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BECOMING A COLOUR OF THE RAINBOW: THE SOCIAL
INTEGRATION OF INDIAN HINDUS IN TRINIDAD,
ANALYSED ALONG A PHASE MODEL OF DIASPORA

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Abstract

This paper outlines the 150 years' history of the diaspora of Indian indentured workers and their offspring in Trinidad. The majority of them are Hindus of various traditions. The developments of creating a home away from home and maintaining their practices and beliefs are contextualised in the theoretical discussion on 'diaspora' as an analytical category. In order to demonstrate the term's analytical heuristics, the paper outlines a phase model of diaspora. The model sets up five ideal-type phases, spanning from the incipient migration and arrival (phases 1), through various levels of adaptation, preservation and conflict (phases 2-4), up to an adaptation to the host society's structural patterns in the social and economic spheres (phase 5). Apart from the societal and political processes involved, the phase model concentrates on the dynamics of religious change which the transplanted Hindu tradition(s) have undergone in the course of time. Also, of prime importance is the shift of identificational emphasis observable among the members of the Indian diaspora groups (both Hindu and Muslim). It is argued that the preservation of the religious specificity of the migrant group, which often is different from the dominant religious affiliation of the resident society, does not hinder the social integration of the group. Rather, both the keeping of a heritage of difference and at the same time a convergence with the resident society's socio-economic patterns can go very well together.

The Caribbean island of Trinidad faced a proliferation of Hindu temples during the 1950s. Researcher Carolyn Prorok spoke of a "dramatic increase in temple building" (Prorok 1991: 86). The construction of new temples went back to the renewed interest in "India" and in Hindu *bhakti* devotion, observable among the descendants of the indentured workers shipped from India to the Caribbean during the 19th century. The temples were styled in a new architectural form,

mirroring Christian churches, relying in fact, however, on a combination of known Hindu temple and assembly forms. This in Hindu terms, innovative temple architecture thus brought forth the "Trinidadian temple" (Protok 1991: 83). It is characterised by its long hall, filled with numerous rows of benches, and a raised area at the hall's end, topped with a dome to indicate that it is here the deities reside. Of equal interest is that during this time the temples not only provided further homes for the transplanted gods. However, they also served as places for political agitation of the Indian based political party, the People's Democratic Party. During the 1950s, political aims and religious concerns appeared indistinguishable, the "Hindu community" being both a religious and a political body of interest.

This introductory description relates to the third and in my mind critical phase of the developmental scheme of five phases, which shall be outlined in this paper. It is characteristic that the new architectural construction, making up only one of many religious innovations during this time, coincided with a process of emancipation from the established Indian patterns. It, likewise, expressed the firm wish to both adapt to the dominant society and to acquire a respected place in it. The developments also point to the fact that in specific social situations, an ethnic group's religious belonging can become very prominent and serve as a vital marker of the group's identity. This implies as well that the importance of religion might change over time, given both the national and the transnational contexts. The religious belonging might not be of prime importance to a migrant group all the time, but there are times, in which it is significant and this needs to be taken into consideration.

This paper shall be subdivided into a brief theoretical part and a descriptive and analytical part. Part I argues to conceive the notion of "diaspora" as an analytical category and offers a working definition of the term. Part II exemplifies the heuristics of this perspective in outlining a developmental scheme of diaspora. Apart from the societal and political processes involved, the phase model shall concentrate on the dynamics of religious change, which the transplanted tradition undergoes in the course of time. Also, of prime importance is the shift of identificational emphasis observable among the members of the diaspora. The dynamics shall be illustrated by the history of Indian immigrants and Hindu traditions in Trinidad.

Theoretical Considerations: "Diaspora" as an Analytical Category

During the last two decades, the notion of "diaspora" has gained a widespread popularity within the social sciences and cultural studies. Many scholars adopted the term as a sociological-geographic category to denote migrant groups and their transnational relationships (Tölölyan 1996). Post-modernists and culture critics employed the notion to refer to a specific type of experience and thinking, coining terms such as 'hybrid identities' and 'double consciousness' (Clifford 1994, Anthias 1998). Comparatively late, the term has also been taken up by historians of religions. John Himmels systematised ten factors in a diaspora religion's change and continuity, differentiating seven areas of research (Himmels 1996: 38-41, 1997).

Apart from outlining the history of Indian Hindus in Trinidad, this paper intends to direct attention to the analytical value and comparative heuristics of the diaspora term. In a previous paper I opted to conceive the notion as an analytical category and transnational tool, applicable to various contexts and semantic fields (Baumann 2000). In this respect I am closely following anthropologist Benson Saler who holds: "While anthropologists normally devote much attention to native categories in ethnographies of the peoples who utilise those categories, the time has come, I think, to borrow selectively from such categories and experiment with them as transnational tools. That is, we might try to use them for probing and describing the cultures of peoples who do not employ them, just as we now use religion as a category for probing and describing the cultures of people who have no word and category for religion." (1993: 263). The same applies to the decontextualising of the diaspora notion from its Judaen-Hellenist coinage.

Suggesting a working definition, a diaspora situation shall be qualified by a group of people who perpetuates a *recollecting identification with a fictitious or far away existent geographic territory and its cultural-religious traditions*. The definition places emphasis on the enduring, often glorifying identification with a cultural-religious point of reference outside the current country of living. Prototypically, i.e. in most, but not all cases, this situation came about by a migration process and involves an identificational difference of the diaspora group to the society's dominant cultural and religious norms and orientations. This difference, a cultural-religious identification bound to a region and culture outside the current country of residence, constitutes an important aspect of

the fundamental tripolar inter-relatedness of diaspora group, country of origin and country of residence.¹

Based on these systematic considerations, a range of fascinating research topics emerges. A prominent research area is the importance of language attributed, both with regard to the diaspora group's identity maintenance and the importance of keeping – or not keeping – a “holy language” for the continuation of the religious tradition (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000). Of contested importance are likewise the means of transmitting the cultural and religious tradition to the next generation; the question of leadership, both in the religious and secular areas; the role and status of women and that of converts; questions of organisational and conceptual changes which the religious tradition inevitably faces in the new, diasporic context. In particular, the doctrinal sphere processes of universalisation, standardisation and compartmentalisation may occur. In modern diasporic contexts, the religion is less “caught”, but increasingly taught. This may be in Sunday classes, camps or school. Robert Jackson and Eleanor Nesbitt observed in their research on British-Indian Hindu children: “Hinduism’ becomes more of a chosen pursuit, a rich subject for organised children’s classes, camps and festivals, rather than a total way of life. [...] It seems likely that ‘Hinduism’, for the children we studied, is becoming a more discrete area of experience, one which can be deliberately avoided or which can be visited, for cultural enrichment or fellowship with co-religionists, rather than being a total way of life.”²

The purpose and aim of conceiving “diaspora” as an analytical tool and subsequently setting up a phase model of diaspora are at least fourfold: (1) The model functions as a frame which encompasses the various facets and modes of a diaspora group and its transplanted religious tradition while adapting to the new context. Such adaptations may include forms of conservative traditionalisation, pragmatic reinterpretation of times, personnel or rituals as well as innovative creation of new forms and contents. The emphasis most likely varies

over time. (2) Differentiating developments taking place over a century or longer into singular phases enables to better account for the factors and particularities which have brought about shifts and changes. This separation reduces the complexity to accountable units (individual phases) and enables to follow up the changes of process in a systematised way. (3) As the model and its historic exemplification will make clear, a socio-economic and political integration of a diaspora group can turn out well without the group surrendering its specific religious identity. Adapting structurally and at the same time keeping a religious difference to the host society's dominant faiths are no mutually exclusive stances. Rather, preserving the identificational difference can provide successful means in the integration process (4) Finally, in comparative perspective, the model might be taken to locate a diaspora group within one of the specified phases. For example, do members of the diaspora group still primarily identify with their former country of origin (phases 1 and 2)? Or has an increasing number of the diaspora group started to emancipate from the political and religious norms of the former country of origin and now rather emphasises to become a full member of the society they live in (phase 3)? Such a locating provides heuristic insights and directs attention to facets and factors hitherto unnoticed within the overall developmental process.

A Phase Model of Diaspora and Indian Hindus in Trinidad

A diasporic situation does not remain the same over time. The mutual relations between diaspora group, country of origin and country of residence change constantly, at times slowly, at times rapidly. In contrast to the prevalent view that the nature of a diaspora group inherently is conservative and traditional, keeping out all changes, it is necessary to develop an understanding that adaptive modifications take place all the time. Some of these changes are striven for, others are reluctantly admitted. Sociologist Robin Cohen justly qualified a diaspora – apart from its negative connotations of homesickness and oppression – as a “site of creativity” (1997: 4). To capture these transitions in time, both of the diaspora group itself and of the tripolar relations, an analytical phase model of diaspora can be theoretically fruitful.

Scholars have separated the phases on basis of various criteria.

¹ Note, emphasis is placed on defining the adjective “diasporic” rather than the noun “diaspora”. See in more detail Baumann (2000: 325-328; 2003). Adam McKee-own suggested a similar approach (1999: 311). The characteristic triangular relationship has been pointed to in detail by Hertzage (1991), Safian (1991) and Cohen (1997).

² Jackson and Nesbitt (1993: 179, 182). There is a growing amount of valuable studies on these topics, see Williams (1988), Knot (1991, 1997), Vertovec (1997), Coward, Hinneells and Williams (2000), Baumann, Lucifora and Wilke (2003).

Some took orientation by the generational shift observable, i.e. the generation of the immigrating people (1st generation), their children (2nd generation), their grand-children (3rd generation) and so forth. At times, however, it is difficult to delineate such generational phases, especially so if the process of immigration continued several decades (see the example below). Another differentiation of phases has been proposed by waves of immigration (e.g. Knott 1991: 95-98). Other researchers have taken as the prime criteria changes in the legal sphere, e.g. change of immigration laws, for example during the 1960s in the U.S.A., Canada and Australia. Last but not least others emphasised internal changes of the diaspora group itself, e.g. the frequency of building temples (Prorok 1991).

In contrast to such primarily historic approaches the suggested model bases its differentiation on abstracting and typifying significant characteristics. The model consists of five phases of varying length. The scheme spans a time of some 150 years. The phases singled out should be taken as ideal types, primarily differentiated for analytical and heuristic reasons in order to enhance an understanding of the complex situations involved. The model should neither be understood in strict chronological terms nor in terms of successive stages. Rather, the model aims to condense the main trend of observable developments and to systematise them.

As follows, the exposition shall state the analytically selected processes in general, abstract terms first. Then, these patterns shall be briefly illustrated by example of the history of Indians and Hindu traditions in Trinidad. In fact, I developed the phase model on the basis of studies related to the socio-political incorporation of indentured workers from India in the Caribbean. This history was compared with developments as outlined in studies on German migrants and their history in Chile in the 19th and 20th century. In the analytical comparison, significant parallels and typical issues emerged.³

³ In comparative view, Speckmann's fivefold differentiation of the social incorporation of Indian workers in Dutch Guyana (1965: 262-267) and Waldmann's fivefold "phase scheme" of German emigrants in Chile (1982) have been vital. In addition, main studies on indentured Indian workers in the Caribbean referred to have been, La Guerre (1985), Vertovec (1992), Sanaroo et al. (1995).

Phase 1: Arrival, Reorganising Social and Cultural Life

The migration process and arrival in the new country necessarily constitutes the first phase. Pressing problems for the newly arrived migrants are coping with strangeness and homesickness, learning the host country's language, starting to understand the everyday style of life and finding employment. Following this stage of contact and initial settlement, which might be constructed as a phase in its own right, subsequent steps to arrange life are taken. By and by, the migrants employ measures to reconstruct, even to the smallest extent, ways of social and cultural life known from home. Certainly, the basis for this reconstruction is the country of emigration. During this phase, only few relations exist with the host society, mainly constituted by work relations. The focus of interest and identification clearly rests on the migrants' own group, strengthened by experiences of feeling foreign and socially excluded and discriminated. The family, if part of the migration, receives primary attention. Forms of religious practice mainly take place in the home. If men are the first and more or less the only ones to have migrated, religious observances are hardly followed at all.

Indian Hindus in Trinidad: Colonial agents of the British Empire had recruited Indians to work on the sugar-cane plantations in Trinidad. In the course of this indentured workers program, from 1845-1917 some 144,000 Indians arrived in Trinidad. The workers had to fulfil a five-year work period and then could either return to India or stay in Trinidad. Most of the later "free Indians" opted to stay, especially so as the option arose to exchange the return trip to India for a small plot of own land. Thus, from the 1870s onwards, former indentured workers increasingly became residential and smallholders. The farmers founded Indian villages in the so-called 'sugar belt', the West and South of Trinidad, being thus geographically separated from the main area more to the North. These "East Indians", as they were named, strove to establish social and cultural forms known to them from India. In modified forms, the extended family was recreated, likewise the *pancayat*, a village jurisdiction. The caste system, however, attenuated more and more, due to the levelling of restrictions on the long ship journey and during plantation work. Only brahmins, members of the ritually highest caste, aimed and also achieved to preserve their status. It was they as religious authorities that increasingly monopolised the forms of devotion, ritual and doc-

trinal interpretation. In this respect, Peter van der Veer and Steven Vertovec spoke of a "Brahmanisation of Hindu traditions" (1991) in the Caribbean. This process went hand in hand with the marginalisation of so-called popular Hindu practices and elements. In this early phase already, the transplanted Hindu traditions were modified and subjected to change. Nonetheless such reconstructions, "for the Indians, religion provided psychological protection, a sense of self-worth with which to arm themselves against contempt of the society. The Pandits and the Imams became influential leaders of the Indian community because they could offer this kind of psychological aid." (Bereton 1981: 112). Certainly it should not go unmentioned that despite the vast majority of Indians being Hindu (86%, decreasing due to Christian missionary endeavours), a substantial and continuing number of Indians had been Muslims (12%⁶-15%).⁴

Phase 2: Intensifying Relations Between Diaspora Group and Country of Emigration

The second phase is characterised by processes of becoming established more firmly in the adopted country. The myth of return has declined, perspectives of staying for a longer term come to the fore. A proliferation of forming social, educational and religious institutions in one's specific tradition is observable. The migrants set up churches, temples, mosques and other places of worship. These form rally points for both religious and social gathering.⁵ The growing up of the next generation as well as the awareness that a return appears more and more unlikely are driving forces to sacralise new places for God and gods and to become established for long. At the same time, these endeavours underscore that the migrant group resists pressures to give up one's religious-cultural specifics and heritage. Warding off

⁴ See in detail for this time also Bereton (1981, 1985), Bereton and Dookeran (1982), Klass (1991: 14-27), Laurence (1994), Ramessar (1994), Changes in Hindu traditions have been analysed by van der Veer and Vertovec (1991), Vertovec (1992: 106-127, 1996). For the Indian Muslims respectively Trinidadian Muslims, see Prorok and Hemmati (1993), Parmasad (1993: 51-52), Samaroo (1996). Here and in the following, it will be referred to Trinidad only, not to Trinidad and Tobago, the now official nation-state. The two islands were joint administratively in 1889. In Tobago only very few Indians reside.

⁵ Instructive case studies are provided in ter Haar (1998) and Warner and Wiltner (1998).

assimilation, members of the diaspora group intensify bonds with the country of origin. Typically, the migrants invite religious authorities from the former home country in order to teach and to legitimise the newly established places of devotion. The focus of attention clearly rests with the country of origin.

In colonial Trinidad, speaking roughly of the first half of the 20th century, Indians clearly remained at the bottom of the socio-economic-cultural ladder of society. The Indian segment constituted a third of the Trinidadian population, some 86,000 people in 1901 (31.5%) and some 196,000 people in 1946 (35.1%). Nevertheless, "Indians were considered to be separate and apart from the host society. Despite their increasing numerical strength, the Indians were regarded as an exotic group, marginal to Trinidad society, insufficiently integrated to be a part of it." (Bereton 1979: 177).

Despite this overt marginalisation, those few Indians who had acquired a British-Christian education and become "westernised", formed first own societies and produced newspapers in Hindi. In particular, as social upward climbers they spoke out against the negative image of the "heathen Coolie" and worked on acquiring a more respected place in society. Among these urban, educated "East Indians", a growing self-confidence strove for claiming rights and own representations. Also, since about 1910, well-versed *swamis* and *gurus* from India visited the Caribbean. They taught Hindu principles and opposed Christian missionary efforts. Hindus built temples in increasing numbers (Prorok 1991).

During the 1930s and 1940s, interest in India intensified tremendously as the independence movement in so-called Motherland India grew strong. In public rallies and processions, Indians in Trinidad sang the Indian national anthem and carried the Indian flag. As Trinidadian historian Kusha Haraksingh tells us: "It was a time when Indians felt they were on the march", both literally and socio-politically (1988: 119). The identificational focus distinctly rested on India, both with regard to political aspirations and religious-cultural bondage.

Phase 3: The Focus of Identification Turns

In phase three of the developmental model of diaspora, a crucial shift of the focus of attention is observable. The country of origin receives less

and less attention, whereas the host country moves to the fore. In particular, this transition takes place if demanded rights are granted to the group and the socially marginalised people gradually become respected and accepted. Processes may run as follows: Some members of the former immigration group have climbed up the ladder of social prestige, often at the expense of social and religious assimilation, i.e. change of name, conversion. They now opt to achieve socio-political participation. This demand for participation may occur during phase 2 already, voiced by individual spokespersons. In this current phase, however, the call for participation receives support on a larger basis. In particular, an end of the social marginalisation of the group is called for and political rights, own schools, possibilities for careers and a share in the resources of the society are called for. The demand to exercise rights and freedom may stir up conflicts; tensions may arise with the host society. On the other hand, if the demands are conceded to the aspiring group of people, an increased convergence of the (former) immigrant group to the host society takes place. The socio-political concessions nurture a rising readiness on the side of the diaspora group to adapt and to focus on the requirements of the country of residence.

In a parallel way, the shift of attention takes relevance for the shape of religious life. Former tight bonds are loosened, they become optional and weaker. Instead, the diaspora group aims to create its own interpretation and contextual understanding how religious norms and practices can be lived in the socio-cultural environment, different from home. Only such adapted forms and contextualised interpretations would ensure the continuity of the heritage and its loyal and self-convinced practice within the next generation. New interpretations are proposed, innovations are ventured and elements of tradition are selected and reinterpreted. Both politically and religiously, the diaspora group strives to gain an increased independence from the norms and expectations posed by the (former) home country.

During this phase, the "dilemma of the diaspora" (Heritage 1991: 20) becomes obvious: On the one hand, the diaspora members aim to stay true and faithful to the former, traditional way of life and its cultural-religious heritage. As it is voiced, only a conservative maintenance of the established and known customs and forms would safeguard a survival of the diaspora group's uniqueness. On the other hand, members wish to become socio-politically integrated in the society, which they have for chosen for permanent residence. Adaptive forms of cultural and religious expressions should guarantee the

continuity and handing on to the generations to come. It is in this phase that splits and schisms mirror the ambiguous situation, especially if the group is large. Some stress to perpetuate rituals and doctrinal education in a rather conservative way, others opt to foster adaptations and innovations.

With regard to Indians in Trinidad, this third phase took place during the late 1940s to the early 1960s. The happiness and pride about India's independence in 1947 changed to a disillusionment about that country. Despite all political rhetoric, no Indian politician took interest in the sorry plight of the marginalised overseas Indians. Although Indians had lived in Trinidad for a century and constituted, with some 200.000 people, a third of the population, they still enjoyed no political say or administrative representation. "East Indians" still comprised by far the most illiterate and the most economically depressed ethnic group in the society (Singh 1985: 48, Ramessar 1994: 141).

However, since the mid-1940s, in the forerun of Trinidad's independence in 1962, social and political concessions were granted to the "East Indians". In 1946, adult franchise was given on a general basis, including the "East Indians". Likewise, Hindu marriages were officially recognised since that year. Hoping to win the then needed Indian political support, the demand for own Hindu and Muslim schools, voiced for a long time, was conceded. Last but not least, Indians were allowed to form own political parties. Bhadase Sagan Maraj (1920-1971), "a 'rag to riches' success of the Brahmin caste" (Singh 1985: 54) and leader of the 1950 formed central Hindu organisation Samatan Dharm Maha Sabha, succeeded to establish schools in the rural, Indian based regions of Trinidad. In these schools, children were taught in the common British based curriculum and the English language. According to Hindu activist Ken Parmasad "the school building program was a massive effort in self-mobilisation and community service [...] The schools became the symbol of a people who through their own efforts and sacrifices, were determined to overcome the limitations of their circumstances." (1995: 50). Contrary to the hitherto unavoidable exposition to Christian (missionary) education, the schools taught Hindu principle, based on a seven-point declaration of faith. The Creed formed the final point of the continual process of doctrinally and ritually standardising the heterogen Hindu traditions.⁶

⁶ See on this Vertovec (1989: 1992: 108-127) and van der Veer and Vertovec (1991).

In the political field, Maraj established the People's Democratic Party, striving to gain a say in Trinidad. The party, however, was not only plainly ethnic, i.e. Indian based, but also overtly Hindu in orientation. The unconcealed party politics by Maraj and the numerous brahmin priests in the newly built Hindu temples alienated the Muslim and Christian Indians. These constituted almost a third of the Indian population at that time. The split of the Indian segment and vote along religious lines left the political representation without a victory.

All these activities, whether it is on the political, educational or religious level, unmistakably showed that the focus of attention and identification had shifted decidedly. It was no more the idealised India, but Trinidad and the increased opportunities due to granted concessions, which stepped up as prime focus of concern and identification. It was exactly during the 1950s and early 1960s that in religious matters lasting innovations were brought forward: Not only did the leaders of the dominant Hindu organisation create a common *Prayer Book* and an essentialising Creed, unknown in India. It was also during this time that Hindus founded numerous new temples and established a new architectural form of the Hindu temple.

The so-called Trinidadian temples, which evolved during this time, were styled in their architectural form along Christian churches. They relied in fact, however, on a combination of known Hindu temple and assembly forms. These Trinidadian temples have a long hall, filled with numerous rows of benches. At the hall's end we find a raised area, topped with a dome to indicate the place where the deities reside. The temples provided a weekly service on Sunday morning. The participants no longer sit on the floor, but on benches, listening to a sermon and jointly singing hymns of devotion. The self-conscious emancipation from the Indian model was coupled with a close orientation along Christian patterns, both efforts aiming to gain respectability for the Hindu tradition in Trinidad (Prorok 1991: 82-87).

Phase 4: On-going Structural Adaptation

Returning to the diaspora phase model, developments in phase four depend to a large extent on the responses the host society has given to the diaspora group on their demand for participation and rights in

the phase before. If educational and professional options are granted and admission is given to climb up the ladder of social prestige, the process of structural adaptation and acculturation, started in phase 3, continues, often at an accelerated speed. If, however, such options are not granted, despite the diaspora group's rapprochement, reactions on the side of the diaspora group differ from obsequious retreat into one's religious-cultural niche on the one hand, to protest and socio-political conflicts on the other.

Such clashes and struggles are interpreted more often than not as cultural conflicts. A sense of foreignness on the one side and legitimate sense of belonging to the country on the other become obvious in public disputes. In particular, interpreted as cultural conflicts, the debate is linked to religious and cultural symbols, norms and orientations and thus takes on a heightened commitment on both sides. Custodians of the society's status quo, who deny a share of social resources, demand that the diaspora group should not only structurally, but also identificationally adapt and assimilate in order to have a right to be fully accepted. In this context, the notion of diaspora can acquire a politicised meaning as it points to the diaspora group's difference of religious-cultural identification. Members of the diaspora group, most often ordinary citizens of the state of residence for long, refer to the country's rights of freedom of expression, which should apply to all members of the state.

In the religious sphere, the spectrum from conservative-traditional to adaptive-innovative interpretations as means to continuing and maintaining the religious-cultural uniqueness of the diaspora group will be broadened and deepened. For example, spokespersons having personally visited the country of origin, may strongly opt to return to the traditional customs and practices. They condemn adaptations and changes in life-style or religious observance. These are considered as lukewarm compromises. Furthermore, additional and new traditions may arrive in the country of residence and establish a following among the diaspora group. This and on-going adaptive innovations further enrich the religious spectrum.

In Trinidad, the 1950s with their structural convergence of the Indian segment and their religious innovations were followed by a period of social-political tiredness and religious disinterest in the late 1960s. Quite a number of anthropologists forecasted the end of Hinduism in Trinidad. The increasing inroad of Pentecostalism among rural Hindus (not among Muslims) in addition accelerated the observ-

able decline. "Throughout the island Hindus felt themselves to be 'on the defensive' against evangelical Christian criticism. This attitude contributed to an overall sense of decline among Hindus" (Vertovec 1992: 124).

However, in the wake of the Black-Power Movement a self-conscious Hindu youth movement came to the fore. Students, those who had received their education in the Hindu schools established in the 1950s, toured the Indian villages in order "to propagate Indian culture, to re-awake the apathetic people".⁷ Furthermore, the oil boom of the 1970s and its loads of surplus monies facilitated to bring forth a Hindu revival in the late 1970s. The new richness in Trinidadian society, which markedly held off conflicts between the two equally strong ethnic groups of Blacks and Indians (both 40% of the population), also enabled Indians to acquire more prestigious jobs and to gain both socially and religiously an increasing share in the society.⁸

Phase 5: Becoming a Colour of the Rainbow

Phase five, finally, depends on the developments having taken place in the previous phase. If the host society has granted access to prestigious jobs and power, the process of structural adaptation and acculturation of the diaspora group continues to a level of indistinguishability of its members from those of the host country. This relates to life-style, educational attitudes and common ideals. In particular, as can be observed in relevant cases, members of the diaspora group can be observed in relevant cases, members of the diaspora group highly identify with the country's achievements. National symbols and ideals feature high. The country, experienced as foreign by the ancestors, has become the new home and the centre of identification-attention.

This adoption of structural patterns in the social and economic spheres does not entail assimilation in the religious sphere. Rather, members of the diaspora group continue to perpetuate the specifics of their religion, giving public evidence of the peculiarities in big festivals and prestigious buildings. The formerly debated alternative to become *either* an assimilated member of the host society *or* to stay

apart, keeping one's heritage, has been resolved to a simultaneous 'both ... and'. This parallelism and convergence is shared and accepted on the side of both the host society and the diaspora group.

In Trinidad, this fifth phase of intensified socio-economic adaptation and national integration of Trinidadian Indians was so to speak topped in the political sphere: In 1995, the Indian and Hindu Basdeo Panday became Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Exactly in its 150th year of presence, a member of the century-long down-trodden segment of Trinidadian society was voted to fill the most prestigious position in society. Also during the 1990s, Indian traditions have acquired a respected place in the hitherto Christian-Black-Creole dominated public domain. This is evidenced by way of splendidly built, representational Muslim mosques and Hindu temples or by way of commemorating main religious festivals as national holidays. No more pejoratively categorised as "East Indians", Indo-Trinidadians strongly identify themselves with Trinidad, its nation, people and land.

Although stereotypes and tensions among the Black and Indian segments have by no means vanished completely, the willingness to form one 'rainbow nation' stands out. Last but not least, this became apparent in the program of the Indo-Trinidadian radio FM 103 (inaugurated in 1993), as manager Surujratan Rambachan emotionally recalls: "When FM 103 started official broadcasting, a significant event took place. The National Anthem of T&T [Trinidad and Tobago] was sung in Hindi and recorded with the use of the Tabla, the Harmonium, Sitar and pan. Jit Samaroo and Mungal Patasar [...] in that one act showed that national unity is possible, that cultural crossovers are possible without having to 'give up' our cultural traditions or values. In that one act, a veritable statement of presence, of loyalty to nation, of identity with a country's aspirations and traditions was accomplished, FM 103 was part of this history."⁹

In the religious sphere, to sum up the developments, a proliferation of new Hindu groups, organisations and movements has come to the fore since the mid-1980s. The Maha Sabha is no longer the all dominating organisation. New groups and organisations such as Swaha or especially the Satya Sai Baba movement have been able to acquire a

⁷ Ken Parnasad in an interview with me on 12.11.1996, St. Augustine, Trinidad.
⁸ On oil boom and Hindu revival, see in detail Vertovec (1990b, 1992: 136-161), Klas (1991: 53-58). For the general socio-economic developments, see Ryan (1988).

⁹ Quote Rambachan (1994: 22). For Basdeo Panday and him becoming Prime Minister, see Ragoonath (1997). For the social and political incorporation of Indians, see Yeibngion (1993) and various authors in Samaroo et al. (1995). For the complexities of forming an 'Indian identity' among Indo-Trinidadians, see Korom (2000).

growing membership and interest. All, except the Maha Sabha, are represented at information stands centrally at the Diwali Nagar site (near Chaguanas, West central Trinidad). The Hindu *diwali* festival in Autumn is celebrated on a national scale at this festival site, attracting some 10,000 visitors. And these visitors do not only come from the Indian fold. In fact, the *diwali* festival has developed to a national event on equal par with Christmas and the Muslim *Id al-Fitr* festival. Commercialised to advertise and spread one's name, businesses, banks, insurances and companies sent out greetings to the 'Hindu community'. During *diwali* time, a popular fast food company even offers "The Meatiest tasting Veggie Burger ever!"¹⁰

Conclusion

This rather rough phase model does not primarily present an integration model, which might be developed there from. Rather, in an ideal type and basic way it aims to draw attention to both the complexity of a diasporic situation, constituted by the tripolar relations, and possible changes occurring. It certainly is easy to critically object that the scheme has been modelled in too close a way along the Trinidadian case. This is frankly admitted, especially so with regard to the last phase. However, it has to be born in mind that the abstracted and typified processes have been developed on the basis of two quite distinct socio-political contexts and emigrant groups – that of Indians in the Caribbean and that of Germans in Chile. Apparent similarities of processes and close correspondences of shifts are observable in these different diasporic contexts.

Certainly the model can be sub-differentiated and be more precise in certain parts. In particular, the initial phase might be sub-differentiated, as the arrival of women and children appear to be a crucial

factor in a diaspora's development (Williams 1988, Knott 1991, 1997). Also, developments within a diaspora group and its relations to both the host society and the (former) country and culture of origin may end in phase 2 or 1 already. Historic cases have shown this, e.g. Greek colonies in the Archaic period (Boardman 1973, Buckley 1996). In addition, a diaspora group may vanish by way of acculturation and then finally assimilating structurally and religiously-culturally into the host society. The case of Huguenot diasporas in various states of Europe and in the New World and their gradual dissolution may provide cases of such an end of diaspora (Brandenburg 1990, Fletcher 1992). In this paper, only one trend of development has been delineated, inviting to conceptualise divergent developments in phases four and five in succeeding models, based on other experiences and histories. Finally, in due course a sixth phase is likely to ensue, as in the Trinidadian case the increasing interest in the Sai Baba and other Indian Hindu traditions points to processes of 're-diasporisation'.

Learning from the Caribbean is not the full message, however. Apart from the model's heuristics in structural terms, the model points to the important fact that identificational differences in religious terms do not impede or prevent processes of integration and national identification. As proposed, an identificational difference can go hand in hand with a structural adaptation and acculturation. Even more, as empirical studies argue, involvement in cultural-religious affairs, i.e. participation in the activities of a diaspora temple, mosque or *gurdwara*, may contribute to adapt more quickly to the new context (e.g. Himmels 1996: 266-269, Warner and Wittner 1998, Nökel 2002). Religious institutions provide the solid base of cultural-religious identification and it is from that self-conscious base that migrant and diaspora people take actions to cope successfully with the demands of the host society.

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- ¹⁰ Advertisement by Royal Castle in *Trinidad Guardian*, 26.10.1996, p. 19. The new plurality of Hindu traditions becomes apparent not only in the display stalls at the Diwali Nagar site, but also in the listing of some 40 groups and organisations in Samaroo et al. (1995: 101) and in the annual Diwali supplement of the national newspaper *Trinidadian Guardian*. For the Sathya Sai Baba organisation, see Klass (1991: 116-172). The non-Maha Sabha fold can be estimated to constitute almost a fifth of the about 265,000 Hindus in the mid-1990s, see: Baumann (2003: 221-225). Among the entire 1.3 million population of Trinidad and Tobago, Hindus make up 23.7%, Muslims 5.8%, Christians in total 68.2%, according to the census 1990; *Annual Statistical Digest*, Port of Spain, Trinidad (1994: 10).

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