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Exploring Identity Construction amongst Upper Middle Class Second-Generation Indian Immigrants in Dubai

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Abstract

Globalization, as a phenomenon, has been greatly beneficial to the United Arab Emirates and has brought the country significant economic prosperity. This, in turn, has encouraged a pattern of mass migration from several neighbouring countries, with India becoming the largest exporter of immigrants. While several researchers have delved into the working conditions and political scenario that surround the Indian immigrant workforce that reside in UAE, none have paid attention to the second-generation of these immigrants. This paper attempts to look at this second-generation and their process of identity construction. More specifically, the study tries to understand how members of this second-generation struggle to identify themselves in a political environment that does not permit them the possibility of naturalizing into citizens, and their native country, India does not accept them to be culturally, truly Indian. The study will outline aspects of the second-generation migrants' lives, in Dubai, UAE, that have contributed to the construction of their unique identity in a complicated political environment. To do so, the study employs semi-structured interviews to understand how deeply these second-generation migrants identify themselves as Indian. Additionally, the study explores if their 'Indian-ness' is sufficient to both themselves as Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and their native peers. Finally, the study delves into understanding how this second-generation has come to view their political identities as

Indians who grew up away from their native India, and have also not naturalized into citizens of another country.

Introduction

As the daughter of Indian expatriate immigrants living in Dubai, it became discernible early that Dubai was not a permanent home for me. I grew up in the city, and have a brother who was born and is currently being raised there. However, my parents made it evident that we, as children of expatriate immigrants, were living in an environment where becoming naturalized citizens was not a possibility. This was largely due to the citizenship laws of the state, wherein citizenship is not granted by birth. Emigration to the Middle East was the result of a mass migratory pattern of a foreign workforce, that took place following the discovery of oil resources within the region, which subsequently boosted the local economy (Errichiello, 2012). Another factor that affected the migration flow into the Middle East besides oil, was the existing historical evidence of migration hailing from British India, and the 'intra-Gulf' mobility which greatly influenced the immigrants' social and economic structure by boosting the number of economic opportunities they received (Errichiello, 2012).

However, the caveat within the recruitment of immigrant workers was the citizenship clause immigrants have been subject to. Neha Vora in her paper *Impossible Citizens: Dubai's Indian Diaspora* (2013, 245 p) explores her idea of Indian migrants residing in Dubai being "unofficial citizens" of the country. Vora identifies that the state does not permit migrants the opportunity to attain either citizenship or permanent residency, even though the Indian population residing in Dubai is a major contributor to the local economy. Indian businessmen, who have been integral to the functioning and growth of Dubai's economy experience neoliberal economic freedoms and growth which they profit from greatly. However, low-skilled Indian migrant workers who may have equally contributed to this economic growth experience highly exploitative employment conditions. These economic freedoms granted to the Indian elite, and the subsequent profits they gain, ensure that they are devoted to the preservation of the current political state of affairs(Vora, 2013). This phenomenon is reflected in a lot of my parents' lifestyle choices. They have settled in neighbourhoods that are predominantly Indian, they have chosen to educate their children in a school that follows the Indian education system, they have chosen to attain membership at a sports club that is, once again, exclusively for the upper-middle-class Indian population residing within Dubai, etc.

While the constant need for the exchange of ethnic capital (Kao, 2004)may be reflective of a behaviour which is typical of communities that mass migrate this may not be the case with regards to the second-generation of such Indian immigrants. Considering that there is no opportunity for the second-generation to naturalize into citizens within the Middle East, the

question of their self-identification naturally arises. Nationality-wise, 'Indian' becomes their 'official' identity, but how much of that identity has been involuntarily adopted is yet to be defined. Moreover, the very fact that this generation has never experienced what it is to be 'Indian', given that they were raised in a foreign country negates that they would identify themselves as purely Indian. Additionally, the hyphenated identities that exist in the West do not exist within the political dynamic of the Middle East due to their Federal Law No.17 of 1972, which concerns nationality and passports. The law is based on *jus sanguinis*, which is a principle of nationality law where citizenship is determined by the citizenship of the parents and not by place of birth. While there is currently an ongoing debate on providing expats with an opportunity to earn citizenship to the UAE, there is significant criticism due to trepidation over the loss of national identity and the declining Emirati population(Al Qassemi, 2013; Gray, 2015). With the political environment being relatively hostile to the naturalization of citizens, what contributes to the identity construction of the second-generation, and subsequently, what becomes their identity is the focus of this research.

'Indian', in context to this diaspora, encompasses three aspects which have been explored within this study. The first is the political aspect of being Indian, wherein the second-generation diasporic population of Dubai have a national identity that is Indian as evidenced by their passports. However, they may not see themselves as an extension of what it means to be 'Indian' politically (Berezin, 2001).Secondly, there is the cultural aspect of being Indian, as this second-generation partakes in numerous cultural activities that are considered to be Indian and this subsequently ties into the third aspect, which is the emotional connect that this second generation possesses to being Indian. While this generation delves into several "forms of transnational engagement" such as watching Bollywood movies, listening to Indian music, interacting with their extended families back in India, learning about Indian history and social practices, and more recently practising "cyber-transnationalism" (Lee H. , 2011), they still do not exhibit the same emotional connection to their motherland, as compared to their parents who are first-generation immigrants. This study has attempted to outline aspects of upper-middle-class second-generation immigrants' lives in Dubai, UAE, that have contributed to the construction of their unique identity as Indians in a complicated political environment.

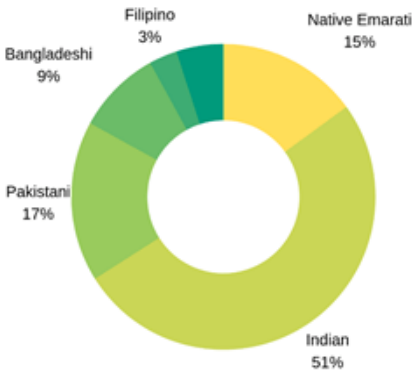

Figure 1. Population of Dubai, *World Population Review* (2016)

This question becomes important to me because of my own experiences with an identity crisis and my inability to agree to me being truly 'Indian'. Moreover, the fact that the Indian immigrant population accounts for 51% of Dubai's population begs the question of whether this phenomenon is consistent within the second-generation of this community(Review, 2016). Wherein, the issue of adopting the identity of being 'Indian' does not fully include their unique experiences, nor does the economic status of a Non-Resident Indian (NRI), which in recent years has become somewhat of a politico-legal identity in both India and UAE, prove sufficient.

Operational Definitions of Key Words

For the purpose of this study, the following terms have been defined and utilized as a foundation for this research paper. Nationality, as derived from R.N. Gilchrist's definition of 'Nationality' (1888) and Ernest Renan's definition of 'Nation' (1882), can be understood as a shared spiritual principle amongst a people who share a past, have common goals for the present and visualize a future in political unity. Taking this concept further is the definition of Ethnicity, which has been identified to be a group of people that have similar biology, share cultural values and communicate with one another in a method that is distinct from other groups(Gautam, 2013). Social Identity has been defined as an individual's sense of who they are, which is founded upon the groups they are members of. These groups can vary from a social class to an ethnic group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; McLeod, 2008).With regards to migration studies, Transnationalism has been referred to as the varying connections between migrant populations and their homelands. These connections can vary from interactions with extended family, consumption of popular culture, consumption of food, the movement to and from homelands and host countries. However, second-generation immigrants tend to have a different process of transnationalism, which may have been "indirect", "intra-diasporic", and/or "forced" (Lee H. , 2011). Finally, transculturation has been understood as the converging and merging of cultures, which includes

the process of developing from one culture to another, obtaining characteristics from another culture, and the consequential development of a new culture (Ortiz, 1947, 1995; Kiprop, 2017).

Objective of the Study

In order to understand the nature of the identity of these second-generation Indian immigrants, the study first attempts to understand the history of Dubai's immigration policy alongside the migration patterns of the Indian society that has now chosen to reside there. The United Arab Emirates on several occasions has emphasized on their achievement of becoming one of the world's largest melting pots of people and cultures. Dr. Hamdan Al Mazroui, Chairman of the General Authority for Islamic Affairs and Endowments, reinstated this belief at the Non – Aligned Movement (NAM) conference on inter-faith dialogue and cooperation for peace and development in 2010, stating, "The UAE is today serving as a real, living melting pot for interaction of cultures, languages and 200 nationalities" (UAE praised for its religious tolerance, 2010). This idea has been echoed through Dubai's construction of 'International City', wherein visitors may experience diverse cultures through the various country-themed building clusters and cuisines offered hailing from across the world (Nasir, 2018). Moreover, this idea has been consistently reinstated for decades with Dubai's annual 'Global Village Festival', which has become their biggest display of celebration of their melting pot. The nature in which Dubai – and the UAE as a whole – has come to embrace its immigrant population, as well as how the country defines itself as a melting pot, creates a positive social and political environment for these second-generation Indian immigrants. Therefore, discussing the immigration policy of the UAE, which has eliminated the possibility of attaining citizenship for this immigrant community, becomes necessary.

Subsequently, the transculturation process of this community into the local society also needs some consideration (Ortiz 1947, 1995; Sharp, 1993; James, 1996, 2014Kath, 2015). It will become necessary to distinguish between the first-generation and the second-generation migrants by their differing processes of transculturation. An extension of this process is transnationalism within the two generations, specifically that of the second generation, since their process of transnationalism would have most likely been involuntary, limited to within the diaspora, or would have been indirect as it would have stemmed from their parents (Bourne, 1916; Somerville, 2008; Bartley& Spoonley, 2008; Lee, 2011; Safi, 2018; Brocket, 2018). Moreover, it is important to understand the 'heightened interconnectivity' the second-generation might experience within the melting pot of Dubai(Gans, 2005), and how that contributes to the group as a generation of immigrants who are learning to re-define their identities in a manner that is convenient to them.

Literature Review

For the purpose of this study, there are three broad themes upon which I have based my review of existing literature. The first theme is migration patterns due to globalization and the political environment surrounding this first-generation's migration stream. The second theme deals with second-generation immigrants and the various transcultural and transnational processes they adopt. The third theme regards the identity construction of second-generation immigrants and their complicated relationship with their ethnic and cultural identities.

The first theme, which pertains to migration patterns as a result of globalization has been explored greatly in academic research. K.L. Naidu (1991),K.C. Zachariah, A.B. Prakash and S.I. Rajan (2004),P. Parthasarathi andD. Quataert (2011),and Stefan Tetzlaff (2011) all delve into the employment conditions of the Indian migrant population. However, they simultaneously provide significant historical context to the trends in globalization and migration patterns. Additionally, several scholars have identified that globalization lends to a particular form of uncertainty among individuals. Specifically, this uncertainty is a result of the conflict that arises from culture stemming from globalization, and one's native culture. The complex nature of this conflict lengthens the process of understanding the self and construction of identity (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Court, 2001). Neha Vora (2013) sheds light on not only the political scenario surrounding the immigration policy of UAE but the significant economic contribution of the Indian population residing within the UAE. While she employs an anthropological approach to the study, she places significant emphasis on the Indian migrant workers who belong to a lower socio-economic class, which is divergent from the subject matter of my study of an upper-middle-class immigrant population. However, her understanding of the hopelessness of the situation applies across the spectrum of class in the Indian immigrant population in Dubai.

Literature on second-generation Indians immigrants primarily focuses on trying to understand their perspectives and their responses to certain situations. Swati Shah (2009) explores the second-generation Indian community and their view of American politics through their own racial lens and their subsequent participation in American politics. She utilizes a case study method to establish the growing political identity of second-generation immigrants due to the increase of ethnic representation in mainstream American politics (Shah, 2009). While much of it is set in the American context and political narrative, Shah provides an interesting perspective on the potential contributions of second-generation immigrants in an accepting political environment. This provides an alternative to the political scenario that currently exists in the Middle East, which is primarily a monarchy, where little to no political rights are granted to immigrants, and therefore, this literature provides an opportunity to compare and contrast the various political scenarios second-generation Indian immigrants are in across the diaspora.

The cultural identity of second-generation immigrants is a debated area (Vathi, 2015; Lee J. , 2016; Nibbs & Brettell, 2016). The understanding that they will always be foreign, be it to their ethnic community or their country of residence, is a sentiment that resonates across the diaspora.

However, this is not exclusive to just the Indian diaspora, but to the Asian and Latin diaspora as well. Lori Woo (2016) explores this through the American immigrant population.Through her research, Woo comes to the definitive conclusion that regardless of the second-generation immigrants' disconnect to their ethnic identities, they will always resonate with their hyphenated American identities. This is, once again, reflective of this identity crisis that proves to be somewhat of an epidemic in countries that boast of being a melting pot of cultures.

T.D. Ratcheva (2016), in an autoethnographic article, discusses the "in-betweenness" of being in a melting pot. The writer explores the idea of being a member of a diaspora but not actively participating in the diasporic community, thereby opting to assimilate instead (Ratcheva, 2016). However, the backlash from betraying one's ethnic community adds to the confusion that these second-generation immigrants face in constructing their identities. While Ratchdeva focuses on a dual identity of being Bulgarian and American, the writer utilizes literature of Ranajit Guha and Salman Rushdie to contextualize her identity crisis.

Collette Sabatier (2008) explores cultural identity in two orientations; i.e., ethnic and national. Sabatier employs an observational study on the social relationships of second-generation immigrants, as well as their parents. She discovers that the relationship between the two generations greatly affects the construction of the second-generations' cultural identity. Simultaneously, this relationship affects the second-generations' perception of enculturation and discrimination, thereby reflecting the dynamic of acculturation within immigrant families (Sabatier, 2008).

The third theme pertains to the identity construction of second-generation immigrants, and their subsequent perception of their ethnicity. Rita Joshi (2004) explores post-colonial literature and their depiction of the Indian diaspora. She delves into the relationship between the recurring themes of terrorism and how that depiction has affected the process of alienation most second-generation Indian immigrants experience as a result of the association (Joshi, 2004). However, this article mostly deals with fictional literature and how it has become representative of the social identities attributed to second-generation Indian immigrants.

The process by which ethnic identity has been created amongst the Indian-American population residing within New York City is explored in a great deal by Maxine P. Fisher (1978). Fisher identifies that this community severely lacks a strong ethnic identity. Subsequently, it was observed that the formation of ethnic group organizations has provided a turning point in this trajectory of identity construction (Fisher, 1978). This stems from a lack of identification from the US government as a legitimate and separate ethnic group and has therefore played a massive role in the construction of weak ethnic and social identities within the Asian Indian community residing in the USA. While this paper is around 40 years old and may not apply to the immigrant population in the USA currently, it is, however, relevant to the study because it analyses how

government policies can affect the attitudes of the immigrant community. Moreover, the paper discusses the convenience with which these second-generation immigrants adopt and drop their native identities, a phenomenon that is still identifiable amongst the second-generation migrants from Dubai.

M.D. Gupta (1997) employs a feminist analysis in order to understand the identity formation of Indian immigrants. She does so by associating it to themes of ethnic culture and tradition. Interpreting data through a transnational approach, Gupta identifies the weight placed upon the immigrant women to carry on the traditions of the Indian community. Consequently, the women become torchbearers of the ethnic identity within the diaspora residing in the USA (Gupta, 1997). It would be interesting to explore whether the deferred process of identity construction for these second-generation migrants is gendered.

Methodology

In order to study this phenomenon, a qualitative method of research was the most suitable. Commonly used to answer questions that pertain to experiences, meaning and perspective, qualitative methods are used to examine beliefs and attitudes that influence normative and accepted behaviour (K. Hammarberg, 2016). When evaluating qualitative studies, there is a significant emphasis on the rigour of the study. Therefore, in order to ensure the study meets the criterion of rigour and allows a cross verification of the findings, this study utilizes semi-structured interviews, which were conducted in phases in order to delve deeper into the subject matter.

Established by Bronislaw Malinowski (1915) and Margaret Mead (1928), and popularized by Franz Boas (1966), ethnographies are typically a descriptive study of a certain society and how they function. They are utilized to understand the world from a certain standpoint and its social relations. Mostly dependent on fieldwork, there is a fair amount of comparative analysis and generalizations made due to the involvement of a researcher who retains his/her own biases, observations and descriptions (Britannica, 2016). The advantages include the ability to identify and analyse unexpected issues due to the interaction of the researcher and the subject of the study. Furthermore, an ethnography permits the researcher the opportunity to observe relevant attitudes and emotions in a short amount of time. While this sometimes is noted as a disadvantage, it would prove advantageous to this study. As ethnography is a method that places emphasis on understanding the world from the perspective of social relations, it would be ideal for this study as it will allow for the consideration of identity construction of a politically uncertain second-generation of immigrants.

An autoethnography is also a viable method of research owing to its autobiographical nature, which can be a useful tool in analysing people's lives which enables the researcher to display

multiple levels of consciousness, whilst simultaneously connecting the personal to the cultural (Walford, 2004). However, this method requires a certain level of introspection and a willingness to self-disclose, which could bring in significant levels of bias into the research and could subsequently narrow the issue to being a personal one, and not that of a communal issue. Therefore, continuing with an ethnography over an autoethnography would limit the possibility of a bias in the study.

Interviews are one of the most commonly used qualitative methods. Typically conducted on a one-on-one basis, interviews have been proven to provide a platform for respondents to delve into a greater number of details. The semi-structured nature of interviews permits the researcher a chance to probe on certain answers, and thereby collect data on both the beliefs that people hold, as well as understand their motivations (Bhat, 2014). The semi-structured format also permits follow-up, adding to the rigour of the data. The interviews were conducted over several rounds of Skype® calls which allowed the study to delve into certain themes repeatedly, and created an opportunity to uncover in-depth findings. The advantages of online interviewing include lesser costs incurred and allows for interviews to take place across countries and cities, which in turn leads to lesser minimal travel for the researcher. Moreover, it allows for interviews to be scheduled flexibly, with no set venue and is quick in gathering data (NCRM, n.d.). However, participants can get distracted as they may not be in a controlled environment. Additionally, the participants could lose interest and motivation during the interview process and they could also alter the language they answer in.. The process is also dependent on the participants' technological competence and access. Finally, identity verification is a hurdle, and the method does not allow the researcher to observe visual cues (NCRM, n.d.).

The study focused on second-generation Indian immigrants who spent their formative years in Dubai. To account for a certain political climate that was previously rather unfriendly to immigrants, these second-generation immigrants should have spent their development years in UAE during the late 1990s to early 2010s. Therefore, the subjects of this study were 19 to 23 years of age. For clarity, currently, these immigrants are either working or are attending university, and may or may not themselves be residing in Dubai. However, their families continue to live there, and therefore these migrants continue to have ties with Dubai. This becomes an important factor as the second-generation would have only gained certain consciousness of their ambiguous identities once they moved into new spaces that were unfamiliar to them. Additionally, this generation of Indian immigrants is from an upper-middle-class income group in order to have gained access to certain multicultural environments. These environments could have been in the form of schools, neighbourhoods, religious congregations, social circles, and volunteer groups.

The schools that these second-generation Indian immigrants attended becomes an important variable contributing to the identity construction of this generation. However, this could not be

the sole factor that affects their identity construction, since decisions regarding the schooling of the second-generation depend on the motives of the parent generation and their income. To illustrate, parents of this second-generation might have had the income to educate their children in a multicultural environment but have chosen to educate them in a school that followed the Indian education system, in order to ensure that their children are well versed in their hereditary culture and tradition. This implies that a certain amount of their identity was involuntarily thrust upon them by their parents. Additionally, while these immigrants may have started out in Indian schools, as their parents achieved mobility amongst the social classes, it is likely that their lifestyle changed to that of a more multicultural one. This subsequently would have altered the environments of the second-generation and thereby affected the process of their identity construction.

For the purpose of this study, the sample was acquired through the process of snowball sampling. For clarity, snowball sampling is a method in which an existing pool of research participant recruits other participants to widen the pool (Stephanie, 2014). For this study, the researcher first delved into one's own network of peers who fit the basic criterion of the sample, and then requested that current participants of the study recruit other participants from their own networks. Through this method, 15 participants were chosen to be a part of the sample. The sample was 46.7% male and 53.3% female. 46.7% of the sample grew up as Hindus, 20% as Muslims, and 33.3% as Christians. The sample had different educational backgrounds, with all of them having started out at Indian schools and 46.7% of them having transferred to multicultural schools in high school. With regard to the decision of where to pursue higher education, 20% of them chose to return back to India and attain a degree at an Indian university, 46.7% chose to migrate to the West for educational opportunities, and 33.3% chose to stay back in Dubai and pursue their Bachelor's degree in Dubai at a multicultural university. Additionally, 40% of the sample were from the North of India, and 60% were from the South.

The semi-structured interviews began with the establishing question, "Generally speaking, could you please describe how you would introduce yourself to a new acquaintance?". The motive behind asking the question was to understand the primary identifiers of the participants and understand key factors that contributed to the construction of their individual identities as second-generation Indian immigrants. Based on their answers, the interview would shift towards either their nationality or their ethnicity. Additionally, questions pertaining to their relationship with their family were also asked to explore if the nature of the relationship was a contributing factor to the construction of their identity. The participants were also asked about their political identities, both as Non-Resident Indians and immigrants. To illustrate, the following are some questions that were asked to the participants of the study:

- Do you feel a sense of belonging within your ethnic group, be it in Dubai or India?

- How would you define your relationship with your family? Do you think that the nature of your relationship with your family affected how you looked at yourself as an Indian?
- Do you experience an "in-betweenness" living in Dubai?
- What social activities did you partake in while growing up?
- Do you think your ethnic identity was forced upon you?
- How was your experience at school? Do you think that affected how you viewed your community?
- Where did you choose to pursue higher education? Why did you choose this place?
- You do not have the ability to become a citizen of Dubai, UAE. Therefore, do you feel like you are missing out on something? Would you continue to stay in Dubai, if you don't get what you are looking for?

The data that was acquired from the interviews has been discussed at length in the following section.

Data and Findings

When asked to introduce themselves, the participants frequently mentioned 'Dubai', their job descriptions, and educational backgrounds, as identifiers. 'India', or for that matter 'Indian', was only mentioned after some persistence, with several of the respondents admitting that their nationality would not be an identification they would mention principally. This is indicated by a participant stating, "Dubai is home for me. This is where I was brought up. So, it has been more of a constant in my upbringing than India ever was." Although, if they were in their native India, the participants admitted that they would mention 'Indian' in an attempt to feel accepted amongst the local counterparts. However, they acknowledge that the attempt would be futile, because various nuances in their behaviour would unveil their "foreignness", with a participant saying,"…while I could say I was Indian, people my age who grew up there would not believe so. They would either catch on that I talked differently, or responded to situations differently…".

When asked if they believed that they possessed a strong association with their nationality, participants responses varied upon their current geographical location. To illustrate, participants who chose to pursue higher education in India, have since developed a strong association with being Indian, which did not necessarily exist prior to them having lived in India for an extended period of time. This is indicated through a participant stating, "…initially, I wasn't too aware of it…but since I have moved to India for college, I have felt a greater sense of belonging to being Indian…this has grown after years of being here". Alternatively, those who chose to pursue higher education in the UAE or in the West, do not showcase an emotional connect to being Indian, with some going as far as associating negative connotations to it.

As the participants consider a sense of belonging to be essential to a community, when asked whether they have experienced it amongst their native Indian counterparts, most of them agreed that they indeed lacked the feeling of being a member of the Indian community. Therefore, most respondents attempted to distance themselves from an 'Indian' experience by attending university in other countries, besides India. However, it should be noted that the spectrum of their association to being Indian is largely dependent on their relationship with their parents and extended families. Additionally, this relationship also affects the participants' inclination towards maintaining their Indian identity. However, all the participants recognize Indian festivals as occasions that are paramount to their understanding of being Indians. As the nature of the events typically calls for celebrations, they showcase a positive association to that aspect of being Indian. To elucidate, a participant stated, "…celebration of festivals is still important to me. I make it a point to celebrate them with my Indian and NRI friends here in the (United) States…it is an important connection to being Indian."

As mentioned previously, the nature of their relationship with their parents and extended family has greatly influenced how they have developed their identity of being Indians. For clarity, a positive relationship with their families has been categorized by communicative relationships with high levels of involvement from the family in the process of inculcating "Indian values" within the second-generation. However, negative or neutral relationships have been categorized as ones that did not display lots of communications or high levels of involvement. Most do not believe the two are correlated, however, the alternative is evident through their interactions with their family. To illustrate, if the participant has historically had a positive relationship with their family, they are more forthcoming to the possibility of defining themselves as Indian, as well as engaging in certain activities which would indicate that they are Indian. Those who have had a negative or neutral relationship with their family, have come to distance themselves from being called 'Indian', and prefer to be known as someone who hails from Dubai. Moreover, these participants have leaned towards surrounding themselves with a peer group of a multicultural nature, and have preferred to connect with their extended family who also shares the status of an NRI, as opposed to their extended family which resides in native India.

All participants endorsed that they experience an in-betweenness with being second-generation Indian immigrants who have been raised in Dubai. They identified that they became more aware of this in-betweenness after moving out of their homes and becoming active members of their student communities in their respective universities. This was initially a condition most had a problem coming to terms with, due to not experiencing a sense of belonging to both their native India or among the multicultural population of Dubai. However, through the transitional period from university life to work life, they have come to accept the duality of their identity and experience. Albeit, the degree of acceptance of this duality is extremely dependent on their relationship with their families growing up. Some have attempted to push aside their duality, and subsequently returned to India in hopes of assimilating back into Indian society, or they have

moved to western countries which will eventually allow them to naturalize into a citizen. Safi (2018) has termed this as “re-migration”, wherein descendants of immigrants tend to enter a pattern of continuous relocation, be it their country of origin or a new country altogether. Safi derived her concept of re-migration from A.M. Paul’s concept of “stepwise international migration” (Paul, 2011) and Susan Ossman’s theory of “serial migration”(Ossman, 2013).

When asked if they attribute their Indian identity as being forced upon them, most do not categorize it as being forced. Instead, they choose to address it as a legality, and not something that has had a cultural effect on their development, with one participant expressing, “…just because I have an Indian passport, doesn’t mean I am Indian.” However, this is contradictory based on how they continue to celebrate Indian festivals regardless of the country they currently reside in, as illustrated previously.

The participants’ schooling has had a massive impact on whether they have come to identify themselves as Indian. Those participants who have attended Indian schools have been more inclined to identify themselves as Indian, due to the controlled Indian experience in these schools. The nature of their experiences at these Indian schools has been categorized by how well they integrated into the student body, the nature of their relationships with their peers and teachers, and their experiences with the schooling boards they were members of. Whether their experience in these Indian schools has been positive or negative has greatly affected how they have chosen to pursue further studies, and subsequently how they have continued to identify themselves as individuals. To illustrate, those who had a positive experience, such as had a beneficial relationship with their faculty and peers, integrated well into the student body, and excelled within the Indian educational board, continued to pursue higher education in India and take pride in being called Indian. However, those who had a negative experience in these schools chose to enrol in institutions that had a multicultural student body, be it in UAE or in Western nations. Additionally, those participants who were educated in multicultural schooling environments, prefer to continue associating themselves with multicultural student bodies, and hence are more inclined to pursue higher education and job opportunities in western counties.

Due to the multicultural nature of Dubai’s population, voluntary activities of second-generation Indian immigrants were ethnically diverse rather than being unique to their local NRI communities. To illustrate, several participants would volunteer to help in charitable fundraisers, and they recall that their environment would not be limited to Indians, but rather a multicultural demographic. However, several of their parents’ choices in social activities were geared towards their ethnic communities, which the participants attended as an obligation to their families. However, they admitted that these social activities were instrumental in providing them the context to the complexities of being a member of the Indian community. As illustrated previously, even though many do not recognize their Indian identity as being forced upon them, they ironically categorize it as being obligatory, which by definition implies that the individual is

bound by duty. This would further indicate that although they do not acknowledge being forced into an Indian cultural identity, their actions and statements indicate otherwise.

The political scenario of UAE is unique, wherein immigrants are not provided with the opportunity to potentially naturalize into citizens (who have political rights, such as access to property, government jobs, education, a welfare state, etc.) which subsequently leads to the lack of a political identity as residents. When questioned on whether a political identity was important to their way of life, the degree of its importance was relative to how politically inclined they were as individuals. Those individuals who are not politically inclined stated that they were willing to forgo a political identity for a better standard of living and would continue to reside in Dubai. However, those individuals who are politically inclined indicated a dissatisfaction in their lack of a political identity, and this was one of the reasons why they pursued higher studies in the West, since it would eventually lead to them gaining a political identity as they naturalize into citizens. Interestingly, it was observed that due to the autocratic nature of the local government, i.e., a monarchy, most of the second-generation was not exposed to an environment that facilitated a political dialogue. This has subsequently led them to expressing disinterest in politics. Those who did develop an interest did so when pursuing higher education, where they were introduced to politics in an academic space.

Additionally, most of the second-generation did not attempt to understand their ethnic culture through various forms of cultural capital on their visits to India, as they were subjected to various forms of bullying, which was inflicted on them by their local counterparts. However, those who did return to India attempted to assimilate back into the local community by familiarizing themselves with Indian history, popular culture references, languages, etc. Those who did not choose to return to India dismissed the idea of exploring their ethnic identity completely. Instead, they chose to pursue the path to naturalize into citizens in other countries.

The participants are currently members of the population who are transitioning into the workforce. Consequently, they recognize that the method in which they would begin to introduce and identify themselves is shifting. Their identity is now being defined by which country's workforce they are or will be a member of. This has been indicated through the initial introductions made by the participants, as well as the female case study subject stating, "…the way in which I would portray myself in a work environment would depend on the ethnicity of my co-workers". To further illustrate, if the participant were to join the workforce in UAE, they would stress on the fact that they are Dubai-raised Indian immigrants. If they were to join the workforce in India, which would likely follow a period of pursuing higher studies there, the participants would emphasize on their time spent in India as their defining years. Finally, if they were to join the workforce in a western country or otherwise, they would distance themselves from being identified as Indian, and would rather promote that they are from the multicultural community of Dubai.

The country in which the participants pursued their higher education is significantly important, as the trajectory in which their 'dual identity' developed was dependent on this (Sanchez, 2009; Al-Rawashdeh, 2014; Cleveland, Rojas-Mendez & Laroche, 2016). To illustrate, participants who chose to pursue higher education in India later showcased attitudes in favour of developing their ethnic identity. While participants who pursued higher education in the UAE or in western countries showcased attitudes that were in favour of developing a multicultural identity. Subsequently, these participants would suppress their Indian identity, save for festival seasons and superficial displays of patriotism as a fashion statement. This has been reiterated several times by the participants, with one expressing, "…I do embrace my Indian-ness…I like to celebrate festivals, and I enjoy dressing up in ethnic clothes…it lets me experience my culture in a fun environment".

Conclusion

Overall, the second-generation Indian immigrants of Dubai seem to be in a state of denial. While they are Indian, as denoted by their passports and their cultural practices, they seem to limit their association to it. Their Indian identity has become somewhat of a fashion statement within the multicultural community they grew up in. However, this denial has come as a result of an unforgiving political environment. The nature of the UAE's political environment has led to the second-generation migrants displaying a severe disinterest in politics, however, there are exceptions to this. The environment in UAE has not encouraged political discourse which has led them to brush off their lack of political identity as a casualty, which has, in turn, contributed to the confusion they possess as being considered 'Indian'. However, this is where the paradox becomes apparent. While they do not identify as being Indian on first thought, they engage in superficial, celebratory, group displays of an emotional identity that can be associated with India. Moreover, if given the opportunity, most of them would prefer to either settle in Dubai or another country in the West, where they could potentially attain citizenship.

This confusion with regard to a valid political identity adds to the second-generation's process of transnationalism, which competes with the first-generation's process. Thereby, actively encouraging them to distance themselves from their Indian identity. However, a collective consciousness of the predicament this second-generation are witnessing has only been addressed recently. Hence, the puzzling nature of it has led to several members of the second-generation brushing it off and re-migrating to another country. Though, this possibility to re-migrate hangs on the fragile thread of India's foreign relations, which is a factor the second-generation does not seem to acknowledge. Moreover, while the second-generation understandably do not identify themselves to be truly Indian, the fact remains that the global community will always classify them as Indians first.

As mentioned previously, this area of research resonated with the researcher deeply. Through the study, they have observed that none of the second-generations agrees that they are truly 'Indian'. However, politically, their hands are tied. Therefore, they have learned to make due by undergoing the process of re-migration or attempting to integrate back into Indian society. They have hesitantly come to accept their duality, as the in-betweenness has become familiar to them. As they proceed with their lives and continue on their own paths, be it in the West, India, or UAE, they either begin to distance themselves from their Indian identity further or embrace it. Although, the former is a more common phenomenon. With a lack of a political identity they fully resonate with, they are driven to look for it elsewhere by attempting to integrate into a more welcoming melting pot like the United States of America. This movement has only distanced them from their Indian identity, except for superficial displays of patriotism, and celebration of their culture as a fashion statement.

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