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South Asians in Scandinavia: Diasporic Identity Processes

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This chapter¹ probes selected social-psychological aspects for South Asian young adults in Denmark and is a follow up of a Danish project conducted in the mid-nineties. The diasporic conceptualizations in respect to human centeredness and cultural processes in migration combined with life course perspective, provide the theoretical framework for this study. In-depth interviews were employed, and information was analyzed through meaning condensation and subsequent categorization of the narratives. The results show the reinterpretation of the self, “others” and home in the diasporic families, for the parental as well as the young generation. The chapter also depicts the young adults’ diasporic identities involving the ancestral countries as well as the Scandinavian welfare societies. The results hardly support the myth of return, although the countries of residence have turned increasingly restrictive in migration policies in the past years.

When we look at the present South Asian Diaspora, the Nordic countries like Denmark and Sweden are rarely mentioned among the host societies. In a similar vein, the current research on migration and intercultural psychology in these Nordic countries hardly pays any attention to this diaspora group. However, there are about 60,000 South Asians (from India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) in these countries, who have primarily arrived as migrant labourers in the late sixties and seventies, and a smaller number as refugees in the seventies and eighties from places such as Gujaratis from East Africa, Tamils from Sri Lanka as well as Sikhs from Punjab (Table 1).

Table 1. South Asians in Scandinavia and citizenship status

	Total number <i>India</i>		Total number <i>Pakistan</i>		Total number <i>Sri Lanka</i>	
Denmark population: 5.3 million	4085	2231 Danish citizens	19301	8052 Danish citizens	10291	6569 Danish citizens
Sweden population: 9 million	12464	9652 Swedish citizens	3779	2416 Swedish citizens	6118	5109 Swedish citizens

Source: *Befolkning og valg*, 2005.

Though there are several psychological and mental health issues involving the *diaspora*, the present chapter is limited to the diasporic identity processes including identity transformations in the life course, through a project in Denmark, which has just been completed (Singla, 2006; Singla, 2008).

A review of the South Asian diaspora in the Nordic countries shows a few studies covering the above-mentioned themes. A recent study is about Gujarati Hindu women living in Mariestad, Sweden (Hole, 2005). The study indicates that these first generation women are still longing to return to India, even when they are well acculturated in the Swedish context, thus seen as “Neither here - nor there”. On the other hand, the young generation do not have the intense urge to return to the ancestral country and have almost no economic commitments there (*ibid.*, p. 308).

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Considering the Danish context, it is observed that a young man's definition of himself as *Muslim, Pakistani and Danish* illustrates the construction of a complex diasporic identity (Khawaja, 2003). Another Danish study which includes the Pakistanis (Mørck, 1998) points to the fact that the youth develop "double identities" as they feel mostly Danish but have strong attachment to their parents' "homeland". Similarly the young women develop their identity as "Danish-Muslim" as they are afraid that the ethnic Danes will not accept them as Danes because they "look" different implying experiences of exclusion due to the color of the skin (Siim, 2006). Frello (2006) notes that some minority youth are *cosmopolitan* characterized by the ability to engage in other cultures, while at the same time having a reflexive distance *vis-a-vis* their own cultural background.

Singla (2004a; 2004b) analyzed the double challenges related to youth period and ethnicity faced by the young people in the mid-nineties, depicting the positive ways of meeting them. A study by Bamzai (2004) in India about overseas-born Indians has addressed diaspora from another context and indicated the generational difference in the diasporic identities. None of the existing studies has focused on the social psychological aspect of the South Asians as a diaspora group in the Scandinavian countries in the contemporary period, as is done in the present study.

The current framework is mainly Social Psychological –about the relationship between the person and the society, though in combination with anthropological perspectives. Epistemologically, a middle ground position is followed, consistent with both the idea that reality constructs the person and that the person constructs reality. Both a crude realism (positivism) and a pure (linguistic) idealism are rejected in favour of a dialectical approach to knowledge inspired by Vertkuyten (2005), and Kvale (1996).

The present study is a follow up of an earlier study (Singla, 2004b), conducted in a broad societal context characterized by radical modernity. Modernity involves challenges such as individualizing and resolving the tension between the individual and the collective –the "we-ness"– seen as the conflict between "to be one's own" and "the urge for belonging to a collectivity" (Dencik, 2005).

Another backdrop is the participating young adults' life course (Boyd & Bee, 2006; Levy, Ghisletta, Goff, Spini & Widmer, 2005), The young adults *position* themselves and can simultaneously occupy more than one position, within the family and networks in the backdrop of these societal and life course contexts (Gergen, 2001; Harre & Moghaddam, 2003).

It is accepted that intersections of important forms of social stratifications such as ethnicity, age, class, gender & national divisions bear significantly upon diaspora histories (Sen, 2006; Phoenix, 2006). There are various categories to which we simultaneously belong –through birth, associations and alliances.

The subjective features of the diaspora –the agency (the meanings held and practices conducted by social actors) are the focus in the present delineation. This directs attention to the multiple meanings of diaspora (Vertovec, 2000), in which diaspora is perceived as a social form, type of consciousness and mode of cultural production and consumption. A social form is about relations, networks, and economic strategies across the borders while consciousness is awareness about multi-locality, both *here* and *there*, connection with others who share the "roots" and "routes". Lastly, diaspora as mode of cultural production is seen as a transnational cultural phenomena. Appadurai (2002; 2006) points to the complex transnational flow of media images and messages as creators of greatest disjuncture for the diasporic populations, which illuminate how space and time are transforming each other in special ways in the present era. Furthermore, he describes how the nation-state has grown ambivalent about minorities who at the same time, because of global communication technologies and migration flows, increasingly see themselves as parts of powerful global majorities.

Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk (2005) criticized Vertovec by arguing that *diaspora*² shifts our attention away from viewing migration as a one-way process, as people migrate from one place and settle in another, just ending the story. However, understanding of the complex transnational identities needs new conceptual maps. These new approaches conceptualize diaspora as both through a *positive embracing* of transnational affiliation as well as through a defensive posture by communities in the face of a hostile host saying *you do not belong*. This theoretical framework is perceived to be relevant to delineating the changing diasporic identities of young adults. Furthermore, the analytical framework of ‘pull and push’ factors is used, inspired by a sociological metaphor being pulled by some positive factors in the country of origin/country of residence and being pushed away by some negative factors in the country of origin/country of residence (Hole, 2005).

Method

The present investigation is a follow-up of the first study conducted in mid-nineties (Singla, 2004b), in which the sample was strategically selected as *well functioning* and *poorly functioning* youth with South Asian and Danish backgrounds. However, this categorization is not used in the current study due to a variety of reasons, among others the changing nature of their functionality. In-depth interviews with young adults (26-32 years) were conducted. The author conducted the interviews herself using a semi-structured guide. The questions in the interview were theory-based, on themes covered in the first study, combined with *young adult* life course stage dynamics.

Table 2. Demographic information for the five respondents

Name	Age/Gender	Ancestral country & Country of birth	Family status	Education	Occupation
Salman	29 / Male	Pakistan, Denmark	Married	Law Student	Law related, part time job
Abdul	30 / Male	Pakistan, Came to Denmark at 14	Married	High School	Self employed, in music systems company
Mita	28 / Female	India, Denmark	Married	Masters in Bio Technology	Researcher and firm owner
Nadia	26 / Female	Pakistan / Afghanistan, Came to Denmark at 12	Married	Teacher's Training	Teacher in a school
Atim	28 / Male	Pakistan, Came to Denmark at 3	Single	Pedagogue	Jobless

The main issue was re-establishing contact with the participants, after a period of approximately ten years. Out of a total of fourteen, eleven participants were traced, though two of them could not be interviewed due to serious illness. Three could not be contacted due to lack of co-operation with the gatekeepers, confirming that the access is dependent on the goodwill of the individual gatekeepers (Sanghera & Thapar-Bjorkert, 2007). Thus nine interviews were conducted; five of these participants' ancestral countries are in South Asia (India, Pakistan) and the focus is given on these (Table 2) for the current study (further methodological details can be found in Singla, 2008).

The researcher's own South Asian background (North Indian, ability to speak Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Danish and English), professional position as university based researcher and the life course phase middle aged contributed to a balance between insider and outsider perspective.

However, at the same time there was awareness of the potentially hierarchical and exploitative nature of relationship between the researcher and the researched. Reflective positionality brought this awareness though could not remove these aspects of relationships. (Sanghera & Thapar-Bjorkert, 2007). Some choices were provided for the participants in order to

² *Diaspora* (*διασπορά*), defined by its Greek etymology as “a scattering” from the roots [*διά* (apart) & *σπείρω* (to sow)], entered the globalising language to apply to all migrants (Guzder & Krishna, 2005).

minimize these aspects, e.g. the interviews were conducted in researcher's counseling centre in Copenhagen by their choice. The participants were also given a choice of languages for the interview. The choice was English for one, mother tongue Urdu/Punjabi for another, a mixture of Danish and Urdu for the remaining three participants. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in English by the researcher. Some biographical details have been altered to secure anonymity due to ethical reasons.

In-depth readings of the narratives, followed by categorical analysis are the main analytic strategies employed. These are tools of analysis developed in order to systematise the complex reality, in which the categories are intricately intertwined. Attempts to compare and contrast the young adults' narratives with their original narratives are also present, though temporal (time-wise) analysis now and then (Singla, 2004) along with the theoretical diaspora concepts, and through spatial (space-wise) analysis, with focus on here and there in their life world.

Results

Based on the in-depth reading of the narratives of the participants, firstly meaning condensations of the various answers were conducted, followed by their division into theoretical conceptualisation grounded themes (see introduction section) related to social relations as well as the psychological (Kvale, 1996; Verkuyten, 2005). In the present article only the theme regarding the diasporic identity is covered (see Singla, 2008 for themes such horizontal and vertical family relationships). Further reading of the meaning condensations led to awareness of a range of relationship to the country of origin. Two main categories were formed in order to incorporate the range of relationships, from frequent, widespread experiences of relationship to rather restricted relationships. These experiences of relationships were accompanied by differential modes of functioning perceived as strategies.

Thus the two primary categories regarding the social relationship with the country of origin were post-hoc termed as firstly comprehensive relations and strategies across geographical borders and secondly limited social relations and strategies across geographical borders. Similarly the second theme related to psychological diaspora consciousness and cultural consumption was also analysed by in-depth reading, followed by meaning condensation. Based on the range of the salience attached to the diasporic consciousness, two primary post-hoc categories were constructed: dominating meaning and moderate meaning. It is important to point out that in contrast to the first theme related to social relations, all the participants attached relatively greater meaning to the psychological diasporic consciousness, thus the categories incorporate the range from dominating to moderate meaning.

Diasporic Identity Processes: Social relations and strategies across geographical borders

The social form of diaspora focuses on the relationship with the ancestral country along with relations with the diasporic community in the other parts of the world. *The myth of return* as an archetype of diaspora is indirectly included. The young participants belong to the following post-hoc categories in order to incorporate these experiences of relationships, (1) Comprehensive contact and strategies, (2) Limited contact and strategies.

Comprehensive contact and strategies

This analysis indicates paradoxes in the psychosocial understandings of the young adults. As an example, consider the Indian young woman Mita, who has a comprehensive contact with the ancestral country, related probably to her marriage to an Indian spouse and their business relations in a major city in India³. She is the only participant who has been eight times to India in the past decade and also has business and familial relations in the UK. She is a frequent user of the internet for business and social purposes. According to her:

³ They have an established firm in the field of pharmacy as her husband possesses an M.Sc. Degree in Pharmacy and Biotechnology.

Our company is also in Hyderabad, England and in Denmark...sort of international.

She mentions economic strategies related to the company employees in India and emphasises that there are no economic obligations to the in-laws family as they are economically well placed and encourage the couple's endeavours.

Aman [husband] is only paying his staff in India and he would try to put some money to develop his company in India.... The family support is none, as my in-laws don't want to take any. They say build your own.

However, she proclaims her connection and gratitude for Denmark as her country of birth and upbringing, providing "settlement for life" along with positive feelings for country of origin, which she didn't have earlier due to limited contact.

Denmark is my country because I am born here.... But what I gained in Denmark is simply my settlement for life. Got my education here came back and the first future and everything I need for progress in life, I got it here... I do belong to Denmark. But I love India as well. Love for India, which I didn't have before [the original study] because I haven't been to India for that long...

Mita is reflexive about her positive feelings and connection to both the countries and seems to be content with the present solution of their business relations between India and Denmark.

So we both are mixing it together and it is going very well our company. If I can succeed this way, I am not going to feel that I miss anything... have both things I want.

Though at the same time Mita positions herself as open with respect to the future possibility as she points to the negative side of the Danish society –the constraints related to the cultural diversity and other ways of life. Mita mentions her diffuse dream of return to India –as a possibility in the distant future.

Tomorrow my dream is to work in India. To give myself such a status in the company that I can go and live there forever. ...The Danish culture is very restricted ... are not very open to foreign cultures.

A spatial analysis of Mita's narrative reveals that her social contacts between *here* and the multiple *there* are at several levels, as she has frequent and varied contact with the ancestral country as well with the UK, where some of her diaspora family members reside. A temporal analysis indicated transformations, as she didn't show much interest in her ancestral country in the original study (Singla, 2004b). On the other hand, it is remarkable that she hardly mentions her parents regarding her contacts across the geographical borders, unlike the other young adults included in the next section.

Limited contact and strategies

In contrast to Mita's comprehensive contact to the ancestral country and UK, other young adults Abdul and Salman have rather limited social relations to their ancestral country Pakistan. However, they explicitly mention their parents' close relationship with the country of origin. In the original study, Abdul was very connected to Pakistan, where he had studied in a boarding school and was psychologically attached to his father's older brother (Singla 2004b). However in the past decade, he visited Pakistan only twice –first time for his older sister's marriage where he fell in love with his cousin, with whom he later got engaged to get married and second time to fetch his fiancé. He emphasised conflicts between his father and uncle as the reasons for their estrangement. He mentions no economic strategies in relation to the ancestral country, though he emphasizes parental connections to their country of origin:

My parents have kept contact with the country of origin. They have not forgotten where they came from.

However, as a company owner, he travels comprehensively and has an international business network.

I have business contacts in countries like Italy, America, and Korea & Germany. I travel twice a year to these countries.

Abdul's limited contact to the ancestral country can be interpreted through the metaphor *pushed* away by the ancestral country due to extended family conflicts and in-laws residence in the USA. There are some similarities with Salman's situation, which has rather limited connections with the ancestral country due to conflictual relations in the extended family and his wife's Afghani background. However, he was about to travel to Pakistan with his younger brother to attend his wedding with a partner living there, indicating the *pull* factor of the transnational marriage. His narrative referring to a reduced contact after the grandparent's demise can be understood through the life course perspective, while marriage across the national border, in contradiction to the dominant discourse about Muslim extended family endogamy, is another reason for the limited contact. Likewise the family conflicts pertaining to property can be seen as *pushing away* factor from country of origin.

Rest of our family lives in Pakistan. My parents have contact. We are an extended family with lots of conflicts, partly because my parents chose to get their children's spouses outside the family and partly because of some property matters...these are the reasons for the distance with the family. We visit them though. We had a closer relationship with the family when my grandparents were alive. After their death it is not the same.

On the other hand, Atim's parents have a very close relation to Pakistan and his mother spends 3 to 4 months every year in the ancestral village. He himself has visited Pakistan just twice in the last decade, though he sometimes visits Pakistani friends in Norway and Sweden.

Unlike these Pakistani participants, Nadia has not visited Afghanistan and Pakistan at all since she arrived in Denmark approximately fifteen years back. The political uncertainty in her country of origin *pushes* her away from the country of origin, which she wishes to visit after completing her studies in the near future.

When I finish my education here, then I could think of visiting Afghanistan for six months and work. When I am finished my education (sic), I will not be so busy.

Some of her maternal family lives in Australia and Pakistan, while her paternal family has moved to Germany and USA. They contact the family members through telephone, while she has contact with the extended family members in these countries through Internet and cell phone. In contrast to the others, Nadia has a supportive economic strategy in relation to the family living in Afghanistan, as she sends money to her maternal family every month. She can be positioned as a compassionate family member, having multiple diasporic relations in many contexts.

We have my mother's family in Afghanistan. Our contact is that we send money to them every month. I send money to my grandmother and mother's sister. I have chosen to send money to them.

Summing up, these narratives indicate rather limited contact, with hardly any mention of any economic strategies, while the temporal analysis indicates noticeable reduction in contact *then* and *now*, especially for Abdul. Nadia's social contacts are different –though there was not a single visit to the ancestral country due to shifts in world politics, yet through the new technology she mentioned, close contacts are kept with the diaspora family members in different parts of the world. How these diasporic contacts and strategies, such as limited visits to the country of origin, affect the psychological consciousness and cultural patterns in this age of global communications is the question covered in the next section.

Diasporic Identity Processes: Psychological diaspora consciousness and cultural consumption

An analysis of the narratives reveals that for all five young adults, the ancestral country and the other contexts are aspects of their complex identity, though there is a difference in the

salience attached to the diasporic consciousness and cultural consumption. The young adults are placed in post-hoc categories: (1) Dominating meaning, (2) Moderate meaning, based on the meaning attached to diasporic consciousness, indicated by their current network, self-identity, experiences of inclusion or exclusion in the majority society in their narratives.

Dominating meaning

For Salman, the diasporic consciousness is the dominating aspect of his identity, as his present primary social networks are his ethnic group members. When asked about this network, he emphasised the almost everyday contact with the co-ethnics and lesser contact with others:

I have a core group, whom I see frequently and talk with... They are primarily Pakistanis. The second group is on hello terms....

Furthermore he mentioned the network he has sustained through the religious participation in the first study (Singla, 2004b). At the same time, he also draws attention to the Danish aspects in his identity. He positions himself as a combination of Danish as well as Pakistani aspects, contrary to the dominating discourse in the Danish society about the “incompatible” Danish and Pakistani worlds.

I already think of myself as Danish. I think a lot Danish, though there are also Pakistani things in me. My feelings are Danish. When I think, then it is in Danish, there are Danish words circulating around in my head. Only this is symbol how Danish I am... I have taken the good things from the Pakistani culture and the good things from the Danish culture.

Juxtapositioning Salman’s position in the first study, *I am a Pakistani, irrespective of my years in Denmark or passport* and emphasis on his experiences of racism in the society (Singla, 2004b, p. 171), with his present position as *a combination*, illustrates the changing nature of diasporic identity.

On the other hand, the young woman Mita has an ethnically mixed network and she clearly positions herself as Indian along with her sense of belonging to Denmark. In the original study, she stated *I am Indian - Danish, though more Indian than Danish*. (Singla, 2004b, p. 172). She further elaborates her positive interest in the Indian cultural productions like films, music and so on; however her husband’s interest for American films is also mentioned. She watches Indian films, though these, mixed with American films and English music, can be interpreted as a part of her diasporic socialising,

I love Bollywood movies, I watch as much as I did before. I have been watching them since I was a kid. Some American movies that is what my husband likes. .. Music - English, Hindi & Bhangra.

At the same time, Mita’s unpleasant memories of racism in the college days are part of the narrative in the original study,

In the college I had a very hard time. With those boys in my class, I was crying... I really hated them... a group of 6-7 people pure Danes and one of them was Polish.

Although she indicates that she has not experienced racism later in her life and her explanation is, “*as I know the Danish mentality.*”

Both Salman and Mita’s narrative depict a dominating position of diasporic consciousness, through differential dimensions-network and cultural consumption respectively, in spite of changes in their diasporic identity.

Moderate meaning

Atim’s network consists of Pakistanis along with a few Turkish and Danish friends, though he doesn’t perceive himself as just Pakistani or a combination. He mentioned his interest for both International Rap music and Pakistani singers like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. He has become aware of his ethnic belonging through the experiences of racism in his education as the club-pedagogue.

He emphasizes the negative stereotypical understanding of his teachers, which he tried to challenge. This awareness also influences the diasporic consciousness.

My teachers were really harami (bastards)... discriminatory and racists. They were very prejudiced ... and placed us in categories like this. We can be well brought up. I was the only foreigner there.

His positioning of himself as a “foreigner” reflects his feeling of exclusion from the society; in the first study he positioned himself as a ‘trouble maker’ who was basically lonely. However, he argues that one can avoid these exclusions if one is self-employed as there is more risk of racism in being employed. Furthermore he also points out media as a powerful source of stigmatising of the minority and its influence on the political arena.

If a person is self-employed, then you don't feel it. If you work under them... seek job where Danes are in charge, then you feel that you are a migrant in this country. ... Media seems to be controlling matters here. Whatever media says, the ministers also say the same the next day.

Similarly Abdul feels discriminated in the broad society, especially through the media, though as a successful firm owner, he doesn't experience discrimination in his business dealings. This is one of the reasons for his moving to Sweden, to Malmo (a Swedish city near Copenhagen), which he expects to be more congenial than Denmark.

There are no problems in my profession ... the society treated [the ethnic minority] all right earlier...but it has changed. Personally it has not affected me but changes are taking place. The way information, media is creating impressions is very bad. This is why my interest for living here has finished.

His diasporic consciousness is considered moderate as he views Indian films and Pakistani dramas⁴ once in a while. At the same time, he has an international business related network and he is a member of “Mazda car club”. This is yet another reason for shifting to Malmo in Sweden. He further explains his position regarding the predominant discourse about the minorities misusing the system, which creates the paradox that even a person like him contributing substantial amounts economically to the society through tax can risk being considered a criminal. He perceives this as a gross misinterpretation of the situation, challenging the implicit assumption in the literature that most ethnic minorities are hardly wealthy.

There is debate about people cheating the system. I have never done anything incorrect in the business. I don't owe any money to the state. Every month I pay the tax... I do so much but still when I am out, people will think I am a criminal, misusing the system.

Abdul exemplifies the active agency –contrary to the prevalent discourse about unemployed, passive minority man. He is active enough to confront the racial discrimination by shifting from Denmark to Sweden. Moreover, he had positioned himself as a mixture of good things from Danes and Pakistanis –a mixture in the first study.

In contrast to Atim and Abdul, Nadia's narrative reveals rather unexpected changes in the life trajectory, which has led to positioning her as a person with a moderate diasporic consciousness in the present study. This is in sharp contrast to her being positioned as a person who with dominating meaning in the first study as *an Afghani girl, more Afghani than Danish* (Singla, 2004b, p. 243). Now Nadia has a comprehensive Danish network, as she is about to complete her schoolteacher studies and teaches in upper middle class Danish private school.

Then I have a [girl] friend from the school, who is also Danish. She is more of a friend than a colleague. Then I have 5-6, who are much older than myself, about 57-58. These 3 are young, otherwise they are all older, over 50 years, all Danish.

⁴ He downloads latest films through the Internet and views them regularly, thereby combining the narratives about *there* with his everyday life *here*.

Her narrative indicates that there is possibility for positive transformations depending on the persons' active agency and some supportive contacts. At the same time she is critical towards the Afghani group organisation in Denmark⁵:

There is an Afghani association but there are persons who deal wrongly with matters seen from my point of view. ...I feel that there isn't solidarity among the Afghanis in Denmark.

Moreover, she is a member of a number of mainstream charity organisations such as Red Cross and Refugee Help in Denmark –an aspect of ethnic minority groups, which is neglected in the prevalent discourses. In a way, Nadia seems to have transformed her rather narrow ethnic position to a broad, more international, cosmopolitan position with a varied supportive network. She has not experienced racism personally in the later years in contrast to her earlier experiences of race discrimination at her work place (Singla, 2004b). Though she regards herself as *really fortunate*, yet she mentioned her siblings' experiences of discrimination. She emphasizes that they have faced difficulties and had to put in “double” efforts to reach their educational or job related goals, as compared to native Danes.

But my sisters, they had to do double of what Danes have to do in order to get a job or just complete their education.

Summing up Nadia's position as having a moderate diasporic consciousness, the temporal analysis indicates a transformation –from a narrow diaspora identity to a broad cosmopolitan identity with a sense of obligation to others and acceptance of differences (Appiah, 2006; Frello, 2006).

Discussion

Earlier in this chapter, the themes of social relations and diasporic psychological consciousness were separated for the purpose of analyses; they are now combined in this section. Our analysis directs the attention to the continued social relations and economic strategies of the young adults in the country of origin. The intersectionality of participants' own ethnic identity with the family history, educational, economic level and the ethnic/regional identity of the partner influence the extent and quality of these contacts.

In the present narratives, there are two distinct types of visiting contacts to the country of origin –from almost yearly visits to just no visit at all in the past decade represented by Mita and Nadia. However, Salman, Abdul and Atim have been to the ancestral country 2-3 times, primarily for family weddings or visits and have no economic relations to the country of origin.

It is paradoxical that the respondents' economic relation to the ancestral country is based on different grounds –business motives for Mita and family related altruism for Nadia. The young women indicate their active agency and self-defining position explicitly through these strategies, thus creating counter discourses to the dominating discourses about the passive ethnic minority women.

Within the metaphorical framework of *pull* and *push* for the diasporic relations, we could consider factors such as the transnational marriage accompanied by cordial relations with the partners' family, the presence of extended family with warm ties and business relations as factors which pull the diaspora group towards the country of origin. On the other hand, complex societal factors like uncertain political situation, extended family conflicts about the issue of marriage and property, demise/moving away of the extended family members are seen as factors, which *push* the diasporic population away from the ancestral country. The restrictive migration laws in the country of residence affecting transnational marriage have paradoxical consequences; most choose partners *here*, while some continue transnational marriages in different forms. Mita's narrative lucidly illustrates that globalization (Stiglitz, 2002, p. 9) through transnational business and knowledge exchange directly influences the diasporic identity processes. Similarly Nadia's narrative brings out the significance of shifts in demographics and world politics in amplifying

⁵ She is the only young adult in the study who is a paying member of a diasporic organisation.

some of the dynamics in the diaspora identity processes. The elements involved in these processes are multiple and tenuously resolved.

These dynamics mirror the changing interpretation of *self*, *others* as well as *home* for both the generations and documenting that the identity processes are complex and contingent. Table 3 depicts the dominant understandings of identity transformational processes. How the *home* is perceived seems to change along life course. Some of the young adults do not position themselves as having frequent social contact with the ancestral country, though yet they emphasize the parental generation's contact. On the other hand, multiplicities of geographical contexts coexist for these young adults—not just the ancestral country and the country of present residence, also other countries, where the diaspora members live and/or where they have business relations. They are connected to different *here* and *there*. Similarly there are transformations in what they thought about their connectedness to the ancestral country in the first study and in the current study, indicating changes in the different life phases, affected by radical modernity. There is use of the global technology to maintain connections with the diaspora across the borders, and examples are Mita and Nadia. On the other hand Abdul has concentrated on his business relations through technology, while for Salman & Atim, the focus is primarily on *here*, with rather limited contact with *there*.

Table 3. Dominating understandings of the participants' identity processes 'now' & 'then'

Name	Now	Then	Salient Aspects
Salman	Danish-with Pakistani aspects	Pakistani	Highly reflective
Abdul	'Businessman' identity Awareness of societal discrimination	Mixed. Positive aspects from both Danes and Pakistanis	Active agency- shifting to Sweden
Mita	Indian, along with sense of belonging to Denmark	Indian, with Danish aspects	Marital and professional ties to India
Nadia	Broad Cosmopolitan Identity	Afgani 'More Afghani than Dane'	International colleagues and awareness
Atim	Foreigner-marked by exclusion processes	'Trouble-maker' Existentially alone	Awareness of race discrimination at personal level

The paradox about the dominating and moderate diasporic consciousness despite limited social relations in the ancestral country can be understood as *positive embracing* of transnational affiliation and defensive posture by communities in the face of a hostile host (Kalra et al., 2005). The young adults' experiences of racial discrimination in various forms—from direct stigmatizing in the educational institutions, to “doing double” or striving hard to get a job, to awareness of negative media images of ethnic minorities—lead partly to the feeling of *not belonging*, as well as to curiosity, sustained interest and a feeling of *belonging to the ancestral country* and the multiple *there* as well.

However, there are transformations in different directions as far as feelings of belonging are concerned—from positioning himself as just *Pakistani* to a combination of the best from the Pakistani and Danish culture for Salman along with invocation of *Danish thinking*. For Salman, religious belonging is also sustained through participation in the mosque activities, where new religious practices play a part. Furthermore, new media has also actively impinged on religious experiences as increasingly religious communities all over the world make use of modern mass media, both print and electronic, addressing multiple publics and offering alternative forms of belonging (Meyer & Moors, 2006). For Mita, the change is in the direction of being “Indian” in contrast to a combination in the original study, whereas for Nadia there is a major transformation—from a narrow ethnic identity to a broad cosmopolitan identity. In spite of these changes, these young adults consider both the country of origin and the country of residence as dimensions of their identities.

Most of the young adults are both diasporic and Danish, in different proportions, contexts and different movements, which correspond to the earlier mentioned meta-theoretical middle

position in the current project. The analyses indicate that the concept of *others* and *home* seem to change as time goes by, related to the processes of globalization and the shifts in the world politics for some of the young adults. These changes lead to transformations in the relation between *here* and *there*⁶. Most young adults included in the present study seem to be *here* but also *there*, perhaps more *here* than *there*. They are Indian/Pakistani, Hindu/Muslim, Danes at the same time, though with differing emphases in different phases of life trajectory. Their visions *then*, probably transformed, are still parts of their *now* and the *future* in some way or the other. The analysis of the *mythical longing for return* indicates that the young adults hardly mention returning to the parental country of origin, similar to the young adults in Hole (2005). These findings are in congruence with the conclusions drawn by Bamzai (2004) that OBIs (overseas born Indians) do not wish to be anywhere other than where they are, at the same time, they do internalize India and express it in different ways than their parents.

With great caution, we can summarize that most of the South Asian young adults in Denmark feel both *here and there* in their multiple belongings and contexts, where the secure welfare system (Siim, 2006) and the opportunities for *settlement for life* as delineated by Mita, and some experiences of race discrimination co-exist.

Irrespective of the limited direct social relations, probably aided by the complex transactional flow of media images and messages through global technologies (e.g. Internet and Indian films; Bachu, 1999; Balasubramaniam, 2005), the diasporic identities are significant for South Asians young adults. At the same time, we have to consider that these global media processes are also about the feelings of longing, recreating representation and the sense of belonging (Guzder & Krishna, 2005). These complex relations between the country of residence and the real/imagined country of origin have significant implications for psychosocial intervention for the young adults. Although these findings cannot be generalized broadly, yet they indicate some tendencies about the young South Asian diaspora in a Scandinavian country. Our journey through time a follow up of the young adults studied a decade back indicates complex and paradoxical results. In the backdrop of the late modernity and the Nordic welfare societies, it can be concluded that the young adults are experiencing changes in regards to their parental generation and their own life understandings, as most are building families and networks.

An analysis of the temporal perspective indicates both continuity and changes, as their *then* is still a part of their *now* and the *future*, despite changes in the world around them and in their own family and life course situation. The analysis shows that the young adults are maintaining, creating relations and attachments across the borders, in varying extents from yearly visits to almost no visit to the country of origin. The transnational perspective should not direct our attention away from the young adults' social relation building in the country of residence. In spite of these variations in the concrete social relations, diasporic consciousness is a part of their identity and they are able to feel at *home* in multiple contexts. Using global technologies and microelectronic transnationalism –internet, films and music– contributes in creating *home*, not only in the country of residence, but also in the country of origin and in some countries where part of the diaspora relations and business contacts exist.

This feeling of '*home*' is not only a positive affiliation, a pull towards the country of origin, but it also relates to the processes of being pushed away, through racism and exclusion in different forms –job wise problems to media wise stigmatization in the country of residence. However, in spite of some experiences which lead to feelings such as '*you do not belong*', especially due to the restrictive policies for foreigners in the past few years in the Scandinavian countries, paradoxically most young adults feel at *home* mostly *here* though also *there*, as they have hardly addressed *the myth of return* characterizing the diaspora processes in their self-definition and life trajectories now and in the future.

⁶ Homeless as an existential state has been discussed as an aspect of radical modernity (Dencik, 2005).

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