

## On the consequences of migration from below: ethnic colonization and the dynamics of transnational networks

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One of the most salient consequences of the processes of globalisation let loose by the huge acceleration in the speed and the equally rapid decline in the cost of long-distance communication during the past half century has been a dramatic increase in the scale and character of transnational migration. During the previous two centuries long distance migration had not only progressed at a much slower speed, but was also very largely a monopoly of the rich and powerful. Indeed from that perspective one of its most salient manifestations was the process of European imperial and colonial expansion. This not only brought the greater part of the non-European world under the hegemony of one or the other of the major European powers, but also saw the export of large numbers of migrants who promptly set about colonizing large parts of North and South America, of Africa and Australia, comprehensively subordinating the indigenous inhabitants of those regions to their own interests.

Much has changes during the course of the past half centuries. All those formal imperial structures have now collapsed, so enabling the formerly subjugated regions of Asia and Africa to strike out on their own – at first politically, and now economically, with ever increasing success. However what I want to highlight today is yet another dimension of the way in which roles have been reversed, and which Euro-America's hitherto taken for granted position of global hegemony is consequently being ever more seriously challenged. Long-distance movements of people of non-European descent, together with their consequent construction of ever-expanding ethnic colonies in the heartlands of Euro-America, is beginning to have just as much of an impact on the underlying structure of the global order as the success of Samsung and Toyota in filling Euro-American households with consumer products.

### 1 Migration

Human migration is invariably driven by efforts to gain access to improved material benefits in some distant location. As a result it is readily susceptible to economic analysis in terms of the costs imposed upon and rewards gained by the persons involved, whose relocation can in turn be readily be noted – and hence enumerated – as an when migrants cross international frontiers. Hence a vast and statistically sophisticated literature on the subject of migration is by now available. Nevertheless it is becoming increasingly clear that such an individualised – and hence atomised – approach to the study of migration almost inevitably produces disappointing results, not least because the conclusions which can be drawn from such studies tend to be as misleading as they are inadequate.

We misunderstand migrants if we seek to make sense of their behaviour on a purely individual basis. Very few are true pioneers, breaking new ground on a wholly unprecedented basis. Instead the vast majority move from their starting point to their destination along what are already well-worn tracks which have been laid down by numerous predecessors. Migratory movements are social processes which build up their own dynamic as knowledge of the opportunities available at some distant destination, as information about the route best followed in order to get there filters back from successful pioneers to their original villages of origin. And as each new migrant follows in the pioneers' footsteps, reinforcing yet further the good news about the real opportunities that are indeed available in some distant but hitherto unknown niche in the social order, so more and more successors will in turn take the plunge. As many commentators have noted, chain migration in this sense is almost invariably a salient feature of long-distance migratory movements.

Chain migration is grounded in mutual communication between migrants themselves, and is consequently not just a socially but a *culturally* ordered process. Migrants make use of their of their own specific values, understandings and mutual loyalties – more often than not articulated in terms of reciprocities of kinship – in order to implement the whole exercise. Hence migrants invariably find themselves constructing transnational networks which are simultaneously global in their reach and intensely parochial in terms both of their roots and their practice. Some commentators have aptly concluded that the outcomes of these processes are best described as *glocal*. The contemporary world is criss-crossed with innumerable glocal networks of this kind, which appear to stretch from everywhere to everywhere.

## 2 'From above' and 'from below'

During the imperial period, most such transnational networks extended 'from above' – or in other words from the centres of imperial hegemony located in Euro-America, from where they reached 'downwards' into subordinated territories towards its South and East.<sup>1</sup> However all attempts to move in the opposite direction were tightly constrained. Although the imperial powers often implemented more or less forced migratory movements within the south – firstly by means of slavery, and later by means of indentured labour – all attempts of subordinated people to establish themselves in the imperial heartlands, as well as in increasingly autonomous colonial territories in North America and the Southern Ocean were nipped firmly in the bud.

In the past half century all this has changed, however. Partly because of the collapse of formal imperial structures, but above all because virtually all the more affluent manufacturing sectors ran acutely short of unskilled labour, and especially of hands willing to undertake tasks which were also menial, unpleasant and low paid, entrepreneurs 'from below' soon began to discover all sorts of more or less vacant niches in Euro-American labour markets. Their arrival was a godsend to employers, who would otherwise have been faced with a crippling level of unfilled vacancies. It was in these circumstances that innumerable transnational networks began to emerge from below, and soon began to deliver millions of migrant workers into the former imperial heartlands from which they had hitherto been excluded.

In the immediate post-Imperial period there was little opposition to these inflows, many of which stemmed from formerly colonised territories. Employers regarded the arrival of such migrant workers as a godsend, given that millions of newly affluent indigenous workers were only too happy to withdraw from the low-paid jobs at the bottom end of the labour market to which the immigrants were initially consigned. Moreover so long as the new arrivals confined themselves to that section of the labour market, their presence offered no serious threat to the interests of indigenous workers – so they had no need to protest either. However this conflict-free honeymoon did not last for long.

As the scale of the inflow increased, so indigenous workers became increasingly fearful that employers would sack them, and employee cheap migrant labour instead. Moreover the

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<sup>1</sup> Of course there were some exceptions to this pattern. Although located in the East, Japan extended implemented much the same program of imperial hegemony towards Korea and China.

migrants failed to remain as docile as many observers had initially expected. Slowly but surely they began to organise themselves collectively, and on that basis to demand better wages, and above all to end to the systematic exclusion to which they found themselves so routinely subjected. Moreover as their numbers increased so they, too began to coagulate together in their own terms. Just like their hegemonic predecessors who had moved in the opposite direction, they also began to construct ethnic colonies within which they made systematic efforts to reconstruct all the most significant social, cultural and religious institutions within the context of which they had ordered their personal and domestic lives back home. Members of the indigenous majority who saw these developments unfolding before their eyes reacted with ever growing alarm. Not only did the newcomers pay little or no attention to indigenous social and cultural conventions as they did so, but the more firmly entrenched these nascent colonies became, the more their members were in a position actively to challenge members of the indigenous majority for access to jobs, to housing and indeed to virtually all other kinds of scarce public resource.

These challenges also had a strong relationship to social class. Most of the new wave of immigrants came to fill vacancies at the bottom end of the labour market in the industrial and service sectors. Such jobs were overwhelming concentrated in urban areas, from where indigenous workers were moving out in large numbers into better public housing which was being constructed in the midst of a process of post-war slum clearance. It went without saying that the new immigrants initially establish themselves in these decaying inner-city areas, where the houses they occupied were as unwanted as the jobs they took. But given that this was their initial (largely uncontested) starting point, it also followed that as soon as they began to organise themselves to better their circumstances, the toes of those on whom they initially trod in doing so were members of the next group up in the social hierarchy: those who stood at the bottom end of the indigenous working class.

## 3 Backlash

Given the strongly hierarchical nature of Britain's indigenous social order, members of the middle and upper classes routinely sought to dismiss any complaints made by those standing at the bottom of the social order as an outcome either of ignorance or stupidity. They were certainly only too ready to do so in this case, with the result that all such complaints about the minority presence – and most especially of their commitment to colony-construction – were initially dismissed as mindless racism. Much has changed since then, however. A minority

settlements grew steadily in size, as colony-construction developed apace, and as members of those colonies used their self-constructed resources to press ever further upwards and outwards through the social order, so the ripples of hostility generated by their challenge have gradually spread further and further up the class hierarchy, so much so that by now no sector of Britain's indigenous population has remained untouched by these developments. Hence despite a constant verbal commitment to the premise that racism is largely absent from British society, exclusionistic attitudes towards the minority presence, and most especially towards their increasingly successful efforts at colony-construction, have become increasingly widespread.

The most salient way in which this backlash has manifested itself is in the sphere of immigration control. In the immediate aftermath of imperial collapse, most of the former imperial powers put few restrictions on the inflow of persons from their former colonies, partly because their labour was a valuable addition to scarce resources, but above all because of an unwillingness to put any restrictions on former emigrants – as well as their offspring – seeking refuge in the motherland, or those members of the indigenous population of the colonies who had compromised themselves in the eyes of their fellow-countrymen by collaborating with their now-departing colonial masters. Come the 1960s, however, the worm rapidly began to turn. As a result of ever more vocal cries of alarm from the indigenous inhabitants of inner-city amongst whom the non-European members of the inflow began to settle, Britain and the Netherlands, and then France, Germany and all the other industrialised countries in Western Europe began to introduce ever more draconian forms of immigration control, explicitly aimed at halting the inflow on migrant workers of non-European origin.

However if the aim of these measures was to halt the process of ethnic colonization, the tap had been turned off far too late. By now a whole host of non-European minority groups had constructed well established niches for themselves in most of Europe's major industrial centres, and in each the process of ethnic colonisation was proceeding apace. The great majority of the early settlers had been young men; some were unmarried, but the great majority had left their wives and children back home in their villages of origin. As their ethnic colonies were growing more secure in socio-cultural terms, and as the doors of immigration control seemed set to close yet more tightly, many took the view that the time was ripe to call their wives and children to join them overseas. They made this decision not so much because they had begun to accept and assimilate themselves into the values and social conventions of the metropolitan societies into which they had settled, but rather

something close to the very inverse of that view. As their nascent ethnic colonies steadily crystallised, they began to feel that they constituted an arena within which the most significant dimensions of the values and conventions which they had used to order their domestic lives back home could be reproduced: so it was that the arrival of wives and children powerfully reinforced, rather than compromised and undermined, the vigour and vitality of the process of colony construction. Of course exactly the same process had taken place in European-sponsored processes of colonisation implemented from above: it was the arrival of wives and children which firmly cemented the Britishness of the British Raj in India. Firstly the incursion was taking place 'from below', rather than 'from above'; secondly issues of kinship – and more specifically the presence of sturdy and far-reaching obligations of mutual interpersonal reciprocity within extended kinship networks – have invariably played a much more salient role in latter-day processes on non-European chain migration and colony-construction.

#### 4 Kinship

Kinship reciprocities are an invisible asset. They cannot either be measured or enumerated, and hence captured for use within econometricians' models. In a world where statistics are expected to provide the foundation of every respectable argument, it follows that that which cannot be measured cannot matter. Indeed there is great doubt whether immeasurable factors even exist at all. Does this matter with respect to the issue of kinship?

In my view it probably would not matter at all if human beings actually behaved as the free-standing rational-choosing individuals which most contemporary economic models assume as a matter of course must be the case. Moreover as so-called modernism makes ever-deeper inroads into the Euro-American social order, such that individualism has steadily begun to undermine the last remaining bastion of collectivism at an interpersonal level – the nuclear family – the behaviour of individuals is beginning to conform ever more closely to the economists' underlying assumptions.

As the period during which children remain the dependants of their parents grows steadily shorter, and as conjugal ties become ever weaker and less permanent, every Euro-American society – or at least the indigenous component of the population of most Euro-American societies – is indeed beginning approximate ever more closely to one in which a collection of free-standing and free-choosing individuals interact with one another on the basis that no one individual has any *necessary* interpersonal obligations to anyone else. In such a society kinship would indeed be a vector of zero significance.

However very few non-European societies – and most especially those found in Asia – are currently ordered on anything like that basis. Kinship conventions in extra-European contexts vary enormously, but almost everywhere one looks one finds that the membership of the group includes far more persons than a conjugal pair and their dependent children, that the domestic group is strongly corporate in character (i.e. it is a joint family in some sense), and that such joint families are normally collectively embedded within clearly structured system of descent groups of some sort. Within such frameworks individual persons are emphatically *not* free agents. On the contrary they are routinely expected to subordinate their personal self-interest to the demands of the corporate group, and most especially those of the family. Only when those obligations have been fulfilled – which of course also gives them access to all the rights and benefits associated with group membership – can they legitimately move on to pursue their own more narrow personal interests.

In societies so organised, it is most emphatically not the free-standing individual which is the building block of the social order, for individual persons are by definition subsumed within the corporate groups of which they are members. Instead it is these miniature corporations – in other words corporate families, and to a rather lesser extent the wider kinship networks into which they themselves are aggregated – which form the basic building blocks of the social order. However in no way does this set of conventions eliminate the prospect of autonomy, self-interest and rational choice as contemporary Euro-American observers often naively conclude. Rather the pursuit of choice and self-interest largely takes place at a collective *familial* level – where it is manifested no less vigorously than it is at the more individualistic levels at which most Euro-Americans currently prefer to operate. In these circumstances the vector of kinship has anything but a zero significance. Rather kinship plays an extremely salient role in all sorts of spheres of social – and economic – activity.

### 5 Transnational networks

No-where are the consequences of all this more manifest than in the contexts of transnational migration. In the first place the process of chain migration is directly facilitated by the presence of corporate family structures and as well as extended kinship networks, since these provide a ready channel for the transmission of information about the opportunities available overseas, as well as facilitating the passage of additional members of these networks along the escalators of chain migration. In these circumstances lack of capital to cover the cost of travelling to a ready-made destination – which now very often includes the very considerable

cost of evading exclusionary immigration controls – is no problem. Those members of the network who have already established themselves overseas are invariably ready and will to cover those costs, in the confident expectation that newcomers will repay the debt to their kinsfolk as soon as they gain access to enhanced income-earning opportunities overseas.

Secondly the processes of settlement, of ethnic colony construction, and perhaps most importantly of all the rapid exploitation of whatever novel niches within which to generate an enhanced income which network members identify are likewise greatly facilitated when such networks of kinship reciprocity are in place. To be sure such assistance is normally only offered on a relatively parochial basis, for really close cooperation and assistance is normally only extended to those with whom has relatively close kinship connections. However the circle of persons who fall under that head may well be several hundred strong, and very often scattered across a variety of spatial locations. Such networks are consequently particularly well placed to take advantage of global changes in opportunity structures.

Last but not least such developments rapidly lead to the emergence of parochially ordered transnational networks which facilitate the circulation of information, of assets and of personnel on a global basis; and it is on the current dynamics of these *global transnational networks from below* that I really want to talk about today, not least because their significance is likely to become ever more salient in the years to come.

### 6 Transnational networks

The processes of globalisation which are transforming our contemporary world are largely driven by transnational networks. However almost all current discussion of those processes concentrates on the seemingly all-powerful networks which emanate from above, most especially in the shape of formally organised multi-national corporations. What I want to suggest here is that these entrepreneurially driven networks from above are now being ever more actively matched – and indeed confronted – by countervailing processes from below.

Some of the countervailing networks from below not only operate within the same spheres of activity as those emanating from below, but are also structured – at least on the face of it – in almost exactly the same way as their better established and hitherto hegemonic rivals. Moreover some of these transnational enterprises are now beginning their Euro-American rivals at their own game. Hence, for example, Toyota is expanding so rapidly that it is set to overtake General Motors – which long since ceased to make significant profits – in the production of cars. Meanwhile Korea and China lead the world in the production of computer

hardware, and it surely won't be long before one or other of India's software houses makes a take-over bid for Microsoft, not least because they can do the job more efficiently as well as more cheaply.

By contrast with such commercially driven initiatives making profits from the provision of goods and services, the transnational networks constructed by migrant workers in search of employment may seem, at least on the face of things, to be a phenomenon of an entirely different order. However closer inspection reveals a substantial range of commonalities, not least because both kinds of enterprise are implemented on a collective basis, and owe their success to their capacity to circulate – and hence to profitably redistribute amongst its members – ideas, assets and personnel on a global basis. To be sure the social origins of the instigators of latter may very different from the former. Most migrant networks initially mobilise people of peasant farming stock with few if any educational or professional qualifications, and less in the way of financial assets. Over and above their native wit, their principal assets are *cultural* in character, are largely embedded in the social and commercial skills associated with their experience as independent peasant farmers, which are in turn articulated through the capacity for mutual cooperation which arises from their membership of extended kinship networks. However what members of such networks share with more formally constituted commercial operations is an intense capacity for entrepreneurship: of seeking out new niches in which a profit can be turned, in providing the resources to enable network members to make the most of the opportunities within each such niche, and their constant commitment to the identification of additional niches to exploit, no matter how remote their spatial location may be. Hence there is a further specific dimension of the transnational networks with which we are concerned here originate 'from below': they also tend to emanate from some of the least well-resourced sectors of their home societies – not just in the countryside rather than the towns, but from the most ill-developed of rural areas.

That said, there is one further crucial parallel between these 'informal' transnational initiatives from below and those currently being mounted on a more formal basis by companies such as Toyota, Samsung and InfoSys – their impact as engines of economic redistribution between the developed economies of Euro-America and the rapidly developing economies of South and East Asia. It is that dimension of the phenomenon which we must now explore.

## **7 Transnational networks as engines for the global redistribution of assets**

One of the principal contemporary criticisms of the activities of Transnational corporations is that they are engines to facilitate the global redistribution of assets from the poor to the rich: Coca-colonisation in other words. What such arguments all too often overlook, however, is the extent to which globalisation is also giving rise to all manner of challenges to Euro-Americans' still largely taken for granted position of hegemony in the global market place – and that the export of people is proving to be just as powerful a vector in this process as is the export of goods and services. How, then, does the phenomenon of transnational migration emerge when viewed from this perspective?

### *7.1 Escalators to prosperity which punch holes in structural barriers*

In the first place each of the translocal networks which migrants set up to facilitate the process of chain migration can usefully be regarded as escalators which transport those fortunate enough to have access to one to step aboard in a location well out towards the periphery of the global economy, and to step off again in the midst of a highly developed metropolis well towards its core. It goes without saying that the distribution, length and sophistication of these escalators is far from uniform. Nevertheless all my experience of rural areas in the developing world suggests that migratory escalators of this general kind are extremely widespread. Thus far, however the great majority appear either to be trans-local or trans-regional, often with a focus on the national capital; only a minority are transnational, and of those only an even smaller proportion hit the global jackpot, in these sense that they have developed in such a way as to deliver personnel into the heart of the labour markets of Euro-America. However no matter how wide the gulf in living standards and opportunities that any given escalator may bridge, the implications for those who step aboard is much the same. It enables those in a position to do so an opportunity escape from the economically restricted circumstances in which they had the misfortune to be born, and to strike out in a distant arena where opportunities for material success – no less for their children than for themselves – are great deal wider than they would have been had they stayed back home. Translocal and transnational networks of this kind are therefore self-constructed vehicles whereby members of specific communities can set out to overcome the structurally determined condition of relative poverty in which they would otherwise have remained more or less permanently trapped. As such they transnational networks frequently have profound

structural consequences: each such initiative is by definition a challenge to the established socio-economic order.

However these challenges are full of paradoxes. Given that such networks only mobilise members of a specific local community, each such escalator is highly parochial in character; and however much its members' entrepreneurial activities may challenge the established order, their activities – considered by themselves – are unlikely ever to amount to much more than a pin-prick with the total scheme of things. Nevertheless when a multitude of networks emerge, all of which a pressing in the same direction, the structural consequences of the collective efforts can be profound. Substantial numbers of the otherwise marginalised may thereby manage to jump the barriers which had hitherto contain them, and hence seriously challenge the privileges which those who were responsible for constructing those barriers in the first place were seeking to sustain.

From this perspective the transnational networks which have arisen with such vigour from below can usefully be regarded as a means by which members of specific communities scattered throughout the developing world have made the most of whatever opportunities came their way to challenge two centuries of Euro-American hegemony by engaging in strategies of colonisation-in-reverse. The way in which they did so was entirely opportunistic: it was not pre-planned, but rather the outcome of innumerable entrepreneurial responses to specific contingencies. And whilst the impact of the activities of members any one such network may have been close to insignificant, their collective impact has been huge: a substantial – and still rapidly growing – proportion of the population in every developed economy is now made up of migrant workers and their offspring, whether they be Hispanics in the United States, South Asians in Britain, North Africans in France or Turks in Germany. As a result the population of Euro-America's heartlands is now far from uniformly Euro-American in origin. Moreover there is no turning back: the ethnic pluralism precipitated by reverse colonisation has now become an irreversible feature of the global social order.

### 7.2 *Ever more fiercely guarded boundaries rendered steadily more porous*

Through most of human history, states have welcomed any increase in the size of the population contained within its boundaries. More hands made for more workers, for more production and for higher levels of collective wealth. In consequence both immigration and high levels of fertility have generally been regarded as welcome phenomena: they added to nation's stock of human capital. Yet although this equation still holds good – with the

consequence that the fall of fertility levels to substantially less than replacement level bodes ill for the future in most highly developed societies – we live in an era when the practice of immigration control has become unprecedentedly draconian. Nevertheless these controls are highly selective. They are virtually non-existent in the case of those holding passports (themselves only introduced early in the twentieth century) issued by one or other the highly developed economies. Whether they arrive as businessmen, as tourists – or even as settlers – such persons are welcome almost everywhere. Those holding passports of less developed countries are subject to much strict scrutiny, especially if there is a prospect of them settling at their destination; however such exclusionary restrictions are routinely waived if the persons concerned are affluent businessmen, or better still are highly qualified professionals. Hence immigration controls have, in practice, a very specific target: precisely the kind of persons whom the escalators of chain migration have been delivering in to the metropolitan heartlands of the Euro-American world in such numbers during the course of the past half century. The policies currently being urgently developed in an effort to halt the resultant processes of reverse colonisation are coming to be known as 'migration management'.

In the face of all this an obvious question needs to be posed: will such policies achieve their desired objective? I am most sceptical. Indeed I find myself wholly in sympathy with the argument advanced by Jagdish Bhagwati in his article in *Foreign Affairs* entitled 'Borders Beyond Control'. In his article Bhagwati points to the structural issues which have rendered this outcome inevitable, including

- steadily shrinking fertility rates amongst the indigenous section of the population in virtually all the developed economies
- the ever-increasing reluctance of members of the indigenous population to undertake a wide range of low-paid menial tasks
- the impossibility of filling the resultant vacuum with out recourse to the import of labour from elsewhere
- the fact that all known efforts to bring market-driven flows of goods, of services – and ultimately of people – across borders has invariably led to the construction of loopholes (in other words smuggling and black markets) to achieve the desired ends

If this was not enough, the transnational networks to which the processes of chain migration have given rise constitute a wholly uncontainable 'enemy within' as far as the managers of migration of migration are concerned. Precisely because the members of such networks operate in the context of a transnational inter-personal social universe, in just the same manner as do the staff of multi-national corporation operating 'from above', within which they constantly circulate ideas, information, resources and of course *themselves* on an

everyday basis. Hence from a within-the-network perspective, national boundaries are of no significance: their social universe is at one level profoundly deeply parochial, since it is articulated through reciprocities of kinship, and where necessary of quasi-kinship, and at the same time comprehensively global, since in spatial terms the it extends to all those locations in a global arena where network members have established themselves. In other words these networks are strongly *glocal* in character, and in most cases becoming more so by the day.

### 7.3 Remittances

Migration never was a one-way trip. Almost migrants initially assume that their overseas adventures are merely temporary expeditions, at the end of which they expected to return home with their pockets filled with gold. Most of them do indeed meet with success: it is that which powers chain migration. However in most cases their overseas experiences tie them into their new locations far more firmly than they had ever imagined, with the result that their return home is frequently much delayed, and itself impermanent: as distant colonies become ever more firmly established migrants become much more likely to meet their Maker in some distant land than in the village where they were born. In other words migrants routinely find that they have translocalised themselves, as a result of having developed roots in several widely spatially separated locations.

Translocality in this sense is an ancient phenomenon: it has long been practiced by sailors and long-distance traders, for example. However in the contemporary world the phenomenon has been rendered far more salient as a result of the revolution in communications: not only has the successive introduction of the telephone, the fax and now the internet made long-distance communication unbelievably cheap and universally accessible, but air travel has rendered visits in all directions unprecedentedly affordable. Keeping in touch over long distances is now quite straightforward.

One major consequence of all this has been a sharp rise in the flow of remittances. Migrants have always sought to send money back home. Their purposes were normally two-fold. Firstly to provide financial support to their kinsfolk back home, not just for material reasons, but also to signal that just as they had not forgotten their kinsfolk, so they themselves should not be overlooked as distant – but not morally absent – members of the local community. Secondly, and consequently, they also saved for their ultimate return home when they would be able to celebrate all their sacrifices in distant lands by building a splendid new house in which to enjoy a comfortable retirement. However in past times getting money back home

was far from easy. Most usually it had to be delivered physically, either when the migrant himself made a visit back home, or when the funds could be entrusted to a kinsman who was going back himself.

The process of sending money back home has also been transformed by the communications revolution, so much so that the volume of such transfers has now become quite staggering. Recent calculations by the World Bank suggest that migrant workers in the developed world send remittances to a total of US\$ 150 billion per annum to their kinsfolk in the developing world through formal banking channels. Moreover that is only half the picture. As any traveller knows, the value of one's money shrinks substantially every time one uses a bank to convert it from one currency to another, and the costs rise even more if one wants funds delivered to a distant destination: anything between 10% and 20% can disappear in the process. Hence whilst the global banking system is now in a position to transfer funds to distant destinations – although much more rarely to remote parts of the countryside from which most labour migrants are drawn – the cost of doing so is very substantial.

Hence a further feature of the migrations process has been the growth of network-based strategies to facilitate the transfer of funds back to migrants villages of origin on an 'informal' basis – or in other words on a basis which by-passes the exceedingly costly value transfer systems provided by the formally constituted banking system. Value transfer networks of this kind can be found within virtually every migrant community, and can usefully be regarded as immediate counterparts of the escalators of chain migrations which developed to facilitate the passage of migrants to their chosen destinations. Value transfer networks deliver funds in the reverse direction, and initially did so on a physical basis: trusted returnees took the cash back home, and made deliveries as instructed. However as the volume of such transfers steadily increased, the process became steadily more institutionalised, and in the South Asian case drew heavily on an extremely ancient value transfer system known as Hawala.

Hawaladars – those who implemented hawala operations – were the commercial bankers of the Middle East and the Indian Ocean region in pre-imperial days. Relying of pre-established relationships of personal trust, grounded as ever in networks of kinship reciprocity, Hawaladars operating in widely separated commercial markets issued their customers (who were invariably long-distance traders) promissory notes known as *hundi* which were immediately encashable when presented to their partners elsewhere. The availability of the

*hundi* system enabled long-distance traders to finance all aspects of their business, and to repatriate their profits to their home base with having to expose them to the expense – and the danger of – of carrying large sums of bullion around with them. Meanwhile the Hawaladars used a system of back-to-back swaps (or as they put it an exchange of debt, *hawala*) to achieve the settlements which are a key feature of all translocal banking operations, no less in the formal than the informal sectors. Although hawala networks were pushed out towards the economic periphery by formally constituted (i.e. Euro-American) banks during the Imperial period, they never fell wholly into disuse. Hence as a combined result of the steady retreat of Euro-American hegemony in the face of the rising vitality of Asian trading networks, the available of new and far more effective forms of communications technology which yet further underlined the trust-based (as opposed to written contract based) business practices which hawaladars routinely utilised, and the huge cash flows generated by migrant remittances, Hawala networks have very firmly come into their own again, with the result that the Exchange Houses of Dubai – and no doubt their counterparts in Singapore and Hong-Kong – process tens and quite possibly hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of value transfers on a daily basis. The greater part of this liquidity is provided by migrant remittances.

As a result many developing countries now find that the inflow of funds generated by migrant remittances is now very substantially greater than that that derived from all other forms foreign aid and foreign direct investments, and sometimes from the export of goods as well. Moreover unlike most other inflows of value from overseas, migrant remittances are transferred straight into the pockets of the poorer sections of the population way out in the countryside, such that they are relatively safe from the depredations of the urban elite. From this perspective the transfer of remittances through migrants’ self-organised hawala networks yet further reinforces their development potential, since the transfers are not subject to the high level of ‘taxation’ which occurs when the transfers are made through much more expensive formal routes.

From this perspective migrant remittances provide a convenient example with which to complete the picture of migrant-driven transnational networks: besides facilitating the delivery of personnel into highly rewarded labour markets in the developed world, so enabling members of rural areas with a long history of transnational entrepreneurship to transgress their way the exclusionary walls with which all the developed economies have

now begun to surround themselves, those self-same networks also facilitate the delivery of ideas and capital assets in the reverse direction, so precipitating an immense potential for economic development in migrants’ villages of origin.

Yet although the transgressive potential of these initiatives from below is enormous, since those who step aboard these self-constructed escalators find themselves in a position not only to punch their way out of the inegalitarian social orders within which they would otherwise remain trapped within their home societies, but also to penetrate the exclusionary obstacles currently being erected around the high-waged labour markets of the developed world, the very informality of these processes renders them extremely vulnerable to state intervention. Hence, for example, many of those who board these escalators arrive on an undocumented basis. Hence even if they find work, buy a house and raise a family they may still find themselves classed as ‘illegal immigrants’, and threatened with deportation. Likewise those who facilitate their passage across exclusionary boundaries can find themselves castigated as ‘snakeheads’ and ‘people smugglers’, and consequently subjected to criminal prosecution. Hawaladars can also find themselves similarly targeted. Whilst their unorthodox approach to value transmission is much appreciated by their customers – since the cost is so much lower – the mysterious oriental practices which give rise to huge flows of ‘flying money’ through ‘underground banking’ channels raises instant suspicion amongst most Western observers. Right now a powerful coalition has emerged which is making a concerted effort to close down all such informally constituted value transfer networks. Drawing together commercial banks (who are alarmed at the prospect of such a large and profitable business opportunity being snatched from their grasp by informal competitors from below), hegemonically oriented government officials (whose aim is to ensure that all such transfers remain firmly under the control of the state), and police and intelligence agencies (whose members have convinced themselves that ‘underground banking’ banking channels are the principal means whereby terrorists finance their nefarious activities and drug smugglers conceal their ill gotten gains, a major global exercise from above aimed at closing down what are alleged to be spectacular exercises in money-laundering is currently under way. Whilst AML (anti-money laundering) initiatives appear to be achieving no greater success than are current efforts to manage migration, they nevertheless represent a considerable hazard for the unfortunate few who find themselves caught up in the regulators’ net. Just as hopeful migrants periodically find themselves dumped overboard on the high seas are interned in camps on the edge of the Sahara, those transferring value back to migrants’ homelands

constantly run the risk of having their funds impounded on the grounds that they are engaging in unregulated financial activity involving the proceeds of crime. Despite the overall success of migrant entrepreneurs engaged in manoeuvring their way upwards from below, the terrain they have to cross remains littered with all manner of pitfalls into which some inevitably fall.

### **8 The role of kinship in the dynamics of transnational networks**

Although all migrant-driven transnational networks display a wide range of commonalities, they are far from being identical in character. On the contrary each follows its own unique trajectory of development. One of the most important sources of diversity stems from the responses migrants chose to make to a whole host of often-unlikely contingencies with which they found themselves faced, no less in the contexts from which they initially departed than in those which they encountered in all the many niches which they and their offspring lit upon and exploited in the course of their travels. Migrants are nothing if not opportunistic. The only predictable feature of their behaviour is that they will act entrepreneurially, and hence take opportunistic advantage of whatever niches enable them to turn an extra penny, whenever and wherever the opportunity arises.

However a further salient feature of their behaviour is that they usually do so not as lone entrepreneurs, but as members of more or less extended kinship networks – on whose resources they constantly draw as they drive their way forward through often-alien terrain. Hence a second – and equally important – source of diversity in the strategic choices made by members of any given network stems from the specific character of the resources available within those networks, which are in turn equally powerfully conditioned by the specific character of the rules and conventions which govern relationships of kinship and marriage amongst their members.

#### *8.1 The strategic utility of extended kinship networks*

In this respect it goes without saying that the more extended the network of reciprocities which kinsfolk within any given community expect to maintain amongst themselves, the better placed they will be both to develop escalators of chain migration, and having done so to maintain equally active transnational networks. By contrast members of those communities where binding kinship reciprocities hardly extend beyond the reaches of the nuclear family – as has long been the case amongst northern Europeans – are much less well placed when it comes to the construction of informal transnational networks. Indeed this may well explain

why Euro-Americans invariably expect to use written contracts to order virtually all transactions beyond those which underpin interpersonal relationships within the nuclear family, whilst those from other traditions are much more ready to rely on relationships of quasi-kinship, or in other words of mutual trust and reciprocity, as a means of guaranteeing that any commitments they may make will indeed be fulfilled. It goes without saying that the more confidently members of transnational networks can draw upon such relationships of mutual trust, the more risks they can afford to take, and the more pay-backs those who have put their trust in such entrepreneurs can expect – always provided that their enterprise proves to be successful.

However such relationships of trust are neither unlimited nor unstructured: on the contrary they are constantly conditioned by the culturally grounded expectations and conventions deployed within the group. Hence whilst the conjugal tie between married couples is the arena within which contemporary Euro-Americans maintain their most comprehensive commitment to mutual reciprocity, in many other societies reciprocities grounded in relationships of siblingship and beyond that of decent match – and indeed very often eclipse – the degree of reciprocity which conjugal partners expect to sustain between themselves. In such societies the family – or to be more accurate the decent group – is a much more important arena for the maintenance and implementation of relationships of mutual reciprocity than is the much more parochial tie of conjugality. With this in mind it should come as no surprise that migrants from India and China should have proved to be such experts in the art of transnational network-construction. The patrilineages which underpin their kinship structures have provided an ideal foundation around which to construct the globally extended networks of mutual reciprocity of kind which many Euro-Americans have come to regard as engines for the articulation of economic, political and cultural mayhem. Reverse colonisation is indeed much easier to achieve when those concerned are in a position to draw on the resources of a strong and well organised structure of kinship reciprocities.

#### *8.2 The strategic utility of ties of conjugality and affinity*

To this must also be added the issue of marriage. In structural terms marriage is a necessary counterpart of kinship in all sorts crucial of ways, of which two are particularly important. Firstly it provides an excellent means of constructing and/or renewing strategic alliances between spatially distant or indeed otherwise unconnected descent groups – so providing a further dimension to the way in which networks can be transnationally extended. Secondly,

and just as importantly, it provides a crucial means whereby such networks can be extended over the generations – or in other words over time. Given that members of transnational networks routinely find themselves operating in alien cultural environments – or in other words in contexts where the surrounding populations organises interpersonal relationships according to quite different cultural premises from those deployed within the network – there is a constant danger that given the passage of time the distinctive practices deployed within the network will gradually slip into abeyance over the generations. Two further prerequisites must be fulfilled if this is not to occur. Firstly all overseas-born offspring must be socialised into within-the-network behavioural and conceptual conventions sufficiently intensively to be able and willing to sustain a commitment to the demands of network reciprocities as and when required, and also to pass those commitments on to their own children; secondly and just as importantly, members of the overseas-born generation are only likely to be able to achieve that outcome if their spouses are also committed to so doing. In other words a fairly high level of network endogamy is essential if the whole institution is to avoid fading into abeyance with the passage of time. In this respect migrants from South Asia are clearly particularly well-equipped to sustain their networks from generation to generation, given the long-standing commitment of most South Asian communities to the principle of caste endogamy.

Nevertheless having a cultural commitment in some direction or another is one thing: the maintenance of those commitments in transnational contexts is quite another. If there is one thing I have learned in my study of transnational migration is that straightforward cultural determinism does not stand up. Hence even when a group has a strong culturally grounded proclivity to behave in some particular way – conformity to rules of endogamy in this case – all my experience suggests that observance of such conventions will quickly be abandoned unless there is a concrete benefit to be gained from so doing. In other words even if most South Asian communities have a commitment to endogamy, one still has to ask just why it is that so many members of any given network choose to conform to any given convention, if indeed they actually choose to do so. All my observations suggest that the principal determinant of their decisions with respect to such issues is whether or not they find it strategically advantageous – from within the contexts of their own specific premises – to continue to conform to what were hitherto established conventions. In other words there is nothing given about their on-going commitment to all the various components of their tradition.

### 8.3 *The differential impact of variations in marriage rules*

The issue of marriage rules serves to highlight these issues with some clarity. As everyone familiar with the Punjab region of northern India will be aware, there is a sharp difference between the marriage rules followed by Hindus and Sikhs on the one hand, and Muslims on the other. Whilst almost all other aspects of their kinship conventions are very similar, Hindus and Sikhs follow elaborate rules of exogamy. Hence whilst marriages are always expected to take place within the boundaries of caste, rules of *gotra* exogamy effectively bars marriage between families with known kinship linkages between them, with the result that all new *riste* (marriages/relationships) have to be negotiated from scratch. By contrast most of Punjabi communities whose members have adopted Islam have not only abandoned these restrictions of exogamy, but moved in precisely the opposite direction: not only are marriages between first cousins permitted, they are actively preferred. Hence in many northern Pakistani Muslim communities well over half of all marriages are contracted between first cousins. Although the frequency of cousin marriage appears to be particularly high in Pakistan, a marked preference for such marriages can also be found throughout the Middle East.

It is also worth noting that Islamic law merely permits, but does not prescribe, marriage between first cousins. Moreover in contemporary Pakistan the driving force behind the exercise of that preference does not appear to come from a commitment to Islamic values *per se*, but rather from a powerful sense of sibling solidarity. Hence not only do siblings expect to have a right of first refusal over the *riste* of each other's children, but there is also a strong feeling that marriages of this kind serve to reinforce the solidarity of the *biraderi* – the descent group. The result, amongst other things, is that Muslim kinship networks tend to exhibit a markedly different structural character from those found amongst Hindus and Sikhs. Given a high frequency of close kin marriages Muslim *biraderis* not only tend to be exceptionally close-knit, but also strongly parochial in character: only a very small minority of marriages take place outside the *biraderi*, and those that are so contracted frequently take place for strategic reasons, since they serve to establish *riste* – this time very firmly in the sense of reciprocal relationships – with another *biraderi* with which there was previously no connection.

By contrast every Sikh and Hindu *riste* is explicitly trans-local in character, since the rules of exogamy bar marriages within one's own village. Hence whilst the patrilineal *biraderi* which form the core of Hindu and Sikh kinship networks are rather less tight-knit than those found

amongst the Muslim counterparts, partly only because internal patterns of agnatic reciprocity are not further reinforced by those arising from relationships of affinity, and partly because every family maintains its own distinctive network of affinal ties with families resident in other villages in the immediate neighbourhood. In other words Sikh and Hindu kinship networks have long been substantially more translocal in character than have those amongst their Muslim counterparts, although in that context the extent of translocality was at most measured in tens rather than thousands of miles.

It is by no means clear as to whether this difference had any significant impact on patterns of social relations in Punjab itself: I have not been able to detect any. What is quite clear, however, is that this otherwise rather arcane difference in marriage rules has had – and is continuing to have – a far-reaching impact on the ways in which the transnational networks constructed by Punjabis following these differing marriage rules have developed over time.

Whilst the difference had very little impact on the initial phases of chain migration, during the course of which the extended structure of the *biraderi* proved to be an extremely vehicle for the construction of escalators delivering male migrants from Punjabi villages to the jobs available in Britain's industrial cities, differences rapidly began to emerge as ethnic colonies in the UK began to stabilise, such that settlers-turning-sojourners began to contemplate the prospect of calling their wives and children to join them. Sikh and Hindu settlers (most of whom came from the Jullundur Doab) moved towards family reunion quite swiftly, rarely waiting for more than two or three years before bring their wives and children over to the UK. By contrast Muslim settlers from Azad Kashmir (the principal source of migratory inflows from Pakistan) often waited for ten years or more before doing so, and became what I have described as transnational commuters in the interval. After working in the UK for a year or two they would take a lengthy furlough back home before moving back to Britain to resume employment.

However that pattern of behaviour came to an end by the end of the 1980s, by when virtually all Mirpuri settlers had taken the plunge, and called their wives and children to join them. However family reunion in this sense promptly opened up the next phase in the story: with whom and on what basis were those children to be married? Parents on all fronts took it for granted that it was their responsibility to see their offspring properly married, and in doing so they initially looked back to the Punjab to find appropriate *riste*, guided by much the same preferences as they would have followed had they stayed back home. However in doing so many parents had an additional consideration in mind. Given the potentially corrosive impact

of the exposure of their UK-raised offspring to alien cultural norms, they also took the view that recruiting sons- and daughters-in-law from the Punjab was the best route towards guaranteeing cultural continuity – or as we might put it, network-extension – in their families. Of course such marriage strategies also had the effect of pulling a further generation of migrants onto the escalators of chain migration, a development which caused considerable alarm to Britain's immigration authorities.

Nevertheless it was a strategy which soon began to cause its initial exponents – the Sikhs and Hindus who had moved towards family reunion well over a decade before their Muslim counterparts – considerable headaches. When their offspring had only spent a few years in the UK before being married, there were relatively few compatibility problems. However as parents soon discovered when their offspring had been born and raised in the UK, differences in outlook were often so great as to put the marriage in jeopardy. This was particularly so in the case of their daughters, many of whom found the prospect marriage to a young lad straight from rural Punjab with little command of English, few if relevant educational qualifications, and a mind-set with respect to gender issues which they often found offensive, hard to cope with. As such marriages began to get into difficulties, young Sikh – and most especially young Sikh women – began to put ever-increasing pressure on their parents, suggesting that they should put offers of *rista* which arrived from Punjab to one side, and instead concentrate on the wide range of *rista* opportunities available in the UK. At first they often encountered considerable difficulties: parents of a more authoritarian turn of mind frequently took the view that such requests were out of place. However it was not long before preferences began to change, not least because parents were under no obligation to give priority to offers of *rista* from any particular direction. They could pick and choose as they liked, and if *riste* which were satisfactory in their own terms – which were often very different from the perspective deployed by their offspring – could also be found in the UK, then so be it. In the face of these pressures the frequency with which Hindu and Sikh parents sought *riste* in Punjab soon began to drop sharply. Instead Punjab effectively became a marriage market of last resort: one in which spouses were sought only when a satisfactory *rista* could not be found in the UK, or failing that in some other part of the community's global diaspora. Remarkably enough, however, whilst priorities in the choice of *rista* had subtly changed, the basic rules remained largely unchallenged. Even in the diaspora most marriages are still caste-endogamous, and likewise still conform to the rules of *gotra* exogamy. Close-kin marriages remain virtually unknown.

#### 8.4 Kinship, marriage and the differential dynamics of network development

Mirpuri migrants waited for very much longer than the Hindu and Sikh counterparts before reuniting their families in the UK. Why should that be so? One factor may well have been their much greater commitment to the principles of female seclusion, *purdah*, such that Muslim men were much more cautious of exposing their womenfolk to the rigours of the English social order. But whilst such a thesis is certainly not far-fetched – since very few Muslim women sought waged employment outside their homes when they finally made it to Britain, whilst Sikh and Hindu women took such jobs as a matter of course immediately after their arrival, since it provided such a ready means of boosting family income – I am by no means convinced that considerations of *purdah* were the principal determinants of delayed family reunion. Instead I would suggest that a much more significant influence in this context is the impact of marriage preferences on the status of conjugal partners within the corporate family. Where close kin marriage is the norm, daughters-in-law rarely enter their marital home as complete strangers: on the contrary they normally already have pre-existing ties of kinship reciprocity with one or other of their new parents' in law. In other words Muslim brides have good reasons feel comfortable in their new home. By contrast Sikh and Hindu brides enter their new homes as complete strangers, and their own discrepant interests serve to add a considerable degree of individuation to the newly created conjugal unit within the normatively corporate extended family. It follows that Sikh and Hindu wives have a much greater interest in persuading their husbands to begin to differentiate themselves from their extended families than do their Muslim counterparts, given that they themselves are strangers to – rather than fellow members of – their husbands' *biraderis*.

But whilst such differences may be of limited significance when all concerned are living under the same roof, there are obvious reasons why their impact should become much more salient when networks become translocal. Sikh and Hindu women had an immediate interest reinforcing the autonomy of their conjugal partnership at the earliest possible opportunity; by contrast Muslim women who had married close kin were much less inclined to do so, for they certainly did not find themselves living amongst strangers when their husbands set off to earn their fortunes overseas. This is not, of course, to downplay the significance of conjugal ties in Muslim contexts: on the contrary they came into play in full force in the goodness of time when they eventually joined their husbands overseas. All I am suggesting is that from a female perspective, the pursuit of greater autonomy from in-laws was normally a much less pressing priority for Muslim women than it was for their Hindu and Sikh counterparts, and

that this serve to explain why the former were much less eager to step onto the escalator which would whisk them away to foreign shores. By contrast most Hindu and Sikh wives were only too keen to take the opportunity to put some physical distance between themselves and their mothers-in-law.

Similarly a consideration of the differential ways in which inter-personal relationships within the extended family are played out in Hindu and Sikh as opposed to Muslim contexts also goes a long way towards explaining the changing patterns of strategic choice when migrant parents set about to choosing *riste* for their offspring, the overseas-born second generation. Precisely because they started their search for suitable matches from scratch, with no obligation to accept offers which came in from any particular quarter, Hindu and Sikh parents had little difficulty in responding to their children's requests to move all propositions arriving from Punjab well down the list of potential choices. However there was a good deal more to it than that. Young Hindus and Sikhs soon began to realise that provided that they made their case with care, it was perfectly possible to ensure that their marriages were arranged with their own priorities in mind by putting forward a suggestion which their parents had no good reason to refuse, and which could be passed off in public as if it had been arranged in a conventional fashion. To be sure they might sometimes find themselves faced with burdensome and in their view quite irrational hurdles, as for example when a couple whose relationship fell foul of the rules of exogamy and endogamy in some way found themselves falling in love. However this merely produced a familiar enough dilemma. Should they let rip with their emotions and proceed come what may, even if that might undermine their participation in all their relationships of kinship reciprocity with their respective families? Or should they simply let their passion cool, and seek to build alternative relationships which were more in keeping with their respective families' expectations? Needless to say most – although certainly not all – chose the latter course.

Nevertheless looked at in a wider context these developments had a radical impact on the character and direction of network development. Provided the frequency of endogamous marriages remained at a level substantially greater than 50%, as indeed it did, network development into the next generation was in no way imperilled by a minority of 'wrong' marriages. Secondly, and just as importantly, the spatial direction of network development soon began to change. Hence whilst *riste* which reinforced links with that section of the community which were still resident in the subcontinent became steadily less frequent, those which created and reinforced linkages within the diaspora itself became steadily more

frequent. At first such within-the-diaspora marriages were initially largely confined to that part of the diaspora which was based in the UK, but as similarly structured ethnic colonies began to crystallise in many other parts of the globe, and communications networks improved, young people began to use caste-specific website to search out potential partners on a global basis. Professionals with similar qualifications could thereby begin to track each other down on a global basis, and if that led to a *rista*, they could set up house wherever the opportunity structure looked most inviting – very often in the United States. In other words as the younger generation of Hindus and Sikhs took ever more active steps to advance their own interests, their marriage choices frequently drew upon, and in doing so further reinforced, the resources of the transnational networks of which they were members, and in doing so took them yet further offshore.

Matters worked out very differently in the case of the Muslim settlers from Azad Kashmir. Although in their case family reunion took place considerably later than it did amongst the Hindus and Sikhs, the transnational networks which they constructed were no less effective, and provided a ready vehicle for the delivery of large numbers of women and children to Britain once the time was ripe. However when the Kashmiris began to contemplate arranging the *riste* of the British born and raised offspring, they found themselves in a very different position from their Sikh and Hindu counterparts. Given that ever more draconian immigration controls were rapidly closing the doors of entry into the UK, settlers' kinsfolk back home were desperate to ensure that their own offspring did not miss the bandwagon. Hence when UK-based settlers' children began to reach marriageable age, they found themselves subjected to a deluge of offers of *riste* from back home. However unlike their Hindu and Sikh counterparts, these offers did not come from individuals and families to whom they owed no specific obligations: rather they came from their own siblings. As such they were offers which could not be refused without good reason – such that the *rista* of the child in question had already been offered to some other member of the *biraderi*. In such circumstances it became difficult if not impossible for settlers to look outside the *biraderi* when arranging *riste* for their offspring, no matter how much their children might seek to persuade their parents to look within the UK for *riste* on just the same grounds as their Sikh and Hindu counterparts had done a couple of decades beforehand. Their parents' hands were tied: in their case a systematic rejection of all such offers would be read as a repudiation of the principles of sibling solidarity which form the very heart of the reciprocities around which *biraderi* membership is constructed: in other words of the transnational network itself. In

these circumstances there was no alternative: their sons and daughters were required to subordinate their personal interests to those of the wider *biraderi*. To this day the great majority continue to do their parents' bidding: at present over half of all British-born Kashmiris marry spouses drawn from back home, and in the vast majority of cases those spouses are their first cousins.

Leaving aside the conjugal problems which such unions not infrequently precipitate, the consequences of these strategic choices – so long as they continue to be exercised in this way – has been to set the spatial vector of their processes of transnational network development off in a very different direction than that which we noted amongst the Sikhs and Hindus. Thus whilst Pakistani settlers and their British-born offspring are no less transnationally committed than their Sikh and Hindu counterparts from just across the Indian border, so far at least they have shown much less of a propensity to move their networks offshore. Rather their marriage choices, together with the much more in-turned and parochial character of their *biraderis* have served to ensure that Pakistani Muslim networks have thus far remained much more dyadic in character, and hence much more firmly rooted in their home villages.

## 9 Conclusion

Transnational networks emanating from below are becoming an increasingly salient feature of the global social order. Few countries remain untouched by the phenomenon – whether as senders or recipients or both; the human scale of involvement in these networks is enormous – in the contemporary world labour migrants can be numbered in hundreds of millions, and each such migrant has numerous dependents; finally the value transfers precipitated by migrant remittances – probably well in excess of \$250 billion per annum – dwarf the transfers to which overseas aid flows to the developing world give rise. As yet, however, the dynamics of these networks, and the benefits which they provide to those who have created them, have received remarkably little positive analytical attention. In large part this state of affairs reflects the extent of the network-builders' success, given that their determined commitment to reverse colonisation directly challenges the interests of that section of the global population which currently occupies, and expects to continue to occupy, a position of hegemonic socio-economic privilege.

From that perspective the activities of these still rapidly developing networks have indeed begun to attract an ever-increasing degree of international attention – but as problems, not as solutions. In the first place the 'migration management' programs which are currently being

tolled out with such vigour by the immigrations authorities in both Europe and the United States seek quite explicitly to halt the processes of chain migration which have enabled many millions of migrants to cross international borders on terms laid down by the authorities, rather than those chosen by migrants themselves; and in the second the anti-money laundering programs which are being rolled out with equally vigour are similarly aimed to contain and control the global financial flows to which the entrepreneurial activities of migrant workers and their offspring have now begun to give rise. In doing so the grounds on which AML procedures are being introduced – namely the suppression of the means whereby terrorists finance their activities – are largely specious. However the underlying interests which lie behind this initiative – to drive all the resulting financial transfers out of the so-called informal sector and back into the arms of the formally constituted international banking sector – appears to be yet another instance of the efforts of Euro-American institutions to protect and defend their current position of hegemony within the global financial order.

From this perspective transnational networks emanating from below – in all their kaleidoscopic variety can usefully be set alongside Asia's current resurgence as a centre of manufacturing activity, and as such regarded as forming an additional front along which a serious challenge to Euro-America's taken-for-granted position of global economic hegemony is being challenged. From this perspective initiatives such as migration management and AML can best be regarded as defensive rearguard strategies. The prospect of their successfully containing rising pressure from below appears to be extremely slim.