

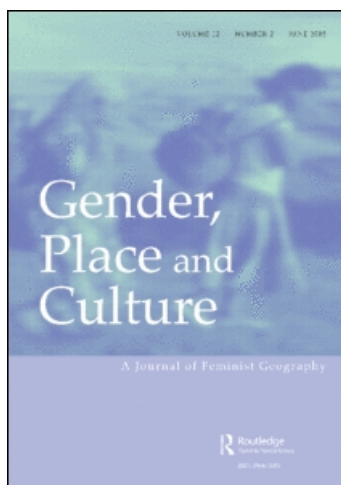
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Communal Discourses, Marriage, and the Politics of Gendered Social Boundaries among South Asian Immigrants in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT *Focusing on communal discourses among South Asian groups in Tanzania, the author highlights the manner in which discourses around religion, caste and race shape gendered patterns of migration and marriage and the everyday politics of social boundaries in an immigrant community. The article demonstrates how discursive processes operating at the community level mediate between the household and the broader political economic processes. It also illustrates that although discourses, boundaries and social relations are easily modified in response to changing circumstances, new narratives and ideologies frequently emerge to ensure that the predominant balance of power in a community is not disturbed significantly.*

Introduction

This article examines the gendered nature of communal discourses around religion, race and caste, and the manner in which such discourses shape and sustain the everyday politics of social boundaries among South Asian communities in Tanzania. To highlight the relationships between gender, communal discourses and social boundaries, I focus on marriage, migration and the control of women's sexualities by their patriarchal communities. I present three brief vignettes that give a glimpse of these complex processes.

VIGNETTE 1

Maria Carvalho [1], a middle-class Roman Catholic, left Goa (see Fig. 1) in 1964 at the age of 17 to marry a man in Tanzania whom she had not met before. Maria's husband, Joe, was born in Tanganyika (see Fig. 2). Like many Goan men of his generation, Joe's father came to Africa alone, and then went back to Goa to get a bride. Opportunities for education in Tanganyika were considered poor at that time, so after all her children were born, Joe's mother returned to Goa with her children so that they could all get proper education there. Joe's father stayed in Tanganyika.

Joe's mother wanted her daughters-in-law to be from Goa. Joe was in love with a woman he met during his school days in Goa, but his mother refused to let him marry her because she was from a different caste. So, Joe said to his mother, 'Okay, you choose me a girl'. And Maria was the girl she chose. She sent Maria's photo to Joe in Tanzania, he liked it, and the marriage was arranged ... Unlike her mother-in-law, Maria refused to go to Goa with her children while Joe lived in Tanzania. She felt that 'marital life was very tough for those who lived like that'. It was only after Maria's daughters finished

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their primary schooling in Tanzania that they went to Bombay for further training. Both her daughters chose their own partners, decided to marry and then informed Maria. The times had changed [2].

VIGNETTE 2

In the 1880s, Dharani's father left for Zanzibar at the age of 16. He lived with several African women before returning to Kutch (see Fig. 1) to marry a woman from his Bhatia caste. His wife remained in Kutch due to 'religious taboos' against mixing with Muslims and Africans. She stayed behind and took care of her husband's extended household and property. But later, the taboos relaxed and she joined him in 1901 [3].

VIGNETTE 3

Patel's father came to teach in Kenya in 1915. He soon returned to marry but his wife stayed in India to look after his extended household, while he frequented back and forth between Tanganyika and India. Patel was born in Gujarat in 1919 and in 1924, his mother joined his father in Kenya after 9 years of marriage. Patel continued to live in India with his grandmother until 1945 when his father persuaded him to come to Dar es Salaam where opportunities were better. By the time Patel returned to marry in 1946, it had become rare for Hindu wives to remain in India. His wife came with him to Dar es Salaam [4].

These vignettes suggest that the experiences of migration and marriage differed significantly along gender lines, and shifted over time for the Roman Catholics and Hindus who migrated from the Indian subcontinent to Tanzania. My purpose here is to show how discourses of purity and honor defined along the lines of race, religion, caste and class played a critical role in shaping marital practices, migration patterns and socio-sexual boundaries of the Asian communities in the changing social, political, and economic context of colonial and post-colonial Tanzania [5].

Colonial policies encouraged South Asian traders, civil servants and artisans (who never constituted more than 0.7% of the Tanzanian population) to occupy the middle rung of the social ladder, with Europeans (0.25% of the population) at the top and the Africans (98% of the population) at the bottom [6]. Gendered communal discourses contributed significantly toward maintaining not only the social boundaries within the various Asian communities, but also the racial and class supremacy of South Asians over the vast majority of Africans. Although Marxist analyses of the Tanzanian political economy (e.g. Iliffe, 1973, 1979; Shivji, 1976, 1991; Coulson, 1982; Sheriff 1987) have often highlighted how South Asian capitalists and middlemen served as the comprador or commercial bourgeoisie who facilitated Tanzania's incorporation into the colonial project and the global capitalist economy, they have largely overlooked the presence of women and of class differences within South Asian communities. The following analysis suggests that the colonial racial and class hierarchy cannot be fully understood without considering the gendered processes that were central to the social reproduction of South Asian classes and communities.

The South Asian groups discussed in this article include Hindu, Jain and Muslim emigrants from the regions of Gujarat, Kutch, and Kathiawar; Sikhs from Punjab; and Roman Catholics from the erstwhile Portuguese colony of Goa (see Fig. 1) [7]. The Hindus, Sikhs, Roman Catholic Goans, and Sunni Muslims were in turn subdivided into higher and lower caste groups, caste differences being most critical among the Hindus. Sectarian differences were important among the Shiite Muslims, and the three most

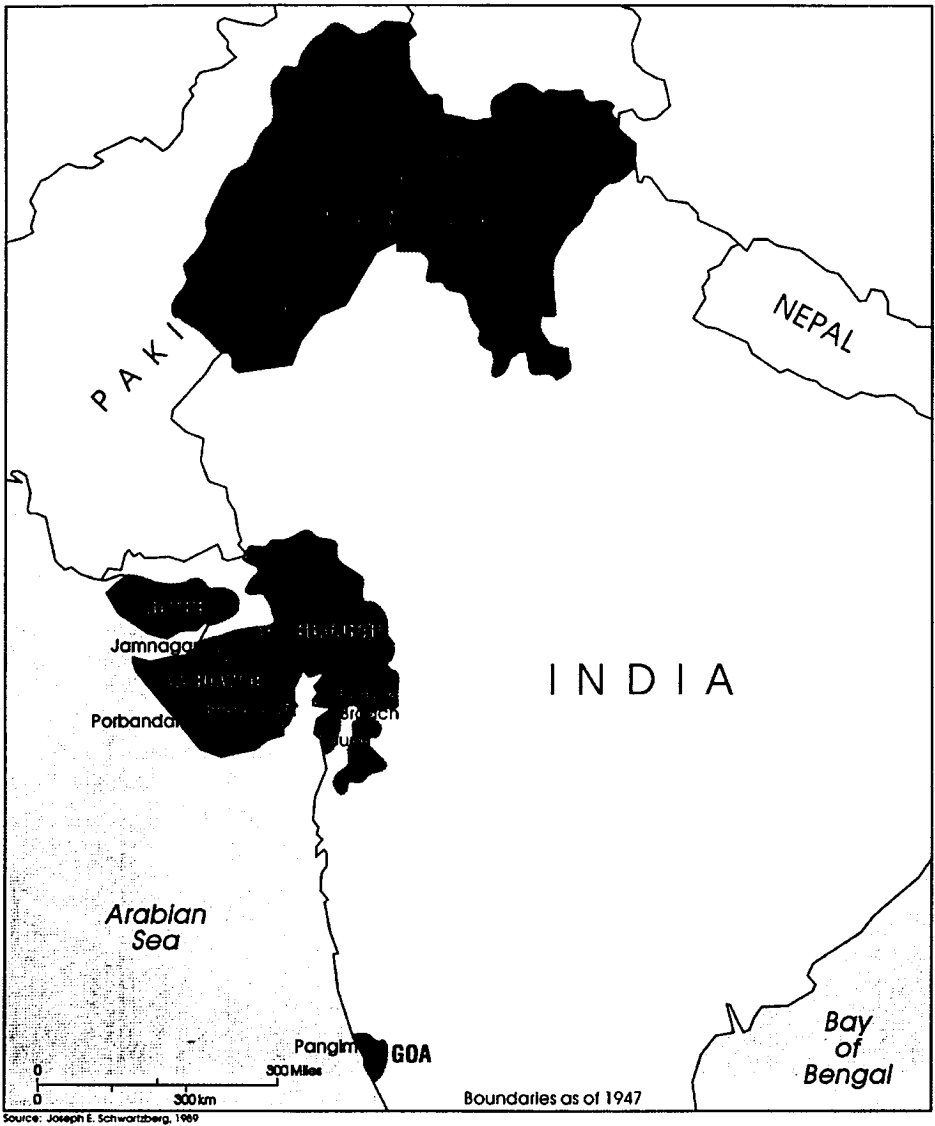


FIG. 1. Areas of Asian emigration to East Africa.

prominent sects of Indian Muslims who settled in Tanzania were the Ismailis, the Ithna Asheris, and the Bohoras.

The vast majority of these South Asians emigrated from the Indian subcontinent prior to the creation of Pakistan and were, therefore, referred to in Zanzibar and Tanganyika as *Indians* or *Wahindi* in Kiswahili. After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, however, the term *Asians* was commonly used in English to refer to South Asians, and this usage is prevalent even to this day. In this article, too, I will henceforth use the term *Asian* to refer to people originally from what are now India and Pakistan.

The country that is today Tanzania has gone through a series of name changes in the last century. German East Africa was renamed Tanganyika when the British acquired

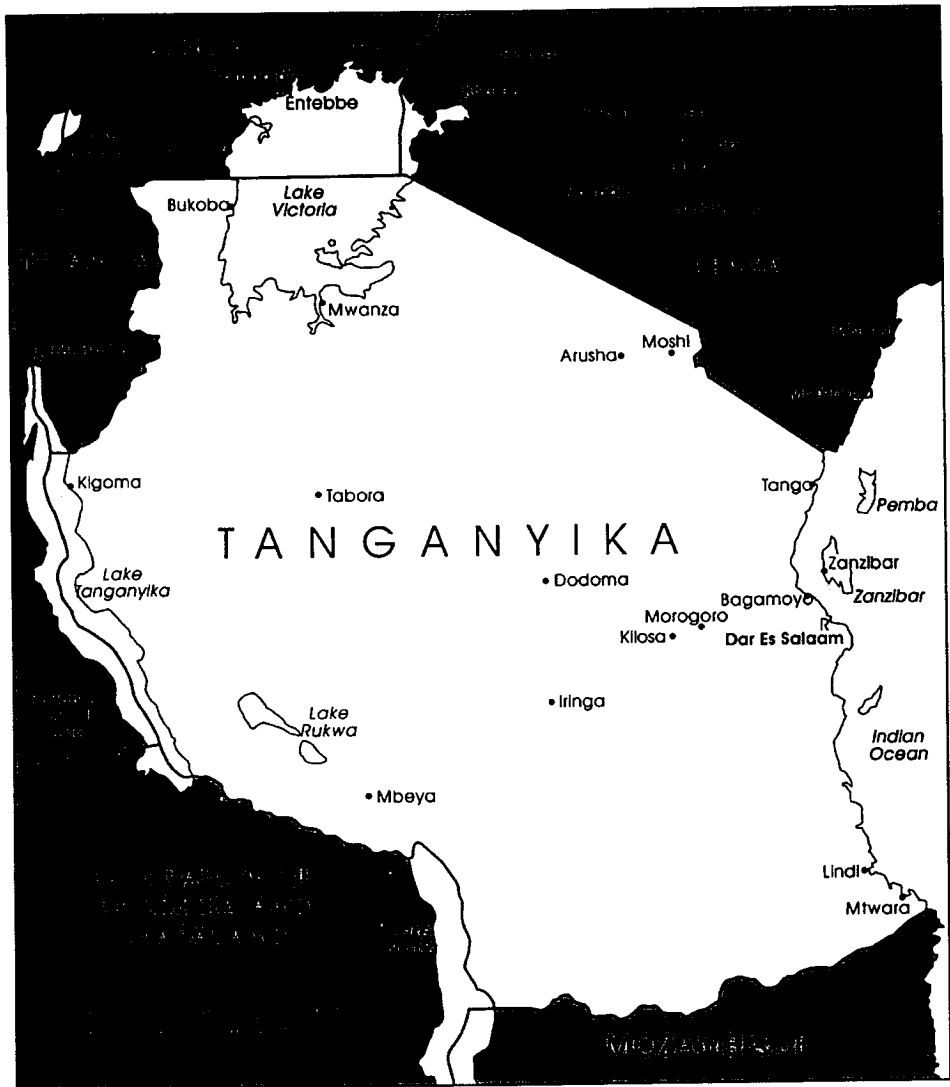


FIG. 2. British East Africa, 1960: main commercial centers.

the territory at the end of the First World War. Tanganyika and Zanzibar were separate nations before they united in 1964 to form the United Republic of Tanzania. I have employed the names *German East Africa*, *Tanganyika*, *Zanzibar*, and *Tanzania* according to the particular historical period in which they were used.

This study is primarily based on fieldwork that I carried out in Tanzania between 1991 and 1993. This fieldwork included 58 life-histories and 150 shorter interviews that I conducted in Gujarati, Hindi/Urdu and English with Asian women and men from diverse religious and class backgrounds. The people I talked to ranged from business-people and shopkeepers to teachers, clerks, housewives, cooks, and vendors. With the exception of a few focused interviews, these oral narratives were a product of close personal relationships that I built with my 'subjects' over a period of several months, and each life-history was based on 5–12 hours of taped conversations. I do not wish to repeat

here the analysis of my complex positionality *vis-à-vis* my subjects (see Nagar 1995, 1997a). However, I want to stress that my position as a young Indian woman who could communicate with people in their languages, and who was intimately familiar with the religious, class and gender-based complexities among various Asian communities, proved invaluable in gaining me the trust of my 'informants', and in helping me comprehend the politics of social boundaries in their communities.

Additionally, I have used transcripts of 50 interviews with Asian businessmen conducted by Martha Honey in Dar es Salaam in 1973–74 during her doctoral research on Asian merchant capital in Tanganyika (Honey, 1981). Although these interviews express male perspectives on gendered processes in their communities, they are useful in understanding the dominant communal discourses that shaped the immigrant experiences of upper-and middle-class Asian women. In the following text, I have cited Honey's interviews as 'MH interviews' and my own interviews as 'RN interviews'.

The following analysis begins with an elaboration of my conceptual framework and the contribution that this article seeks to make to the existing feminist literature on gender and migration. Focusing on the period between the 1880s and 1990s, the next four sections present a chronological account of the political economic changes that took place in Tanzania, (a) before the First World War (late 1800s–1914); (b) during the inter-war period (1918–39); (c) between the end of the Second World War and Tanganyika's independence (1945–61); and (d) in the post-independence era (1961–93). In this account, I highlight how Asian communities modified their dominant narratives and ideologies of religious, racial and caste purity in response to political-economic developments that occurred over a century-long period. I examine the manner in which these shifting discourses of ritual and sexual purity were employed by Asians of various classes and religions to define their gendered migration patterns and marital practices, and to regulate their patriarchal communal boundaries. These discourses, in turn, helped to perpetuate the existing racial and class divisions between Africans and Asians, and the internal religious, caste, and class differences within the Asian communities.

Conceptual Framework: Communal Discourses and Gendered Social Boundaries in an Immigrant Setting

Gender, Migration, and Communal Processes

Our understanding of gendered migration patterns has been enriched in recent years by works that have integrated micro- and macro-levels of analyses. A considerable body of literature in this area has focused on how shifts in the global economy and socio-spatial restructuring of production shape gendered patterns of migration (Ranney & Kossoudji, 1984; Sassen-Koob, 1984; Jackson, 1984; Mirdal, 1984; Trager, 1984; Pedraza, 1991; Lintelman, 1995). But more pertinent to the subject matter of this article is the work that makes macro-micro connections at the household level (Wood, 1981) and links economic structures with sociocultural constructions of gender and patriarchal structuring of society (Glenn, 1986; Brettell & Simon, 1986; Lamphere, 1986; Radcliffe 1990, 1991; Chant, 1992; Bailey & Ellis, 1993; Massey *et al.*, 1993; Tyner, 1994; Halfacree, 1995). These writings frequently combine structuralist insights with feminist discussions to examine sociocultural influences, structures of reproduction and production, and power relations within the household (Chant & Radcliffe, 1992, pp. 23–24).

Feminist scholars have added a new richness and complexity to the migration literature by illustrating, often through women's and men's own words, the centrality of

social relations of gender to the immigrant experience. For example, Sinke (1992, 1995) uses the concept of social reproduction to explore the gendered connections between the international labor market, marriage market and women's migration. She shows that the work of social reproduction that women are engaged in goes beyond bearing children and nurturing and sustaining their families. It incorporates activities that replicate family, community and ethnic/cultural patterns, and thereby create as much as re-create certain cultural settings and societal norms (Sinke, 1992, p. 68). Kibria (1993), Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992, 1994) and Bhachu (1986) offer dynamic views of immigrant women's subordination and resistance by highlighting how family-based and community-based patriarchal relations are intricately linked with broader structural processes. Far from interpreting social change among immigrant communities as a simple process of assimilation into the host society, these authors effectively demonstrate how gender relations, and associated notions of tradition, culture, and identity are continuously enacted, reconstructed, contextually expressed, and negotiated in families and social networks. At the same time, Kibria (1993, pp. 142–143) also reminds us of how economic vulnerability, middle-class aspirations, and the maternal authority that they enjoy within the 'traditional' family system, can hinder immigrant women from engaging in a radical restructuring of family life, and its basic structural and ideological parameters.

Radcliffe (1990) and Tyner (1994) present nuanced and complex perspectives on migration and patriarchy by focusing on multiple hierarchies and socially constructed differences. Tyner (1994) illustrates the importance of socialization processes and gendered and racialized stereotypes in defining the labor recruitment process that channels Filipina migrants into domestic servitude and the entertainment sector. Radcliffe (1990) draws our attention to the manner in which hierarchies based on ethnicity, gender, and family structures interact with definitions of 'Peruvianness' to subordinate the female domestic workers who migrate to Lima from rural areas of Peru.

Despite the extremely valuable insights that these works provide, however, the literature on gender and migration has largely been silent on how communal processes mediate between the household and broader political-economic structures to shape gendered experiences of migration. Communal processes are intimately linked with the issues of interacting hierarchies, social reproduction, racial and gendered stereotypes, and reconstructions of gender relations, traditions, and identity that scholars such as Sinke, Kibria, Hondagneu-Sotelo, Radcliffe and Tyner have analyzed. But although some authors (e.g. Boyd, 1989; Pedraza, 1991; Gabaccia, 1992) have underscored the importance of social networks based on family and kinship in the formation of ethnic communities, little, if anything, has been written about the ways in which communal institutions or discourses mold marital practices, gendered migration patterns, and the (re)definitions of socio-sexual boundaries and gender relations in the immigrant setting. I elaborate on these themes in the next part of this section.

Communal Discourses and Social Boundaries

In the context of South Asian communities, the term 'communal' is often associated with religious identities and differences. In this article, however, communal refers to identities and discourses pertaining to communities defined around religion, caste or race. While religion, caste, and race are all socially constructed and fluid categories, they are often deeply embedded in institutional structures and discourses that shape people's everyday lives, and in the power hierarchies that define their multiple social relationships (Nagar, 1995, 1997a, 1997b). This article does not aim to define the categories of religion,

race and caste, but I would like to clarify that the institution of caste cannot be seen as subsumed under religion because, like class and gender, caste also marks internal social borders and hierarchies within a given religious group.

Discourses can be described as 'frameworks that embrace particular combinations of narratives, concepts, ideologies, and signifying practices' (Barnes & Duncan, 1992, p. 8) through which 'the world is made meaningful and intelligible to oneself and to others' (Johnston *et al.*, 1994, p. 136). Discourses are materially implicated in the conduct of day-to-day life, they serve to naturalize particular world-views and the positions of subjects within them, and they are characterized by particular constellations of power and knowledge that are open to contestation and negotiation (Johnston *et al.*, 1994, p. 136). Communal discourses, then, are constructions that justify and reinforce differences and identities based on religion, caste, and race through narratives, practices, concepts, and ideologies related to purity, pollution, honor, and values.

Social boundaries are intimately connected with communal discourses. In simple terms, a social boundary can be described as a dynamic and fluid line of demarcation that defines the 'in group' and 'out group' in a given context (Nagar, 1995, p. 49), and communal discourses are crucial in naturalizing and legitimizing such a boundary. Because each of us simultaneously belongs to multiple social collectivities, the boundaries which circumscribe our social lives are constructed through power relations along a number of different axes, for example, gender, race, class, and caste (Somers, 1992; Nagar, 1997a). These multiple boundaries permeate, overlap, and cross-cut each other in complex ways and are frequently characterized by shifting rules of inclusion and exclusion. As a result, far from being separate, race, gender, class, and caste constructs become inextricably intertwined to form 'interlocking systems' (Glenn, 1996, p. 59). These interlocking systems are, as McClintock (1995, p. 5) observes, experienced as 'articulated categories' that 'come into existence in and through relation with each other—if in contradictory and conflictual ways'. Thus, *relationality* is an important characteristic of articulated categories and of the social boundaries that sustain them; each category and boundary is positioned, and therefore gains meaning, in relation to other categories and boundaries (Glenn, 1996, p. 60). Experiences of high and low caste women or of Hindus and Muslims, then, 'are not just different but connected in systematic ways' (Glenn, 1996, p. 60).

What is the relationship between dominant discourses, articulated categories, and processes that perpetuate patriarchy, racism and classism? Among the scholars who have highlighted the complex interconnections among these processes are Stoler (1991a, 1991b, 1995) and McClintock (1995). Focusing on the manner in which the discourse of sexuality articulated with the politics of race in the Dutch East Indies, for example, Stoler examines how 'European bourgeois orders produced a multiplicity of discourses that turned on the dangers of "internal enemies," of class, sexual and racial origin' (Stoler, 1995, p. 10). Both Stoler and McClintock analyze the discursive mechanisms by which interracial unions came to represent the 'paramount danger to racial purity and cultural identity' of European colonizers, and the manner in which women of color in the colonies were constructed as 'dangerously ambiguous and contaminating' (McClintock, 1995, p. 48).

The notions of discursive constructions of race, gender, class, and sexuality, articulated categories, and social boundaries can help us develop a nuanced understanding of the processes that create gendered migration patterns, marital practices, and community politics in immigrant contexts. In particular, a focus on communities reveals that political-economic processes operating at national or international scales do not directly

link with the family or the household. Rather, these processes are mediated by communal discourses, practices and ideologies that operate at the intermediate levels and mold social practices, overlapping communal boundaries, and power hierarchies in shifting material contexts.

The emphasis on shifting contexts is an important one because it underscores the socially constructed nature of categories such as religion and gender. As Glenn (1996, p. 57) notes, 'If race and gender are socially constructed systems, then they must arise at specific moments in particular circumstances and change as these circumstances change. We can study their appearance, variation, and modification over time'. However, it is not simply the alterations that we are concerned with; it is also critical for us to examine how certain social norms are redefined in response to changing circumstances without displacing the underlying power structures and social differences. For example, the communal discourses of purity and pollution among Asian immigrant communities in Tanzania were modified continuously in response to political economic developments and led to changes in patterns of migration and marriage. But the dominant gendered hierarchies of power and divisions based on race, class, caste and religion were not disturbed significantly.

Last but not least, focusing on the effects of gendered communal discourses on migration, marriage and social boundaries uncovers the relational nature of religion, caste, race and gender. The very notion of guarding religious, caste or racial purity assumes the presence of impure 'others' who need to be socially distanced. Thus, communal purity that bestows social status and privilege to one group also marginalizes other groups and renders them inferior. Similarly, gendered, classed, and caste-based constructions of purity and pollution translate into the regulation of the mobility and sexualities of upper- and middle-class women by their communities. At the same time, this very control of privileged women becomes the basis for legitimizing the sexual exploitation of women who are socially marginalized on the basis of their race and class (Nagar, 1996a).

Political-economic Developments, Migration, and Marriage Before World War I

The migration and marriage patterns that evolved in response to political-economic changes before the First World War were shaped in varying ways along the lines of religion, caste, class and gender. In this section, I first discuss how religious differences were played out in the nineteenth-century migration patterns of Hindu and Muslim male traders to the island of Zanzibar. I then show how changes in the colonial political economy and material conditions of Asians led to a redefinition of migration and marriage patterns on mainland Tanganyika, imparting them new complexities along gender, class, and communal lines. I also examine how these shifting patterns of migration and marriage were continuously supported and legitimized by modifications in the gendered, classed, and racialized communal discourses.

Zanzibar was the first place on the East African coast to attract Asians as permanent settlers, and religious differences between Hindus and Muslims were clearly played out in the late 1800s during the initial phase of settlement. Male traders from north-western India had maintained contact with Zanzibar through the centuries-old Indian ocean trading networks. However, it was the Sultans of Zanzibar who encouraged permanent settlement of Asian trading families in the latter half of the nineteenth century by

providing them with incentives such as land, gifts and running water (MH interview; Gregory, 1993).

According to the 1887 census, there were 4866 Muslims and 1022 Hindus/Jains in Zanzibar (Gregory, 1993). This sharp contrast in the numbers of settler Hindus and Muslims was rooted in religious differences. Shiite Muslim traders from Ismaili, Ithna Asheri, and Bohora sects felt a religious affinity with the Islamic culture of Zanzibar and the Swahili coast, and the Sultans' encouragement stimulated the kin-chain migration from Gujarat, Kathiawar, and Kutch to Zanzibar. The constructions of ritual purity and pollution among Hindu trading castes of Bhatias, Lohanas, and Jains, on the other hand, initially discouraged the permanent settlement of Hindu families in Zanzibar. These Hindu castes were characterized by strict social taboos against Muslim ways, especially their non-vegetarian dietary habits. Hinduness and caste purity for these upper castes was defined in opposition to the Muslim ways and the Islamic environment of Zanzibar and the Swahili coast was believed to threaten and pollute this purity. Rather than settling permanently in Zanzibar, therefore, upper caste traders often preferred to travel back and forth between India and Zanzibar.

Later, the decline of the slave trade and opening up of opportunities on the mainland in the late nineteenth century attracted middle-class men from north-western India to migrate as retail traders to German East Africa. The German colonial government also encouraged Asians to take over the administrative posts in its plantation economy. During the period 1895–1914, the British built the East African railway, importing 37,747 Asian men, mainly Ramgharia Sikhs from Punjab (but also some poor, lower-caste Sunnis and Hindus from Kathiawar and Kutch) to do low-paying contractual jobs as manual laborers, craftsmen, water carriers, cooks, and semi-professionals. About 7000 of these men remained in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika on expiration of their contracts (Mangat, 1969). While some continued to work in government service, the majority became artisans or merchants in the new towns that opened up along the railway line. Sikh settlement in Tanganyika, therefore, took place primarily in towns by the railroads, for example, Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Dodoma, Tabora, Kigoma, Iringa, and Mwanza (see Fig. 2). Very few Sikhs settled in Zanzibar (RN interviews).

Most middle- and upper-class Muslim and Hindu men who settled in Tanganyika and Zanzibar during the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries went back to their home regions to marry. While Muslim women increasingly accompanied their husbands to Tanganyika and Zanzibar, higher-caste Hindu men from upper and middle classes considered Africa as 'alien' and 'unsafe' for women, and believed that women would be under better care if they stayed behind in their husbands' extended households (MH interview; RN interviews). Higher-caste Hindus also saw Africans and Muslims as 'polluted' because they ate meat. As Caplan (1985, p. 71) notes, 'In all cultures, cooking and giving food are loaded with emotional significance, but in India food has extra dimensions, those of purity and pollution'. The discursive constructions of ritual purity and pollution were both gendered and caste-based, and higher-caste women were regarded as the main custodians of their family's purity. These women could not eat or drink anything touched by an African, a Muslim, or someone from the lowest Hindu castes. As one Bhatia man remarked (MH interview): 'We did not bring our wives here because our women tend to be very orthodox. They mostly use silver utensils and will not eat anything [touched by] a non-Hindu.'

Women shouldered the burden of maintaining religious and caste 'purity,' and in the early twentieth century upper-caste Hindu women stayed back in India to guard themselves and their families against pollution. Men generally went back to India to marry, and their wives stayed behind from the beginning with the men making frequent

trips back and forth. Or else, the women came to Tanganyika for a few visits and returned to India for childbirth, where they generally remained for 10–20 years until their children finished their education (MH interview; RN interviews). This practice also ensured that women were subjected to strict social control by their husbands' families while they helped to socialize their children into the caste-based and religious norms and fulfilled their familial and communal obligations (RN interviews).

In middle-class Hindu families, the economic and social uncertainty in Tanganyika and Zanzibar also contributed towards women's staying back at home. Women often remained in India to look after their parents-in-law, children and property; to till the fields and raise the cattle; and to take care of their children's education (RN interviews; MH interviews). For example, Rupalalia, a businessman from the Lohana caste, explained that when his grandfather came from Porbandar (Gujarat) in 1889 with his oldest son, Rupalalia's grandmother remained behind with another son and six daughters. She looked after her children and the familial land, and grew and sold produce to take care of her family until 1920 when the whole family moved to Kenya and Tanganyika (MH interview).

One illustration of the relational nature of caste, class, religion, and gender is the manner in which the relative absence of Hindu women from higher castes affected the migration patterns and experiences of lower-caste Hindus and Sunni Muslims. Higher-caste Hindu men whose wives stayed behind in India needed someone in their homes to cook, wash, and clean for them. Since Africans were considered too polluted to take care of these tasks, prosperous Hindu men frequently returned with poor men from lower castes (such as Ranas and Bhois) as their domestic servants and cooks. Although there were no similar taboos among Asian Muslims, this practice of bringing male domestic servants from India also motivated Ismaili, Ithna Asheri, and Bohora businessmen to bring poor Sunni men to work in their homes.

For lower-class Hindus and Muslims, safeguarding of religious or racial purity was not a major consideration in migration decisions. Poor women whose husbands went to work in Zanzibar or Tanganyika looked after their families in India for a few years until their husbands could pay for the women's passage. Unmarried working-class men were usually able to make enough money in 2 or 3 years to be able to go home to marry and return with their brides. As the families of lower-class Hindus and Muslims multiplied, they started providing a range of services to prosperous Asian families as vendors, barbers, tailors, midwives, manual laborers, shop assistants, domestic servants, and cooks, thereby creating a class-based and caste-based occupational hierarchy in the new immigrant setting (RN interviews).

But not all the lower-class men could afford to return home to get brides who could fulfill their sexual needs and take care of their households. For these men, African women served as a 'refuge.' Poor men from Sunni, Ismaili, and Ithna Asheri communities among the early settlers, and from the Ramgharia Sikh community among the later immigrants, frequently married or cohabited with African or racially mixed women [8]. Also, as the case of Dharani's father (see vignette 2) illustrates, prosperous Asian businessmen, irrespective of their marital, religious, or caste status, frequently had sexual relationships with Swahili women out of wedlock. These relationships were justified on the grounds that men could not live without sex and Asian women could never give a man the kind of sexual pleasure that African and racially mixed women could. A 70 year-old Bhatia man echoed this stereotype that predominates among Asians (RN interview):

I will tell you frankly, the best kind of sexual enjoyment that you can ever get

in life is with an African or mixed woman. An Indian woman is simply incapable of giving you that kind of pleasure. So it was very common for Asian men to sleep with Swahili women and there were lot of mixed offspring. In my own extended family, several men had children with African women.

Often, upper-class men also justified their relationships with African women on the grounds that women from their own communities were 'too uptight' or 'too religious' to accompany them to the Tanganyikan interior, and so they had no choice but to derive sexual satisfaction elsewhere. An upper-class Hindu male architect provided the following interpretation of past sexual relationships between Asian men and African women (RN interview):

[I]t was quite normal and natural for this to happen ... I have heard a lot of stories about the Bhatia [caste] ... In Lindi-Mtwara area many Bhatias had African mistresses.... [T]he Bhatia women were not outgoing ... They were too religious, and they [did] not like to mix with other communities, let alone Africans. So Bhatia men [who] ventured all alone into the interiors of Tanzania ... [had] affairs with African women.

Thus, on the one hand, gendered ideologies led upper-caste Hindu women to stay behind in India to guard their communal purity and to abstain from open sexual relationships with other men or women. On the other hand, their very absence formed the grounds on which their husbands justified their relationships with African women. Asian men from all classes regarded the African woman as a sexualized object with whom relationships were 'quite normal and natural.' As long as they married women from their own communities, upper-class Asian men were free to have sexual unions with African women without giving them or their offspring any status or legitimacy within the Asian communities (RN interviews).

To summarize briefly, gendered discursive constructions of purity and pollution among upper-caste Hindu traders served to naturalize and reinforce (a) the religious boundaries between Hindus and Muslims, (b) the caste and class boundaries between upper-and lower-caste Hindus, and (c) the racial, religious, and class boundaries between Asians and Africans. These discourses also resulted in long separations between upper-and middle-class Hindu couples, with women taking care of the social reproduction of their families in India on the one hand, and their absence shaping the caste, class, and sectarian compositions and hierarchies among Asian immigrant communities on the other. Finally, while the intersection of patriarchy, racism, and classism constructed the Asian woman as either an embodiment of purity and virtue or excessively religious and orthodox, the African woman was perceived as the oversexualized 'other' who was readily available to quench the 'insatiable sexual thirst' of the Asian man.

Migration and Marriage in the Inter-war Period

Larger structural changes in the colonial political economy reconstituted migration and marriage patterns. I will first describe how patterns of male migration shifted in the Asian communities in response to the reorganization of the East African colonial governments, and the ways in which these shifts reshaped communal discourse and the accompanying marriage practices among upper-caste Hindus.

A rapid expansion of the activities of colonial governments and of trading opportunities attracted about 20,000 immigrant men from north-western India to German and

British East Africa between 1890 and 1921. In addition, Roman Catholic men from Goa also arrived in large numbers to work as cooks, tailors, shoemakers, bandmasters, and barmen, and educated Goan men were employed as clerks and accountants by European sisal-plantation owners. Between 1887 and 1921, the Asian population in Tanganyika rose from just over 1000 to 10,209 people (Gregory, 1993), most of them men.

The formal transfer of German East Africa to British hands at the end of the First World War severely affected middle-class Asians. New taxes were imposed and Asians were forced to keep accounts in English instead of Gujarati. Those who worked in the German-owned estates and plantations lost their jobs. At the same time, however, the British sold off German property at low rates, and this led Indian merchants to buy land plots and coffee and sisal estates from the British and strengthen their foothold in the Tanganyikan economy. Between 1921 and 1936, Asians (excluding Goans) acquired 316,024 acres of agricultural and pastoral land in Tanganyika, and by 1939, Asians owned 20% of the sisal estates in Tanganyika (Gregory, 1993). Asian men who became prosperous estate and plantation owners employed their male relatives and friends and helped them to set up retail businesses in Tanganyika. Business partners, managers and salaried employees were also chosen from the familial nexus. Kin-connections made through marriages played a very important role in the recruitment process.

Meanwhile, the crisis caused in India by the economic depression of the 1930s continued to pull more immigrants from Gujarat, Kathiawar, Kutch, Goa and Punjab to East Africa, where there were tremendous opportunities for employment in government service, crafts and construction, commerce, banking, wholesale and retail trade, and in the informal sector as cooks, tailors, and shoemakers. Kin-chain migration of Ramgharia Sikh men also gained momentum at this time as many of them, who initially came to work on the railways, set up small family businesses as carpenters, furniture-makers, and transporters. By the late 1930s, Asian men dominated a range of small enterprises including blacksmithing, tinsmithing, tailoring, furniture-making, construction work, and garages. In 1939, the East African Asian population numbered more than 100,000, a quarter of whom resided in Tanganyika (Gregory, 1993). Jain and Hindu men from Lohana, Bania and Bhatia trading castes established retail trading shops in the Tanganyikan towns of Dar es Salaam, Lindi, and Pemba. Although Tanganyika and Zanzibar retained a larger proportion of Muslims, Hindus and Jains rapidly outnumbered Muslims in Kenya and Uganda. In 1948, Hindus/Jains totalled over 45,000 in Kenya as contrasted with approximately 27,500 Muslims, and over 20,000 in Uganda compared to approximately 11,000 Muslims (Mangat, 1969; Gregory, 1993).

Although the majority of Hindus still returned to India to marry, the above developments resulted in three major changes. First, more Hindu wives began accompanying their husbands to Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Second, arranged marriages within East Africa became more common as various Hindu castes developed social and institutional links with their own castes in Kenya and Uganda (and in some cases also, Madagascar and Mozambique). Third, Hindu and Muslim families in India who were eager to establish links with East Africa, began to find brides or grooms in Tanganyika for their children. Such matrimonial alliances helped migrant men to establish small retail businesses upon arrival in Tanganyika by using the contacts of their in-laws (MH interviews).

As political and economic changes made the environment in Tanganyika more favorable for Hindu settlement, Hindu women's absence was felt more acutely in upper-and middle-class homes. While previously women were needed in India to continue the social reproduction of their households and communities, the site of this

reproduction increasingly shifted to the immigrant context. Women were needed to maintain and strengthen their husbands' households, to supply their husbands with the home-made meals they missed, to provide stability and security at home so that men could concentrate on their businesses, to raise children, and to reproduce the culture of their classes, castes, and regions in Tanganyika. With these developments the same Tanganyika that was once regarded as an unsafe place for upper-caste women now became a desirable place for them, and women came to be regarded as the 'foundations of their communities' (MH interview). As one 70 year-old, upper-caste (Lohana) woman remarked (RN interview):

It was wonderful when women started accompanying their husbands here because a woman belongs where her husband is. Without him, her life is unfulfilled. I got married in 1933 at twelve, and then I had to stay in Kathiawar with my mother-in-law for two years and three months because I was too young to get a passport in those days. But when I turned fourteen, my family agreed that I shouldn't wait anymore. So on my passport, we put 1918 [instead of 1922] as my year of birth so that I could join my husband in Dar es Salaam.

Migration in the Goan and Sikh communities, however, still remained overwhelmingly dominated by working-class men. Goan men who worked as cooks, tailors, and shoemakers were often employed by Europeans and their financial situation was not always stable. At the same time, being more oriented toward service than business, Goan families wanted to provide their children with good education. Consequently, like Maria Carvalho's mother-in-law (see vignette 1), many Goan women stayed in Goa to raise and educate their children while their husbands tried to earn a secure living in Tanganyika.

Among the Sikhs, many of the working-class men who had started small business in the Tanganyikan interior were often unable to return to Punjab and settled down with African women. Saroj, who was born of a Swahili mother and a Sikh father, explained that such marriages were frequent in the 1920s and 1930s (RN interview).

There were many Swahili and Sikh marriages ... all over Tanzania ... My husband's mother was [Swahili] ... and his father was a Sikh ... My brother's wife's ... mother was from a tribe in Iringa and her father was a Sikh. I do not know of any mixtures where the mother was a Sikh, and father an African.

The African and racially mixed women who were incorporated into the Sikh community often had to forgo their non-Sikh past as completely as they possibly could. An African woman marrying into their community was seen by Sikhs as marrying 'above' the social group in which she was born. Being accepted by this 'higher' social stratum, therefore, required abandoning the ways of the 'lower' social group. As Saroj explained (RN interview):

When my mother married my father she became a Sikh—she converted completely. She only spoke Punjabi at home, she said only Sikh prayers, her dress was also Sikh ... Very few of my mother's relatives visited her ... She never talked to us about her past or about her family ... She never told me how hard it was for her to adjust in the Sikh community.

Political economic developments in the inter-war period helped Asian men from various communities to gain a strong foothold in the economy and the bureaucracy. Upper-and middle-class Hindu men, in particular, started enjoying greater economic security and their caste-based networks expanded throughout East Africa. With these

developments, the predominantly religion-based divergence between Hindus and Muslims began to give way to a class-based differentiation in marriage and migration. As the socio-economic framework for upper and middle-class Hindus changed, women were needed for the social reproduction of increasingly secure and prosperous settler castes in Tanganyika rather than in India. Accordingly, the discourses of ritual purity and pollution that previously regarded Tanganyika as a threat to women's purity, now cast women as the foundations of their communities. Consequently, patterns of arranged marriages shifted and women could join their migrant husbands soon after marriage without jeopardizing the social status or purity of their families.

However, no such shifts in discourses or migration patterns occurred among working-class Goans or Sikhs, who still faced economic uncertainties and constraints. Like the lower-middle-class Hindu women before the First World War, working-class and middle-class Goan women spent long periods in Goa away from their husbands so that they could improve the prospects for their children by providing them with a good education. In the Sikh community, marriages between working-class Sikh men and African women continued during this period. Because Asians saw Africans as socially inferior to themselves, the African women who married Sikh men were seen as 'marrying up' into the Sikh community. To be accepted by the Sikhs, therefore, these women had to give up their own communal context, religious identity, and social practices.

Migration and Marriage Between 1945 and 1961

In the period after the Second World War, marriage practices maintained a distinct class-based character. The changes in the material circumstances of settler Asians and the colonial hiring policies in the 1950s contributed in varying ways towards reshaping these practices. In this section, I highlight how the attitudes of upper-class Asians towards spousal choices shifted after the Second World War. I then discuss the distinct trends of marriage and migration that developed among Goan civil servants in Tanganyika.

By the time the Second World War commenced, Muslim families from the Ismaili, Ithna Asheri, Bohora, and Sunni sects had settled in Tanganyika and Zanzibar in large numbers and, except for Bohoras (whose religious leader lives in Bombay), most of these people had limited contact with their places of origin. Among Muslims of all classes, the majority of marriages were arranged within Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Among upper-class Hindus, Sikhs and Goans, too, selection of spouses from within East Africa became more frequent by the 1940s. Upper-class families now commonly felt that Asian families settled in East Africa were more prosperous and, therefore, more sophisticated than 'fresh immigrants' from India. Hence, 'girls from East Africa made better spouses' because 'India was too different from Africa and it was hard for girls from there to adjust here' (MH interview; RN interview). A Lohana woman in her mid-fifties explained this popular notion (RN interview):

Generally speaking, Asian girls raised here are more refined in their tastes and more used to an upper class life-style. They can speak English and have no problems wearing western dresses. Girls from India are usually conservative and not so advanced.

Maria Carvalho (see vignette 1) also recalled how the sari clad, long-haired, 'traditional' girls from Goa felt 'too ordinary' in comparison with modernized Goan woman of Tanganyika with their 'high status, nice dresses, short and permed hair, and lipsticks' (RN interview).

Thus, Westernized tastes and upper-class sophistication commonly became the desired virtues in brides marrying into wealthy Asian families. In the rich Hindu and Jain families, in particular, this newly-defined preference for women with 'élite tastes' posed a stark contrast to the old desire for a 'traditional' bride who could stay in India to safeguard the ritual purity of her caste. Women were now seen as important instruments to gain upper-class prestige and social mobility.

Among the middle-class Hindus, Sikhs and Goans, however, the practice of seeking wives from India continued right up to the 1960s. Informants offered several explanations for this. First, in numerically small castes, unmarried women were fewer in number than unmarried men [9]. Second, travelling between India and Tanzania was relatively cheap until the mid-1970s when strict foreign exchange controls were imposed. Third, unmarried men often had friends and relatives in India who could readily find brides for them because 'back home everyone was crazy' about the 'gold mine called East Africa' (RN interviews). The brides who came from India in the 1940s and 1950s almost always came to Tanganyika and Zanzibar right after marriage and settled there permanently. One reason for this was that the privilege of unrestricted travel from India was replaced by stricter immigration control in Tanganyika during the Second World War (RN interviews). Partly as a result of this factor, the period after the Second World War witnessed the greatest increase in the Asian population relative to earlier periods: the number of Tanganyikan Asians rose from 25,000 in 1939 to 92,000 in 1962 (Gregory, 1993, p. 13).

Another reason for this increase was that after World War II, the British hired educated Asian personnel to fill the middle rungs of the civil service as accountants, clerks, managers, and secretaries, and in private banks and enterprises. By 1951, Asians in the Junior Civil Service of Tanganyika numbered 2449, and by the end of the colonial period in 1960 there were 2750 Asian clerical workers in government service and another 1317 in non-government service (Gregory, 1993; Tanganyika, 1953). This Asian clerical staff was dominated by middle-class Roman Catholic Goans, Sikh Jaats, and Hindu Brahmins and Patels. These civil servants were either accompanied or followed by their wives.

The predominance of Goan men in the civil services gave birth to distinctive marital practices among Goan civil servants. Unmarried men went to Goa on an extended vacation of several months every 3 or 4 years. Their passage was paid and they could get free passage for their brides if they had a civil marriage in Goa. As one Goan man in his sixties explained (RN interview):

You went to Goa for four months... the treasury kept paying your monthly salary, and you looked for a bride. You could do this yourself during the Sunday masses ... Or else, you just sent the word around that you were from Africa... and proposal after proposal came to your door.

In other cases, the marriage was arranged by relatives in Goa. Sometimes, the couple had an opportunity to meet prior to marriage. At other times, an exchange of pictures between the prospective groom and bride had to suffice. The bride was often sent on a ship to Tanganyika where the groom married her. Otherwise, the bride got married to a relative of the groom by proxy in a civil ceremony, obtained a marriage certificate and her free passage to Tanzania, and got married to the real groom in church upon her arrival in Tanzania (RN interviews).

By the mid-1960s, however, arranged marriages in the Goan community began to be replaced by 'love-marriages' where Goan youngsters chose their partners themselves,

dated them and then got married. This development among Goans was closely linked to the construction of a 'Europeanized' Goan identity in Tanganyika that set them apart from the rest of the Asian immigrant groups. A Tanzanian minister commented on the distinctiveness of Goans when he described them as 'a strange Asian tribe with conspicuously European ways, what with their Portuguese names and dexterity at ball room dancing!' (Mkapa, 1992, p. 7). But although their Roman Catholic background and Portuguese names distinguished Tanganyikan Goans from other Asians, it was the predominance of educated, middle-class, and higher-caste Goan men in the civil services that encouraged them to build a culture of Western-style clubs, dances, parties and music, with the men priding themselves as lovers of 'wine, women, and songs' (Menezes, 1992a, 1992b). In addition, mother tongue Konkani was replaced by English as a language of communication in homes, and women switched almost completely from saris to Western dress. With these changes and the desire to become increasingly Westernized, arranged marriage within one's own caste became an outdated concept. As long as the children of Goan civil servants did not date or socialize with children of Goan tailors, cooks, or barmen, young women and men were free to marry the Goan of their choice (RN interviews).

I shall briefly summarize how communal discourses molded the marriage and migration patterns in response to the developments after the Second World War. Being a privileged racial minority under the British, Asians were able to build for themselves a stable and lucrative economic niche in Tanganyika. Tanganyika no longer signified economic insecurity and struggle; it became a symbol of prosperity and social status. Accordingly, there was a shift in the aspirations of Asians as the majority of them started internalizing the values of the upper and middle classes. Rather than deriving their communal status and prestige from the Indian subcontinent, Asian families now began to identify with colonial East Africa and caste-based restrictions on women's migration were substituted by new standards of sophistication, refinement, and love-marriages. In the Goan community, the elite culture of civil servants came to predominate and gave birth to new discourses of Westernized identity, modern values, and love-marriages. Caste-based differences and arranged marriages came to be associated with traditional and old-fashioned 'Indian customs' which conflicted with the Europeanized identity that Tanganyikan Goans aspired to. Although these new narratives of Goan identity led to a gradual erasure of caste differences among Goans when it came to marriage, the class hierarchy within the Goan community remained intact. Similarly, the discourses of new class aspirations and Western values led to modified marital practices and women's migration patterns among other Asian communities without altering the pre-existing differences and hierarchies based on class, caste, religion, or race.

Marriage and Purity in the Post-independence Period

The strong identification of Asians with Tanganyika did not last very long. The arrival of independence in Tanganyika and Zanzibar was marked by radical socio-political changes. Asians perceived these changes as a threat to their security, and the 'gold mine' of opportunities that was once located in East Africa now moved to Europe and North America, resulting in a massive exodus of upper- and middle-class Asians to the UK and Canada. As economic prospects shifted from one continent to another, the gendered cultural practices pertaining to marriage and migration also shifted and new narratives of communal status emerged to correspond with the shifts in the diaspora. At the same time, however, the modifications in gendered rules of ritual purity and gendered patterns

of migration did little to undermine the patriarchal structures of authority that regulated women's lives. While communal purity previously implied both sexual and ritual purity, in the post-colonial period more emphasis came to be placed on Asian women's sexual purity and on the guarding of racial, religious, and caste-based frontiers against contamination by intercommunal sexual relationships.

It is beyond the scope of this article to present a detailed analysis of the effects of various government policies on Asians in the post-independence era (see Hartmann, 1991; Nagar, 1996b), but a brief summary of the key events is necessary to understand the Asian exodus. With Tanganyika's independence in 1961 and the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964, the colonial racial structure crumbled; Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged to form the United Republic of Tanzania in 1964. In the wake of the Zanzibar Revolution in which Arabs and Asians were attacked as exploiters and 'blood suckers' of indigenous people, about 10,000 Zanzibari Asians moved to the mainland. The adoption of socialist policies in Tanzania between 1967 and 1976 resulted in nationalization of many Asian enterprises and over 3000 Asian-owned buildings (Fimbo, 1974), and marketing cooperatives eliminated the notorious presence of Asian middlemen from the countryside. As a result of these developments, the decade of the 1970s saw the exodus of about 50,000 Asians to the UK alone, while several thousand additional people, especially Ismailis, left for Canada.

As the Asian population shrank in Tanzania and expanded in London, Birmingham, Toronto and Vancouver, Asians from all communities became westward in their orientation. During my fieldwork in 1991–93, many upwardly mobile Asians expressed that they had no desire to arrange their children's marriages in the Indian subcontinent or Tanzania because the former was too 'backward, over-crowded, and competitive' and the latter was 'too risky politically' (RN interviews). The UK and North America became the favorite destinations for upper- and middle-class Hindus, Sikhs, Ithna Asheris, Ismailis, and Goans because these places were seen as 'safe' and 'full of business and professional opportunities'. Matrimonial alliances became the most convenient ways to facilitate this move to the West, and not surprisingly, 'girls with British or Canadian citizenships' became 'hot commodities' in the marriage market (RN interviews).

Another gendered strategy pertaining to westward migration was the diversification of citizenships in Asian homes. While men often became Tanzanian citizens to continue their business operations in the most profitable way, it was common for women to retain their British passports. This enabled a family to obtain access to the UK without having to uproot itself from Tanzania. Thus, the same women who once needed protection from the supposedly harsh and socially threatening environment of Tanzania, now became the channels to the prestigious 'West' (RN interviews).

But the above developments did not elevate the communal status of settler Asian women. Although the gendered norms of ritual purity relaxed with their westward orientation, discourses of sexual purity became critical. In particular, as the balance of power between Asian and African communities shifted in the post-colonial period, relationships between Asian women and African men became more threatening than ever to Asian men. As in the earlier periods of Asian migration, it was not men's but women's sexual purity that marked the purity and honor of race, religion, and caste, and this ideology of communal purity and honor was played out on the bodies of Asian women of all classes through strict control over their sexualities (Nagar, 1996a). At the same time, these very discursive norms and ideologies gave married and unmarried Asian men the freedom to have relationships with women from other races, religions, and castes. Although it is not possible to do justice to this complex topic in one section of this

article (see Nagar, 1995, 1996a), I will briefly illustrate how this gendered regulation of bodies operates in Asian communities and helps to maintain the existing social hierarchies.

While the dominant patriarchal ideologies construct a man's need for sex as insatiable, a woman's sexuality is viewed as something that needs to be controlled by the community because women cannot control it themselves. Ironically, the most common way to regulate women's sexuality is to dismiss it. To be a 'good' woman implies being in control of one's sexual urges, something the men are seen as 'naturally' unable to do (RN interview). An Ithna Asheri woman explained this thinking (RN interview):

[S]ex doesn't exist for women. For men it does and that's why they accept it when men have affairs. But they think that women don't have sexual needs and... [sex is] looked upon [merely] as a duty to procreate ... [T]he women are not supposed to portray themselves as sexual beings—even to their own husbands, let alone the community.

Thus, Asian women's sexuality is both 'protected' and controlled by their communities. Men may 'misbehave' but it is only women whose unchecked sexuality can pollute and contaminate. Women who challenge these rules of purity have to pay serious penalties. For example, when Alice, a middle-class Goan woman, married Peter, an African man from the Nyakusa tribe, her family and community rejected her (RN interview):

Nobody, NOBODY from my family attended my wedding... There was no body of mine there. I was all alone. Until today [I am alone]... I have a mother who doesn't care for [me], I have brothers who are outstandingly rude to me. They have just discarded me [and my children]... Ever since I started going out with [Peter], the Goans have looked down upon me.

However, no such punishment is inflicted on Asian men who marry African women. For instance, when Alexander, a Goan man, married Maggie, an African woman from the Chagga tribe, his wife was not only accepted in the community with open arms, she was treated like a Goan. As one middle-class Goan woman said (RN interview), 'We don't feel that Maggie is an African. To us she is just another Goan'. Alice, however, is completely unacceptable because, according to a working-class Goan man, 'she has married an African man. And to us a black man is a worker, a house boy' (RN interview).

One might think that interracial marriages would constitute a more serious offence than marrying across religious or caste lines, but Asian women who marry Asian men outside of their own religious or caste group are also shunned by their communities. However, when men do the same thing, they and their wives are generally accepted by the men's communities. As one upper-caste Hindu man commented (MH interview):

We men are very touchy about our women... Even today, if my daughter wanted to marry outside our caste, I would be very upset because the joint family system is very important to us [and if the daughter] marries outside, this system is broken down.

Smriti, an upper-class Hindu Lohana woman who has married an Ismaili Muslim man, openly speaks against this gendered discrimination (RN interview):

My community has not accepted me ... which I think, is very wrong. I am still a Lohana's daughter. I have not changed my religion... My brother married a [racially mixed] woman from Brazil and ... [Lohanas] accepted him because he is a boy. I am not. That is the difference. There are many Lohana [men] who have married Ismaili women, but they are accepted. 'The Ismaili women

have come to our community,' that is what they say... But why have they thrown me out?

Alice and Smriti, then, become the 'bad' and 'polluted' women in their own communities because they represent 'sexual affront' (Stoler, 1991b) to communal order and racial and religious boundaries. At the same time, the good and respectable Asian women who internalize the prevailing norms and values of sexual purity are continuously subjected to oppressive double standards. Their sexuality is both dismissed and used as legitimate grounds by their men to have affairs with African women who are constructed as 'naturally promiscuous' and sexually more desirable and aggressive than Asian women (RN interviews). An Ithna Asheri feminist interpreted these dual standards thus (RN interview):

A lot of Asian men here have ... a respectable wife who is an Asian—the visible wife. And then there is always an invisible [African] wife... The Asian wife is not supposed to satisfy you in bed, so you go for the African woman. It is a myth here that they are all very good in bed.

In contrast to this sexual freedom that allows Asian men easy access to the bodies of African women, sexual relationships between Asian women and African men are regarded by 'respectable' Asians as 'loathsome' and 'culturally impossible' (RN interviews).

Thus, dominant communal discourses of Asians serve to naturalize the racist, sexist and classist stereotypes of African women and men, thereby establishing the cultural and moral superiority of the Asians over Africans. These discourses play a crucial role in legitimizing the economically and socially privileged status that a few rich Asians enjoy relative to the vast majority of Africans (Nagar, 1996a).

At the same time, the gendered, and classed oppressions perpetuated by these discourses repeatedly become a politically volatile issue in the context of race relations in Tanzania. This was seen, for example, during the years following the Zanzibar Revolution when raping and forcibly marrying Asian women to African men became the main tool by which President Karume sought to put Asian men in their place (Fair, 1994). Criticisms directed against Asian men for exploiting African women but failing to let their own women marry African men resurfaced in Dar es Salaam in the early 1990s when the rise of multiparty politics and the cry for indigenization (the transfer of economic power to 'indigenous' Tanzanians) led to widespread popular antagonism against the Asians (Nagar, 1996b).

Conclusion

The migration strategies and marital practices that immigrant households employ in response to structural changes at the national or international levels are mediated in critical ways by communal discourses. Communal discourses comprise narratives, ideologies, concepts, and signifying practices that naturalize dominant beliefs, power hierarchies, and social differences based on gender, religion, caste, class, and race. Although it may seem difficult to combine all the dominant social categories operating in a given context into a single analytical framework, it is nevertheless critical to do so because people's everyday experiences are shaped simultaneously by multiple constellations of differences and power. Communal discourses help us apprehend how social categories are not only socially constructed, multiple, and fluid, but also thoroughly enmeshed with

each other so that they continuously derive their contextual meanings in relation to each other. Discourses, just like the social categories and boundaries that they mold, are always subject to contestation, negotiation, and modification. However, while I have highlighted these struggles and negotiations elsewhere (Nagar, 1995, 1997b), it is also important to recognize the manner in which discourses serve to limit social change and to reinforce hierarchies. Thus, even as discourses, boundaries and social relations are easily modified in response to changing circumstances, new narratives and ideologies frequently emerge to ensure that the predominant balance of power in a community is not disturbed significantly.

I will clarify the above points by briefly summarizing the story of Asian migration, marriage, and settlement in Tanzania. Migration patterns and marital practices that evolved in Asian households in response to changes in the colonial and post-colonial political economy were mediated and shaped by communal discourses. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, caste-specific discourses of ritual purity and pollution encouraged upper- and middle-class Hindu women to stay in India and facilitate the social reproduction of their households and extended families there. While these women's sexualities were strictly regulated by their families in India, notions of purity were flexible enough to allow men to have sexual relationships with African women without defiling the men's communal purity. With the changes in material circumstances of Asians, however, the location of social reproduction shifted and norms of purity no longer required women to stay in India. New classed and communal narratives that perceived women as communal foundations, and valued sophistication, modern upbringing, and love-marriages emerged to support the growing identification of various Asian groups with Tanganyika and the corresponding changes in gendered practices of migration and marriage. The onset of independence and the socialist policies adopted in Tanzania in the 1960s and 1970s once again led to a shift in the migration and marriage strategies as Asian aspirations now focused on Europe and North America. Women with British and Canadian citizenships became instrumental in opening the doors of Tanganyikan Asian families to the 'West.'

But the above developments did not erase the gendered discourse of purity among settler Asian communities, which focused mainly on the regulation of women's bodies. While political-economic developments and shifts in material conditions led Asian communities to modify the gendered compositions and the rules of purity maintenance, the overarching patriarchal ideologies and power hierarchies subordinating Asian women remained intact. Discourses of sexual purity continued to play a critical role in legitimizing the regulation of Asian women's sexualities. This communal control over women's bodies was rooted in existing social differences and hierarchies of power, and served as an essential tool for sustaining and reinforcing the racial and class-based gulfs between Asians and Africans, and the caste, religious, and class boundaries among the various Asian communities.

In each of the aforementioned phases, the definitions of religious, caste, racial or class were constructed in relational terms. For example, upper-caste Hindus defined their religious and caste purity by 'othering' the Muslims, Africans, and low-caste Hindus and by making women responsible for maintaining the ritual purity of their communities. This multilayered construction of purity, in turn, shaped the migration patterns and experiences of poor and low-caste men and women from Hindu and Sunni communities. Similarly, Goan civil servants cultivated a Europeanized identity in opposition to both 'Indianness' and a working-class identity to mark themselves as culturally superior to Asian Hindus and Muslims, to African communities, as well as to Goan shoemakers,

tailors, and barmen. Also, discourses that perpetuated the image of an oversexualized and culturally inferior African woman went hand in hand with narratives that established the Asian woman as pure, asexual, excessively virtuous and orthodox. Thus, although the modifications of communal discourses led to shifts in the specific ways that religion, caste, race and gender were articulated with each other, the social boundaries defined around these categories continued systematically to preserve the existing social differences and hierarchies.

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NOTES

- [1] All the names used for informants in this paper are pseudonyms.
- [2] Author's interview, Dar es Salaam, 27 November 1992.
- [3] Honey's interview, Dar es Salaam, 19 October 1973.
- [4] Honey's interview, Dar es Salaam, 21 April 1974.
- [5] The term 'socio-sexual boundaries' refers to social boundaries that regulate the sexualities of their members.
- [6] According to the 1988 Census, the population of Tanzania was approximately 23 million (United Republic of Tanzania, 1989). For over two decades, no official statistics have been gathered on ethnic or racial groups in Tanzania. Unofficial sources, however, estimated the Asian population of Tanzania at the beginning of the 1990s at 65,000–75,000 (or about 0.3% of the country's population).
- [7] Goa became a part of India in 1961.
- [8] There are hardly any references to interracial relationships in the literature on Tanzanian Asians, but examples of such relationships are many. The following examples come from my interviews. A Sikh man's uncle married an African woman and was boycotted by his relatives. A Sikh woman discovered in 1991 that she had a 'mixed' half-brother whose mother was not accepted by her father's family. A half-Isma'ili man explained that his father married an African woman in the 'remote Sumbawanga where hardly any Asians lived.' In Dar es Salaam, there are three generations of 'half-caste' Sikhs who have been intermarrying with 'half-caste' Sikhs. An Arab-African woman's ex-husband was born out of wedlock of an Ithna Asheri father and Arab mother. Another racially mixed woman explained that her grandfather was an Indian Sunni who married a 'half-caste' woman.
- [9] Caste groups are not confined to the Hindus. They exist among Asian Sunnis, Sikhs, and Roman Catholic Goans, although five Goan informants felt that the caste-consciousness in their community has been gradually dying.

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