



**HAL**  
open science

## Indian and Polish Migrant Organisations in the UK

Thomas Lacroix

► **To cite this version:**

| Thomas Lacroix. Indian and Polish Migrant Organisations in the UK. 2011. halshs-00820303

**HAL Id: halshs-00820303**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00820303>**

Submitted on 6 May 2013

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



# **Indian and Polish Migrant Organisations in the UK**

Final report of the Transnational Migration Organisations (TRAMO) project

**Thomas Lacroix**

**14 April 2011**

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	4
Methodological note .....	5
<b>1. The shifting ethos of the Indian migrant organisations in the UK .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1. Migrant India: a brief history .....	7
1.2. Indian organisations in the UK.....	8
1.2.1. <i>Main categories of organisations among Indians in the UK.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Figure 2: Recent trends: diversification and transnationalisation of Indian organisations</i> .....	<i>10</i>
1.3. Indian Workers' Association, Birmingham .....	11
1.3.1. <i>Historical background .....</i>	<i>12</i>
1.3.2. <i>Goals and field of work .....</i>	<i>13</i>
1.3.3. <i>Regional distribution of resources .....</i>	<i>14</i>
1.3.4. <i>Main external activities and events .....</i>	<i>15</i>
1.3.5. <i>Main internal activities and events.....</i>	<i>16</i>
1.3.6. <i>Analysis of organizational field and organisational pattern .....</i>	<i>16</i>
1.4. The Sikh Human Rights Group .....	18
1.4.1. <i>Historical background .....</i>	<i>18</i>
1.4.2. <i>Goals and fields of work.....</i>	<i>19</i>
1.4.3. <i>Regional distribution of resources .....</i>	<i>19</i>
1.4.4. <i>Main external activities and events .....</i>	<i>20</i>
1.4.5. <i>Main internal activities and events.....</i>	<i>21</i>
1.4.6. <i>SHRG: a transnational pressure group.....</i>	<i>22</i>
1.5. Indian transnational organisations in the UK–India migration system .....	22
1.5.1. <i>The UK context: liberalisation policies and selective immigration policies .....</i>	<i>23</i>
1.5.2. <i>Ebbs and flows of the Indian diasporic policy .....</i>	<i>24</i>
1.5.3. <i>Diversification and diasporisation of immigrant communities and their impacts on</i> <i>organisational structures.....</i>	<i>26</i>
1.5.4. <i>Market citizenship and the re-composition of UK-based Indian volunteering .....</i>	<i>27</i>
<b>2. Polish organisations in the UK.....</b>	<b>28</b>
2.1. Polish migration and Polish organisations.....	29
2.2. The Polish associational landscape today.....	31
2.3. The Polish scouting organisation (UK) .....	36
2.2.1. <i>Historical background .....</i>	<i>36</i>

2.2.2 Goals and fields of work.....	37
2.2.3 Regional distribution of resources .....	38
2.2.4. Main external activities and events .....	39
2.2.5 Main internal activities and events.....	40
2.2.6. Synthesis.....	40
2.3. The Polish Catholic Mission .....	41
2.3.1 Historical background .....	41
2.3.2. Goals and field of work .....	42
2.3.3. Regional distribution of resources .....	43
2.3.4. Main activities and events .....	44
2.3.5. Local and international embeddings of the Polish Catholic Mission .....	46
2.4. Polish migrant organisations in a European post-communist context .....	47
2.4.1. The UK: a new space for Polish migration .....	47
2.4.2. Poland and its émigrés: representations and policies .....	48
2.4.3. Polish migration after 2004 and its consequences for the Polish volunteer sector .....	50
<b>3. Migrant organising and cross border embedding in the UK.....</b>	<b>52</b>
3.1. Migrant organisations and their context: a comparative perspective .....	52
3.2. Other factors: context sensitivity of migrant organisations.....	56
3.4.1. The quest for legitimacy: MOs and their associational fields.....	56
3.4.2. Strategic patterns of leadership of migrant organisations: accommodators, protestors and conservatives .....	59
<b>Conclusion: characteristics of Indian and Polish transnational organisational fields and their effects upon migrant associations .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>64</b>

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Indians and Poles are among the most important immigrant groups in the UK. In 2009, with 625 000 persons, Indians are the largest foreign born group, the Poles are now the largest group of foreign nationality (494 000 persons) (ONS 2009). The choice of these two groups was driven by the intent to compare a long standing immigrant population with a recent one to check whether migratory historicity might have influenced the shaping of respective associational fields. The difference of ethnicities (Asian non Christian vs European Christian) was another aspect which influenced this choice: the race relation policy primarily targeted Black and Ethnic Minorities (BME) and therefore left aside white populations such as the Poles. Interestingly, the comparison between the two populations turned out to be very relevant but not for the expected reasons. In fact, the Polish associational field has even older roots than the Indian one: it was basically established during the immediate post-war period. In addition, contrary to what the perceived cultural “proximity” let us to foresee, Polish associations tend to be more distant from the rest of the British civil society and therefore less sensitive to mainstream social change. These unexpected findings have rendered the comparison all the more fascinating.

Two main questions have driven this research: what are the characteristics of transnational associations of migrants? What are the main factors explaining the shape and contents of this associational transnationalism? This work is based on the systematic analysis of four case-studies: the Sikh human rights Group, the Indian Workers’ Association in Birmingham, the Polish Scouting association (UK) and the Polish Catholic Mission. This paper successively examines the Indian and Polish associational fields in the UK. When analysing the four case studies, specific attention will be paid to the spatial distribution of the resources and practices of the organisations, before attempting to link up these formal characteristics with the internal and external constraints which affect their functioning. In doing so, particular attention will be paid to the leadership patterns which prevail within these organisations, their relationships with other migrant organisations and the national and international contexts in which they are embedded.

The scoping analysis of both associational fields reveals at first sight a landscape of organisations deeply anchored into the arrival space, with little relations with abroad. However, a closer scrutiny on the actual functioning of associations unveils aspects of cross border embedding which remain hidden if one sticks to a superficial skimming of associational activities. In particular, the study highlights the importance of transnational organisational fields formed by associational networks and transnational social fields of individual members for the inscription of migrant organisations into cross border set of relations. The present analysis provides a more detailed account on the complexity of processes at stake behind the curtain of the “transnationalising” immigrant civil society.

---

<sup>1</sup> I am extremely grateful to the readers of preliminary versions of this paper for their fruitful comments. I would like to thank the TRAMO team and the members of the scientific committee, in particular Peggy Levitt, Alejandro Portes, Luyn Goldring, Patricia Landolt, Marta Biernath, Dirk Halm, Zeynep Sezgin, Ludger Pries and Miguel Martinez Lucio. And last but not least, this research would not have been possible without the support, guidance, comments and friendship of Stephen Castles.

## Methodological note<sup>2</sup>

This work dwells on a methodological framework established within the TRAMO programme funded by the Volkswagen foundation and led by Bochum University (Ludger Pries, Zeynep Sezgin). The research is a comparative study of migrant organisations in Germany, Spain, Poland and the UK. Besides the universities of Bochum in Germany and Oxford in the UK, the work has been undertaken in partnership with the University of Granada and the University of Warsaw. The same methodology has been applied by the four teams.

The data collection process was broken down into three main phases. The first step has been a comprehensive inventory of existing migrant organisations among the two studied groups in each country. A sample of twenty organisations maintaining cross border activities has been selected for a survey. Information about the size, activities, history, sources of funding and assets were gathered through telephone interviews. A subset of four organisations, chosen for their importance and track record of cross border activities was selected for on-field investigations. In the UK, these organisations were the Indian Workers' Association, the Sikh Human Right Group, the Polish Catholic Mission and the Polish scouting organisation (ZHP-UK).

The analytical framework draws on methodological tools elaborated within the sociology of organisations for the study of transnational corporations and organisations (Bartlett/Ghoshal, 1989). A typology of organisations was built up according to the pattern of resource distribution and (centralised or decentralised) and the degree of activity coordination between the different local units (strong or weak). The distribution of resources corresponds to the locus of activities, of funding sources and available assets. The resources can be centralised by core organisations or equally distributed among the different partners and institutions in the places of arrival and origin. The coordination refers to the capacity to circulate information and exert power over the overseas institutions. By combining the two values of each of the two dimensions, four ideal types of migrant organisations are defined (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Ideal types of migrant organisations**

Cross-border processes Structure		Coordination	
		Weak	Strong
distribution	centralised	Focal organisation	Global organisation
	decentralised	Multinational organisation	Transnational organisation

<sup>2</sup> This section is a brief overview of the methodological framework used for the present research. A detailed presentation is developed by Ludger Pries in the introductory chapter of the book which will present the results of the TRAMO research (Palgrave, forthcoming).

Focal and global organisations mostly focus their activities either in the arrival or sending country. They are said to be either Country of arrival (CA) or Country of Origin (CO) centred. They both are characterised by the centre/periphery configuration of their cross border ties. But, while focal organisations are only loosely connected to partners and institutions abroad, global organisations are organisations who work in close contact with overseas institutions. Multinational and transnational organisations are characterised by an even distribution of their activities and resources in the origin and sending countries. They are distinguished by the intensity of their cross border connections. Transnational organisations are polycentric institutions scattered in different countries. In contrast, multinational organisations are formed by a constellation of relatively autonomous entities.

Once defined the forms of cross border embedding of selected organisations, the present research seeks to explain them. The literature on organisations has highlighted a series of factors affecting their shaping and structuring. These factors can be grouped into three main categories: (1) long-term or background factors, i.e. the institutional and historical contexts, the political, economic and societal systems; (2) the situational/short term factors such as the political and economic opportunity structures, the composition of migration groups, the structure of the organisational field and the relation organisations maintain between each others in these fields. A third series of factors pertain to the functioning of migrant organisations. The patterns of leadership and former decisions taken by the organisation (path dependency) weight on present attitudes and orientations.

These factors constitute a grid of analysis through which each of the four case studies have been examined in order to understand their functioning in a cross border field.

## **1. The shifting ethos of the Indian migrant organisations in the UK**

Indian organisations proved to be a leading force during the British civil rights movements of the sixties and seventies. This strong embedding of working class associations within the immigrant population ended in the eighties with the surge of the Khalistani movement (a movement supportive of the independence of Punjab during the Indo-Punjab civil war in the late nineties). The “Khalistani moment” acted as a transition period during which the civil society re-configured. The contemporary Indian civil society in the UK reflects the sheer socio-economic, religious, generational, ethnic and political diversity of this community (and, somehow, the strong diversity of India itself). This section will present the processes of shifting ethos at play within the associational field, from a working class focus to a more ethno-cultural one.

Two case-studies will provide the possibility to examine the tensions at work among UK-based immigrant organisations, taken between their historical roots and contemporary transnationalisation trends. The two associations are two leading Punjabi organisations which have played and still play a major role within the community: the Indian Workers’ Association (Birmingham) and the Sikh human rights Group. A closer look at the functioning of the associations reveals why mass organisations from the sixties and the seventies faced difficulty to take the “transnational turn” of the nineties, while, conversely, ethno-political organisations became increasingly global. Before addressing the analysis of the case studies themselves, the evolution of the Indian civil society will be outlined. This will provide the opportunity to examine more in details the relationships between Indian overseas

associations and the state of origin. This section will be ended by a comparative analysis of the two associations and the impacts of their context on their functioning.

### **1.1. Migrant India: a brief history**

The scattering of Indians throughout the world started with the use of Indian workforce by colonial administration. Workers were first sent to various part of the Empire to work on colonial farms and replace the slave workforce when slavery was abolished in 1833. For this reason, Indian communities are to be found all over the Anglophone world and Empire: Eastern Asia (Malaya, Myanmar), South and Eastern Africa (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa), Australia, North America, Fiji, Ceylon, Mauritius, Guyana and the Caribbean Islands (Trinidad, Jamaica). Indian expatriates form the second largest diaspora with 21 million people<sup>3</sup>. In the UK, Indians form the first community of foreign origin. Pioneer immigration was recorded in the early nineteenth century when Lascars (employees working for British shipping companies) established small settlements in British harbours (Bristol, Liverpool).

After India's independence in 1947, the Indian migratory system underwent a complete transformation. The dominantly South-South circulation reoriented South-North. From the 1950s onward, the United Kingdom, the USA and Canada attracted low-skilled workforce from South Asia. Indian communities sprung up in industrial areas of London, the Midlands (Leicester, Birmingham) and the Northern districts (Manchester, Liverpool, Bradford). These flows increased in the late 1960s and the 1970s with the arrival of Indians expelled from Africa by newly independent states (mostly Kenya and Uganda). In the UK, mass immigration started only after the Second World War. The Sikh Punjabi, coming for the larger part from the districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur constituted the bulk of the post-war unskilled immigration. From the mid-sixties onward, the UK-Based Indian community gradually diversified with the arrival of newcomers from other areas (Ballard 2003; Brown 2006; Peach 2006). The restrictive immigration policy implemented in the UK after 1962 put an end to the temporary migration which had prevailed so far. The closure of borders accelerated the coming of women and children through family reunification and spurred the settlement of immigrant communities. Dependents made up 75 percent of all Indians entering in 1965 and 80 percent in 1966. Flows peaked in 1968, at just over 23,000, in the wake of the arrival of Eastern African Indians expelled by Idi Amin Dada (Bhachu 1985). Between 1970 and 1996, an average of 5,800 Indian immigrants landed every year in the United Kingdom. Indian immigration sharply increased again between 1995 and 2005. The recent surge of immigration from India is accounted for by the recruitment of engineers and students. The absolute number of Indian students abroad tripled from about 51,000 in 1999 to over 153,000 in 2007, according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Thus, India ranks second among the world's largest sending countries for tertiary students, after China. The United Kingdom is the third country of destination (after the US and Australia). Student migration is often the gateway for permanent stay in the country. This is eased by policies favouring the coming of students implemented by the UK since the mid nineties.

---

<sup>3</sup> Source: the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs



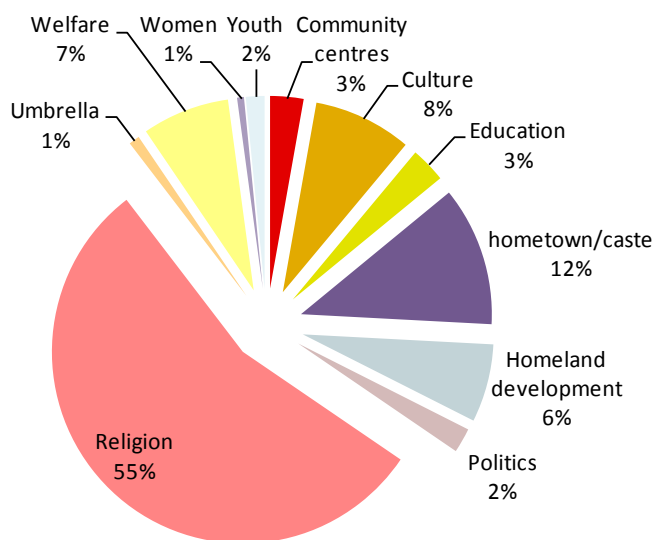
## 1.2. Indian organisations in the UK

This section is based on the listing and mapping of Indian organisations in the UK. Such an exercise is rendered difficult by the absence of a unified legal status of association. The listing of Polish and Indian organisations was marshalled by combining two national-level sources: the charity commission directory and from the directory on religious organisations put together by Derby University (Weller 2007). Complementary research has been carried out through internet, the BT phone book and local databases. This led to the identification of 389 Polish and 1210 Indian organisations. The database includes information about the name, the year of creation, the place where it holds its headquarters, the main activity and the transnational orientation of the associations.

### 1.2.1. Main categories of organisations among Indians in the UK

Today UK-based Indian community displays highly diversified occupational, cultural and ethnic profiles, yielding, in turn, a composite associational landscape sustaining varied transnational connections with the homeland.

**Figure 1: Indian organisations in the UK (in 2010)**



Source: personal investigations

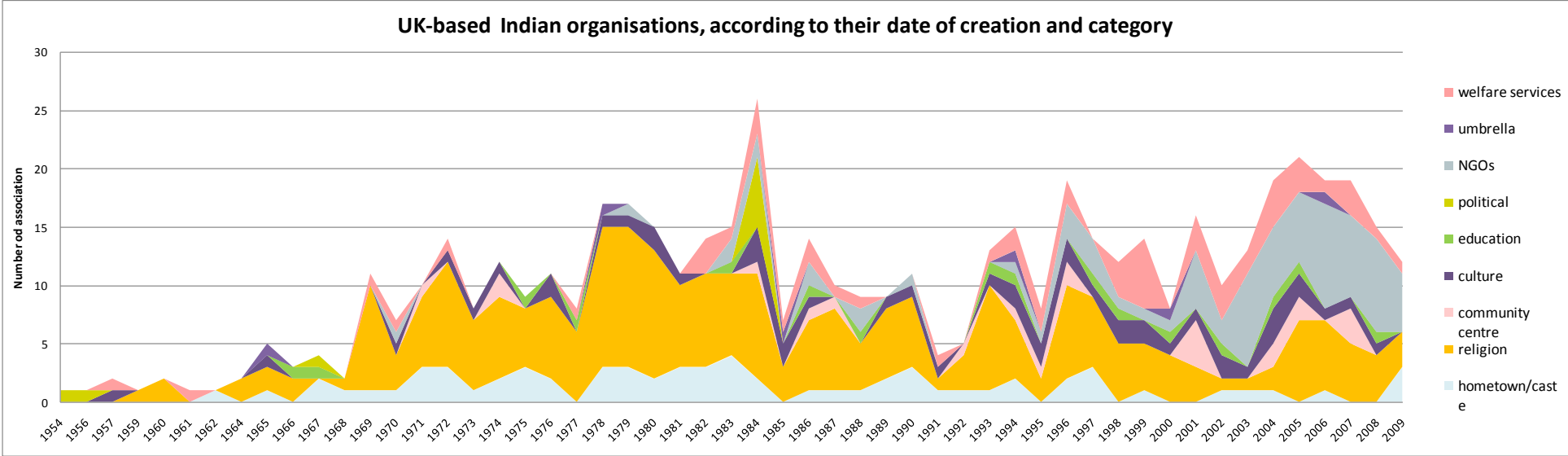
The main divide structuring the organisational field is the religious one. Places of worship still constitute half of Indian associations. Religious organisations and places of worship represent 55% of the total. The Indian community is divided between six main religious groups (Sikhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Catholicism, Islam), and a wide arrays of sects and sub-groups within each main branch. However, it would be misleading to regard the other 45% as secular organisations. By and large, one observes a strong entanglement between the welfare, political and religious spheres. This trend was accelerated by the decline of secular political organisations during the eighties. Most welfare organisations (nurseries, week-end schools, sport clubs, health centres elderly care, etc.) have been, to a

large extent, taken in charge by religious organisations. Places of worship often host a community centre where after school classes are organised for youngsters, where women and elderly people can meet and find support. Beyond their religious function, places of worship provide a space around which community life organises, including in its political aspects. At the local level, the election of trustees of local temples is often characterised by factional disputes. At the broader scale, political groups have been increasingly linked to religious movements since the mid eighties. The politicisation of the Sikh identity during the civil war in Punjab and the deployment at the international level of Hindu nationalist networks (Jaffrelot 2006) were conducive to the merging of the political and religious spheres. The specific role of places of worship explains the quasi absence of youth, women, elderly organisations and the low number of community centres and welfare organisations at large. Even umbrella organisations are mostly federations of religious associations. The Hindu Council, the National Council of Hindu temples, the World Council of Jain Academies are cases in point.

The second main cross-cutting divide which structures the Indian organisational field is the one of ethnic-based (hometown or caste) groups (12% of Indian associations). The pattern of ethnic grouping varies from one area of origin to the other. For example, Gujaratis tend to create caste organisations while Punjabis are more prone to create hometown or *Ilaqa* (i.e. a group of village) organisations. Caste associations are now a widespread form of organisation. They are in fact *biraderi* associations, i.e. caste fraction in which youngsters are to be married. They tend to coalesce into international federation acting as a transnational matrimonial institution (the Charotar Patidar Samaj in Northampton and Coventry, the Gujarat Samaj in Nottingham are two examples). Hometown organisations are networks of people coming from the same place of origin. Since the nineties, a large number of them have found in development activities a motive to renew their existence (e.g. the Pakowal village association, the Bilga General Hospital Charitable Trust). Plethora of development projects such as the building of schools, hospitals, sport centres, places of worship have sprung up since the nineties in the main areas of departure (Dusenbery & Tatla 2010; Lacroix 2011 (forthcoming)). Interestingly, their transnational engagement was conducive to greater formalisation. Hometown group tend to register a formal organisation in order to access to external funding made available by migration and development policies.

The secular pillar is the third and, by far, smallest one. While it was the dominant one until the eighties, spearheaded by the leftist Indian Workers' Association and the nationalist Overseas Indian Congress, it lost currency during the civil war in Punjab. Beside the remnant of older associations, a growing number of non religious associations have appeared during the last decade, mostly in the cultural and homeland development domains.

**Figure 2: Recent trends: diversification and transnationalisation of Indian organisations**



Thomas Lacroix 2010, Source: personal investigations

The longitudinal analysis of the types of organisations and their creation displays the sensibility of the associational field to the evolution of the community. The graph above highlights a take-off in the creation of migrant organisation in the late 1960s, in the wake of the arrival of the “twice migrants” from Eastern and Southern Africa. Until the mid nineties religious and to a lesser extent, hometown/caste organisations dominate the landscape. A peak occurred in 1984, date of the sacking of the Golden temple, when Khalistani organisations appeared to frame the wave of discontent within the diaspora.

Finally, this analysis reveals an ongoing transformation of the associational field since the early nineties. This is characterised by a constant decline in the number of creations of new places of worship and a regular increase of other types of organisations. This is particularly the case for organisations oriented toward homeland development (migrant NGOs), which form the majority of created organisations since 2001. As mentioned above, this trend does not stand for an increased secularisation of the associational landscape. This means that religious (and ethnic-based organisations) have taken a wider variety of forms and occupy a wider range of fields of activities. An increasing number of hometown networks and religious activists are committed to cross border development initiatives. For example, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewa Jatha in Birmingham has carried out several renovation projects of Sikh shrines since the early nineties, mostly in Punjab, but also in Kenya<sup>4</sup>. Several affairs in the US or in Britain involving fake NGOs tapping in the diaspora to provide funding to extremist religious groups is a side effect of the increased level of commitment in philanthropic activities (Van Hear et al. 2004: 15). Today, 13 of the 25 top receivers of foreign funding in India are religious organisations (Jayel 2007: 154). This hints for the global deployment of religious Indian networks in the nineties. Likewise, secular NGOs (such Asian Foundation for Philanthropy or Alternative India Development) have appeared. This phenomenon is observed in other domains such as culture and welfare services.

But can it be said that, since the nineties, there is a transnationalisation of volunteering among Indian immigrants? On the one hand, cross border activities are increasingly common, especially in the domain of philanthropy. This is not specific to associations. Donations to charitable causes have steadily increased, reaching a peak of \$2,6 million in 2007. In 1996, the earthquake in Gujarat triggered massive spontaneous donations from the diaspora. The same phenomenon has been observed in the US (Kapur 2003). Transnationalisation is not confined to philanthropy. The diasporisation of religious networks has been alluded to above. Diaspora-wide Sikh organizational networks have scattered from the mid-eighties onward. Similarly, cross national Hindu nationalists networks developed throughout the diaspora (Jaffrelot 2006). The Sangh Pariva, a cluster of organisations linked to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is a case in point. But on the other hand, the actual number of Indian associations committed to transnational projects is rather low. In fact, three quarter of organisations do not report any engagement beyond national borders. It seems that transnationalisation trends at play in certain sectors of the Indian associational field are not at odds with a strong embedding at the local level.

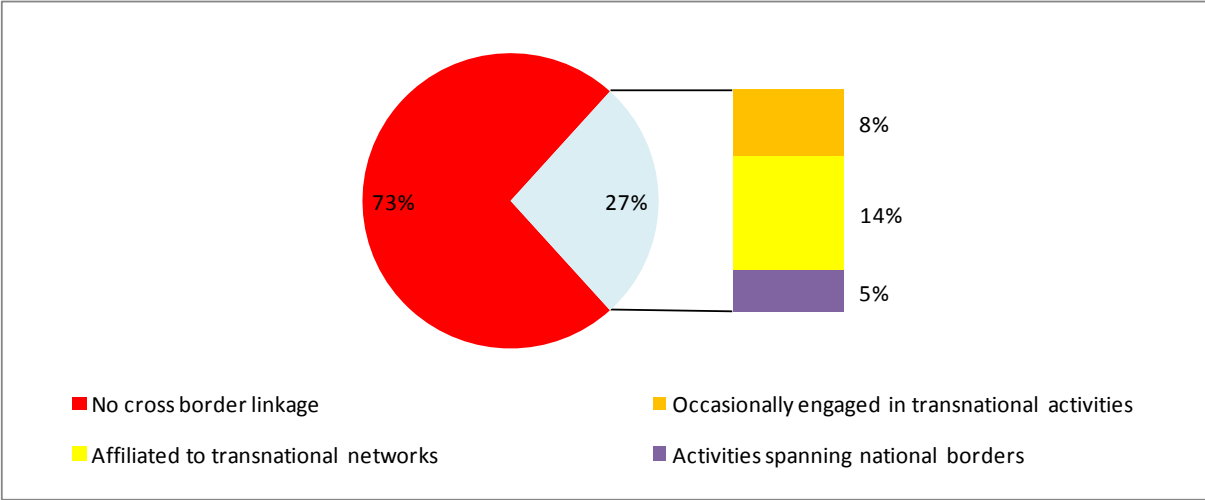
---

<sup>4</sup> IEEGBSHRG3 (note on the annotation of interviews: the first three letter refer to the type of interview, IEE for external expert; IEI for external expert; GB refer to the country case study, here UK; the following letter to the name of the association, here SHRG for Sikh Human Right Group; and the number is the one of the interview referred to)

If one focuses on the remaining quarter having reported cross border practices, one observes a variety of transnational connections. They can be translocal, in particular in the case of small development projects, trans-state or even global: one of the specificity of the Indian Diaspora is to maintain ties not only with the origin country, but also among Indian communities in the main receiving countries (USA, Canada, etc.) or even with communities in former important host countries (development projects supported in Kenya or Uganda by Indian organisations illustrate this specificity). To sum up, one observes two forms of transnationalisation: of activities on the one hand (mostly in the field of development), of organisational networks on the other. Three categories of transnational engagement can be distinguished:

- Community associations (religious and welfare local organisations) which are occasionally committed to a development project abroad. Example: the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewa Jatha of Birmingham, Namdhari Sangat Birmingham, Indian Workers’ Association. They mostly work in partnership with other organisations (local NGOs, local place of worship, etc.) and do not maintain formal structures abroad.
- Associations whose primary goal is to deliver services to the UK-based community but are affiliated to transnational networks. Through these partnerships, these organisations participate in international meetings and activities (Example: the Indian Overseas Congress, the Arya Samaj London or the Bardai Brahmin Samaj, the National council of Sikh Gurudwaras, the British Organisation of Sikh Students)
- Organisations which have been created to support activities abroad. They are mostly political (Sikh human rights Group) and development organisations (Alternative India Development, International network for the development of India in action). These organisations often have branches, defined as “mother” or “sister” organisations abroad.

**Figure 3: Patterns of cross border engagement among UK-based Indian organisations in 2010**



Source: personal investigations

As shown by the graph above, this transnationalisation trend represents a small proportion of organisations. It is however a recent trend with regard to the fifty year history of Indian associations in Britain and therefore likely to become significant in the decade to come. One must be kept in mind that the data rely on the information given by organisations in the consulted databases and websites. It is therefore likely that the number of organisations engaged in cross border activities is underestimated.

Building on this analysis, a series of preliminary hypotheses can be formulated. In the first place, migrant organisations rely on two forms of networks to establish cross border contacts: interpersonal networks and organisational networks. Henceforth, in order to understand the transnational dynamics of MOs, in addition to societal, legal and political context factors, one must consider their embedding into transnational social fields of actors and into transnational organisational fields of associations. In the second place, the forms taken by cross border organisations (whether transnational, global, multinational or focal) depend on their pattern of engagement and on the cross border resources (whether individual or organisational) they rely on. The two case-studies analysed below belong to two different categories: the Indian Workers' Association is a political organisation primarily focused on local issues but occasionally committed to cross border activities (first category) while the Sikh Human Group belongs to the third category of associations designed to act in several states at the same time. But the choice was also commanded by their importance in the Indian associational landscape (they both are regularly quoted as major organisations in the scientific literature). Their comparative analysis will offer the possibility to grasp some elements of the evolution of Indian volunteering from a pre to a post Khalistan era. It must be noted that the two associations are led by Sikh Punjabis. The study is restricted to a section of the UK based Indian associational activism. The non Punjabi organisational patterns, in particular caste organisations and Hindu mainstream politics are left aside. This focus will ease the comparison and ensure a better embedding in a common political and historical context.

### **1.3. Indian Workers' Association, Birmingham**

The Indian Workers' Association is by far the Indian organisation which attracted the largest interests of researchers. Created in 1954, this organisation traversed half a century of history of Indian settlement in the UK. Existing studies have been focused either on its own evolution (its leadership, its strategy and internal conflicts, etc.) or its role within the Black and ethnic social movements or its place within the Indian community (De Witte 1969; Josephides 1991; King 1994; Ramdin 1987). Little attention has been paid to its transnational embedding. However, several hints let think that the transnational extensions of the association may have played a major role in its evolution and functioning. As a Marxist organisation, it was likely to be inscribed in a wider network of leftist organisations. In that sense, it was felt that IWA could offer the possibility to observe a long standing form of transnationalism and its recent evolution. The analysis confirms the existence of this transnationalism, but it turns out to be much more limited than expected. The study gives however precious elements on the difficulty for these working class organisations to take the recent transnational turn.

### *1.3.1. Historical background*

Two dates are usually retained to flag up the creation of the Indian Workers' Association: 1938 and 1953. The first IWA, created in the late thirties in Coventry, was a self-help organisation whose members were mostly pedlars who, at that time, formed the bulk of Indian immigrants in the country. The first organisation is reported to have supported independence of India, especially when "Shaheed" (martyr) Udham Singh was imprisoned for having murdered Sir Michael O'Dwyer, former Governor of Punjab. The association was reactivated in the early fifties, while the Indian population soared in the country. A first branch opened in 1953 in Coventry, then in Wolverhampton and Southall in 1956 and Birmingham in 1959. The organisation gradually expanded in parallel with the settlement of Indian communities. Branches were opened in the Midlands, East and West London, Northern England and Scotland. Offices were founded either spontaneously to meet the needs of local communities, or by communist Indians purposely sent in a specific area to implant the organisation (Josephides 1991: 12). During the early days of the IWA, branches were said to be relatively autonomous and following their own agenda. Membership was varied in terms of political affiliations, religion and geographic origin even though the majority were Sikh Punjabis. In some areas, the organisation was reported to enlist half of the male Indians (De Witte 1969: 47). A centralisation process began in 1958, apparently suggested by the Prime Minister Nehru during his visit to the UK in 1957. However, as early as 1962, a conflict divided the organisation when the Southall branch, by far the largest and wealthiest, became autonomous. Organisational splits usually occur for a mix of reasons, whether interpersonal rivalries (De Witte 1969); or ideological and party divergence (Josephides 1991). In 1962, a conflict opposed the Southall hierarchy, politically moderate, to the communist-dominated national committee. In 1966, during the Sino Indian war, the British communist Party, in allegiance to the Moscow politburo, took position against the Chinese military action against India. In reaction, a large number of IWA Maoist leaders, backing Beijing against the Indian government, resigned from the CPUK and participated in the creation of the Association of Indian Communists. A second split occurred in 1967, mirroring the split of the India communist party between the CPI Marxist (CPI-M) and the CPI Marxist-Leninist (CPI M-L). The division occurred in the wake of the rise of the Maoist "Naxalite" movement in Bengal, the CPI-M supporting the movement while the CPI-ML was opposed to it. From 1967 onward, two distinct associations were holding the name of IWA (GB), one based in Southall, the other in Birmingham. A third split happened 1983 when a group became closer to the Akalis (the main Sikh party) in a context of growing Sikh nationalism.

The eighties were a period of decline of the influence of the organisation. The refusal to support the Sikh cause during the civil war in Punjab led a large number of affiliates to quit the association. The social fragmentation of the Indian population and the overall decrease of working class identification were underlying factors explaining this decline (see below, membership). In 1991, the different branches reunited to offset the loss of membership (King 1994: 62), and split again in 2002. This last split basically had similar resorts: the diverging strategies and aims of the different groups in presence.

The Birmingham branch is the leading association of the IWA (GB), CPI-M oriented. It is, nowadays, the most active branch, along with Southall, the other branches being either

hardly active or dormant. The IWA (GB) referred to in this paper is the one based in Birmingham.

### *1.3.2. Goals and field of work*

The activities of IWA GB can broadly be divided into two main fields: welfare services to immigrants and political struggles for civic and human rights. The constitution of the association puts great emphasis on this second aim, the first one being subordinated to wider political aims (Josephides 1991: 56). In the UK, the main fields of work of the association can be gathered in three broad categories:

- Struggle against racism and far right movements,
- Struggle against discrimination and infringes on economic and social rights of immigrants,
- Constitution of a Black-Asian civil rights movement.

The constitution of an overarching immigrant Black Minority Ethnic civil rights movement has been for IWA a strategic guideline. The organisation played a leading role in various associational platforms since the sixties, such as the CARD (Campaign against Racism and Discrimination) launched in the mid-sixties. While the statutes of the organisation lists its political aims and objectives, there is only one short mention of welfare and cultural activities: “Promote welfare services, undertake cultural and social activities for the fulfilment of the above aims and objects”. IWA members clearly perceive the organisation as a political one and not as a welfare centre, even though welfare services constitute the bulk of their actual activities and remain the means through which the organisation stay connected with its target group, i.e. Indian labour immigrants.

As opposed to the UK-based activities, India related connections occupy a secondary place in the IWA constitution. Three goals, as inscribed in the IWA GB statutes, refer to India:

- “Support all economic, social and political struggles of the Indian masses against semi-feudal and semi-colonial society in India and a People’s Democratic India.
- Publicise the political, economic and social situations in India among its members and other people
- Seek co-operation and unity in action with other organisations working for the same end.”

IWA Birmingham sees their engagement in India as secondary compared to UK based activities: “The primary task of the Indian Workers’ Association is in this country, is to fight against racism and fascism, then to organise its members and others to join trade union and labour movement, that is the primary task. But is a certain issue comes up affecting the lives of the people here, for example the Khalistani issue, and IWA saw it as very divisive for the movement against racism: that is one of the factors behind IWA opposition to Khalistan” (Avtar Johal, General Secretary, quoted by King 1994: 76). However, they have maintained long standing activities toward India, essentially through the financial support of leftist organisations in Punjab, but also through active participation in electoral campaigns and meetings, reception of communist and Trade Unions leader in the UK, etc. In addition, IWA



Birmingham has been engaged in international issues in favour of an independent Palestinian state, IRA claims in Ireland and the end of apartheid in South Africa. More recently, it campaigned against the war in Iraq (within the Anti War platform).

### *1.3.3. Regional distribution of resources*

*Membership:* IWA-GB is said to be 1700 card holders strong. Card holders pay a symbolic membership fee of two pounds for two years. Most of them are Sikh Punjabis, with a strong representation of Doabatis, the central district of Punjab<sup>5</sup>. However, the association is also opened to non-Sikh and non-Punjabi Indians, class status and nationality being the main criteria of enrolment.

The membership of the Indian Workers' Association has steadily decreased since the early 1980s. It has become a central concern as early as the mid eighties (IWA archive MS/2142/D/2/1). Several factors explain this evolution of membership. It first occurred in a context of general disaffection of Trade Unions and leftist movements in the UK. The closure of large industries (and especially of foundries, the main employer of Indian workforce in the Midlands) led to a diminishing sense of identification to the working class. In parallel, the Indian population diversified. The number of business owners and middle-class Indians increased, especially in the garment and retails sectors. The fragmentation of the Indian communities placed the IWA in front of a dilemma which underpinned the 1983 split: to support either Indian ethnicity or Indian workers. This dilemma led to an open dispute during the Randi affair, in the early 1980s. The Randis were large Sikh owners of "sweat shops", i.e. small garment workshops in which Indian workforce were employed under harsh conditions and low wages. A contention broke out when some IWA members questioned the possibility to regard Indian business owners like any other employer due to their shared ethnicity. The emergence of the Khalistani movement is a second factor which led a large number of affiliates to quit IWA. The association refused to support the idea of an independent Khalistan, even after the attack against the Golden Temple. IWA members were molested and its periodical burnt on the steps of several Gurudwaras. IWA influence shrunk among the Indian community. The association members were ruled out from the board of trustees of Gurudwaras. Up until now this conflict is still a burning issue. Sikh organisations have been much more successful in attracting second and third generations than leftists secular organisations have.

Finally, in the nineties, the decrease of new inflows of labour immigrants hampered the association to renew its membership. The dogmatic rigidity of the association hampered any attempt to evolve in accordance to the expectations of immigrant children. In contrast, the Southall branch, which has followed a more pragmatic strategy, focusing on welfare activities rather than on political struggles and cooperating with local authorities, has seen its membership decreasing to a far lesser extent. In the mid nineties, the Southall branch claimed a membership of 11000 (against 1700 in Birmingham) (King, 1994: 68).

*Hard assets:* the Birmingham offices are held in the Shaheed Udham Centre, a community centre closely related to IWA. It provides the logistic basis for IWA activities. The Centre

---

<sup>5</sup> IEIGBIWA1

itself hosts several associations, including an advice centre for Indian immigrants and the Asian Rationalist society.

*Financial assets:* IWA exclusively receives financial support from subscriptions, donations and events. The Birmingham-led IWA has always dismissed any support from public authorities, contrary to, for example, the Southall branch. Modes of collection for specific purposes have evolved over time. In the late fifties, collection were mostly made door to door. In the sixties onward, when the immigrant population increased, collections were taking place at the factories doors, on Friday, which was the pay day. From the late eighties onward, membership decreased but the economic situation of members improved. Individual donations became the rule.

#### *1.3.4. Main external activities and events*

In the UK, the IWA welfare activities constitute the bulk of daily activities of the organisation. The active members advise immigrants, mostly recently arrived from India, on health and safety issues, on legal matters regarding their stay in the UK, or on industrial disputes. The IWA orient claimants towards British Unions when necessary. The advice activities are taken in charge by the Shaheed Udham Singh Welfare Trust since the mid-eighties.

IWA has woven tight relations with Asian organisations, with the view to spearhead a Black-Asian civil right movement. In the field, it maintains privileged contacts with the Kashmiri Workers' Union, the Bangladeshi Workers' Association and the Pakistani Workers' Association. They organise political rallies, meetings and lectures. Those are more often than not accompanied by cultural events such as Bangra<sup>6</sup> music concerts, drama or poetry.

Finally, the IWA performs lobbying activities within wider associational platforms such as United against Fascism, Anti-War or Palestine Solidarity Campaign<sup>7</sup>. Members partake in picketing, leafleting, petitioning and demonstrations. One example is given by the recent case of a teacher using the school website to disseminate racist statements. IWA members demonstrated in front of the court during the trial.

In India, the main partner of IWA Birmingham is the Desh Bhagat Yadgar Hall. It is a conference Hall built up in the memory of freedom fighters from the Gadr movement. The Gadr movement is the first pro-independence party created in the US prior the First World War. It is a forerunner of the Indian Communist Party (Singh 1994). The support of the Desh Bhagat Yadgar Hall started as soon as the early fifties. The idea of a Hall emerged when Gadr members jailed by British authorities in the twenties were released in 1947. Four people travelled to the UK in 1959 to expose the project. The IWA has provided the bulk of the overseas support to build up the Hall itself. IWA members organised several public meetings and toured with them for door-to-door collections. Throughout the sixties and seventies several other collections were made to support the extension and equipment of the building. They were carried out either directly at the gates of large Indian-employing industries, or during social events organised by IWA. The last concerted campaigns took place in 1999. Since the late nineties, donations are done on an individual basis. For example, in 2009, 500 pounds were sent for the acquisition of a printer. In 2007, the Indian

---

<sup>6</sup> Punjabi popular music

<sup>7</sup> IEIGBIWA2

Workers' Association organised a lecture tour in various IWA branches for Janmohan Singh, Secretary of the "Shahid Baghat Singh Research Committee" and member of the Desh Baghat Yadgar Hall.

In parallel, IWA members have financially supported Indian Communist Parties. There are, however, no formal linkages between the Indian based CPs and IWA. The contributions remain at the individual level, not at the organisational one.

At the international level, the association issues letters and statements on political and social matters to British and Indian authorities (MPs, High Commission). For example, the General Secretary sent a letter to the Indian High Commission and the Indian government when a Sikh leader was assassinated in Vienna, which triggered a wave of unrest throughout Punjab in May 2009<sup>8</sup>. There is no account of recent collaboration between IWA and other organisations located in another country than India. This type of partnership seems to have been very limited. An example is provided by an international tour of a Punjabi poet, Sant Ram Udasi, co-organised by IWA and IPANA (Indian People Association of North America) in 1979. The archives<sup>9</sup> enclose eight letters between the two organisations, between July 79 and March 1980. Exchanges about the preparation of the event were occasions to address other political issues such as information exchanges about respective campaigns, literature exchanges and joint statements on specific political events. To our knowledge, IPANA does not exist anymore and such linkages between IWA and third country organisations have not been maintained. This evolution is underpinned by the global shrinking of the leftist immigrant movement throughout the world.

### *1.3.5. Main internal activities and events*

IWA-GB is led by an executive committee headed by the General Secretary. The "Exec" is composed of 21 members. All of them are of Indian origin, including four people of immigrant descent born in the UK. The committee is elected every two years during the General Assembly. None has been held since the 2003 split, due to a contention about the list of affiliated branches.

The executive committee itself is convened at least once every two months and sometimes more if needed.

The IWA-GB in Birmingham used to host a periodical, Lalkar. The journal became formally independent during the period of unity of the three IWA-GB, in the late nineties. The reason for this was that the communist orientation of the editorial line was not to please the moderate members of the IWAs' coordination. However, despite this formal disconnection, Lalkar is still regarded as an IWA offshoot.

### *1.3.6. Analysis of organizational field and organisational pattern*

IWA appears as a focal organisation with few relationships with overseas partners. Political activism constitutes the core of IWA volunteering while advisory and welfare work fills in the gist of members' agenda. IWA was (and is still) a focal organisation whose activities and interests were targeting the migrant community in the UK, but it was nevertheless

---

<sup>8</sup> <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/its-dera-sach-khand-versus-turbaned-sikhs-in-vienna/93288-2-7.html>

<sup>9</sup> Archive reference: 2141/C/12

connected to a transnational space which had structuring effects on its functioning. The occasional collaborations with an association such as IPANA in Canada were the visible part of a wider network deployed at the interpersonal level. Another evidence of this is supported by the collections made to support electoral campaigns of the Indian communist party in India<sup>10</sup>. The various splits of the organisations correlated to the evolution of the political life in Punjab are a direct aftermath of these structuring effects.

Although overtly Marxist, IWA distanced itself with communist parties. Contacts with political parties tend to be restricted to the individual level (or mediated through the Association of Indian Communists). Different factors explain the will to keep these connections with the communist organisational field hidden. The first one is strategic. This is explained by the will to keep its mobilisation basis as wide as possible, and to attract affiliates with different political affinities. Strategic concerns have led the organisation to limit its embedding into a wider transnational organisational field. This embedding has shrunk further in recent years with the disappearance of former partners, such as IPANA.

The second constraint faced by IWA is ideological. As an Asian Marxist organisation, IWA has had to solve the contradiction between the precepts of a universalist ideology and the ethnicity (and therefore the particularism) of its members. As highlighted by previous studies (King 1994), the IWA has always been torn between politico-centred and ethno-centred focuses. Events organised by IWA are characterised by a mix of political and cultural aspects. For example, during the aforementioned lecture tour of Dr Janmohan Singh, Bangra bands and actors were invited to perform music, poetry and drama after the lecture. In doing so IWA gives a cultural “coloration” to the political message: culture is a vector to convey a political content. The same can be said of the relationships maintained with India. The cultural dimension is not absent from the cross border linkages maintained abroad. The invitations of Punjabi poets are cases in point. But these cultural aspects have been strictly subordinated to political objectives. For example, the links between IWA and the Desh Bhagat Yadgar Hall is premised on a shared history and mythology of independence struggles and leftist secularism. The relationships with the Hall have more to do with the claiming of a link with the Gadr movement. Nowadays, transnational campaigns exclusively deal with the issue of freedom fighters and independent activists. The organisation thus seeks to establish a direct lineage with independence struggles, thus seeking to nurture a secular and historical legitimacy against the rise of the Khalistan movement and politico-religious ideologies. Local and cross border activities are therefore characterised by the ethnicization of political linkages.

But the sheer transformation of the immigrant volunteering inaugurated by the Khalistani movement and its subsequent transnationalisation are underpinned by an opposite logic, namely the politicisation of ethnicity. In other words, the Khalistani movement has put IWA in front of its own contradictions. This suggests that the incapacity to solve this tension between class and ethnic belonging explains not only the overall decline of this type of organisation, but also its incapacity to take the “transnational turn”. A simple anecdote illustrates this: several interviewed leaders asserted that they actively partake in hometown networks and development operations for their place of origin. The interviewees admitted

---

<sup>10</sup> archive 2141/C/2/1

that they never bridged both types of commitments even though the social content of development projects was obvious. This staunch separation between the militant and the emigrant is characteristic of the “fault line” of class-based activism.

Transnational activities themselves have shifted from an organisation to an individual-based one. This shift is illustrated by the support of the Hall in Punjab. The association, once in charge of coordinating the collections and conveying of money, has become a mere platform of dissemination of information about needs and activities of the Hall. The members are free to choose if and how they want to contribute and send donations. The support is now provided by people who are personally acquainted with members of the Desh Baghat Yadgar Hall and who pay visit to the association during their trip to India. In other words, the decision making of cross border donations has shifted from an organisational to an individual level. The IWA itself provides a loose coordination of cross border relationships. The organisation embodies and warrants the moral obligations that link the Hall and the UK members. The IWA frames cross border relationships rather than perform them. Three factors account for this shift: the constant circulation of members (a great number of them being retired) and their handling of banking procedures have rendered the mediation of the association obsolete. In addition, the larger amounts per donation do not render the pooling of small amounts necessary, hence the lesser need of a coordinating organisation. Finally, the Hall itself is now financially autonomous thanks to the renting of its premises. There is a shift of financial resources from organisation to individuals and from the UK to India. For these reasons, the Indian Workers’ Association itself remains a focal organisation, but is connected to its members’ transnational social field.

#### **1.4. The Sikh Human Rights Group**

The Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG) presents a very different organisational and ideological profile. SHRG is an association purposely created to perform its activities at the transnational level. It is one of the main organisations of what is now called the “post-Khalistan” movement.

##### *1.4.1. Historical background*

The Sikh Human Rights Group is part of what is often called the post-khalistan movement (Singh & Tatla 2006), i.e. the Sikh diasporic civil movement that emerged from the ashes of the Khalistan movement after the end of the civil war in Punjab in the mid nineties. The Khalistan movement itself appeared in the late eighties to support the autonomist movement in Punjab (Tatla 1999). Among the main Khalistani organisations, were the International Sikh Youth Federation, the Council of Khalistan, Babbar Khalsa and Dar Khalsa. This period was marked by a redefinition of the Punjabi civil society along ethno-religious lines instead of the class-based political identity which dominated previously. The Khalistan movement itself was divided into various categories of organisations. The most radical were supporters of an independent state in Punjab and campaigned actively in the main settlement countries of the diaspora. However, while repression by military forces gained momentum, some activists adopted a less radical stance and oriented their activities towards the denunciation of human right abuses perpetrated in Punjab.

Among them, the Sikh Human rights Group (SHRG) was created by Jasdev Rai in 1988. Jasdev Rai was himself a student in medical studies in Liverpool without any political or associational background when the conflict broke out in Punjab. He became a member of the International Sikh Youth Federation in 1984 and its president three years later. However, diverging opinions led him to create his own organisation, SHRG. In the late eighties, the increasing severity of the Indian government response in Punjab led a growing number of people to seek refuge in Europe. The Sikh Human Group was primarily an organisation dealing with the problems of refugees in the UK and human rights abuse in Punjab. Since the end of the civil war in 1991, it evolved toward the promotion of rights for Sikh minorities throughout the diaspora. It is now leading in rethinking the legitimacy of Sikh militancy in a post-Khalistan era.

#### *1.4.2. Goals and fields of work*

The Sikh Human Rights Group was formally established in response to the worsening of the human rights situation in Punjab. The organisation led several campaigns to stop the extradition of alleged Khalistani terrorists from the UK. SHRG was also committed to the production and dissemination of information about human rights in Punjab. The Group also provided legal advice to refugees for court proceedings. The Group provided experts and witnesses to support the case of activists.

Nowadays, the association is less active on the terrain of asylum. It has refocused its legal work on discrimination cases against Sikh people from the diaspora. In the UK, SHRG has been particularly involved in the campaign for the recognition of Sikhs as a distinct ethnic group in the UK census categories (distinct from "Indian") (Singh & Tatla 2006: 119). The Group has widened its field of work to minority rights, anti-racism and sustainable development. In 1993, Jasdev Rai was invited to a UN conference on racism in Vienna. SHRG became, since then, increasingly involved in works on racism and discrimination with the UN. In 2001, Jasdev Rai contributed to write the sixty-seventh paragraph of the final statements of the UN Durban conference on racism. More recently, he participated in a group of reflection with UNESCO on ethics, human rights and environment. SHRG is also involved in several campaigns on health issues in Punjab, such as female foeticide or affordable medical treatment. By and large, since the beginning of the nineties, SHRG has reoriented its field of work from Punjab to the rest of the diaspora and from refugee issues to discrimination.

#### *1.4.3. Regional distribution of resources*

SHRG is a small group of activists relying on high levels of human and social capital to carry out lobbying campaigns among policy makers. Apart from the London office, the Group counts three branches in India (Chandigarh, open in 1988), Canada (Brampton, Ontario, since 1989) and the US (Evenel, New Jersey, 1996). The association owns an office in Ealing. Country teams do not possess any specific premises. Mail boxes are addressed at the professional offices of the branch heads.

The organisation is mainly composed of Sikh people, but the UK team also includes volunteers from other communities. In London, seven people participate in SHRG activities, one in Canada; six in India and two in the US. However, the formal number of member does not give a real sense of the Group's actual range of recruitment. A number of people work

closely with SHRG on specific issues, such as lawyers and religious leaders. I interviewed, during the fieldwork, six people working for and with the organisation and it proved difficult to make a clear distinction between members and non members<sup>11</sup>. Some non members have been working for longer than some current employed members. There is no will to expand membership. Members and affiliates are mostly postgraduate professionals, high profile lawyers and religious officials. According to Jasdev Rai, the choice to maintain a small organisation is consistent with a strategy of “backstage” lobbying. The head of the organisation wants to avoid publicisation of its activities and to be able to negotiate with the different fractions of the Sikh community (Pro-Indian organisations, Akali Dal, Khalistani organisations, etc.).

“Money is a constant struggle” admitted one employee<sup>12</sup>. The members do not pay any subscription fees. SHRG is mainly funded through donations from individuals and organisations. Certain activities benefit from the support of external organisations such as British local and national authorities, UN or UNESCO. The London office employs three people who compile documentation for the different court cases. The legal and research staff works for free but travel and accommodation expenses are taken in charge by SHRG. Events such as conferences are funded by various partners.

#### *1.4.4. Main external activities and events*

The external activities of SHRG are mostly oriented toward state authorities, international and religious organisations, major Sikh associations or influential individuals such as MPs. The main external addressee is the Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), the leading authority of the Sikh religion. For example, SHRG works with the SGPC since 2003 in the framework of a campaign of awareness against female foeticide<sup>13</sup> in Punjab.

In addition to the anti-female foeticide campaign, SHRG has been recently committed to the support of a French Sikh student who sued the government for not allowing the wearing of the turban in public schools. The head of SHRG is also engaged in UN and UNESCO think tanks on human rights, racism and environment.

Finally, some SHRG activists belong to other organisations. For example, Jasdev Rai is also the General Secretary of the British Sikh Consulting Forum, a privileged interlocutor of the British government on Sikh issues. Another SHRG member is active in Khalsa Aid, a UK-based philanthropic organisation working in the health sector in Punjab. For that reason, some part of SHRG activities are carried out on the behalf of external organisations and, conversely, the Group sometimes implements on its behalf other organisations’ activities. Likewise, overseas branches of SHRG perform their own activities, independently of the centre. The Chandigarh office is committed to a campaign with street children. It works closely with an association developing economic activities for deprived children.

---

<sup>11</sup> IEIGBSHRG3

<sup>12</sup> IEIGBSHRG2

<sup>13</sup> In India, the introduction of prenatal scanning caused a dramatic increase of abortion of female embryos. Even though the law forbids giving any information about the sex before birth, this phenomenon remains pervasive due to corruption. The current female/male ratio in Punjab is the most skewed in the world. The unbalance between boys and girls is particularly strong in Punjab (798 girls for 1000 boys) and Delhi (868/1000).

The general strategy of SHRG consists of carrying out lobbying actions in order to mobilise high level organisations on specific issues. This is done through the organisation of conferences and other public events but also through background lobbying of high level officials. The turban affair in France provides an illustration of SHRG approach. The turban affair started in September 2004, when the law banning religious signs in state schools was enforced. The claimants first benefited from the support of "United Sikh", an organisation based in New York but having branches worldwide, France included. The United Sikh strategy was to claim a modification of the law in the name of religious and cultural liberty. The French Court dismissed the argument and the case was brought to the European Court of human rights in Strasbourg. One of the students then asked for the support of SHRG. Jasdev Rai convened a legal team to defend the case around the person of Manjit Singh, one of the most prominent British lawyers of Indian origin. Manjit Singh's participation is free of charge but SHRG and the Bobigny Gurudwara cover travel and accommodation expenses. SHRG has also hired volunteers to collect and synthesize information for the trial. Interestingly, the team changed the line of defence by moving away from the religious field. The main idea brought forward by the organisation is to say that the turban is not, in itself, a religious piece of cloth, but a practicality meant to tame and hide unshorn hair, which is the actual religious sign. The argumentation developed by SHRG is therefore in complete opposition with the one brought to the fore during the turban affairs in the UK, in the sixties and seventies. In the past the right to wear a turban in various work places (such as a motorcycle policeman in 1976) was defended on the grounds of the religious obligation to wear the turban. The shift of argumentation is typical of the accommodation strategy of SHRG which seeks to adapt the Sikh ethnic practices to the societal and legal context in the places of settlement. In parallel to judicial assistance, Jasdev started diplomatic manoeuvres to put pressure on the French government. The head of the organisation contacted a friend of his, an MP at the Lower House in New Delhi and General Secretary of the Akali Dal, just before the official visit of Nicolas Sarkozy in India, in January 2008. Together, they met the French Ambassador and Indian government officials in order to ensure that the issue would be addressed by the two Heads of State. In parallel, Jasdev Rai visited the Delhi Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee to secure their support and have them to lobby the Indian government from their side. During the visit, Nicolas Sarkozy repeated that the turban was not banned in France (but only in state schools). Likewise, when Manmohan Singh visited France, in July 2009, SHRG put in motion a similar strategy. Mr Rai was contacted by the Indian Defence Secretary of State in order to get an update on the situation. He re-asserted that his demand and the students' was not that for an exception to the law, but for the recognition that the turban did not fall under the rule of the law. In parallel, Jasdev Rai used his position of General Secretary of the British Sikh Consulting Forum to contact the British government in order to pressure the French government at the European level.

#### *1.4.5. Main internal activities and events*

As a pressure group, SHRG does not develop any major internal activities. The London organisation and its branches hold monthly meetings. There is no formal procedure of election that would justify larger meetings. Communication in the UK is mostly done through telephone, email and face-to-face meetings with weekly or daily frequency. Communication with India and other countries is done by email and occasional visits. Finally, in India,



informal meetings are held weekly and formal meetings monthly in the office of the branch head.

The work is split between staff members who perform legal work or conference preparation. There is no fixed sub-committee division. The division of labour evolves with the activities of the organisation.

#### *1.4.6. SHRG: a transnational pressure group*

SHRG is a small pressure group which seeks to spur mobilisation of high level organisations and individuals on specific issues rather than mass mobilisation. SHRG does not possess, on its own behalf a large amount of financial and material resources. It draws extensively upon the human and social capital of its members and partners. It is particularly true for the turban case campaign for which financial flows are relatively low. It is also true for the female foeticide campaign which primarily relies on SGPC resources (staff, finance and infrastructures) on the field. In that sense, the issue of the resource distribution appears to be of minor importance compared to the capacity of mobilisation. In this context, SHRG is primarily characterised by its inscription into a dense and diverse set of organisational and individual transnational relationships. The Group has links with a wide array of associations holding different ideological backgrounds (pro-Indian, Khalistani, etc.), public bodies and international organisations. Its privileged relationships with the SGPC, the British Sikh Consulting Forum, UN and UNESCO have been highlighted. SHRG is also active at the UK level in the field of discrimination issues and maintains, in that context, frequent relationships with the Home Office and other associations. The relationships maintained with organisations working in the same field are complex. The Group collaborates with associations on certain issues while being simultaneously in competition on other matters. United Sikh is a case in point. Both organisations have participated in the UN cycle of conference on discrimination and racism, but have opposed views on the defence of the turban case in France.

SHRG is a cross border organisation which has deployed its organisational structures in a number of different countries. The association was purposely created to carry out its activities at the international level. This international range of activity has gradually widened from a UK-India focus to a diasporic one. The organisation concentrates most of its resources in London, but it is deliberately positioned on the international scene. The Group maintains three branches abroad strongly coordinated to the centre. The decision making remains in the hands of the UK bureau. Likewise, funding and mobilisation capacity is of the main office responsibility. The coordination with the Indian branch in Chandigarh appeared to be strongly directive in the framework of the Female Foeticide campaign. Exchanges between the two offices, by email or telephone, were weekly. SHRG therefore presents the characteristics of a transnational organisation. But outside the activities coordinated by the London office, country organisations seemed to have a large degree of independence and they appeared to develop their own range of activities.

### **1.5. Indian transnational organisations in the UK–India migration system**

In this last part, the second main questioning that has underpinned this study will be addressed, namely: what are the factors that explain the forms and evolution of

transnational engagement of migrant organisations? As stated in the introductory section, three ranges of factors will be examined: factors inherent to the functioning of the organisation, long term/structural factors (membership model, political system, market structuration, etc.), and short term situational factors (political and economic opportunity structures, migration policies, etc.). Factors of change do not affect MOs in the same way. Some have direct effects (like the public funding policies for civil society organisations) and some have indirect effects, i.e. those affecting the immigrant population and, subsequently, the MOs. For example, the closure of a border may induce a rising number of illegal immigrants and therefore a rising number of associations tackling this problem, but the closure of border may not have a direct effect on MOs. In order to reduce the complexity of the processes at stake, special attention will be given to direct factors.

It is argued that recent trends observed among Indian organisations are accounted for by the sociological transformation of immigrant populations and by changes in the political context in the origin and receiving states. The political structures and the characteristics of the immigrant population appear as the prevailing factors affecting MOs. This view is consistent with most scholarly research on migrant organisations (Schrover & Vermeulen 2005: 826). In this section, these two factors will be examined successively.

#### *1.5.1. The UK context: liberalisation policies and selective immigration policies*

The application of a liberal model of governance in receiving countries transformed civic mobilisation. In the UK, the active dismantling of trade unions by the Thatcher government and the general collapse of working class structures considerably weakened the class-based pattern of volunteering. The government adopted five successive laws to restrict the powers of trade unions and dismantled hundreds of parity commissions. The loss of influence of leftist migrant organisations is not an isolated phenomenon but is an element of a general trend.

But the liberal line was also applied to reform race relations policy. In the eighties, migrant organisations suffered from a general decrease in public expenditure. Conversely, there was a shift away from interventionist anti-racist policies. Instead there was a move to market-oriented approaches, which emphasized service to local authority 'customers'.

Soon after Labour came to power in 1997, rapid economic growth led to an upsurge in immigration and asylum. Breaking with the conservatives approach, the government implemented immigration schemes for highly-skilled and low-skilled immigrants and for students. Net immigration of non-British persons increased from around 100 000 a year in the mid-1990s to 161 000 in 1998 and 225 000 by 2001. Many of them were asylum seekers: applications rose from 41 500 in 1997 to 58 000 in 1998 and 92 000 in 2001.

Integration policy was also reformed as the Labour government developed a more inclusive approach to urban regeneration (Somerville 2007). The measures were built upon partnerships between central and local governments on the one hand, community organisations and local agencies on the other hand. Thanks to the mobilisation generated by this collaborative approach, the number of such organisations has increased over the last decade. However, this policy led to an overall restriction of rights with a stronger emphasis on actors' responsibility. The shift of emphasis from "integration" to "social cohesion" is emblematic of this trend. The concept of social cohesion became popular after the Cattle

report addressing the 2001 riots in the North of the Country. The Commission of Race and Equality was dismantled in 2007 and replaced by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. Paralleling the selective opening of the borders, a security policy imbued by anti-terrorist rhetoric underpinned the reform of asylum and the struggle against illegal immigrants. This caused the number of deportations to soar and the demand for asylum to shrink.

#### *1.5.2. Ebbs and flows of the Indian diasporic policy*

The vested interests of Indian authorities in the diaspora are a relatively recent phenomenon. After independence, the national authorities adopted a development strategy oriented toward self sufficiency in order to cut off from its past as a colonised country. In this context, emigration was a reality which did not fit with the overall narrative of an independent nation-building process. Emigration was perceived as an individual choice in which the state should not interfere, and people outside the national territory were seen as beyond the sphere of competence and responsibility of the state (Lall 2003). Emigrants were widely perceived negatively, either in terms of deserters or of brain drain (Khadria 2008: 98). Emigration was discouraged as passports were sparingly delivered. This line was harnessed to the non-alignment foreign policy, maintaining relationships with both superpowers but remaining outside of any military alliance. As the first large independent country, India was seen as spearheading the anti-colonial struggles and maintained privileged relationships with Southern countries. To preserve its spearhead role within the non aligned block, India was to maintain good relationships with Southern states hosting a sizeable Indian population in Southern and Eastern Africa and therefore avoided bringing forward the thorny question of the rights and problems of these populations in their host countries (Lall 2003).

The voluntary blindness of state authorities on migration issues became gradually unsustainable. The transformations of the Indian society during this period incurred increasing social tensions which spilt over to and were magnified by the diaspora. The social and economic evolution of the country brought about the rise of new political movements. As early as the mid-sixties, the poor conditions in which agriculture was left (India had to massively import cereals from the US in order to avoid an outbreak of famine) led to the implementation of the Green Revolution, a World Bank inspired strategy aimed to increase the productivity of agricultural land thanks to enhanced seeds, fertilisers and pesticide. The plan was an overall success and granted the country food self-sufficiency despite its galloping demography. However, in the long run, the Green Revolution, not backed by a real land reform, widened socio-economic inequalities both within and between the states of the Union. It favoured a new class of agricultural entrepreneurs while fostering frustration among other groups (Singh 2009). These events somehow prepared the violent conflict that flared up in Punjab in 1984. The conflict itself is the consequence of converging political and economic factors (Singh 2009; Tatla 1999). The rise of radical Sikh movements is rooted in a protest against the degradation of the moral bases of the society induced by consumerism, the disruption of traditional community structures and the increasing gap between rich and poor people. In 1984, the occupation by a radical group of the Golden Temple, the holiest shrine of the Sikh religion, triggered an army intervention (the Blue Star operation). The event spurred unanimous protest among the Sikhs of India and abroad. In October of the same year, two Sikh bodyguards of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi assassinated her,

leading to countrywide riots and lynchings against Sikh people. Punjab declined into civil war a year later, after the assassination of the head of the Akali Dal by Khalistani activists demanding an independent Punjab. The war ended six years later with the holding of elections which gave to Akali Dal the direction of Punjab.

The war radically transformed the UK-based Indian civil society. The Sikh autonomist movement has been active outside Punjab since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But it had always had a very limited audience until 1984. The ethno-national movement gained support from all the strata of the community abroad. The first demonstrations were called by Gurudwaras. Rapidly, a wide range of autonomist organisations sprung up to frame the movement, not only in the UK but in every major countries of settlement. In the UK, the main organisations were the Council of Khalistan, the International Sikh Youth Organisation, Babbar Khalsa and Dal Khalsa (Tatla 1999). The movement led, in the space of a few years, to a complete reshaping of the Sikh associational field. The two major associations up to then, the Indian Overseas Congress and the Indian Workers Association, were opposed to the separatist movement and rapidly lost their support within the community.

In this context, Rajiv Gandhi, who was elected Prime Minister after the death of his mother Indira, broke with the disinterest of his predecessors regarding the diaspora (Khadria 2008). This change was motivated by the necessity to exert a tighter control over diaspora organisations and therefore to create new links with overseas associations. The policy implemented until the early nineties was, however, focused on security aspects. The government mainly used the weapon of diplomacy to have Khalistani associations classified as terrorist organisations by host governments in order to downplay their voice at the international level.

However, the economic crisis, at the turn of the decade, led the government to revise its stance and it started to perceive emigrants as an economic asset to be tapped in. In 1991, the critical deficit of the balance of payment urged the government to adopt a World Bank and IMF-designed structural adjustment plan which put an end to 45 years of staunch protectionism and government control. The government enforced a wide array of measures meant to deregulate and open the economy to foreign investments. A substantial series of measures specifically targeted overseas Indians. They constitute the first diasporic policy implemented by the country. In effect, the deficit of the balance of payment in 1991 had been worsened by the fast removal of overseas Indians savings from national banks. The measures adopted were strictly focused on economic aspects and aimed to ease investment in India (Lall 2003). This change was supported by the growing economic success of the diaspora. Success stories of wealthy expatriates such as Silicon Valley engineers and rich businessmen contributed to improving the image of those who had left the country. Indians are among the wealthiest ethnic groups in the USA and in the UK (Peach 2006). Remittances increased sharply in the nineties with growing migration flows to the Gulf countries. This migration started in the mid-seventies with the oil boom and attracts migrants from Kerala and Southern India (Khadria 2008).

A second step was reached when the BJP won the elections in 1998. The defeat of Congress marked the end of the omnipotence of the historical party. Conversely, the victory of the BJP revealed the rise of the high caste and Hindu nationalists. During its term in government, the party developed a new policy toward the diaspora. This surge of interest was not only

motivated by economic incentives, but also by the will to reinforce the influence of nationalist networks among wealthy Western born Indians working in the private sector (Therwath 2010: 216). In 2004, a Ministry of Overseas of Indian Affairs (MOIA) was constituted to implement the new policy. Its missions fall under three categories: framing the departure flows, providing protection to overseas Indians and enhancing the development impacts of the diaspora. In response to the persistent claim for dual citizenship, the government introduced the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) scheme. Beside the status of Non Resident Indian (NRI), the OCI creates a new title with the view to formalise a legal bond with persons having lost their Indian nationality, the "Person of Indian Origin" (PIO). Both statuses grant to the expatriates a series of rights in the economic or educational domains, but still exclude the right to vote from abroad. But the key measures of the BJP government were the liberalisation of the exchange regime, in order to enhance the remitting of money to India. Their amount nearly trebled during the last decade, increasing from \$15.8 billion in 2001 to \$43.8 billion in 2008 (MOIA 2009).

The Congress came back to power in 2004 with Manmohan Singh, former World Bank economist and the first Sikh to be appointed as the head of the state. The return of the Congress to state affairs opened the third stage of the reform of the diasporic policy. The new government signed a series of bilateral agreements on labour mobility and social security. Since 2004, plethora of institutions has been created to institutionalise the various aspects of the diasporic policy. At the head of this institutional web stands the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. The main institutions assisting the Ministry are the Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC), a one stop shop for economic engagement, investment and business and the Global Indian Network of Knowledge (Global-INK), an electronic platform that will facilitate transfer of knowledge.

### *1.5.3. Diversification and diasporisation of immigrant communities and their impacts on organisational structures*

The mutation of immigration and immigrant communities proves to be a key driver of change of migrant organisations in the UK. Integration and the new regulations for the entry of immigrants were conducive to the diversification of the associational landscape. New national groups, refugees, highly-skilled immigrants, retired immigrants, children of immigrants are some of the categories of migrants that have produced their own specific associational sector. The overall diversification process has gradually eroded common patterns of identification. In the context of the general collapse of class structures and of the diminishing prevalence of overarching ideologies (Marxism, nationalism, etc.), alternate forms of mobilisation (ethnic- or faith-based) re-surfaced. In the eighties, the rise of the Khalistan movement revealed and amplified trends which were already at play within the immigrant population. The economic downturn in the seventies and the eighties accelerated the mutation of Indians employment structures. Employment in the industrial sector steadily decreased. In parallel, the emergence of a business sector was conducive to the formation of Indian market places in the main areas of settlement such as Handsworth in Birmingham or Southall in Ealing. The family investment in the education of children resulted in the emergence of sizeable elite of doctors and engineers (Peach 2006). From the mid-eighties onwards, a large highly-skilled migration of engineers, students or doctors arrived in Europe

and North America, diversifying further the profile of the Indian Diaspora. This diversification undermined the working class identity that prevailed during the previous decades.

The case-studies provide elements to understand how this general process affects migrant organisations. The changing nature of immigrant profiles, expectation and needs provoked loss of membership among those which fail to adapt and gain of membership for the successful ones. The above-mentioned Randi affair gives an illustration of the conflicting identities within the diaspora. In the nineties and two–thousands, IWA failed to attract second and third generation immigrants. Nowadays, the bulk of IWA activities are welfare advice to low-skilled primary migrants. However, the personal resources of its members enabled the organisation to survive up until now. Members, mostly retired workers, have the time and the resources to engage in local and transnational activities. This accounts for the substitution of the shrinking transnational organisational field of the association by the transnational social fields of its members. Conversely, SHRG appeared in the wake of the long term transformation of immigrant communities revealed by political unrest in the eighties. After the war, the Group re-oriented its focus of activities in order to respond to the challenges posed by the diasporisation of Indian communities abroad.

The second key element pertaining to the transformation of immigrant communities is the one of the diversification of destination countries. The diasporisation of immigrant communities, has been spurred by the freedom of mobility within the Schengen area, but also by the closure of external borders which encouraged emigrants to find new destinations (the US and Canada in particular). This phenomenon opened for immigrant organisations new avenues of engagement and the possibility to establish partnerships with overseas organisations. The Sikh Human Rights Group illustrates the correlation between diasporisation and organisational transnationalism. During the Punjab civil war, the privileged relationships between the UK and India led the former colonial power to close its borders to political refugees from Punjab. This caused a reorientation of refugee flows toward other European destinations, mostly Germany (13000) and Belgium (6000) but also France (4000) (Tatla 1999: 59). The Europeanization of Sikh emigration built up during the following decade. Some estimates state the number of Sikhs in France at 10 000 (Moliner 2007). As shown by the turban case in France, the settlement of Sikh communities raises new problems of adaptation which have spurred a transnational mobilisation of post-Khalistani organisations. By and large, the international reorientation of SHRG activities is representative of the growing interconnectedness between the different poles of the Sikh diaspora. The place of origin is increasingly regarded as a place among others. Behind SHRG activities, can be read the two trends which characterise the contemporary evolution of the Sikh diaspora, namely the diffusion towards new destinations and the strengthening of interrelationships between older places of settlement.

#### *1.5.4. Market citizenship and the re-composition of UK-based Indian volunteering*

The Sikh Human Rights Group and the Birmingham Indian Workers' Association are two associations heralding the transformation of volunteering among UK-based Indians since the last two decades. Although they are related to the same segment of the Indian Diaspora (namely UK Punjabis), they differ in many ways. First, the two associations first draw on two distinct definitions of their target group. While the IWA addressees are Punjabi workers,

SHRG are concerned with Punjabi Sikhs. Of course, Sikhs and workers are not distinct groups but two forms of identification (religious and class related) of the same one. Secondly, the associations maintain opposite forms of relationships with UK authorities. IWA has been keen on avoiding any compromising relationships with local and national political actors. Conversely, SHRG efficiency relies on its capacity to multiply linkages with a variety of institutions. Finally, their respective relationships with origin and third countries have taken opposite directions. The organisational field of IWA has drastically shrunk and now relies on the personal contacts of its members. SHRG has deployed its field of activities to new countries and has developed partnerships with international organisations such as UNESCO.

These two opposite stances are best explained by the emergence of new forms of volunteering and the subsequent fall and rise of old and new organisational fields. The recent evolution of UK-based Indian organisations is accounted for by a combination of political and social factors. The greater stratification of immigrant communities and their diasporisation has happened in a context of liberalisation of the relationships between states and individuals. This convergence transformed radically the pattern of immigrant volunteering, marked by a lesser influence of overarching ideologies and the subsequent rise of ethno-religious based motives of mobilisations. Relationships between expatriates and their country of origin and settlement are increasingly instrumental and localised. By and large, it is argued that migration policies in the new liberal context at the European and global levels have resulted in the formation of a “market citizenship<sup>14</sup>” between migrants and the states (Goldring 2002). The Migration and Development policies implemented by origin state and the integration policy of the UK are both based on this “market citizenship”. As a consequence, migrants are perceived as partners targeted on the basis of common interests rather than as users of public services. In a post-Khalistan era, motives of volunteering are less overtly political, and political objectives are attuned with more consensual practices: struggle against discriminations instead of promotion of minority rights, engagement in development instead of direct support of homeland political factions, etc. Likewise, one can observe a broad diversification of the forms of migrant organisations since the early nineties. This is explained by the wider diversity of the audience of migrant organisations but also by the merging of ethno-religious, political and non political (cultural, welfare, development) fields.

## 2. Polish organisations in the UK

The study of the Polish associations is a crucial test to check the validity of common assumptions on migrant organisations. Poles, unlike Black Minority Ethnic groups, have not been targeted by race relations policies. Nor have they been concerned by civil right movements. In fact, in many respects, Polish organisations in the UK do not fit to the model of associations of labour immigrant from Southern countries. In that sense, the comparison

---

<sup>14</sup> “[Market citizenship is a term] used to describe the redefinition of citizenship in neoliberal terms, emphasizing the “autonomy, self-sufficiency and discipline” of market-ready citizens. The concept underscores the relationship between market position and one’s capacity to exercise claims and rights associated with citizenship” (Goldring 2002: 69)

will allow to revisit assumptions previously formulated and shed a new light on immigrant volunteering.

## 2.1. Polish migration and Polish organisations

The migration history of Poland parallels the troubled political history of the country. In fact, migration is part of the founding myths of the Polish Nation-State. In 1795, Russia, Prussia and Austria partitioned Poland, causing its de facto suppression of geographic maps. Recurrent uprising against the foreign rules led to a campaign of stark repression against nationalist movements in the nineteenth century. This caused what is now known as the “Great European Migration” of Polish people (1831-1870). Most of the flows were oriented toward France (the historical ally of Poland), but around 120 000 people, predominantly Russian Jews, sought refuge in the UK (Duvell 2004: 3). The arrival of East European immigrants during this period spurred the first restrictive measures to immigration (Solomos 2003). In the years following this wave of political refugees, the harsh economic conditions triggered outstanding economic outflows. Between 1871 and 1913 about 3.5 million Poles migrated (nearly 10% of Polish population, mostly impoverished peasants), including approximately 2.5 million to the USA (Cyrus 2006). The First World War and its aftermath gave another impetus to mass emigration. 2 million people left the Polish territory between 1914 and 1918. The re-foundation of the Polish state after the Versailles Treaty did not solve the economic difficulties faced by the population. In the wake the general Pilsudski *coup d’Etat* in 1926, an authoritarian regime was established. The economic downturn of the 1930s hit the country in a climate of growing anti-Semitism. Another 2 million emigrants moved during this period. Finally, Polish migration reached a peak during and after the Second World War. Around 5 millions Poles voluntarily or forcibly left their home during the war and another 4.5 million were deported due to the ethnic cleansing policy (mostly ethnic Germans to Germany) between 1946 and 1948 (Igllicka 2000: 62). This period was the one of the second major immigration wave to the UK. Around 120.000 soldiers, civil servants and refugees joined the Polish government in exile established in London after 1940 (Sword 1996). The Polish Resettlement Act (1947) offered British citizenship to the Poles who had fought against Nazi Germany and Soviet Union troops. Like most immigrant groups, the Polish community tended to cluster in the same areas: most Poles bought cheap houses in London, Birmingham or Manchester.

With regard to its overall emigration history, the communist period between 1948 and 1989 can be regarded as a bracket with relatively low movement. During this period, any form of mobility was strictly controlled and emigration to the West was used by authorities as a safety valve during and after political unrests. It was the case in 1956 and in the early 1970s. In 1956 workers went on strike in an industrial city of the west-central of Poland. The social movement led to the formation of a reformist government headed by Gomulka. But this episode came to a rapid end and the ensuing hardening of the regime caused the expatriation of 70 000 people (among them 10 000 left for the UK), the largest departure wave until the late seventies (Igllicka 2000: 64). A similar event occurred in 1968 when 20.000 Jews emigrated during an anti-Semitic campaign orchestrated to dampen social uprising (Petersen 2008). In the late seventies, in a context of economic crisis, the German government consented giving to the Polish authorities a financial support in exchange of a limited opening of the borders. The events that shook the regime between 1976 and 1980



constitute a watershed in the history of Poland (Bernhard 1993). Facing increasing discontent from the population, the government granted the right for Poles to join in free trade unions (Gdańsk Agreement). The creation of an independent trade union, Solidarity (Solidarność) followed. This organization aggregated a broad anti-communist social movement ranging from Church officials to secular anti-communist leftists. In 1981, under the threat of a Russian intervention, the martial law was declared and opposition groups were banned. Between 1.1 million and 1.3 million people are estimated to have left Poland throughout the eighties, mostly to Germany (Igllicka 2000: 62). Only 6000 went to the UK due to restrictive immigration regime. A large proportion of the refugees were members of the intelligentsia and middle class families. The communist regime ended in 1989 and the first free elections were held in 1990. The official symbols of the country were handed over by the last president in exile a year after. Despite (but also due to) the democratic transition, emigration flows kept apace. However, the predominantly political nature of pre-1989 expatriation was replaced by labour migration. Germany remained the favoured destination until the mid 2000s. During this period, Germany was the only Western European country which did not impose any limitation on the number of entries for short term employment (Kicinger 2009: 86). The UK, which granted limited access to its labour market; also saw the number of Polish “visitors” rose during the period, reaching around 200 000 a year (Duvell 2004). The nineties migration flows were mostly either very short term or settlement flows. A large number of transnational entrepreneurs chose to commute back and forth to Germany (Igllicka 2000, p.70). The orientation of the Polish migration system started to change in the late 2000s, when, thanks to the freedom of business creation, a migration industry took root in the UK (Garapich 2008a). When, in 2004, Poland joined the European Union, a sizeable Polish-born population (74.000 according to the UK census) was already settled in the country (Duvell 2004: 4). The objection to adopting a transition period before granting freedom of circulation (negotiated by Germany and endorsed by most European countries) gave another impetus to the reorientation of migration flows. The UK became the first destination country in 2006, before Germany and the United States (Kepinska 2006: 37). Estimates vary a great deal about the presence of Poles in the country due to the short term aspect of this migration (McKay 2009: 42). Between 2004 and 2005, the Polish community was the largest foreign born group, surpassing in numbers the Pakistani and Indian communities (ONS 2009). According to the Central Statistical Office nearly 690.000 Poles were living in the UK at the end of 2007, it was 30% more compared to May 2002 (Burrell 2009). The 2009 economic crisis seems to have done little to reverse the dynamic. Compared to the pre-accession migration, newcomers are younger and more educated. The vast majority found low skilled jobs as care workers, in the cleaning or building industry, restaurants, agricultures, even though a class of entrepreneurs rapidly emerged in parallel with a thriving ethnic economy (Duvell 2004).

Today, there are between 17 and 35 million people of Polish origin<sup>15</sup> (Nowosielski 2010), but just over 2 million Polish nationals, living abroad (Szewczyk & Unterschütz 2009: 211). This brief migration history of Poland brings to the fore two distinctive classes of migrants: the political refugees until 1989 and the labour emigrants coming from modern Poland. In

---

<sup>15</sup> Estimates vary according to the definition given to what a “Pole” is and the number of generation included in the counting.

practice, these two categories are far from being clear cut insofar as economic and political causalities are tangled. But this distinction crosses diasporic identities of those who left the country and their offspring. To the materialist and profit oriented behaviours displayed by newcomers, old timers oppose the moral superiority of their trajectory, putting forward the hardships through which they went, the sense of community belonging and their allegiance toward a fantasised pre-war “Poland” (Galasinska 2010; Garapich 2008b). This opposition is the great paradox of the Polish diaspora: these two generations do simply not come from the same country. And however, their opposition echoes and magnifies the lines along which the post-communist Poland is itself divided.

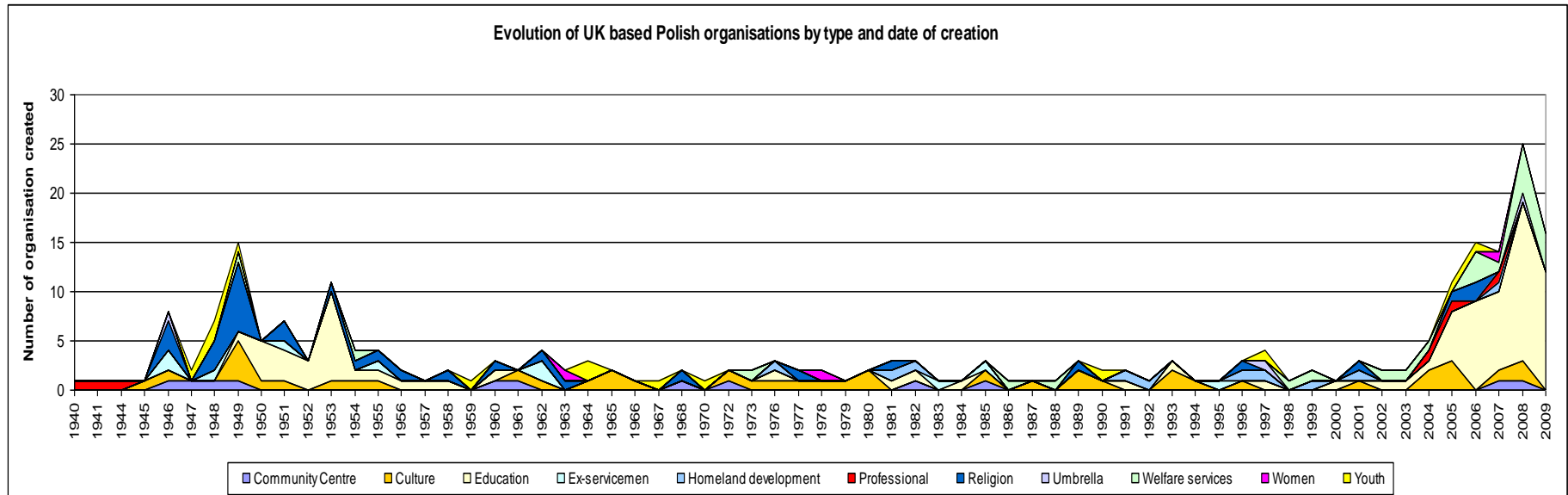
## **2.2. The Polish associational landscape today**

The exploratory investigations carried out on Polish organisations sparked off two surprises. In the first place, the mapping of Polish organisations revealed a smaller number of associations than in the Indian case, i.e. two third less, for an equivalent population. It turned out, during the preliminary interviews carried out in Birmingham and Slough<sup>16</sup> that these organisations were tightly connected into a centralised “organisation of organisations”. The leaders of the Polish clubs contacted were having the same discourse: our relationships with Poland are mediated by London-based organisations. In the second place, contrary to what was expected, the main organisations were long established, created after the Second World War, often maintained by second or even third generation Poles and none by newcomers. Paralleling the surge of Polish migration, associations mushroomed after 2004. But the emergence of the new organisational field has not been conducive to a polarisation of the associational landscape. The associational field described by the literature (Sword 1996) established after 1945 did not appear significantly affected by the massive arrival of Polish nationals since 2004.

---

<sup>16</sup> IEEGBPOL1

**Figure 4: Evolution of UK-based Polish organisations by type and date of creation**



Thomas Lacroix, 2010. Source: personal investigations

After 1945, the Polish community's built up on two secular and religious pillars, headed, on the one hand, by the government in exile and, on the other hand, by the Polish Catholic Mission. The catholic pillar includes, in addition to the Polish parishes themselves, a number of congregation and a number of associations such as the Polish YMCAs. The secular pillar includes political and military authorities. After the government in exile ceased to be officially recognised in 1946, it maintained an underground existence until 1989. Its presence made London the main political centre of the post-war Western diaspora. The Federation of Poles<sup>17</sup> was founded to represent the Polish community in the UK toward the British authorities. The Federation is nowadays a platform gathering seventy-five Polish associations. The existence of the government in exile came to an end in 1989, when the communist regime collapsed. The last president in exile died in 2010, in the plane crash that also killed the Polish president and his wife. Up until now, the Federation is the official political voice of the Polish ethnic community in Britain (Sword 1996). Both institutions are established in the POSK building, a community centre located in Hammersmith, London. The military structured around the Association of Polish ex Combatants (Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantow). The association was created in 1946 and listed 27 000 members (7000 in the late nineties). The association primarily took care of the welfare of the former soldiers. It supported the creation of hostels, 38 club houses (26 were still active in 1996), adult training courses, Polish Saturday schools and scouting troops, etc. SPK is the UK branch of a world federation whose headquarters are based in London and which counts 24 chapters throughout the world. Cultural and welfare services to the community are provided by Polish clubs. The Polish social and cultural association was founded in London in 1946, the Polish club Birmingham in 1947, the Polish community in Leicester in 1948, etc. Their primary function was to serve as a space for social gatherings. Around the Polish clubs, a variety of associations were created as the Polish community grew in number in the 1950s: dance groups, football teams, etc. Finally the youth organisations gained importance from the sixties onward to cater for the needs of the new generation. Polish Saturday schools mushroomed to teach the Polish language. The Polish Scouting movement, traditionally strong in Poland, was also reconstituted in the UK.

Until the early 1990s, the Polish civil society's abroad main purpose was the preservation of Polish cultural practices. This was part of a wider political strategy as the purpose was to maintain certain Polishness imbued with strong anticommunism. The diaspora maintained (and still does) its cultural cohesion rooted in the imagined pre-war Poland. For example, the Polish clubs throughout the country used to celebrate (and still do) the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May (in reference to the adoption of the first Polish constitution in 1791) as the national day, a celebration suppressed by the communist regime in Poland.

After the fall of the communist regime, the post-war organisations, although losing their initial *raison d'être*, did not display any major change. One observes, during the first half of the nineties however, the creation of continental-wide federations in order to ascertain their representative role of the Poles abroad. The "Polish community council of the world" was founded in 1992, in Krakow, federating the main pre-1989 refugee organisations and Polish associations from post-soviet countries. Other main umbrella organisations are the European council of the Diaspora created in 1993 (which changed its name into the

---

<sup>17</sup> [www.zpwb.org.uk/en](http://www.zpwb.org.uk/en)

European Union of Polish communities in 2000) and the Union of Associations of the Diaspora and Latin America (USOPAL) also in 1993. According to Michal Garapich<sup>18</sup>, the post-war associations responded to these change by re-formulating the terms of their legitimacy. First, the work of these associations is still rooted in a nationalist ethos. They perceive themselves as an avant-garde mandated with the mission to preserve Polish values of liberty and Christianity. Secondly, the return of the communist party at the top of the state as soon as 1993 (and back again in 2001) gave credit to the idea of a fail de-communisation of the country. Finally, the Polish authorities acknowledged the role of post-war organisations as the representatives of all the Poles abroad. As Michal Garapic puts it: *“the Polish state’s policy toward its diaspora is deliberately based on a exclusionist policy that emphasises Polish exiles – living proof of the Polish grandeur- and deemphasizes the post-1989 migration from Poland – an uneasy evidence of Poland’s economic downturn and sometimes painful transformation process”* (Garapich 2008b: 13).

In the mid 2000s, after Poland’s entry in the European Union, the arrival of several hundreds of thousands of Polish immigrants radically transformed the face of the Polish community, but not in the way nor to the extent that the authors of these lines had expected. In fact, it was anticipated that newcomers would revitalised the existing structures and would support the emergence of a new associational sector. Both expectations turned out to be only partly valid. For example, it is estimated that the Birmingham Polish Club receives between 10 and 12 000 people each year<sup>19</sup>. The audience at the Slough Polish church rose from 400 to 2000 in a couple of years<sup>20</sup>. But if the Polish churches and, to a lesser extent, the Polish clubs, were refilled by new immigrants, it is far from being the case for other associations (see below the case of the scouting movement). Our second expectations fell even shorter. Our mapping highlighted a surge of creation of associations (according to our census, 25% of Polish associations were created after 2000). The vast majority of these new associations are Polish schools and, to a lesser extent, welfare centres. They primarily target the immediate needs of newcomers. These associations, however, do not transform the overall hierarchical architecture of the existing field. This might, however, change in the following years as an embryo of group of organisations display national ambition. This is the case of the Polish cooperation networks<sup>21</sup> which federates organisations created by middle/upper class youngsters like the Polish City Club, created by a Polish group working in the City, the business area of London, or Poland Street. As a consequence, the recent immigration waves did not drastically transformed the contemporary organisational field. As shown in the graph below, the historical architecture is still readable in the mapping of UK-based Polish organisations.

---

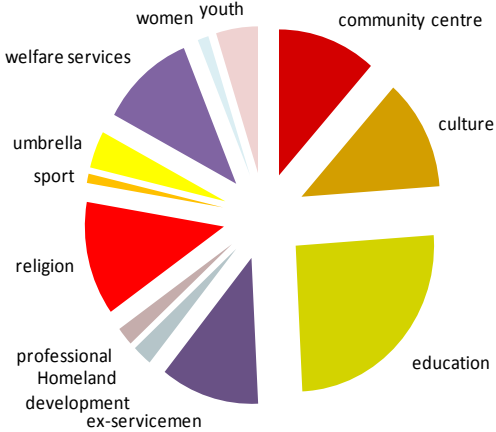
<sup>18</sup> IEEGBP03

<sup>19</sup> IEEGBP02

<sup>20</sup> IEEGBP04

<sup>21</sup> <http://polishcooperation.net/>

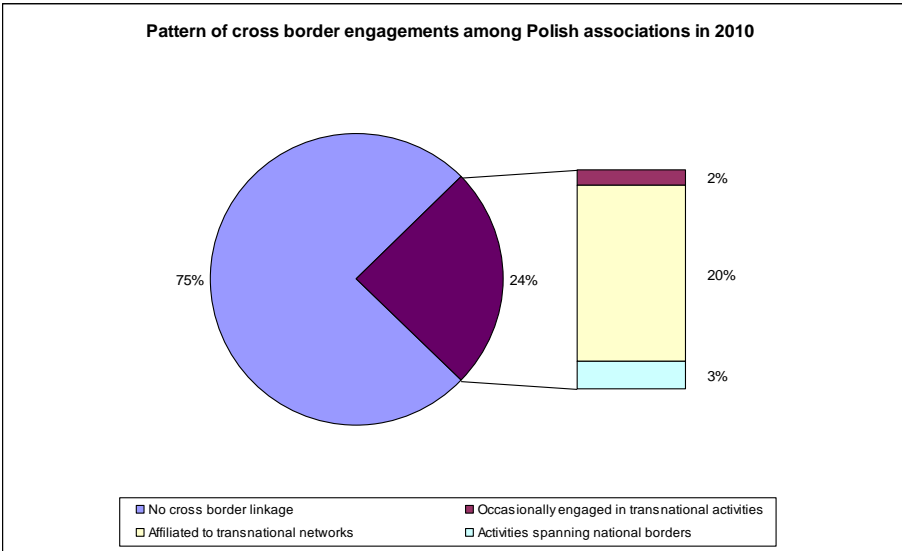
**Figure 5: Polish organisations in the UK (in 2010)**



Source: personal investigation

The difference with the Indian organisational field is here striking. There is not outstanding prevalence of any particular type of organisation. Polish schools, ex-servicemen associations, religious organisations and their associated associations (community centres, cultural organisations) constitute the bulk of Polish associations. The level of cross border engagement is not significantly lower to the one observed among Indian associations (24% compared to 27%). But the hierarchical structure of the organisational landscape is strikingly translated into the pattern of cross border relations. Umbrella associations such as the Polish Mission, the Polish association of ex-combatants, the UK Scouting movement mediate the relationships with the rest of the diaspora and Poland.

**Figure 6: Pattern of cross-border engagements among Polish associations in 2010**



Source: personal investigations

In fact, as shown by Michal Garapich (2008a), a private sector which took in charge most of the needs of the immigrants rendered obsolete the recourse to volunteering. Brokers and lawyers ease the coming and settling of immigrants, newspapers disseminate information about job opportunities, cultural events, etc. Polish groceries and pubs recreate a space of intimacy, etc. According to the author (*ibid.*), the reasons accounting for the development of this migration industry lay in the existence of the “old timer” sector, leaving little space for a new associational field to emerge and to the freedom of entrepreneurship enjoyed by the newcomers. Other factors come into play such as embedded distrust toward free services (stemming from a post-communist “hangover”, see (Morawska 2001)) and the fact that the private sector represents an avenue for social mobility.

Given their mediating role between local organisations and the rest of the diaspora, I will present two long-standing Polish associations: the Polish Catholic Mission and the UK Polish scouting association.

### **2.3. The Polish scouting organisation (UK)**

#### *2.2.1. Historical background*

The origins of the Polish scouting movement abroad are rooted in the Second World War history of Poland and of the Polish diaspora. In 1939, Poland underwent two simultaneous invasions: the Germans from the West and the Russians from the East. The dismantling of the Polish State caused massive population displacement towards Germany and the USSR. In the Western part of the country, people were sent to German industries as forced workers. In the Eastern part, the establishment of communist rule led to deportations of several hundreds of thousands of people (the figure of 1.5 million is often quoted), mostly from middle and upper urban classes, to Siberian camps. In 1941, the Barbarossa operation (i.e. the Wehrmacht attack against the USSR) led Stalin to join the allied camp. Following a trade off with Churchill, he agreed to release Polish prisoners in order to convene a Polish army. Civilian detainees were gathered in Southern Russia and dispatched to various British colonial territories, in Palestine, Eastern Africa or India. Soldiers who had formerly served as scouts were set free from their military obligations in order to re-form scout troops and take care of families and orphans in the refugee camps. In February 1945, in Yalta, the allied forces came to an agreement on post-war Poland. The borders of the country were redefined. The Eastern regions of the country were incorporated into Ukraine, Belorussia, Lithuania and Romania, while the German-Polish border was moved westward to the Oder-Neisse Line. Between 1945 and 1947, the interplay of relocation and reunification of refugees and families gave shape to the post-war Polish Diaspora, whose largest settlements were to be found in the US, the UK, France, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and Argentina. Very few settled back in Poland where their allegiance to the exile government and their experience of the Russian gulags were making them unwanted. In 1947, the Iron Curtain froze East-West movements and cut off the diaspora from the homeland.

After 1947, Polish diasporic organisations were created in order to take the community social life in charge. Among them, the Scouting movement (ZHP<sup>22</sup>), as the main youth

---

<sup>22</sup> Two Polish scouting organisations have the same name: the first one is the largest scouting organisation in Poland and the second one is the object of our study, with its headquarters in London. In order to avoid any

organisation, had a central place. Around 50 000 boy- and girl-scouts were scattered in the world at that time<sup>23</sup>. In the mid fifties, when a scouting movement was recreated in communist Poland, appeals were made to reunify the different branches of the exiled movement under the communist banner. However, nurturing a strong anti-communist line<sup>24</sup>, the movement dismissed any formal contact and communications were cut off during thirty years.

In the mid-eighties, the exiled Polish scouting movement was approached by dissident Poland-based organisations. Informal contacts were made in Berlin, Paris or Vienna where leaders exchanged books on the functioning of the scouting movement (among other things, Baden Powell books), which were banned in Poland. Representatives from the “underground” movement were invited in 1988 to the General Assembly of the exiled movement in the USA (Maryland). After 1989, official contacts were made. ZHP members were invited to participate in the “round tables” which prepared the transition of power. However, according to one interviewee who took part in the negotiations, communist representatives insisted on excluding youth organisations from the negotiations<sup>25</sup>. In consequence, ZHP-Poland (the Poland-based organisation) has retained most of the pre-1989 features. Alternative catholic scouting organisations, such as ZHR (Związek Harcerstwa Rzeczypospolitej, the main organisation stemming from the dissident movement), were founded. For these reasons, the exiled movement refused to incorporate any of the mainstream Poland-based associations which still function on the basis of previous communist rules. Official contacts and field cooperation are, however, ongoing with all major Polish scouting movements.

The exiled movement has also established links with another federation of Polish organisations which gathers associations from former socialist countries (Ukraine, Slovakia, Baltic countries, Byelorussia, Hungary, etc.). Those scouting organisations are ethnic Poles organisations who found themselves citizens of a new country when the borders were redefined in 1945. For example, Lvov, the founding city of Polish scouting is now in Ukraine.

### 2.2.2 Goals and fields of work

The organization maintains Polish catholic scouting in its pre-war form as opposed to the model developed during the communist era in Poland. The oath of the Polish scout sums up the ideological line of the movement: *I have the desire to devote my life to the service of God and Poland, to help my neighbours willingly and to obey the scouting law*. An additional sentence is added to assert the allegiance toward the host country.

Beyond the organisation of scouting activities themselves, its first goal is to transmit a sense of belonging to an imagined pre-war Poland within the diaspora. Culture, language and history are taught through games and readings. Polish is used as the main language among

---

misleading confusion, the London organisation will be simply named ZHP while we will name the Poland-based one as ZHP-Poland

<sup>23</sup> IEIGBZHP1

<sup>24</sup> “They’re commies, sub-human subversives/They are commies, human living curses/They got nowhere to go so let them drown” these words are abstract from a song popular among Canadian Polish youth called “Bomb the Boats and feed the fish. I want to thank Peter Molduano to point me this out.

<sup>25</sup> IEIGBZHP1



leaders, but it tends to be replaced by English at the troop level due to the poor level of Polish among youngsters. It must be remembered that the history of Poland taught during the communist era in Poland itself was extensively rewritten along ideological lines. History, in that sense, became a political stake and the preservation of an alternate narrative, a political cause. For example, troop leaders organise activities around the main dates of pre-war Polish history. The diaspora in general and the scouting movement in particular maintained a memory which was erased or transformed in the homeland.

The second goal of the organisation is to educate future citizens in the host country. In fact, allegiance and integration into the host society (which is the place of birth of youngsters) is not perceived as contradictory with the maintaining of a Polish identity. While the former relates to the past (and possibly to future) of the group, the latter participates in the building of the “here and now” of the youngsters. The disjoint time-space framework of belongings solves the contradiction of community building in a diasporic context.

### 2.2.3 Regional distribution of resources

ZHP-UK is part of a worldwide network at the top of which stands the Association of Polish Scouts (ZHP) established in London. The World Committee calls itself the “National” organisation since all members are said to belong to the same national community even though they are internationally scattered. It issues official guidance for affiliated bodies in the major countries of settlement. Apart from the UK, the “National” organisation (i.e. the world Bureau) coordinates the activities of five country branches: Argentina, USA, Australia, France and Canada. Each country organization (including the ZHP-UK) is further divided into districts which gather local troops. The subdivisions of country organisations are named according to large Polish regions and cities<sup>26</sup>. The scouting organisation has thus paralleled its own spatial distribution with a mental geography of Poland, somehow “making the world a home”. At each level, the organisation runs in parallel four distinct “pillars”: the boy scouts, the girl scouts (themselves subdivided in age groups: cobs, scouts, leaders, etc.), the friends of scouts (an organisation gathering the support of parents) and, finally, the alumni.

Given the international structuring of the Polish scouting association, the distinction between internal and external activities and events must be specified. It is our choice to regard ZHP-UK as the focus of the research. The section below presents the spatial distribution of its resources and activities.

**Table 2: Number of affiliates at the country level (in 2009)**

	Boy scouts	Girl scouts
<b>USA</b>	600	1200
<b>Canada</b>	600	600
<b>UK</b>	500	500
<b>Australia</b>	190	
<b>Argentina</b>	100	
<b>France</b>	75	

Source: ZHP UK

<sup>26</sup> London (Warszawa), the Midlands (Bialo-Wierza), the Mid-to-North-East (Wilno), and the North-West (Gdynia). Each region has a sister group of Polish Girl Scouts, in the South they are known as Pomorze, others are; Baltic, Mazowsze and Kaszuby.

In the UK, the current scouts belong to the third generation of immigrants who arrived during the war. This generation possesses a very poor command of the Polish language. The language used at the day to day level is increasingly the tongue of the host country.

As far as its financial assets are concerned, the scouting organisation receives no state subsidies. It is entirely funded by the membership fees and the donations of Alumni and of the Friends of scouts (parents) organisations. In addition, the scouting troops receive support at the local level from allied organisations such as the Polish church or the ex-servicemen associations. Donations are collected according to the needs of the troops. Expenses incurred by annual events (summer camps, Jamborees, General Assemblies) are covered by parents. The collected fees are dispatched at the local, regional, national and international. Subscription fees are divided in half between the troops and the district committee and 20% of the district resources go to the country organisation. All scout leaders work on a voluntary basis. At the World Bureau level, the renting of premises owned in London provides a specific source of revenue in addition to the share of subscriptions received from country organisations.

Each troop possesses basic camping equipment. Some Sea Scouting troops own their own boats. The British organisation owns two camp sites. The US, Canadian and French organisations also own their own camp sites. Finally, the “National” structure holds property of an estate in London where the main office is located.

#### *2.2.4. Main external activities and events*

Being essentially a service providing organisation for its members, the Polish scouting organisation has not any external addressee other than its target group and allies, nor is it a claim making organisation. The Polish scouting organisation have significant interactions with national organisations and public authorities.

The relationships with allied organisations, mainly the Polish Catholic Mission and the ex-servicemen associations, take place at the local level. Chaplains are nominated at the “National” and country levels in order to coordinate the relationships with ecclesiastic authorities. This is justified by the fact that priests usually accompany troops during week-end and summer camps to give a mass. The chaplains are also in charge of warranting the accordance of the scouting rule with the catholic dogma.

The external activities with other scouting organisations are limited. They are restricted to participation in international events such worldwide Jamborees and informal relationships with other scouting organisations. The Polish scouting movement maintains long-standing informal relationships with the World Scouting association (also based in London) and official contacts with the main Polish based scouting organisations, namely ZHP-Poland and ZHR. At the time of the field investigations, none of these types of event have recently taken place. The next large event gathering scout troops from different parts of the world in Poland is the jamboree of the centennial anniversary of the Polish scouting movement (created in 1910 in Lvov). It is to take place in August 2010 in Krakow. 10 000 participants are expected.

### *2.2.5 Main internal activities and events*

Country organisations have in charge the actual management of Polish scouting whereas the World Bureau is the authority defining scouting rules. The role of the country organisations is to coordinate the daily functioning of troops, the summer camps and the training of scout leaders. They also act as a jurisdictional body to implement any disciplinary action.

The main activities of the World Bureau consist of the preparation of the General Assembly, held every three years, which gathers representatives from the six host countries; the preparation of the “National” Jamboree every five years; the training of chief scouts (the highest level of the scouting hierarchy); the publishing of a quarterly for scout leaders and a monthly periodical for all members. They both are published in Polish. The World Bureau also hosts the highest level of the scouting judiciary system.

### *2.2.6. Synthesis*

The UK Polish scouting movement is fitted to implement its activities at the national level. But the association is part of a world organisation which is characterized by a strong decentralization of resources but a strong centralization of power. In that sense, ZHP-UK is part of the second category of association defined above: an arrival country centred organisation member of a cross border network. UK focal features mostly regard the various assets of the organisation, the day-to-day management of the Boy and Girl Scout troops, general coordination of activities. The decision making for important aspects of the life organisation (budget, appointment of leaders, etc.) are taken at the international (World Bureau) level. At the same time, ZHP-UK maintains loose relationships with other country organisations, mostly mediated by the centre. The coordination of activities between the centre and country organisations is relatively strong, but weak between the country organisations.

The other main feature which stands out of the above analysis is the closure of the cross border social space it delimits, with almost no interactions with other organisations other than close allies. In addition, its field of activity does not include the origin country. The historical and ideological context in which the organisation took shape explains this peculiarity.

The structuring of the Polish scouting association is strongly hierarchical. It rests on a balance between centralized and decentralized coordination, top-down directives and bottom-up feedback. Two organisational levels play a decisive role in the decision making: the World level and the country level Chief Scouts (Guides), i.e. the heads of the two main pillars of the Scout hierarchy. The overarching bodies, such as General Secretaries, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, have only coordination responsibilities or responsibilities in domains which go beyond the ones of Scout leaders.

The other aspect highlighted by this analysis is the self-sufficiency of the organisation which relies on its own assets and on a small number of historical allies to run its activities, namely the Polish Church and some Polish organisations such as the ex-servicemen. As one interviewee put it: “the two most important things for a troop to be run are the training of

leaders and the link with the local church”<sup>27</sup>. The training of its own staff is crucial to maintain the overall structuring and underlying ideology. Training is a crucial part of the Polish scouting organisations activities. It ensures the reproduction of the hierarchy and of the overall functioning of the organisation. The Scout hierarchy is divided between, from bottom to top, troop leader, patrol leader and Scout Master. Country organisations are responsible for the training of the two first levels of the hierarchy. Chief Boy scout and Chief Girl guide are assisted by a training team who is in charge of coordinating the training events. Theoretical teaching used to be organised locally, but, due to the decrease in the number of applicants, they are now delivered during national level training camps. The last event of that sort gathered 60 people from the whole UK. Practical teaching is done when leaders work with their troop. The scout master training is managed at the World Bureau level. The general training process of a scout master takes around two years. It is achieved during a training event which organised yearly by the World Bureau and coordinated by Chief Scouts and Guides.

The general organizational pattern has lasted for the last sixty years and has undergone only minor changes. The informal relationships maintained with other scouting organisations are the only apparent breaches in a strongly inward structuring. Introverted organisational pattern results from the organisation primary goal, which is the preservation of specific Polishness. The Polish scouting association has been purposely created to become a diasporic organization and to spur a sense of Diaspora belonging. This sense is, for example, reinforced by the toponymy of the Polish Scouting movement, overarched by the so-called “national organisation” and divided in sub-sections holding the name of Polish cities and regions.

ZHP is an association whose activities and resources are centred in the host country but which is connected to a worldwide network of organisations. The nature of this connection to the rest of the world varies according to the point of view adopted by the observer. If one focuses on the relationship between ZHP UK and the World Bureau, then the organisation presents the characteristics of a global organisation. Its assets, membership and activities are concentrated in the arrival country but it remains strongly dependent on a World organisation which defines its general framework of activities. However, if one also includes the more loose relationships maintained between the different country organisations, and then ZHP appears as a multinational organisation, i.e. an aggregate of focal associations more or less loosely connected.

## **2.3. The Polish Catholic Mission**

### *2.3.1 Historical background*

The role of homeland Churches in framing the social life of expatriates has been widely documented (Alcorso et al 1992; Levitt 2007). This role is endorsed by the Polish Church since the onset of Polish migration history. The Polish Catholic Mission was created during the nineteenth century in the wake of “Great European Migration”. At that time, the state of Poland had no formal existence and the Church was the only “Polish” organisation

---

<sup>27</sup> IEIGBZHP2

acknowledged by the ruling powers. The Church vested interest for Catholic expatriates as they became a significant source of funding (Przychodzki 1994: 217). In the UK, the Polish Catholic Mission was created in 1894 and a first church was established in 1905 in a rented house of London. The house also accommodated a library and the Saturday school. Since the onset, the function of the Polish church was not restricted to the provision of pastoral care. It is equally concerned by the maintaining of a catholic "Polishness" among expatriates<sup>28</sup>.

The head of the Catholic Church in Poland recovered its capacities in 1919, after the state was re-established. The relationships between the episcopate were institutionalised in the late twenties with the creation of a commission in charge of the ecumenical activity of Polish emigrants (*Komisja di Spraw Duszpasterstwa Emigracyjnego Episkopatu Polski*), the Polish association of Care for the Expatriated Compatriots (*Stowarzyszenia Opieki Polkiej nad Rodakami ne Obczyznie*) and the Society of Jesus for Expatriates (*Towarzystwo Chrystusowe dla Wychodzcow*). In 1931, the Pope Pius XI acknowledged the Primate of Poland's responsibility over the Polish diaspora. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1930 the Cardinal August Hlond inaugurated the first Polish Church in UK. However, the economic crisis of the thirties put a halt on this dynamic of institutionalisation. Unable to maintain its personnel, the London church was the only remaining Polish church in the whole Europe at the outbreak of the Second World War.

The contemporary institutional framework was established in 1947, at a time when there was a critical need for pastoral and social care for Polish refugees in the UK. An agreement was reached between the British and Polish episcopates and Wladyslaw Staniszewski was named Vicar Delegate of the Polish Catholic Mission in 1948. The number of parishes increased steadily until the sixties, followed by a decline of attendance from the seventies onward. The arrival of the "million Poles" in the mid two thousands reanimated the UK Polish church. One observes nowadays a surge of activities between Britain and Poland to fulfil the need for more priest and premises.

### 2.3.2. Goals and field of work

The Polish Catholic Mission (PCM) provides pastoral care for Poles in England and Wales<sup>29</sup>. It manages Polish priests and their parishes on the British territory. It also provides a range of non liturgical services. The Mission maintains Saturday school providing courses of Polish language and culture and catechism. It provides welfare support through grants or loans to deprived people and partakes in relief actions in Poland in case of natural disasters. Finally, the PCM endorses a representative role of UK Catholic Poles toward the British and Polish episcopates, the sending and origin states and toward other catholic communities (polish or not) in Europe.

These three broad main functions (pastoral care, cultural and representative functions) have remained unchanged since the inception of the organisation in the late nineteenth century. The cultural/education activities of the clergy are underpinned by the founding myth of a Polish catholic nation (Porter 2001). It was already the case in the twenties when Polish

---

<sup>28</sup> IEEGBPOLMIS1

<sup>29</sup> The Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales, pdf document, [http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203\\_history.pdf](http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203_history.pdf)

priests were sent to France to provide religious services to the miners. At that time, the Church worked in agreement with the French *Patronat* to secure a link of allegiance with Poland, minimise the “risks” of assimilation, it is to say of enrolment in French trade unions (Catani & Palidda 1987; Ponty 2008). It will be shown that the myth of the Catholic Nation is still at the core the Mission’s activities.

### 2.3.3. Regional distribution of resources

The Polish Catholic Mission headquarters are based in London, next to the first UK-based Polish church, on Devonian road. The PCM owned in 2005, 30 churches, 12 Chapels, 39 presbyteries and 55 centres<sup>30</sup>. Communities and Centres are grouped into six Deaneries: North, Midlands, South-East, South-West, London-North and London-South. In 2005 there were about 94 priests under the jurisdiction of the Vicar Delegate for Poles in England and Wales<sup>31</sup>. This number increased in the recent years and there are now 110 priests working for the PCM in UK and 89 parishes<sup>32</sup>. Priests are recruited from Polish Dioceses as well as from 10 different religious orders<sup>33</sup>, among those the Society of Christ provides the largest number of priests<sup>34</sup>. Finally, the PCM owns three homes for elderly people.

The PCM is structured on a complex hierarchic system. The Vicar delegate is responsible in front of the Polish Episcopate but holds its capacities from the Conference of British Bishops. Priests originally affiliated to diocese are liable to the Vicar Delegate but those belonging to a religious order remain member of this order. The status of religious orders is therefore unclear and they can enjoy a large autonomy. This is sometimes a cause of conflicts within the organisation<sup>35</sup>.

The Polish Catholic Mission also acts as an umbrella organization gathering<sup>36</sup>:

- **The Polish Institute for Catholic Action (IPAK):** it represents Polish catholic communities in England and Wales at international conferences of Polish expatriate communities. It organizes conferences, lectures and pilgrimages.
- **The Polish University Chaplaincy:** works amongst students of Polish origin and students from Poland who reside temporarily in Britain. The university chaplain for Poles is appointed by the Vicar Delegate and works under his jurisdiction;

---

<sup>30</sup> The difference between a Polish Catholic Community and a Polish Catholic Center is that the first one has a resident priest whereas in the second one there is not a resident priest. Usually a priest in charge of a Polish Catholic Community has the care of one or two other Polish Catholic Center.

<sup>31</sup> The Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales, pdf document,  
[http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203\\_history.pdf](http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203_history.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> IEEGBPOLMIS2

<sup>33</sup> The Society of Christ, the Marian Fathers, the Society of Jesus, Canons Regular of the Lateran, Salesians of Don Bosco, Oratorians, Friars Minor Conventual, Pallottine Fathers, Priest of the Sacred Heart and Holy Ghosts Fathers.

<sup>34</sup> The Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales, pdf document,  
[http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203\\_history.pdf](http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203_history.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> This is exemplified by the sale of £22 million worth Mansion of Fawley Court by the Marian Fathers. This caused protest from the PCM and the wider community which claimed ownership on the property.  
<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/articles/a0000279.shtml>

<sup>36</sup> The Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales, pdf document,  
[http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203\\_history.pdf](http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203_history.pdf)

- **The Catholic Association of Polish Youth (KSMP):** it organizes meetings and conferences for Polish Youth;
- **The Polish Publishing House (VERITAS):** it publishes Polish Catholic books as well as weekly magazines. The Vicar Delegate participates in Trustee Meetings and he is the religious adviser to VERITAS. He clears any controversy about the publication of book and articles;
- **The Polish Émigré Educational Society:** it manages Polish Saturday School where religion is an integral part of the curriculum.

Polish Catholic Mission also cooperates with the Relief Society for Poles Charitable Trust (TPP), a philanthropic organisation stemming from pre-war Polish section of the Red Cross and with the Polish Scout Movement operating in Britain. As seen above, the Vicar Delegate appoints Chaplain's scouting movement at the UK and World Bureau level.

Finally, the PCM seats in a number of UK and European organisations. It also liaises with other Polish Missions in Western Europe through the Council of Polish Catholic Missions in Western Europe.

For the sake of being comprehensive, it must be noted that lay catholic organisations and Polish priest are also active in a number of British and European platforms such as the local diocesan deanery committees, the National Council of Lay Associations, National Board of Catholic Women, Aid to the Church in Need and the Consortium of Christian Organisations.

The bulk of the Polish Catholic Mission finance comes from the Communities<sup>37</sup>. Unlike in Canada<sup>38</sup>, there is no overarching institution incorporating the parishes' accounts. The various Mission scattered all over the world have provided a crucial financial support, especially during the communist regime when the Poles from abroad constituted the main source of foreign currency.

The Polish Catholic Mission also benefits from some grants of the Polish consulate, the MB Grabowski Fund and Spunota Polska<sup>39</sup>. These funds are mainly used for the Polish School and to organize national feasts and other cultural events.

#### *2.3.4. Main activities and events*

The PCM is primarily concerned with the pastoral care of Polish Catholics in the UK. The PCM provides to their parishioners regular religious services (religious offices, sacraments, etc.). PCM publishes for the parishioners an information bulletin. It is a weekly publication with all the information about the activities of the different parishes. Besides, the Mission is committed to a wide range of activities toward youngsters. Besides of the Saturday schools, the PCM organises every year the Children Day, with picnic and competitions. Another major national event is the celebration of the Polish National Day, every third of May. At the

---

<sup>37</sup> The Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales, pdf document, [http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203\\_history.pdf](http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203_history.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> The Credit Union in Canada is the largest parish-based bank in the world. It contributed to channel financial support to the Church in Poland during the communist regime (Przychodzki 1994: 224-225)

<sup>39</sup> The Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales, pdf document, [http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203\\_history.pdf](http://www.polishcatholicmission.org.uk/download/20071203_history.pdf)

European level, the Council of Polish Missions in Western Europe organises the “Concordia”, an international meeting for youngsters<sup>40</sup>. The Mission also supports homes for elderly people.

In the UK, the clergy meets about four times a year in specific part of England. There is an official meeting for all the Polish parishes in England and Wales which takes place once or twice a year. In addition, four times a year, priests receive indications about their work from PCM in Poland. Additional visits and informal contacts are regularly taken. The activities of the priests throughout the country are therefore strongly coordinated with the London headquarters.

At the European level, a meeting with the other Polish Catholic Mission in Europe is convened twice a year, one with the directors and one with the delegates. These meetings take place in Poland and are convened under the aegis of the Polish Conference of Bishops. Discussions are held about all the problems related to the organization and the management of the PCM. The relationships between the different Polish Missions in Europe are generally mediated by the Hierarchy in Poland. In contrast with this rather loose coordination, sustained contacts are taken between the UK Mission and Poland. Visits stand monthly from both sides. Additional correspondence is maintained through email or telephone at least once a week.

The relationships with the UK clergy at large (at the national and local levels) are not less strong. In fact, due to its reticular nature and the multiplicity of hierarchies it is inserted in, it is sometimes difficult to identify the limits of the organisation. The recent increase of the Polish immigrant population has led the interactions between the PCM and the Polish and UK-based organisations to intensify, blurring further the limits between the different bodies. On the one hand, the PCM needs more priests and more churches to ensure an adequate pastoral care to the Poles. On the other, the UK clergy is facing a gradual downturn of its staff, causing the vacancy of some churches and shortage of staff where there is a surge of attendees. The PCM in UK is working toward a closer collaboration with English parishes<sup>41</sup>. Two pilot projects in Preston and the Lancashire are being carried out to harmonise Polish and English pastoral work so that Polish priest could deliver pastoral work to both communities. Three meetings are scheduled this year with UK authorities to work on this issue<sup>42</sup>.

Another process is likely to lead to a greater integration of both institutions. The Vatican released in 2004 guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People in 2004. The Pontifical document, entitled “Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi”, lays emphasis on the necessity to provide religious services in the origin language of the emigrants, underscoring the importance of the mother tongue in which they express their feelings, their thought and their spiritual life. At the same time, the Vatican encourages close collaboration between departure and arrival Churches for an exchange of information on matters of common pastoral interest and about problems concerning migrants; finally, it urges national churches to set up intercultural and interethnic parishes that provides pastoral assistance for both the

---

<sup>40</sup> The section on the Polish Mission in Germany gives a more thorough presentation of this event.

<sup>41</sup> IEEGBPOLMIS1.

<sup>42</sup> IEEGBPOLMIS1.



local population and foreign residents. The Polish Catholic Missions in Europe have recently endeavoured to harmonise the delivery of pastoral care to expatriates. In 2009, the Vicar Delegate of Germany drafted and circulated among European Vicar Delegates a joint document to adapt the Vatican guidance to the context of the Polish diaspora. The text is imbued with the Polish nationalism that characterises the representation that the Polish Church nurtures of its own role. It focuses on patriotic and religious values of the Church in Poland, the need for a religious education of children and youth as well as the cultivation of Polish culture, traditions and habits. The text lay emphasis on the necessity to train priests who can provide the adequate pastoral care for emigrants and who are capable of interacting between the different communities. It also points out the role of teams and working groups of the Conference of Polish and British Bishops Conferences and the overall need for a close cooperation with the host Church. The document has been communicated for validation to the Polish hierarchy. If a common agreement is reached, the text is meant to provide a basis of work for the harmonisation of the provision of religious services throughout Europe<sup>43</sup>.

### *2.3.5. Local and international embeddings of the Polish Catholic Mission*

The Polish Catholic Mission first appears as an organisation whose activities, staff and resources are located in the UK for the pastoral care of UK-based Poles. But a closer scrutiny reveals an organisation at the centre of a complex institutional framework aggregating the UK and Polish Churches, other European Polish Missions and a range of catholic associations working on the field. At the crux of this complex stands the Vicar Delegate. The Head of the PCM is formally tethered to the British and Polish hierarchies. Vicar Delegates are nominated by the Polish Church and appointed by the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. In fact, the British hierarchy confers to the Vicar Delegate its capacity to act on the British territory while the mandate over Polish catholic expatriates is delegated by the Polish Church. On the one hand, the PCM receives general directions from the Polish hierarchy and implements them on the field. The Mission is tied to the homeland through a constant circulation of people and information. On the other, the organisation works with the UK episcopate to arrange logistical issues: provision of premises, organisation of common events, etc. Although a distinct organisation, it is tightly embedded in the networks of the British Catholic Church at the local and national level. In consequence, the influence and capacity of mobilisation of the Mission goes far beyond the Polish community itself. This is best shown by the organisation of national events. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2010, the PCM organised a Mass in Westminster commemorating for the death of the former Poland's president in a plane crash. The event convened about 2000 people inside the cathedral while a crowd was gathered outside the building following the celebration on a large screen. Among invitees who attended the mass, were thirty ambassadors, representatives of the Royal Family, representatives of the Polish parishes and of the main Polish organisations (scouting troops, ex-servicemen associations, Federation of Poles, etc.)<sup>44</sup>. The influence of the PCM in the UK is likely to increase in the coming years as the British episcopate relies on the Mission to patch shortages of clergymen.

---

<sup>43</sup> IEIGBPOLMIS2

<sup>44</sup> IEIGBPOLMIS2

Finally, the PCM UK is part of the broader network of Polish Missions in Europe. The connections between the different institutions are mostly mediated by the Polish Church through the Council of Polish Catholic Missions in Western Europe. They however collaborate during occasional international events such the youth festival “Concordia” or to harmonise pastoral care to the diaspora.

To sum up, the UK Polish Catholic Mission is an organisation at the centre of a dense organisational network tightly embedded locally in the mainstream catholic civil society and internationally in diaspora-wide Polish catholic hierarchy. Like the Scouting organisation, it maintains two types of cross border connections. The association is tightly connected to the Polish episcopate which defines general guidance. The strong institutionalisation of cross border activities leaves little space for individual initiatives. If the staff is UK-based, they mostly come from and are trained in the origin or a third country. It is also part of the European network of Polish Missions with which it maintains looser connections. The UK PCM therefore cumulates the aspects of a global UK centred and of a multinational organisation. The definition depends on the focus adopted by the observer.

## **2.4. Polish migrant organisations in a European post-communist context**

### *2.4.1. The UK: a new space for Polish migration*

The social and political mechanics that informs the Polish associational field differs strongly from what is observed in the Indian case. The British integration framework dwells on a race-based approach which excludes Poles. And, in contrast to the Asian social movement, the Polish organisations have less been affected by the structuring role of British Unions. The Polish population, benefiting from higher education levels than their Indian counterpart from the onset, enjoyed better access to the job market and therefore a rapid assimilation into the British society. In addition, the ideological alignment of the diaspora elite favoured the *rapprochement* with right-wing parties and, conversely, widened the gap with leftist organisations. Unlike in the Indian case, the collapse of working class structures was not conducive to a radical transformation of the associational field.

If the UK policy context played a role in the evolution of Polish associations, it pertains to the specific way in which the British authorities addressed the integration of Poland into the Western European ensemble. Contrary to its other European counterparts, the United Kingdom imposed few restrictions on the coming and settlement of Poles in the country. The Associate Membership agreements signed between the accession states and the UK in 1993 granted the right to establish businesses. In addition, in the wake of a lobbying campaign of the Federation of Poles<sup>45</sup> (Sword, 1996: 69), the British authorities did not impose any visa obligations on short-term visitors. The measure was taken to leave the possibilities for Polish relatives to visit family members who had been sometimes away for half a century. In fact, the combination of the two decisions had two consequences. It was first conducive to the increase of undocumented over-stayers (Duvell, 2004). But it also led to the emergence of a class of Polish entrepreneurs such as lawyers, brokers, advisors and travel agency who assisted newcomers in finding their way into the maze of the British

---

<sup>45</sup> IEEGBPOLS

official services for foreigners. As a consequence, in 2004, when the last obstacles to mobility were suppressed, an embryo migration industry was already established. This favoured labour immigration to a country which was in need for low-skilled workers. But it also favoured the emergence of a profit sector which took in charge the needs of newcomers, in parallel to the existing associational framework. The number of Polish media informing newcomers about jobs, accommodation and cultural events boomed from four weekly in 2004 to tens of websites nowadays (Garapich, 2008a). The same can be said of retail shops, pubs, etc. But the emergence of this parallel Polish world, whose quasi-unique meeting point are the Polish churches, impeded the socialisation of newcomers into existing social networks, which do not anymore fulfil their role of matrix of transformation of “peasants into soldiers”.

#### 2.4.2. Poland and its émigrés: representations and policies

The relationships between Poland and its expatriates are underpinned by mythical representations forged throughout two centuries of Polish migration history. Narratives of the nineteenth century emigration still underpin the representation of emigration today. Labour migration is still perceived as illegitimate, a betrayal by workers placing their individual interest above the national good. In contrast, political emigration is the nationalist engagement *par excellence*. Refugees are bound to propagate Enlightenment ideals of liberty and resistance against imperialist regimes, while contributing from abroad to the preservation of an imagined Polishness. The role of the Church and, by extension, of other diaspora organisations was to ensure that the experience of migration would transform emigrant peasants into faithful Poles. These categories are reinforced by class and ethnic divisions, political migration being associated with a catholic elite migration. These representations still frame the Polish mindset and discourses on migration (Garapich 2010). The Catholic Church has been one of its most constant promoters. The Church has widely based its legitimacy on the myth of the “Catholic Nation” (Porter 2001), i.e. on the idea that the Church is the historical pillar on which the Nation was built up. This myth is propped up by narratives of the institution as the locus of resistance against the non-catholic Empires at the time of the partition. In the seventies, this discourse tended to be more diluted within a wider rhetoric on human rights. However, in the nineties, the Church sought to regain a central political role by opting for a more conservative discourse and greater involvement in political debates<sup>46</sup> (Anderson 2003). Nowadays, common representations of migration tend to conflate the myth of the catholic nation with the nationalist discourse of the “good” political refugee versus the “bad” economic emigrant. These narratives still frame the *raison d’être* of the main Polish organisations abroad and the state attitude toward its diaspora.

The Polish Church, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Senate are, historically, the three main institutions in charge of the relationships between the expatriates and their homeland<sup>47</sup>. The Church maintains the network of the Polish Catholic Missions in the main country of settlement. This organisation was created during the partition period, in 1894, with the aim of keeping control over the provision of religious services to the Poles abroad

---

<sup>46</sup> This interference of the Church into political elections caused it a loss of popularity between Poles. In fact some surveys showed that Church’s approval rating declined from 87% in 1989 to 31% in 1995 (Ramet 1997: 97-110)

<sup>47</sup> IEEGBPOL3

and to attract their financial support (see the introductory section of the UK Polish Mission). The relationships between the three institutions are sometimes confrontational as their objectives do not necessarily overlap. During the communist period, the Senate became of secondary importance as the linkages with the Western diaspora were cut off. After 1948, the relationships were not inexistent, but they were underlain by foreign policy strategies. The contacts with the diaspora were maintained through the Towarzystwo Polonia, a foundation funded by the Foreign Office. In the seventies, the government approached Chicago organisations to use them as an intermediary with the IMF<sup>48</sup>. But it is not until the mid 1990s that the state developed a coherent policy toward its émigrés.

Since the nineties, the Senate retrieved a more central role in the management of the relationships with the diaspora. An independent foundation, Spunota Polska has been created to channel public funds to overseas organisations<sup>49</sup>. Although no organic links tie the foundation to the Senate, they closely work together. There is no official and systematic emigration strategy in Poland (Kicinger 2009: 87), but a collection of measures that serves as a legal framework to deal with both emigration and immigration. Prior to entry into the EU, migration was regulated through a series of bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries. Since 2004, the principle of free circulation of workers applies. However, a transition period before the actual implementation of this principle runs until 2011 for most Western European countries. The United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden are the only Western countries which have not taken on this transition period (Kubal 2009).

During the nineties, the government was primarily concerned with the Eastern diaspora. The Polish authorities created a specific card for “Ethnic Poles” living in Eastern countries. The card facilitates the circulation between the two countries and gives automatic access to some public services (Kicinger 2009). The year 2007 is a watershed for the attitude of the government toward the Western diaspora. For the first time, the leader of the liberal party campaigned in the UK and Ireland in order to attract the votes of the overseas workers<sup>50</sup>. After the liberals won the Parliamentary elections, a series of schemes were implemented. The programme Powrot (return), deals with the return of recent emigrants. It includes tax alleviation for those willing to create an enterprise and the promotion of business and job opportunities among expatriates. The programme was conducive to the creation of a website ([www.powrot.gov.pl](http://www.powrot.gov.pl)) and to the organisation of fairs in London and Dublin.

A specific programme targeting young researchers offers two-year scholarships to carry out a research project in a Polish university. The government also set up an institutional framework meant to provide legal support and cultural services to the expatriates. This was first done through a programme of modernisation of consulate infrastructures and of information about the living conditions in major destination countries (the programme closer to work, closer to Poland) (Szewczyk & Unterschütz 2009: 217).

Finally, in October 2007, a new programme meant to foster the linkages between Poland and the diaspora abroad was initiated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. This programme primarily dealt with the strengthening of the relationships between the consulate

---

<sup>48</sup> IEEGBP03

<sup>49</sup> IEEGBP03.

<sup>50</sup> IEEGBP06

authorities, the Polonia organisations and the Polish Catholic Mission. It supports cultural activities, Polish community schools for the children of emigrants, establishment of chairs and lectureships in local universities, the provision of grants for young Poles (Szewczyk & Unterschütz 2009: 218). The institutionalisation of the Polonia framework participates in an effort of recognition of the political role of the post-war diasporic organisations, (Garapich 2008a). This policy dovetails with the re-composition of the landscape of diaspora organisations after 1989.

The role of the Polish Church in post-Communist Poland is yet to be documented. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Church has faced a loss of influence within the Polish society. Even if the institution strove to cash in on its commitment to the Solidarnosc movement, it was excluded from the political scene after the first free elections. In order to offset its withdrawal, a part of the Clergy radicalised its discourse to occupy the terrain of traditional values and to get closer to right-wing conservative parties. This shift had an echo among British Poles, a traditional conservative stronghold. Some interviewed parishioners asserted that some Polish priests had expressed voting recommendations in masses during electoral campaigns. But those are actions of individuals and not a deliberate strategy of the Polish Mission.

#### *2.4.3. Polish migration after 2004 and its consequences for the Polish volunteer sector*

The recent wave of labour immigration to the UK has not, so far, resulted in a sizeable upsurge of affiliation in existing Polish organisations; and if one observes an increase in the number of creation of associations (see below), they remain relatively small and focused on local issues. Six years after the start of the Polish migration wave, the emergence of a new organisational field (as it occurred in the eighties in the Indian case) does not seem likely. One observes a new associational sector, but it turns out to be spearheaded by small elite of highly skilled workers who share no affinities with the post-war establishment. The majority of middle- and low-skilled workers present in the country are not part of associational networks, except with regard to the need to provide Polish language courses to the children, and the emergence of few welfare and cultural associations. Several factors explain this mild interest. Before the economic crunch of 2009, a common argument put forward by interviewees concerned the temporary character of Polish migration. Most immigrants were perceived as not envisaging long term settlement and therefore not attracted by associational involvement. But this argument has lost its force as settlement becomes increasingly an option for Polish families since the economic downturn.

The emergence of the migration industry as a substitute for volunteering has already been mentioned. For Michal Garapich, the migration industry is an escape from the diasporic hierarchies between so-called labour immigrants and the political elite, underpinned by historical representations of migration. The decline of the prevalence of nationalist ideologies since the end of the cold war is another explanatory factor. However, the Fukuyama thesis, according to which the establishing of liberal democracies unavoidably leads to a de-politicisation of social conflicts, is not propped up by the situation on Poland. The contemporary Polish political scene is more polarised than ever between post-communist parties, the post-Solidarnosc movement and new conservative parties. In this context, migration represents a form of exit for those who find it hard to carve out a place in

a Poland which still struggles to re-invent itself. In that sense, migration is a political statement and migration, as ever, is a locus where the Polish society invents itself. This hypothesis would explain why newcomers are reluctant to enter existing the diaspora associational field which constitutes the echo chamber of homeland political debates in the UK.

However, the two case-studies show that newcomers have not completely ignored associational activism. For example, some newcomers have chosen to create their own scout troops. In France, three new groups have been established in Lyon, Aix and Orleans. In most cases, the creation of new troops is spurred by the absence of organization in the place of settlement. Southampton is a case in point<sup>51</sup>. A local union of Polish workers created a troop with the support of the UK scouting movement. It remains to be seen if these new troops will formalize their relationships with the country organisations. Their incorporation is not without posing difficulties insofar as they often import with them methods and practices inspired by homeland scouting. These difficulties have, in the past, led to a split in the Canadian Girl Guide association (Przychodzki 1994). By and large, new affiliates coming from Poland are surprised by the emphasis put on the teaching of Polish history and culture and the general weak command of Polish in existing troops. Finally, interviewees put forward that some recent recruits are reluctant to be trained as scout leaders unless they are paid to do so<sup>52</sup>.

Contrary to the previous example, the Polish Catholic Mission in the UK has widely benefited from the Polish emigration in the post-communist context. The arrival of new immigrants re-filled the Polish (and British) parishes. Nowadays, more than 2000 people regularly attend mass in Slough and 10 000 in Ealing<sup>53</sup>. Even if the Polish Mission only attracts a small proportion of the newcomers (between 10 and 14%<sup>54</sup>), the overcrowded churches have accelerated the transfer of British Poles to English speaking parishes. In consequence, the mutation of the Polish community affects the PCM in two different ways. On the one hand, the association has “polishicised” both its staff (with the arrival of new priests) and target group. On the other hand, the growth of the number of attendees has been conducive to a deeper integration of the organisation into the British Catholic framework. The pilot projects aiming at creating Polish-British parishes are a case in point. This trend occurs at a time when the Vatican urges national churches to create intercultural spaces to attract immigrants.

Apart from ex-servicemen organisations whose disappearance is programmed, the capacity to attract newcomers will be crucial for perpetuating diaspora organisations. The Polish Scouting movement will be a test case. Scouting is still popular in Poland and it is likely that newcomers will want to enlist their children in scouting troops. But will they do so by creating their own organisation, like the aforementioned examples suggest? Or will the existing Polish organisation reform its structures in order to incorporate new affiliates? If the path to reform is taken by the organisation, it will probably lead to an increased embedding

---

<sup>51</sup> IEIGBZHP2

<sup>52</sup> IEIGBZHP2

<sup>53</sup> [www.catholicerald.co.uk/articles/a0000279.shtml](http://www.catholicerald.co.uk/articles/a0000279.shtml)

<sup>54</sup> IEIGBPOLMIS1

at the local level with British organisations and at the international level with Poland-based organisations.

### **3. Migrant organising and cross border embedding in the UK**

This final section elaborates a systematic comparison between the different case-studies. It highlights the differences and similarities in their functioning and in the relationships they maintain with their environment. I have so far paid a specific attention to the context factors that have a structuring effect on the organising patterns of the studied organisations, namely the national and international political contexts and the migration systems. In this section, other aspects of the migrant organising process will be examined: the constraints exerted by the insertion into wider organisational fields on the one hand, the duties generated by the overall ideological or strategic line of conduct on the other. Both pertain not to the context of the organisations but to the daily organisational life at large. The decisions they make and the relationships they maintain with other organisations produce in turn structural constraints that weight upon their activities. These “internal” factors explain the difference of sensitivity to the “external” context between the investigated associations. As seen above, the Sikh Human Rights Group has been more prone to enlarge its field of activities than other organisations. At the other end of the spectrum, the Scouting movement has maintained its overall pattern of functioning for six decades. Finally, the comparative analysis brings to the fore how two dimensions of cross border fields dovetail with each other, namely transnational organisational fields and transnational social fields.

#### **3.1. Migrant organisations and their context: a comparative perspective**

The Indian and Polish migration systems in which our case studies are embedded constitute two highly different environments. The Polish diaspora has been isolated from the homeland for half a century. It faced two major geopolitical changes: the fall of the Berlin wall and the entry of Poland into the European Union. A profound sense of otherness separates new immigrants from the post-war diaspora. First, the newcomers are urban middle class Poles while old-timers are mostly born in the UK or have been socialised in the country since their childhood. But there is also a subjective otherness honed in by mythical representations of Polish migration, which distinguishes both groups. The mutations through which Poland has passed after the Second World War and after the fall of the Iron Curtain have produced a new history, a new nation, a new country. Both groups simply do not come from the same country.

Conversely, Indian migration is a typical postcolonial migration. The Indian community in the UK has benefited from continuous arrivals from the origin country, even if the composition of the flows changed over time: male and low skilled in the fifties and sixties, family and higher skilled since the late sixties, students and engineers in the nineties and two thousands. If otherness has been experienced, it was primarily with the host society, both ethnically and politically: Indians have been confronted with long-standing racial prejudices forged since colonial times.

The Polish and Indian inflows have undergone an upsurge since the early 2000s. The reasons and compositions of the new migration waves differ sharply. Highly-qualified Indian

immigrants arrived through the filter of the UK selective immigration policy while Polish immigration increased after Poland became a EU member in 2004 and occupied the lower strata of the job market.

Beyond the differences between the two groups, they both face the challenges posed to long-standing immigrant groups. One observes a general trend of internal class, cultural and political diversification as integration forces and new immigration waves generate socio-professional diversity. This trend nurtures tensions as shifting self-identifications obliges groups to redefine their positioning toward host and origin societies. Another trait shared by both groups is the recent opening of origin state authorities to diaspora issues. India and Poland have formalised diasporic policies to foster the economic and political support of diaspora organisations and individual.

The Polish and Indian migration systems differ in many respects, and have, in turn, processed distinct associational fields. At the local level, Polish and Indian associational fields share common structuring patterns. The associational landscapes have taken shape around specific pillars: the Church and ex-servicemen's associations on the one hand, Gurudwaras and ethnic networks on the other. Around these organisations have mushroomed local associations taking in charge the needs of the communities: community centres, Saturday schools, youth and women's organisations, sport clubs, etc. In that respect, at the local level, both organisational fields appear as an interlocking of small community associations with religion acting as an aggregating force. In both cases, the vast majority of organisations dedicate their services to the local population and are not engaged in cross border activities.

But the common features vanish when one looks at both fields on the national or international scale. Indian organisations turn out to be much more fragmented, with a range of overarching institutions delimiting the main dividing lines of the field and a myriad of small and large independent organisations, thus reflecting the social and religious diversity of the subcontinent and of its diaspora. Conversely, the internal structures of the Polish associational field have little changed since the late forties. A unique umbrella body, the Federation of Poles and the Polish Mission act as the main representative bodies. Around them a series of overarching organisations represent the different sectors of the associational fields at the national/world levels. The centralised/decentralised features of both fields impact on the transnational embedding of organisations. In the Polish case, cross border relations are often mediated by overarching organisations. The Scouting movement and the Polish Catholic Mission in the UK are two cases in point. Both are harnessed to a global organisation which edicts the main rules of functioning. Inversely, cross border linkages with India is more varied, in scale and nature. This does not mean that the Polish associational field is less transnational than its Indian counterpart (both count only a quarter of cross border-connected associations), but simply that the structures of their respective cross border embedding is different.

The peculiarity of the Polish organisational field is explained by the specificity of the migration history of the group. The government in exile has acted as a strong political pole around which the associational field coalesced. The low number of arrivals and the political consequences of the historical context impeded the development of associational fields important enough to challenge and take over the existing one. After 2004, the new immigrants had the choice between recourse to the private or the volunteer sectors. In



contrast, Indian volunteering has dramatically changed over the last three decades. Since the eighties, former dominant associations, mostly secular, have been superseded by ethno-religious organisations. One observes a broad ethnicisation of political and non political activities as ethnic identities have started to prevail upon class identifications.

These trends have affected not only organisational fields at large but also associations themselves. The shift of legitimacies of immigrant volunteering which occurred in 1984 was conducive to the disaffiliation of Indian Workers' Associations and to the emergence of Khalistani organisations such as the Sikh Human Rights Group. Organisations created in the wake of the civil war in Punjab are inscribed in a diasporic social movement and therefore more prone to develop cross border activities. Since the end of the war, the Group has built its activities and legitimacy on the expanding diasporic consciousness among Sikhs. The Indian organisations have been more sensitive to the long term evolution of the immigrant communities rather than the short term shifts of the migration system. The same can be said of the Polish associations. The rise in the number of undocumented immigrants in the nineties and the immigration wave triggered by the entry of Poland into Europe has not affected the agenda of the two investigated associations. Unlike what happened in Spain (see the chapter on the Spanish case) no new associational sector sprung up to take in charge the problems of illegal migrants. Likewise, no alternate organisational field has emerged to challenge the nationalist ethos of the existing one. It is still too early to envisage the long term effects of the new migration wave on Polish volunteering but one can assume that the attraction of newcomers will become a bigger stake as assimilation undermines the traditional clientele of the associations.

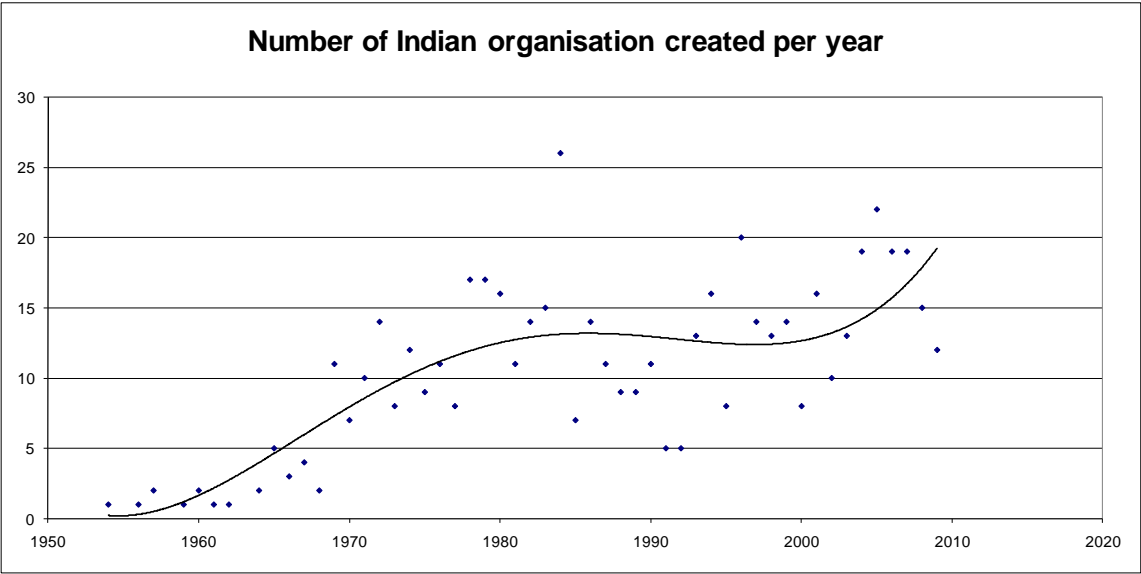
The Indian and Polish migration systems reflect two distinct historical and geopolitical contexts. Likewise, the common national context of the arrival country has done little to foster converging trends. The two groups have occupied largely distinct socio-professional, geographic and political segments of the British society. The Poles have remained outside of the multicultural framework in so far as they could not benefit from the measures targeting Black and Asian populations. Likewise, the British foreign policies toward the two origin countries have hardly anything in common. In this context, the few similarities highlighted by the comparison between the four case studies are all the more outstanding. They more specifically pertain to the sensitivity of migrant associations to integration processes. As shown by the different case studies, these effects are significant, slow and ambiguous. Significant first: none of the organisation is immune to its effects. The evolution of the organisations and their number of affiliates are tightly connected to social dynamics at play within immigrant groups. But they can be very slow: organisations can retain membership over several decades and even, as shown by the Polish example, over two or three generations. And they can be ambiguous: integration can make affiliates move away, but it also enlarges the financial capacities of members and thus helps organisations to survive even if they have lost currency among the wider community. In the IWA case, these enlarged capacities have made it possible to sustain cross border activities despite the shrinking of organisational linkages.

The second parallel which can be traced between the two groups investigated is the shift of representations and policies in the origin countries toward their respective diasporas. It is difficult to assess the impact of the new policies on the migrant organisations as none of the

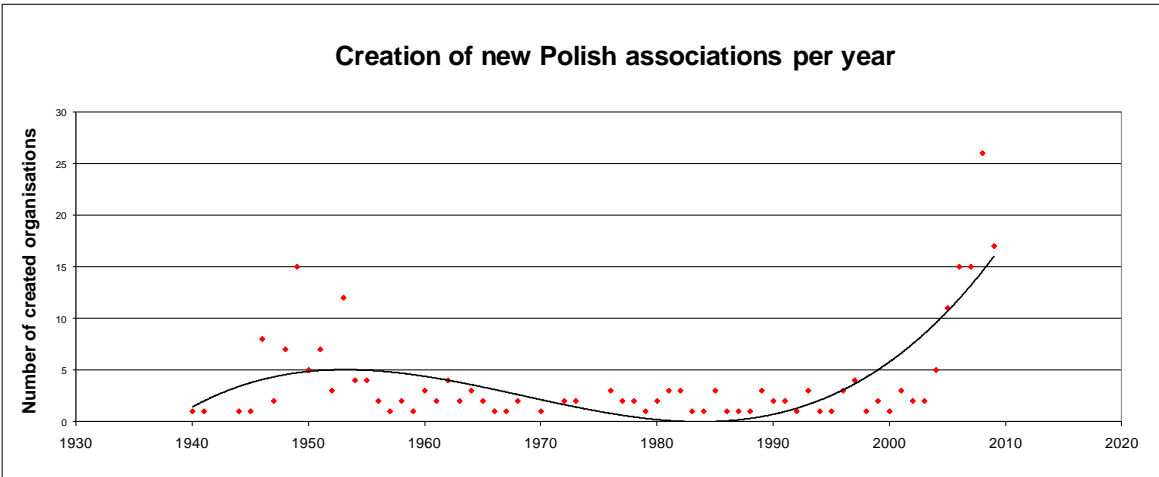
four case studies has directly benefited from governmental schemes. However, it can be said that this tendency towards opening has accompanied (rather than actually created) the trend of transnationalisation at play among migrant organisations. The recognition by the Polish state of the representative role of post-war organisations has certainly sustained a sense of legitimacy, and henceforth, has facilitated the adaptation of these organisations to the post-Berlin context. Likewise, the discourse of the Indian authorities on the “angels of development” (Khadria, 2008) is to be put in perspective with the increasing number of associations committed to homeland development projects. Among Indians, the transnationalisation process is definitely associated with international philanthropy.

One last similarity highlighted by the comparison is the absence of systematic causal links between the emergence of new organisational fields and the surge of creations following new immigration waves (see graphs below).

**Figure 7: Number of Indian organisations created per year**



**Figure 8: Creation of new Polish associations per year**



Source: personal investigations

The surge of immigration flows from Poland and India has paralleled a recent increase in the rate of creation of new associations. In the Indian case, the growth of creations is accounted for by the number of new homeland development oriented organisations. This trend is not related to the inflows of highly skilled migrants and students. In the Polish case, the surge is linked to the demand for Polish schools and advice centres for newcomers. So far, it cannot be said that these new generation of Polish association has produced an associational field of its own. They still lack overarching structures and political identity. The constitution of national networks might challenge the internal dynamic of the associational field in the coming years. In both cases, this increase has not yielded a distinct organisational field heralding a shift in current trends. The occurrence of new immigration waves is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for the emergence of new organisational fields.

The differences of contexts accounts for the morphologic differences between both organisational fields. But contextual factors leave unexplained a number of differences between the case studies. In particular, they do not explain why organisations endure despite the complete transformation of their environment and why some organisations appear more sensitive to such transformations than others. Ecological and organisational factors, that is to say factors pertaining to the relations maintained by organisations within their organisational field and those pertaining to the inertia of daily practices' have to be considered.

### **3.2. Other factors: context sensitivity of migrant organisations**

The different case studies display various levels of sensitivity to their context. The Indian organisations turned out to be more sensitive than their Polish counterparts. The Sikh Human Rights Group proved to be highly responsive to its context. The Indian Workers' Association and the Polish Mission display a lesser sensitivity to their environment, even if the two organisations had to face a rapid evolution of the number of affiliates. Finally, the scouting movement in the UK is the association which appears as the least affected by the context changes. Of course, the organisation had to adapt to the decreasing number of affiliates. But, apart from this element (which pertains to internal transformation of the target group), the scouting movement still works on the same founding principles and relies on the same partners to perform its activities.

#### *3.4.1. The quest for legitimacy: MOs and their associational fields*

The first element explaining the different context sensitivities of organisations is their mode of embedding into the wider organisational field. MOs rely on their allies to carry out their activities, and for access to information and resources. The capacity of migrant organisations to evolve with their environment hinges on their mode of inscription into their associational field. The historical context during which associational fields emerge is of crucial importance to understanding their structuring, ideological alignment, geographic scope and power distribution. The organisational field of the scouting movement and of the Polish Mission took shape during the Second World War. The post-war working class movements for the IWA and the civil war in Punjab for SHRG formed the historical background which defined the contours of their associational embedding. As time passed, organisations and their mutual interactions tend to crystallise through daily practices. Associational fields then become systems of relations which acquire their own autonomy. When the initial conditions

which led to the emergence of the field disappear, the latter continue to exert a structuring influence on organisation activities. The place of an organisation within an associational field depends on its legitimacy in the eyes of its partners. Given the structuring strength of organisational fields, any attempt by an association to reorient its activities or line of conduct goes along with a quest for renewing its legitimacy toward its partners. Transnational embedding of MOs is equally submitted to these “ecological” constraints. This form of constraint is best shown when analysing coping strategy of MOs in times of crisis. Illustrations of this process are provided by the different case-studies.

The importance of ecological constraints is obvious in the Polish case. The establishment of the Polish post-war associational field was part of a wider political strategy. The end of the communist regime put an end to the deep of the *raison d'être* of the post-war organisational field, the scouting movement included. The government in exile was dissolved and the symbols of the Republic returned to Poland. The post-war organisations became custodians without custody. However, the organisations remained. This is particularly the case for the scouting organisation. The scouting world organisations did not join ZHP-Poland. In this specific case, the failed de-communisation of the ZHP-Poland was instrumental in preserving the legitimacy of the exile scouting association as a separate organisation. In addition, the fall of the Berlin Wall had little effect on the environment of the scouting movement. As highlighted above, the creation and functioning of ZHP, from troop level to the World Bureau, is organically linked to two other organisations: the Polish Mission and ex-servicemen's associations. The strong institutionalisation of the relationships between these three organisations (and beyond, across the entire field), propped up a routinisation of practices. In the UK, the persistence of the Federation of Poles has also been critical for the overall maintaining of the different elements of the organisational field. The recognition by the Polish government of the post-war organisations as the legitimate voice of the overseas Poles was key to the stability of the field. Overarching institutions such as the Federation of Poles and the Polish Catholic Mission maintained their central position within the organisational field, which prevented it from collapsing. This explains the relative immunity of the Scouting movement to the transformation of the geopolitical context. Likewise, the Polish Mission has maintained its role of custodian of Catholic Polishness within the diaspora. For example, the historical place of the Mission within the organisational field explains the re-interpretation of the Vatican guidelines on diaspora pastoral care, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*. This re-interpretation lays an obvious emphasis on the preservation of this Polishness (and Polish language) and downplays the urge to create intercultural spaces. This interpretation is underpinned by the Mission's place of pillar of the diaspora organisational establishment.

In its sheer diversity, the Indian organisational field is far more complex than the Polish one. In fact, it is an aggregate of various fields which appeared at various periods of the history of the settlement of the Indian community in Britain.

With the end of Marxist parties in Punjab<sup>55</sup>, the link between the IWA and India changed in nature. On the one hand, as the leftist Indian associational field of IWA shrunk, the organisation reduced its transnational commitments and became a mere facilitator of

---

<sup>55</sup> Nowadays, the CPI has maintained a strong presence in three states only: Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura

individual transnational engagements. On the other, from an ideological focus and a moral subordination, India has become an instrumental source of historical legitimacy. The search of legitimacy became increasingly important in the wake of the Khalistani movement and the general delegitimization of working class structures in the UK. The transnational relations with overseas partner (namely the Desh Baghat Yadgar Hall) are built on a putative filiation between the organisation and the Gadr party. The IWA seeks to build up a secular identity against the ethno-cultural focus of Sikh activism. These efforts to bring to the fore the historical linkages with the Gadri movement were also part of a wider strategy of reunification with other IWA branches. Simultaneously (and, one could say, paradoxically), IWA Birmingham distanced itself from communist linkages. The concessions made in this sense (such as the outsourcing of Lalkar, the IWA periodical) allowed for a temporary reunification of the different factions into one single national organisation. However, this strategy had its limitations and did not overcome organisational inertia. Unlike SHRG, IWA did not fundamentally re-orient its focus and space of engagement.

The Khalistani movement and its aftermath have been determining as regards the associational and ideological positioning of the Sikh Human Rights Group. After the end of civil war in Punjab (and therefore of the initial conditions in which it was founded), the Sikh Human Rights Group enlarged its field of activities to environment, health issues (female foeticide) and religious rights (the turban affair). It found new sources of funding (UN, Unesco) and widened its range of action to new countries (France). By positioning on human rights issues rather than on pro-independence claims, the Group marked its difference from the radicals of the movement. When the dust of the Punjab civil war settled, the less confrontational atmosphere enabled the organisation to collaborate with the various factions of the movement (pro-independence hard liners, Akalis, etc.) in the UK and India. SHRG refined its central position within the organisational field. In this context, SHRG comforted its critique of the Khalistan movement in order to theorise its ideological positioning. According to its leader, Sikhs form a deterritorialised community based on shared values and *Weltanschauung* and not on a sense of belonging to an origin territory. The effort of re-conceptualisation has taken place within the framework of UN and UNESCO-led reflection on discrimination. This led the Group to build up a Sikh perspective on racism, human rights and on the environment<sup>56</sup>.

SHRG is a pressure group in contact with the different factions of the Sikh associational field. Of course, this accommodating strategy has its own limitations. As SHRG showed interest in new issues, it entered into competition with other organisations. Once again, the Turban affair is a case in point. It confronts two associations, SHRG and United Sikhs, opposed by two conceptions of the way to defend Sikh interests. While SHRG favours backstage manoeuvres to obtain consensus, United Sikhs, which was originally created in the US and is strongly influenced by American forms of ethnic group mobilisation, favours direct confrontation with legal institutions on the behalf of collective rights. This brings to the fore the importance of action strategies and leadership patterns adopted by each organisations to explain the functioning of migrant organisations.

---

<sup>56</sup> IEIGBSHRG1

### 3.4.2. Strategic patterns of leadership of migrant organisations: accommodators, protestors and conservatives

The inscription of immigrant organisation within their associational field conditions their capacity to react to wider structural changes. But, ultimately, it is the line of conduct adopted by organisation to fulfil their aims that determine their sensitivity to context changes. For the sake of sound comparison, the analysis is based on the classification of ethnic leadership elaborated by Gunnar Myrdal in his seminal book: *An American dilemma: the negro problem and modern democracy* (Myrdal et al 1962). The author distinguishes between two forms of ethnic leaders: accommodators and protestors. The attitude of the former is primarily driven by the search for consensus between the stakeholders, while the latter seek to transform their context through direct confrontation. I have applied this model to characterise the strategies displayed by the associations investigated.

In line with the path-dependency theory, it was found that the initial strategy adopted by the organisations had effects throughout their lives. As a consequence, accommodating organisations are more open and therefore more sensitive to context factors, while protesting organisations, which tend to restrict their partnerships in accordance with their ideological alignment, tend to be less affected by the societal and state contexts. A third category has been added to the original typology: the conservatives. Like the protestors, their strong ideological stance is protected by limited interactions with their environment. However, contrary to protestors, they do not seek to affect their environment through direct confrontation. On the contrary, they have no other claim than the preservation of their ideological stance and resources.

This typology refers directly to another classic of the social sciences, namely the distinction established by Robert Merton between innovation, ritualism and rebellion (Merton 1938: 676). These are three archetypical attitudes adopted by individuals and groups to overcome the difficulty of achieving their goals when institutionalised social structures constitute an obstacle. Accommodators tend to be innovative in the sense that they negotiate a transformation of their institutional environment in order to achieve their purposes. Conservative organisations are associated with ritualist behaviours: they tend to drop their goal to privilege conformity to existing institutional mechanisms. Finally, protestors favour rebellion and reject both the cultural aspirations and reigning standards to introduce a “new social order” (ibid.: 678). Each case study illustrates one of the above patterns.

SHRG represents an archetypal accommodating organisation. Addressing SHRG as an accommodating organisation clarifies the form and level of cross border relations displayed by the organisation. The choice to act as an accommodator was made during the early days of the Khalistani movement. The creation of SHRG stems from the will to follow a more moderate stance than pro-independence organisations. The Group works in the more consensual field of human rights. This positioning was maintained after the Punjab civil war and enabled the Group to diversify its activities. SHRG was subsequently solicited by various institutions: the Home Office, UN bodies (committees on discrimination and environment) and the SGPC (the turban case, the anti-foeticide campaign).

The behaviour adopted by the organisation to support the Sikh student in the turban affair is typical of such innovative strategy. In order to achieve their purpose, SHRG strove to

circumvent the legal barriers by downplaying the religious value of the turban. The outstanding outcome of such strategy is the dual integrative dynamic that it induces. SHRG's line of work is to seek a *modus vivendi* which will eventually transform both the Sikh and receiving communities. The turban affair, if the argumentation of the organisation was acknowledged by judiciary authorities, would inscribe in the French legislation a definition of the turban that is in contradiction with the common interpretation. But it would also mean the reappearance of Sikh turbans in French schools. Likewise, the 2001 campaign of lobbying toward the British government for the recognition of Sikhs as a distinctive ethnic community, sine-qua-non condition to voice in the British multicultural system, is in line with an accommodating stance. This recognition gives a legal ground to a non-Indian Sikh identity. The SHRG and the British Sikh Consultative Forum have been at the forefront of this campaign.

IWA-Birmingham is a protestor association. The Birmingham Indian Workers' Association is a Marxist organisation which has opted for a hardline stance with limited interactions with organisations which do not share the same ideological line, public authorities included. The association has endorsed a "rebellious" attitude as it rejects both the British institutional framework and the social order. IWA objects to any support from the public authorities. This stance is consistent with the objective of transforming the social conditions of its target group (the Indian proletariat in the UK) through direct confrontation. In other words, IWA displays the characteristics of what Gunnar Myrdal calls a protestor organisation. The ideological positioning of IWA Birmingham is a decisive factor explaining the pattern and scope of its UK and transnational relationships and practices. Its positioning as a radical protestor organisation renders the association relatively immune to the institutional context, and, to some extent, to its organisational context. Because of its absence from the institutional space created by the race relation policy, the association has been less affected by the reform of the integration/race relation policy than other IWA counterparts. Likewise, IWA Birmingham failed to establish long standing alliances with other organisations which did not endorse the same strategic alignment. The association therefore is primarily affected by the evolution of the Indian community itself and the historical shrinking of the Marxist movement, not only in the UK, but also at the global level.

The Polish scouting organisation and the Catholic Mission have both endorsed a conservative pattern of action. Both are bound to perpetuate a diasporic sense of belonging. This stance presents four key characteristics: the self reproduction of its hierarchic functioning by the training of its personnel; limited reliance on external (public) funding; externalisation of the decision making process; the stability of its organisational field in which it is embedded. The training of leaders ensures the reproduction of its "genetic code" while the stability of its external partners ensures the permanence of its human resources and the valorisation of its legitimacy. Finally, in both cases, the leading institutions issuing the general guidelines of the organisations are not hosted by the organisations themselves but, in one case, by a World Bureau, and, on the other, by the Polish episcopate. In both cases, this specificity is an additional factor of stability of the organisations. It is hardly surprising to see that the organisations are relatively immune to context factors in the host and sending countries. It explains the preservation of the structures of the associations for several decades (and twenty years after the fall of the Berlin wall). It also explains why the country organisations have kept the same mode of structuring in the various settlement

countries. The hostland-related context factors (the composition of the Polish community notwithstanding) have hardly any sway on the organising pattern. In this context, the conservation of the organisation as an independent one is largely linked to the “routinised” procedures of the organisations. In Merton’s words, these organisations have become ritualists: the conformity to internalised institutional practices has downplayed the ability to reformulate new goals with regard to the changing context.

### **Conclusion: characteristics of Indian and Polish transnational organisational fields and their effects upon migrant associations**

At the beginning of this paper, the historical overview of Indian associations in the UK highlighted a paradox. On the one hand, the literature on Indian migration makes the case for a global diasporisation of social networks. One observes an increasing interlocking of social relations between the different poles of settlement all over the world. And numerous elements support the idea that this trend is paralleled by an overall transnationalisation of the Indian volunteer sector. The growing number of organisations engaged in homeland development, the deployment of politico-religious networks at the global level (such as in the case of the Khalistani movement) are the two facets of this trend. But, at the same time, the quantitative mapping of Indian associations in the UK contradicts this idea of an overall globalisation of Indian volunteering. The vast majority of associations have no commitment whatsoever beyond the national borders. In this context, it is legitimate to ask whether students of transnational organisations have not been lured by an academic fashion and have granted an excessive attention to marginal aspects of immigrant volunteering.

A closer scrutiny of the actual practices and functioning of migrant organisations sheds a new light on this paradox. In fact, our investigations have revealed a much wider range of cross border commitment than what appeared at first sight. Cross border activities are not the sole fact of transnational associations which rely on a number of branches in several countries. A large number of local associations turn also out to be occasionally committed to specific, mostly limited in time but sometimes recurrent, activities abroad. Through the accumulation of occasional practices, they contribute to the transnationalisation of volunteering. In addition, there is a sizeable proportion of local-focused immigrant organisations which are connected to wider transnational networks of associations. Their members participate in meetings, they receive advice and guidelines, and they give or receive money to institutional networks that span national borders. Finally, the study highlighted the tight interconnections between cross border organisations. They weave together what can be called transnational organisational fields (TOFs) at the global level. Each of the case studies has been an entry gate to study the history and constitution of Indian and Polish cross border associational fields and their impacts on the functioning of associations. A large section of this paper is dedicated to the description of the historical evolution of TOFs. The transnationalisation of migrant volunteering is made of interrelated dynamics of reshaping and decline of certain transnational fields and the rise of new ones. Their evolution is driven as much by the geo-political context as by the transformation of immigrant communities. The formation of transnational organisational fields is marked by the different facets of the globalisation process. First, at the national level by the reformulation of a liberal social contract between the state and individuals: the rise of a



market citizenship which underpins UK integration policies and the Indian diasporic policies has a bearing on new forms of social mobilisation. Conversely, economic and social liberalisation policies accelerated the decline of leftist working class organisations, leaving a vacuum filled by ethno-religious forms of organising. Secondly, at the regional level, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the European construction encouraged intra-european mobility, favouring diasporisation processes and the subsequent extension of associational activism.

But the main driving factor explaining the evolution of migrant organisations and their organisational field is the evolution of immigrant communities. The internal diversification of Indian and Polish communities has been spurred by endogenous long term integration processes and by the arrival of new categories of immigrants. The yearnings and expectations of immigrants evolve over time and so do the forms of volunteering. As a consequence, organisational fields have emerged and decayed. During the post-war period and until the eighties, these fields were underpinned by Marxist and nationalist ideologies. Since then, they have been challenged by ethnicisation and commoditisation of social mobilisation. The nationalist project of the post-war Polish diaspora has, so far, resisted well, partly because of the recognition of the Polish state, partly because new immigrants have not challenged its legitimacy. But the Indian post-independence field is only the shadow of what it used to be.

The final section of this paper showed that the internal structuring of TOFs explains the prevalence of certain forms of cross border engagement among migrant associations. The highly centralised Polish post-war organisational field have set the stage for the development of organisations coordinated by overarching institutions framing the activities of country-based branches. In line with the TRAMO taxonomy, this pattern has favoured the emergence of global and multinational organisations. The Scouting movement and the Polish Catholic Mission are two cases in point. Conversely, the a-centric Khalistani organisational field, itself a segment of the wider highly fragmented Indian organisational field, is more likely to host transnational organisations such SHRG. Finally the focal Indian Workers' Association is part of the shrinking Marxist Indian organisational field, which emerged at a time when the local needs of the UK Asian proletariat were the most pressing.

Organisational fields privilege certain forms of cross border organisations. But they also explain certain types of articulation, within organisations, with the transnational social fields (TSF) of the members. Among the investigated Polish associations, the strong institutionalisation of inter-organisational relations minimises the importance interpersonal relations in the conduct of cross border activities. Conversely, the less centralised Indian fields enable a greater role of individual members. The study has shown that the head of SHRG also relies heavily on interpersonal contacts in the UK and overseas to carry forward the association's activities. In the case of IWA Birmingham, the lesser role assumed by the association in carrying out transnational campaigns (and the greater role taken by individuals) is a symptom of this overall decline of cross border field. Both cases highlight the significance of individual based connections as a form of cross border resource.

Finally, the historical structuring of organisational fields favours certain types of cross border embedding, but does not determine them. A closer scrutiny shows mixed evidence of the actual effects of their context on the daily functioning of MOs. While some organisations have undergone an important reorientation of their activities in order to adapt to the new

context, others seem to have only been moderately affected. Furthermore, the persistence of migrant organisations despite the complete transformation of their environment shows that context factors do not suffice to explain the reality of immigrant volunteering. The organisation level analysis sheds light on the importance of, in the first place, the relationships between the MOs and their wider associational field and, in the second place, of the strategy endorsed by the organisations to pursue their aims. The inscription of associations within their wider TOF conditions the sustaining of associations, the reproduction of their legitimacy and access to financial and social resources. But, ultimately, the deliberate positioning of the association toward other associations and public authorities is critical to understand the functioning of associations. Beyond the external constraints that weigh on associations, the way members manage their self reproduction (for example, through the training of staff members) and their overall strategy of leadership are crucial determinants of the forms taken by migrant associations. Accommodating associations, more prone to engage with other institutional partners, are more likely to modify their morphology under changing circumstances than protesting or conservative organisations.

The study of Indian and Polish associations in the UK has highlighted the importance of analysing migrant organisations in their wider organisational, national and international contexts. But, studying the recent evolutions of Polish associations, I have been confronted by the epistemological limits of our conceptual framework. Being confined to the study of non-profit organisations, the thread of the evolution of immigrant volunteering toward the emergence of a migration industry and the subsequent commodification of volunteering could not be followed. The concept of non-profit organisations is, in this case, too narrow to account for the organising process of immigrants. A second limit which faced in this work is the difficulty of developing a comprehensive analysis of the role of individual relations and transnational social fields in the functioning of MOs. The present study does not offer the possibility of a further account of existing articulations between individual and organisational processes. TSFs, although elusive, are nevertheless of great variety, encompassing individual networks, transnational families and an array of informal groupings. Finally, our epistemological stance turned out to be an obstacle to fully grasping the analytical implications of the engagement of migrant organisation in social movements. This is the case for the Sikh Human Rights Group, connected to a global social movement on human rights and anti-racism through its work with UN bodies. Global social movements can be regarded as a specific form of social organisation, one which is cosmopolitan and not tied to a specific group and committed to social change. The connections between migrant organisations and wider social movements constitute an avenue of research which is yet to be explored. Social movements, transnational social fields and profit organisations are three boundary stones delimiting the epistemological area of the concepts of migrant organisations and transnational organisational fields. These observations highlight the necessity to imagine a wider conceptual framework, encompassing formal and informal, profit and non profit, migrant and cosmopolitan forms, of organising. Such a conceptual framework would be more likely to reflect the complexity of social mobilisation in a diasporic context.

## Bibliography

- Alcorso C, Popoli CG, Rando G. 1992. Community Networks and Institutions. In *Australia's Italians Culture and Community in a Changing Society*, ed. S Castles, p. 261. St. Leonards, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin
- Anderson J. 2003. Catholicism and democratic consolidation in Spain and Poland. In *Church and state in contemporary Europe : the chimera of neutrality*, ed. JTS Madeley, Z Enyedi. London: Frank Cass
- Ballard R. 2003. The South Asian presence in Britain and its transnational connections. In *Culture and economy in the Indian diaspora*, ed. BC Parekh, G Singh, S Vertovec, pp. 197-222. London: Routledge
- Bartlett, Christopher and Ghoshal, Sumantra (1989) *Managing Across Borders* (London: Hutchinson Business Books).
- Bhachu P. 1985. Twice migrants : East African Sikh settlers in Britain. London: Tavistock. xiii, 205 p.
- Bernhard MH. 1993. *The origins of Democratization in Poland*. New York: Columbia University Press. 298 p.
- Brown JM. 2006. *Global South Asians. Introducing a modern Diaspora*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press. 197 p.
- Burrell K. 2009. *Polish Migration to the UK in the "New" European Union*. Farnham: Ashgate
- Catani M, Palidda S, eds. 1987. *Le rôle du mouvement associatif dans l'évolution des communautés immigrées*. Paris: Fas, Ministère des Affaires Sociales
- Chishti M. 2007. The Rise in Remittances to India: A Closer Look In *Migration Information Source*. Washington: Migration Policy Institute
- Cyrus N. 2006. Polish emigration: permanent and temporary patterns. In *Contemporary Polish migration in Europe: complex patterns of movement and settlement*, ed. A Triandafyllidou. Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press
- De Witte J. 1969. *Indian Workers Association in Britain*. Oxford
- Dusenbery VA, Tatla DS, eds. 2010. Sikh diaspora philanthropy in Punjab : global giving for local good Oxford: Oxford University Press. 312 p.
- Faist T. 2000. *The volume and dynamics of international migration and transnational social spaces*. Oxford: Oxford university press. 380 p.
- Galasinska A. 2010. Gossiping in the Polish club: an emotional coexistence of "old" and "new" migrants *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* First published on: 19 March 2010:14
- Garapich M. 2008a. The migration industry and civil society: Polish immigrants in the United Kingdom before and after EU enlargement. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* 35:735-52

- Garapich M. 2008b. Odyssean refugees, migrants and power. Construction of "Other" within the Polish "community" in the UK. In *Citizenship, political engagement, and belonging : immigrants in Europe and the United States* ed. D Reed-Danahay, C B. Brettell, p. 292. New Brunswick, N.J. ; London: Rutgers University Press
- Garapich M. 2010. Je suis parti juste comme ça... Le discours migratoire dans la culture polonaise et ses contestations. *Ethnologie française* 40:235-43
- Goldring L. 2002. The Mexican state and transmigrant organizations: Negotiating the boundaries of membership and participation. *Latin American Research Review* 37: 55-99
- Helweg AW. 1979. *Sikhs in England: the development of a migrant community*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. xi, 175 p., [4] leaves of plates p.
- Iglicka K. 2000. Mechanisms of migration from Poland before and during the transition period. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* 26:61-73
- Josephides S. 1991. *Toward a history of the Indian Workers' Association*. Coventry: Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations. 59 p.
- Kapur D. 2003. Indian Diaporic Philanthropy: some observations. In *Workshop on Diaspora Philanthropy to China and India*, ed. GE Initiative, p. 24. Harvard University
- Kepinska E. 2006. Recent trends in International Migration. The 2006 SOPEMI report for Poland. In *CMR Working papers*, p. 110. Warsaw: Centre of Migration Research
- Khadria B. 2007. Tracing the genesis of brain drain in India through state policy and civil society. In *Citizenship and those who leave. The politics of emigration and expatriation*, ed. N Green, F Weil, pp. 265-79. Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press
- Khadria B. 2008. India: skilled migration to developed countries, labour migration to the Gulf. In *Migration and Development. Perspectives from the South*, ed. S Castles, RD Wise, pp. 79-112. Geneva: IOM
- Kicinger A. 2009. Beyond the focus on Europeanisation: Polish migration policy 1989-2004. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* 35:79-95
- King J. 1994. *Three asian associations in Britain*. Coventry: Centre for research in ethnic relations. 90 p.
- Kubal A. 2009. Polish Migration to the UK in the 'New' European Union. *Journal of Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Law* 23
- Lacroix T. 2011 (forthcoming). The Rationale of Collective Remittances, a comparative perspective. In *Distant Development: Migrant diasporas in collective transnational activity*, ed. R Black. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University press
- Lall M. 2003. Mother India's forgotten children. In *International migration and sending countries*, ed. E Ostergaard Nielsen, pp. 121-39. Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

- Levitt P. 2007. *God needs no passport. Immigrants and the changing religious landscape.* New York, London: The new Press. 270 p.
- McKay S. 2009. The dimensions and effects of EU labour migration in the UK. In *EU labour migration since enlargement : trends, impacts and policies* , J Leschke, A Watt, pp. 29-49. Farnham: Ashgate
- Merton RK. 1938. Social Structure and Anomie. *American sociological review* 3:672-82
- Moliner C. 2007. L'immigration sikhe en France. Des plaines du Pendjab à la Seine-Saint-Denis. *Hommes et Migrations*
- Morawska E. 2001. Structuring migration: The case of Polish income-seeking travelers to the West. *Theory Soc.* 30:47-80
- Myrdal G, Sterner RME, Rose AM. 1962. *An American dilemma : the Negro problem and modern democracy.* New York ; London: Harper & Row. lxxxiii, 1482 p. p.
- Nowosielski M. 2010. The trap of transnationalism—Polish organizations in Germany. In *European Consortium for Political Research.* Munster
- ONS. 2009. Migration Statistics Quarterly Report n2. *online document*, Office of National Statistics, London
- Peach C. 2006. South Asian migration and settlement in Great Britain, 1951-2006. *Contemporary South Asia* 15:133-46
- Petersen HC. 2008. March 1968 in Poland - A national event and transnational movement. *Osteuropa* 58:71-+
- Ponty J. 2008. *Les Polonais du Nord ou la mémoire des corons.* Paris: Autrement. 123 p.
- Porter B. 2001. The Catholic Nation: Religion, Identity, and the Narratives of Polish History. *The Slavic and East European Journal* 45:289-99
- Przychodzki P. 1994. The influence of the roman catholic church on Canadian Polish Congress. In *Half a century of Canadian Polish Congress*, ed. E Soltys, RK Kogler, pp. 199-43. Toronto: Canadian Polish Research Institute
- Ramdin R. 1987. *The making of the Black working class in Britain.* Aldershot: Gower Publishing. 626 p.
- Ramet SP. 1997. *Whose Democracy? Nationalism, Religion, and the Doctrine of Collective Rights in post-1989 Eastern Europe.* Oxford, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield
- Roy J, Banerjee P. 2007. Attracting FDI from the Indian Diaspora: the way forward. p. 36. New Delhi: Confederation of Indian Industry
- Schrover M, Vermeulen F. 2005. Immigrant organisations. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies* 31:823-32
- Singh G, Tatla DS. 2006. *Sikhs in Britain. The Making of a community.* London: Zed books. 274 p.
- Singh P. 2009. *Federalism, nationalism and development.* Oxford, New York: Routledge. 223 p.

- Somerville W. 2007. *Immigration under New Labour*. Bristol: The Policy Press. 232 p.
- Sword K. 1996. *The Polish community in Britain*. London: The Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London. 241 p.
- Szewczyk R, Unterschułtz J. 2009. Labour emigration : government and social partner policies in Poland. In *EU labour migration since enlargement : trends, impacts and policies*, J Leschke, A Watt, pp. 211-27. Farnham: Ashgate
- Tatla DS. 1999. *The Sikh diaspora. The search of a statehood*. London: UCL press. 327 p.
- Therwath I. 2010. Les "journées des Indiens à l'étranger". Le gouvernement face à la diaspora. In *Loin des yeux, près du coeur. Les Etats et leurs expatriés*, ed. S Dufoix, C Guerassimoff, A De Tinguy, pp. 205-20. Paris: Les presses de Sciences po
- Weller P, ed. 2007. *Religions in the UK: a multi-faith directory 2007-2010*. Derby: the Multi-faith Centre, University of Derby in association with the Faculty of Education, Health and Social Sciences. 360 p.