Chapter 2
Migration, Transnationalism, and Ambivalence: The Punjab–United Kingdom Linkage

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Abbreviations

BNP	British National Party
ECR	Emigration Check Required
ECNR	Emigration Check Not Required
FCNR	Foreign Currency Non Resident Account
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FEMA	Foreign Exchange Management Act
HLCID	High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora
IDF	India Development Foundation
IP	Immovable Property
IT	Information Technology
KIP	Know India Programme
MOIA	Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NRE	Non Resident External Rupee Account
NRI	Non Resident Indian
NRP	Non Resident Punjabis
OCI	Overseas Citizen of India

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PIO	Person of Indian Origin
RBI	Reserve Bank of India
RHLCID	Report of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora
SGPC	Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandakh Committee
SPDC	Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VDC	Village Development Council

2.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the main findings of the studies conducted in India and Britain. As it became evident that India as a whole is much too large and diverse for the qualitative analysis in question, it was agreed that the Indian research team would focus solely on the Indian Punjab. Within a broader understanding of Indian migration and transnationalism, this chapter therefore focuses on Punjab–UK linkages, so as to speak to this largest and most long-standing migration channel.

The influence of Indian diaspora has been transformative to the extent of engendering theorizations of reverse colonizations (Ballard 2003, 2009; Lal 2006; Nelson 2008). Indian migration has changed the social fabric of the UK, whether we consider the metropolitan areas of settlement or a broader process of multicultural drift—the increasingly visible presence of black and Asian people in all aspects of British public life, as a natural and inevitable part of the scene, rather than an alien wedge (Hall 1996: 188).

Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) are said to be the single largest ethnic minority in Britain (RHLCID 2001:124). According to the UK National Census of 2001, there are 569,000 Indians in the UK. However this figure includes only so-called nonresident Indians (NRIs) or recent first-generation migrant Indians and not PIOs, who were either born and brought up in or have become full citizens of UK (MOIA 2010: 3). The High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora (HLCID) set up by the government of India has estimated the NRIs and PIOs together at 1.2 million, which was 2.11% of the total UK population (RHLCID 2001: 124).

However, the Indian diaspora is not one, but encompasses *diverse configurations* horizontally and vertically. The Indian diaspora can thus be thought of as chaordic (Werbner 2002), with numerous strands running through it, multiple centers and forms of connectivity. Parsis and Bengalis were the dominant groups in emigrations during the colonial era, together with the numerous Indian soldiers who settled in UK following troop deployments during World Wars I and II (RHLCID 2001: 122). The latter group was dominated by Punjabis. The emigrations during the 1950s and 1960s consisted mainly of workers who were absorbed into the massive reconstruction efforts in the industrial sectors in the aftermath of World War II. This stream of emigrations was also dominated by Punjabis, who were reinforced by a ceaseless flow of people from Punjab in the subsequent decades and continuing even today. Punjabis currently constitute about 45% of the Indian community in the UK, with a

Sikh majority (RHLCID 2001: 122–124), and are also known for maintaining strong transnational linkages, whereas the population has entered into the third or fourth generation subsequent to migration. It is estimated that 300,000–500,000 Sikhs and 54,000 Hindus from Punjab live in Britain, which is also the country housing the largest number of Punjabis outside India (Raj 2003; Singh and Tatla 2006).

2.2 Context: Punjab–UK Migration Corridor

Punjabis are one of the most out-migratory communities in present-day India. Being located on the invasion route into India, the people of Punjab often had to leave their homes and adapt to newer locations, which led them to develop an imaginary intrinsic mobility and flexibility (Helweg 1986). Scholarly work traces the antecedents of Punjabi migration to the *Punjabization* of the Indian army, which led to the migration of Punjabi soldiers to North America, East Africa, and the Far East (Tatla 1995; Thandi and Talbot 2004; Metcalfe 2005; Nanda and Veron 2009). During the post-1857 years, Punjabis captured the attention of the British as a "loyal martial race." By World War I the number of Punjabis in the army has risen to 150,000, on fourth the strength of the Indian army (Tatla 1995). The preference for martial races, as Punjabis were typecast, and the irrigation-driven movements of population and agricultural prosperity prepared the ground for Punjabis to venture out (Tatla 1995: 69). Punjabi migrants to Britain in the nineteenth and early twentieth century were mainly the personal servants of imperial adventurers and administrators; seamen who worked in menial capacities on British merchant ships; and a smaller number of students seeking professional qualifications apart from a few members of the erstwhile royal and aristocratic families (Visram 1986). World War I brought more seamen and soldiers from Punjab to Britain, who slipped quietly away to stay back by making use of the local conditions. By the time of independence Punjabis were a visible presence in Britain's larger ports and industrial cities, mostly as peddlers (Ghuman 1980).

Leading the massive migrations from post-independent India, during a general economic boom in postwar Britain, Punjabis contributed significantly to the process of so-called *reverse colonization* (Ballard 2003). These migrations of the early 1950s and 1960s consisted mainly of young men and were facilitated by the Commonwealth citizen regime under the 1948 British Nationality Act. With the introduction of the voucher system in 1961 and subsequently limiting it to the skilled categories of labor and with an impending closure of migration, wives, relatives, and friends were sponsored into England in large numbers in the 1960s and 1970s (Helweg 1986). This resulted in an expanding process of chain migration (Ballard 2003). The postwar economic boom in England allowed a much more diversified labor emigration from Punjab, facilitated largely by the existing Punjabi peddler communities in England and informal networks of agents. However, the migration of Punjabis to the UK has been taking place within a wider and complex transnational

field that includes East Africa, East and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, North America, and continental Europe (Tatla 1999; Brown 2006), which complicates the singular sending-receiving country model. Among the "twice migrants" (Bhachu 1985), are a strong contingent of Punjabis who migrated to the UK from East Africa. The major chunk of Punjabi emigrants to the UK are said to be from the Doaba region; the rural Doaba were swept by migration fever from early the 1960s onward (Ballard 1994). The phenomenon of migration fever continues even today, resulting in diverse forms of informal and formal flows to the UK, facilitated by social and professional networks alongside informal transnational players.

Migration was still a prominent fact in the lives of Punjabis in the UK even though the home ties were changing with time and over generations. Indeed, Punjabis across the diaspora have engaged in refined debates about the apparently intrinsic Punjabi impulse for migration and its consequences for individuals as well as the countries they left behind. This has been expressed in a lively public sphere comprising poetry and oral traditions, songs, newspapers, and magazines such as *Desh Pardesh, Mann Jitt,* and The Asian Express; radio stations such as Sunrise Radio, Raj FM, Punjab Radio, Club Asia and The Asian Network; and TV channels such as the Zee network, Alpha Punjabi, and Brit Asia; as well as films, novels, postings, and clips circulated on the Internet. As Tatla and Singh (1989), Tatla 2002; Kalra (2000b), and Dudrah (2002a, b) have pointed out, these publics have long dwelt on the tumultuous changes wrought by migration on individuals and places, often with an astute political awareness of colonial history, rendering evocatively the unsettling and dislocating effects of migration for individuals' sense of who they are and where they belong. At the same time, these publics are a terrain for cultural entanglements and exchanges, and very local cultural productions, which have played with and reproduced a nostalgic memory of Punjab in the same gesture as creating new musical and cultural products that transform a global "mediascape" (Banerji and Baumann 1990; Back 1995; Appadurai 1996; Sharma et al. 1996; Maira 1998; Dwyer 2000; Bhachu 2004).

2.3 Methods

To provide depth of context, the fieldwork was carried out with a regional/local focus in Punjab and the UK. In Punjab, the field work was carried out in the Doaba region, which is known as the migration belt of Punjab because of the high incidence of migration relative to other regions. This region includes four districts of present-day Punjab: Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala, and Nawanshahr. The city of Jalandhar is the focal point of the region and is known for its flourishing migration economy. The migration economy is predominantly concentrated in urban areas with a variety of service providers related to emigration, which include numerous travel agents, recruitment agents, educational consultants, English training centers, banking institutions, immigration and legal consultants, marriage bureaus, and shops and restaurants catering to nonresident Indian choices and tastes, among others (Fig. 2.1).

Fig. 2.1 District map of Punjab (Source: www.mapsofindia.com)

In the UK, the field work was carried out in the West Midlands, which is one of the country's so-called Little Indias and has been a major area of settlement for Indian Punjabis since World War II. The West Midlands is a sprawling conurbation centered on Birmingham, the second most populous city in the UK with a population of just over a million. Based on projections from the 2001 census, it has been estimated that 20% of the population of Birmingham is now identified as Asian British (Simpson 2007). The West Midlands were the powerhouse of the industrial revolution in England, known as the workshop of the world and the city of a 1,000 trades. Punjabi migrants in the 1950s and 1960s found employment in iron foundries, light engineering, and transport across the West Midlands. Since the 1980s the West Midlands have made a slow transition to the service economy (Dick 2005). Punjabis in the West Midlands have established and maintained multistranded connections with India (McEwan et al. 2005) and the West Midlands is also a center of British Punjabi popular culture and infrastructure (Dudrah 2002a, b). In addition

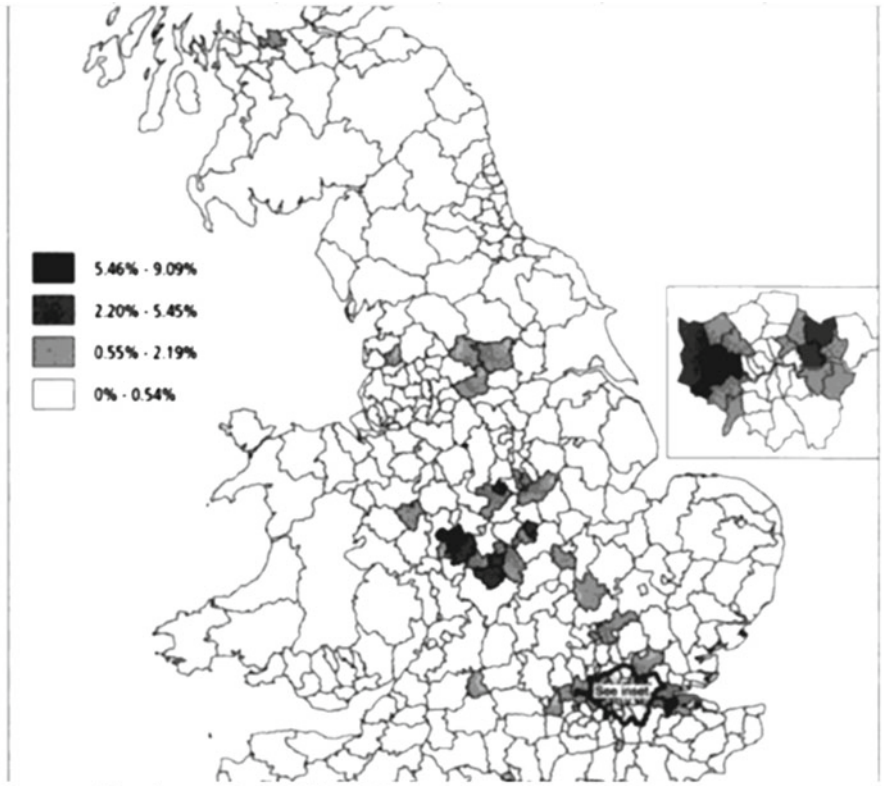

Fig. 2.2 Geographic distribution of Sikhs in Britain, 2001 census (Source: Singh and Tatla 2006: 61)

to doing field work in the West Midlands, we followed the contacts and interviewed family members and friends in other cities, including London, Bedford, Leicester, Leeds, and Bradford (Fig. 2.2).

In keeping with the TRANS-NET project proposal, we collected data through semistructured and life-course interviews, which ran through a similar range of issues in the Doaba and West Midlands field work. However, the selection of the informants varied. In Punjab and the UK we focused on (1) labor migrants, skilled and unskilled; (2) family migrants, namely spouses and children; (3) student migrants; (4) humanitarian migrants or asylum seekers; (5) irregular migrants; (6) relatives and friends who remained in Punjab; and (7) British-born nonmigrants tracing family heritage to Punjab. However, there were slippages among these categories and they differed between Punjab and the UK. The interviews were conducted at the informants' homes, community centers, or university campuses, and in English, Hindi, or Punjabi. For the 20 life-course interviews, we recruited new informants for the study. The personal characteristics of the interviewees on each site are given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Characteristics of interviewees in Punjab and the UK

		Punjab	UK
Number of interviewees		84	106
Gender	Female	25	38
	Male	59	68
Age	Below 20	0	10
	20–29	12	33
	30–39	15	15
	40–49	17	16
	50–59	23	15
	60–69	11	10
	70+	6	7
Country of Birth	India	84	55
	UK	0	44
	Other	0	7

It should be noted that the interviewees in Punjab comprised 57 Sikhs, 24 Hindus, and three Christians of different caste backgrounds, whereas the interviewees in the UK comprised 94 orthodox Sikhs, three with affiliation to the Ravidasia or Namdhari traditions (which have been called heterodox sects "within the Sikh universe") (Leivesley 1986; Singh and Tatla 2006: 80) and nine Hindus, including three who had mixed Sikh and Hindu heritage but identified with their Hindu upbringing. We carried out two interviews with Punjabi Christians that were not tape documented but recorded in field notes. Therefore, the findings presented here concentrate on Sikhs, although also representing the porous and constructed nature of the boundaries around the diverse religious traditions associated with Indian Punjab (Nesbitt 2005).

In addition to the formal semistructured and life course interviews, a wide variety of resource persons or stakeholders were consulted over the course of the research. These included NGOs, educational consultants, police officials, political leaders, travel agents, bankers, money exchange officials, teachers, journalists, local level officials, youth workers, builders, village development council (VDC) members, and beneficiaries. Information was also collected from NRI police stations, the NRI Sabha and the NRI Commissioner's office in Punjab, and from closely following the media, popular cinema, and music. The field work and archival research were further contextualized through ethnographic observation in villages, workplaces, community organizations, and public events, and through spending extended periods of time informally with a small number of families.

2.4 Nonconforming Typologies: The Heterogeneity of Transnational Space

What is at the center of migration from Punjab to the UK is an entrenched notion of mobility. Poverty or making a living is not the primary compulsion in most cases. A social fantasy in favor of emigration is part of the mental landscape of the region,

in which emigration is seen as the primary conduit to success (Taylor 2004). Such a mental landscape generates manifold processes and channels for materializing the dream of migration, upsetting neat categorizations such as labor, family, or educational migrant. Labor migrants often are seen as family migrants, and family migrants later may turn into labor migrants. In other cases, family migrants' labor is invested in sustaining transnational households and sometimes even businesses. On occasion, current educational migrants are found to be neither international students nor labor migrants per se. Moreover, the research both in Punjab and the UK unravels complex patterns; migrants move into numerous places and positions along their biographies of migration. It is also a transnational space in which back-and-forth human movement takes place in the form of visitors and vacationers, separately from returnees to Punjab. The history of emigrations from Punjab is punctuated with a wide variety of formal and informal flows, direct and indirect, through short or long transits, and with significant differences in how they are viewed from both ends. Such flows are taking place recently despite and against restrictive immigration regimes and migration policing in the West (Anderson 1995; Hill-Maher 2003; Weber and Bowling 2004). There is also a significant difference between which migrant categories are used in the UK and Punjab. This complexity does not derive from the literature on transnationalism, not only because typically research is carried out solely from one location (either the sending or the receiving country) and hence categories are flattened out, but also because categories are accepted as given through "sampling the dependent variable" (Portes 2003), or researching transnationalism through people who are transnational by definition.

To combine the fluid and varied life histories we found in the field with a degree of conceptual focus, we developed contrasting analytic sets of individuals who were in similar circumstances. These are in vivo categories inspired by Kalra's work on the labor experiences of Pakistanis in Oldham (2000a, b: 13), and they confirm the intricacies involved in terms of temporality, spatiality, gender, generation, and type. They draw attention to community narratives about migration and the nature of community life, predicated on normative dominant narrations of stable heterosexual families and a community core comprising old timers and bhijis, who are at the center of cultural, economic, and political axes. The categories are relational; they are not static, but represent people who interact with one another in particular contexts. The "freshies" and "torture victims" are related to Indian Punjabi transnationalism, for example, but are peripheral to the core. The categories are generational. They reflect life-course transitions and community development, and lend dynamism to the model. The categories also draw attention to changing regimes of labor and immigration and signify how state regulation mediates and produces particular identities and subjectivities for migrants.

The old-timers are the first-generation migrant men who came to the UK in the 1950s and 1960s when young. They came through formal and informal channels. They were readily absorbed into the unskilled and semiskilled sectors of industrial labor, and initially sent their earnings back home. They also fostered the so-called chain migration to the UK by sponsoring other young male members of the family and friends in the village. The majority of the old-timers belonged to medium- and

small-scale farming families from Jat castes, accompanied by lesser numbers from artisan Tarkhan or Ramgharia castes, and even lesser numbers of scheduled castes or dalits (so-called Chamars and Chuhras). Although some were well educated with degree-level qualifications, in general they were viewed by the white British as black immigrants lacking education and skills. The old-timers' self-representations are generally within the scope of masculine providers. They revolve around the compelling economic circumstances of migration, hard labor, and recovering the family from poverty to more landholdings, a better house, pleasing marital alliances and life-cycle rituals, and good business—albeit there are specific differences in individual testimonies. The strong-willed masculine subjectivity they construct for themselves hinges around their collective suffering and hardship in the early days, and individual success stories in which they brought prosperity to their families and created transnational households. After the tightening of the voucher system in the mid-1960s, many skilled young Punjabis made their way into the UK, most of whom belonged to Jat families, and were therefore also considered old-timers. On the other hand, in Punjabi imagination in India, emigrants to the UK in the 1950s and 1960s were adulated for their economic success, which was inscribed on the landscape of Punjab with houses, landed property, and so on. These success stories are essential in constructing the social fantasy of migration.

One of the central tropes in the old-timers' masculine stories is their efforts to take their spouses and children to the UK to settle under a single roof. The wives of such migrants, thus called on, are respectfully referred to as *bhijis* (younger people also call them aunties). They were "called" by a sponsorship letter from their husbands, and describe the motivations of their migration in terms of their situation as wives. Many of these "brides of England" waited anxious years before their men "called" them over. Individual narratives revealed that in the years of waiting they tried as hard as they could to persuade their husbands to "call" them. There were also insecurities and questions about their husbands' shenanigans in the UK. Their migration could require concerted pressuring of their husbands and much resourcefulness as they awaited the "call" to Britain and the money for airline tickets. Failing that, bhijis organized their own travel, borrowing money from their natal family or friends. They sometimes traveled even without their husbands being aware of the journey, only to become stranded before being picked up. One of the migrants interviewed on vacation had come to the UK with his mother and two siblings without his father's knowledge or approval, and consequently they were not picked up from the airport and entered police custody. In their situation as for others, the social and religious network came to the rescue.

> Q: During the time when your father was living in UK, he must have been very keen to take you all. … How had this decision been taken [to go without ensuring that his father is aware of it]?
> A: I don't know how, why the decision was taken. … We were three. There was another family from our village. So we were two families. So we were taken to a police station in London and they started asking questions—"Where do you want to go? What you want to do?" We had the address, but there was no phone number, there were telephones and telegrams at that time. The lady that was with my mother, she was a bit more educated than my mother. She said "look, if you could, take us to a *gurdwara*, then it would be fine." And at

> the *gurdwara*, there was a young guy who had come from India to study. The priest of the *gurdwara* was not there. So after some hours he came. Next day, the priest sent the telegraph to my father to come and take us off. The next day he came and we went along with him. (Male, 56, migrant on vacation)

These women were central in sustaining their transnational households and many often were tied to household labor by discrimination against working. Their cooking and performing *seva* for the elders and the community was an everyday act of cultural service. Many women entered the informal and formal labor markets as well as performing their household duties, to contribute to the household finances (Modood and Berthoud 1997; Brown 2000; Platt 2002). The children taken along by them or "called" by their fathers were known as "1.5-ers." Neither first- nor second-generation but 1.5, they also referred to themselves as proper *desi*s (South Asians) because they had strong personal memories of living in Punjab, as well as knowledge of the place and its many language and cultures. Although their lives in Punjab before being called to the UK were prestigious by virtue of their father's emigration to the UK and his periodic visits, they experienced disorientation, bullying, and racism in school after emigration to the UK as immigrant children. There are no special appellations in Punjab for the bhijis and 1.5-ers; they are simply referred to as part of the generic term NRIs, or rarely as oldies. However, they had different experiences because of the bhijis' genders, and also because the 1.5-ers went through the UK school system and thus had distinct linguistic and cultural skills.

East Africans make up a strong contingent of Punjabis in Britain. They are considered twice migrants (Bhachu 1985), who migrated from Punjab to countries such as Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania during British colonialism, mainly to develop the physical and commercial infrastructure of East Africa. Africanization policies in postcolonial Africa and the view of Asians as the dregs and stooges of colonialism encouraged the majority of Asians to migrate to Britain or Canada with their British passports. Unlike the old-timers, East African Punjabis migrated as entire families. To regulate the heightened immigration of Asians from East Africa, the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act replaced distinctions on country of passport issue with the notion of ancestry, denying entry to passport holders who were not born in Britain or did not have parents or grandparents in Britain. This was further tightened by the Immigration Act of 1971 (Paul 1997; Spencer 1997; Jopke 1999; Hansen 2000). The East African Punjabis are disproportionately affiliated with the Tarkhan/Ramgharia castes and unsurprisingly cherished their life in Africa as part of a "coloured" community without residential demarcations and religious or caste divides. The East African Punjabi respondents who were interviewed had a self-consciously modern outlook and often look down on their counterparts who had migrated directly from Punjab as *pehndoo* (villagey/unsophisticated). However, the informants from Punjab whose East African relatives in turn emigrated to the UK were unenthusiastic about their African life and had some amnesia not only about their life, work, and duration of stay in Africa, but also often about the specific country itself. The African stint was often overlooked or forgotten by their relatives in Punjab, who failed to recall even the name of the African country, although they retained vivid memories of their UK life. However, the East African Punjabis, who

experienced downward mobility during the immediate decades of their re-migration, moved up swiftly in terms of employment, wealth, and authority. They were also reinforced by substantial intergenerational mobility, and reinvented themselves as multiple-migrants (Bhachu 1999).

Mangetars, literally meaning fiancé(e)s, who have recently migrated to Britain for the purpose of marriage, is another group of Punjabi migrants in the UK. The dissolution of the Primary Purpose Rule in 1997, which sought to disallow marriages for the purpose of economic migration, was withdrawn in 1997, led to a sharp rise in the numbers of male spouses granted visas to the UK, to the extent that there is now near parity with the numbers of female marriage migrants (Home Office 2001). However, the assumption that marriage migration is primarily motivated by economic migration continues to inform immigration laws (Menski 1997). The category of *mangetars* is diverse and includes those who came marriage, and those who came on a temporary visit, or a student or work visa, and ended up marrying someone from Britain. There is intense pressure on unauthorized migrants to get their status legalized through the strategy of marriage, which in turn engenders fear among the local Punjabi community, particularly for girls, about youngsters resorting to trickery to become allied with someone who is British-born or British, as well as fears of bogus marriages. *Mangetars*, on the other hand, experience turbulent downward mobility. Their language skills and qualifications are disregarded in Britain, and so they are not impressed with the *rishta* (proposal) when it comes. Most often the *mangetars,* particularly girls, are better qualified than their partners, but end up marrying men with lower educational attainment and family backgrounds, and settle for low-end jobs disproportionate to their qualifications, thus making Britain a *meetha* (sweet) jail for many of them. Contrary to this, Punjabis in India expect their UK *rishtedar* (relatives) to find a match for their sons and daughters from the UK, and often such marriages are facilitated by social and kinship networks. Women with UK citizenship are better placed when it comes to their marriage choices irrespective of their marital status and family life. Punjabi men who marry British Punjabi women find themselves vulnerable, because they do not believe they have adequate control over their wives and thus are often apprehensive about their relations and friendships. On the other hand, there are occasions in which the groom and his family feel that the bride is not loyal and cultured enough and is slightly too smart, particularly when the woman is someone with a high education and class.

The *torture victims* from Punjab form another category of migrants to the UK. In the face of growing state violence to confront the Sikh separatist movement in India, many suspects were forced to flee the country and seek asylum in various countries, including the UK (Keppley 1996; Gayer 2002). They sometimes traveled through transit countries with the help of agents and relatives. However, the torture victims distinguish themselves from ordinary illegals by their descriptions of political activism and the resultant persecution and suffering. They found their honor and niche in the UK through networks sympathetic to the *Damdami Taksal,* and many later became prominent members of *gurdwara* committees and political activists against human rights abuses in Punjab. Their applications for political asylum often become entangled

in the bureaucratic process of proving their claims of physical harm and political threat in Punjab. Apart from contemporary media clippings and other documentary proofs, they often have to undergo clinical tests to establish the physical damage wrought by alleged torture, proving the embodied nature of their predicament. On the other hand, the general discourse in Punjab, where the nation-state is a palpable presence, views torture victims as political asylum seekers who make use of the separatist movement to gain entrance into the UK and other countries. Their stories of heroism are viewed with skepticism. The robust parallel economies of emigration run by agents and other players facilitating the migration of asylum seekers during those years are invoked to reinforce this argument.

The new *professional migrants* from Punjab to the UK are less inclined to live their whole lives in the UK. After a few years in the UK some people migrate to countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia for better economic prospects and sometimes even for a better climate. There are information technology (IT) professionals who plan to return and settle in Indian cities such as Bangalore. A few are waiting for the IT city being built in Mohali. One migrant on vacation who currently works in an international cruise restaurant in the UK reported that he wishes only to continue to work there, but does not want to live in the UK. He is not very keen to have a community life among the UK Punjabis. His family lives in Punjab, and he spends 6 months a year in Punjab and the remainder in Dover.

> I went just for work. Actually I struggled long in Mumbai before. Around six months. I was not very fluent in English and when I attended a couple of interviews people told me that I have to refine my English. So I joined for some course. Then I got appointment s from many companies including the Royal Caribbean. But I choose this because I need to work only 6 months and 6 months I can come back and be with my family. I had to worry about nothing; the company took care of everything. In fact, I love agriculture. But my parents, particularly my mother do not want anyone of us to be here in agriculture because it does not have any respect…. When I got a job without paying anything all my friends were surprised. They asked me how come I got this without spending anything. And when I came back they were even more surprised. They asked me why did I come back when people here are dying to go. (Male, 34, migrant on vacation)

However, emigration of professionals from Punjab, embodying a typical tourist in Bauman's "liquid modernity" (2000), are not closed to the social set-up in the UK. The IT professionals being sent by the Indian corporate sector on specific assignments to the UK, for instance, enter into an alternate Punjabi space, defined by ethnic and kinship networks.

> He went to UK as part of his duty to complete some assignments in UK. He has been working with Wipro. It was thus he married my niece who has been working with a furniture showroom, Ikea. The marriage was arranged by the family. Now both are living there. They have his two sons. All of them live in UK.

Various illegals form another category of Punjabi migrants to the UK. The term *illegal* was highly stigmatized in the UK, although less so in Punjab. Nonetheless, it was widely used in everyday speech and so is retained in this chapter. The illegals include persons crossing borders clandestinely without documents or with forged documents, overstaying visitors, and so on. *Student migrants* have formed a major

category in recent years. Under the new regime of managed migration, in which students and skilled migrants are seen as positive economic assets, education has become a major channel of migration from Punjab. The commoditization has not only generated a robust economy of educational migration in Punjab, but also opened the channel of migration to groups hitherto uninvolved in terms caste, class, and gender. However, it is also true that in the larger global market of education available to Punjabis, countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada are more sought after than the UK for their fees, secure prospects for continuation, and so on. The students who came to the UK were mainly attending new universities and backstreet colleges with names such as Brit College, providing diverse and less expensive courses and minimum class hours and thereby tacitly supporting students in working beyond the regulated 20 h a week. They often resort to low-skilled service sector jobs to raise money to earn a living and tuition fees. At the same time they had to make sure that they attended the required number of hours of classes because attendance of international students is monitored, unless they wished to become "illegal" right away. Many are eager to complete the course requirements as something to show their family as a testament to their success. However, it is found that in many cases their families back in India do not even know what sort of course their child is pursuing or the college in which they were studying. For many, the investment was for emigration rather than education. They were indifferent to the news in the Punjabi media about bogus colleges functioning in the UK, but were sometimes worried by the fact that their children were unable to find jobs, particularly in the context of the economic recession of 2009.

New individual migrants, including student migrants, illegals, and so on, are often referred to in the UK as *freshies,* another stigmatized term that derives from the expression "fresh from the boat." The settled and British-born informants tend to look down on them because of their perceived provinciality, lack of local know-how, poor language skills, inappropriate clothing, useless qualifications, and presumed illegality. Freshies are felt to devalue a neighborhood because they do not care about the upkeep of the houses they stay in, live in *dera*s (lodges) crowded with men, drink too much, and keep poor personal hygiene. The label freshie expresses the hierarchical and differentially empowered nature of transnational space, in which British-born is synonymous with authority, modernity, affluence, and status, and "Indian" is synonymous with poverty and backwardness. For example, one female informant criticized another mangetar, a female friend from Punjab, by complaining, "Who does she think she is—British born?" However, the ambivalences around the term freshie are suggestive of complex cultural dynamics within transnational space. The settled and British-born informants expressed stereotypes about freshies "minting it" and sending ill-gotten earnings to Punjab to build lavish mansions. We were told stories of freshies who made their money and returned to India because they said, "Why should I live here when with this money I can live like a king over there?" As one of the 1.5-ers pointed out, "You wouldn't have got that 40 years ago, nowadays people can live with the best of both worlds." However, we found that many of the freshies, rather than hoarding money, were going through the contradictions of the myth of arrival (Ahmad 2008). Unlike the old-timers, who

imagined that they would go to Britain, make money, and return to Punjab, but ended up staying, this was a different configuration of the migration imaginary. For the freshies, getting out of India was an almost compulsory element of youthful masculinity. They perceived that there was no future for them in Punjab and therefore went to huge pains to migrate—only to find there were scant opportunities for residency and their immigration status was perennially precarious.

The ambivalences over the category *British-born* were no less complexly configured over transnational space. Although being British-born connoted authority and status, they were also derided as "confused" and bore the brunt of expectations and disappointments concerning the maintenance of culture and tradition. From the perspective of Punjab, the worrying or sometimes comic figure of the British-born youth, as in the 2009 Punjabi film Munde U.K. De (Fig. 2.3), shows that the British-born generations may only achieve respectability, intelligence, and value to the extent that they disavow their Britishness and embrace their Punjabi heritage.

Our interviews in Punjab testify there is a strong sense of contempt toward the NRIs. Even close relatives are not spared. Nonresident Indians are seen as the primary reason for all vices in Punjabi society, including the increase in drug addiction among youth, violence, inflation, separatism, high land prices, destruction of family values, and exorbitant dowries. They are blamed for throwing Punjab into a stage of insurgency by supporting a separate homeland movement. They are often the butt of jokes for their extravagance and conceit in dress, ornament, and style of homes. They are ridiculed particularly for investing money in sports and festivals just to get their names announced through the microphone. Popular Punjabi films construct such comic figures of NRIs who with their pomp, splendor, and lack of wisdom attempt to lure local girls and disturb the values of Punjabi life. Yet, the desire to go abroad, as well as boys and girls waiting for NRI brides and grooms continues. This simultaneous contempt and desire vividly illustrates the heterogeneity woven into the transnational tapestry and its multiply-inhabited character.

2.5 Against the Duality of Transnational Spaces

The diffuse processes associated with transnationalism might lead us to endorse a vision of transnational spaces (Jackson et al. 2004: 3)—multidimensional and multi-inhabited fields, in which a multitude of actors are seen to operate with different levels of investment and involvement. Walton-Roberts (2004, 2005) shows how entire spaces are reconfigured through transnationalism, opening up the concept beyond migrants to include, for example, the village official who coordinates NRI financial contributions and therefore forms a node in a transnational network although never himself able to travel overseas. However, this literature maintains a stubborn *bipolarity* that is problematic against the extended spatial terrain in which we found transnationalism to operate. Formulations such as "the social space of British-Asian transnationality" (Crang et al. 2003: 451) privilege dyadic relationships between singular sending and receiving countries. Furthermore, we often read

Fig. 2.3 Film poster for Munde U.K. (Source: De 2009)

that this spatial dualism is undergirded by sociocultural dual perspectives or bifocality, opposing the *desh* (home), the locus of personal and social identity and religiosity, with *pardesh* (abroad), conveying material bounty and opportunity (Gardner 1993; Vertovec 2009: 67–68). Thus, it is the *desh* that is privileged with iconic and material value. By contrast, we found that transnationalism took place with in an expanded and more complexly configured spatial and sociocultural landscape, which exceeded these dualistic formations. Meanwhile, studies of diasporal formations stress the imagined connection between "a collectively self-defined ethnic group in a particular setting, the group's co-ethnics in other parts of the world, and the homeland states or local contexts when they or their forebears came" (Vertovec 2000: 7), whereas the actual ongoing exchanges between people scattered across the world are not brought into the frame of reference. We propose a de-centered Punjab, operating not only at the level of cultural productions and their complex spatial entanglements (Sharma et al. 1996), but also in practical and material terms.

From the perspective of Punjab, the UK is just one of a number of countries with which our informants maintained connections, and to which people aspired to migrate. These places were all referred to as "foreign" and seen to be connected to one another. For example, one informant in his late twenties was eager to go to the UK but had no personal connections that would enable him to do so. He explored the possibility of migrating to the UK illegally through agents in Amritsar, but the 10 lakh rupees fee was too much for him to afford. Instead, he took the advice of his wife's cousin-uncle, a factory owner in Malaysia, and invested nearly 1 lakh rupees in a visit to Hong Kong. He was unable to find a job in Hong Kong and took his return flight after 2 weeks, but was happy because he felt the foreign visa in his passport would make his applications for other *vilayti* (Western) countries look credible. He also boasted that he had become confident in speaking English and now looked differently on Punjab. Similarly, the students in Punjab weighed the fee structures, admissions criteria, eligibility requirements, and residency entitlements of universities/colleges in Canada and Australia against those in the UK. When the perspective shifts from a particular destination to the sending context, the transnational field expands considerably. Kelly had a similar insight in her research on Gujarati migration to the UK: "gradually… I realised that Britain was not the centre of their world, and that my country was only one of a number of options which they would consider" (1990: 251). This is not to deny the prominence of the UK in the imaginary of "foreign" places in Punjab. The UK, by virtue of the overlaying of postcolonial migration onto colonial histories, had a specific pull. One relative who had never visited his brother in the UK nonetheless knew the geography of the UK inside out and could render the streets of Bradford where his brother and family lived in vivid detail. Framed photos of London's Tower Bridge can be found hanging on the walls of migrant- and nonmigrant households across Punjab. These were not isolated instances, but reflect the folding of specific foreign locations and countries into the imagination of Punjab.

In the process of migration, we found that there were major circuits of transnational connection among the routes of *transit.* The "illegals" (we again distance ourselves from the stigma of the term) were migrating through two dominant routes.

First, they could travel from India to Turkey, Russia, or a few other ex-Soviet Union countries and make their way toward the UK by crossing numerous national borders (UNODC 2009). The second unauthorized flow went directly from India to southern European countries on visit visas, and then required the migrants to negotiate entry to the UK. These irregular transit routes entailed a perilous *contingency* as the illegals might be caught by border guards and sent back to previous countries of transit, or even to India—from where they might make a second attempt to migrate through the channels of a different agent. Although the illegals who reached Britain stated that they migrated with the intention of coming to Britain, it is clear from the accounts of the returnees and informants in continental Europe that there is a strong blurring of the line between countries of transit and countries of destination. Although France, Italy, and Greece have flows of illegals en route to the UK, there are also substantial populations of Punjabis who have decided to stay and make their future (Bertolani 2010; Moliner 2010). In Poland, by contrast, there are thousands of Punjabis living in a liminal space between transit and settlement. Some have lived for up to 5 years before finding the opportunity and wherewithal to move on. Others fell in love and/or married Polish women who were working with them in restaurants and other service sector jobs across Western Europe, and returned with them to Poland (Igielski 2010). Although the illegals often set out with the hope of getting to the UK, they had to compromise and re-evaluate their prospects in the light of subsequent experiences of settlement; yet still they contemplate onward movement.

Recent migrants communicated as much as they could with their significant others in Punjab, and these linkages were important in the course of transit and settlement. As well as maintaining contact with their families in Punjab, however, recent migrants maintained and actively developed links with people in other countries along these transit routes. One illegal, who had crossed borders in eastern Europe with a motley assortment of Indian Punjabis, Pakistanis, and Iranians, kept in contact with the Pakistanis and sought advice from them about his next move after they had parted company in France. Another, who had overstayed his student visa, was speaking on the phone with some friends from his college in Punjab, who were at that time in Spain and advising him that the Spanish government was likely to have an amnesty for illegal immigrants. For precarious recent migrants, the goal of becoming *pukke* (regularizing) led them to focus their efforts at networking and maintaining relationships in the criss-crossing spaces of transit. This leads us to the question why the transnationalism paradigm seems to fetishise connections with the sending country at the expense of migrants' priorities and efforts to settle in the West.

From the perspective of the UK, too, India was an important node but within an expanded transnational landscape including a range of other diasporal locations arising from colonial and postcolonial movements. Most significant among these was the substantial group of East African *twice migrants* (Bhachu 1985) whose distinctive migration histories produced ongoing familial and economic connections with Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. In the UK we also encountered twice migrants from other places associated with colonial indentured labor, such as Hong Kong and Malaysia, who shared with the East Africans the sense of being

more modern than the majority of Punjab–UK migrants and their descendents, having become accustomed to Western lifestyles and standards of living in their previous countries. Many of the recent migrants we encountered through the English classes were not from Punjab but from countries in the transit routes across continental Europe such as Germany, Italy, and Spain. These were families who had moved to the UK to provide young children with an English education in British schools, worried that their children would be limited if they could only speak German or Spanish. Having followed the advice of contacts from their largely Punjabi networks, they ended up living in Asian neighborhoods in ex-industrial localities with weak service industries and poor employment opportunities. Their children ended up studying at inner-city schools with other minority and immigrant children. Finding Britain to be a disappointment, they often had mixed feelings about remaining in the UK, although having sold off assets or put properties to rent, they had burned their bridges and were obliged to give life in the UK a try. Their ambivalence illustrates again the smudged line between countries of transit and countries of destination.

These cross-diasporal connections were important as sources of potential value. For example, during the 1980s and 1990s many of the old-timers were discouraged from establishing businesses that were dependent on importing from or trading with Punjab because of the political instability and intractable problems of corruption, bureaucratic hurdles, and difficulties in enforcing agreements with parties in India. However, they had developed a number of other transnational connections linked with their mobile life histories, building on links to relatives and acquaintances in East Africa, North America, or the Gulf. One old-timer who was an avid *kabaddi* player went to Vancouver for a tournament in the 1980s and found out about polar fleece material by talking to some of the other *kabaddi* competitors. He then made a substantial profit from importing the material into Britain and becoming the first to trade in it: "We got it from Canada very dear, £6 a metre but people paid so much for it in those days it was still worth it, at the peak we had people lining up outside the factory in the morning to get their hands on it (Male, 58, old-timer)." Another old-timer who owned a factory in Birmingham making plastic bags and coat-hangers was going into business with his son, who was in Dubai working for a construction company, but had taken the initiative of establishing and registering a factory making the same products over there. Similarly, transnational property investments were not restricted to India but drew on other opportunities presented to them from their life histories. Twice migrants were continuing to invest in property in East Africa and others were considering investing even further afield, as in the following quote. For such individuals, Punjab therefore comprised only one element of a complex portfolio of transnational investments.

> My son, who is a solicitor, he has bought a land in Mombasa in the last one year. I was wondering, we left our property for nothing there in Nayuki and he's buying now! They have three partners who are going, lot of things here and there and they had interest in there you know. They had interest there because their cousins are there in Mombasa having a big hotel there so I think they've been encouraged by them. So they've bought a piece of land in Mombasa about an acre, they are planning for development for a shopping centre.

> My daughter, she was asking me if she can buy land in Brazil! I asked her, why the hell, why would you go to Brazil, it's a South American country you don't know what is there how are you going to keep it there, how are you going to manage it there! But I think it's only for speculation. (Male, 65, East African)

Familial connections also showed an expanded transnational field including locations in North America and Australia. In particular, the British-born informants often had a very different sense of being transnational with respect to India and other places in the diaspora. For example, they might shy away from speaking to relatives in India who they did not know, skulking off instead of talking on the phone. At the same time, they invested time communicating with their cousins in Vancouver or California on social media such as Facebook or MSM messenger, and were often more excited by the prospect of a holiday in North America than in India. Although the idea of a transnational marriage with a partner from India did not appeal to many of the British-born informants, they often said that transnational marriages with diasporal Indians in North America were quite interesting possibilities. North America was also prestigious, and those who were most socially mobile were contemplating moving to Canada or the United States for work, like other British teenagers and young adults who have been transfixed the popular culture of the United States, and who wish for an exciting but reassuringly Anglophile change of scene (Brooks and Waters 2010). There were also some British-born informants who said they thought the United States was a fairer country than Britain, a less racist place where even an African American could become president.

> I think this *is* my home. It's the only home I've got, anyway, I don't fit in there [India] any more either. Maybe that's why I'm drawn to the USA more than here. I could give up Englishness or Indianness and become an American—they allow you to do that. In my mind I think I'm English, but well, am I? Why can't people say yes, be proud this is your home? (Male, 40, British-born)

Religion also provided a major route for "chaordic" transnationalism beyond Punjab. Since the crushing of the Khalistani militancy in Punjab in the late 1990s, Sikh ethno-nationalism in the UK has re-configured under a rubric of human rights, re-working long-standing themes of martyrdom within the Sikh tradition (Fenech 2005). The politics of victimhood has adopted the signs and insignia of international human rights movements (Chopra 2010). In particular, activists have taken up themes relating to the Nazi genocide. The 25th anniversary of the Golden Temple attacks and the Delhi riots was marked in 2009, and was commemorated by awareness-raising publications such as, "1984: The Sikhs' Kristallnacht," horrific exhibitions of human rights abuses in Punjab at Vaisaki celebrations, a surge of Khalistan-oriented talks in gurdware (Sikh temples) and campuses, and the annual rally in Hyde Park in London, at which mourners dressed soberly in black suits, with black turbans and black arm bands. The victimhood theme was the root of a substantial degree of sympathy with the Jewish diaspora and also for the state of Israel. We repeatedly heard Jat Sikhs expressing solidarity with Jewish people as brethren who had been persecuted and subjected to atrocities in the same way as Sikhs, but although the Jewish people got their homeland, the claim for Khalistan was brutally suppressed by the Indian government.

Most recently, Sikhs in the UK have turned their gaze from Punjab homeland politics to other transnational linkages expressed by the conceptualization of the Sikh collectivity as a global qaom (nation) enshrined in the sovereignty of the Khalsa panth (path or community). For example, Sikh groups in the UK have been in the vanguard of a campaign to pressure the French government to withdraw the ban on wearing turbans in public institutions. They made connections with European and North American Sikhs over the problems of multiculturalism in their respective countries. Nonetheless, lest the primacy of the Khalsa image lead us to entertain ideas of a de-territorialized Sikh nation challenging Westphalian notions of sovereign nation-states (Gayer 2002; Shani 2005), the transnational relationships remained tangled. In practice, the promise of a de-territorialized sovereign Khalsa was rejected in favor of allegiance to the Shiromani *Gurdwara* Prabandakh Committee (SGPC) and Akal Takht in Amritsar, which were seen to provide some degree of political centrality. If Akal Takht rulings were controversial and at times unpopular, the alternative prospect of Sikhism being overrun by the popular dalit Ravidasia movement was too awful for Jat Sikhs to contemplate. As one joked, "If we stop engaging with the SGPC then look mate—the dalits are gonna take over!" Heterodox Sikh movements such as the Ravidasia and Namdhari sects were configured differently in transnational space, the gurdware in the UK taking a leadership role over other gurdware across Europe.

Young people's transnational politics re-worked those of their parents. Although 1984 continued to excite and mobilize young British-born Sikhs, and their organizational life reflected the fault lines between Khalistani-aligned or -opposed sects and *jathe* (Sikh groups and organizations), there was a turn toward de-coupling Sikhism from its provincial concerns with Punjab homeland and re-casting it as a fast-growing "world religion" alongside Christianity and Islam. Youth in the UK were linked to and played an essential part in Sikh revival in Canada, the United States, and continental Europe as well as Punjab. When attending Sikh youth events, it was common to be shown photos and video footage of turbaned and bearded white Sikhs from North America or black Sikhs from East Africa or elsewhere in the diaspora—images that continually provoked strong reactions from Punjabi Sikhs, who were affirmed by this embodied proof of the global reach and significance of their faith. However, against the notion of the de-territorialized Sikh *qaom,* it is important to note that white or black Sikh converts were positioned by Punjabi Sikhs as within, but also outside of the *panth,* which was ethnically Punjabi and implicitly racially profiled. Transnational connectivity therefore appears different from the perspectives of Punjab and the UK, and cannot be reduced to dyadic relationships between the two countries—illustrating the multi-sited and differentially empowered nature of transnational space. The transnationalism literature also typically effaces the complex history of diaspora, in which the UK is but one node. Meanwhile, the literature on diasporal formations gives insights into global ethnic consciousness (Vertovec 2000) and the complex structures of movement, connection, and subordination wherein "a plurality of antagonisms and differences are distinctive features" (Hall 1996), yet the focus is on imagined connections rather than ongoing exchanges. To grapple with these tangible interactions, and capture

simultaneously the de-centering of the Punjab–UK relationship as well as its very specific imaginaries and linkages, we find resonances with Ong and Nonini's (1997) notion of the "chronotope," which describes to how multiple geographies are continually being engaged by ethnic Chinese, whose earlier diasporas are continually evolving into networks throughout regions of dispersal and settlement.

2.6 The State and the Production of Transnationalism

Transnationalism privileges people-to-people contacts across national borders as its fundamental point, resulting in researches on multi-sited lives and ethnoscapes (Marcus 1995; Appadurai 1996). The unbounded/multi-bounded belonging is also understood as making significant shifts in the nation-state model, which has been the ruling mode of political affiliation in the modern world (Vertovec 2009). Early research enthusiastically embraced the idea that migrants were able to transcend state sovereignty through the micro-practices of "transnationalism from below" (Smith and Guarnizo 1998). Later research recognized the many ways in which state policies still matter, "the state is here to stay" (Levitt et al. 2003: 568). However, the fluctuating role of the state within shifting transnational flows, and its political agency in formalizing informal transnational spaces through new institutions and discreet discourses has been overlooked. By contrast, we found that the government of India has re-evaluated its emigrants and transnational citizens as a resource for tapping transnational capital for its development, a resource arguably to counter the ongoing discriminatory globalization. This marked a definitive change in the approach of the nation-state toward its overseas citizens. Similarly, the British government has also institutionalized the exteriority of its Punjabi population through the minoritizing practices of multiculturalism and therefore played its part in producing transnationalism.

The policy of the Nehruvian state toward overseas Indians was one of either returning home or indigenizing themselves in their respective countries of residence, something required not only by the imposing nation-state-framework, but also by a daunting bipolar world under the Cold War (Edwards 2008: 452). The end of the Cold War and the new economic policy in the late 1980s made the Indian state open up itself to overseas Indians. Although significantly late, the realization of strategic importance of the Indian diaspora resulted in concrete steps by the state to promote emotional and economic ties with its overseas citizen (Lall 2001). The rhetoric was to promote a "global Indian family" and citizenship, with which the High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora (HLCID) was appointed in 2000 to make recommendations to reinforce the state initiatives in this direction further (Edwards 2008: 444–445). The establishment of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) in 2004, on the recommendation of the HLCID, for specifically looking after the affairs of the overseas Indians is considered to be an important step in this direction. The MOIA is mandated to "promote, nurture and sustain a mutually beneficial and symbolic relationship between India and overseas Indians" (MOIA 2007: 6). It is

expected to ensure the welfare and protection of the overseas Indians while emigrating, while experiencing expatriate life, and after returning from overseas work. It seeks to ensure and promote beneficial relationships with Indian people abroad, the Global Indian citizen. Unsurprisingly, the NRIs, who were seen hitherto as the "not-required Indians," soon experienced a metamorphosis as the national reserve of India in media representations (Edwards 2008: 454).

The resultant statist interventions aimed at institutionalizing transnational ties and structuring what we call national regimes of transnationalism has been more driven by *nationalistic* than transnational considerations. The attempts to attract transnational capital for national development are defined in a framework of mutually beneficial relationships between India and overseas Indians. The statist discourse on this underscores India's credentials as an attractive investment location at one level, but resort to a nationalist rhetoric invoking the original belonging of overseas Indians at another, in an attempt to "try and make the overseas Indian an active participant in the India growth story" (MOIA 2008: 43). To facilitate these mutually sustaining objectives, a liberal policy and institutional framework has been put in place for ensuring NRI investments through the automatic and government route such as the larger liberalized Foreign FDI Regime of India, which offered additional incentives to NRIs (Rajan and Varghese 2010). The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) offers various incentives in the form of tax exemptions and liberal repatriation schemes. Income from the investments made by NRIs/PIOs out of convertible foreign exchange in their NRI Accounts and FCNR accounts are totally exempted from taxation. The RBI also supports NRI investment in India through indirect channels such as loans. Under FEMA regulations, a foreign citizen who is resident in India can purchase Immovable Property (IP) in India without any approval from the RBI. NRI/PIO account holders are also permitted to remit up to $1 million per year out of the balance in their nonresident (ordinary) account/sale proceeds of assets (inclusive of inheritance/settlement). The banks are also permitted to issue international credit cards to NRIs/PIOs without prior approval of the Reserve Bank of India.

In addition to such "services," there were also attempts on the part of the state to systematize and streamline the flow of transnational resources for philanthropic and charity works. The government has put a liberal framework in place for nongovernmental organizations, in the forms of societies, trusts, and nonprofit companies, to receive contributions from overseas to carry out charitable/philanthropic work in India (MOIA 2006: 48–51). More recently, the government of India established an India Development Foundation (IDF) to promote philanthropy among the Indian diaspora, having realized the potential of transnational diaspora resources through the channel of philanthropy. Apart from promoting philanthropy, IDF is supposed to "align diaspora philanthropy with the national development goals and to provide a platform to the diaspora for channelizing their philanthropic initiatives through creditable NGOs and institutions" (from the proposed national migration policy document, as yet unpublished). It is not surprising that with an increasing reliance by nation-states on development, which is fundamental to state-centric biopolitics for its self-legitimization, transnational citizens and nonresident citizens are found

to be highly potent sources of capital generation. Through such initiatives the nation-state also sought to reinforce its foundations by extending itself to a constituency that had hitherto remained outside its fold, by opening up "proper" and new spaces of exchange alongside formalizing diverse forms of hitherto informal and undercover flows into the home country.

This has been accompanied by a new representational regime through the production and reinvention of categories such as NRI, PIO, OCI, as new signifiers and administrative categories. The category of NRI was created by the state in the 1970s in an attempt to interpolate the migrant as an extension of the nation with visible economic intentions (Shukla 2005: 59). Thus, India has actively constituted itself as a homeland through its changing policies toward NRIs, but is not an inevitable homeland for its emigrants (Raj 2003). Although the poorer migrants in the countries in the Middle East and elsewhere were not really built into it, subsequently NRI became the generic term to describe Indian migrants. The appellation gave a new subjectivity to the transmigrant for being abroad, apart from bestowing a few benefits that are not usually available to those living outside the nation-state, including the right to own property (Raj 2003: 10). In the late 1990s the powerful language of nationalism was extended to noncitizens with Indian ancestors by taking concrete measures to strengthen and reinforce the emotional ties that transnational Indian citizens apparently share with their motherland. The category of PIO was invented and a PIO card scheme was introduced in 1999, much before the formation of MOIA, in an effort to give a formal and bureaucratic expression to such enduring bonds. A PIO card holder is entitled to visit India without a visa for 15 years. No separate student visa or employment visa is required for admission to educational institutions and taking up employment in India. PIO card holders are not required to register with the Foreigners' Registration Officer if continuous stay does not exceed 180 days, and they are entitled to get all benefits and facilities available to the NRIs in economic, financial, and educational fields. A gratis PIO card may be issued to an exceptionally eminent person of Indian origin, who plays an important role in building bridges between India and the country of his or her adoption, if he or she expresses a desire to obtain the PIO card.

Further, more recently on the recommendation of the HLCID, the government of India had introduced a scheme of OCI, by which aspiring and eligible PIOs are given overseas citizenship of India. The scheme has been operational from December 2, 2005. Overseas citizen of India has been introduced as a new category of citizenship to facilitate lifelong visas, unrestricted travel to India, and certain economic, educational, and cultural benefits. An OCI is entitled to the benefits of multiple entry, multiple-purpose lifelong visa to visit India, exemption from registration with the police authorities for any length of stay in India, and parity with NRIs in financial, economic, and educational fields except in the acquisition of agricultural or plantation properties. However, "[p]ersons registered as OCI have not been given any voting rights, election to Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha/Legislative Assembly/Council, holding Constitutional posts such as President, Vice President, Judge of Supreme Court/High Court, etc.," although the response by the transnational citizens of India to the scheme has been overwhelming (MOIA 2006: 55). The other important

measures taken by MOIA to reinforce the ties of overseas Indians with a resurgent India are the Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC), the Know India Programme (KIP), and the Tracing the Roots program, apart from instituting the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (Rajan and Varghese 2010). Arguably, such institutional changes presuppose a redefinition of nation in such a way as to accommodate its transnational citizens, a new state nationalism that is increasingly open to overseas Indians. The statist notion of nation has this undergone re-formalization to take the nation beyond a national space, its territoriality, to a transnational space. However, the rationale that underlies this transnationalization of the nation is primarily national. Further, there is marked statist ambivalence over its transnational citizens, which is clearly visible in the limits of this formal seriality as explicated in the denial of political rights and restrictions on owning property.

Substantial openness to transnational citizens and NRIs are available at the subnational level, too. The Punjabi government has taken steps to encourage overseas Punjabis to invest in the state by making use of the emotional and sentimental ties of the latter with their motherland. It extended incentives to NRPs to invest in the state apart from simplifying the procedures and fastening the processes. The establishment of the Department of NRI Affairs in 2002 was aimed at promoting an advantageous relationship and offering necessary services to the NRPs. Realizing the amount of money being pumped into rural Punjab for philanthropy and village infrastructure, the Department of NRI Affairs sought to incentivize and formalize such transnational contributions by instituting the NRI-GoP Rural Infrastructure Development Fund. Responsively, the government established NRI police stations, fast track court for NRI cases and extended support to the NRI Sabha, an NGO of the NRPs. These interventions on the part of the government of Punjab in turn reinforce a distinct Punjabi cultural identity beyond the territorial confines of the subnation into a global Punjabi identity.

Similarly, the British government has also actively fostered a sense of exteriority for its ethnic minority populations through the institutionalizing policies of *multiculturalism,* and the way it encourages its minoritized subjects to formulate their ethnic and religious identities and engage in civic action. From the 1960s to the late 1990s, British immigration and citizenship policies maintained a double objective: immigration control combined with *anti-discrimination legislation* for migrants once in Britain (e.g., the 1965, 1968, and 1976 Race Relations Acts) (Zetter 2002; Somerville 2007). The legislation actively produces identities for minorities by offering legal entitlements for those who ascribe membership of a group recognized by the government. The institutional practices that define citizenship rights and statuses are what Ong refers to as "subjectification," in the sense of "a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society" (Ong 1996: 263–264). The anti-discrimination legislation subjectifies in particular ways and yet we still find that there is scope for people to subvert and strategically redeploy the terms of debate.

As many have pointed out, Punjabis have been at the forefront of anti-discrimination politics in Britain. The historic Mandla vs. Dowell Lee case (1978), over the right of Sikh men and boys to wear a turban, set a precedent for cases to come. The Race

Relations law of the day provided protection in cases of discrimination against racial or ethnic, but not religious, identity, whereas the House of Lords determined that Sikhs should be protected under this legislation: "the Sikhs… are more than a religious sect, they are almost a race and almost a nation" (Hall 2002: 52). Since then, religious identification has also come under legal protection (e.g., the Racial and Religious Hatred Act, 2006) and provides a major channel for representation and consultation under the rubric of "faith communities" (Baumann 1996). Therefore, Sikhs have deployed the terms of religious or racial group identity fluidly. Several informants had taken part in the unsuccessful campaign for Sikhs to be recognized as a separate ethnic group in the 1991 census. Latterly, however, the same informants had taken part in campaigns against the French ban on wearing the turban, in which they argued (*contra Mandla vs. Dowell Lee*) that the turban was a cultural, not a religious, requirement. This political fluidity has led Sikhs to be described as a "paradigm case of a special-interest group that can always negotiate an opt-out from general rule making" (Singh and Tatla 2006: 126).

Immigration policy under New Labour grappled with heightened tensions over *citizenship.* National and international events—specifically ethnic riots and terrorism—led to a move toward policies directed toward fostering integration and cohesion, along with the construction of a "core" national identity, the latter entailing citizenship ceremonies, a citizen's test, and the requirement to have some knowledge of English, Gaelic, Scottish, or Welsh. (See the 2003 Report on Life in the UK as a blueprint for recent government policies. For a review of recent policies, see Back et al. 2002; Castles et al. 2002; Flynn 2005; Sales 2005; Zetter 2006; Somerville 2007. The "Life in the UK" classes we observed during the field work, provided by community centers on behalf of the local authority to equip applicants with the skills and practical knowledge to pass the citizenship test, were productive of particular identities. Classroom discussions of set texts clipped from newspapers concerned topics such as human trafficking and gangmasters, which prompted the students to express anti-immigration politics, and encouraged them to place themselves on the side of the rightful British citizen rather than the devious underhand anti-citizen freshie. Discussions repeatedly used the pedagogic device of comparing Britain with the countries of origin, fixing cultural identities and functioning "to understand immigration and movement in the sense of a cultural prior" (Raj 2003: 166). Topics such as the National Health Service and adult education opportunities in Britain invited classroom discussions comparing British services with those in the students' countries of origin, sharpening their sense of the superiority of Britain and heightening desire and feelings of belonging to their new nation-state.

State multiculturalism has come under attack on multiple grounds in the post-9/11, post-7/7 era: for creating "parallel lives" and communities or allowing the nation to "sleepwalk towards segregation," as put by Trevor Phillips, the head of the Equalities Commission, and for infringing the liberal conception of state neutrality (Tomlinson 2008). Meanwhile, schooling continued to be an essential place where children and young people were turned performatively into ethnic minorities. Despite three decades of research criticizing multicultural education policies, pupils and students were still celebrating Black History month with special Multicultural

Days in which they learned about the achievements of well-known black people in art, literature, and dance. During Black History week, schools came together for sessions with choreographers, who showed them, for example, traditional African dance and hip hop moves. They celebrated Multicultural Week by learning about Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, and Sikhism, with trips to local gurdware and synagogues, and held special assemblies in which each of the school years did something ethnic, such as performing a choreographed Bollywood dance. The restriction to special events such as Multicultural Days and Multicultural Weeks normalizes whiteness and/or Christianity and underscores its refusal to be shifted from center stage. Pupils must participate by displaying their difference, celebrating their diversity as long as it remains in the minority, compressed, and flattened into celebratory approaches and synonymous with unpolitical lifestyles sympathetic to progressive liberal sentiments (the saris, samosas, and steel bands, or 3S approach criticized by anti-racists in the 1980s) (Troyna 1987). Each "community" was taught the essence of how they were put in their place, valorized via old stereotypes about religious and hospitable Indians or cutting-edge, cool, hip hop–producing black people: reified, glossing over class, gender, and generational differences and disregarding institutional forms of racism.

> I mean most of it was about black slavery, you know. Obviously. But there was also a certain amount of time spent on colonialism, British India, partition, didn't really go into that much detail and also it was very, incredibly like, simplistic. I do think there's a lot left out of the history books, but a lot of people in the Sikh community don't know either. Everyone relies on the media and that sort of information and a lot of that is very liberal if not to the right and you know, people in the UK don't really talk about Cable Street [an anti-fascist battle in East London in 1936] unless you study something related to it, either, at uni and no-one talks about the other side of partition either, like the movement that really led to total independence and also the trail that led to partition and the politics of it. (Male, 23, British-born)

Moreover, the informal processes of schooling were strongly assimilationist and ensured that pupils developed a sense of being caught between two cultures—a category of practice much discussed in academic writing about young people's everyday negotiations among different cultural orientations or social fields, making use of the sociolinguistic concept of code-switching. Although the metaphor of translation has been used to describe the situational performances of identity through which young people negotiate supposedly opposed social fields of temple, home, or school (Hall 2002), we found the notion of hermetically sealed social fields to be a dangerous fiction. For example, most young people's home environment was what linguists would describe as mixed (Romaine 1995: 183–185), in which Punjabi-speaking grandparents and parents conferred knowledge of English through their own speech as well as media exposure via TV and/or the Internet. Children started schooling as "imbalanced bilinguals," and the intense academic and peer pressures to speak English in a monolingual school set-up led them to respond, not by compartmentalizing their language practices into the domains of home and school, but to invest more in English. Their Punjabi came to be inflected with English phonology, grammar, and loan words. They were also responsible for spreading the use of

English further within their homes. Nonetheless, when asked about it in interviews they consistently divided their lives neatly down the middle between "Punjabi culture" [at home or temple] and "the outside culture" [at school].

More insidiously, we came to appreciate that the very categories of "Asian" and "English" were created for children experientially through the process of schooling. For example, one female migrant was distressed to find her 6-year-old daughter coming home from school saying, "I don't want to wear my Indian clothes, I want to wear my English clothes." She argued that her daughter had worn t-shirts, trousers, frocks, and *salwar kameez* interchangeably and never distinguished between Indian and English items before, so where did this thing about "Indian clothes" and "English clothes" come from all of a sudden? The idea of being caught between two cultures was a discourse through which people were brought into being or subjectified through the process and practices of schooling. Schooling was a complex site in which young people simultaneously developed local belongings through their intermezzo friendship practices and also a sense of not-belonging and perennial exteriority or "immigrant imaginary" (Hesse 2000).

In short, our research on India and the UK confirms that transnationalism cannot be viewed as an autonomous domain created and sustained by the partaking people, nor an exclusive people-to-people informal exchange space, but is significantly produced by other players, including the state. The state not only powerfully mediates the transnational connections of people, but also creates and sustains categories and produces identities and subjectivities alongside formalizing the informal spaces and exchanges.

2.7 Pragmatic Citizenship and Ambivalent Nationality

The literature holds that transnationalism poses a fundamental challenge to traditional citizenship based on an assumed congruence of continuous residence in a given territory, a shared collective identity and participation in, or subjection to a common jurisdiction—dwelling on the increasing incidence of dual citizenship, and potential postnational, transnational, and cosmopolitan citizenships (Gerdes and Faist 2008). However, we found that having transnational links did not mean that people did not think in terms of *a single, solid citizenship.* The settled migrants—the old-timers, bhijis, and 1.5-ers—had long since taken on British citizenship and nationality or more concretely, "the passport," as it offered practical benefits in terms of welfare entitlements in the UK as well as movement between countries for travel. The migrants from East Africa and Hong Kong had opted for British rather than local nationality, being insecure about their future under independent rule. Those who had retained Indian nationality were in a clear minority. Although the old-timers took British citizenship, some encouraged their wives to retain Indian nationality so as to keep ancestral properties and agricultural land under their wife's name—maintaining their wives' dependence as family migrants, a carefully and strategically maintained neither-here-nor-there state. A few of the old-timers

retained Indian nationality out of a sense of loyalty to the country of their birth and as a political objection to British dominance, as dedicated leftists and followers of the *Ghadar* anti-colonial movement.

> I am a patriot. I have always remained as Indian. I and my wife have Indian passports, we have Indian nationality. We have never left it.
> **Q:** You went there in 1968 and your family joined you in 1972, you didn't take citizenship there yet, how did you survive such a long time?
> **A:** I became a citizen after one year. I never changed my nationality. One has to take citizenship otherwise you don't get benefits, even medical benefits. (Male, 70, old-timer on vacation)

With the exception of these few old-timers, the settled migrants had a remarkable lack of concern or indifference to the political implications of giving up Indian nationality. The same was the case for the recent migrants, who either had or were planning to take British citizenship and nationality as soon as they had spent sufficient years in Britain to be eligible for it. Indeed, the inhospitableness of the British state toward even legal immigrants created a sense that the granting of entry clearance and rights to remain in the UK was so whimsical that British citizenship should be secured as quickly as possible. Their adoption of British citizenship/nationality was overwhelmingly explained in terms of *pragmatic* considerations—that the red passport gave them benefits in terms of welfare entitlements and greater ease of applying for visas to travel to third countries. However, interwoven into these pragmatic considerations was a strong sense in which British citizenship was a *symbolic asset,* prized and considered to be superior. There was a clear hierarchical order within transnational space, with Indian nationality ranked below British and other European, North American, and Australian nationalities. Taking British citizenship was a statement expressing their commitment to the country, and was a way of consolidating their belongings (Fig. 2.4).

> I hold an Indian passport. I have applied for a British passport. I stay here and my wife stays here so I want to be a part of England. I won't get to know about India much sitting here. If I stay here, eat here then I want to think about this country. (Male, 31, mangetar)

Most of the migrants we spoke to were not very interested in *dual citizenship,* most of them preferring the red passport over Indian nationality. Even the returnees who had decided to spend the rest of their lives in Punjab wanted to retain their British citizenship because of the practical advantages it conferred. The circular migrants, such as the migrants on vacation who were working on temporary international placements in IT, management, or hospitality, were an exception to this pattern as they wished to retain Indian citizenship, privileging their families, property, and livelihoods in India.

> I don't believe in [dual citizenship]. A man with his feet on two boats is not happy. If you are in India on a dual citizenship and something happens then Britain will not come to your aid but if you visit India as a British citizen then you can turn to Britain for help. If I don't stay there then there is no point of dual citizenship. (Male, 33, East African)

> I have many benefits. I can travel to New Zealand and Canada without a visa. I can travel to many other countries too. In the case of US too, I get a visa on arrival. I can just travel with

Fig. 2.4 Transforming the Indian passport into a British passport (Source: Author)

> my passport… Only these advantages make me to keep this passport… I am 100% an Indian. But British passport gives me many facilities. (Male, 74, returnee)

The NRI, PIO, and OCI categories were of interest mainly to those who were traveling regularly to India and purchasing property for their own business interest. In fact, the categories of NRI and OCI were seen as synonymous with wealthy old-timers who had made it as transnational entrepreneurs.

> We look at this, should we remain British passports or should we do this dual nationality with India? There's no benefit for me to go and get an Indian passport and in terms of NRI status, India doesn't attract me. I know there are some massive gains to be made though, I know India has really rocketed as has China. (Male, 47, British-born)

Raj stresses that, although the NRI category had a "basis in material concerns, it is also a category fostering an imaginary link" (2003: 177). However, we found that the informants were alert to the Indian state's economic self-interest and responded to these categories with *ambivalence.* The settled migrants saw through the NRI and OCI schemes and took the fact that they were barred from political rights as proof that these categories were intended to entice investment from migrants and diaspora without giving them much in return. As one old-timer put it, "I know I'm an NRI, so why should I pay for it?" The settled migrants' number one criticism was that the NRI Sabha in Punjab had not made it any easier to protect their property rights. If nothing else, they had hoped that the NRI Sabha would lead to progress on this issue.

> They haven't given us any facilities, there's no change in the rules. I mean, Punjab is a police state you see. Whatever the police want to do, they do it. I mean I've got a house in Jalandhar and someone is living there. I went to rebuild it but according to law, they said we have occupied for so many years so it's our property now? So we don't get any backing from the government. The government of Punjab makes statements just to attract the money from here. But actually there is no law that they can protect our properties. People are just disappointed when they go there and find that NRI institution whatever it's called, NRI Sabha, it's doing nothing. (Male, 58, East African)

Moreover, there were strong distinctions between citizenship and national identity, which do not always correspond. National identification with India was patterned by

religious and political affiliation. In general, the Hindu Punjabi informants identified more strongly with the Indian nation than the Sikhs (Raj 2003). Indian flags were in evidence in Hindu temples and parents were opting to teach their children Hindi rather than Punjabi because "Punjabi is the language of Punjab but it is not the Indian national language." By contrast, the Sikh informants identified more ambivalently with the Indian nation. The *Ghadar*-affiliated leftists prefigured the role of Sikhs in the struggle for independence from the British—commemorating Bhagat Singh and Udham Singh, for example—and described themselves as "Indian patriots." However, the Sikh ethno-nationalists, following the tensions between the Akali Dal party and the central Congress government in the early 1980s, which culminated in the assault on the Golden Temple in June 1984, could not recognize themselves in the Indian nation. Recalling the anti-Sikh riots in which thousands were killed in pogroms across India in October–November 1984, they felt that they were not recognized within the Indian nation, either.

> I used to get the India News from the Indian High Commission, I used to be proud of every region of India—oh, what's Andhra Pradesh doing, what's that doing, what's up—you know my husband used to say you're mad you are, you know like you'd think you were living in India or something. I love it, I want to know what they're doing! Then 1984 and I cancelled my subscription I thought no. Don't want to know. I'm sorry, but you've let us down. (Female, 59, British-born)

Although the majority of the informants took on British citizenship and nationality, identification with the British nation was also conflicted. Since the 1970s, the main narrative concerning the national identifications of Punjabis in Britain is that after the old-timers recognized that they were not sojourners and reunited their families to make for a more comfortable and permanent residence, their allegiances shifted to Britain (e.g., Anwar 1979). This view was echoed vigorously by the old-timers, the family migrants, and their children, who were often frustrated by questions about their identifications with India and took great pains to stress their Britishness. Often, criticizing the disrespect that freshies showed to Britain—with their supposedly illegal entry, supposed undocumented work, supposed negligence of paying National Insurance and tax, undercutting the minimum wage and sending everything back to India—served as a foil against which their own commitment to Britishness was elaborated and worked out.

> We all came because of poverty, the majority 95% of people. At that time we thought we'll make our money and go back but that never happened and it's not going to happen now, nobody is going to go back, we're now in the third generation and all this. The inside feeling is when we go to India we think we're abroad and we like to come back as soon as possible. (Male, 65, old-timer)

> People come here on six month visas but they end up working here and never go back. Immigration has gone up and it causes too much trouble in this country. The political system is totally wrong. We are living in this country and faithful to this country so we should have rights but then the government gives funds to all these new people. Nobody cares that we worked so hard and contributed to this country. (Male, 70, old-timer)

There was a strong sense of Indian Punjabi exceptionalism that came out in the pervasive moves to represent the community politically as a *model minority.*

The informants pointed out that Indian Punjabis comprised a prosperous, educated, well-integrated, and peaceful community. Often, they compared themselves implicitly or explicitly with Pakistani Muslims, who were a "suspect community" (Hickman and Thomas 2010). This self-conscious representation as a model minority had tangible resonances with colonial constructions of Sikhs as a loyal martial race, and prompted active debate concerning Anglo-Sikh history and its legacy. At the community level, there was a political project of de-centering whiteness. For example, there was a campaign for greater recognition of the contribution that Indians, and specifically Sikhs, had made to British nationhood by fighting against white British and Commonwealth troops in World Wars I and II. Sikhs amassed for Remembrance Sunday or "poppy day" ceremonies and presented wreaths commemorating the Indian soldiers who gave their lives to secure the British nation for generations to come. The historical engagement of Punjabis in the British Indian army was also linked to drives to encourage young Indians to sign up for the army. Community organizations had British army recruitment leaflets; the Birmingham Vaisakhi celebrations had British army stalls to raise support for the armed forces. The widespread passion for Anglo-Sikh history was part of a project redefining Britishness as something that could be claimed by people identified as non-white.

> I've been looking at the 1920s at the colonial aspect. The UK had a massive recession then and lots of people were unemployed. So they went to find some other countries, they went to find India and ripped off the raw materials and then brought them back to the UK to create jobs, like in the textile mills. Then they went back and sold it at 100% profit. I say "Great Britain" but that's because it's the sweat and blood of my forefathers that made this country great. So I have rights in this country. We need to instill this in our kids and give them confidence. (Male, 52, 1.5-er)

Despite this political activity, there was a strong sense in which Britishness or Englishness was not open to identification even for those who had its citizenship. Implicitly, Britishness or Englishness was defined in racial terms and was synonymous with *whiteness.* For instance, British-born Punjabis were still not recognized simply as British. Instead, they were perennially asked the question, "Where are you from?"—to which the correct answer was not "Birmingham"—serving as a constant reminder that whiteness was the cultural center of British citizenship. In everyday speech, the category "English" or "British" was synonymous with "white person." The racism implicit within such constructions of Britishness was remarked on in relation to Gordon Brown's protectionist response to the credit crunch in early 2009, and the high-profile campaigning by the British National Party and the English Defence League in 2009–2010. The informants cited this political rhetoric as proof that at the end of the day there would always be a powerful constituency of people who would not accept that they were British.

> Gordon Brown should have watched his words when he said "British jobs for British workers." You'll notice that you don't see any black or Asian workers on strike. Those people that are striking, they probably see our family as not British. (Male, 40, British-born)

> There is a huge chunk of old people who are above 75 over there. As now there are good medical facilities, people live long. Now the feeling of compassion for old people is decreasing. They are like a burden on the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They are unable to afford

> the expenses. They will get us out. The BNP will do this or we have to come back by ourselves. They say there will be poverty; England will become a third world country. (Male, 70, migrant on vacation)

Citizenship policies were also increasingly pinned to autochthony. Immigration policy under New Labour moved toward fostering integration and cohesion, along with the construction of a "core" national identity, the latter entailing citizenship ceremonies, a citizen's test, and the requirement to have some knowledge of English, Gaelic, Scottish, or Welsh. The "Life in the UK" citizen's test incorporated knowledge of British national and local government institutions such as the parliament, police, and the law, with knowledge of welfare and entitlements, white British culture, and Christian religion (festivals and practices such as Christmas, Pancake day, April Fool's day)—combined with nods toward multiculture, with questions on the history of postwar immigration to Britain and the percentage of the population comprising different ethnic groups. These trends toward a white-coded and assimilationist formation of citizenship were experienced to be *exclusionary.* Although British citizenship was still desirable, some recent migrants were discouraged by the requirement of having to expend so much energy—perhaps fruitlessly—on having to improve their English and so be accredited by a national standardized test.

> The need to take British passports has not arisen as yet. What will we do with British passports? I don't feel any attachment with my Indian passport but I'm scared of taking the English test for citizenship. I cannot take that test. (Female, 39, mangetar)

Although some of the informants did move back and forth, we found that most were committed to a single national citizenship, and to availing the rights and entitlements, or practical benefits associated with it—particularly those concerning mobility across borders. People's engagement with citizenship was therefore overwhelmingly pragmatic. In the case of the British citizens who took NRI or OCI citizenship so as to avail themselves of opportunities for purchasing and dealing in plots, or of families in which members held different political citizenship to safeguard ancestral property, the engagement could also be strategic. The question of national identification, however, was met with ambivalence or indifference. Although most of the informants wanted a solid British citizenship, there was a strong sense of being excluded from the mainstream narration of national identity by virtue of racial imaginaries.

2.8 "Illegality" and Social Licitness

The Punjab–UK transnational space is also known for unauthorized flows of people, which is facilitated by a parallel economy of migration. A UNODC study estimates around 20,000 unauthorized emigrations to UK alone from Punjab annually, and 100,000 are at any point awaiting deportation behind bars (UNODC 2009). A good number of Punjabis continue to immigrate into the UK for work through unauthorized means—entering the country on visit visas and overstaying or getting smuggled

into the country with the help of transnational networks of agents. Such unauthorized flows are made possible not only by a receptive labor market, but also buttressed by the social ties of the emigrant at the destination. The flows though apparently defying the state, make use of the loose spaces and players available within the state mechanism and laws. This involves negotiations through the cumbersome bureaucracy of the state that intentionally excuse the illegal and take full advantage of labor market dynamics in the destination countries. The thick and thin policing of borders by the receiving states and the inconsistencies in the institution of emigration governance in India together facilitate this unauthorized flow. The Emigration Check Required/Emigration Check Not Required (ECNR) regime allows a form of unfettered informality in the case of migration to ECNR countries, which include all European countries, and a form of controlled informality in the case of countries in the Middle East (Kodoth and Varghese 2010; Varghese and Rajan 2010). The unfettered informality allows all emigrations for work to ECNR countries free on the one hand and concedes a space for all sorts of informal practices in the field of emigration on the other. However, the mutually incompatible legalities make a legally emigrated migrant illegal during the journey itself or after arrival at the destination. Such unauthorized flows, on the other hand, enjoy tremendous social sanction in rural Punjab, making it socially licit even while illegal as per the statist vocabulary (Abraham and Schendel 2005).

Contrary to a general perception that cumbersome and dangerous ways of border crossing by the Punjabis have taken the safer routes of educational migration, our research has amply testifies the continuation of such human flows even in recent years. These emigrants not only cross many national borders, but also spent significant amounts of time in transit countries in their attempt to make it to the UK. At least two routes are chosen most often: first, traveling from India to Turkey, Russia or a few other ex-Soviet Union countries and making their way toward the UK by crossing numerous national borders. The second unauthorized flow went directly from India to southern European countries on visit visas, and then required the migrants to negotiate entry to the UK. The former involved more risk as it involves the physical crossing of borders, although the latter was not completely free from risks either as they often involve travel in closed containers for long periods. The emigrants often left India legally on visit visas and become illegal during their border crossings, making the legal/illegal divide in the formal sense itself complex. The case of the following returnee falls under the first category of unauthorized migration.

> It is after two stints of expatriate life in the Middle East the returnee decided to emigrate to Europe in 2000. The deal with the agent was in fact to go to France for 3.5 lakh rupees. He mobilised money from a private money lender on exorbitant interests. He was sent to first by flight to Moscow, from where the agents helped them to travel across different countries to make their way into France. The first task was to cross the border of Russia and to enter Ukraine, which was done by walking during night times in a group of similar people mobilised by the agents from countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and so on. The agents allowed them to take rest during the day time and border crossing was done in the night, which often took hours of walking. After reaching Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, they took a train to the border and crossed over to Slovenia by foot, which again took four hours of walk in the

midnight. Crossing the border, the agent sent them by taxi to the Slovenian capital. The agents collected the rest of the payment from there and sent them by road to Germany. On the German border the police took their "finger prints" and were caught. The agents were seen nowhere to help out although one of them used to accompany them during the journeys. They were in the detention camp for 2 days and then deported to Prague, where they were ordered to leave the country within 7 days. They were detained, free food was given, and were not allowed go outside. But the representatives of the agents came calling them there and helped them to leave the Czech Republic to Austria by train. They lived in Austria for a week, out of which 1 day in a Gurudwara and surviving with langar. Then the agents sent them to France through Italy. On arrival at France, the returnee called his relatives to come and pick him up. He stayed in France for 3 months and was working as a painter though was earning very less. He met with another agent over there who promised to take him to UK, where he thought the prospects would be better for him. Many people were sent to UK by a ship in a container, which looked like a van for him! But he was sent by air, he don't know how the agents got visa for him for the same. He left his passport with the agents upon his arrival in Moscow. Then given his photo to the agent, with which the latter fabricated identity documents according to the requirements of each country. It seems to him that the agents have many passports with them; they change the photograph and use the same passport for many people. It took about six month on the whole for him to reach UK. (Male, 47, returnee)

As this case reveals, this returnee's destination when he left Punjab was France, and the UK captured his imagination during his life in France, causing France to turn from the country of "reception" to the country of "transit." In the following case, a relative narrates the other route of clandestine emigration to the UK as it happened in the case of her son.

It was against much of the displeasure the parents, her son decided to go to videsh in 2006. A deal was struck for 9.2 lakh rupees according to which the agent agreed to send him Austria directly without any transit crossings. However, instead he was sent to Greece, from where the agent sent him to Italy, the expenses of which including the flight charges were agreed to be borne by his family. On his arrival in Italy he was received by his relatives and he lived in the country for 1 year doing "third-class kind of jobs" like agricultural work and cattle rearing. The son remained resilient and refuses to return, as he did not want to earn the name of "a son who spoiled the father's hard-earned money." His hardships and paltry earning which was just enough for his survival, made them to decide to leave Italy for good as quickly as possible. He got in touch with an agent to go to UK but ended up in a refugee camp in Belgium. One of his neighbours in Belgium was immediately contacted who took him home from the camp. He remained in Belgium for 3 months without any jobs and continued his effort to go to UK with the help of the same agent. The agent was unable to facilitate his way into UK and hence he contacted another agent who managed to put him in a ship bound for UK. The deal was for 1.5 lakhs on arrival as in the case of the other agent. He had to remain in a container in the ship, but was caught by the British police when the ship touched the shore. As the container was that of France he was deported to France, as the British police who raided the ship assumed that since the containers belongs to France the men inside must be from the same country. He remained imprisoned for 15 days in France, after which he was sent back to Belgium along with two other Punjabi boys who were similarly caught and imprisoned. He remained in Belgium for another month only to contact another agent to make his dream a reality. The tenacity paid off and finally he could make his way into UK through the same channel by ship inside the container. (Female, 46, relative)

In this case the eventful arrival in UK took more than 1½ years with major transitory stints in Italy and Belgium. These "micropractices" of people, as Abraham and

Schendel (2005) call it, assume a number of other forms of clandestine migration. These innovative strategies are continuously re-invented depending on the circumstances. A cursory look at the contemporary media in Punjab would reveal these clandestine micropractices. One commonly reported practice is that of teams traveling to the UK to participate in sporting activities to disappear at their destination. There are cases in which people buy their place into the visiting performing groups so as to make their way into UK. There are umpteen cases reported that youngsters travel as part of *kabaddi,* football, river-rafting, cricket, *gidda* and *bhangra* teams, and a good number of them disappearing on arrival or after a few matches or performances to become part of the gray labor market. Both men and women travel to the UK in this manner. There are agents who facilitate this sort of flow quite efficiently. There are a good number of marriage bureaus arranging brides from the UK for aspiring youngsters to make their way into England. Such "paper marriages" are arranged with consenting British citizens who are paid for their part. As countries like the UK and Canada begin to recognize same-sex partnerships, emigration attempts are also using this legislation. Agents and immigration consultants are responsible for making the same-sex British citizen willing to be party to these paper unions. Religion is also appropriated into migration attempts. There are several reports of people travelling to the UK as *sants* (saints) and priests to improve their financial status. The research team came across a few *raggi* (singers) who made their way into the UK as religious performers, out of whom a few had found unskilled jobs in the country while several worked as religious performers in the UK. There are also reports that in a few cases people donated their kidneys to ailing recipients in the UK to make their way into the country. The opening up of the education market in the UK has been used of late in a big way to emigrate as students and their spouses.

Agents who negotiate their clients' path through different countries to the UK are allegedly collecting between Rs. 500,000 and 1,800,000. On numerous occasions, after receiving payment these agents cheated the aspiring migrants or the kabootar (pigeon, the local appellation for illegal emigrants). There are occasions when the kabootar are stranded in transit countries or have to make their own way into the UK after several trials and tribulations. However, such illegal but licit practices enjoy significant social sanction in Punjab. Negotiating your way into the UK or any other country clandestinely hardly carries the burn of social stigma, as they are seen essentially as strategies of individual mobility. The participants are far from being innocent kabootar, as they are referred to in the local imagination, as most of them are partially or fully aware of the risks involved with the endeavor on which they embark. Perhaps the appellation kabootar itself is an indication of the social approval given to such flows, which therefore cannot be equated with international crimes such as trafficking of drugs, arms, or terrorism across borders. Very often, for many people such informal networks appear more friendly and dependable than the machineries of the state (Varghese and Rajan 2010). It is also important to note that such micropractices run in defiance of a policing nation-state system, in contradiction with the notion of the world in motion associated with contemporary globalization

(Smith and Guarnizo 1998). However, more important, they wilfully utilize the loose spaces conceded by the state and mutually incompatible national legalities.

Such emigrations are not new, either. The emigrations on the banana boat with forged documents and hefty payments to agents were happening even in the 1950s and 1960s, at a time when the immigration law was much more elastic. By the mid-1950s it was difficult for Indians to be issued passports to travel to the UK because India was trying to curb emigration (Josephides 1991: 259). Hence, some aspiring migrants requested passports to first visit other countries—we heard stories about Singapore in particular—and then came to Britain. Such migrations are powerfully bolstered by a social network, established and reinforced over years of Punjabi migrations. The agents who facilitate this operate across national borders in a transnational network. The study in the Doaba region indicates that the network is being run mainly by Punjabis themselves located in different countries, but in coordination with players in the respective transit countries, with Pakistani, Turkish, and European as well as British nationals. We were told of the bribery of the border guards in the UK. The social sanction given comes from the economic prospects of emigration, imagined absence of criminality involved in what they are doing, which is conceived of as vastly different from the trafficking of drugs, arms, or terrorists across borders, the underlying notion of mobility through hard work, and also from the long history of movement of people from Punjab to the UK from colonial times. The social licitness is also informed by the state's unfriendliness even toward genuine, legal prospective emigrants. The social licitness is also attested by the fact that agents who facilitate such unauthorized emigrations have a free spread in the rural Punjab to contact the prospective emigrants and to be contacted by them. The rural suspicion of outsiders and a general refusal to share the migration related details reinforce this social licitness.

Although there is plenty of cheating and defrauding, the network of agents works largely in good coordination and they often stick to an ethics set by themselves in the business. The continuing dependence on such network is a result of the confidence they won over years among the people, apart from the so-called craze for migration. There are enough cases in which the agents returned the money upon their failure to facilitate migration. This market ethicality in many other cases limited the financial loss and safeguarded the emigrants from being cheated through self-imposed ethics and collection methods. In the case of the returnee cited earlier, although the deal was fixed for 3.5 lakh rupees, he was paying the money in specified installments as the journey progressed. He did not pay even a single penny to his agent in France, who facilitated his emigration from France to the UK, before reaching the destination. All of the money was paid after his arrival in the UK, something arranged in confidence with his social support network there. Similarly, in another case, although he lost 50,000 rupees, the amount he advanced in a deal of 1.5 lakh, to the agent who agreed to arrange his emigration from Belgium to the UK, the next agent who successfully arranged for the returnee's way into the UK, collected all of the money upon his arrival in the UK. This was also negotiated with the help of his *rishtedars* in the UK, who paid the money to the agent after his safe arrival. These transnational networks of agents are also known for keeping the

family of the emigrant back at home informed about the progress of the journey. One relative used to get calls from the agents from Italy, Belgium, and the UK and she could also call them to get regular updates about her son's journey. Although the information given by the agent went wrong when her son was arrested in the UK and send back to France, it appeared to her that such agents were much more friendly and dependable than the mechanisms of the state.

As indicated, the social sanction that migration enjoys as a conduit of mobility in the social imagination of Punjab is at the center of this sense of mobility. Irrespective of the channel of emigration chosen, no categories of emigration to the West are stigmatized. The success of an unauthorized migrant is gauged in terms of his ability to get authorized in the destination. Many of the unauthorized emigrants in the UK are on the hunt for British Punjabi brides to get them legal status. One returnee explained his failure in terms of building up relationships leading to marriage. Although his social network could not find him a match, he could not sustain any of the relationships into which he had entered. The social capital of the migrants assumes tremendous importance here. Those who are disabled because of its lack have to return home after their unauthorized life in the UK, a trend that is increasing of late.

This social licitness is not without its own limits. A failed experience of emigration may result in some stigma and the return of the migrant is unappreciated. Only subsequent success could remove the stigma. The returned migrants are essentially viewed as failed subjects, a de/emasculated subjects. The village will have many stories to tell regarding his deportation and a lack of respect is reported even among family members. Our interview with one returnee was virtually stopped by his wife who interceded halfway through our conversation, with the remark that he was discussing unnecessary things and reminding him that he was already late to go and fetch fodder for the cattle. Many returning migrants are isolated from the social activities of the village. Even sports and arts clubs who took handsome help from them during their expatriate life were unenthusiastic toward them after their return.

2.9 Historicizing Networks

Informal ties of family and *ilaaqa* (area) have long been shown to be the building blocks for chain migration (Aurora 1967; Ballard and Ballard 1977; Helweg 1979; Werbner 1990). More recently, sociological work has argued for the centrality of networks to all transnational social formations (Vertovec 2009). However, we found a flexibility and ambivalence in transnational Punjabi networks, which raises questions about the normativity and moral judgement at the heart of these conceptualizations of human relationships.

From the perspective of the Punjab, the families and households that are taken to be the decision-making units in standard narrations of the migration process, are shown to be fictions. Families and households do not exist as unified entities and are internally fractured by relations of *gender* and *generation* (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994;

Westwood and Phizacklea 2000). Collective narratives from the old-timers were that they came to Britain to work and escape poverty, although mostly it seems that their earnings were used to improve landholdings, build better houses, start a business, or provide a dowry. When their narratives are considered individually, however, it seems that many of the old-timers migrated hurriedly, spontaneously, and with family opposition, sometimes raising their own funds by borrowing from friends so as to make their way to the UK independently. Moreover, when they came to the UK, some of them had other ideas about what to do with their time rather than making money and sending it back to the family. For example, one man who migrated in 1963 with the sponsorship of his older brother was supposed to do an apprenticeship as a draughtsman, but gave up his studies, worked as a bhangra singer and played hockey instead. "After six months I decided I can't go with this, always bhangra in my mind, always singing in my mind. So I told my brother sorry, I can't continue with this, it's not for me, leave me alone." Their enjoyment and nostalgia for the *mastane* (fun) early days complicates the corporate explanation of economic migration for the wider family good, and also underlines the narration of strong-willed, independent masculinities. Likewise, the bhijis collective narrative about their migration entirely in terms of their dependent situation as wives was fractured by individual narratives showing women's agency and micropractices on their own terms. That migration was not a straightforward collective decision is underlined by the controversies and disputes among different family and household members.

Definitions of citizenship and nationality from the postwar era onward have manipulated the meanings and legitimacy attached to being a migrant or part of a migrant family, creating a distinctly *state-produced* context for transnational families. During the years of Conservative rule (1979–1997), as the bulk of immigration had shifted to family reunification**,** so the focus of immigration policy shifted to the control of secondary immigration (Jopke 1999). Family reunification was controlled by a narrow, gender-biased, and racially influenced interpretation of the right to family life through legislation such as the Husbands Ban and the Primary Purpose Rule, which critics argue served specifically to restrict South Asian migration through arranged marriage (Menski 1999). During the 1980s immigration legislation was challenged by black women's organizations on the grounds of being sexist and racist, and the European Court of Human Rights eventually ruled against sex discrimination in the Immigration Rules in 1985 (Wilson 1978; WING 1985; Mohanty 1991; Jopke 1999). However, the extent to which immigration and citizenship policies continue to construct subjects in gender-biased and racially prejudiced ways is evinced by the Home Office's preoccupation with female migrants, who are primarily seen as introducing traditional practices such as arranged marriages, authoritarian gender and generational relations, and excessive religiosity into normatively liberal British society (Yuval-Davis et al. 2005; Wilson 2006; Gedalof 2007). In the context of strong controls on marriage migration, the cachet of overseas migration may rework gender relations in complex ways as the micropractices of migrants seek out all available possibilities. A migrant on vacation, who had married

a widow in the UK with three children and was well aware of the social disapproval of such relationships, rationalized his decision in the following manner.

> I never tell a lie as Rambhagat never lies. My wife had three children and her husband had passed away.... After that my sisters said to me that you are a saintly man, you should give protection to these children. First I hesitated, then I determined in my heart and adopted the children. I have no child of my own. This is my motto. I am living for the children. I have built the children up, I have nurtured them up.... At that time, the Conservative party was ruling and when I came back, they did not give me the visa. They said that you were going there to settle permanently. Then I devoted myself to praying and I thought that I would not go anywhere. Then my mother said that you had to go abroad. You are a Rambhagat, if Ram could go to exile on the behest of his step-mother, could you not go abroad on the behest of your real mother. (Male, 47, migrant on vacation)

Moreover, transnational families were not entities that existed a priori but were produced in the context of a complex history of mobility that was many, many generations deep. The connections that are available through the sliding semantic structure (Werbner 1990: 98) of Punjabi kinship were imaginatively made use of with a capacious notion of *rishtedar* (relative). The category remained open to encompass not only blood relatives, close and distant, but also *ilaaqa* (area) based friends, people from the neighborhood and sometimes even indirect contacts. In the UK, local, practical kinship was fluid and assimilative as the old-timers and in particular, the bhijis engaged in the practices of place-making (Gupta and Ferguson 1997), emplacement (Feld and Basso 1996), or frontiering (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002) through which migrants create familial space in a place where kinship connections are sparse. The sensibility of frontiering kinship is captured movingly in the following nostalgic quote from a British-born informant.

> In this one semi-detached house which they were renting, there was my auntie and my uncle, which was my dad's eldest sister and husband, my mum and dad and one other couple I think. So there's like six or seven people kind-of living there and they were living like that for a good couple of years, because they were establishing themselves, you know, getting on their feet, so they were all living together and they've got really, really fond memories of that because they weren't alone or unique in that situation. They're our family friends now, but they have this kind of shared history because they were all of the same ilk and they were all kind of making their own mark, so those bonds are really close and tight now.... In the summer it's just really nice because they all sit around you know, the mums just make some snacks and stuff, the men have like a whisky, they all sit around together and they talk and watch the sun go down. (Female, 31, British-born)

Importantly, *rishtedari* was not a matter of reconstructing relationships that already existed in Punjab, but of creating new relationships akin to kinship. The fact that these were often cross-ethnic has been overlooked in accounts of Punjabi migration and diaspora, resulting in an overwhelming perspective of Punjabi networks as insular and bounded. We found that cross-ethnic friendships were very important for individual identities, in giving people a sense of being multicultural, and emplacement in the UK. For example, one of the bhijis, who had had a stroke, was attending an English class every weekday in a different town. Her sons were unhappy for her to make the half-hour bus journey every day on her own and offered to drive her to the class, but she insisted that she liked to be out and about and independent.

She found the classes difficult because they focused on written English, but she knew a lot of vernacular, spoken English from 30 years of working on a sewing machine in a factory. She was gregarious in the class and fond of inviting other students back to her home. She invited the black Caribbean teacher as well, and took pride in the fact that she had taught her to make chapattis. When we visited her house for an interview, she showed off the wedding album of her eldest granddaughter and pointed out a photo of another black Caribbean friend who had been their neighbor for years. She had moved back to Jamaica, but still had come for the wedding. The old-timers and bhijis had been active participants in creating a convivial and multiracial local culture.

Although local *rishtedari* could be fluid and assimilative, relationships with blood relatives in Punjab often appeared to be strained, worked through with relations of unequal dependency, veiled resentment, and mistrust. Although transnational families are usually defined in terms of love and caring, the obligation that undergirded relations with kin in Punjab highlighted *ambivalence* as the central experience of the transnational family. From the perspective of Punjab, the relatives complained of disappointment that their migrant *rishtedar* had forgotten them and become too busy in their own lives. When their relatives from the UK visited Punjab, they could expect to be reprimanded about the frequency and direction of phone calls: Who called whom? The Punjabi branches of families we knew from Birmingham attended to the cost and thoughtful choice behind each and every gift bought for different family members when family came for visits from the UK. They noted the trust expressed and rights conferred to them by particular vilayti (overseas) kin, for example, whether they were given the keys to their properties in Punjab and permitted to use them. In contrast, the burdens of transnationality weighed heavily on the shoulders of our informants in the UK and they had their own disappointments. Many of the informants in the UK complained about how their remittances had been spent and expressed misgivings about the tensions and dilemmas it had caused. They were proud of having supported their family in Punjab, but came to dread the inevitable letters and phone calls asking for money, "Paaji, brother, send us this, send us that." They were resentful of being treated like a "free fund" and complained about the culture of dependency that their foreign wealth had created among their relatives in Punjab—ingratitude, lack of initiative, irresponsibility—or worse, deceit.

> There were very frequent requests for money on a regular basis. My father wasn't that literate, my mother could read Punjabi and write so she used to read the letters when the letters would come. My mother would sit down with my father and she would read the letter so then they knew what exactly was said, and although my father made most decisions my mother was quite a tough character and again drive by extremely strong values and wanted fairness on both sides. She never said "you can't do this to your family" she only said "reflect on what's happening here as well." So she'd write the letters back, but only whatever my father said. And I remember those letters sometimes caused quite a lot of agro, and some disputes between my mother and father. So in a sense as children we were aware of the relationship of my father and the family in India. (Male, 48, British-born)

Irrespective of the historical period of their migration, the informants in the UK almost unanimously complained of conflicts over the remote management of

existing or newly acquired properties in Punjab. Relationships with siblings had soured over inheritance. Such was the degree of suspicion that could arise between siblings, that one of the old-timers in Birmingham offered to sell us a Dictaphone that he had bought to tap the phone line of his brother in Delhi, whom he suspected might be trying to change the name on the deeds to their father's flat into his own name. The NRI Sabha case files in Jalandhar list a litany of problems from looting of houses through encroachment of property to murders, including back-stabbing among *rishtedar*. There are plenty of complaints made by NRIs against their own relatives, close and distant, for encroaching into or misappropriating their properties. Complaints about forging signatures and documents are another frequent case, as indicated.

> In his complaint dated 4.8.2009 the petitioner complains that his grandfather died in 1997, upon which the property was inherited to his father and two of the latter's brothers. Taking advantage of the petitioner's father being an NRI, his brothers hatched a criminal conspiracy to grab the property of the applicant's father on an agreement dated 10.4.1995 purportedly executed by his grandfather. The complaint says that the said agreement is forged and details proofs pointing to it. The document was forged to sell the land. The civil suit in this connection is going on and the verdict still pending. The brothers and the person who allegedly bought the property threaten the petitioner with dire consequences in case they continue with the case. On this complaint the police conducted an enquiry and found that the agreement/document in question is forged with an intention of grabbing the property of the petitioner's father. (Case file from NRI Sabha, Jalandhar)

The troubled relations between *rishtedar* in Punjab and the UK could be rebuilt for the purposes of emigration. *Rishtedar* were often munificent in their support to needy *rishtedar* even if the connection was distant. It is not that aspiring migrants or their families go in search of their *rishtedar* when they need their support, or to re-establish troubled relationships for the purpose of migration. Through the web of *rishtedar* and its avid generosity, the locality is reinvented and transnational space is thus reconfigured with local connections. Newly arrived, relationships with the *rishtedar* were delicate. They were completely dependent on them for accommodation, food, and guidance in everything. Simultaneously, the *rishtedar* felt overwhelmed by repeated requests for help from distant relatives or indirect contacts, and although they would help out of a deep sense of obligation, they felt under a huge burden to provide hospitality. After eventually becoming independent, standing on their own two feet and moving out, new migrants would maintain strong and respectful connections with their erstwhile patrons or *rishtedar*.

Rishtedar were not merely a form of social capital, however, but highlight the relations of power that are woven into the supposedly neutral and value-free language of networks. Although the language and practices of *rishtedari* contextualized relationships in terms of kinship or fictive kinship, there was huge potential for informality within relationships of *rishtedari* that were by definition unequal. Most of the new migrants were dependent on co-ethnic employers for jobs, following information and contacts from their *rishtedar*. Many of the freshies complained about problematic labor practices whereby they had to put up with infringements of health and safety, low pay, undocumented work, and lack of representation. Such jobs were called "two pounds an hour jobs," implying that they were paid below the