culture of individualism of persons and collectivities' (ibid. 200).

In this context, the analysis turns towards the possibilities of immigrant communities/groups that are *not* European by origin and whose mother tongues are *not* part of the European 'heritage'. For this, the study benefits more if one applies, due to the constraints of time and space, primarily the perspective of an identification with inferior Europe combined with the 'unity in diversity' view in connection with the existence of South Asian diasporic communities in the UK as a member of the European Union. Additionally, one will take into consideration the identification with European lifestyles and values. Nevertheless, there are two trends that undermine this type of identification: one is the competition on the labour market which generates anxiety over job maintenance among citizens of European countries with better economies who fear an invasion of immigrants from poorer countries; the second is 'the dearth of institutions of European solidarity providing help among Europeans in times of personal crisis or disaster' (Kaelble, 2009: 205). Kaelble's statements are supported by other views according to which European tolerance in the context of majority/minority populations does not mean solidarity with or intolerance towards diverse groups but rather separation from those groups in order to reinforce multiculturalism, viewed as 'a defense of "national" culture' (Delanty and Millward, 2007: 140). Yet, the understanding of nationalism is changing together with the enlargement of European borders and with the re-composition of societies: "Where nationalism was once defined by reference to other nations, (...), nationalism is becoming more defensive and defined by reference to immigrants and other marginalized groups (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991)" (ibid. 143).

Indeed, Delanty and Millward focus on the politicization of 'European identity' as a concept and criticise European liberalism for being just 'a new kind of exclusionary thinking that mixes racism and xenophobia' (ibid. 141), thus giving rise to what they call 'xeno-racism', a phenomenon rather based on cultural than on colour. They also correctly notice that the media is a huge source of xeno-racism that can be met especially in TV broadcasting of soccer matches in Great Britain in which commentators refer to players that have been bought from teams from abroad as '*foreigners*' (foreign transfers) assumed '*not to play fair*', as opposed to '*our players*' who '*play fair*' (ibid. 142) (emphases original). Thus, the dichotomy 'us'/'them' becomes more explicit: 'us' vs. 'foreigners'. Of course, Delanty and Millward bring to light the new Other, the immigrant who comes from an Eastern European country and who is not racialized based on colour or 'race' but on socio-economic status. In this context, is the South Asian immigrant better off than the poor white immigrant in Britain? Professionals and especially educated second-generation British Asians have better chances to feel more 'connected' to the receiving country because of the opportunities and the better living conditions they have.

With reference to Great Britain, identification with Europe has been difficult and complex if altogether weak because of a 'complex relationship with national identity' (Kaelble, 2009: 203). One can only imagine the complex identity of an immigrant from the Indian subcontinent who lives in the UK as part of the European Union. However, the same authors state that identification with national values does not imply a rejection of European ones and suggest that in fact the two may just as well coexist. That is why someone who looks at minority communities from South Asia in the UK wonders whether this assumption is valid or not and if yes, to what extent? In other words, how 'connected' do members of these communities may feel to European identity today?

It is also implicitly assumed by the internal diversity of Europe that 'Europeans' prefer multiple identities (ibid. 202). As migrants, South Asians in the UK may also assume multiple identities – the one 'connected' to the 'homeland' and the one 'inherited' from the new land - , not to mention other potential identities shaped by religion, gender, class etc. One significant element in the analysis is the awareness that the Indian subcontinent does not have a historical connection with Europe as a conglomerate. Instead, it has a strong connection with the former British Empire that had colonised India.

Analyses of South Asian migrants' identity formation and redefinition in the British context, especially after India's Independence (1947), are many. Debates over which label would be most appropriate for them – either 'British Asian', or 'British of Asian origin', or plainly and outwardly 'British' – are not over yet. These tendencies show a constant preoccupation with these individuals' willingness to be associated ('connected') with one cultural/national background or another thus pointing to their cultural affinities.

However, there are less debates over 'British Asians' being preoccupied about being labeled 'European'. Although this quality allows one more mobility and they may have networks with relatives who live in European countries other than the UK, the main preoccupation with identity is rather at ethnic level, then at local level rather than at a wider level of what we call 'Europeanness'. Cinnirella and Hamilton (2014) have found that for British Asians, 'ethnic identity is often stronger and more central to ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom than a sense of British identity (e.g. Hutnik 1985, 1986)' (Cinnirella and Hamilton 181) and justify it by assuming that these minorities' perception of being 'truly British' means to be white. They also note that Asians and white Britons may 'connect' differently with 'European identity'. Thus, British Asians 'may feel that the European "prototype" is white, and this may be a barrier for the internalization of European identity in such cases' (id.). They continue by saying that because of British Asians' perception of British identity as being more multicultural, they identify more easily with the national identity than with the European one.

Nonetheless, some British Asians, particularly those from India, may feel tempted to, at least partly, identify with Europe rather than with the former coloniser but this identification may easily be connected to an even more comprehensive hegemonic construction, the so-called 'First World'. Thus, I will bring here as an argument the confession of a writer who tries to (re)define his identity as a British citizen of Asian descent who is also a European citizen. Madan Sarup (1996) talks about himself as a British citizen, about his Indian origins and the concept of identity. A material representation of identity (and changes in identity) can be the passport. And, just like the stages of one's life, so someone's passport and photos change. Sarup tells us that he has three passports, out of which two are no longer valid ('cancelled') and the current one is smaller and identifies him as European Union citizen, as it is printed on the cover of the passport. He describes the limits and parameters that 'tell' him who he is:

I want to have a closer look at my red passport, which is in front of me. It is smaller than the old blue one; on the cover, at the top, are the words 'European Community' and underneath is written 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'. On the back of the inside cover are many names, my nationality and my date and place of birth. The inside of the passport contains visa stamps which permitted to stay in India and Pakistan for a certain number of days. The Indian visa states that it is not valid for restricted or protected areas; these visas permit entry to and through defined territories. (Sarup, 1996: xv)

The following paragraph reveals how complex his connection to any of these identities is – layers of identity that added up alongside changes at geopolitical level. An individual whose origins are Indian to get British citizenship ascertained by the passport is not an achievement, as Sarup puts it. It would make more sense to feel more at ease with an identity that does not remind him of the days of the Raj - a European identity. However, this position is equally conflicting as it is nothing more, some say, than a hegemonic construct:

The passport refers to my nationality (British citizen). I think of it as a formal category because it does not express how I feel about it. I am not proud to be 'British'; it reminds me of the scars of imperialism, the days of the Raj. I feel more sympathetic to the idea of being a citizen of the European Community, but here too I feel ambivalent: I would rather be a citizen of a federal European Community, but friends remind me that the concept of 'Fortress Europe' is a Eurocentric strategy to maintain the power and the privilege of the 'First World'. (id.)

Others, as empirical data has shown, second- or third- generation 'British Asians' assert that they are British thus pointing to their identification at national rather than ethnic or supra-national level. Their multiple identities may be more significantly complicated by their status as PIOs (Persons of Indian Origin) that connects them to the country of origin more than the so-called European lifestyle

and values. With the growing of the Indian diaspora, for example, the Indian government became aware of its importance, politically and economically, and devised a strategy to reinforce the relationship between these individuals and their country of origin – ‘mother India’. Parvati Raghuram asserts:

In creating a new form of citizenship, the government has attempted to retain a form of exclusive citizenship for nationals who are resident in the country while offering a different, more limited set of rights to those whose interests may also be served by another state. The overseas Indian citizenship is also sensitive to the location of the citizen and the different modes of reception that its diasporic populations receive in different receiving states in terms of the rights on offer. (Raghuram, 2008: 172-173)

Yet, it is the receiving state that determines who and how enters. Raghuram tells us that on the 11 September 2000, Barbara Roche, the UK Home Office minister responsible for immigration passed a new immigration policy that changed the selection process from a skill-based one to one based on work permits in an attempt to win back the terrain that Britain had lost in the competition on the labour market with the US, Canada and Australia (ibid. 175). However, after the suicide bombings in London on the 7 July 2005, ‘the government tried to introduce a clause that the threshold for exclusion would be lowered to include those whose exclusion is ‘conducive to the public good’ (ibid. 179). The removal of rights became a real threat and was paradoxically accompanied by a series of programmes meant to support community cohesion. Thus, British multiculturalism was little by little replaced by ‘older notions of assimilationism within a newer, de-racialised, language of social cohesion’ (Lewis and Neal 2005, quoted by Raghuram 179). As she herself puts it:

It appears that just as India recognises its diaspora through an expansion of citizenship to those of Indian origin living abroad, the terms of reception are becoming increasingly stratified, exclusionary and detrimental to those who acknowledge or take up dual nationality. (Raghuram, 2008: 179)

To give credit to Raghuram, the immigrant/diasporan is at the crossroads between the receiving country who wants him/her to prove his/her affiliation towards it while the country of origin, in its turn, is making him/her alluring offers by inviting him/her to maintain and reinforce ‘connectedness’ with it.

4. Conclusion

This paper contains two parts. The first is an analysis of the dichotomy ‘connectedness’/‘alienation’ in the context of migration. As it is expected, (im)migrants may feel ‘alienated’ when they are away from their ‘home’ countries

and their feelings of 'alienation' may be replaced by some factors that reinforce 'connectedness' with 'home'. 'Connectedness' is often (re)constructed by rich powerful members of (im)migrant communities who contribute significantly to the re-making of 'home' in the receiving country through donations and other contributions. On the other hand, the host country's immigration and citizenship policies are factors that intervene physically into the lives of (im)migrants. They affect their status as immigrant or as (potential) citizen and consequently their feelings of 'alienation' and sense of 'connectedness', either with the 'homeland' or with the country of destination depending on how integrated they feel. 'Integration' must not be understood as 'tolerance', as minorities reject this term in favour of concepts such as 'acceptance', 'recognition' and 'respect' (Delanty and Millward 2007). Lifestyle, goals in life and even the use or non use of their (parents') mother tongue are illustrative of their 'alienation'/'connectedness', alongside their identification with their ethnic and religious self.

In the second part of the analysis, the focus slightly shifts to the concepts 'alienation'/'connectedness' in the context of South Asians living in Britain as part of the European Union. The question at stake is where these individuals relate to their ethnic identity or rather national identity (British) or even supra-national identity (European identity). As it is assumed that a 'European' is flexible and can assume several identities, it is expected that South Asians in Britain find it 'natural' to be, for example, Indian and British and European. However, the association of 'Britain' with the former conqueror may prevent some to call themselves 'British' while others, especially second and third-generation (im)migrants state that they are *just* British. Others may be reluctant to assume a European identity as they may simply equate Europe with another bigger Empire, the 'First' World.

As such, 'European identity' or 'identification with Europe' (Barn 2008) is yet a complex issue with (im)migrants who have come and are still arriving from the subcontinent and bring about differences of generation, language, religion, culture, class, gender, to mention just a few. Immigrant communities are not simply a formation with common language, values, beliefs, customs and practices. There are several strata that add to the current (im)migrant *community*. In addition to this, the European Community emerges as an important actor in the lives of all people who live in the state-members, including immigrants from South Asia. An attempt to pin down a particular 'identity' or better yet an identification with one of the many 'connections' at stake nowadays is therefore superfluous. Difference, despite laws that may try to erase it, is still increasing with every new migrant community/group, with every new-comer, with every new social and historical context.

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