

Neighbourhood, city, diaspora: identity and belonging for Calcutta's Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities

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Neighbourhood, City, Diaspora:

*Identity and belonging for Calcutta's
Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities*

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of PhD in Geography at the Department of Geography,
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is located in the wider debates in postcolonial cultural geography on the city and diaspora. It engages with everyday lived spaces of Calcutta's Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities through a focus on ideas of home, identity, belonging, cosmopolitanism and nostalgia. Drawing on overlapping narratives of these two communities in the city and in diaspora in London and Toronto, the thesis explores the idea of Calcutta as a 'diaspora city' and also the notion of a 'Calcutta diaspora'. It explores the material and imaginative entanglements of migration and places narratives of identity and belonging for its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in the context of the city. Both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities have been an integral part of Calcutta's colonial and postcolonial histories, and although many members of both communities have migrated elsewhere in recent times, the city remains an important locus of emotional register.

It is in this context that the thesis studies everyday lived spaces at different scales: in the neighbourhood, in the city and in diaspora. While the actual spaces are located/ rooted in real neighbourhoods and cities inhabited by the communities, the imagination of these spaces both in the city and in diaspora also intersect to create a more complex relationship between minority communities and cities. Methodologically, the thesis has adopted a multi-sited, qualitative approach to follow the lives of the communities across cities. Whilst a large part of the material has been drawn from in-depth interviews, the thesis also uses material drawn through ethnographic research and participant observation at community events, maps of the neighbourhood and city drawn by interviewees and secondary material such as community publications and websites, films, pamphlets and newspaper reports.

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Chapter one

INTRODUCTION

I begin with a story. It is an example of the kind of story that made me want to study the connections that exist across lives of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities of Calcutta¹. In an interview in Toronto, an Anglo-Indian man and I were discussing Chinese shoe shops. He told me that he cherished a pair of shoes that he had had made from Henry's, a Chinese shoe shop in New Market. One day in Toronto, he was wearing these shoes and was in an elevator with a couple of young Chinese men. One of them was staring at his shoes and suddenly asked him, 'are you from Calcutta?' The Anglo-Indian man was shocked but he questioned, 'why do you ask?' The young man then replied, 'because those are my Uncle Henry's shoes you are wearing!' Unbelievable as it sounds, the story is based on a real event. Besides conjuring a serendipitous moment, the story also reveals much about the specificity and close networks that exist in the everyday life in Calcutta. The fact that this story plays out in Toronto, several years after both the Anglo-Indian man and the young Chinese man had migrated from Calcutta also says much about the circumstances in which such memories of the city reappear.

I decided to research the similarities between Calcutta's Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities drawing on an instinctive understanding of these connections across the two communities which again, was based on my everyday knowledge of Calcutta. Soon I became aware of several other aspects about these connections. First, I came to know about the presence of an Anglo-Chinese population which came about through inter-marriages between the two communities. While many Anglo-Indian and Chinese interviewees spoke about being culturally 'Changlo-Indians'² pointing to a common social circle, the specific location of the Anglo-Chinese population in particular areas of central Calcutta rooted such overlaps in actual spaces of the city and also within the imagination of both communities. Second, although my initial research plan focused on the communities solely in Calcutta, I realised that despite

¹ Although Calcutta was renamed Kolkata in 2001, I use the previous name as this was how almost all interviewees referred to the city. Also, while the focus of my work is contemporary, the city of the past figures in much of the narrative.

² I write about this in greater detail in Chapter 4.

the importance of located histories and geographies, writing about the communities without any reference to their presence in a wider diaspora would have left out a significant aspect of such connections.

One of my main motivations for this research was a wish to write about a different aspect of Calcutta through two of its minority communities. I wanted to write about Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities, and the connections between them, not just through an ethnographic and ‘community’ narrative, but also through an understanding of the role that Calcutta has played in their lives. This attempt has also meant thinking through the different positionalities of both communities - as ‘others’ in the city, as ‘minorities’ and as ‘diasporas’. Differentiating between ‘minority histories’ and ‘subaltern pasts’, Dipesh Chakrabarty (2004:229-232) writes that discussions around minority histories have often followed debates around notions of multiculturalism and the politics of identity after the Second World War and that the idea of a ‘minority’ is a constructed one. In contrast, ‘subaltern pasts’ are marginalised pasts that resist historicisation because ‘they represent moments or points at which the archive that the historian mines develops a degree of intractability’ (ibid.). While the scope of this thesis does not extend to debates on whether Anglo-Indians and Chinese communities are ‘minorities’, and/or ‘subalterns’ in the city, I found this explanation useful to think through the spatialities of the city that I focus on.

Calcutta as a ‘diaspora city’

Calcutta, like most colonial cities, grew through the migration of different groups of people. As a trading city, it attracted not only communities from other parts of India but also from outside the country. Jewish, Chinese, Armenian and Parsi communities thus made Calcutta their home alongside Marwari, Punjabi, Gujarati, Tamil, Bihari and Oriya communities. The creation of an Anglo-Indian community of mixed descent, as a direct result of colonialism, is a marker of the diverse processes through which a colonial city becomes a site where multiple communities come together. These communities form an important part of Calcutta’s multicultural fabric in both colonial and postcolonial times. There is already a rich body of work which looks into the specific histories of many of these communities (Berjaut, 1999; Blunt, 2005; Hardgrove, 2002; Oxfeld, 1993; Silliman, 2001). Amongst these, Blunt and

Hardgrove study the histories of Anglo-Indian and Marwari communities in relation to the history of Calcutta and Bengalis. Urban histories of Calcutta have also included mention of these communities. Analysing the social fabric of the city using the 1961 Census, N.K. Bose (1965) described Calcutta as a ‘premature metropolis’, after finding that even though most neighbourhoods in the city were mixed in terms of class, ethnic groups tended to cluster together, even if not spatially, through their associations. There has also been a recent surge of interest in ‘minority’ communities of Calcutta³. Writing about the changing political contexts of the city, Swapan Chakravorty describes the metropolitan culture of Calcutta as ‘the culture of the displaced’ (2007:3).

I outline here a brief history of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in Calcutta to provide a background to the thesis. In her study of the Marwari community in Calcutta, Hardgrove (2004) makes an interesting claim on the concept of community. She situates the definition of a community in relation to another- “community in itself has no primordial core and is always historically and socially constructed in relation to other such enacted groups” (2004:20-21). She also traces the formation of a community identity in terms of an ‘internal space’ which is significantly influenced by public discourses on reforms of the specific community and notes that the creation of gender identities are critical in the ‘reformative performances at inter-communal boundaries in shared public spaces...’ (ibid). Although the above points were made in the context of the Marwari community drawing on primordial links of kinship, lineage and family to construct and contest their public image, these insights can be extended to the study of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities of Calcutta, to explore the connections between them.

Chinese in Calcutta

Chinese migration to Calcutta began during the late 18th century. Popular stories trace the arrival of this community to the brave venture of a sailor merchant, Atchew or Achi, who started a sugar mill in south Calcutta, in an area which is now called Achipur. Calcutta is one of very few cities in the world to boast of two Chinatowns. These two Chinatowns are also unique in the sense that they differ significantly from

³ Two books, *Calcutta Mosaic* (Banerji et al. 2009) and *Ethnicity, migration and the urban landscape of Kolkata* (Chatterji, 2009) were published in 2009 to map the spaces of minorities in the city.

a typical idea of Chinatowns elsewhere. Enmeshed within the urban fabric of Calcutta, the Chinatowns in this city are not separate, touristic entities, but uphold a way of living alongside different communities.

The first Chinatown in Calcutta took shape in the vicinity of Tiretta Bazaar in central Calcutta (Figure 1.1) during the mid-nineteenth century. Often known as Tiretta Bazaar Chinatown or '*cheenapada*' or even 'Calcutta Chinatown' (a name acquired much later with the establishment of a second Chinatown in Tangra), this locality was then home to several Chinese sailors who stayed back, waiting for their ships to return. Situated in the heart of colonial Calcutta, the Chinese population added to the cosmopolitan nature of the city. This neighbourhood developed as a Chinatown in the 1930s and 1940s when there was a significant influx of migration from China. Until then it was mainly a community of men. Migration of families from China required the construction of more permanent structures and gradually the visual aspects of a Chinatown began to emerge.

There are several historical references to the Tiretta Bazaar Chinatown. One of the earliest references is in an article by C. Alabaster which appeared in the *Calcutta Review*, 1858. Apart from describing in detail the temples, the graveyards, the opium dens and the living quarters of the Chinese, Alabaster notes the different groups of Chinese living here - 'the shoe-makers, ship-carpenters and hogslard-manufacturers' (p.137). Being a tiny community at that time, the Chinese intermarried amongst the different subgroups (mainly Cantonese and Hakka) and also with others living in the same neighbourhood, mainly 'Hindustanis' and also 'Eurasians':

“ Properly speaking, they are two distinct colonies, belonging to distinct races, carrying on distinct trades, and speaking different languages; but community of interests, the manufacture of hogslard, opium-smoking, and Hindustani have almost merged them into one; and constant intermarriage threatens to annihilate the difference between the shoe-makers and ship-carpenters notwithstanding the still existing obstacles to such complete union in the great disparity of wealth of the two communities.” (Alabaster, 1858 [1975]: 138)

A later article by Augustus Sommerville (1929) paints a stereotypical image of Chinatown as a place of crime. Choosing to uphold the 'seamier' side of Chinatown, Sommerville fans the imagination of Chinatown as an unsafe place. Such an image had resonances in popular imagination in later periods as well, especially through the existence of some gambling and opium dens. At the same time, there exist fond memories of Chinatown mainly in connection with food. Nanking restaurant became a popular place for the rich and the famous in Calcutta. The daily Chinese market selling all kinds of delicacies was well-known to other communities. Rafeeq Ellias' documentary, *The Legend of Fat Mama* (2005), traces the story of an elderly Chinese lady selling food in this market. Fat Mama, as she was fondly called, symbolises the attraction that was Chinatown. The Chinese market continues to this day in a much-scaled down version and the crumbling structure of Nanking survives amidst decadence- a reminder of the glorious days of Tiretta Bazaar Chinatown.

Things began to change in Chinatown in the late 1950s when the Calcutta Improvement Trust decided to build a huge thoroughfare cutting across its centre. Chattawala Gully, Phears Lane and Blackburn Lane which used to wind through Chinatown were fragmented. The impact of the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict was also great on the central Calcutta Chinatown. Most Chinese living there were Cantonese, who worked as carpenters. Since they worked as 'ship-fitters' in the dock areas and also in private companies, they lost their jobs and were compelled to emigrate. Many Hakkas living there also chose to move to Tangra, the other Chinatown. Fragments of Chinatown still exist in and around Tiretta Bazaar. Bentinck Street, near Lalbazar, continues to have Chinese shoe shops, though much lesser in number. There are a number of shops selling Chinese groceries. The Sunday morning market continues with a smaller breakfast fare and road names like Sun Yatsen Street and Lu Hsin Sarani hold on to the Chinese presence in this area of Calcutta.

Chinatown in present day Calcutta refers to Tangra, which is located in the eastern part of the city. Although most Chinese in the city live in this neighbourhood today, Tangra was at the margin of Calcutta in its early years. The neighbourhood began to take shape around 1910 when some Chinese shoemakers decided to process leather for their business and moved to the area, also called Dhapa (Oxford, 1993). Tangra in its early days was a marshy area with very little permanent settlements around.

Although there are hardly any historical references to Tangra, when compared to Turretta Bazaar Chinatown, the evolution of this neighbourhood mirrors the history of the Chinese community in Calcutta very well. While Turretta Bazaar was inhabited mainly by the Cantonese (although pockets of Hakka population did exist), Tangra grew as a predominantly Hakka neighbourhood.

The initial years in Tangra were hard for the Hakka Chinese and the poverty of the neighbourhood stood out in stark contrast to the golden days of Turretta Bazaar Chinatown (Berjeaut, 1999). The fortune of Tangra turned gradually after World War II with an increase in the demand for raw hide. More Hakka Chinese entered the tannery business and permanent structures were put in place. Hakkas being a close-knit community, Tangra Chinatown developed almost secluded from outside influence. Community organisations played an important role in the overall physical development of the area. Pei May School was set up on community initiative. Most cemeteries, both Cantonese and Hakka are located here too. Tangra, inhabited mainly by the Chinese in contrast to the cosmopolitan Turretta Bazaar area, appeared more insular.

The Sino-Indian conflict in 1962 is a point of disjuncture in the history of the Chinese in Calcutta and other parts of India. Border disputes between India and China which began in 1959 culminated in a war in 1962 (Leng and Cohen, 1972). Many Chinese holding PRC passports and associated with pro-communist schools and associations were deported and many were taken to an internment camp in Rajasthan (ibid.). In Tangra, tannery owners faced great difficulty in reaching the raw hide markets located in central and north Calcutta because of restrictions on their movement. Tangra was located outside Calcutta municipal boundaries and hence the Chinese needed permission each time they had to travel beyond Tangra. But with business booming through the 1970s and 1980s, the Hakkas became more prosperous than the Cantonese and those who remained in Turretta Bazaar Chinatown and carved a more permanent place for the community in Calcutta.

In 1992 the Supreme Court of India dealt a blow to the tannery business by announcing that tanneries in Tangra would have to shut down as they were causing environmental pollution. Land was acquired further east of the city to create the

Calcutta Leather Complex where tanneries were ordered to move. While bigger tanneries could afford this move many smaller tanneries suffered as a result of this decision. The Chinese, especially the younger generation, began migrating out of the city. The crisis in Tangra still continues as the community dwindles each day. Interesting changes though are taking place in the neighbourhood. Tangra had gradually taken over Tiretta Bazaar as the hub for Chinese food in the city since the

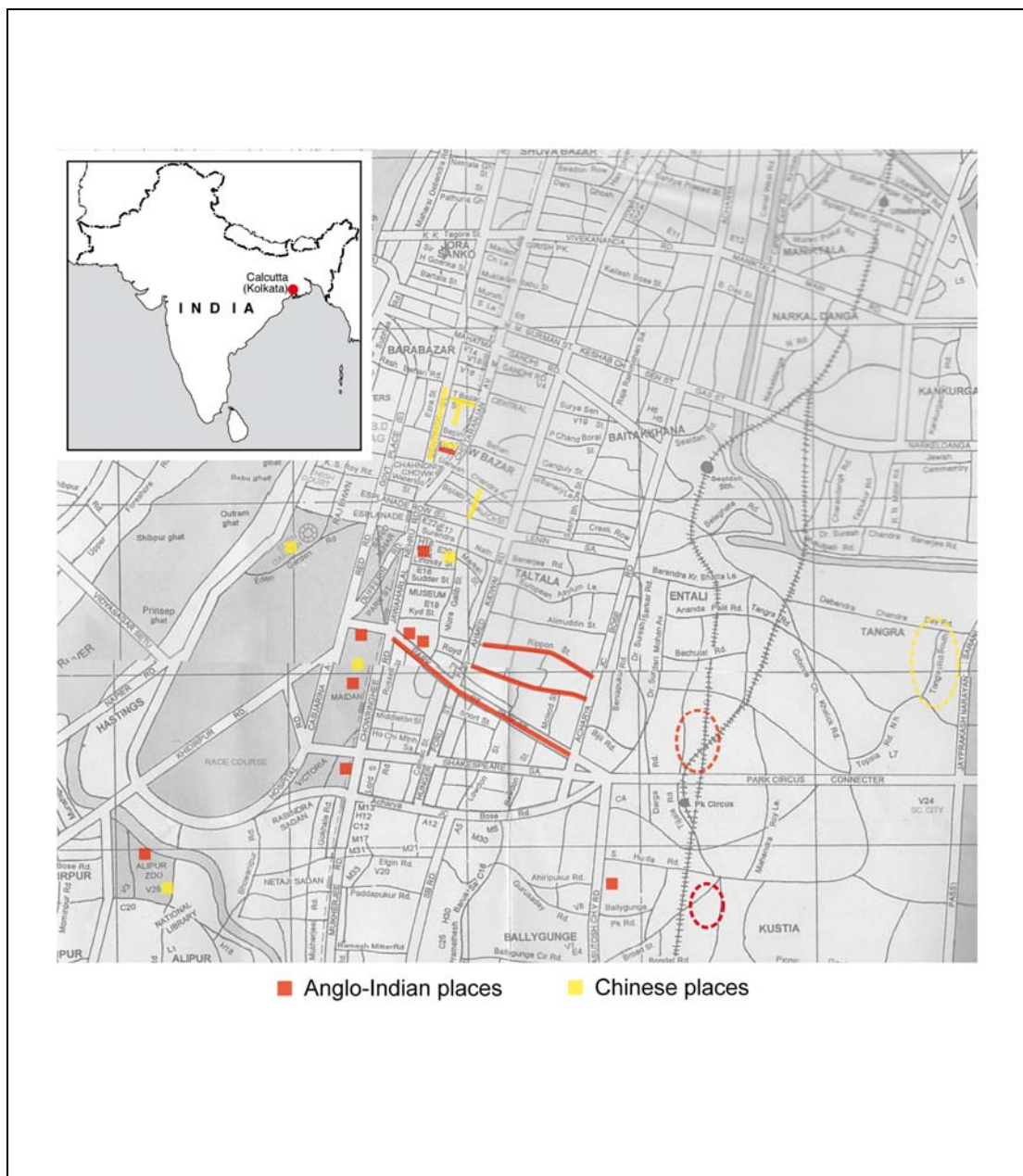


Figure 1.1 Map of Calcutta showing residential areas and places of significant attachment for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities.

1980s. With the tanneries being forced to shut down recently, many have turned to the restaurant business.

A significant part of Calcutta's Chinese community has migrated from the city since 1962, though migration from Tangra took place later in the 1970s, and continues till today. Many live in other cities in India like Bombay and Bangalore, but most live outside India in Taiwan, China, Sweden, Austria, the United States and Canada with a significant concentration in Toronto. The unofficial number of Chinese in Calcutta is less than 5000 (Indian Chinese Association 2001 diary).

Anglo-Indians in Calcutta

Anglo-Indians form one of the largest communities of mixed descent in the world. Article 366(2) of the 1935 Government of India Act defines Anglo-Indians as:

“...a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India” (in Blunt, 2005:3).

Anglo-Indians resided throughout India, including cities such as Bangalore, Bombay and Madras, and in the railway colonies all around the country. The community, though, has a special affinity towards Calcutta. As the second city of the British Empire and subsequently as the location of several associations, such as the All India Anglo-Indian Association (till 1941) and the Colonisation Society of India, Calcutta played an important role in Anglo-Indian life. Much like the Chinese, Anglo-Indians have concentrated in a few areas of the city, mainly in Central Calcutta around Bow Bazar, Elliot Road, Wellesley Road and Ripon Street, in Park Circus. Although Anglo-Indians also lived in Khiderpore in south-east Calcutta, these central areas of Calcutta, often called the 'square mile', bounded by Chowringhee in the west, Lower Circular Road to the east, Bow Bazar to the north and Park Street to the south, form an integral part of 'Anglo-Indian Calcutta'.

Several institutions like churches, schools, social clubs around which Anglo-Indian life revolves were and still are located in these areas. The Calcutta Rangers Club

established in 1896 on the Maidan is still an important site for Anglo-Indian socialisation as are the Grail Club and Dalhousie Institute. New Market, although not specifically catering to Anglo-Indians, occupies an important place in the Anglo-Indian heart. Apart from being a place for regular shopping, New Market came alive with boarding school returnees during school holidays. Christmas in Calcutta continues to be a special time for Anglo-Indians in the city and those who have emigrated, with New Market as a key site for nostalgia.

Most Anglo-Indians continue to live mostly in rented properties in central Calcutta. Many of these apartments were taken on a long-term lease. The increasing price of real estate in these areas has pushed many Anglo-Indians to suburban areas like Tollygunje and Behala to the south of Calcutta. Many have also migrated to Picnic Gardens in east Calcutta. Robyn Andrews in her thesis on the Calcutta Anglo-Indian community mentions that many describe this area as 'little Australia' giving an explanation that 'if you can't emigrate, then a home in Picnic Gardens is the next best thing' (quoted in Andrews, unpublished thesis, p.73) Despite this newer concentration in Picnic Garden, however, the neighbourhoods of central Calcutta remain a special place for the Anglo-Indians. Sites like New Market, the several churches dotting the area, and concentration of various charitable associations represent Anglo-Indian nostalgia for these areas.

It is estimated that in 1947 there were 300,000 Anglo-Indians in India (Blunt, 2005:3), but many have migrated to Britain, Australia and Canada since then. The unofficial estimate of Anglo-Indians in Calcutta today is 30,000 (Andrews, unpublished thesis).

Research questions

In this thesis I explore the connections between Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans through critical intersections of diaspora and the city. I engage with everyday lived spaces of Calcutta's Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities through a focus on ideas of home, identity, belonging, cosmopolitanism, memory and nostalgia. Drawing on parallel narratives of these two communities in the city and in diaspora in London

and Toronto, I explore the idea of Calcutta as a ‘diaspora city’⁴ and also the notion of a ‘Calcutta diaspora’. I explore the material and imaginative entanglements of migration and place narratives of identity and belonging for its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in the context of the city. Both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities have been an integral part of Calcutta’s colonial and postcolonial histories, and although many members of both communities have migrated elsewhere in recent times, the city remains an important locus of emotional register. I analyse these connections within three separate, yet interlinked concepts outlined in the three substantive chapters. First, I set the connections within a notion of cosmopolitan encounters in the city. Second, I draw on the notion of the homely/unhomely city for the two communities as ‘minorities’ to analyse the importance of narratives of belonging and identity. Third, I chart the parallels between the communities as ‘Calcutta diaspora’ and explore how the city is imagined in London and Toronto. The neighbourhood and the city in all three substantive chapters act as the core site where narratives around cosmopolitanism, identity and belonging and nostalgia play out, and represent the tangible space where imagined notions of belonging to ‘family’, ‘community’ and ‘nation’ intersect. Whilst both communities’ sense of identity and belonging, and indeed the connections across the communities, is framed by intangible notions of festivities, music and food, the neighbourhood and the city grounds these notions to a territory. Thinking about these connections through the city aims to achieve two objectives. First, it valorises the diversity of social life in globalised colonial and postcolonial cities, and also emphasises the importance of particular experiences of minority colonial diasporic communities such as the Anglo-Indian and Chinese, which often get subsumed under ‘community’ narratives. Second, it posits the city as a point of departure and arrival, thus framing a space in which the translocal lives of these communities are lived and mediated. The thesis also focuses on the specificity of Calcutta, and the ways in which the city is typified by its close networks and connections, and how these characteristics are imbibed

⁴ While I draw on the idea of Calcutta as a ‘diaspora city’ in this thesis in relation to the city’s Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities, it is an idea that is part of a wider research project ‘Diaspora Cities’, funded by The Leverhulme Trust and directed by Alison Blunt, and which this PhD thesis is part of. The use of the ‘diaspora city’ concept in this thesis is thus linked to the wider argument of the project focusing on the importance of cities of departure for diasporic groups, but also used to analyse the communities still living in the city. I use the idea of ‘diaspora cities’ with a particular focus on connections between Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans.

within the respective ‘community’ narratives, in the city and in diaspora. Located within wider concerns of material and imaginative aspects of the city and diaspora, this thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

- What are the neighbourhood geographies of the Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in Calcutta? How have these geographies changed over time? What encounters and exchange take place between Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in the city and in diaspora? What are the connections between these two communities and how are these connections imagined?
- What are the connections between cities and diasporas? Why is the city an important space of belonging for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities? What are the material and imaginative entanglements of the city and diaspora?
- What is the importance of the neighbourhood and the city in a diasporic imagination? What are the practices of nostalgia that constitute imaginative geographies of the city? To what extent do memories of and emotional attachment to the neighbourhood for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in London and Toronto influence their ideas of identity and belonging?

Chapter outline

This thesis studies Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in the city and across diaspora in London and Toronto. In the next chapter I review the literature around the city and diaspora and explore the concepts that frame this research. Chapter 3 includes an explanation of the research methodology I adopted in researching overlapping lives. The three substantive chapters are organised around notions of cosmopolitanism, home/belonging and memory/nostalgia. In Chapter 4 I engage with the idea of cosmopolitanism in relation to the sense of overlapping lives in everyday spaces of the city. Exploring both lived and imagined notions of cosmopolitanism this chapter sets a narrative of neighbourhood within an idea of cosmopolitan Calcutta and how a politics of cosmopolitanism in the city intervenes in this narrative. Chapter 5 is based on narratives of belonging to Calcutta. It explores the idea of Calcutta as a site of belonging for its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in the context of two political incidents that affected the lives of the two communities- India’s Independence and Partition in 1947 and the Sino-Indian War in

1962. The second part of the chapter traces the overlaps between identity, home and belonging. Chapter 6 charts the complex entanglements of memory, nostalgia and the city by exploring how everyday landscapes of the city are re-membered in diaspora. By drawing on overlaps across Anglo-Indian and Chinese memories the chapter also interrogates the idea of a 'Calcutta diaspora'.

Chapter Two

ACROSS CITY AND DIASPORA: CONCEPTUAL FRAMES

Writing about the ‘urban turn’ in scholarship in and on India, Gyan Prakash (2002:3) states that the ‘question of the city [in India] was refracted through the nation’. Explaining that the ‘city occupies an ambivalent position in the Indian nationalist imagination’, Prakash notes that the recent interest in the urban is primarily because of an ‘erosion in the authority of the historicist narrative of Indian modernity’ and also the ‘emergence of a new politics of urban space’ (p.6). ‘The urban turn’ he writes, ‘offers an opportunity to revise the history of Indian modernity [and] to bring into view spaces of power and difference suppressed by the historicist discourse of the nation’ (Prakash, 2002: 6). Just as Prakash’s argument foregrounds the Indian city and the ability of the recent ‘urban turn’ to question a nationalist discourse, theories of diaspora also similarly push the boundaries of the nation. Avtar Brah (1996), for example, writes about the ‘intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes’ (p.181). While the context in which Prakash writes about the ‘urban turn’ has a specific location in India, it raises questions around a universalising nation-based historicist approach, which the idea of ‘diaspora’ also questions. In this thesis, I bring together the two concepts of the city and diaspora to explore the critical connections between them. Through a comparative study of Calcutta’s Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities, I explore how these communities are ‘placed’ in the context of Calcutta, and also how the city itself is imagined over diaspora. In this chapter I review the literatures that have framed ideas of the city and diaspora in relation to one another. First, I set the context of this thesis within ideas of diaspora as multiple journeys grounded in the city and ideas of the city as a site of encounter. Second, I elaborate on how I use existing literature on everyday spaces in the city to study particular sites of encounter, and the neighbourhood specifically. Third, I analyse ideas of cosmopolitanism, home/belonging and memory/nostalgia as the three core themes that run through each of the substantive chapters.

‘Unmoorings’ and ‘groundings’

Writing about Singapore, Brenda Yeoh (2003) uses the notions of ‘groundings’ and ‘unmoorings’ to chart how postcolonial geographies of place and migration play out in the present city (p.370). On one hand, she explores how the politics of heritage contests the ‘grounding’ of certain identities in the city and forgetting some, while on the other she traces how the city deals with ‘unmoorings’ of contemporary migration. Yeoh’s article outlines how ‘colonial’ cities like Singapore deal with both past and present migrations and is an example of how the idea of ‘diaspora’ is contested in such cities. While the historical context of Calcutta varies from Singapore despite both being colonial cities, as does the way in which the present day cities have developed, the ideas of ‘unmoorings’ and ‘groundings’ create an effective framework to discuss Calcutta’s Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities and their migration to and from the city. Although I consider the migration of both communities from Calcutta, I use ‘diaspora’ as a conceptual frame to interrogate the ‘groundings’ and ‘unmoorings’ of these two communities and the city. In this review I use the conceptual frame to chart intersections between ideas of diaspora and the city.

Theoretical ideas about diaspora have often been developed in conjunction with ideas of globalisation. Diaspora is an idea which ‘forces us to rethink the rubrics of nation and nationalism’ and which also offers ‘myriad, dislocated sites of contestation to hegemonic, homogenising forces of globalisation (Brazier and Mannur, 2003:7). Debates around diaspora have also become important in geography. As Alison Blunt (2005:10) writes, ‘the term ‘diaspora’ is inherently geographical, implying a scattering of people over space and transnational connections between peoples and places’. The different geographies of diaspora have also been studied as connections between ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ (Clifford, 1997) and as a ‘historical rift between locations of residence and locations of belonging’ (Gilroy, 2000:124). While the potential of the notion of ‘diaspora’ to disrupt essentialised ideas around identity and territory has often been analysed in celebratory terms of ‘hybridity’ (Bhabha, 1994), there has also been a concern to ‘ground’ ideas of diaspora in the ‘real’ world and material realities. Katharyne Mitchell, for example, has cautioned against a ‘hype of hybridity’ (1997) as have Kalra, Kaur and Hutnyk (2005). Sean Carter (2005:55), writing about the geopolitics of diaspora, has also pointed out that ‘there is a tendency within diaspora studies...to utilise...spatial metaphors, whilst

simultaneously denying the significance of geography'. The 'significance of geography', however, has often been analysed in the context of the nation (Basch et al., 1994). Dahlman (2004), for example, draws a parallel between ideas of the 'nation' and 'diaspora' pointing out that both concepts describe a relationship between space and identity. Whilst the significance of the power of the nation-state in affecting material realities of diaspora cannot be overlooked, the cultural aspects of diaspora are often located along different spaces of power. Nagel (2001:255) views the relationships of power which are reflected in the construction of culture, as located 'not only in the nation-state but also in households, neighbourhoods, workplaces'. The city similarly represents a site to explore the relationships of power imbricated in diasporas. As I explained in the introduction to this thesis, Calcutta is an important site of belonging for both its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. This is not to say that identification with a sense of a wider diaspora- Anglo-Indian Calcuttans as part of a global Anglo-Indian diaspora and Chinese Calcuttans as part of a wider Chinese diaspora- is less important. At the same time focusing on these two communities in Calcutta helped in analysing their location-specific histories and geographies.

Alongside the location-specific histories of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities 'grounded' in the city, this thesis also explores how migration has shaped their lives in and across cities. The city in this case is an example of 'diaspora space' (Brah, 1996). Avtar Brah (1996:209) describes 'diaspora space' as:

“...the point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of 'us' and 'them' are contested... diaspora space as a conceptual category is 'inhabited', not only by those who have migrated, but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous...the concept of *diaspora space* (as opposed to that of diaspora) includes the entanglement, the intertwining of the genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put'.”

The concept of 'diaspora space' thus incorporates both 'groundings' and 'unmoorings' to analyse mobility and stasis in the contemporary world. In this thesis, I have drawn on the idea of diaspora space in two ways. First, I found it a useful

concept to analyse the overlapping lives of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in the city. Second, it also helped theorise the city itself as a ‘diaspora space’.

Other research has also drawn on the idea of diaspora space to examine transnational connections. Focusing specifically on material cultures, for example, Crang, Dwyer and Jackson (2004) write about ‘transnational space’, which they argue is ‘*constitutive of transnationality* in all its different forms’ (p.1). In their words, ‘different diasporas are characterised by different geographies that go beyond simple oppositions between the national and the transnational, the rooted and the routed, the territorial and the deterritorialised’ (Crang et al., 2004:2). Drawing links with Brah’s (1996) notion of ‘diaspora space’, the authors maintain that transnationalism encompasses spaces ‘beyond the social worlds of those who define themselves as transmigrants... transnational space is complex, multi-dimensional and multiply inhabited’ (ibid.). I draw on this approach in my research, where the spaces of the neighbourhood in Calcutta are inhabited by the Anglo-Indians, the Chinese, as well as other communities. The histories of these two communities can thus be analysed in relation to one another as well as in the interstitial spaces of other communities. Crang, Jackson and Dwyer (2004:7) further stress the complexity of social life which demands moving beyond the dichotomies of ‘deterritorialisation’ and ‘reterritorialisation’ and ‘thinking through refigurations of the geographies of place, settlement and belonging’. The connection with place is spelt out in “three-fold geographies - of immediate contextuality, of flows and circuits, that in turn constitute these contexts; and of imaginative geographies that characterise those contexts and flows and our relations to them” (ibid.). This attachment to place thus implies ‘belongings’ (in an ‘embodied, practical’ sense) and ‘belonging’ (an ‘emotional state and imaginative manoeuvre’). In placing the everyday spaces of the city in diaspora space, I explore these complex overlaps between material and imaginative geographies.

Whilst conceptualising the city and the overlapping lives of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities within a ‘diaspora space’ helped to locate both the city and the communities in ‘groundings’ and ‘unmoorings’, conceptualising Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in terms of ‘diaspora’ presented a different set of issues. In the thesis I have located Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans as communities,

minorities and also as diasporas. Yet the theorisation of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans as ‘diasporas’ requires some exploration. I have used the notion of diasporas in two main ways in the thesis. First, I have considered both communities as diasporic in Calcutta to contextualise the sense of home and belonging in the city. I have also situated them within a ‘colonial’ diaspora that shaped the formation of Calcutta as a ‘diaspora city’. Second, I have placed the communities within the notion of a ‘Calcutta diaspora’ in London and Toronto to explore their sense of attachment to Calcutta. In both instances I have drawn on the imaginative connections implied by the term diaspora. Recent research on diasporas, especially by geographers, have focused on both material and imaginative aspects of the idea (Blunt, 2005). But Brubaker (2005) points out that a “‘diaspora’ diaspora” has meant that the word is used in various contexts, and that ‘besides nominations of new candidates for diaspora status, the ‘diaspora’ diaspora also involves a dispersion in disciplinary and social space’ (p.4).

Writing on the need to think beyond the majority/minority axis, Brah (1996:189) embeds the notion of diaspora within notions of differential power. She suggests that ‘a multi-axial performative conception of power highlights the ways in which a group constituted as a ‘minority’ along one dimension of differentiation may be constructed as ‘majority’ along another’ (ibid.). In the context of imagining groups as diasporas, Brah further points out that it is necessary to view ‘minorities’ not only in relation to ‘majorities’ but also in relation to other minorities, thus reflecting the multiple journeys of diasporas (ibid.). In the context of Calcutta, the various ‘colonial’ communities like the Anglo-Indian, Chinese, Jewish and Armenian communities often draw on this notion of a shared journey from ‘elsewhere’ to describe the overlaps between their lives. At the same time, the journeys of each of these communities have been shaped differently. So for example, writing on the Baghdadi Jewish communities in Calcutta Jael Silliman (2001) mentions that there was a wider identification of the Calcutta community with Jewish Asia, mainly through trading networks⁵. The Calcutta Chinese community, on the other hand, remained more or less closed from these wider interactions with other Chinese diaspora, because of their smaller numbers and also because the 1962 Sino-Indian

⁵ These connections between different minority communities in the city and in diaspora frame the rationale of the ‘Diaspora Cities’ research project.

war limited their movement both within and outside India. While this thesis has a more contemporary focus, I needed to consider these different journeys to define the communities as diasporic in Calcutta. In migrating to London and Toronto, Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans often draw on a common sense of 'being from Calcutta' but at the same time there are other identifications with the wider Anglo-Indian, Chinese as well as Indian diasporas. Locating diaspora in the city and across cities also necessitates thinking through different ideas of 'community' and 'minority' in Western and non-Western contexts. The identity politics that I explore in the context of Bow Barracks and Tangra in Calcutta (chapter 4) and the sense of belonging/ not belonging as minorities in the city (chapter 5) need to be understood differently from the identity issues of being 'invisible minorities' in Toronto (chapter 6).

Issues of differential location are also raised within other research on comparative diasporas. Studies on comparative diasporas have focused on the same community over a period of time (Jain, 1993), the same group across different places (McKeown, 2001), and also interactions and comparative studies across different communities. While many such studies adopt a historical and/or anthropological framework focusing on the particular groups under study, there are others which raise questions on the idea of comparison. Comparing postcolonial diasporas across a range of sites, McKeown, Murphy and Procter (2009), for example, point out that 'in exploring the legacy of empire, postcolonial research has tended to focus on individual nations rather than on investigating links between empires' (p.1). In this thesis I use a comparative framework to draw on the commonalities across Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans and their lives in Calcutta, London and Toronto, thereby engaging with their different diasporic locations. I also use a comparative frame to locate the interactions between the two communities within a politics of difference that affect their everyday lives. Although in the thesis, I have used the term 'community' loosely to denote individuals who identify themselves (principally through ethnicity) as Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans, the various contexts of both the city and the diaspora that I explore in the thesis, point to a contested and multiply constructed notion of the idea of 'community'. The dynamics of community, place and identity have followed many different and diverse intellectual trajectories, ranging from 'community' as a basis of collective identity and collective

action, to envisaging 'community' in the context of power and difference (Silk, 1999: 5). Following Stuart Hall's (1992) concept of 'new ethnicities' other research has focused on the contradictions implicated in evoking the concept of community (Dwyer, 1999). Similarly, for both Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans, the idea of the 'community' is fractured along class, gender, age and diaspora space.

Postcolonial cities as sites of encounter

The city makes up the site for this research, but the reasons for emphasising the urban goes beyond the urban location of both communities. In a review of cultural geographies of migration, Blunt (2007: 5) notes that the 'city has been a particularly important site for the analysis of transnational migration and citizenship'. Indeed a wide range of research has focused on how neo-liberalism works in and through cities. Katharyn Mitchell (2004) in her book on the migration of wealthy immigrants from Hong Kong to Vancouver analyses how migration and city can be connected through the neo-liberal frame. Research adopting a postcolonial framework of analysis, on the other hand, has viewed the city in terms of a space of encounter. In a review on 'postcolonial cities' Brenda Yeoh (2001) outlines five areas of engagement. First, she locates the 'postcolonial' in the 'urban' and emphasises on the importance of the city as a 'specific space with material and imagined dimensions' (p.457). Her argument that the postcolonial debate is 'etched' on the city resonates with arguments that call for re-materialising the idea of diaspora. Second, she views the postcolonial city as a site where claims of identity are put forward by urban governments as well as different social groups. Third, quoting Triulzi (1996), Yeoh points out that 'the city by definition is a space of encounters with difference' and thus 'the visual space of the political' (p.460-461). She also remarks that 'it is often in the buzz of the streets and the thick or urban encounters between individuals and groups that the postcolonial is enacted and lived' (p.459). The fourth area she engages with is heritage and the importance of memory in postcolonial cities. Finally, by examining the prospects of getting past the 'post', Yeoh writes about the futility of placing the postcolonial city in a development trajectory (p.462). In my research I draw on many of the concerns raised by Yeoh (2001), but I also analyse these concerns within a specific focus on diaspora and the city.

In her book *On not speaking Chinese*, Ien Ang (2001) considers the critical connection between diaspora and the global city. Comparing the ‘imagined communities’ created by these two concepts, Ang writes that,

“While diasporas are constituted by ethnic unity in the face of spatial scattering, global cities are shaped by ethnic diversity through spatial convergence. While what matters for diaspora is a connection with a symbolic ‘elsewhere’, a long-distance, virtual relationship with a global community of belonging, what grounds the global city is its firm orientation towards ‘here’, the local, *this* place. While the transnationality of the diasporic community is one of ‘sameness in dispersal’ across global space, the transnationality of the global city is characterised by intense simultaneity and co-existence, by territorial ‘togetherness in difference’”.(Ang, 2001:89).

Based on evidence from different and contesting notions of a Chinese diaspora in Singapore and Sydney and the complex hybridity of the global city, Ang concludes that the ‘global city is the space of diaspora’s undoing’ (p.92). Ang’s argument is useful in my research to think through the different positionalities of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in London and Toronto, placed amidst a wider South Asian, Anglo-Indian and Chinese diaspora.

Whilst studying the migration of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans to London and Toronto is an important part of my research, I also consider the comparative contexts of their lives in Calcutta, London and Toronto. In particular, I examine how memories and attachment to a way of life in Calcutta influences the lives of these communities in London and Toronto. In bringing together these comparative urban contexts, Shail Mayaram’s (2009) idea of the ‘other global city’ is particularly useful. Much research and theories on diaspora draw on experiences in the Western city and the city of destination. Whilst in this thesis I locate the experiences of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in the specific material contexts of London and Toronto, I also consider how memories of close proximity in everyday lived space in Calcutta are imagined in diaspora. Mayaram (2009) places the concept of ‘other global city’ as an alternative to Saskia Sassen’s idea of the ‘global city’ and explores

substantive examples of ‘living together’ in several cities across Asia. Conceptualising the ‘other global city’ is not only useful in exploring different notions of cosmopolitanism but is also indicative of the need to theorise non-Western cities in a non-hierarchical frame.

Concerns about placing the postcolonial city in a non-hierarchical frame have also been raised by Jennifer Robinson (2006) in her book *Ordinary Cities*. By positing the postcolonial city ‘in a world of cities [which are] linked through a wide range of circulations - of people, ideas, resources’, Robinson suggests a post-colonial urban theory which ‘builds on comparative traditions to think through the diverse experiences both within and across cities’ (Robinson, 2006: 65). While the idea of ‘ordinary city’ offers a way to think about connections between postcolonialism, modernity and development - a theme also explored by Legg and McFarlane (2008) in the context of ‘Western’ and ‘Southern’ urbanism - it also points to a possibility of ‘ordinary’ spaces in the city to research connections between postcolonialism, diaspora and the city.

Everyday spaces in the city

The idea of ‘ordinary’ spaces or everyday lived spaces in the city is an important theme which runs through this thesis. I have developed this idea in connection to a sense of neighbourhood or *para*⁶ that is important in understanding Anglo-Indian and Chinese lives in Calcutta. Focusing in particular on the close proximity experienced in everyday lived spaces in Calcutta, I have explored how an understanding of this space creates a sense of overlapping lives for these two communities as well as how the memory of these spaces travels from Calcutta to London and Toronto. Recent theorisations of space in geography have witnessed an increase in thinking about space relationally, which emphasise on an open, mobile and networked notion (Jones, 2009), and also a scalar notion of space. The space of the neighbourhood and other everyday spaces in the city referred to in this thesis, whilst implying a networked, translocal connection, are instead analysed through a scalar notion of space, whereby different scales of the home, the city and diaspora are enmeshed. In this section I locate this concern within two different but interconnected sets of

⁶ *Para* is the Bengali word for neighbourhood. I explore this idea more fully in chapters 4 and 6.

literature. The first relates to the idea of everyday space in the city within literature on globalisation, transnationalism and translocalism, while the second engages with the idea of encounter within the city. I also consider how everyday spaces have been studied in relation to urban India.

The idea that everyday spaces are important in understanding the city in a global world has been a significant aspect in the literature on globalisation, transnationalism and diaspora. David Ley (2004), for example, has argued against an economistic understanding of the 'global' city emphasising instead the need to study transnational spaces through the political and cultural domains of everyday life. The need to understand that people's lives are connected in an increasingly global world has also led to research on 'transnational urbanism' (Smith, 2001). Explaining the need to analyse the city transnationally, Michael Peter Smith (2005) writes that such an optic is necessary because

“...it captured a sense of *distanciated* yet *situated* possibilities for constituting and reconstituting social relations. The study of transnational urbanism thus underlines the socio-spatial processes by which social actors and their networks forge the *translocal* connections and create the translocalities that increasingly sustain new modes of being-in-the-world.” (Smith, 2005:237)

Other research on transnational urbanism has developed this idea in various ways. Durrschmidt (2000), for example, has explored 'globalisation of lives', which 'is experienced by people as the extension of their 'milieux' both spatially and symbolically' (p.1). Following the lives of eight Londoners, his work examines 'the micro-globalisation of the world city's everyday life and the globalisation of the biographies that are participating in it' (ibid.). In the editorial of a special issue of *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Conradson and Latham (2005) engage with transnational urbanism in two ways. First, they explore quotidian and ordinary forms of transnational everyday lives and second, they emphasise on the importance of 'middling' forms of transnationalism (p.228-229). Whilst an understanding of everyday spaces in the context of globalisation and transnationalism has influenced the way the urban is theorised, it has also informed ways in which transnational

communities are studied. Focusing on transnational connections existing across communities (Glick Schiller, Blasch and Blanc-Szanton, 1992) and place-making practices (Ehrkamp, 2005), these studies have emphasised the need to include both transnational connections and everyday space in studying communities across borders (Kennedy and Roudometof, 2001).

A different strand of research building on recent feminist work on emotions has emphasised the idea of translocality in understanding everyday lives and migration. There has been considerable interest in emotional geographies in recent times (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Bondi et al, 2005; Davidson and Milligan, 2004; Thien, 2004). Influenced mainly by post-rationalist and feminist theories, such an approach destabilises objective notions of space, asserting that social relations are lived and mediated through emotions (Anderson and Smith, 2001). Davidson and Milligan (2004:524) write that ‘our emotions matter...they have tangible effects on our surroundings and can shape the very nature and experience of our being-in-the-world... our sense of who and what we are, is continuously (re)shaped by how we feel’. Consequently much research in this area has focused on the embodiment of emotions. Most debates on the significance of emotions, as Lipman (2006) points out, revolve around the idea of the self. In these debates, the self is produced by the ‘relational’ nature of emotion, where “the ‘I’ and ‘We’ are shaped by, and even take the shape of contact with others” (Ahmed, 2004:32). Building on this area of research and on Appadurai’s (1996) notion of translocality, a special issue of the new journal *Mobilities* has brought together articles that focus on the ‘complex forms of subjectivity and feeling that emerge through geographical mobility (Conradson and McKay, 2007:167). Besides an understanding of the ‘multiply-located senses of self’ and the ‘emotional and affective states that accompany mobility’, the notion of a ‘translocal subjectivity’ also claims that ‘the formation of migrant selfhood is usually more closely related to localities within nations than to nation-states’ (Conradson and McKay, 2007:168-169). In this thesis I draw on the notion of translocality through an emphasis on the idea of neighbourhood and everyday lived space of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in Calcutta. I explore both the overlaps within Calcutta and across London and Toronto to engage with how migration affects the lives of those who still live in Calcutta, as well as how an attachment to specific spaces in Calcutta is reconfigured in London and Toronto.

Whilst research on transnationalism and translocality has influenced the way everyday migrant and urban lives are studied in the context of globalisation, other research on conceptualising everyday space in the city has drawn on the ‘cosmopolitan turn’ in the social sciences to develop ideas around postcoloniality and a sense of ‘living together with difference’ (Valentine, 2008). Reflecting on ‘geographies of encounter’, Valentine (2008) writes that recently the city is being ‘re-imagined as a site of connection’ (p.324). She refers to writings by Iris Marion Young, who viewed city life as ‘a being together of strangers’ and Doreen Massey who refers to the ‘throwntogetherness’ with others in the city, to argue that celebratory ideas of cosmopolitanism need to be placed within ‘real’ spaces of difference and inequality (Valentine, 2008: 324). I develop the notion of cosmopolitanism more fully in the next section, but here I would like to emphasise that the idea of encounter as discussed within literature on postcolonialism, has often been analysed through the neighbourhood in the context of everyday space in the city.

One strand of research has added a critical dimension to notions of neighbourhood by questioning and bringing into focus exclusionary and ‘othering’ processes that create the figure of a ‘stranger’ alongside that of a ‘neighbour’. David Sibley (1995), for example, has analysed everyday spaces in the city as sites of exclusion. Sibley analyses these spaces of exclusion at the level of home, locality and nation. Based on theories of psychoanalysis and the concept of purified space, he looks at how exclusionary practices can encourage defensive feelings of territoriality. Sibley also notes that feelings of territoriality with regards to neighbourhoods depend on the location and social composition of the area. Difference is less likely to be noticed in a ‘weakly classified’ area than in a ‘strongly classified’ area or purified space (ibid.). Such exclusionary practices can create strangers among neighbours. Sara Ahmed analyses the creation of the stranger ‘as a figure with both linguistic and bodily integrity’ through everyday encounters (2000:4). She notes the implication of a ‘stranger danger’ discourse operating in neighbourhood watch schemes. Such discourses can turn neighbourhoods into ‘tiny underdeveloped nations’ (Morris and Hess in Ahmed, 2000:26). But more importantly, such discourses point to the role of certain policies in creating neighbourhoods which are “imagined as organic and pure

spaces through the social perception of the danger posed by outsiders to moral and social health or well-being” (Ahmed, 2000:26). Similarly, Anne-Marie Fortier also analyses ‘how new forms of multicultural intimacy are imagined in contemporary Britain and how they are invested with particular ideals of mixing, loving they neighbour and feelings for the nation’ (Fortier, 2007:104).

A significant part of the above literature, however, has been developed within the context of the Western city. Everyday space in the non-Western city or specifically in the Indian city has been conceptualised differently. The idea of neighbourhood as a space of encounter has drawn on the literature on postcolonialism but has focused on the city of the past. The neighbourhood as a spatial unit is an important part of the Indian city, as shown by the use of a wide range of words- *mohalla*, *wadi*, *bazaar*, *chawl*, *pol*, *para*- in common parlance (Kumar, 2002). In these literatures everyday space in the colonial city has been viewed as a space of resistance and contestation. Masselos (1991), for example, writes of the neighbourhood as ‘accustomed space’ which as a site for festivals was a means to contest the imposition of the coloniser’s idea of urban space. Writing on the ‘sanitising’ efforts of the colonisers and its resistance by the colonised in Calcutta, Archer situates the indigenous voice as a “...discourse of the locale, articulating and protecting structures of caste, occupation, family, gender, religion and neighbourhood” (Archer, 2000:48). In the contemporary context, everyday space in urban India has been also been studied in relation to globalisation. In their edited collection, *The Meaning of the Local*, Geert De Neve and Henrike Donner (2006) bring together contributions that focus on the idea of the neighbourhood. Different from approaches that focus on broader structures of the neo-liberal regime or on new media and communication technologies that have restructured Indian cities and influenced urban life in recent times, this volume draws attention to everyday lived realities and thus engages with a politics of the local. Whilst I draw on the idea of encounter in everyday spaces of the city explored in the literature on postcolonialism and migration in the Western city, I also locate the experience of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities within a specific historical knowledge of Calcutta. I have focused on the importance of Calcutta in the lives of its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities both within the city and across diaspora through an engagement with ideas of cosmopolitanism, home/belonging and memory/nostalgia.

Cosmopolitanism

There has been a surge of interest in the idea of cosmopolitanism in recent times. The concept has been used in two broad areas of research. The first of these is linked to global political aspects of cosmopolitanism and engages with ideas of citizenship, human rights, universalism and global/social justice (for example see, Beck, 2006; Benhabib, 2006; Cheah and Robbins, 1998; Fine, 2006; Hayden, 2005). The second area engages more specifically with cosmopolitanism and the city, with reference to the presence of diverse communities within the contemporary city. Wider debates on cosmopolitanism, communities and the city have followed further two strands. The first of these is based in the literature on transnationalism and globalisation, which analyses the deterritorialisation and re-territorialisation of culture and how the presence of different communities in a city leads to the creation of ‘globalised localities’ (Albrow, 1997). The second idea relates the idea of cosmopolitanism to multiculturalism and analyses the notion of living with diversity (Amin, 2002; Parekh, 2000). Recent work has also emphasised the importance of a critical understanding of cosmopolitanism in its alternative (Nandy, 2000) and vernacular (Breckenridge et al., 2002) forms.

The use of the idea of ‘cosmopolitanism’ in the literature on globalisation, especially in conjunction with neo-liberal attitudes towards globalisation, has been open to criticism. The connection of ‘cosmopolitanism’ to a philosophical and moral stance which can be traced back to Kant, upholding an idea of universal citizenship, has also been criticised by newer ways of envisaging cosmopolitanism. Breckenridge et al (2002), for example, engage with the idea of cosmopolitanism as a theoretical concept. Tracing the origin of the concept to Enlightenment and its idea of modernity and rationality the authors point out the need to revise the conceptualisation of the idea of cosmopolitanism. Their edited volume locates a range of practices and new archives which allow for alternative theorization of the term and set an agenda for ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism’ (Breckenridge et al, 2002:13). In this context, Pollock (2002) examines the circulatory networks of Sanskrit literature in pre-colonial Asia, Abbas (2002) studies the imported cosmopolitan architecture of Shanghai and Appadurai (2002) analyses the changing ideas of cosmopolitanism through the circulation of cash in Bombay’s housing sector. All these examples, according to the

editors, point to ‘ways of living at home - ways of inhabiting multiple places at once, of being different beings simultaneously’ (Breckenridge et al, 2002:11). Yet despite these emancipatory implications, the editors remark that it is the refugees, diasporic groups, migrants and exiles who embody the cosmopolitan in the contemporary world- they are the ‘minoritarian cosmopolitans’, people who are ‘grouped together in a vocabulary of victimage and come to be recognised as constituting the ‘problem’ of multiculturalism to which late liberalism extends its generous promise of a pluralist existence’ (Breckenridge et al, 2002:6).

It is the increasing presence of the ‘minoritarian cosmopolitans’ that has been the focus of studies on the multicultural city. Multiculturalism has been incorporated in the political lexicon of urban governance specifically in Western cities. The city is the obvious locus where transnational flows of people and culture converge. In this context, cosmopolitanism has been analysed as the material manifestation of different cultural aspects. These manifestations though, do not simply imply a presence of different cultures, but are grounds for contestation. Critical analyses of such contestations have included studies of particular sites in the multicultural city (Anderson, 1991; Binnie et al, 2006; Jacobs, 1996; Watson, 2005) as well as those on the problems of governing the multicultural city (Keith, 2005). There are several overlaps between this field and the literature on globalisation and the city. The terms ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘cosmopolitanism’ have often been used interchangeably. It seems that ‘multiculturalism’ is often used to portray the social reality of the ‘global’ city, and whilst ‘cosmopolitanism’ is also used in the context of globalisation, it incorporates a wider connotation of engaging with different communities in the city. Keith (2005:4) points out that globalisation has brought about a notion of ‘living with difference’ and that many social, political and ethical concerns of the multicultural city revolve around this notion. With reference to Keith’s book, Kwame Appiah’s (2006) book, *Cosmopolitanism: ethics in a world of strangers* and Paul Gilroy’s book, *After empire: melancholia or convivial culture*, Jazeel (2007) argues for the need to move beyond ‘a nostalgic longing to recuperate a ‘cosmopolitan ethics’ and consider ‘how living together might be imagined outside the parameters of a cosmopolitan tradition’ (Jazeel, 2007: 623).

In much of the above literature cosmopolitanism has also been conceptualised as an everyday term. As Hannerz notes, cosmopolitanism is ‘an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other... an intellectual and aesthetic stance toward divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity’ (1996:103). While complex processes inform debates on identification of the ‘cosmopolitan’, locating cosmopolitanism in the city presents another set of complexities. Binnie et al note that certain urban spaces are marketed as cosmopolitan, yet ‘it might be that those spaces not marketed as cosmopolitan are in their mundane and everyday production more cosmopolitan’ (2006:249).

In this thesis I engage with these debates about cosmopolitanism as an idea and as a lived experience in two main ways. First, I engage with how overlaps and interactions between Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans as well as their location amidst other communities in Calcutta can be envisaged in cosmopolitan terms. Second, by bringing together the different contexts of cosmopolitanism in Calcutta and Toronto⁷, I consider how both communities refigure their relationship with the idea of a ‘cosmopolitan’ city. In placing the city and the everyday spaces of Anglo-Indian and Chinese lives in the city as the context of this analysis, I engage with several critical concerns that have informed debates on cosmopolitanism. The first of these concerns is the link between modernity, cosmopolitanism and the city. Ulrich Beck (2006: 19) in this context writes that,

“During the national phase of modernity cosmopolitanism could only be grasped intellectually, in the head, but could not be felt as a living experience. Nationalism, by contrast, took possession of people’s hearts. This head-heart dualism is turned upside-down in the second modernity. Everyday life has become cosmopolitan in banal ways; yet the insidious concepts of nationalism continue to haunt people’s minds almost unabated”

⁷ While multiculturalism is also a policy in London, I focus on Calcutta and Toronto to study the parallels across Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans. The presence of Chinese Calcuttans is considerably less in London compared to Toronto.

In this thesis I consider how Calcutta is imagined as a place of belonging by its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in connection to ideas about it as a cosmopolitan city. While not disregarding the importance of the nation as a space of identity, I consider the city as an affective space for the communities. The connection between the city, modernity and cosmopolitanism is complex in the context of India (cf. Chakrabarty, 2000; Chatterjee, 1993; Prakash, 2002). Diasporic groups were an important part of all colonial cities and Calcutta is no exception. Over time, though, these groups have dispersed further to other cities in India and elsewhere. Calcutta, itself is undergoing rapid changes in the present times and as Chatterjee (2004:146) points out, there is a recent trend of promoting a ‘globalised cosmopolitan subculture’, alongside an attempt by the political leadership to assert a new ‘Bengaliness’ in the city. The question, in this context, is not whether to term Calcutta as cosmopolitan or not, but rather how to envisage different communities over time. In Keith’s words, the “spatialisation of urban cultures in particular places at specific times is central to an understanding of the manner in which cities mediate the cosmopolitan” (2005:10).

The second area of concern that I engage with is the issue of scale in considering ideas of cosmopolitanism. I explore ideas of cosmopolitanism at the scale of the home, neighbourhood, community and also the city. Breckenridge et al. (2002), for example, draw parallels with feminism and cosmopolitanism by pointing out that both approaches struggle against universalist discourses and emphasise plurality of modes and histories (p.8). As they question,

“...if cosmopolitanism seeks to take the large view, how can we think the intimate under its sign without restricting intimacy to the domestic sphere? Any cosmofeminism would have to create a critically engaged space that is not just a screen for globalisation or an antidote to nationalism but is rather a focus on projects of the intimate sphere conceived as part of the cosmopolitan. Such a critical perspective would also open up a new understanding of the domestic, which would no longer be confined spatially or socially to the private sphere” (p.8-9).

The third area of concern I engage with is the idea of alternative cosmopolitanisms. Writing about imagining geographies of identity, Katharyne Mitchell (2007) mentions that Clifford's (1992) use of the term 'discrepant cosmopolitanisms' opened up possibilities of discussions on 'subaltern cosmopolitanisms' (p.713). Such a notion of cosmopolitanism, she also writes, 'involves a concept of cosmopolitanism from below, one that is predicated on long-distance action and a transnational, counter-hegemonic sphere of politics' (ibid.). Mitchell concludes her engagement with ideas of subaltern cosmopolitanism by saying that 'groups and individuals perform their own sense of cosmopolitanism dependant on context - their own particular locations in various axes of power' (p.714). The located sense of cosmopolitanism and the need to ground ideas these ideas in 'actually existing cosmopolitanisms' (Cheah and Robbins, 1998) has also been discussed in relation to a need to theorise alternative cosmopolitanisms. Jeffrey and McFarlane (2008), for example, explore ideas of performing cosmopolitanism. As they write,

“...cosmopolitanism here is distinct from transnationalism in that it points specifically to the capacity to mediate between different cultures or social worlds; if transnationalism refers primarily to flows of people, resources ideas, and activities, cosmopolitanism refers to an ability to negotiate difference”.

Such a notion of cosmopolitanism thus opens up ways to think about critical relations between diasporas, cities and mobility. In the thesis, apart from evoking a sense of overlapping and connected lives of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans, I use the idea of cosmopolitanism in three main ways. First, I use it in the specific context of neighbourhood interactions that cut across community boundaries. Second, I explore the implications of envisaging cosmopolitanism in the space of the intimate, through inter-marriages. Both these notions are juxtaposed in chapter 4 to chart the politics of cosmopolitanism in the city. Third, I also use the idea of cosmopolitanism to explore the idea of 'diaspora cities', and the nature and implications of mobilities within and across Calcutta, London and Toronto.

Home/Belonging

Home is described as ‘an emotive place and spatial imaginary that encompasses lived experiences of everyday, domestic life alongside a wider sense of being and belonging in the world’ (Blunt, 2009:732). I extend this idea of home in the thesis to analyse Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans’ sense of self and belonging in diaspora along with their attachment to particular areas of Calcutta and to explore the idea of the city as home. In adopting this approach I aim to contribute to the existing research by exploring how connections between communities through lived spaces of everyday life can evoke a sense of home. Everyday life for communities in cities is rarely confined within an insular space, although this may seem to be the case through, for example, the associational networks of particular communities. Everyday life also normally extends beyond the immediate locality of residence, for example, through work spaces. And even though both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in Central Calcutta are not residentially concentrated any longer (Tangra and Bow Barracks may be taken as exceptions), I explore to what extent there is a sense of emotional attachment to particular areas or neighbourhoods in Calcutta which play an important role in shaping their identity in the city as well as over diaspora. The idea of neighbourhood also invokes a sense of living alongside one another as neighbours, and although the scale of this may vary considerably (from a small area like Bow Barracks to a wider sense of an Anglo-Indian neighbourhood across central Calcutta, or a fairly homogenous area like Tangra), this idea has important social and political significance in tracing the histories of the communities within and across cities.

Geographies of home have varied from the scale of the domestic to the diasporic (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). An important theme which underlines ideas of home across these scales is the notion of a blurred boundary between the public and the private. This thesis investigates how and why the neighbourhood may represent home for the Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities, both as a lived space encompassing the daily rhythm of everyday life, and also as a space in and through which the communities have developed a sense of belonging to the city. The notion of belonging is central in postcolonial studies where complicated patterns of belonging are traced through connections between ideas of home and indigeneity which overlap histories of nation and empire and also through ideas of home and

homeland. Blunt (2005), for example, analyses how Anglo-Indian women embody and reproduce complex images of belonging, with Britain as Fatherland and India as Motherland. The complex senses of belonging for the Hakka Chinese community is outlined by Oxfeld (2003) who points out that the Hakka Chinese often draw upon the idea of 'guest people', a term the Cantonese Chinese used for them in Guangdong, China to trace their history in China, Calcutta and Toronto.

A wide range of research analyses how transnational migration unsettles the idea of home and critically analyses the relationship between mobility and location (Ahmed et al, 2003; Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). Ideas of home in these literatures have been analysed in terms of multiple attachments and how they are reproduced materially within the home (Tolia-Kelly, 2004) as well as in transit (for example in 'The Migrant's Suitcase'; Morley, 2000). At the level of the neighbourhood, David Ley (1995) and Katharyne Mitchell (2004a) show how 'monster houses' of Shaughnessy Heights in Vancouver built by wealthy migrants from Hong Kong become an issue of local urban politics. Claire Dwyer (2002) explores the complex overlaps between home, belonging and identity for young British Muslim women in a north London suburb. As Blunt and Dowling (2006:154) write, 'transnational homes are... shaped by ideas and experiences of location and dislocation, place and displacement, as people migrate for a variety of reasons and feel both at home and not at home in a wide range of circumstances'. Further, noting that not all diasporas sustain an ideology of return, Brah (1996:180) makes a distinction between 'homing desire' and nostalgia for a 'homeland'. The migration of Anglo-Indian and Chinese from Calcutta to London and Toronto has also unsettled their ideas of home, if home for them was ever a 'settled' idea. I draw on the connections between mobility and location for Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans to explore how emigration from Calcutta refigures the idea of home for those who have stayed back and also how the memories of Calcutta inform the sense of home in London and Toronto. Conceptualising migration through uprootings/regroundings, Ahmed et al. (2003) argue that the 'task is... not to categorize 'home' as a condition distinct from 'migration'...but to ask how uprootings and regroundings are enacted- affectively, materially and symbolically- in relation to one another' (p.2). This thesis engages as much with ambivalent conceptions of home for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities as it is about how they refigure 'home' in and through the city.

The idea of neighbourhood as home helps in critically conceptualising the sense of connections across the two communities within a place of dwelling through which diasporic communities develop a sense of belonging across and within cities. As Brah (1996:196) writes, ‘...‘home’ is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination... a place of no return... [but]... home is also the lived experience of a locality’. In extending the idea of home to the neighbourhood and the city I analyse these lived experiences as well as the importance of the neighbourhood as an emotionally meaningful space. Blunt (2005:5) notes that, ‘as a space of belonging and alienation, intimacy and violence, desire and fear, the home is charged with meanings, emotions, experiences and relationships that lie at the heart of human life’. The thesis explores ways in which the city is not just a geographical space but also an imaginary space, a place of affect and a site which harbours emotional links and attachments.

Memory/Nostalgia

Both the city and diaspora form rich and significant contexts for the discussion of memory and nostalgia. Whilst the literature on urban memory has focused on the spatialisation of memory in the built landscapes of the city, and the site of the urban as a ‘palimpsest’ for storing memory, ‘replete with monuments and museums, palaces, public spaces and government buildings’ (Huyssen, 2003:1), work on migration has analysed memory as a narrative to negotiate a sense of self and belonging (McDowell, 2004). The idea of nostalgia with its invocation of the word ‘home’ has been analysed in the context of diasporic longing for a homeland (Blunt, 2005:13). In this thesis I explore overlaps across urban and diasporic memory to analyse how cities mediate diasporic memory, as well as how the site of the urban is remembered over diaspora and acts as a place of nostalgia. One important emotion that links Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities from Calcutta is their nostalgic connection to the city. In analysing Anglo-Indian and Chinese memories in Calcutta as well as their imagination over diaspora, I explore whether and how memories of particular places and a nostalgic link to the city creates a sense of home and belonging for the communities. I also explore to what extent proximity within the spaces of the neighbourhood and memories of it shape the identity of each community and to what extent changing ideas of cosmopolitanism in Calcutta

intervene in these memories and nostalgias. In chapter 4 I explore links between memory of a cosmopolitan Calcutta and the politics of cosmopolitanism in the city. In the chapter 5 I use memory as a narrative device to place feelings of belonging in the city and as a way to place Calcutta as home in that nostalgia. In chapter 6 I analyse memories of the city to explore practices of nostalgia.

Several literatures point out the centrality of space in conceptualising memory and nostalgia (Blunt, 2003; Boym, 2001; Legg, 2004). Pierre Nora (1989), for example, views memory as attached to sites or *lieux de mémoire*. While there is a large literature on state-backed historical narratives creating landscapes of memory, most often in the city (Atkinson and Cosgrove, 1998; Hodgkin and Radstone, 2003; Johnson, 1995; Schama, 1996; Till, 1999), there are others which stress the political significance of memory and nostalgia and the manner in which such emotions have been institutionalised through constructions of museums and shrines (Boym, 2001). Whereas there are overlaps between ‘memory’ and ‘nostalgia’ in these literatures, some prefer to invoke the root meaning of the term ‘nostalgia’ as ‘longing for home’ to analyse a sense of belonging to a place. Blunt (2003) points out that there exists an antipathy towards nostalgia mainly because the ‘spaces of home are located in the past rather than in the present, in imaginative terms rather than in material terms, and as points of imagined authenticity rather than as lived experience’ (p.721). In contrast, her suggested term ‘productive nostalgia’ traces its embodied and enacted practices in the present (ibid). In analysing the nostalgic connection of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities to Calcutta, I explore whether there is a sense of attachment to particular places or neighbourhoods in the city and interrogate the ways in which memories of these places create a sense of attachment. I draw, in particular, on the meaning of nostalgia as evoking home and thus trace the development of a sense of belonging for the two communities.

The communities’ history in the city is not without conflicts. There are defining moments in the history of both these communities which have influenced their current presence in Calcutta. Many Anglo-Indians, for example, emigrated after India’s Independence in 1947. Similarly, the 1962 Sino-Indian War marked a crisis in the lives of the Calcutta Chinese and many emigrated as well. Hodgkin and Radstone’s (2003) edited volume includes studies on trauma and how these negative

memories are commemorated and contested. Legg (2004), in reviewing their work, points out that 'while both conditions [trauma and nostalgia] represent problematic engagements with the past, nostalgia often focuses on a time and place before or beyond a traumatic incident' (p.103). In the thesis I explore to what extent the nostalgia for Calcutta amongst its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities focuses on the times before 1947 and 1962.

While these moments in history marked the beginning of migration for both communities, more members of the communities have migrated since and for reasons not directly related to these political events. An increasing presence in the diaspora has refigured their relationship to Calcutta and memories of many recent migrants have more links with the city in more recent times rather than a nostalgic pre-1947 or pre-1962 era. The connections between diaspora, memory and identity have been analysed in various contexts. Making a distinction between 'restorative' and 'reflective' nostalgia, Boym (2001) points out that while the former focuses on *nostos* and aims to recreate loss, the latter invokes *algia* (longing) and is best understood in movement- 'If restorative nostalgia ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland in an attempt to conquer and spatialise time, reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalises space' (p.49). These different links between memory and diaspora dwell upon collective memory as shaping identity. In her study of Italian immigrant culture, Anne-Marie Fortier (1999, 2000) describes St. Peter's Church in Clerkenwell, London as a place of re-remembering. While the process of re-remembering dwells on memories of places, it also identifies 'members' who fit in (ibid). Tolia-Kelly, on the other hand, writes about re-memory in the context of domestic material space. Re-memory, in her words, is 'memory that is encountered in the everyday, but is not always a recall or reflection of actual experience' (2004:316). As she argues, memories of places do not have to follow linear, biographical narrative and can be more complicated than a simple link between diasporic identity and place (ibid). Diasporas are commonly defined through their journeys. Brah (1996: 183) suggests that these 'multiple journeys may configure into one journey via a *confluence of narratives* as it is lived and re-lived, produced, reproduced and transformed through individual as well as collective memory and re-memory'. A common perspective which links these various arguments is the formation of a common collective identity. While Anglo-

Indian and Chinese communities do draw on this collective sense of identity, I analyse whether their memories of particular places in Calcutta also relate to memories of each other and if so in what contexts.

In another context, I also explore links between memory, city and cosmopolitanism. The city has been viewed as a 'theatre of memory' (Boyer, 1994), where different groups recreate 'landscapes of memory' (Srinivas, 2001). While urban memory has been studied in various contexts (Boym, 2001; Srinivas, 2001; Till, 2005), I focus particularly on the links between community, memory and the city. In her study of Alexandria, Veronica Della Dora (2006) analyses how nostalgia for a transnational, cosmopolitan past can be both a subversion of the 'colonial cartographic gaze' as well as a device used by the state and urban developers to market images of a city. The political use of nostalgia can take various forms and the way it is manifested depends on the particular context. Mills (2006), for example, analyses changes in Kuzguncuk, a neighbourhood in Istanbul, and traces the production of its landscape through two nostalgic narratives - a narrative of multicultural tolerance and another of the neighbourhood or *mahalle*. Depicting the neighbourhood as a space of belonging for minority communities in Istanbul, Mills analyses how 'the *mahalle* ... is [also] the site of national boundary-making' and the place through which identities of who is a 'Turk' and who is a 'minority' is played out (2006:387). The manner in which nostalgic discourses of a cosmopolitan past can mask social differences is also the topic of research by Watson and Wells (2005) on a London market.

The complex issue of the city as a reference point for identity in India is considered by Nandy (2000a). In another article on Cochin, Nandy (2000b) analyses the place of the self in a culture of cosmopolitanism, where he argues for an 'alternative cosmopolitanism' in contemporary Cochin, implying that the multiple communities which formed part of the colonial city need to refigure their relationship with the city in the face of growing 'Indianisation'. Nandy further points out that the presence of different communities in a city has an important role to play in the historical conception of a city (in this case Cochin). These groups are also part of shared public memories. But Nandy maintains that to search for an alternative cosmopolitanism, one needs to look beyond these public memories. He talks about

‘tacit memories’ of Cochin. Putting forward an idea of a ‘secret self’, Nandy maintains that the:

‘...socialised self learns to keep double ledgers, one for public or official consumption, the other for private moments or for transmission as unofficial memories or creation of contraband histories’ (Nandy, 2000b:81-144).

In his paper on Cochin, Nandy suggests that not just individuals but communities also have their secret selves. Hence, his aim in this paper is to search for another Cochin, a mythic Cochin that is ‘not openly recognised in Cochin’s public life or its public reflection’. In this thesis I explore how Calcutta exists within the memories of its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities, as well as what these community memories of the city might mean.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have discussed the conceptual frameworks within which I place the critical intersections of the city and diaspora. I have analysed how the city acts as a site of encounter for various diasporas and how the idea of the diaspora itself can be grounded in the city. I have also discussed how ideas of cosmopolitanism, home and memory straddle the city and diaspora and how these notions can be used to frame the overlapping lives of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in the city and in diaspora. The idea of cosmopolitanism invokes a sense of overlapping and connected lives. In this review I have explored how cosmopolitanism, in lived and imagined dimensions, provides an insight into the connections between the city and diaspora, across cities and across diaspora. A sense of home and belonging too is an important concept for studying diasporas. Envisaging the city as home for diasporas, I have also explored how the city as a site of belonging influences diasporic lives at different scales. Finally, I have charted the multiple terrains of memory in the city and how practices of nostalgia recreate the city as home.

This thesis contributes to these debates on the city and diaspora in two significant ways. First, it connects research done separately on the city and diaspora to explore the critical connections between these material and imaginary spaces. Second, it

contributes to a critical understanding of diaspora through a focus on connections between two communities as well as connections that exist across cities through diaspora.

Chapter Three

RESEARCHING OVERLAPPING LIVES IN THE CITY: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The methodological challenge of bringing together different cities and different communities was an aspect I had to consider carefully, the specificities of which became clearer as I proceeded in the fieldwork. The research for this thesis involved adopting multi-sited, qualitative methodology based mainly on interviews but also ethnography, some archival research, and textual and visual analysis of films, documentaries, pamphlets and publications of community organisations, as well as maps of the neighbourhood and the city drawn by interviewees. Whilst a comparative frame underpinned my research, I was aware that despite the potential of such research to disrupt theoretical assumptions on both the city and diaspora, it could equally create a hierarchy, dividing the lives of the communities across three different cities, as well as differentiating the cities. In this sense, my aim was not to use comparison as a method to highlight the differences between Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans or evaluate the different contexts of Calcutta, London and Toronto. Rather, in analysing the experiences of both communities across the three cities and tracing the connections within the communities across the cities, I aimed to bridge the spaces of difference that may result from comparative research.

The inspiration for this over-arching, comparative and transnational research came to me through two main bodies of research. First, I was inspired by Jennifer Robinson's (2006) idea of 'ordinary cities' and her argument for the need to revalorise comparative traditions in urban theorising. Second, I also drew inspiration from Avtar Brah's (1996) idea of 'diaspora space' in which she complicates the "genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put'" (p.209). Whilst the contexts of both studies are different, both incorporate a need for comparisons across space as well as time. Comparative studies in geography, as well as other social sciences, are not new, and neither are debates on how to do such comparative research. Although as Jennifer Robinson (2006) notes, a comparative tradition in urban studies is not a new phenomenon, comparison across a global scale gained prominence in the context of a 'transnational' turn in the social sciences (Seigel, 2005). Migration and

diaspora studies, being inherently global in scale also often adopt a comparative framework. In terms of methodology, debates have focused on the need to move beyond a 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller, 2002), and adopting a multi-sited ethnography (Hannerz, 2003) as well as a cosmopolitan methodology (Beck, 2007). A comparative methodology as upheld through ideas of global ethnography and cosmopolitan theory shows the need for translocal research, and understanding processes whereby the 'global' and the 'local' merge.

While I drew on the essence of such multi-sited studies to develop a methodology for this research, I also took into consideration the reflexivity associated with much qualitative, postcolonial and feminist research, especially critical ideas about a methodology reflecting the politics of scales, positionality, emotion and ethics and responsibility. A multi-sited ethnography helped me gain a better perspective into the lives of both communities. Writing about Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in Calcutta seemed incomplete without referring to the members of the communities in diaspora, and as I came to realise over the course of my research, there is much of Calcutta and the communities in Calcutta that seep through in the lives of those in London and Toronto. Studying two communities across three cities also involved crossing boundaries both materially and imaginatively. Just as my fieldwork took me to different cities, away from my 'home' in Calcutta, I also had to negotiate different boundaries within the cities and across communities. In this chapter I discuss the methods I have chosen to conduct multi-sited research for this thesis and also reflect on how such methods both enabled and disabled the crossing of boundaries.

Straddling boundaries: doing qualitative research on 'communities'

In a review of qualitative methods in human geography, Mike Crang (2005:230) points out that despite 'talking about the body and emotions', qualitative research has been limited by a textual focus. Having relied significantly on semi-structured interviews, I have to admit, that my research is also similarly dependant on texts. I conducted 37 semi-structured interviews with 63 Anglo-Indian women and men, and 44 interviews with 65 Chinese women and men living in Calcutta, London and Toronto (see Appendix A for details). I carried out more or less equal number of interviews in each city. Whilst I set up most interviews with a single person, often the interviews turned out to be group interviews with one or two other members of

the family. I also conducted a second interview with 20 Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans living in London and Toronto, focused around drawing memory maps of the city to reflect the emotionally significant places in the city. The choice of interviewees for the second interviews was guided by two main factors. First, it was the availability of time on the part of interviewees and their willingness to participate in the second interview. Second, I chose the range of interviewees to reflect the different areas of Calcutta that they lived in. Some second interviews in Toronto were conducted on the same day as the first interview, mainly because of time constraints and the distances to be travelled to their place.

In the thesis, I have maintained anonymity and used pseudonyms for interviewees. Since both Anglo-Indian and Chinese interviewees used Christian first names, I have added a Chinese surname to distinguish between members of the two communities. As I began my fieldwork in Calcutta, some initial interviewees were recruited through personal contacts and/or references. Most other interviewees were recruited through snowballing. In London and Toronto, the respective community associations and community events were important starting points in getting contacts. In recruiting interviewees, I took into consideration the areas of Calcutta they live/d in. For the Chinese community, I was careful to recruit people who live/d in both central Calcutta and Tangra. I tried to keep a balance between Hakka and Cantonese as well as other sub-groups, but the greater visibility of the Hakka community and their stronger connection to Calcutta meant that I had a greater number of Hakka interviewees. For the Anglo-Indian community, I chose people who live/d in a range of central Calcutta neighbourhoods to reflect different socio-economic backgrounds. Although Anglo-Indians also increasingly live in other areas of Calcutta, I decided to focus on central Calcutta because of the significant emotional identification with these areas and also because of residential overlaps with the Chinese communities. In all three cities, I spoke to at least one family who identified themselves as Anglo-Chinese, either through descent or through marriage. Amongst the total interviews with Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans, I conducted six interviews with 10 Anglo-Chinese men and women. While all of them accepted and spoke openly about their 'mixed' identity, they also identified themselves as culturally more Anglo-Indian (in the greater number of cases) or Chinese. I have classified them in Appendix A as Anglo-Indian or Chinese depending on how they described

themselves. Most interviewees amongst both Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans were above 55 years of age, although I also interviewed some who were younger. Since a significant aspect of my research engages with memories of the city, the generational divide worked to my advantage. In London and Toronto, I spoke to people who had migrated at various periods of time, though there was a broad distinction between the two cities for Anglo-Indians. Most Anglo-Indians who migrated to London did so in an earlier period compared to Toronto. Most interviews were conducted in English, though in the case of the Chinese community, three interviews were in Hindi and one in Bengali. I also conducted two focus group interviews with six people in each group in Calcutta with officers of Bow United Organisation and Indian Chinese Association, one in London with a group of four close Anglo-Indian Calcuttan friends and two in Toronto, with four officers of Yin Hua Association and four members of the Hupei Association. Whilst the focus group interviews with officers and members of community associations helped me to better understand how community life for both Anglo-Indians and Chinese communities were influenced by these associations, I also decided to conduct a focus group with friends in London to reflect shared memories of the city as well as how friendship connections from the city are established.

One of the biggest challenges in relying on interviews for data was the constant need to reflect the diversity within each of the communities, in the city as well as across diaspora. Whilst keeping a balance across gender and including people from different areas of the city was relatively straight-forward, I also needed to reflect on the different social status of the interviewees as well as guard against a generational divide in the material obtained. I have attempted to keep the sample of interviewees as representative as possible of these differences. I have used neighbourhood as a criterion to reflect the differences in social status, although in London and Toronto the neighbourhood became more a criterion to reflect on different narratives of the memory of the city. In most cases, however, my attempts to maintain representativeness through choosing interviewees had to be modified during the research process itself. Interesting contrasts and differences within and between the communities became clearer as I actually conducted the interviews. A greater number of interviews with members of the Anglo-Indian community in all three cities, but more in London and Toronto, were conducted at their homes. Many interviews extended

into lunch and dinner invitations and the actual interview setting also turned into ethnographic research. The home setting also encouraged the inclusion of other members of the family in the interview which turned into a group activity. These group interviews were useful to generate a wider range of data, especially as discussions often revolved around differences of experiences. It also prompted me to reflect on why interviews with members of the Chinese community did not usually follow the same pattern. Whilst more Anglo-Indian interviewees were recruited through personal contacts or through snow-balling, my access to members of the Chinese community was more mediated through community organisations. The predominantly patriarchal structure of the Chinese community meant that the contacts I got were often of other men, and the interviews were conducted mainly in public spaces. However, as my research progressed I was able to make use of personal contacts to recruit more Chinese women. Apart from gender, differences across age-groups also influenced the nature of material I obtained from the interviews. Although there is a generational imbalance in my sample of interviewees, with most of them being above 60 years old, it reflects a conscious decision on my part because a large part of the narrative of the city was a narrative of the past. I have utilised the few interviews with younger members of both communities to discern a difference in the narratives. Despite these issues in bridging the differences between and across the communities semi-structured interviews were useful.

Since my research aimed at understanding parallels between Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans, in-depth interviews were useful in gaining inter-twined knowledge of the communities on subjective experiences of home, belonging and identity. Geographers adopting qualitative methods have relied significantly on in-depth or semi-structured interviews, alongside participant observation and ethnography to delve into the complex meanings of social reality. At the same time, critical geography has made us aware of the complexity of the research process itself, punctuated by inequalities of power in the researcher/ researched relationship. Cindi Katz, in this context, writes that, 'questions raised by conducting fieldwork in human geography at once invoke boundaries and blur borders' (Katz, 1994:67). Katz made the comment in the context of political, personal and ethical questions that she needed to think through and negotiate in her research in Sudan and New York City. Indeed, qualitative research at any scale demands self-reflexivity on issues of

boundaries and borders, especially when there is some movement from one place to another. Often such reflexivity has been analysed in the dichotomy of 'insider'/'outsider' within contexts of 'community' (Mohammad, 2001) and cross-cultural research (Mullings, 1999). Whilst my research is characterised by a diasporic scale, which introduced specific issues of borders and boundaries that I discuss below, it also involved negotiating boundaries on an everyday basis, in the research context of the city as well as the actual interview process. I discuss these issues in the context of my own positionality as a Calcuttan and as a researcher.

Given the diasporic focus of my research, I could have begun my research in any of the three cities. I chose to begin in Calcutta for two main reasons. Firstly, although taking into consideration that both communities in Calcutta are diasporic, in the sense that their lives have been influenced by an idea of home and belonging elsewhere, I wanted to interrogate their sense of everyday life in the city and their attachment to Calcutta. Secondly, a comparatively better identifiable 'community' in Calcutta, both spatially (through concentration in particular neighbourhoods) and socially (through the presence of various community associations), made it easier for me to 'get into' the communities. Connected to both these reasons is also my own positionality as 'being from Calcutta'. Having grown up in Calcutta and lived in the city until recently, it is a city I identify as 'home'. Whilst I was conscious of not letting my personal attachment to the city get in the way of interpreting narratives of the city, I had to negotiate my identity as 'being from Calcutta' in different ways over the course of this research. In Calcutta, I grew up in a central area of the city, not too far from the 'Anglo-Indian' and 'Chinese' neighbourhoods that I write about. My initial acquaintance with the communities had been forged through a complex set of interrelated factors like where I lived, some family friends who are from both communities, stories told to me about the communities by a wide-range of people, and some personal friendships. While negotiating my own identity through these personal relationships is something I had never deeply thought about, I was compelled to do so while conducting my research. Studying for a PhD in London and going back to Calcutta to do research was not a straight-forward journey of returning 'home'. It was also a process of getting to know Calcutta all over again through the eyes of interviewees from each community. My identity as 'being from Calcutta' was negotiated by both myself and by interviewees. Confident in the knowledge that I

was going back to known surroundings to begin my research, and having some personal contacts in the community I had thought that getting access into both communities and recruiting interviewees wouldn't be too difficult a task. This was not the case. The word 'community' itself evokes a sense of boundary, and I was part of neither. I began my research by talking to personal contacts from both communities, and they suggested a few leads into the communities. Often, these were people who were 'known' in the community, by virtue of their position in community associations or their knowledge about the respective communities. But some also suggested their personal contacts when I mentioned that I wanted to interview people who lived in particular areas. I always introduced myself as 'being from Calcutta' in the hope that a shared knowledge and experience of the city would help me gain an 'insider' status. I also often mentioned my experience of growing up in central Calcutta to create a common ground to talk about the city. Part of this effort was aimed at balancing the effect of presenting my research as part of my education in London. Given that a significant number of Anglo-Indians and Chinese live in diaspora, outside Calcutta, and that discussions often raised issues around marking differences between the communities in Calcutta and London/Toronto, it is a 'boundary' that I had to tread carefully. My awareness of this boundary, however, did little to mitigate the complex power relationships that characterise the 'field', as the following example shows.

In Calcutta, I attended a pension and ration distribution day for elderly and needy Anglo-Indians at one of the old-age homes, Lawrence D'Souza Home. This distribution day, held on a Sunday each month, is organised by the Calcutta Anglo-Indian Service Society (CAISS). The money for the pensions and the ration is collected mostly from funds donated by diasporic Anglo-Indians. As I was interviewing one of the pensioners, on coming to know that my research was based in London, a fact I could not hide as it was clearly mentioned on the information sheet and consent form, I was approached by another pensioner. She had heard that I had 'come from London', and assumed that my research was connected to the pension funds. She thanked me profusely for the 'great work' that I was doing. Incidents such as these were specific to the location where I was doing an interview. The pension and ration distribution day at the Lawrence D'Souza Home is an example of an event and a circumstance which encapsulates the inequalities inherent

in researching diasporic lives. Although I continued the interview later, at the interviewee's home in Tiljalla, that interruption had already marked the boundaries between the researcher and the researched. 'Being from Calcutta' meant very little in that context. The above incident is specific to the Anglo-Indian context, pointing to how differences within the community can influence positionality within comparative research. In general, when I introduced myself as 'being from Calcutta', interviewees were more open in talking about the community and the city. They identified me as an 'insider', but also explained certain things as 'outsider' to the communities, as someone unaware of Anglo-Indian and Chinese 'culture'.

The idea of 'culture' also intervened with the idea of 'ethnicity' and both these concepts were used to create as well as transcend boundaries. I discuss this in connection to two aspects that influenced the research. First, continuing the earlier discussion on being an insider/outsider, I explore how my positionality as someone with a 'mixed' family background influenced the research. Second, I discuss how conversations about respective communities lent itself to an exploration of connected lives. The space offered by in-depth interviews allowed a wide-range of conversations to take place between interviewees and myself. Since my interview questions included asking about personal life experiences, conversations often veered towards discussing my own life as well. Initially, I was uncomfortable talking about myself and did not want to digress from the research topic. Many interviewees tried to locate me, and connect my appearance with a Bengali name. Although I was uncomfortable and unsure of their attempts to place me because I felt that would have complicated the already complex research situation, I later realised that by identifying an Anglo-Indian and Chinese 'other', I had already placed them in my knowledge of different communities living in the city, so it was fine if they also tried to place me. Whilst I did not offer any information about my family background unless I was asked, the interview situations which raised these questions became a complex mix of both me working out my positionality at a personal level and interviewees' attempts to place me. Although I would like to think that my 'in-between' position was an advantage in researching overlaps between 'marginalised', 'minority' communities, I am unsure as to how my positionality has been interpreted by the interviewees. The ambiguity of being/not-being the 'Bengali other', helped in discussing certain topics like the 1962 Sino-Indian War, but also did not have any

impact in my attempts to get access in the closed Tangra Chinese community. I have often felt more at ease talking about Anglo-Indian 'culture', but at the same time some interviewees' queries and assumptions about my religious beliefs, especially in Calcutta, have added to the ambiguity of negotiating positionality in the field. In London and Toronto, on the other hand, a diasporic identity for both interviewees and myself reduced some of these complexities based on ethnicity and religion.

I generally introduced my research topic as a study on the communities, but also on connections between the two communities. However, researching communities brought into focus internal power dynamics. To understand the lives of the communities, I also had to understand these power dynamics. I had to be conscious of who introduced me to whom and who was identified as being able to talk about the community. In the early stages of research, I became aware of how both communities spoke differently about the city. Whilst many Anglo-Indian interviewees spoke about the 'community' in terms of key personalities, like prominent public figures who were from Calcutta, for the Chinese community the absence of such figures focused the conversation more around their 'ethnic' identity and culture and how these have contributed to Calcutta. The style of communication was also different for both communities. Anglo-Indian interviewees talked a lot more than the Chinese, who often presented their views in a more 'matter of fact' manner. Although language may have played a role in this, when I asked interviewees about it, many explained it to me as an aspect of 'culture'. Discussing respective communities also brought up the issue of stereotypes. Whilst both communities were conscious of their stereotypical representation in films and/or fiction, some also used stereotypical metaphors to discuss each other. Whereas the Chinese community viewed Anglo-Indians as 'party-going' and 'not thinking about tomorrow', the Anglo-Indian version of Chinese caricature included 'hard-working' and 'conservative'. In another instance, one Chinese interviewee explained that marriage between Anglo-Indians and Chinese took place because the Anglo-Indian man was not good enough for the Anglo-Indian woman who preferred a hard-working husband, while on the other hand, a Chinese man preferred an Anglo-Indian woman because she was 'fun' (Field notes). Whilst most of these accounts were told as jokes, negotiating stereotypes across 'culture' and 'ethnicity' is an aspect I had to consider.

Besides exploring connections between Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in Calcutta, I also wanted to explore connections within the two communities in London and Toronto. Whilst some aspects of the above discussion about crossing boundaries and negotiating my positionality in the interview context is also applicable to the interviews I conducted in London and Toronto, a different politics of location characterised the communities in these two cities. In my research in London and Toronto, 'being from Calcutta', for example, helped the conversation through a shared memory of the city. But at the same time, both communities also drew on a shared 'Indian' identity. In attempting to explore the diasporic connections within communities across the cities, I asked for contact details of family and friends living in London and Toronto to interviewees in Calcutta. Whilst this strategy worked for the Chinese community, reflecting the strong family links that continue to be maintained over diaspora, it was not as straight-forward for the Anglo-Indian community. Alison Blunt (2005) writes about a similar problem that she faced pointing out that many had lost touch with family members who had migrated earlier, as well as the sensitive issue of interviewing members of the same family living in very different socio-economic positions (p.18). In London and Toronto, I recruited interviewees mostly through community associations and personal contacts. I also contacted people who I had met in Calcutta during Chinese New Year and Christmas to explore their links with the city.

Performing identity: ethnographic encounters

While the interview setting enabled me to discuss subjective views on connections between communities and cities, ethnographic research in the form of participant observation provided an opportunity to observe how 'community' identity was performed in the city. Ethnographic research in critical geography has been used in two main ways. First, it has been used to give voice to marginal communities through 'inter-subjective research practices' (Parr, 2001:181). Second, it has emphasised the exploration of the 'tissue of everyday life to reveal the processes and meanings which undergrid social action' (Herbert, 2000: 551). In this research too, I have used ethnography to try and understand feelings of belonging and attachment to particular spaces in the city. I have tried to get a sense of everyday geographies for Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans. Since many interviews were conducted at the

homes of interviewees where the interview process often spilled over to lunch and dinner invitations, I have also used this opportunity to observe how ‘community’ identities are performed within the home. Much of the discussion on positionality and boundaries outlined in the previous section is also applicable to these ethnographic encounters.

One of my aims in this research was to understand the everyday lived space of the two communities in Calcutta in the context of connections between them and also the attachment that diasporic Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans have for these spaces. During my fieldwork in Calcutta I visited these localities, particularly Bow Barracks, the Tiretta Bazaar Chinatown, Elliot Road/Ripon Street area, Picnic Gardens and Tangra regularly. I also visited the morning market near Tiretta Bazaar to have Chinese breakfast, Nizam’s kati roll shop in New Market and Chinese restaurants in Tangra. None of these places were new to me, except Bow Barracks where I had never been, yet re-visiting these places as a researcher made me see them in a different light. Having made newer acquaintances within the two communities these places in the city also acquired a newer meaning for me. A closer observation of the localities also proved to be a counter foil to analyse the narratives of both communities about these areas. A significant part of the narratives focused on the memory and nostalgia for these localities. Observing these localities in the present helped me gauge and understand the difference and change that many also spoke about.

Whilst ethnography in and on the everyday spaces of the city helped me understand the localities that Anglo-Indians and Chinese interviewees spoke about, ethnography at community events focused more on community practices. These events were ‘celebratory’ and ‘performative’ spaces in the city that brought ‘community’ identity to the fore. These events were also sites to explore diasporic links within and across communities. In Calcutta, I attended various community events in the run-up to Christmas. There is significant nostalgia for a Calcutta Christmas amongst diasporic Anglo-Indians and it continues to be an important festival for the community. Various community associations organise programmes for the elderly, children and the ‘less fortunate’. I attended lunch and dance programmes organised by CAISS at Birkmyre Hostel and Loreto Entally School and by the All India Anglo-Indian

Association (Calcutta branch) at Frank Anthony Public School. Many Anglo-Indians, who have family in the city, come back to Calcutta around this time. I went to a musical programme titled 'Down Memory Lane' at St. Joseph's Boys' School which was attended by both diasporic and resident Anglo-Indians. The festivities which take place surrounding the 'community' in Calcutta is largely absent in London and Toronto, where Christmas is celebrated more within the family and explains the nostalgia that Anglo-Indians have for this time. It is a similar case for Chinese Calcuttans living in Toronto who miss the close celebration in Calcutta. Since many members of the Chinese community continue to have family links in Calcutta, a large section of the diasporic population comes back to the city at this time. I attended the Chinese New Year celebrations in both Tangra and central Calcutta. While the central Calcutta celebration is more low-key, Tangra has a huge celebration spread over three days. Someone told me that the return visits of diasporic Chinese from Toronto increases the population of Tangra by two or three times (field notes). I also visited Achhipur in the weeks following Chinese New Year to observe the festivities surrounding paying respect to Achhi, the 'first' Chinese person to have arrived in Calcutta. Whilst both Christmas and Chinese New Year marked a 'time to come back home' and mostly revolved around the respective communities, the events were also an occasion for me to note friendships between the two communities. In Bow Barracks, both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities participated in the Christmas programme. I also met a few Chinese Calcuttans at some of the Christmas events organised elsewhere.

In contrast to the festivals in Calcutta, community events in London and Toronto were more focused around the 'community'. In London I attended the Thursday luncheon meet that the South London Anglo-Indian Association organises for Anglo-Indian pensioners and the annual reunion of the Victoria and Dow Hill Association. Although these events do not focus solely on Anglo-Indian Calcuttans, they were useful to recruit interviewees and also to observe the different forms that nostalgia takes through playing bingo, for example, and also food. In Toronto, I attended the 7th World Anglo-Indian Reunion held in August 2007, which I discuss in more detail in chapter 6. Attending the Reunion was an opportunity for me to explore how such events act as forums for the diasporic community, not only to relive and re-enact nostalgia through food, music and meeting old friends, but also to explore how

events held along with the Reunion like ‘Reaching Out Meet’ shaped diasporic connection with ‘home’. To observe the Chinese Calcuttan community in Toronto, I went to the Yin Hua Association and the annual lunch of the Hupei Association.

‘Community’ archives, ‘diasporic’ archives

At the beginning of this research my methodological plan included archival research, both in public archives as well as ‘community’ archives located at the various associations. My aim in conducting archival research was to locate both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities within a wider history of Calcutta. I conducted research at the Oriental and India Office Collections of the British Library and also at the National Library in Calcutta. The vast differences in the amount and nature of material that I found in these public archives on the Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities made me realise that any effort to locate the two communities’ history in Calcutta through public archives would be an unbalanced one. Whilst there was a significant amount of material on the Anglo-Indian community, focusing mainly on imperial anxieties around the presence and material condition of the community in the city, the Chinese community was largely absent from these public archives. As researchers on both these communities have pointed out, ambiguities surrounding defining the communities (in the case of Anglo-Indians) as well as other political reasons limiting access to material on the communities (in the case of the Chinese community) have meant that their histories in the city have remained largely ‘hidden’ (Berjeaut, 1999; Blunt, 2005). Antoinette Burton, for example, writes (2005:8), ‘...what the archives hold and what they do not has implications not just for the writing of history but for the political fortunes of both minority and dominant communities the world over...’. Although Burton made this remark in the particular context of Hindutva politics and the rewriting of history textbooks in India, a similar debate can be extended to the history of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities or any other minority community in Calcutta/India. Both colonial and post-colonial histories of Calcutta have focused extensively on the coloniser/colonised divide, where the colonised has often been represented by the dominant Bengali community. While one cannot deny that Calcutta is a Bengali-dominated city, both politically and culturally, a construction of the history of minority communities in the city through the imperial archive does little to tilt this balance. Burton (2005) points to the increasing importance of some destabilising archives. She writes about the Lower

East Side Squatters and Homesteaders Archive Project in New York which will document 'the culture of squatters as well as their battles with developers and city officials' (p.2) and also points to the importance of cyberspace as the storage of such histories (ibid.). Elsewhere, Burton (2003) explores the house and women's memories in those houses as archive. She asks, 'what does it mean to say that home can and should be seen no simply as a dwelling-place for women's memory but as one of the foundations of history...' (Burton, 2003:4). Burton's work points to the complex political factors that shape the relationship between public and private archives. I extend this debate to analyse how an idea of 'diasporic' archives lends itself to comparative and transnational research.

I had initially planned to draw on the records held by various community associations, like the All India Anglo-Indian Association office in Calcutta and the Indian Chinese Association of Culture and Welfare in particular, to explore the more local histories of the communities in the city. But the kind of material I was looking for, on everyday lived space of the city and a sense of personal attachment, seemed absent from such archives. Community associations in London and Toronto too did not hold very specific material on the city. Instead I decided to use personal memorabilia as material objects of memory to explore diasporic links between both communities and the city. Like Tolia-Kelly (2004) who studied material objects within South Asian homes in London, I also used these memorabilia to trace the different trajectories of migration from Calcutta apart from a wider memory of the city. For the second interview that I conducted with 20 members of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in London and Toronto, I asked them to bring along any 'thing' in their homes that reminded them of Calcutta. Although most brought 'tangible' objects like memorabilia collected from Calcutta, associated with personal memories of the city, as well as photographs and food, some also spoke about memories and poems as 'intangible' links to the city. The fact that these memorabilia were kept at home, and not always displayed openly, points to the importance of the home as a site for exploring connections across cities. I discuss these memorabilia in greater detail in chapter 6.

I also focused on new media and cyberspace, as a site through which attachments to the city are played out. Recent research in this area has explored the use of

cyberspace in a range of contexts. Nagel and Staeheli (2010), for example, have studied how ICT is used in British Arab and Arab American activism. Pollard (2007) has explored Chinese diaspora websites. Although I did not study how the communities use cyberspace to connect across cities, I used the websites to explore personal writings on the city. The first in this category, are the websites hosted by the various community organisations. These websites act as forums for discussions, announcements for various community events, ‘publish’ articles and photographs and are also part of the public domain in which the community is represented to others. In the context of diasporic communities, cyberspace is an important site through which links are maintained. In particular, I looked at www.anglo-indians.com which has been compiled by Bert Payne and Lynette Rebeiro. Although both compilers lived in Calcutta and are now in the USA and Canada respectively, the website was useful in getting a sense of diasporic Anglo-Indian life, especially through the publication of the ‘India and Beyond’ newsletter. I also looked at www.dhapa.com which is a website put together by a group of young Calcutta Chinese.

Reading the city, mapping memories

Just as understanding the overlaps between Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities both within Calcutta and across diaspora was an important aim of my research, I also wanted to get a sense of what ‘Anglo-Indian’ and ‘Chinese’ Calcutta might mean and how identity, emotions and place in the city were connected in the city and in diaspora. Analysis of cultural and creative representations of Anglo-Indians and Chinese in films, plays and photographs addressed this concern by providing a visual basis of the imagination of the city and community. In using a visual methodology, I aimed not only to map these imaginations and trace the portrayal of specific places in the city but also question the production of these images (Rose, 2001). Both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities have been represented in fiction, films and theatres, including *Last Dance at Dum Dum* (1999, a play by Ayub Khan on Anglo-Indians in Calcutta), *Neel Akasher Nichey* (1958, film by Mrinal Sen, portraying the life of a Chinese peddler), *36 Chowringhee Lane* (1981, film by Aparna Sen, located in the heart of Anglo-Indian neighbourhood) and several others. Whilst some uphold the stereotypes and essentialised representations of these communities, others probe into these representations. In *Neel Akasher Neechey* (Under the Blue Sky), Sen traces the

friendship between Wang Lu, a Chinese peddler of silk and Basanti, a political activist, set in 1930s Calcutta. Wang Lu consciously stays away from the opium trade run by his fellow countrymen and is portrayed as an apolitical person. Yet, when Basanti gets arrested, he becomes involved in her political group and later goes back to China to join the resistance movement against Japanese invasion. The film was banned by the government in 1958 for two years for its political content- a significant fact in the context of growing hostility between India and China at that time. This is an interesting film which draws on the political context of Indo-Chinese relations and although, being in Bengali and thus probably not been seen by many Chinese, it helps to locate the community in a Bengali imagination. *Neel Akasher Neechey* is also a good contrast to the representation of the Chinese community in the post-1962 period (Banerjee, 2007). Other more site-specific films include Anjan Dutta's *Bow Barracks Forever* (2005) and draw more specifically on the links between community and neighbourhood. This film frames the context of a discussion around cosmopolitanism, city and the community in Chapter 4. Rafeeq Ellias' documentary *A Legend of Fat Mama- Stories from Calcutta's melting wok* (2005) follows the Chinese community to Toronto and acts as a medium through which the community voices its concern about the hostilities they faced during the Indo-China war in 1962. None of these films are, however, directed by Anglo-Indians or Chinese. In representing the city it seems that both communities have preferred written texts. Whilst Anglo-Indian literature is comparatively large, there is only one book so far written by a Calcutta Chinese- *Palm Leaf Fan and Other Stories-* by Kwai-Yun Li (2006). To get an idea on Anglo-Indian Calcutta I read various entries in *The Way We Are* (2008) and Anglo-Indian websites and *Haunting India* (2003) by Margaret Deefholts. The fact that most of these articles/books are written by diasporic Anglo-Indian and Chinese, points to the politics of reading the city through texts for these two communities.

Indeed one of my main concerns in this research was also to get an idea of the city as viewed by diasporic Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans. I also realised that often discussions in interviews veered towards talking more about community identity. Since the primary link of diasporic Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities to Calcutta is through memories, I decided to conduct second interviews with some respondents based around memory maps of Calcutta. Memory maps and/or mental

maps have been used by geographers to uncover often hidden spatial patterns within marginal groups. Gill Valentine (2000), for example, has used such maps to uncover children's geographies. In the context of migration, diaspora and the city, maps have been seen as a performative device to enquire into relationships between people and place (Myers, 2006). In this research I have used these maps to understand the spaces of memory for Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans as well as to get a visual representation of the cartographies of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcutta. I asked interviewees to draw two maps- one on the neighbourhood and the other on the city. I also asked them to take me through the places that they had put down on paper, so that I had some narratives to match these representations. The maps of the neighbourhoods were important to get a sense of the overlapping lives of the communities in Calcutta since many of them spoke at great lengths on the proximity of lived experience in the city. I noted in particular the places, the routes and the people that interviewees mentioned in these maps. The city map, on the other hand, was a wider map on spaces of nostalgia in the city. Incorporating these maps in interviews was an interesting exercise. Whilst it helped me in understanding the spaces of attachment in the city, for some interviewees it was also a process of 'recovering' the city. One interviewee, for example, asked me for a copy of the map that he had drawn saying that to have all the places which mattered to him on one piece of paper was a significant treasure for him. This also reminded me of another incident I had encountered in my fieldwork at the South London Anglo-Indian Association, where one person attending the luncheon club, took out a map of Calcutta from his pocket to show me and say that he was from Calcutta. Mapping the neighbourhood and city was a useful methodological device to connect memory with territory, two important terrains of diasporic identity. Just as the act of drawing the maps enabled a spatial and visual representation of the memories it also recreated the memories for Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans. The process of drawing the maps encouraged a discussion on the city, and highlighted the important spaces of 'Anglo-Indian' and 'Chinese' Calcutta, and at the same time made tangible the spaces of memory that were narrated in the interviews.

Emotions, ethics, responsibility

The multiple locations covered in this research both materially and imaginatively have been a challenge to think through issues of emotions, ethics and responsibility.

Each of these three ideas is intricately linked to the reasons behind choosing the research topic, the research process itself and the implications for disseminating the research results. The idea of ethics and a sense of responsibility have been at the core of debates in social sciences for a while. Lincoln and Denzin (2003:5) write that,

“As researchers look to their representational practices, to questions of authority and legitimacy, and to questions of agency, locus of control, and human justice, ethical considerations have come to the forefront as inquirers see these relationships as either empowering or disempowering respondents, as fostering participation and human dignity, or as having the power to negate control and agency”.

While many of the concerns raised by Lincoln and Denzin (2003) have been addressed by feminist researchers, the idea of responsibility has also been raised by those locating their research in a postcolonial frame of knowledge production (Jazeel and McFarlane, 2010). The principal ethical considerations in this research had to do with issues of representation, anonymity and confidentiality, but also with my positionality as ‘being from Calcutta’.

In choosing to study two communities across three cities I had to carefully consider not just the power imbalances and ethical issues of confidentiality and anonymity in the research process, but also what such a large scale of research might mean for the communities in each of their location. Writing about the ‘limits of responsibility in the politics of knowledge production’, Jazeel and McFarlane (2010) consider the dilemma between the necessity of abstraction and the material context of the field. As they write that,

“In choosing...to employ explicitly comparative research methodologies, or to attempt to learn from a multitude of different and variable ‘field’ contexts, degrees of abstraction are always necessary precisely to be able to pin down points of identification, difference, good practice or anomaly between and across those diverse case studies” (Jazeel and McFarlane, 2010:112).

The close engagement with both communities across the three cities, but in particular in Calcutta, has made me think through the abstraction that I suggest in connecting lives within and across cities. While it was the issue of friendship and narratives drawing on a sense of commonality between the two communities that sparked my interest in the subject, I have tried to locate these overlaps within particular concerns of difference along class, gender and also ethnicity within the city. I also needed to think through comparisons across cities, especially while representing communities from the different cities.

Conclusions

The methodological challenge of a multi-sited and comparative study has been an important one for this research. In conceptualising a research design that straddles communities and cities, I have drawn on a range of methods to explore subjective experiences across diaspora and in the city. The large scale of the research however has raised issues of boundaries and specificities of researching each community in the three cities that I have discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Four

LIVING TOGETHER IN THE CITY: ACTUAL AND IMAGINED COSMOPOLITANISMS

In August 2005, the Indian Chinese Association for Culture, Welfare and Development (henceforth ICA), along with the Municipal Corporation of Calcutta put up a road sign at Tangra- 'Tangra China Town'- written in Chinese, English, Bengali and Hindi. Described as 'Little China stays alive in Eastern India' (Inter Press Service, 2005), the putting up of this sign marked the beginning of promoting Tangra as 'Chinatown'. Another newspaper article, written on the same occasion, differentiated between Toretta Bazaar Chinatown and Tangra to point out that 'the section of the community that lived at old Chinatown...has long become an integral part of the city...in Tangra though, the community had remained trapped in the ghetto with little or no interaction with the outside world' (Hindustan Times, 14 August, 2005). Earlier that year, Paul Chung, president of ICA, spoke about plans to put up the road sign as well as a ceremonial gate, typical of many other Chinatowns, outside Tangra, which 'would be a tribute to the cosmopolitan character of the city ('Chinese road sign to integration' The Telegraph, Calcutta, 10 February, 2005).

Two years later, in 2007, a film directed by Anjan Dutta, *Bow Barracks Forever*, was released in Calcutta, and there were widespread protests amongst the Anglo-Indian community in the city as well as in other parts of the world and demands that the film be banned. The story of *Bow Barracks Forever* revolves around the lives of people who live in Bow Barracks, a tiny neighbourhood, comprising of 7 blocks of buildings, off Central Avenue in Calcutta, which is under the threat of destruction. The publicity for the film describes it as 'a real life story of a tiny but resolute Anglo-Indian community right in the heart of bustling Kolkata trying desperately to keep alive its hopes, dreams and aspirations and its identity, as the world around them changes swiftly and tries to impose that change on them and their lives...it is a tale of heart-breaking loneliness and immense courage' (Bow Barracks Forever DVD, Pritish Nandy Communications, 2007). The film was made with the residents of Bow Barracks, some of them acting in the film, and parts of it shot on location. The film was made with the intention of getting attention to the plight of Bow Barracks

residents who face destruction of their home but the film was widely criticised, mainly on two accounts. First, with the way it had portrayed Anglo-Indian women in the neighbourhood and second with the way it had portrayed the Anglo-Indian community as longing to move out of Calcutta. A letter of protest from Malcolm Booth, the Honorary General Secretary of the All India Anglo-Indian Association, mentions that characters in the film are mainly portrayed as ‘a wife-beater, a smuggler, a few drunkards, ladies having extra-marital affairs, unemployed wasters, a character named Peter the Cheater, and characters who have a strong dislike for India and therefore want to leave the country...all of them use what is probably the most crude and vulgar language...’ (The Review, October- November 2007:4). Protest meetings were held at Bow Barracks and a demand was made to accept that the film is based on fiction and not the ‘real story’ as the film had claimed. The film was not very successful commercially, and so the demand that it be banned resolved itself.

Both Tangra and Bow Barracks are spatial representations of the cultural politics of cosmopolitanism that have become important in many Western and non-Western cities. Analysed within wider ideas of ‘global cultural city’ (Yeoh, 2005), such spatialisations of identity politics have often revolved around the neighbourhood. Viewed as ‘globalised localities’ (Albrow, 1997) or as an ‘imagined space’ (Chua, 1994), the idea of the neighbourhood encapsulates complex politics between the city, community and notions of cosmopolitanism. Such discourses of globalisation and transnationalism have renewed interest in ideas of cosmopolitanism (Binnie et al., 2006; Breckenridge et al., 2002; Keith, 2005). Whilst these discourses reveal wider politics of neo-liberalism affecting cities in present times, in this chapter, I focus more on the micro-politics of living together in the city. The cultural representations of neighbourhoods like Bow Barracks and Tangra reveal the need for Calcutta to project a ‘globalised cosmopolitan sub-culture’ (Chatterjee, 2004), but also mask the community politics behind it. In this chapter I engage critically with overlaps between city, community and cosmopolitanism in two ways. First, I set the narrative of neighbourhood within an idea of cosmopolitan Calcutta and explore how Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities negotiate ideas of cosmopolitanism in their everyday lived space. Second, I engage with the notion of encounter in the city, through connections between ideas of ‘living together’ and cosmopolitanism. I frame

my argument particularly within two areas of concern. One is the notion of the neighbourhood as an 'ordinary space' (Watson, 2006) in the city and the other is the notion of everyday/vernacular/ alternative cosmopolitanisms (Nandy, 2000b; Pollock et al. 2002).

Cosmopolitan encounters in ordinary spaces of the city

Both the acts of putting up a road sign in Tangra and the focus of *Bow Barracks Forever* on the imminent destruction of Bow Barracks point to an intervention of politics in the public spaces of the neighbourhood. At the same time, both these neighbourhoods have a specific location in the respective communities' imagination, which point to politics internal to each community. I use these parallel connections in this chapter to explore the idea of neighbourhood as a semi-public, semi-private space. I situate this notion of semi-public, semi-private space within recent literature on cities which emphasise the importance of ordinary spaces in the city (Watson, 2006) and also the necessity of viewing cities as ordinary (Robinson, 2006). Sophie Watson (2006) points out that neighbourhoods are symbolic and marginal spaces in the city and makes an argument for the necessity of including such spaces, alongside more monumental and formal spaces of the city, in envisaging public spaces in the city. In particular, I draw on the notion of neighbourhood as a space for 'encountering different others, or even for encountering other selves within (our selves)...' (Watson, 2006:173), to analyse connections between Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in Calcutta and also other communities they share lived space with.

The idea of encounter is integrally related to ideas of 'self' and 'other'. Sara Ahmed points to the 'complexity of relationship between histories of colonialism and contemporary modes of encounter' (Ahmed, 2000:14), and how such encounters produce an embodied stranger. Whilst the politics of postcoloniality have implied that these embodied others have often been studied in the context of the Western city, the notion of 'self' and the 'other' have also been important in non-western cities. A different historical trajectory, though, has modified its relationship with cosmopolitanism. Writing about Cochin's history, Ashis Nandy (2000b) makes an interesting point. He writes about the alternative narratives of Cochin, which emerge from personal narratives of the city. The official and more public narrative of the city

places cosmopolitanism on a pedestal, often extolling the cosmopolitan values of the city, however personal stories of various community members, which Nandy defines as the city's 'secret self', tell a different story- a story which talks of struggle, of animosity towards other communities, and sometimes of mutual support. The relationship between cosmopolitanism and community is a complex one in such contexts.

The city is a central site where such ideas of alternative cosmopolitanism have been analysed. Situated within a wider concern of locating a 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' (Breckenridge et al., 2002), ideas of alternative cosmopolitanism challenge notions of cosmopolitanism put forward in universal Enlightenment ideas. The literature on subaltern cosmopolitanism (Gidwani, 2006) locates these different notions of cosmopolitanism amongst marginalised groups and places. Although these ideas are not always analysed in the context of cities, there has been an attempt to explore notions of cosmopolitanisms existing in 'other global cities' (Mayaram, 2009). The concept of 'other global cities' is an alternative exploration of the forms of cosmopolitanisms existing in those cities which are beyond the definition of Saskia Sassen's (1991) notion of global city. The kinds of cosmopolitanisms studied here 'recover the complex pasts of the Other Global City... [its] intimate histories of cosmopolitan being, its aspirations, contestations, and limitations' (Mayaram, 2009:8). Such explorations provide an alternative framework for analysing living together in the city, which I use in this chapter.

Alongside these concerns of locating alternative and vernacular cosmopolitanisms, there has also been an emphasis on grounding notions of cosmopolitanism in everyday practices (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002) and in everyday spaces of the city (Binnie et al., 2006). Notions of 'actually existing cosmopolitanism' (Cheah and Robbins, 1998) locate the politics of cosmopolitanism in cities in everyday spaces (Ho, 2006). Cosmopolitanism is also seen as a 'set of performances' (Jeffrey and McFarlane, 2008).

In this chapter I draw on these debates on cosmopolitanism to explore encounters between Anglo-Indians, Chinese and others with whom they share space. I also extend my analysis to particular political and material conditions of the city through

the study of a specific Anglo-Chinese neighbourhood, Bow Barracks, and ideas about Chinatown. Analysing the notion of cosmopolitanism in relation to communities in Indian cities often sets up a narrative of ‘de-cosmopolitanisation’ which necessitates an exploration of multiple forms of cosmopolitan imaginations and practices (McFarlane, 2008). This chapter is an attempt to bring together different contexts of cosmopolitanisms in Calcutta existing amongst Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. The first section, ‘overlapping lives’, explores notions of everyday cosmopolitanism existing in and as neighbourhood spaces. The second section, ‘Calcutta to Kolkata’ places the idea of alternative cosmopolitanism amidst the spatial politics of both communities and also within a wider politics of imagining a cosmopolitan Calcutta. Such cosmopolitanisms are actual in the sense they are located in the politics of the city and community. At the same time there is an imaginative dimension to the idea of cosmopolitanism in the way it is embedded in memory and also imagined in the present.

Overlapping lives

The idea of the neighbourhood or ‘*para*’ has been an important part of a consciousness of living in a city like Calcutta and in India generally (cf. Chattopadhyay, 2005, p.88-89). Many Anglo-Indians and Chinese draw on the notion of the ‘*para*’ to describe the neighbourhood they live/d in. While the term *para* is rooted in a Bengali consciousness of life in an urban locality, it also draws on a meaning of ‘community’ and ‘sociability’, much like other non-Bengali words like *mohalla*, *chawl*, *wadi*, *pol*, which are commonly used in other cities in India. The sense of ‘community’ invoked in *para* often cuts across ethnic and/or class lines. In this section I draw on this notion of *para* as a space for everyday interactions to analyse the changing nature of Anglo-Indian and Chinese neighbourhoods in Calcutta. I draw on a notion of mundane/everyday cosmopolitanism to explore how both communities relate with this space. I develop an argument on overlapping lives by examining practices of everyday cosmopolitanism. I also analyse how narratives of cosmopolitanism in the context of neighbourhood have varied over time in the city as well as how these narratives are imagined in diaspora. The use of the word *para* goes beyond a straight forward translation of meaning and instead juxtaposes Anglo-Indian and Chinese narratives of everyday lived space with their idea of dwelling in a

‘Bengali’ city. The narrative weaves its way between the past and the present and is interspersed with accounts of both communities.

Sense of *para*

A sense of *para* can be described at two levels. One is at the level of cognition of an area of the city, while the other refers to a sense of territorial belonging and everyday interaction on a smaller scale. So, for example, the area of Tiretta Bazaar is also known as *cheenapara* as many Chinese used to live there. Tangra is now referred to as the Chinatown of Calcutta, as most Chinese live in that area. Anglo-Indian *paras*, on the other hand, were quite scattered and some areas of central Calcutta where Anglo-Indians lived were often collectively known as *sahib para*⁸, even though considerable differences existed within these areas. In colonial times, the cognition of these different parts of the city, divided along caste, occupation and/or community lines, formed an important part of indigenous knowledge of the city (Archer, 2000; Dasgupta, 2003). Communities like the Anglo-Indian and Chinese were also associated with particular areas and indeed, until around the 1980s, both communities lived in very specific areas of the city, mainly in central Calcutta. This overall cognition also became part of Anglo-Indian and Chinese knowledge of the city, and both communities continue to view their presence in Calcutta through these areas. The cognition of the *para* on this broader scale often produced a community narrative which was insular. Even the differences between *paras* which were mentioned were along community lines. So when I asked Derek about Anglo-Indian *paras*, he said:

“Before there were some areas which were exclusively Anglo-Indian...most people who lived there were Anglo-Indians. There were buildings and mansions which were exclusively Anglo-Indian...like South Wind Mansions on Ripon Street. So there were not just areas but also buildings and mansions, and it was centred around central Calcutta. Then there were lots of Anglo-Indians in Khiderpore and Ekbalpore. Over the last decade and a half, Anglo-Indians have moved out...to

⁸ ‘*Sahib*’ was used formerly to denote a European man in colonial India. So *Sahib-para* translates as neighbourhood where *sahibs* lived. In the present it is used as a form of respectful address.

Picnic Gardens and Behala, so you can't exclusively call an area Anglo-Indian".

However a sense of an Anglo-Indian *para* still exists in some parts of central Calcutta. As Hilda pointed out, '...there are little lanes of Ripon Street, Wellesley 2nd Lane, those are Anglo-Indian *paras*. Even if there are no Anglo-Indians there, they would still be termed Anglo-Indian *para* because that is where maximum number of Anglo-Indians reside...they are out in the streets in the evening...talking'. Anglo-Indians also spoke of differences between *paras* which formed part of the community's inside knowledge. They spoke of socio-economic differences between different neighbourhoods and also cultural differences. As Derek put it, 'there would be this north Calcutta, south Calcutta thing...there would be differences in the way people talked or conducted themselves, say between Park Circus and Bow Street and central Calcutta'.

For the Chinese, cognition of Chinese *paras* was divided between *Cheenapara* and *Tangra*, and the differences between these areas were described through particular ways of living in each of these neighbourhoods. Whilst *Cheenapara* and its surrounding areas of *Lalbazar* and *Bentinck Street* were described as more mixed, *Tangra* presented an image of a more homogenous neighbourhood. Talking about the differences between these two neighbourhoods, Brenda Chen who grew up in *Tangra*, points out:

"I think the mentality was different. They [the *Cheenapara* Chinese] tended to socialize more with other ethnic communities. For example, the Chinatown Chinese laughed at your Hindi. Their Hindi was less broken. We never bothered to learn it. Our Hindi was different. There was a lot of mocking from them. There are also differences in terms of upbringing. In *Tangra* 98% of the individuals were earning from tanneries. It was different from people in Chinatown. Even in Toronto if we find Hakka Chinese, the funny thing is we shake hands and ask where are you from? If you are coming from Calcutta there is a link but if you are from *Tangra* we immediately zoom in and say, ok, which tannery and then once that is

established then, ‘which family’? The connection is stronger...[the Cheenapara Chinese] lived a more cosmopolitan life”.

The difference in the cognition of these neighbourhoods was also pointed out by Mei Ling, who said that the Tangra Chinese used a Hakka term, ‘*feo hong*’, meaning ‘outside the centre’ to describe the Cheenapara Chinese.

Such personal and ‘community’ knowledge about neighbourhoods was often expressed in sensory terms. Talking about the ‘Anglo-Indianness’ of his neighbourhood in Elliot Road, Peter said:

“It was the sights, the sounds and the emotional heartbeats that you would experience in moving around the neighbourhood. For example, the sights...at every turning, every corner you would see an Anglo-Indian...and the sound...well there was always the music. If you walked down the streets...then you would hear music- jazz, rock or sometimes waltz...there was a variety of sounds...”

Peter was talking about the past, an aspect of neighbourhood narratives to which I shall return, but what such narratives did was to present an image of a space in the city which could be defined as Anglo-Indian or Chinese. Such cognition is no doubt important as it creates an idea of dwelling in specific parts of the city. But narratives of typical neighbourhoods also mentioned ‘others’. A *para*, as I mentioned earlier, often cuts across lines of class and/or ethnicity, and this was true of Anglo-Indian and Chinese neighbourhoods as well. It is these cosmopolitan encounters in the neighbourhood that I now explore.

Everyday/mundane cosmopolitanisms

Writing about overlapping lives of Muslims and Copts in Cairo, Asef Bayat (2009) uses the term ‘everyday cosmopolitanism’ to express how the self transcends itself to associate with agnostic others in everyday life. Such cosmopolitanism is, as he points out, ‘not merely limited to elite lifestyle, but is extended especially to include subaltern experience of inter-communal coexistence’ (Bayat, 2009:180). In a different context, Yasmeen Arif (2009) explores mundane cosmopolitanism as

‘humbler, ordinary activities of plural experience’. Building on my discussion of Anglo-Indian and Chinese *paras* in the previous section, I now turn to explore the interactions within *paras*. In Bengali, the word *para* has a specific connotation of defining a locality and denoting specific forms of sociality, involving mainly a male public sphere. Whilst many Anglo-Indians and Chinese may see themselves living in a *para*, an engagement with that idea would differ greatly from person to person and from locality to locality. The interactions that I mention here thus may or may not be construed as *para* relations, but what I draw on is the kind of mundane cosmopolitanism that Arif (2009) mentioned exists when people live in close proximity.

Beyond the community

Areas of central Calcutta where Anglo-Indians and Chinese live/d are very mixed in terms of both class and ethnicity. The kind of cosmopolitanism experienced in these areas differs greatly from homogenous areas like Tangra, where everyday life for the Chinese revolves around the community. Tangra is spread over quite a large area, more than what would constitute a neighbourhood or *para* in other parts of Calcutta. Although other communities live in Tangra as well, there is a part which was almost exclusively Chinese until recently. The address 47 South Tangra Road is common to several tanneries and homes, indicating a concentration of the Chinese in this locality. The unified image of a Chinese locality makes it almost impossible for narratives of other communities to come through in Tangra. When I asked Brenda about other communities living and working in the locality, she acknowledged other communities, like Nepalis and Biharis, living in Tangra. But as she points out:

“...they could have been temporary boarders, but not people living there...the Nepalese were workers but they do not consider it home...their home was still Nepal...they would go back every three months... [Tangra] was just their place of work. The Biharis also went back home.”

Brenda, of course, talks mainly about the Chinese part of Tangra and about life within the tanneries specifically. *Bustees* or shantytowns housing workers are present all around Tangra, and although she does mention them, there is a distinct sense of a

‘Chinese’ Tangra in her narrative. Others living in Tangra mention their non-Chinese neighbours but only occasionally in the passing. As Fu Huang told me, ‘there are Punjabis and Muslims owning tanneries’ or ‘there is a tea-stall owned by a Bengali’. Non-Chinese neighbours in narratives of Tangra thus appear in casual conversations but not always in everyday practices of sharing life in the neighbourhood. An exception is the presence of the Chinese Kali⁹ temple at the gate of Tangra, where the Chinese New Year parade begins with a prayer for Kali. The history of the Chinese Kali temple¹⁰ is the kind of everyday cosmopolitanism that exists in Calcutta, but often gets subsumed under a ‘community’ narrative.

The ‘community’ narrative presented by the Cheenapara Chinese was different in the sense that, although the Chinese themselves were presented as a closed community, wider narratives of lived space included mention of others. In Cheenapara the lived space of neighbourhood is very different from Tangra. Socio-economic differences mark the two neighbourhoods. Many Chinese who have lived there or still live there mention the humble surroundings. The open-ness of their lived space stands out in stark contrast to the enclosed lives of tanneries in Tangra. Patricia Hsu who grew up in Cheenapara and now lives in Toronto says:

“In Calcutta the house that our parents could afford was just one room where you eat, sleep, entertain...there was no separation...also in Calcutta we don’t close our doors. If a family has large number of kids, the neighbours will help look after them ...be they Chinese or Indians.”

Apart from obvious socio-economic differences between Tangra and Cheenapara, the close sharing of residential space with other Indian communities framed a narrative of locality which extended beyond the immediate community. David Chung, who lives in Cheenapara, talks about the *Dosads*, a Harijan community who are in the pig slaughtering business:

⁹ Kali is a Hindu goddess who enjoys significant patronage amongst the Calcutta Chinese.

¹⁰ Zhang Xing (2008) mentions that the Calcutta Chinese women venerated Kali as a fertility goddess, and that the temple in Tangra was built by Li Quansheng a Burmese man, who as a child was ‘sold’ to a Hakka Chinese family. The temple was built along with a Bihari, and after Li Quansheng’s death, his son arranged for a Brahmin priest to conduct rituals at the temple (ibid.)

“The *Dosads* are very dependent on the Chinese...the Chinese love pork...in fact some of the *Dosads*, the older ones, said they were chased away from Bihar and the Chinese sheltered them in Chinatown...they were not wanted anywhere...they couldn't live in a Muslim locality...they couldn't live in a high-class Bengali locality...now they have moved to Tangra, where they have a pig slaughter house and they bring it here and sell it.”

The *Dosads* continue to live in this locality. During Chinese New Year some of them also take part in the lion dance. Narratives such as these not only point to different notions of cosmopolitanisms existing in different areas and explain why it exists in one area and not the other, but also make a statement about the necessity of looking for cosmopolitanism in everyday spaces of the city.

The lives of Anglo-Indians and Chinese in the city revolve around particular sites. For Anglo-Indians, for example, the church forms an important focal point of the locality. As Derek points out, ‘one will very rarely find an Anglo-Indian *para* far away from the church...it will always be close to a church- walking or rickshaw distance to the church’. He also added that the parish plays an important role in Anglo-Indian localities and gave the example of Picnic Garden where a new parish is being set up following the migration of the community there. Similarly, for the Chinese such community sites are important. Life in Tangra for the Chinese is focused around ‘community’ places like Pei May School, a Chinese school¹¹ which was built by the community, and also the market (Figure 4.1). The morning market in Tiretta Bazar (Figure 4.2) also plays a focal role for the Chinese community, as do the various temples dotted around the area.

At the same time, certain markers of ‘Anglo-Indianness’ of a locality also included those spaces which extended beyond the community. Talking about the importance of the central Calcutta neighbourhoods for Anglo-Indians, Patricia says:

¹¹ Pei May School shut down in early 2010, after a dispute within the community regarding its management.

“For the Anglo-Indian community, the tailors are here. We have the dry-cleaners...we know these people for ages...we have the market. And see, this part is mainly Muslim and the infrastructure is Muslim...Anglo-Indians love their food...they love dalpuris, halwa-puris, bakarkhanis¹² and you get that only in Muslim localities. Then the other thing is we eat beef which you get only in Muslim areas. So these are the things...people come back for those things...they come all the way from Picnic Gardens just to buy bakarkanis”.



Figure 4.1 Chinese market in Tangra

Hilda also points out that ‘the rickshaw-*wallah*, the tailor, the laundry...the Chinese food...that’s what basically Anglo-Indians are about...that would be an Anglo-Indian *para*’.

¹² These are some of the popular snack and/or breakfast food for Anglo-Indians. While bakarkhanis and halwa-puri are mainly Muslim food, dalpuri is typically North Indian. However, the history of ‘Indian’ food itself is very cosmopolitan and it is often difficult to identify certain food with specific communities.

Food is an important cultural trait which connected communities both within the neighbourhood and more generally. While food plays a vital role in creating a ‘community’ identity, it also marks and maps that identity onto certain spaces in the city. Indeed, certain kinds of food have attained iconic status for both Anglo-Indians and Chinese. Kati rolls¹³ from Nizam’s, a shop in New Market, for example, evoke immense nostalgic connection for both communities as does biryani from Shiraz or Rahmania¹⁴. Nayanika Mookherjee (2008) identifies food as the central trope of place-making of Bangladesh amongst ‘Indian Bengalis’. Whilst she analyses how culinary



Figure 4.2 Morning market in *Cheenapara*

boundaries and connections are mobilised to contest political identities between nation-states, I locate this politics on a smaller scale, within the neighbourhood. For Anglo-Indians, sharing neighbourhood space with Muslims and Chinese meant

¹³ Kati rolls are kebabs wrapped in a kind of fried flat bread. Although kati rolls reached their iconic status through a specific shop in New Market- Nizam’s- they are now sold all over Calcutta, and are popular street food. Both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities share a passion for kati rolls, to the extent that it figures in most community gatherings outside India. In Toronto, I came to know, through an Anglo-Indian, of a Calcutta Chinese family that makes kati rolls.

¹⁴ Both famous restaurants in Calcutta specialising in Moghlai food.

developing certain culinary tastes. As Nigel points out, Anglo-Indians ‘have lot of cuisines and customs entrenched in those localities...the type of food available in shops in those areas...like cakes and bakarkhanis and kati rolls...these kind of things we don’t see in any other parts of the city’. The cultural practice of food is both personal and political. Appadurai (1981), for example, coins the word, ‘gastro-politics’ to describe the contested nature of food and associated social relations in South Asia. For Anglo-Indians and Chinese such politics not only locate them in certain parts of the city but also define the way in which both communities relate to each other. As Daniel Li explained:

“In a country where one community does not eat beef and the other does not eat pork, so when we socialise, we get along very well with the Anglos. Anglo-Indians love our food and we love their tangy curry...we share our food and food is an easy thing to make friendship...to melt the ice”.

A large part of the significance of food is played out within the spaces of home. Food and eating practices are important parts of domestic culture of Anglo-Indians through which they marked out an identity different from other communities (Blunt, 2005). For the Chinese too, food is an important marker of identity. Talking about how and why the Chinese community (especially the Hakka community) kept to certain customs and how she felt different when visiting a friend, Brenda Chen says:

“We kept to ourselves a lot of our culture and our customs. We would still use chopsticks...we had seen workers in the tanneries eat their food with their hands, but seeing the friends in school eating like that was different. The food that we were given was also new. We had never been introduced to that kind of food. We did not know that those kinds of food even existed”.

Whilst this notion may have changed over time, food remains important to the Chinese, especially around festivals. The preparation of food during Chinese New Year was often described as a community affair. Mei Ling points out, ‘we have it weeks before, we prepare...making the chips...fish mashed up...dry meat on the

terrace...it was great, sort of a community thing'. For Anglo-Indians too, the baking of cake and making *kul kuls*¹⁵ at Christmas were important practices of performing a 'community' identity. Derek, for example, describes Calcutta Christmas as a 'very unique Christmas' because 'it is very cosmopolitan...it's not just Anglo-Indians or Christians who celebrate it'. Yet as he points out there are certain traditions which are part of the community, like 'rosa cookies to *kul kuls*...salt meat...people making their own mixture for cakes and giving it to the baker...'

Whilst festivals and food are important markers of 'community' identity, these practices often appeared in neighbourhood narratives as ways to share space. Deliah, who is Anglo-Chinese and who grew up in central Calcutta, describes what festivals meant to her growing up amidst different communities:

"I do remember the Muharram procession which was a big excitement for us children...these little swords would be sold...at Chinese New Year food would be exchanged...we would also send down Christmas cakes...on Bihari festivals some people who worked for my father would bring baskets of food and send *malpoas*...we had a washer who was Muslim and for Eid he would bring *simai*¹⁶...".

Whilst such narratives of sharing food may evoke a sense of everyday cosmopolitanism, it does little to mask the tensions and politics around food that exist between communities. Such narratives also frame a temporal idea of neighbourhood as a shared space. I discuss later how these remembered and imagined cosmopolitanisms intersect with changing narratives of sharing space in the city to point to the wider politics of living together in the city.

Of Anglo-Chinese and Changlo-Indians

Apart from being a trope to explore inter-communal relations in neighbourhoods, food also specifically connects Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. As Daniel Li's comment above shows, both communities were drawn together not only because

¹⁵ Kul kuls are a type of sweet prepared particularly at Christmas, not only in Calcutta but all over India.

¹⁶ *Malpoa* and *simai* are also kinds of sweets.

they liked each others' food but also because their food set them apart from other communities. Both communities also shared residential space in central Calcutta, especially around Bow Street, Grant Street and Chandni but also around Elliot Road, Ripon Street, and Wellesley Road. While the neighbourhood forms a significant space in which Anglo-Indians and Chinese interacted, connections between the two communities also developed through friendships in other social spheres like the school, which were also, at times, located around the neighbourhood. It was Daniel Li who referred to 'Changlo-Indians' when we spoke about the similarities between the two communities. I had initially used the term 'Anglo-Chinese' to denote those persons with mixed Anglo-Indian and Chinese parentage, but the term 'Changlo-Indians' is evocative of the connections between the two communities. It is these connections between these two communities, both within and outside the neighbourhood that I now explore.

A large part of the interaction between Anglo-Indians and Chinese took place through everyday spaces in the city. Apart from food, Chinese shoe shops and hair and beauty salons were very popular with Anglo-Indians as with other communities, and still are. For some, these encounters in everyday spaces were significant ways in which memories of interactions remained. For Roger, who now lives in Toronto, these everyday interactions formed an important part of his recollection of Calcutta days, even though he did not have any Chinese friends:

“My recollection of the Chinese in Calcutta was that of going to Bentinck Street and saying, ‘John, I will try size number 8 shoes’. Every person was called John over there...then there were the restaurants...there was terrific Chinese food in Calcutta...so when I am talking about Chinese, I am thinking of Chinese shoes...of Chinese food...”.

Many Anglo-Indians mentioned several restaurants when they spoke of the Chinese in Calcutta like the Asiatic Restaurant on Wellesley Road, Tai Fa on Temple Street and the 'Hole in the wall' on Waterloo Street. Fat Mama who used to sell noodles in Chinatown was also mentioned frequently and is the focus of Rafeeq Ellias' documentary on the Calcutta Chinese, *The Legend of Fat Mama* (2005). Not all of these interactions were described in terms of 'consumption'. For many, like 80 year

old Thomas who also lives in Toronto, the connection with Chinese food was made through friends. He mentioned his Anglo-Chinese friend who had taken him to Chinatown at one in the morning for food. For Penelope, who grew up in Habley Lane near Chinatown, the connections between the communities were rooted in her life in the neighbourhood. She reminisces:

“We had an old Chinese man who lived just across from our place. He used to cook food and bring it across...the old man could not talk English at all...his name was Asu...one day he gave me something to eat and said, ‘how?’ I said good, thinking it was chicken, but it was frog’s legs! But it was tasty...”.

Penelope also grew up with many Chinese neighbours around her- ‘those who made paper flowers’- and she remembers how as a child they used to play *kolo kolo chin chin*, a Chinese game where there would be a king and ‘the king would tell you to go and bring wood shavings or *kuccha* we used to call it’. Similarly for Belinda, who is Anglo-Chinese, but sees herself more as an Anglo-Indian, living alongside different communities was part of her life in Calcutta:

“You have to understand that no one thought you were different...the whole community was living together...and you were all people. People. And of course you were Chinese and of course you were Goan... but it didn’t make any difference. With respect to segregation and all, there was no such thing”.

Whilst many mentioned that living together in close proximity was and still is a part of life in some parts of Calcutta, many also said that interactions were largely in public spaces. Although friendships between Anglo-Indians and Chinese meant visiting each others’ homes, most often these interactions were in public spaces. The interactions forged in the space of the neighbourhood thus become important. One of the ways in which neighbourhood relations were carried forward was through attending the same schools. Anglo-Indian and other Catholic or missionary schools were very popular amongst the Chinese, and although many initially went to the local Chinese schools, Chien Kuo, Mei Kuong and Shin Hua, hardly any Chinese go

to the Chinese schools today and most go to English-medium schools. Whilst many Anglo-Indians and Chinese went to boarding school in Asansol and Darjeeling together, many also studied in the schools in and around central Calcutta. Friendships developed at school between Anglo-Indians and Chinese were often carried over from the neighbourhood, but not always. An identification of each other as minorities in the city often brought them together. As 28 year old William Liu points out:

“We both know we are minorities. Both are comfortable in speaking English...other communities speak mainly Hindi...let’s say you go out with other groups...they would all talk in Bengali and Hindi and make us feel like outsiders...but that’s not the case with Anglo-Indians”.

William Liu grew up in Tangra and, although he is unable to speak good Hindi, the Cheenapara Chinese are well conversant in Hindi and/or Bengali. But others, like Daniel Li, also drew on the notion of being a minority:

“I think the Anglo-Indians also like the Chinese, they feel they are minorities in Calcutta...we get attached to Anglo-Indians because they speak English and they are also more sociable...they have a happy way of life”.

Identification with each other in the neighbourhood or otherwise has also led to intermarriages between Anglo-Indians and Chinese, though not on a large scale. One cannot really identify an ‘Anglo-Chinese’ community as such, but there is recognition that there have been marriages between the two communities. Intermarriage between different groups has become more common in recent years, and indeed an Anglo-Indian or a Chinese is as likely to inter-marry with any other ‘Indian’ community. At the same time there is a need to historicise such marriages. Both communities have been largely endogamous, and marriage, like food, has been integrally related with maintaining a distinct identity. Blunt (2005) writes that debates about the status and existence of Anglo-Indian communities in India are often reflected through concerns about dress and intermarriage. For the Chinese it is more about continuing the family name. The need to maintain a ‘pure’ identity for the Hakka Chinese has meant that intermarriages are frowned upon. This also sets up

an interesting dynamic between the two Chinatowns in Calcutta. Tangra, being predominantly Hakka and much more prosperous than Cheenapara, displays a more conservative attitude towards marriage as well as other social customs. When Tangra was initially developing as a Chinese neighbourhood, marriages between people in the two neighbourhoods were common although usually strictly between Hakkas. As Ann Lo, who is Hakka and has grown up near Bentinck Street, points out, 'then, for practical purposes, they [Tangra Hakka] prefer girls from Tangra, because we were city-bred and were not used to getting up early to work in the tanneries'. In the present, as she continues, Tangra girls 'would not like to marry a city boy because they are so used to their lifestyle'. There was also a general perception of Cheenapara Chinese being more open to intermarriages, especially the Cantonese. Historically, there have been more inter-marriages in and around Cheenapara, with Anglo-Indians and also with other communities. In an article written in 1858, Alabaster mentions such intermarriages between Hakka and Cantonese and also with the 'Eurasian' population (Alabaster, 1858 [1975]). While the historical context of these intermarriages marked certain neighbourhoods as mixed and some as not, in the present, intermarriages between Anglo-Indians and Chinese are often described as relationships which develop because they live in similar neighbourhoods.

Narratives of everyday cosmopolitanism for the Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities thus drew on intimate and personal relationships between the two communities, but rather than being limited to the spaces of home, these relationships were constructed in and through neighbourhood spaces.

A narrative of loss

The narratives of everyday cosmopolitanism explored in the previous section outlined a sense of overlapping lives existing across communities within the space of the neighbourhood. In this section, I place such narratives of overlapping lives within a temporal framework to analyse how the notion of encounter has varied over time. Talking about her growing up years in Calcutta, Deliah spoke about the contexts in which she remembered different communities. Deliah herself is Anglo-Chinese and she remembers her father's friends, 'who were Greeks', and also her aunt, 'whose first husband was Greek, and second husband was Armenian, and there was a Jewish person who was her best friend'. Deliah explained to me, 'that's the way Calcutta

was...and nowadays people are totally unaware and people have no memory of this Calcutta'. When I asked her whether this means that this Calcutta does not exist anymore, she explained further:

“I think physically, where are the Armenians, where are the Jews? [These] people no longer live there. There might be an Armenian Church, this and that...but the people are not there, unless you kind of know about them or you are curious enough...it's there if you want to dig it up, but on a daily basis when children went to school and your friend could be Michel Gappe or so and so and people socialised and some of them married, that kind of everyday unspecialised knowledge is not around.”

Deliah's comment is reflective of the kind of narratives existing about cosmopolitan Calcutta, not just amongst the Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities but also more generally. There is a sense that a cosmopolitan Calcutta existed in the past, but that it has disappeared over time. This kind of narrative is not unusual in colonial cities. Bombay, which is probably the only other city in India described as cosmopolitan, also upholds a historical sense of cosmopolitanism. Right-wing regional politics, apart from other factors, though, have led many to construct a narrative of 'decosmopolitanisation' around Bombay. It is in this context that McFarlane (2008) argues for the necessity of alternative imaginaries of cosmopolitanism and suggests a move away from discourses on communal relations to envisage alternative cosmopolitan practice. I locate the politics of envisaging cosmopolitan practices in the city within inter-communal relationships in neighbourhoods to explore what it might mean for minority communities like the Anglo-Indian and Chinese to place themselves in a narrative of decosmopolitanisation.

Many Anglo-Indians and Chinese spoke about the idea of a cosmopolitan Calcutta. For some it is an idea that they associate with the past, whilst for others present day Calcutta offers a different kind of cosmopolitanism. In the past, life for Anglo-Indians and Chinese in Calcutta revolved around particular neighbourhoods. With the emigration of many members of both communities, the neighbourhood is remembered in interesting ways. For many living in diaspora, the neighbourhood in Calcutta is a place of childhood memory. Talking about his early years in Calcutta,

Donald points out that ‘you were situated in your family and that was your own little world’. Indeed for many, the family and the immediate neighbourhood framed an idea of Calcutta as home. The presence of a greater number of members in the past also created a memory, where the notion of the ‘community’ was often limited to a particular group. Explaining the close-knit structure of the Anglo-Indian community, Donald further states:

“In Calcutta our social world would have been confined to a significant extent to the Anglo-Indian community. That is where our parents worked...Anglo-Indians were given an area of work, and they worked within the community and socialised within the community”.

While the notion of a ‘closed’ community was presented by the Chinese too, especially amongst Hakkas, descriptions of everyday life in the neighbourhoods also involved talking about cosmopolitanism as a lived experience in the city. When I asked David Chung, a Hakka Chinese who lives in Cheenapara, whether he thought of Calcutta as a Bengali city, he answered in the negative- ‘no, because so far we have lived in a cosmopolitan area...I have seen mostly Gujarati, Marwari, Muslims, Dosads, so I never thought it is a Bengali city’. For Penelope, who grew up near Bow Barracks and who now lives in Toronto, the memory of a cosmopolitan neighbourhood was also grounded in the presence of different communities. As she points out, ‘we had so many people of different caste and creed, and we would all go to school and we would all be neighbours’. Her memory, at the same time, extends to imagining a cosmopolitan Calcutta where everyone lived happily together. As she says, ‘at that time, you didn’t think of caste, religion, creed or whatever you call it, it was one big happy neighbourhood’. Bernard, Penelope’s husband, explains this notion of cosmopolitan Calcutta by comparing it to a cosmopolitan Toronto:

“I think cosmopolitan Calcutta is more genuine in the sense that people cared for each other. For cosmopolitan Toronto, everything is too mechanical, everything is superficial... they may be concerned for you, but whether they will go that extra yard to comfort you, I don’t think so. Then you have all these legal things that get involved, and that’s why people don’t want to get too personal or too caring for cosmopolitan

culture. Although it is there, but unfortunately, I think other than the Chinese or the Indians, South Asians, the rest of the other cultures are too, I wouldn't say artificial, but not too concerned about the individual. Whereas back home in Calcutta, that cosmopolitan thing was different. The difference could only be physical, but I think emotionally everyone was involved with each other. If I had to do something for you, I would do it, I wouldn't care if you were black, green, red, yellow...".

Other Anglo-Indians and Chinese living in diaspora also draw on this comparison of cosmopolitanism between Calcutta and Toronto. Mei Ling, for example, says- 'I think it [Toronto] is a cosmopolitan city but it is not a cosmopolitan community. Calcutta is more cosmopolitan community...I mean Chhattawala Gully...'. For David too, the neighbourhood was an important space to engage with the other. As he says:

"Well, you knew your neighbourhood in Calcutta. You knew the people. It was a way of life. People were walking about, not driving about. You constantly bumped into people, mingling with them. Here, people drive. You don't even know your neighbours. From that angle, you can have people next to you and you can respect that they're different, but you don't really get to know them as you would get to know your neighbours in Calcutta. It's different as a set-up."

While this narrative of loss creates a memory of a 'cosmopolitan community' rather than a 'cosmopolitan city' for those who have migrated from Calcutta, such a notion is also important for those who have stayed back in the city. A narrative of cosmopolitan Calcutta is closely related to a narrative of 'when there were many of them'. Hilda, who grew up in a central Calcutta neighbourhood and now lives in south Calcutta, described her neighbourhood as an area which had 'lots of Anglo-Indians', where the 'streets were empty and belonged to us'. When I asked her what she liked most about the neighbourhood, she replied that 'it was the ambience...we were surrounded by movie halls, we had the church close by'. She also spoke about her neighbours. Saying that Anglo-Indians got on very well with others, Hilda further said:

“Basically an Anglo-Indian is a happy-go-lucky person...he lives for the day...tomorrow will look after itself, so they got on very well, most of the times...whether it was a Muslim family or any other family. We had a Sindhi family right here, since the time I was born and they learnt English from us...the young men are now married and they say, ‘Auntie we learnt English from you’. So we co-existed without any problems”.

For Hilda this co-existence, which many others spoke about when talking about cosmopolitan Calcutta, is often rooted in the past. It does not necessarily imply that the co-existence is not talked about in the present. Hilda herself spoke about how Anglo-Indians who have moved to Picnic Gardens, a neighbourhood where many Anglo-Indians now live, ‘co-exist very amicably’ with the Bengali population in the area. Those who live in Bow Barracks, as I mentioned earlier, also draw on this sense of co-existence. At the same time, notions of a cosmopolitan Calcutta are tied to particular neighbourhoods in central Calcutta, and a narrative of loss often surrounds these neighbourhoods, which were part of cosmopolitan Calcutta but which have changed over time.

These changes are usually described in terms of migration of the Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities to other parts of the city or outside the city. As Noel, who still lives in Calcutta, points out:

“Basically a lot of the Chinese and Anglo-Indians have moved out, and you will find that those areas have changed...the life spent over there was quite different and I have got a few Muslim friends who say they used to love going there because it was a different sort of lifestyle...it used to pulsate with life, and now it is not the same...earlier if I wanted to hear Musical Bandbox (a programme on radio), I had two options- either stay at home and listen to it on the radio, or move around these places and I would hear it anyways because everyone had the Musical Bandbox on at that time. Then there is what Anglo-Indians called their Sunday dish, yellow rice and kofta curry...wherever you went you had that

aroma...there was this close, happy-go-lucky thing...there was no tension, no sense of insecurity...”.

The lament that Noel expressed is also shared by the Chinese community who lived in and around Cheenapara. Julie Hu, who grew up on Grant Lane, not far from where Hilda lived, says, when I asked her about the changes taking place in the neighbourhood:

“Maybe my neighbours being less and less Chinese...because they all moved abroad. I remember when I was younger that compound had around 30-40 Chinese. You could see them sitting outside on hot days. Our doors were never shut because everyone was welcome, but as we grew up the doors started closing because there were not many Chinese families left. Our landlord rented it out to someone...usually a godown...”.

Julie’s comment reflects the changes that were taking place in central Calcutta. Wider commercialisation of these areas along with a changing demography is a significant part of a narrative of loss for those who live/d in these areas. For many, this large-scale migration of community members invariably meant an end to Anglo-Indian and Chinese neighbourhoods in the city. Keith, for example, remembers:

“Lots of changes were taking place...lots of Anglo-Indians were moving away to England and various other places and so the neighbourhood was somewhat changing. A lot of Anglo-Indians were giving up their flats for huge *salamis*¹⁷ and using their money to go to Canada or England. The people coming in were usually Bengali or Muslim¹⁸. It didn’t change the nature of the area, because those who moved in, blended in, but still it changed to a non-Anglo-Indian neighbourhood.”

¹⁷ *Salami* refers to a large sum of money deposited with the landlord by the tenant. When the tenant moves, the *salami* is usually repaid either by the landlord or by the next tenant.

¹⁸ Anglo-Indians (and also the Chinese) usually refer to non-Bengali Muslims as Muslims. ‘Bengali’ usually is referred to as Hindu Bengalis.

For David Chung, it was a part of Calcutta that he was familiar with that disappeared. As he said, ‘Anglo-Indians are going away...lots of Muslims coming in...our locality has been filled with other communities’. Such narratives of loss place the idea of a cosmopolitan Calcutta in the past. However, it does not preclude the possibilities of the kinds of everyday cosmopolitan practices I described earlier existing in the present. Instead such narratives set up an interesting dynamic with the politics of cosmopolitanism in the city which I discuss next.

Calcutta to Kolkata: politics of cosmopolitanism in the city

In 2001 the official name of Calcutta was changed to Kolkata in keeping with the Bengali pronunciation of the city’s name. This was part of a wider trend of renaming cities and also roads in India along regional lines to reflect ‘local’ or ‘indigenous’ history. Wondering whether Indian cities are becoming bourgeois, Partha Chatterjee notes an emerging trend of promoting a ‘globalised cosmopolitan subculture’ alongside an attempt by the political leadership to assert a new ‘Bengaliness’ in the city (2004:146). Chatterjee’s comment was made in relation to wider predicaments of ‘political society’¹⁹. At the same time, he points out that such measures were an effort to ‘re-inscribe the cultural dominance of Bengali middle-class’ (Chatterjee, 2004). It is in this context that I explore the cultural politics of cosmopolitanism in a city like Calcutta. In this section I present the politics of envisaging a space for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in the city through an analysis of specific neighbourhoods that they have lived in- Bow Barracks and the two Chinatowns. While I do not necessarily place the politics surrounding these neighbourhoods in the context of Calcutta as a ‘Bengali’ city, I draw on the ways in which cosmopolitanism is imagined through the city’s Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities as well as what it means for the respective communities.

Bow Barracks: a cosmopolitan *para*

At the beginning of this chapter I introduced the film *Bow Barracks Forever* in the context of a cultural politics of communities in Calcutta. The subject of the film, as I also mentioned, attempted to raise broader issues of heritage conservation in the city,

¹⁹ Chatterjee (1998) uses the term ‘political society’ in contrast to classical notions of civil society, to describe a sphere where ‘demands of electoral mobilisation’ and the ‘logic of welfare distribution’ overlap.

but instead got caught in a quagmire of representation of the Anglo-Indian community. In this section, I take the film and the protests around it as a way to interrogate the complex overlaps between ideas of neighbourhood, community and cosmopolitanism. Bow Barracks is a predominantly Anglo-Indian neighbourhood, yet it is home to several other communities, including some Chinese families. I extend the notion of alternative cosmopolitanism (Nandy, 2000b) to analyse communities living together alongside each other in this neighbourhood.

The burden of history...

Bow Barracks, according to municipal records, was built in 1922 as part of a re-housing scheme of the Calcutta Improvement Trust (CIT) for poor Anglo-Indians who were displaced by improvement works in the Bowbazar area. Over time, the barracks housed different communities and people. During World War II, for example, American soldiers stayed here, whilst a number of Chinese families also moved here during the 1950s when they were displaced by the construction of a thoroughfare in the old Chinatown area in the vicinity.

The history of the neighbourhood is important in understanding how Bow Barracks was imagined. Located in Bowbazar, Bow Barracks is in the heart of the area that was much denigrated by colonial municipal authorities. The living condition of Anglo-Indians was of particular concern to the British in the early 20th century. The unofficial Report of the Domiciled Community Committee Enquiry Report, 1918-1919, for example makes note of this area and especially its poverty and degradation. Bow Bazar and Entally are noted as being ‘proverbial plague spots, where vice and filth predominate’ (p.7). While such ‘discourses of dirt, disease and degradation’ complicated the racialised discourses of the colonial city (Blunt, 2005:35), these discourses were also made part of everyday knowledge of the city by members of the community living elsewhere. Much of the character of Bow Barracks derives from Anglo-Indian imagination of the place. As Patricia says:

“Bowbazar has an entity of its own...if you talk to a person...it’s a derogatory term which was used...that he or she is a Bowbazarian. We in central Calcutta consider Bowbazar very rough...so that is the picture of Bowbazar but they are Anglo-Indians to the core”.

Over time, the residents of Bow Barracks have nurtured a self-image of being ‘rough and tough’. Current residents reminisce about group fights and their ‘wild’ past- a past as seen through the eyes of other Anglo-Indians that paints a grim and licentious image of the Barracks. As Cecile Hu, who lives in Bow Barracks and is married to an Anglo-Indian says, ‘...they were wild...like people used to get frightened of them from outside...there were a lot of fights between neighbours...this one...that one...all over the locality...so that’s why they say...oh my god you are from the barracks...like something bad...’

Such identifications of the neighbourhood, however, went beyond class differences and the ‘wild’ reputations of its residents. There were deeper discomforts surrounding race as well. One would not readily identify with Bow Barracks, a ‘*khichdi*²⁰’ place (as often referred to by other Anglo-Indians) where one was not sure about the ethnic origins. As Denzil mentions:

“they were a mixture...even their way of dressing and everything...like in our homes we always go about in slippers and all, but they walk about bare feet and one person would go to another person’s house...there was a lot of borrowing from one another...it was a different type of life...it was a mixture life...we did not know whether they were Chinese...whether they were Muslims...in Bow Barracks we did not know...”.

Another person mentioned that ‘Bowbazarians were regarded by Anglo-Indians as not quite the full rupee...one didn’t go to Bowbazar. One didn’t marry (easily) a Bowbazarian. From their side it was closed shop too and they did not allow others in very easily’ (personal communication).

A different cosmopolitanism

²⁰ *Khichdi* means kedgeriee, a dish made with a mixture of ingredients like pulses, rice, vegetables and spices. In the context of Bow Barracks, the term was used to refer to the inter-racial marriages that were characteristic in this area.

Bow Barracks is located in what was a very cosmopolitan locality. It still has a Parsi *dharamsala*²¹ on one side, a Buddhist temple on the other and there was once a Jewish bread shop nearby. Some residents mentioned that many Jews lived on the nearby Weston Street (Robert). Whilst an Anglo-Indian identity is dominant in Bow Barracks, there is a very strong community feeling in the neighbourhood. Most residents are related through marriage, often across different communities, to form a kind of large extended family. They take pride in their sporting and particularly hockey playing tradition, and although there is a sense of each community being different, all speak about a special 'Barracks' identity. The lived cosmopolitanism of Bow Barracks comes through in the description of the place as a 'real *para*' (Tim)

One of the ways in which the special identity of Bow Barracks is explained is through their 'unique' way of living. As Jane who has grown up in the Barracks explains:

“The special identity is that five or six generations have lived here...they have built up their own activities...we are very much into sports and then there are the festivals...these have gone on for generations, so that's why we have our separate identity”.

Some of these activities are rooted in an Anglo-Indian way of life. For example, there is a grotto on the side of Barracks where all residents come together for evening prayers, while others often cut across community boundaries. When there is a death in Barracks, it has become a tradition to take the coffin in a procession around the block (Jane). Serene Chu describes the everyday life in Barracks in terms in which other *para* life would be described:

“Like every evening you see the elderly ladies, around 4.30/5.30 they come down and they sit just outside my block and they talk about food and what they will buy, and they gossip... like they have a little *adda*²² here. If I feel like I've nothing else to do, I also just pick my baby up and

²¹ Place of worship which also doubles as a resting place for pilgrims and travellers.

²² 'Adda' refers to a casual chat around any topic and is characteristic of 'Calcutta' and more widely Bengali culture. Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) has written about this form of sociality as part of a male public sphere. However, the term is also used colloquially to mean random gossip and chat.

go to my friend's place. Although she's working, her mom is there, I know from...we used to live two blocks away. We've grown up together. So I just call out "Auntie!" and she is like "Yes!" and I just go in. She is a Goan. So I just go there and sit down. She's got a one year old daughter. When she is doing something I just go and speak to her, spend one hour, chat. She tells me all the news about what is happening in Barracks, because I'm very bad, I hardly know what's going on in Barracks. She updates me and gives me all the news"

Although there is a sense that each community leads its own life, many residents spoke about the 'unity' that is there in Barracks which cuts across communities: 'we are very united...if someone is in need, they come and help, there is a sense of unity like among families' (Martin); and they agree that this is a unique feature in the neighbourhood- 'unique is the bond between the residents... in sorrow or anything we are united. Everyone comes forward and gives a helping hand' (Douglas).

Disappearing cosmopolitanism

In recent times, Bow Barracks has been the focus of attention amidst a threat of eviction that the residents face. In the late 1980s, Calcutta Improvement Trust (CIT) labelled Bow Barracks as an unsafe building and asked tenants to move out. The residents refused to do so and continued living there, although the CIT stopped maintenance work. In 1999, a second notice was sent to the residents and the CIT stopped taking rent. Since then residents have been paying rent to the Rent Control Board. In 2000, an NGO called ARCH (Action Research in Conservation of Heritage) took up the cause and began a campaign to save Bow Barracks. It held a community planning workshop in association with another NGO, which was attended by several eminent architects, planners, engineers and economists. The workshop helped to produce a document called Vision for Bow Barracks, which included the formation of BBOWS (Bow Barracks Organized Welfare Society) and also a plan to market brand Bow Street, through its Christmas celebrations. Although Bow Barracks always had a Christmas event, it was never marketed in this manner. Since 2000 a greater visibility in the print media, high profile music events along with the film *Bow Barracks Forever*, attempted to garner public support for the

conservation of Bow Barracks. In 2001, Anglo-Indian MP²³ to the Lok Sabha from Madras, Beatrix D'Souza, pledged Rs 50 lakhs²⁴ for the purpose. Although the campaign put Bow Barracks in the public eye, it failed to stall CIT's decision to demolish the building. BBOWS gave way to another residents' forum called Bow United Organisation, which has since then carried out essential maintenance work. The Christmas celebrations also continue and each year seems to get bigger, with greater media coverage and bigger sponsors. Christmas celebrations in Bow Barracks are a week-long affair. Lights are put up across the streets and celebrations begin on 23rd December with a big concert. There is a children's party on Christmas Eve when Santa Claus comes riding in a rickshaw as well as a street party on Christmas Day and a senior's day on Boxing Day cap the celebrations. Christmas is also a time when many residents who have emigrated come back to visit family members. The CIT has now agreed to build a block of flats in a nearby park to relocate the residents and plans to build an infotech plaza, a shopping mall and a high-rise apartment block where Bow Barracks now stands. A newspaper report had initially noted that the red brick structure of Bow Barracks might be reincarnated on a smaller scale and given a new name, Bow Barracks Forever, after the film, so the idea of the place continues and a part of cosmopolitan Calcutta is preserved in its new avatar. After the debacle of the film, however, that name will be changed.

Envisaging Chinatown: culture, politics and community

The image of a Chinatown has been a powerful one to describe the presence of a Chinese community in a city. It is a real and imagined space at the same time. It has been studied as a space of belonging, through the ways in which Chinese communities create home in the city (Zhou, 1995), as well as a place of non-belonging, particularly in relation to discriminatory practices leading to spatial segregation (Anderson, 1991; Shah, 2001). In recent times the idea of Chinatown has been analysed within discourses of globalisation and transnationalism (Yeoh, 2001) where it is seen as a place for consumption and as a cosmopolitan space in the city. Following on from the previous discussion on Bow Barracks and the politics around its different cosmopolitanism, in this section I analyse the politics of envisioning a

²³ The Anglo-Indian community has two nominated representatives in the Indian government. One nominee represents the community in the Parliament, and in West Bengal a member is also nominated to represent the community at the Legislative Assembly.

²⁴ Rs. 50,00,000 (5 million)

cosmopolitan Calcutta through Chinatowns and also the implicit appropriation of the idea of cosmopolitanism by the Calcutta Chinese community.

The politics of envisaging a Chinatown in Calcutta is firmly rooted in the different histories of the two Chinese neighbourhoods in the city, Cheenapara and Tangra. In the ‘overlapping lives’ section in this chapter, I explored how different notions of cosmopolitanism experienced through everyday lived space mark the difference between these two neighbourhoods. While socio-economic differences underpin the contrast between Cheenapara and Tangra, there are other issues of ‘mixed-ness’ of everyday life (in Cheenapara) and practices of inter-marriages between the two neighbourhoods that determine the relationship between the Chinese living in these two areas. The other aspect which differentiates these neighbourhoods is the visual public space of the community as seen through temples, community associations, restaurants and schools. The imagination and representation of Chinatowns all over the world have a strong visual element attached to these areas and the two Chinatowns in Calcutta are no exception. While Cheenapara, being the initial Chinatown, has more temples, community schools and offices of community associations, Tangra developed an insular image with its high walls and a more suburban location. In the following discussion I analyse the need for envisaging a Chinatown in Calcutta and the ways in which these visual aspects are re-conceived.

Re-conceiving Chinatown

In 1993, based on a report prepared by the West Bengal Pollution Control Board on effluent discharge by industries, the Supreme Court of India served an eviction notice to tanneries in Tangra (Co-ordination Committee of Calcutta Tanners Report, 1994). Tanneries have formed the backbone of Tangra’s economy since its inception in 1910, where ‘in this jungle like swamps the Chinese tanners toiled day and night for more than 3 generations to convert what is “Tangra” today’ (ibid., p. 2). The eviction notice was a blow to the Chinese tanners in Tangra. Since 1994, many tanneries have moved to the Calcutta Leather Complex in Bantala, an area further east of the city. The move created fissures in the community along economic lines as smaller tanneries were not able to afford the move (Patrick Hsu). Many tanneries have since been transformed into restaurants, and although Tangra had been a hub for Chinese food since the 1980s, it is now on a much larger scale.

In recent times there has been an attempt by the West Bengal government to market the neighbourhood as 'Chinatown' (The Hindustan Times, 10 May, 2004). At the moment there is just a road sign in Chinese put up at Tangra. But if plans are sanctioned, there could be four gateways to Tangra, a revolving restaurant on a pagoda, an alternative medicine centre and a martial art centre ('Vision Shangri-La', Sunday Times of India, May 20, 2007). The choice of Tangra as 'Chinatown' is, on the one hand, obvious as it has the physical and imaginary characteristics of Chinatowns elsewhere in the world and with the tanneries being forced to move this does make perfect business sense. But on the other hand, it is interesting to note that it draws on a pure Hakka identity. Many say with pride that the purest form of Hakka is to be found in Tangra rather than China. There are divisions within the community as to whether the 'Chinatown' should be in Cheenapara or Tangra but the Chinese community as a whole through their increasing visibility in the print media seems to be engaging in this performance of ethnic identity. Given the current developments in east Calcutta and the perceived need to market the city in an effort to attract foreign investments, such policies acquire a wider political context. The celebration of Chinese New Year plays an important role in this. Traditionally, Chinese New Year celebrations in Cheenapara were contained within the community. Dragon dance groups were formed along regional lines as well as neighbourhood affiliations. In recent times, as large numbers of Chinese have emigrated elsewhere, the dragon dance groups are formed of not just Chinese but also members from other communities, especially in more mixed neighbourhoods of Central Calcutta. But Chinese New Year celebrations in Tangra have grown larger over the years. This is because of a greater number of Chinese living in Tangra but also because of a greater prosperity in Tangra. Members of the Chinese community from Tangra are also more recent emigrants. So, while many Cantonese Chinese from Cheenapara emigrated from Calcutta after the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict, those living in Tangra emigrated in the late 1980s mainly because of economic reasons. This is also the reason why Tangra sees a greater number of Chinese coming back to Calcutta during Chinese New Year. Recent years have seen the inclusion of a three-day carnival in the celebration of Chinese New Year, mainly keeping in mind the return flow of emigrants from Canada.

Celebrating cosmopolitanism?

De Neve and Donner (2006:10) write that ‘all neighbourhoods are places of remembered pasts and imagined futures’. The discourses around both Christmas and Chinese New Year set up an interesting dynamic between nostalgia for old cosmopolitan Calcutta and ideas of new cosmopolitan Calcutta. The leaflet for Bow Barracks Community Festival, for example, titled ‘Save our homes, preserve our traditions’, draws on nostalgia for old cosmopolitan Calcutta and showcases an Anglo-Indian way of life. But at the same time it also presents Bow Barracks as a unique multicultural neighbourhood, where ‘Anglo-Indians, Goans, Chinese, Bengalis, Gujarati and Muslims [live] as one big united family’ (Bow United Organisation leaflet, 2006). There has also been considerable media interest in the festival in recent years, especially in the context of Bow Barracks’ imminent destruction. According to one of the leading newspapers in Calcutta, “Eviction will scatter the community, whose lifestyle forms a fragile link between the city’s eclectic past and its dynamic present” (The Telegraph, Calcutta, 5th June, 2000). Media interest is also present in the case of Chinese New Year and Tangra, too, is presented as the last bastion of the Chinese in the city.

By bringing together the different policy contexts of Bow Barracks and Tangra, I have framed an argument around the neighbourhood as an ordinary space in the city, through which one gets a glimpse of the complex connections between cities and communities. The plan to turn Tangra into Chinatown and the one not to preserve Bow Barracks go much beyond the issue of whether to market the cultural aspect of a community as commodity or not. It is a question of who is identified as a cosmopolitan in the city and who is not.

Conclusion

Writing about the notion of cosmopolitanism Mayaram (2009) advocates an approach that is not about universal belonging and rootedness, but which is:

‘demonstrative...of the capacity of self to relate to non self not in denial, negation, otherness, and annihilatory politics but in feelings ranging from prejudice, ethnocentrism, and indifference, to civility, accommodation,

dialogue, mutual respect, learning and sharing to compassion, friendship, and even love. [] Cosmopolitan being is not about belonging- for this will always entail a membership and exclusion- but about a relation and the capacity of self to relate to non-self affirmatively...’ (p.10-11)

Mayaram’s stance urges us to look for cosmopolitanism in ‘other global cities’ where the notion of living in close proximity criss-crosses different histories and different geographies. Building on this need to look for cosmopolitanism in ‘other global cities’, I set out in this chapter to explore the notion of a cosmopolitan Calcutta through its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. I placed the narratives of everyday lived space within actual and imagined cosmopolitanisms to trace the complex overlaps between the past and the present. I have analysed the overlapping narratives of Calcutta’s Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities to explore how members of both communities relate to one another in the spaces of the neighbourhood and how the neighbourhood itself is construed as a space of belonging. In the second part of the chapter, I have analysed the different politics of cosmopolitanisms in Bow Barracks and Tangra to set the notions of everyday cosmopolitanisms as experienced in neighbourhoods within a policy context. This comparative frame has allowed for a consideration of the ways in which Calcutta engages with the Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. It has also allowed for an exploration of how a notion of encounter in the city, in the context of diasporic groups plays out in the everyday spaces of the city. Taking up Mayaram’s (2009:11) remark that the ‘cosmopolitan being is not about belonging’, I extend the discussion of encounter in the city to the next chapter, where I chart the complex overlaps of ideas of belonging/not-belonging to the city for Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans.

Chapter Five

NARRATIVES OF BELONGING TO THE CITY

I begin this chapter with two quotations about the idea of the city as a space of belonging for Calcutta's Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. When I asked Brenda Chen, who grew up in Calcutta and now lives in Toronto, to locate her sense of home, she replied:

“Now it is Toronto, but there's always the sense that I was raised in Calcutta...more and more I live in Toronto it becomes home. But because you are in Toronto, they ask- 'where are you from originally'? It's always like, oh yeah...yes...but...and then you say you are from Calcutta. The funny thing is you never say India, always Calcutta...because you always want to distinguish in your mind that you are not from Bombay or Delhi...and the point is if the question comes from someone with an Indian background, and you say you are from India, they look almost shocked, so you always have to qualify and say that you are from Calcutta.”

In another instance, in response to my question on his feelings of belonging, Alan, who lives in Calcutta, said:

“Let's say we feel that Calcutta is our city, especially Anglo-Indian Calcutta...we feel that Calcutta is a city of our homes...we belong to the city and the city belongs to us.”

Both Brenda Chen's and Alan's comments reflect the complex overlaps between ideas of home, belonging, the nation and the city. Whilst Brenda Chen's view of Calcutta as home is closely connected to the tensions between belonging to the nation and belonging to the city over diaspora, Alan's assertion that 'Calcutta is a city of our homes' grounds that sense of belonging to dwelling in the city. Both comments also point to the potential of the city, in contrast to the nation, as an affective register of belonging. In the previous chapter, I discussed notions of

cosmopolitanism as a way to 'belong' to a neighbourhood. While 'community' narratives predominated in explaining this sense of belonging, so did narratives of 'overlapping lives'. The politics of cosmopolitanism around Bow Barracks and Chinatown grounded these issues in the politics of the city. In this chapter, I explore the notion of belonging to the city and place these narratives within wider debates of belonging to the city and/or the nation. I raise questions around the complex politics of belonging to the nation for the Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. I explore how the city is imagined as a space of belonging as well as how the sense of belonging is rooted in the everyday experience of the city. I frame my argument around the complex overlaps between 'sense of belonging, everyday practices of belonging and formal structures of belonging' (Fenster, 2005: 243).

Belonging and the city

Belonging is a concept which connects people and communities to place through a sense of attachment and also the articulation of identity. Large-scale migration in both colonial and post-colonial periods has destabilised any fixed relationship between identity and territory, which is of central concern to geographers. As Catherine Nash (2002:224) writes:

'The material and political implications of different modes of belonging, place and identity - national, transnational, indigenous, settler, diasporic - shaped by long and continued processes of migration, displacement, settlement, dispossession and the growing recognition of the rights of indigenous people, have clearly been central to cultural geography, cultural studies and postcolonialism'.

Critical analysis of different modes of belonging has attempted to unsettle the idea of the nation, in the context of settler colonialism and ideas of indigeneity (Gelder and Jacobs, 1998), as well as wider diasporic identities which destabilise a discourse of origin linked to the nation (Ifekwunigwe, 1999; Nash, 2008; Walter, 2001). Minority communities have been the focus of many such studies, as they are the ones often left outside the meaning of the 'nation', and faced with the violence of the nation-state. Belonging, then, is the 'historically and temporally disjunct positions that minorities occupy ambivalently within the nation's space' (Bhabha, 1990:33).

Belonging has also been studied in various contexts and at different scales. As Mee and Wright (2009:772) note, 'belonging has formal and informal aspects...is associated with exclusion and exclusionary processes...is negotiated through practice and performance, through politics...and through affect...'. Formal aspects of belonging have been studied as part of the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis et al, 2006) and ideas of citizenship (Mavroudi, 2008). As Gilmartin (2008: 1842) notes, geographers have used the notion of belonging to ground the relationship between migration and identity in two ways. First, by highlighting the ways in which 'bodies of migrants are used as a means of exclusionary practices at a range of scales' and second, through ways in which migrants themselves negotiate belonging for themselves.

Belonging is thus essentially about inclusion as well as exclusion and, as Probyn (1996) has pointed out, integrally related to identity. Writing about the complex overlaps between the 'being' and 'longing' aspects of belonging and identity, Probyn (1996:19) claims:

'[Belonging] captures more accurately the desire for some sort of attachment...and the ways in which individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fuelled by yearning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state'.

Probyn's conceptualisation of belonging highlights its affective dimensions, and stresses a 'sense of belonging' and feeling of 'being in place' (Mee and Wright, 2009: 772). Notions of belonging have also been studied in the context of a sense of home. Writing on the critical geographies of home, Blunt and Dowling (2006:27) assert that '...senses of belonging and alienation are constructed across diverse scales ranging from the body and the household to the city, nation and globe'. Indeed, the idea of home encompasses belonging at various scales, from the idea of a homeland to the actual spaces of dwelling.

Whilst a significant part of research on the idea of belonging has focused on the nation, as a space and as an imaginary, notions of belonging have also been studied

in the context of the city. Elaine Ho's (2006) research on Singapore, for example, draws on the ideas of citizenship and belonging in the context of the city. Similarly, Anna Secor (2004), explores the intersections of citizenship, space and identity in the context of Istanbul. Istanbul is also the site for Amy Mills' (2006) work on the idea of the *mohalla* or the neighbourhood where she investigates how the space of the nation is inscribed in the space of the urban. Most often in such studies on the politics of national belonging, migration forms an important context to analyse ideas of belonging in the city. Katie Walsh (2006), for example, grounds her research on British expatriate belonging in Dubai. Whilst Tovi Fenster (2004) explores the 'physical spaces of belonging' in her research on Banglatown, London, Mark-Anthony Falzon's (2003) research on Bombay views the city as 'homeland' for its Sindhi diaspora.

In this chapter, I draw on these debates to explore ideas of belonging for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in Calcutta. I explore the idea of the city as home in different contexts. In the first part, I analyse the tensions between belonging and not-belonging and how notions of belonging change during times of political turmoil. In the second section, I explore the idea of Calcutta as home for both communities and analyse the intersection between community identity, memory and migration.

Belonging/not belonging

When discussing my research topic, one of my Chinese interviewees in Toronto told me a story about Anglo-Indians and Chinese in Calcutta to explain the friendship between the two communities and their changing status in the city. One day in Calcutta before 1947, he said, a group of people were queuing up in front of a cinema hall. An Indian person tried to join the queue and to get ahead pushed a Chinese out. An Anglo-Indian immediately came to the rescue of the Chinese and they ganged up against the Indian. Post-1947, he continued, this could have never happened - they could not have spoken out against the Indian under any circumstances (field notes). The story was told as a joke, but it marked the transition in the status of the two communities. For both communities there is some nostalgia for colonial Calcutta and the advantages they had as 'in-between' communities. It is difficult to draw a parallel between the experiences of both communities in colonial Calcutta - the Anglo-Indians were far greater in number and much more politically

organised. The city was the base for the All India Anglo-Indian Association till 1941. As Blunt (2005a: 33) points out, Calcutta remained the intellectual and political heart of the Anglo-Indian community even after New Delhi was made the capital. Although there was a 'community structure' for the Chinese in Calcutta, established through the schools, temples and regional/surname associations, these did not engage much with wider politics. In fact, as Oxfeld (2003:85) notes, these organisations were inward-looking and sought to keep 'community issues' within the community itself. Yet, at the same time, there are similarities in the ways in which these two communities did not feel at home in the city.

In this section I take a broad temporal framework of the transition from colonial to postcolonial Calcutta to analyse the narratives of the two communities during times of political turmoil - India's independence in 1947 and the Sino-Indian war in 1962 - and explore the overlaps as well as differences in the ways in which the communities reacted to these events. I use notions of the homely and the unhomely to chart the complex overlaps in narratives of belonging to the nation and/or the city. Freud's work on the uncanny unsettles the dichotomous relationship between the homely and unhomely, the *heimlich* and the *unheimlich*, and points to the co-existence and simultaneity of these two feelings. In postcolonial geography, the notion of the uncanny has been used to explore the complicated geographies of settler colonialism and its links with ideas of indigeneity (Gelder and Jacobs, 1998). As Blunt and Dowling (2005:175) also write, 'histories and memories of dispossession and forced relocation have important implications for social justice, belonging and the politics of home'. Whilst the nation has been an important backdrop to analyse the politics of belonging/not belonging, the idea of uncanny has also been used at other scales to explore the co-existence of homely and unhomely feelings. Miller (1999), for example, uses the notion to explore how neighbourly relations alternated between the *heimlich* and *unheimlich* in Indian cities after wide-spread communal riots in 1992. In this section I explore how the idea of home for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities vacillates between the nation and the city. I also explore how feelings of not being at home in the nation are reflected at the level of the city, particularly within the spaces of the neighbourhood. For both Anglo-Indians and Chinese as minority communities in Calcutta, times of turmoil were described as a kind of watershed in describing their presence in the city. While narratives of 'home' assert a

positive sense of belonging to the city, times of political turmoil turn those very spaces 'un-homely'. In this section I study the ways in which Anglo-Indians and Chinese did not feel at home in Calcutta during such times, and how they negotiated belonging. I focus particularly on the time of India's Independence and Partition and the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict.

Between the nation and the city

The city figured frequently in narratives of belonging of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans. It was a site of significant emotional attachment, intrinsically linked to ideas of home and belonging. Notions of home and belonging are often traced back to a place of origin, very often the nation. But for Anglo-Indians and Chinese Calcuttans these are not straight-forward relationships. Debates on belonging at the level of the nation, for both communities, have often focused on the political realm and been called into question at critical political moments. Whilst India's Independence was one such moment for Anglo-Indians and there was a need to assert belonging and citizenship (Blunt, 2005), it was never a simple relationship. Similarly for the Chinese Indian community, the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict raised questions about citizenship, even for those who were born in India.

Being a community of mixed descent domiciled in India, anxieties about a place to call 'home' were reflected in the various settlement schemes planned for the community. Writing about McCluskieganj, the largest and best known Anglo-Indian settlement schemes Blunt (2005) comments that such a scheme was a 'response to a crisis of Anglo-Indian identity, attracting settlers with the idea of creating a homeland that was located within, but clearly distinct from, the rest of British India' (p.74). Similarly, Bear (2007) describes the scheme as one where 'Anglo-Indians would put down agricultural roots in a cross between a homeland and a village home' (p.150). The idea of a homeland was indeed an attractive one, and many families from Calcutta had initially moved to McCluskieganj to build a home (Blunt, 2005a). The scheme was not very successful and few Anglo-Indian families live there now. This anxiety about the need to have a place to call 'home' is reflected in Roger's comment:

“It’s almost 40 years. I am a Canadian now, but I still call India home. When I came to Canada, I accepted this as my country and I owe my allegiance to this country, because it gave me what India could not give me- not because I was not educated or I was dark, or yellow or green, but because I was not Indian. Once the British left, they left us at large. There were no jobs for us on a platter. Now I understand that Anglo-Indians are blending in the mosaic of that country and most of them are earning degrees and getting good jobs. [...] We are a community which is misplaced all over the world. The British and the Indians created us, but they gave us no country...we don’t have a country! Canada is great, but this is not my country. I happen to be here and live here. I don’t have a country.”

Whilst such an anxiety may be a thing of the past, and commonly expressed by those who migrated in the period soon after India’s independence, it reveals the complexities of identifying the nation as home for a community of mixed descent. For those who still live in India, identifying with the Indian nation, and being part of that ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991) is more straightforward, but as Alan’s comment shows, it also implies a re-formulation of community identity:

“...any community...once they have been through the schools...they have a better way of looking at life. The respect for each other has grown...the understanding and tolerance is more...let’s say we are all together as a family. As I told someone, don’t try to teach us to be Indians, we are not Indians. India is a country of communities and each community is as Indian as the next community. Together we are Indians, each in our own way of lives, with our culture, arts, dress...belonging means you are Indian, we are the same.”

The dual identification with Britain as fatherland and India as motherland was thus replaced by a dual identification of Anglo-Indian by community and Indian by nationality (Blunt, 2005: 179). So Peter, for example, says, ‘some identify totally with India...for me this is my birthplace, my homeland’, whereas Catherine’s comment, ‘there are some Anglo-Indians, like my grandmother, who still eats with a

fork and knife, but I am *bindaas* [not bothered], I dig into my fish with my fingers’, further qualifies this feeling and points to generational differences which exist in identifying the nation as a place of belonging.

For the Chinese the notion of belonging to the nation is fraught with tensions of the 1962 Sino-Indian War and is reflected mainly around issues of citizenship. Like the Anglo-Indian community, this tension is often expressed in racial and embodied terms, as in the comment by Michael Lim, ‘China gave me my colour but India is my homeland’. For the initial settlers in Calcutta, the idea of China as home was retained through everyday practices of culture. As Mei Ling points out:

“They all wanted to go back...I think...us ...those who were born...in the 40s and 50s, were the first generation born there [Calcutta]... the first generation to actually break out of the mould...because I know that my parents never had any Cantonese friends...they didn’t even want to learn Hindi...they were very afraid...we had to be brought up as Chinese...and kind of drill into us that thrice a year we have to go to the cemetery...it’s a clan bonding thing...its all kind of...my parents wanted to go back home... all they wanted is to go back...”.

Because the Chinese community concentrated in Calcutta, there were also frequent connections between the idea of the nation and the city as home. For Agatha Yeh, the idea of home was located in Calcutta as the place of birth, but at the same time, she asserts a belonging to India in the context of the Sino-Indian War:

“we never thought of going back to China, only after 1962, after problems with India and China, then there was no job, especially, the Cantonese they used to go to the ship to work, then they don’t get a permit and that is why no job, that’s why they went to Canada, Hong Kong, China, we never talked about living elsewhere, because our home is India, many generations, suppose like my parents of course from China, but then I am born in India, and my children born in India, now my grandchildren is also born in India, so more in India than in China”.

The incidents around the 1962 war formed a significant part of the narrative of viewing the nation as a space of belonging for the Chinese community. Cynthia Au's comment, for example, is reflective of the dilemma that the Chinese community felt in explaining their sense of belonging:

“It was not our fault that China fought with India, or India fought with China, but we were the victims. We were disowned. I was born and brought up there and still you say that I am not Indian, you don't deserve an Indian passport, it is a matter of fact I have an attachment to the land, the place where I went to school.”

The tensions of belonging to the nation continued in the next generation and added to a sense of insecurity. Brenda Chen, for example, explained:

“We were told that our grandfathers were just thrown out and our grandmothers basically trying to survive, trying to make a living. They did not talk a lot about it but we were aware of it. The funny thing was that we were never really close to China. But the younger generation did not think much about it. We as a generation never really felt the thing for China. We didn't really care who was for China, who was for Taiwan. In my generation we never got that thing to study Chinese.”

Sarah Wang further explained that issues around citizenship were also complicated by the older generation not speaking any Indian languages:

“The younger generation integrated much better as they go to school and they are educated but the older generation I think had a very hard time integrating. For instance my mom doesn't speak Hindi that well so she stays mostly to herself, and also many of the older generation were not given the Indian citizenship so I guess that total integration into the Indian society was not as complete as one would have thought.”

At the same time, she says, ‘Calcutta feels like home to me as I was not made to feel as an outsider it was just very subtle...I never felt that this was not my

home'. When I ask her about this sense of attachment to Calcutta rather than India, she says, 'I would always say I am from Calcutta, because I guess I had more of an attachment to Calcutta because that was the place I was born, and India is very big'. Similarly, for Christopher Wu, a young Calcutta Chinese in London, identifying India as home was important to explain where he came from but at the same time a city identity also helped to place himself within other 'Indian' communities. As he says:

"I am from India. The nurse out there saw my passport and said, 'how can you be Indian?' I had to explain the whole story. Even in college they thought I was Chinese. When I spoke Hindi, they were amazed. So I speak with the Pakistani people also. It was a good experience. I explained that I am Indian Chinese... When they ask me that where are you from, Manipur or something? And then I say no, I am from Calcutta. I really like to say that I am from Calcutta. I have this thing in me. I don't want others to confuse me as someone from the North-East because I am not from there. I am from Calcutta with a Chinese origin. They do get confused sometime, but I say no".

These narratives of both communities thus weave a story of belonging which move between the nation and the city. They point to the insecurities and ambivalences of identifying the nation as home and also highlight how a 'community' identity intersects with these narratives to create a more complex sense of belonging.

1947

The birth of new nations - India and Pakistan - in 1947 redefined the idea of belonging for the different communities living in the region. Whilst nationalist sentiments brought together diverse communities, they also identified who became a minority. The violence that accompanied Partition redefined identities along religious and communal lines. The rich Partition literature is too vast to attempt a summary here, but it is important to note that recent attempts to re-write the history of this period have used 'memory' as a trope to explore this time of turmoil (cf. Butalia, 2000 on gendered memories of Partition in Delhi; Ray, 2002 on memories of 'Growing up Refugee' in Calcutta for those which have focused on a particular city).

These narratives have focused on broader national politics, experiences in different cities as well as personal memories and have encompassed academic as well as fictional writing (cf. Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, *Ice Candy Man*, 1988 on the events of Partition seen through the eyes of a young Parsi girl). For Anglo-Indians, 1947 marked an important shift in their position in India, and most writings on the community's history see this as a point of time when large-scale emigration began. Blunt (2005) points out that while many Anglo-Indians migrated at this time fearing economic, social and cultural dislocation, other Indians migrated mainly because of Partition (p.110-111). This is an important distinction to fully understand the two facets of the same historical incidence and how they affected the Anglo-Indian community. As Charles, an 80 year old Anglo-Indian living in London, pointed out:

“I don't know whether we felt that we would fit into the future India, you know I think all of us were more used to...let's admit it...being more British than Indian, and that's why we did that. History proved that the Indian people did not decide to fight against us or harm us in any way but we all felt that we would be safer leaving the country and going to England”.

Many Anglo-Indians thus perceived the new nation as a space where they did not belong. But whilst such feelings of not belonging were framed in terms of Independence, and influenced the decision to migrate, events around Partition evoked a different, even if connected, sense of fear amongst the community. Dorothy McNemanin (2006) recalls her memories of the Partition growing up in Rawalpindi, and points out that Anglo-Indians were generally excluded from the communal violence that spread at that time. Not much has been written on these memories of Partition of the Anglo-Indian community, but such recollections were an important part of my interviews when people spoke of their memories of the city. Whilst narratives of belonging to the nation often revolved around an embodied racial identity, religion complicated that space of belonging in the city. Many of my interviewees spoke of the horror which accompanied the communal violence before and after Partition. The Calcutta killings of 1946-47 are often used in these narratives to explain the reason for migration. Communal tension at such a scale disturbed

Anglo-Indians greatly and many thought that they might also have to face discrimination. As Charles again pointed out:

“I also remember...I was actually a witness to the terrible massacre that was taking place. I remember seeing the street...it was like a morgue with dead bodies everywhere and everything was being burnt. I said to myself, this is not a place I am going to live in...I felt the time could possibly come when they would get on top of us...it was not a safe place to live anymore...the wonderful thing was up to that time how peacefully everybody lived together- it was fantastic, until madness got to them. Overnight there was this hate that suddenly came out because of religious differences...overnight they were running around killing each other and we were in the middle of it. We were scared that they would at anytime turn on us.”

Similarly, for Joan, the memory of riots was greatly disturbing. She spoke about her father who was the station superintendent in Sealdah, and told her stories of ‘trains that would come in full of mutilated bodies’ and how the station was ‘full of refugees’. Whilst these broad narratives of the unhomely city was expressed through the widespread communal violence that affected Calcutta at that time and contributed to a general sense of not-belonging in the newly formed nation, many Anglo-Indians also located their sense of discomfort in specific experiences of their own neighbourhood. The Partition riots placed Anglo-Indians in an in-between situation in their immediate locality. As Christine said:

“I saw people being killed during the riots from our balcony...the Society cinema was the borderline...towards the left side were the Hindus and to the right Muslims...they used to come out sharpening their knives. [] It was a difficult time for the Anglo-Indians, but we were neutral parties...when they had the riots, they would never interfere with the Anglo-Indians, because they could identify them straight-away...”.

Many also recounted stories of saving their Hindu and/or Muslim neighbours. Belinda, living in Toronto, talking about these times, initially said that “...it didn’t

affect the Anglo-Indian community as such because we were neutral...we were in the middle... so when there was this big massacre, we saw it..." As an after thought, she then added:

"I think ultimately it affected us...these were our friends...our neighbours who were slaughtered, right? ...the Indian people respected others...they called us Mother, Auntie...so my grandmother was called Mummyji. At the back of our home, divided by this low housing or the water park lived the Muslims and on the other side the Hindus. When they had the big riot and they were slaughtering people...in one family they killed the father, the mother and the kids. Their neighbours were terrified so they came to our door to ask for help. They were Muslims. My grandmother said, 'the bathroom is in the room, go in there'. I remember being terrified because the Hindus came with knives...and the second time it was a Hindu that came...over the wall. And my Grandma took them in. We kept them till dark and then took them over to the other side..."

Many, like Belinda, spoke about how they helped both Hindus and Muslims, and at the same time pointed out that despite being in a 'neutral' position, the ambivalent identity of the community added to the anxiety. Like Belinda, Raymond too remembers stories from his neighbourhood:

"My next door neighbour, Mrs. S, gave shelter to 12 Hindu *gowalas*...she gave them food. The sweeper, who was also a Hindu, told her- 'if I go home, I will be killed'- so my uncle put his suit and his *sola topi* on him, put him on his motorcycle and took him to the camp on the Maidan...on the road they thought he was an Anglo-Indian. Anglo-Indians played a very important part in helping out both communities...they did not take any sides."

The presence of many Anglo-Indians in civic services like the police also lent a sense of security to the community- as Donald pointed out:

“Both communities looked up to the Anglo-Indian and the police force to keep peace. It was like a barrier around us, because we lived right in the middle of a Muslim complex. When we went out to fetch our rations, you could see the distrust, but in the same token there was an element of safety in being an Anglo-Indian.”

The communal violence at the time of Partition thus turned the city unhomely for Anglo-Indians as for other communities, but at the same time, their in-between position gave a sense of security. The sense of unhomeliness was further heightened in the 1960s as the reservation of public sector jobs in the railways, post and telegraph, customs for Anglo-Indians under the Constitution of India ceased. This was also a time when the Chinese community faced hostilities following the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962. It would be incorrect to say that the events around 1947 did not affect the Chinese community. The end of colonial rule created anxieties around ideas of belonging. Peter Au, 70 described the differences between colonial and postcolonial Calcutta in the following way:

“...I mean the attachment is there but the feeling is different. I suppose during British rule... the British themselves were foreigners too, so they treated us according to the law, but after Independence the power shifted to India, so they look at you more as foreigners...”.

This sense of being the racialised ‘other’ intensified with the process of Indianisation. Nationalist rhetorics were often perceived to be exclusivist by these ‘in-between’ communities. The All India Anglo-Indian Association, however, made attempts to assert the political rights of the community, and calls to stem the flow of emigration tugged at patriotic feelings of the community. For the Chinese, a sense of belonging in the immediate postcolonial period was marked by ambivalence. The events around 1962, however, added a political immediacy to their situation. The next section describes the events around 1962 and how it affected the Chinese community in Calcutta.

1962

Writing about the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict, Ellen Oxfeld (1993:80) observes that no study of the Chinese tanner community would be complete without examining the effects of this turbulent period as it had a profound impact on community life and on the relations between the Chinese community and others. Oxfeld's comment is equally applicable to the wider Indian Chinese community residing in Calcutta and elsewhere in the country. As mentioned earlier, a large part of the narrative of belonging for the Calcutta Chinese community included talking about the 1962 conflict and how the community was made to feel not at home during that time. Whilst narratives of not-belonging to the nation formed an important part of discussing notions of belonging, especially through ideas of citizenship, a located exploration of the community's experience in Calcutta helps analyse how the idea of the city as home changed at this time.

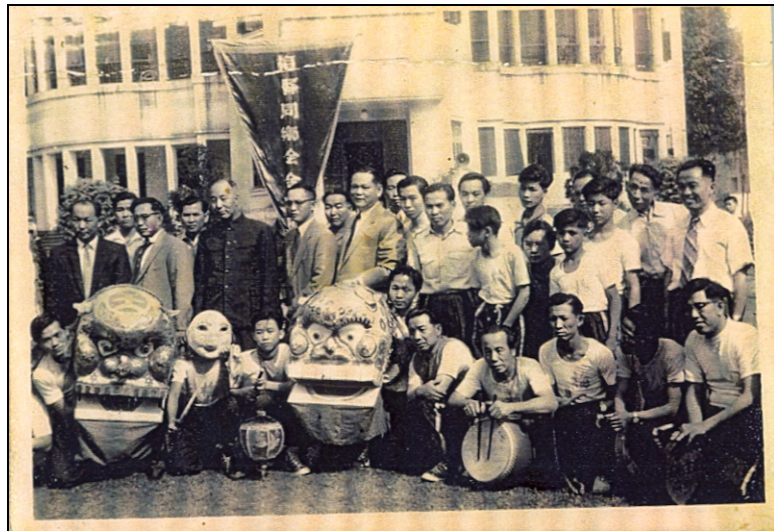


Figure 5.1 Chinese consulate in Calcutta, c.1955 (photo courtesy: Chen Chou Hua)

The fluctuating political relations between India and China were reflected in the Calcutta Chinese community in various ways. The formation of Communist China in 1949 strengthened political links with India, and when Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister, the links between the two countries and its people were described through the phrase '*Hindi Chini bhai bhai*' (Indians and Chinese are brothers). In Calcutta, the People's Republic of China (PRC) government opened a consulate (Figure 5.1). The Bank of China opened a branch in the city. Chinese community life in Calcutta, as with other overseas Chinese communities elsewhere, was marked by

the divisions between the nationalist or Kuomintang supporters and Communist China sympathisers (Oxfeld, 1993). In 1962 the community was forced to encounter the effects of discordant national relations in their daily lives. They faced rampant discrimination during the war at various levels. Although a narrative of trauma unified a Chinese Indian identity later, and intra-communal divisions were played down as both Cantonese and Hakka Chinese were taken to the camp, political divisions between Communist and Nationalist supporters underpinned that unity. Many of my interviewees mentioned incidents of business rivals from within the community taking advantage of this division and identifying their rivals as Communist supporters to the police.

In historicising the Chinese 'other', in the context of the representation of the community in Deepa Mehta's film, *Fire*, Payal Banerjee (2007:442) writes that 'from [a] political context of the war and historicity of Indian nationalism emerged a discursive space that constructed the image of an ideal Indian nation/citizen, over and against the image of the Chinese 'other' in India'. Debates on the Chinese 'other' often played out in the realm of citizenship issues. The 1955 Citizenship Act of India granted citizenship rights to those who were born in the country, or whose parents/grandparents were born in India, or who had been ordinarily resident of India for at least 5 years prior to that, but these rights were taken away in 1962 in the light of hostilities between the two countries (Cohen and Leng, 1972). Restrictions were placed on the movements of the Chinese. In Calcutta this meant that those who lived in Tangra had to apply for daily permits to come to the raw-hide market in Calcutta (Oxfeld, 1993:81). Many of my interviewees spoke about the uncomfortable experience of going regularly to the Foreigners' Registration Office to renew their permits. As Daniel Lee remembers:

“...my own maternal uncle, they left India, they were carpenters, they used to work in strategic places, like docks and airports, immediately after that war, and they didn't have any more work so they left...[]...I have personally felt injustice... my mother and father were registered foreigners, although my mother was born in India. So every year we had to renew our stay in security control. As a boy when I used to go there I used to be frightened because our parents were frightened...”.

This sense of insecurity continues to haunt members of the community till today. Many were taken to an internment camp in Deoli, Rajasthan, and were detained there from 1963 till as late as 1967 when the camp was shut down. Many of my interviewees spoke of the horror and the trauma of having to go to bed everyday with some money and food sewn into their clothes, because the police came at any time of the night. As Paul Hsu remarked:

“... we were scared...I remember we were always kind of prepared for when they would come and take us away...my dad made big sacks in case something happened...a lot of family was taken away without notice. I saw them coming one morning...I still remember the lady, she was so distraught she didn't have the strength to climb in the van they were taking her in...its something I will never forget...”.

Similarly, Patricia Hsu, also in Toronto, narrates her memories of being taken to the camp where she spent four years of her life, and how that unsettled her idea of home:

“I still remember very clearly the whole, we were just, we came from the train and just before we went inside the camp, they searched us, body searched us. We were woken up at the crack of dawn with whatever clothes we had on we went there... the water was undrinkable, we didn't have clean water for at least a few days... the soldiers cooked for us and we were literally like beggars with our pots, lined up...eventually those who were more fluent in English came forward as a spokesperson for the whole camp and they went spoke with the camp commander... slowly things got better in terms of food, people went back to China...we were housed in a tall fence with barbed wires and each station they also had soldiers with guns drawn, overlooking us... you know for those memories, I guess there is a sense of bitterness in what happened there, but it is also a sense of home because that is where we were born and brought up”.

The 1962 war obviously left a deep scar in the community's mind and ideas of belonging and not-belonging were often reflected in everyday relations. Chinese businesses were targeted all over India, as were individuals (GOI White Paper No. VIII, 1963) and any organisation that identified with Communist China, like the Shin Hua School (Figure 5.2) and China Review newspaper office, was shut down. Young Chinese Indians, most of whom had been born in India, also faced animosity at school. As Pamela Chen, who now lives in Toronto, remembers:

“It was quite devastating actually...I felt intimidated every time I left my house. They had these little rhymes- *cheena cheena chong chong*- very derogatory remarks... even in school...it was always that negative feeling you would get that oh, you are an enemy...you were at war with my country. Even though I was born Indian and had an Indian passport...it didn't matter...you looked Chinese.”



Figure 5.2 At Shin Hua School, Calcutta c.1955 (photo courtesy: Chen Chou Hua)

Such issues created a problematic relationship with authority. As Paul Hsu pointed out, ‘there was no ill feeling among the neighbours...it is the authority that used to scare us...their people used to come and keep an eye on us...to see what we were

doing, where we are going’. This fear of the ‘authorities’ continues till today. As Daniel Lee, who lives in Calcutta remarked that, ‘even in our generation this fear continues...that barrier is still not over and it will take another generation to get over it’.

Whilst these times of political turmoil provide a temporal framework to analyse the feelings of belonging/not belonging to the city for Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans, other narratives around issues of identity, work and migration also complicate the notion of the city as home. In the next section I explore these narratives in the context of the notion of Calcutta as *desh* or ‘homeland’ for these two communities.

Calcutta as *desh*: home, memory, identity

Laura Bear (2007) describes the railway colony as an Anglo-Indian idea of *desh*. *Desh* is a Bengali term which refers to the nation as homeland, but it also refers to ‘home’ in the sense of a place of origin, and is usually located in rural areas. It is common to place people by asking, ‘where is your *desh*?’ thereby fixing ‘origin’ to a territory. In her discussion about the connections between Calcutta and the railway colonies, Bear (2007) writes:

“...for Anglo-Indian families in Kolkata the railway colony as a place of memory and conceptual space gave families a foundational point of origin, a *desh*. Anglo-Indian accounts of railway colonies were equivalent to the stories of the family *desh* told by other urban groups in the city, such as Marwaris and Bengalis.”(p.180-181).

Calcutta can similarly be described as *desh* for Anglo-Indians and Chinese who were born in the city or have lived there for a long period of time. Underpinning the idea of the city as *desh* is a vision of the city in the past rather than in the present, as a place in memory rather than a present day lived space. Whilst the city in memory plays an important role in narratives of belonging and is a significant way in which Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities describe their connection with the city, I also focus on the narratives of those who still live in the city. The connection between the past and the present, between those who have moved and those who have stayed on

also creates a complex relationship with the city. For the railway colony, Bear (2007:181) points out that “as a real place in the present, rather than as a site of nostalgia, the colony had to be escaped”. Her interviewees viewed the railway colony as a place in decline and degeneration that had to be left behind, yet moving away did not sever the links with this space for them as the connections with railway colony re-appeared with relatives ‘left behind’ who showed up at their houses in Calcutta (ibid.). Bear’s arguments also link ideas of *desh* to *jati* which she describes as the ‘multiple and historically produced meanings of species, nation, race and kinship groups’ (p.3) thereby linking ideas of genealogy to national belonging. Whilst her argument is located specifically in practices of bureaucracy and explores how ‘intimate stories of the self’ are closely related to more public ideas of belonging to the nation for Anglo-Indians, I frame an argument around Calcutta as *desh* to explore the narratives of belonging of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in two ways. First, I locate a sense of Calcutta as *desh* in the narratives of community identity and work as a way to link identity to a territory. Second, I draw on the notion of homeland implied in the idea of *desh* to explore the emotional connections of diasporic Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans to the city.

Tracing belonging

Calcutta, for its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities, is a place situated at the intersections of community identity and memory. Earlier in this chapter I discussed how tensions between narratives of belonging to the nation and the city reformulated community identity for both Anglo-Indians and Chinese. In this section, I explore how tracing a sense of belonging to the city locates such stories in the wider politics of community identity, as well as how such identities are set in nostalgia for a Calcutta of the past. I also explore how the articulation of a city-centred community identity creates an embodied and gendered difference between those who are from Calcutta and those who are not.

Calcutta-wallah

Calcutta occupies an important place in Anglo-Indian memory, imagination and attachment, having one of the largest concentrations of the community, both in the past and in the present. There is no doubt a great nostalgia for colonial Calcutta in the community. For many the city is remembered as the bustling place they moved to

from the relatively placid surroundings of the railway colony. Lionel, for example, explained that he ‘lived in a railway colony [where] there was nothing other than the railway...everyone seemed to go to Calcutta...if there was ever a hope of getting a job, you got one there’. Apart from the city as a place to find jobs, the city is also remembered as a place with a lively social life. For Leonard, who spent a long time in a boarding school in Kurseong, the city ‘gave a lot to offer because it was a chance to be somewhere different...it was a chance to go to restaurants and meet other people, the cinemas...it was a contrast of living a very quiet life in the hill station...’. Both Lionel and Leonard now live in London and for them Calcutta is a city in memory, although Lionel goes back regularly for holidays. But even for those who have remained, the nostalgia for an earlier Calcutta is strong and the city is often imagined as being in the past, when there were many more members of the community. On being asked whether Calcutta was home, Hilda replied ‘yes, definitely...because we had Anglo-Indians in the police, we had Anglo-Indians in the railways, we had them on buses, so yes we felt at home...in fact we still feel at home...but not home, home like it used to be...because now things have changed, but we are comfortable...we are ok...’. Derek, a prominent member of the community, explained the special place that Calcutta has in an Anglo-Indian imagination:

“...I think it has to do with the fact that Calcutta was the capital of the country and therefore it was a land of opportunity for people who wanted to work...For some reason Calcutta socially and culturally is a much more big-hearted and open-minded city than many other cities...I am not running down any other city but I think that Calcutta suits the Anglo-Indian mentality. The Anglo-Indian felt most at home in a place like Calcutta where you could do your own thing...and as a result of which I think the city has a very special place in our hearts. I know people who live in Australia, they make sure they come back to Calcutta at least once every two years - if they don’t smell Calcutta and go back, they feel they have missed out on something... Also there is a commonality between the Bengali and the Anglo-Indian... that is why they are comfortable with each other. I am not saying the Anglo-Indian is not comfortable with others...the Anglo-Indian is very comfortable with the Chinese

community...the Jewish community...initially because of eating habits and later for other reasons, the Anglo-Indian has much in common with the Muslim community...so where you would be selling beef on the streets, Anglo-Indians would be comfortable...now everybody is comfortable. The church in Calcutta too...most old churches and parishes would be in Calcutta. For these reasons I think the Anglo-Indian has clung on to Calcutta and loves Calcutta passionately”.

Such broad narratives of belonging to the city expressed by those who have remained in Calcutta and those who have moved elsewhere dwelt on some common points. The nostalgic dimension was present in most narratives, and while the nostalgia revolved mainly around ‘community’ life, painting an image of Anglo-Indian Calcutta, there were mentions of other communities as well.

‘Calcutta-wallah’ is a term used by Anglo-Indians to describe those who were from the city, both those who were born there and those who spent a significant length of time in the city. It is an identity connected to the city of the past as described earlier, and although it continues to be used in the present, it is projected through and as nostalgia. The embodied figure of the Calcutta-wallah not only differentiates and places Calcutta in a hierarchy compared to other places where Anglo-Indians live/d, but it was also often expressed in gendered terms. The term ‘*wallah*’ itself is a masculine form of the noun, but is used to denote both Anglo-Indian men and women from Calcutta. However in certain circumstances, which I describe later, the Calcutta-wallah identity was projected through women.

Thinking back about what a Calcutta-wallah identity meant, Donald, who now lives in London, says:

“Calcutta Anglo-Indians thought they were the *crème de la crème*. Calcutta was a big city and they had travelled to be there. There were Madras Anglo-Indians, Bombay Anglo-Indians, Delhi Anglo-Indians but... Anglo-Indians in Calcutta always thought they were a cut above the rest...[] I never thought about it that way. It was my home as far as I was concerned...I had no experience of any other city...I don’t think

Calcutta has any special characteristic, but if you ask me whether Calcutta Anglo-Indians like to think about the city that way, then I would say it is probably true.”

Donald’s comment points to two important aspects of the Calcutta-wallah identity. First, it suggests the existence of an affective connection with Calcutta, which was related to personal memories of the city as home. Second, by stating that he had no experience of any other city, Donald’s comment also suggests the construction of a Calcutta-wallah identity mainly through moving away from the city, as well as through the eyes of others who came to the city. Indeed, many pointed to the significance of a Calcutta-wallah identity through a contrast with the railway colonies or upcountry towns. As Deliah, who lives in Canada, says:

“I think Calcutta Anglo-Indians have this assumption of being a little more sophisticated, a sort of a big city identity...Anglo-Indians who came from smaller towns would be less Western or less sophisticated...in fact upcountry Anglo-Indians would come to Calcutta to do their Christmas shopping...they would go to New Market and buy barley sugar...”.

When I asked Linda who was born in a railway colony not far from Calcutta and had lived in Calcutta for a while, what distinguished Calcutta Anglo-Indians from others, she replied:

“Now when I look back and hear them talking, I get the feeling that Calcutta Anglo-Indians considered themselves king of the castle. They were so much more Westernised. They had New Market. They had all the new fashions. They had the best cinemas. They seemed to think they were the best. Some of my older friends say- ‘oh the ladies of Calcutta, they were the prettiest things’. But when I look around me, there were beautiful women from Madras, from Bangalore! [...] People would talk about the Grail Club and the Rangers Club. Those places were associated only with Calcutta...I think that is what is about Calcutta - it is the social scene”.

Often these differences between a Calcutta Anglo-Indian and others were described in embodied terms. When I asked Patricia, who lives in Calcutta, about the particularity of a Calcutta-wallah identity she explained:

“... somebody from Madras, you straightaway say they are from Madras, because their accent is different...the way they dress is different...in Calcutta, you know an Anglo-Indian straight away whether she is dressed in a salwar kameez or a dress...there is something distinct about the Calcutta Anglo-Indian”.

Such embodied differences are also reflected by Denzil. Denzil now lives in Toronto and he reminisces about the time when he had just moved to Calcutta from an upcountry small town:

“Calcutta was the most lively place at one time, especially for those who came from a small place like I did. You had to get your bearings before you could move around. You had to take things very cautiously. You felt like an outsider. In Calcutta you had to dress better. You had to wear a suit to church...elsewhere you could go in pants and shirt.”

For others, a particular Calcutta identity was expressed in gendered terms. A special Calcutta identity was connected to the ‘ladies of Calcutta’, a popular song written by Bill Forbes in the 1960s. The song compares the ladies of Calcutta to ‘chicks of Naples’, ‘French birds’, ‘Swedish dolls’ and ‘English birds’ to conclude that the ladies of Calcutta ‘are the sweetest by far’ (source: <http://kolkatacitydiaries.blogspot.com/2008/06/ladies-of-calcutta.html>). Indeed for many, memories of Calcutta and association with the city, revolved around the city as a social place and the special character of the city was often reflected through Anglo-Indian women. Describing Calcutta as he remembered, Bradley, who lives in London, says:

“You had all the people coming from upcountry...all the girls following their parents, and the coolies with the basket...the girls with tight skirt

and fancy shoes...the women of Calcutta, they really dressed...they were in those cancan skirts and high heels...”

Wilma, who was from Calcutta, and went to boarding school in Kurseong, was marked by her ‘Cal girl’ identity. As she explains:

“Where I went to school, there were many girls from railway colonies. I was looked upon as quite a sophisticate. The films that had already released in Calcutta had not come there as yet. I remember sitting in the lavatories, telling them stories about the latest movies. Fashion-wise too Calcutta was ahead.”

For Agatha, who was born in a railway colony and now lives in London, Calcutta was a special place she went to:

“Being in a boarding school, I wasn’t in Calcutta first and the Calcutta girls, they all talked about New Market. When I went home, my mum would take me straight to New Market to buy material for new clothes...sometimes she would take me to other places like the Chinese shoe shops...”.

She, like Wilma, also remembers the interactions she had in boarding school with Calcutta girls and explained what made Calcutta different:

“In boarding school...we were all equal. To be honest we didn’t know which were the free girls²⁵ or anything like that, but where clothes or styles were concerned...the Calcutta girls were the crème in the area. Listening to them chat the city seemed to be far more interesting, but when one looks back, we from the railway settlements had far better facilities like space and sports. None of us lived in flats, we had h-u-g-e double storey houses...[] Yet we envied the Calcutta people. We said ‘I

²⁵ Those whose fees were sponsored.

need to go to Chinatown and have Chinese food'. We never got Chinese food [in railway colonies]".

Alan, who lives in Calcutta, draws on these differences to explain what a particular Calcutta Anglo-Indian identity means today:

"Although we live in a predominantly Bengali society, where we have mixed, most of us live in Muslim areas. So we never really learnt the local language, except for kitchen Hindi²⁶. So we kept an accent²⁷. Our accent has not gone to the local tongue and made a mix, like in the south".

Whilst Alan's comments point to the continuance of an embodied Calcutta-wallah identity, it also reflects how notions of cosmopolitanism, as described in the previous chapter, influenced a city-based identity. A cosmopolitan sense distinguished Calcutta from other places. In Toronto-based Polly's words, 'a city is like a melting pot...when you are in a smaller place like upcountry, you are more aware of who is coming and who is going'. Similarly, David mentions, 'the people from smaller places, like the railway colonies would mostly interact within the community, they didn't have the broader mix'. Denzil also describes the way a cosmopolitan Calcutta helped create a particular Calcutta Anglo-Indian identity:

"Calcutta will always be Calcutta. I think people will always be from Calcutta. If you are from Bombay you are a totally different Anglo-Indian, if you are from Madras you are different, but Anglo-Indians from Calcutta have a different lifestyle...in the way they mix. I think we were more exposed to cosmopolitan people than Bombay or Madras...[] Calcutta was the British capital at one time, so there are a lot of cultural things in Calcutta that made Anglo-Indians different. You had these

²⁶ Refers to the kind of Hindi that Anglo-Indians learnt to be able to converse with their domestic helps in India.

²⁷ The Anglo-Indian accent is quite specific and mark/ed the community differently from others. Blunt (2005) writes about the way accent made Anglo-Indians feel not at home, when they migrated to Britain and Australia. Such an accent, was often remarked in 'disparaging' terms or 'chi chi' (dirty) accent (Blunt, 2005: 57)

clubs, the schools...I don't think there were so many schools anywhere else in India...".

The historical circumstances of Calcutta described above have changed, as has the Calcutta-wallah identity. Although it is essentially an identity refracted through the past, the manner in which it is described in the present, especially by those who still live in the city, points to how the sense of a Calcutta Anglo-Indian identity draws on the cosmopolitan aspect of the city, yet at the same time retains a distinctive community identity. Derek, for example, notes that in Calcutta, 'everybody [all communities in Calcutta] keeps their own thing and is respected for it'. It is this ability to retain their own distinct community identity that the Chinese Calcuttans emphasise in tracing their sense of belonging to the city.

A Calcutta Chinese identity

Belonging for Chinese Calcuttans also revolves around emotional connections to the city as 'home'. Whilst nostalgia plays an important role in the case of Anglo-Indians, belonging to Calcutta for the Chinese has differed significantly over generations. Life in Calcutta for the Chinese in the early days revolved around the community and its related associations like the clubs, schools and temples. Calcutta, for the Chinese in the initial years was, as I explained earlier, a temporary home. The events of 1962 changed the circumstances and narratives of Calcutta as home told by those who were born in the city. The early close-knit community life for the Chinese is linked to the contexts in which the community migrated to Calcutta. Similar to Anglo-Indians, the reasons for a concentration of the Chinese community in the city were principally because of Calcutta's position as a colonial city. Although the Chinese express some nostalgia for colonial and the immediately post-colonial Calcutta, feelings of attachment to the city are often expressed in terms of migration and the need to make a living. Ann Lo, who lives in Calcutta, explained that the main factor is 'a business platform...wherever you survive you call it a home'. Another Chinese Calcuttan, Fu Huang said, 'Calcutta is like a second home...it's a nice city...it is the cheapest city in India...you can have a meal for Rs.5 or Rs.500'. Both are Hakka and such narratives of belonging to the city are grounded in Hakka ethics of work. Work or the lack of it thus often framed notions of Chinese Calcutta. I discuss this further later in the chapter. In this section, I explore how a 'Calcutta Chinese' identity is envisaged,

despite the inherent Hakka/Cantonese divide that runs through cultural practices and identities.

On being asked whether a particular Calcutta Chinese identity existed, Patricia Hsu replied:

“I think Calcutta is the city where you find most of the Chinese culture preserved, like in terms of the Chinese New Year, going to the cemetery twice a year to pay your respect to elders...in other places like Bombay, Delhi or Bangalore, that part of the culture is missing...”.

A Calcutta Chinese identity is thus different from an embodied Calcutta-wallah Anglo-Indian identity, and is rather located in cultural practices of the community. Writing about the Malaysian Chinese in Penang, Jean DeBernardi (2004) describes such ‘rites of belonging’ as integral in creating an identity for a diasporic Chinese community. Whilst for Anglo-Indians, tracing a sense of belonging to Calcutta was rooted in the colonial city, for the Chinese, a common identity of being from Calcutta is ritualised through the practice of visiting Achhipur in the four weeks following Chinese New Year. The beginnings of the community in the city are traced back to the arrival of Yong Atchew, a Fukkienese sailor merchant in the late 18th century. Many versions of this popular history survive till this day, but the most common ones re-tell the story of how Atchew wrested land from Warren Hastings, the governor-general at that time, through dint of courage, and established a Chinese colony (Liang, 2007). Achhipur, as it is called now, is an important place for the community, and every year after Chinese New Year, several groups go to offer prayers at the Bogong-Bopo (God and Goddess of Earth) temple and Atchew’s tomb. The Bogong-Bopo temple is also seen as the protector of the Chinese in Calcutta and their worship by the entire community is an example of how the community’s history in India is ritualised (Zhang Xing, 2008). In recent times, there have been concerns about encroachment on the space around the temple. The Gee Hing Association in charge of Achhipur is trying to find historical records to prove their title to the land (field notes). The case is interesting on several counts. It points to complex interactions between popular history, identity and urban space. It also points to the difficulties of claiming space by migrant communities in the city.

Talking about the practice of going to Achhipur every year and also visiting the cemetery to pay respect to clan ancestors, Francis Chu, who lives in Calcutta, reflects on the importance of holding on to cultural practices for the community:

“I think they are trying to hold on to our roots...culture ultimately is about being Chinese...it is not just about being Calcutta Chinese...but Chinese Chinese...[] I think ancestor worship...that is a very strong part of Chinese culture.”

Whilst such rituals of visiting Acchipur play an important part in framing a common Chinese identity, the practice of visiting the cemeteries is divided along regional groups. Indeed a common Calcutta Chinese identity is fractured along associational politics and regional identity. Such an identity is also gendered. As Mei Ling points out, ‘all this clan-bonding rituals... it is all male’. Since Hakkas are the larger group in Calcutta today, a Calcutta Chinese identity articulated by the Hakka Chinese also revolves around a pride of a ‘pure’ Hakka identity surviving in the city. Although Hakkas living in central Calcutta also draw on this notion, the notion of a ‘pure’ identity focuses mainly on Tangra. As Fu Huang, who lives in Tangra, says, ‘anywhere else they don’t speak proper Hakka, only in Calcutta we speak it well...because we are still conservative’. Brenda Chen who used to live in Tangra also points out:

“You will find a lot more ancient traditions of China maintained in Calcutta. Because I think when the Chinese moved out of China, a certain era of China was encapsulated and brought to Calcutta. The customs are maintained even now in Calcutta. The Chinese in mainland China may have modernised and moved on, but [in Calcutta] the formation of these little groups is still prevalent”.

Whilst a Calcutta Chinese identity, like the Calcutta-wallah identity, frames the city in a time-warp, it is also an identity which has moved its performative space from within the community to the public space of the city through the formation of the Indian Chinese Association (ICA). The ICA was formed in 1999 and organises a

cultural programme for Chinese New Year. It is also attempting to create a more public face of the community by collaborating with the Kolkata Municipal Corporation in various projects like planning for a new Chinatown and thinking of a museum on the history of the community in the now-derelict building of Nanking restaurant (The Telegraph, Calcutta, 2nd June, 2008). One of the officials of the ICA said that they deliberately chose to put 'Indian' in the name for the association rather than 'overseas', 'because we were born in India...we want to integrate with the society here...'. Stressing the need for integration and also recognition for the community, Christopher Wu, a young Chinese Calcuttan, says:

“It [the ICA] is a very good thing. In a way we Chinese have existed in India for a long time. People have now got to know that there is a Chinatown in Calcutta. Other Indians [outside Calcutta] didn't know we existed...[] We were behind the scenes, but now things have started changing.”

Christopher Wu's sentiments are also shared by others and many are now voicing their concern for a greater recognition for the community. In this context of presenting a public face of the community, many are also drawing parallels with the experience of the Anglo-Indian community and asking for a greater political representation of the community (www.dhapa.com).

'We too are part of Calcutta'

In Rafeeq Ellias' documentary on the Calcutta Chinese community, *The Legend of Fat Mama* (2005), an Indian Chinese lawyer living in Toronto spoke about her reactions to the 1962 war. Reflecting on the incidences after the war, she explained that she believes what the community wants is not just an apology from the Indian government but recognition by the Indian people of the fact that the community was an important part of Calcutta and contributed to the economy as well as the cultural fabric of the city. As minority communities in the city, both Anglo-Indians and Chinese have often asserted a need for recognition of their communities' contribution. Whilst notions of patriotic service to the *desh* or the nation existed in Anglo-Indian narratives, for example through the Anglo-Indian woman's services in the Women's Auxiliary Corps (India) or WAC(I) or the community's role in the

running of railways, such an idea was not present in the Chinese narratives. An idea of belonging to the city as narrated through work, on the other hand, grounded their experience in the city and reveals complex intersections between community identity, city space and migration.

Calcutta, until the 1960s, was an important place for both communities in terms of work. For Anglo-Indians who had grown up in railway colonies, the removal of job reservations meant that they had to move elsewhere for work. As Lionel said:

“...we went to Calcutta because it was a city. We used to live in the railway colony...there was nothing over there other than the railway. Everyone seemed to go to Calcutta. If there was ever a hope of getting a job, you got one there. Loads of jobs...lots of railway boys went up to Calcutta.”

For the Chinese too, colonial Calcutta was an attractive place to work. Liang (2007) distinguishes between three stages of Chinese migration to Calcutta and the associated occupational groups. The first wave of migrants who came in the nineteenth century mainly consisted of traders and skilled workers. The second group, comprising mostly of unskilled workers, came in the 1920s and 1930s as refugees fleeing oppressive conditions in China, and the third group came post World War II, as civil war raged in China. Liang (2007) further points out that the Chinese carved out a niche for themselves in four types of occupation - carpentry, shoemaking, tannery and dentistry. While these occupations were, and still are, influenced by regional backgrounds, and thus reinforced tight community identities, the Chinese have also ventured into other professions like restaurants and beauty parlours. The younger generation, like the Anglo-Indians, have been educated in English-medium schools and increasingly work in the service sector.

One of the implications of identifying certain work types with community identity was that it was used frequently in narratives of belonging to the city. Patricia, for example, points out that Anglo-Indians ‘have certainly contributed to the field of education, music, sports...and also in organisations...those that are not just for Anglo-Indians, they are for everybody...’. Pamela Chen, too, asserts that the Chinese

‘brought the economy in...the Chinese were in business and...we kept the city going. We supplied a lot of needs to the people, like dry cleaning services, we supplied shoes, we supplied food. I think we brought the economy up...but we were never acknowledged for what our contributions were’. The idea of being of ‘service’ to the city was at the core of asserting a sense of belonging. While the numbers were there, it strengthened community identity considerably, but with emigration, the identification with certain professions declined. As Alan notes:

“...the time is different...today there is a different need...the contributions today are different. I know a lot of Anglo-Indians who are still in the customs, in the railways, in the police...but it is not the numbers anymore...it is a different relationship...we are not looking at ourselves as Anglo-Indians but as Indians, so each one is doing a duty”.

The notion of the citizen and the idea of ‘duty’ was part of nationalistic discourses of belonging which were appropriated by minority communities. For Anglo-Indians, such ideas were often articulated in terms of integration/assimilation. Whilst the differences were pointed out in cultural terms, raising questions, for example, about whether Anglo-Indians living in India should adopt ‘Indian’ dress, language and/or eating habits, narratives of work also drew on this notion to explain belonging. David, for example, was insistent on pointing out the necessity of taking education seriously. He said:

“For many Anglo-Indians [earlier] it was about the festive side...the tamasha [spectacle] side, the jiving and all that stuff...very few wanted to pursue something outside of that. Who are we? How can we contribute? We did have to fit in too. We were Anglo-Indians and as India Indianised, you had to fit in”.

Work thus, besides reinforcing stereotypical community identities, also acted as a space to integrate with the city and with the new nation. Narratives of belonging as expressed through work also had gendered implications. While certain types of work like being a secretary, nurse or teacher for Anglo-Indians, and running a beauty salon

for the Chinese, were clearly dominated by women, a more general 'community' narrative brought out contrasting gendered patterns in Anglo-Indian and Chinese narratives. An Anglo-Indian sense of contribution to society has always been more focused around women. Anglo-Indian women embodied modernity and were often contrasted with Indian women (Blunt, 2005:59), as portrayed in the 1963 film by Satyajit Ray, *Mahanagar* (The Big City). The film revolves around the friendship between a Bengali woman, Arati (Madhabi Mukherjee) and her Anglo-Indian colleague, Edith (Vicky Redwood) who helps Arati overcome her internal conflicts of working in the outside world. Polly, for example, stresses how Anglo-Indian women were much in demand in the work force:

“In Calcutta, you had all these places like the banks where we used to work...we were so well loved...and if you knew that an Anglo-Indian woman was coming for a job, the manager would get us the job because we were good workers”.

For women like Polly, who have migrated from Calcutta, the memory of working in Calcutta is particularly important. Penelope, who lives in Toronto, remembers:

“I used to work in Grindlay's...Grindlay's was my home...I so loved it there...I was so pampered there...at 10 o'clock the bearer used to come with tea...we used to get lunch and transport...it was a home away from home.”

Whilst work space for Anglo-Indian women contributed to a sense of belonging to the city in the past, gender differences are also pointed out when narrating a sense of Anglo-Indian identity in the present. Patricia, who lives in Calcutta, explains the assurance of being a Calcutta Anglo-Indian through the participation of Anglo-Indian women in the workforce:

“There is something distinct about the Calcutta Anglo-Indian...at times we call it a haughtiness, but there is an assurance...because the Anglo-Indians, where jobs are concerned...got all the good jobs, like in the police, customs, railways, secretaries, air hostesses...all Anglo-

Indians....especially the girls...the girls usually do well...unless they marry wrong and end up in poverty...”.

Alison Blunt (2005:201) writes that the ‘status and existence of the community are embodied by Anglo-Indian women’. Patricia’s comment above is an indication of how work, marriage, identity and a sense of belonging are intimately connected for the community. Similar to Anglo-Indian women, narratives of work for Chinese women reveal complex overlaps between the public space of the city and the private space of home. Whilst the Anglo-Indian woman has come to embody the identity of the community in more public spaces of the city through work, the Chinese woman’s contribution is seen more through spaces of home.

In her work on family and enterprise amongst Tangra’s Hakka community, Ellen Oxfeld (1993:143) writes about the concept of ‘wife’s wealth’ prevalent in the community. She notes that the Tangra Chinese often explain the success of their business through the role played in it by the women (ibid.). She further notes that the Chinese tanneries were both home and workplace for the community and the non-separation of these areas enabled women to take on a greater role in the business, alongside doing household chores (ibid.). Hakka women have generally been viewed as ‘the most hardworking and independent women in China’ (Luo, 1992 cited in Lozada, 2005:97). Yet, strong patriarchal values have meant that the Calcutta Chinese women have mostly worked within the community enterprises. Remembering growing up in such a closed environment in Tangra, Lucy Chang, who now lives in Toronto, says:

“The boys...everything was just served to them...the girls had to do everything. They had to carry the water, put on the gas, look after the house...sometimes life was tough [...] the girls were not supposed to go out much, because in Dhapa everybody lived so close-by...everyone knew whose daughter you are...how you behaved...all your actions were microscoped [sic]”.

Although the community in Tangra remains quite conservative, women are increasingly taking a more active role in the family business and some have also

stepped out on their own. As Monica Liu, a successful woman entrepreneur owning several restaurants in Calcutta, says:

“Every woman has her own story; a unique personal experience and set of events that led to the decision to open her own business. Chinese men often dominated the business scene for ages. But in every occupation, it was the women who gave their input but stayed behind the scenes. However, in recent times, the tough economic situation and money crunch have driven many enterprising Chinese women to come forward and throw in their lot alongside their men folk in the hospitality industry as well as more lucrative commercial ventures [...] There was a time when almost every beauty saloon in Kolkata had Chinese women hairdresser. Every customer demanded to be served by a Chinese beautician and admired them for their skill, dedication and discipline.” (Liu, 2008).

Longing and belonging

Tracing a sense of belonging through narratives of community identity and work located the city amidst wider community politics and also asserted a connection to the city. Besides linking identity to territory, the idea of *desh* also implies a movement away from the place of ‘origin’. Migration from Calcutta is an important dimension to explore the notion of belonging for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. Whilst feelings of not-belonging were crucial for large-scale migration from the city, the way the city is remembered as home reasserts a sense of belonging. Calcutta as home is refigured not only for those who have migrated but also those who remained. In this section, I explore connections between Avtar Brah’s (1996:196) notion of home ‘as a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination and... [as] the lived experience of locality’. I also place the narratives which revolve around nostalgia and draw on its root meaning of ‘longing for home’.

Calcutta as home

In one of my interviews in London, Bradley, who had lived in Calcutta for a while, described his feelings for Calcutta. He was coming back to the city after spending a few days upcountry. And he said:

“Home is here...heart is there...how do you leave your children...grandchildren... this has got to be home. The heart is always there. I came here with every intention of going back...So to me, I love Calcutta so, so much, it’s unbelievable. I knew the date, the time...when I actually fell in love with Calcutta...I got a taxi and I was going over Howrah Bridge, I saw a *bhisti walla* [water-bearer] cleaning the roads on the other side of it...going up to Brabourne Road and I got a terrific feeling come over me...we are home. From that moment I absolutely fell in love with Calcutta.” (Bradley)

He later told me he couldn’t remember the exact date, but nonetheless it shows the sense of attachment that many have for Calcutta and the contexts in which the city extends beyond its immediate location. In another instance, I was doing an interview in an Indian Chinese restaurant in Toronto, and soon one of the owners came up and asked me ‘are you from back home?’ (field notes). We had a lively discussion about Calcutta - what had changed, what it was like for him to live in the city and he was keen to compare his memories of the city to what it was like now. Evidently the idea of Calcutta as ‘home’ triggered strong emotions. Although both these people had migrated from Calcutta a long time ago, which added a nostalgic dimension to the place where they once lived, the idea of ‘home’ for Anglo-Indians and Chinese Indians extends beyond personal emotions and has relevance in creating a space of belonging for both communities.

The city as a place of birth was a recurrent theme in narratives of city as home. For many of my interviewees who were not born in Calcutta, but had spent a significant length of time in the city, talking about other towns/cities formed part of their narratives of belonging. But for those who were born in the city, talking about India meant talking about Calcutta. Their attachment to Calcutta was also often linked to the city as a place of birth. As Julie Hu, who now lives in Toronto, says:

“I think that’s where I spent most of my life...that’s where all my friends are...Calcutta...India...and everything about that place and I would see it as a whole rather than associating anything with mainland China. India is

my home...I think its more Calcutta...that's where I was born...so that's the place which formed me...you recognise Calcutta...”.

Although there were frequent overlaps between ideas of India and Calcutta as home, the narratives of lived experiences emphasised familiarity with the city as a basis for attachment. Many Anglo-Indians and Chinese had rarely travelled outside the city, making it an important site of belonging. As Kenneth, an Anglo-Indian living in Toronto said:

“ ... even though we are Canadian citizens now, it [Calcutta] will always be back home for us, because that is where we were born, that's the soil we were brought up on...because many Anglo-Indians never experienced other parts [of India], so Calcutta is home.”

Similarly, Pamela Chen, who also lives in Toronto, said ‘it is always back home...I have travelled to other cities, but our connection is with Calcutta’. For Anglo-Indians, these personal connections to the city were important in asserting belonging to the city:

“...it is the attachment that comes from being in any particular city...I mean this was my home, but for another Anglo-Indian it was his city as well. I think for people, whether the city is nice or not, it is like their home, so it is important to you, it is a part of your being, your experience, your background...I do have links with Calcutta, what I feel is my personal experience...like my family has roots which go back 200 years in Calcutta...there is a grave stone in the cemetery in Calcutta...”.
(Leonard, London)

“That is my home town. That is where I was born. I had a good part of my life there. I still cherish all those days, the friendships I had. I pray everyday for the families who were good to me and who have all gone to heaven now. I mention them in my prayer everyday, thanking God for giving me the opportunity for sharing my life with these people.”
(Thomas, Toronto)

“...that is where I grew up. That’s where I started to make friends... Calcutta more than any other part of India...That is when I started to build memories. Yes, my life in India centred around Calcutta. It is still a very special place. I know I haven’t been home and people say ‘why haven’t you been home?’ All I can say is, I don’t know why I haven’t been home. When I think of Calcutta, I think of this little city where I grew up.” (Linda, Toronto)

When I ask Linda, why she still thinks of Calcutta as home, she says, ‘because Mom and Dad and Nana were there...when we came to England everyone separated’. Whilst for Anglo-Indians tracing a familial link to the city formed part of narratives of belonging, for the Chinese such narratives are ritualised through ancestral worship during Ching Ming or the Spring Festival at the various cemeteries in Calcutta. Describing her sense of attachment to Calcutta, Patricia Hsu explained how she imagines the city as home:

“Personally I always think of it [Calcutta] as my homeland as that is where I was born, that is where I got my education...other than that I really don’t have an attachment because it has been 34 years since I left...another attachment is that my Dad is buried there...and I also hope to go and see Bandel Church²⁸ one day...”

Oxford (1993) writes that the family is an important social unit for especially the Hakka Chinese. Most migrations thus took place in family groups or the family followed soon after. The city is remembered as a place where these close ties had survived. Calcutta, for its Chinese community, is a city where they trace a sense of belonging to the community. In Mei Ling’s words:

“I think the nostalgia is mainly about what they miss...the sense of belonging...to a community...not the place itself. I think if they can get

²⁸ Bandel is a town in Hugli district, around 60 km north of Calcutta. It has a church built by the Portuguese and is an important site for pilgrimage for Catholics.

all the community and transplant it here [Toronto], with the same kind of belonging and perform the same rituals, they would be quite happy”

Beyond the community, everyday spaces in the city also figured in nostalgic narratives of the city. As Roger who migrated to Toronto in the early 1960s, explains:

“If you are talking to Anglo-Indians who are from Madras they have their affiliation for Madras. People from Bombay have their affiliation for Bombay. They won’t talk about India, as in India. They would talk about the city that that they were from. I have never travelled in India, so I really don’t know India, I know Calcutta. [...] You know they say London has a certain aura about it and I feel Calcutta does also. I think about it the same way people think of London. I like the hustle and bustle of Free School Street, of Park Street, of Chowringhee and I think we can’t beat that... I miss that.”

Similarly for Cecile, who migrated to Toronto at the same time as Roger, it is the everyday spaces of her daily routine that remain in her memory of Calcutta. As she recalls:

“When I started working in Cal, I used to get up in the morning and actually go to mass on a daily basis to St. Anthony’s church and on my way home after the mass I used to go and pick up all the fresh market for the day, bring it home, then I would shower and dress and still have time to go for work, well in advance...there is no way I can do that here...”.

Conclusion

The idea of home as space of belonging as well as not belonging is a theme which runs throughout this chapter. I have explored the idea of Calcutta as home through the narratives of belonging for both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in two ways. First, I have located the complex feelings of belonging and not-belonging in the context of times of political turmoil for both communities. Second, I have also

analysed the idea of the city as home in the context of narratives of belonging around identity, work and migration.

In the first section of the chapter I located the narratives of belonging in particular times of political turmoil. I also explored how the nation was a problematic space of belonging for both communities. For Anglo-Indians, such narratives of belonging were expressed through a dual identification as Anglo-Indian by community and Indian by nationality, whereas for the Chinese the identification with the nation was fractured through traumatic experiences during the Indo-China War of 1962. Both communities spoke about feelings of being at home in Calcutta, through the everyday experiences of the city, which contrasted with a sense of unhomey belonging at the level of the nation. Although the city was viewed by both communities as home, I have also explored how a 'community' identity created complex overlaps with narratives of belonging. The incidents of communal riots at the time of India's Independence and Partition placed Anglo-Indians in an in-between position and reflected how religion complicated narratives of belonging to the city in contrast to belonging to the nation that was underpinned by race. Whilst the Chinese community also drew on their in-between position when talking about colonial Calcutta, they located their sense of unhomeliness on more direct experiences of trauma and discrimination during the 1962 Indo-China War.

The city, besides evoking contrasting narratives of belonging and not-belonging, is also imagined and narrated as a site where memory and community identity intersect. The idea of *desh*, which I explored in the second part of the chapter, locates the city at the intersection of home, memory and identity. Whilst narratives of identity for Anglo-Indians created an embodied image of the city by identifying the figure of a 'Calcutta-wallah', for the Chinese, Calcutta was a site where community identity was preserved. In both cases, the city is projected through and as nostalgia. Drawing on the sense of nostalgia as longing for home, members of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities who have migrated remember the city as the place of their birth and locate it amidst personal and familial connections. In the next chapter I analyse the intersections between nostalgia as longing for home and the actual practices of (re) creating home in London and Toronto.

Chapter Six

A CALCUTTA DIASPORA? MEMORY, NOSTALGIA AND IDENTITY IN THE EVERYDAY LANDSCAPES OF THE CITY

“I stand and stare at my deserted town
Childhood memories flash by to hold me on
The rumbling machines have now died down...
It’s like a Western ghost town now
Gone are the days when children run
All that matters is the setting sun
The old school is at the threshold of closing
It’s now like an old model posing
The chimney smoke is seen no more
Tangra now is not as before
Tanneries are now being sold at haste
New neighbours come in with a darker face
People now move to the other world
Only leaving back their ‘undeserving old’
Language and traditions are fading out
Western culture is in and that’s no doubt
The coloured drainage still flows on
So do the elders’ stories still live on?
The famous women’s gossips are fading down
But now...it’s re-birthing in the foreign town”.

(poem written by Benjamin Kuo, posted on www.dhapa.com/poem-about-tangra)

“But Calcutta, oh! Calcutta
The city of my birth;
There’s no place quite like you
In the length and breadth of this earth.

Your streets are always teeming
Your voice raucous, loud;
But oh! What sights and smells
You’ll find in a Calcutta crowd!

I see the Victoria Memorial
Stately, gleaming white;
Watching over the city
In the warm Calcutta night.

Great monuments to the Raj
And the grand Dalhousie Square;
I think about them often
And wonder if they are still there.”

(Excerpt from ‘My Beloved India’ by Colleen Campbell, 1999:13-14)

These two poems aptly capture the sense of nostalgia that both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities have for Calcutta. Whilst the first poem is written by a Hakka Chinese man who grew up in Tangra and rues the loss of the community that once existed, the second poem is written by an Anglo-Indian woman who ponders about both iconic and everyday spaces in Calcutta. The sense of loss is palpable in both poems, although in different ways. Whilst Benjamin Kuo's poem describes a loss in the more immediate past and rues the loss of 'the rumbling machines', the fading language and tradition, and laments leaving behind the 'undeserving old', he also sees a glimmer of hope in the women's gossip 're-birthing in the foreign town' (Toronto). Colleen Campbell's poem, on the other hand, by mentioning Victoria Memorial and the 'great monuments to the Raj', implies nostalgia for colonial Calcutta. The streets and the sights and smells of a 'Calcutta crowd' place this nostalgia in the everyday spaces of the city as well. In this chapter I explore the memories of the city that remain with Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans who have migrated to London and Toronto. In the previous two chapters I have analysed connections between lives of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in the context of the neighbourhood and the city. Whilst the first chapter charted the enmeshed politics of community identity and urban politics with those of the intimacies of everyday lived space in the neighbourhood, the second chapter located the idea of the city as home within wider narratives of the communities as minorities in the city, as well as within wider political tensions which affected the lives of the communities. This chapter considers the ways in which members of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities engage with Calcutta in diaspora, particularly through their memory of the city. Building on maps of emotionally significant places in Calcutta that I asked interviewees to draw, this chapter analyses the everyday landscapes of the city across diaspora. These maps reveal cartographies of the remembered city that focus on particular neighbourhoods, sites and routes, and map the distinctive and contrasting landscapes of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcutta. Linked with narratives and practices of everyday life in London and Toronto, the maps also act as a methodological device to interrogate the place of memory in diaspora. Exploring the diverse ways in which the relationship between communities and the city is spelt out and the manner in which Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans draw on their

invisibility within a wider Asian diaspora, this chapter also interrogates the idea of a 'Calcutta diaspora'.

This chapter is located within wider debates on urban memory, diasporic identity, landscape and home. Within debates about diaspora and migration, landscape has been analysed as a trope to explore the contested sites of memory and identity (Bender and Winer, 2001). In this chapter I explore how memories of everyday life in Calcutta contribute to a shared 'Calcutta identity'. A significant part of the literature dealing with diasporic memory and identity relate it to notions of home (cf. Davidson and Kuah-Pearce, 2008; Tolia-Kelly, 2004). In these cases, the idea that home is something that is left behind is perpetuated by the idea of homeland and the idea of return. Other approaches have reflected the complex entanglements between mobility and stasis, as in Avtar Brah's idea of 'diaspora space'. Connections between memory, identity and space are also filtered through the process of 're-membering' (Fortier, 2000), whereby identifying 'members' of a community is located in the politics of 'community'. Exploring practices of nostalgia perpetuated through the memory of neighbourhoods in Calcutta, and through the activities of respective community associations, I also situate these debates within wider issues of the politics of identity.

Moving memories

Members of the Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities migrated from Calcutta at different times. The Hakka Chinese from Tangra are, for example, generally more recent migrants, having moved to Toronto mainly since the 1980s (Oxfeld, 1993). However, members of both Chinese and Anglo-Indian communities from central Calcutta migrated since the 1960s, coinciding with de-reservation of jobs for Anglo-Indians and the 1962 Sino-Indian war. In the previous chapter, I discussed how times of political turmoil in Calcutta rendered the city unhomey for these two communities. Migration by members of both communities from Calcutta continues till today for reasons indirectly related to these political events and also for economic reasons.

Writing about Anglo-Indian emigration from India, Alison Blunt (2005:156) makes a distinction between the effects of political decolonisation immediately after India's

Independence, and the commercial decolonisation that took place in the 1960s. The exodus in the earlier case was more to Britain, whereas later it was to Australia, mainly due to changes in immigration policies of both countries. Explaining the difference in the motives for migration in different stages, Peter, who lives in Calcutta, explained:

“After Independence in 1947 and through the 1950s, there was a fear psychosis in the community. They did not know what to expect from the Indians, now that the British had left...Although nothing happened, they felt that something will happen....there was an exodus...they were leaving in hundreds and thousands. The first flight was to England and then Australia became very popular...and afterwards it was Canada because Australia was tightening up...Canada was more receptive...”.

Peter’s comments are reflected in the narratives of migration of those who have emigrated. Those who migrated to London in the early 1950s, for example, described the sense of unease they felt in India post-1947:

“[In Calcutta] it was a happy, easy, carefree life, but I don’t know why we felt threatened for not being wholly Indian...we couldn’t live there or they wouldn’t make a preference for us...that’s what we felt and everyone came one by one, followed by their friends and family”. (Alice, London)

“For years, India was home. We never thought of it anyway else - that is where our parents and we were born, lived for many generations. But suddenly the political situation changed, India got its Independence, anti-British riots took place. Up until then, a lot of Anglo-Indians who were very secure in what they were doing with their career, social life, suddenly felt threatened and challenged.” (Leonard, London)

“We were brought up in a British fashion. We spoke English at home, we ate with knives and forks. The Anglo-Indian followed their British ancestry, not the Indian. When we were in school, a second language was

compulsory...even if you got through senior Cambridge there were many who were cleverer than you. In general, Anglo-Indians got jobs in India through knowing someone, or someone your parents knew...we were definitely financial migrants”. (Timothy, London)

Leonard’s comment reflects a wider unease about the political situation, whereas Timothy related that unease about not finding a job. In this context, many described their migration as a step to ensure a better life for their children. Alice, who migrated to London in 1962, explained that she had come away ‘for the sake of the children’. As she said, ‘we had jobs...but by the time we left, they were giving jobs to the Indians rather than Anglo-Indians’.

Whilst many Anglo-Indians migrated to Britain in the immediate years after India’s Independence, there was, at the same time, unease amongst those who stayed back in Calcutta, about the hard life in England and racial discrimination. Alison Blunt (2005) outlines how the British Nationality Act of 1948 made it difficult for some Anglo-Indians to prove their ancestry in order to emigrate. Explaining why ‘England was out of question’ for her, Belinda said, ‘there was a lot of migration there, and I heard stories from people who had gone, how difficult it was for them because of their colour of skin’. Similarly, Roger narrated his reasons for migrating to Canada:

“When India got its Independence, Britain allowed tickets, open tickets, for Anglo-Indians to go there. All my mother’s cousins went to England in the early 1950s...I remember one of my aunts writing to my mother- ‘oh, this one has bought a car and this one has bought a house done this, done that’ - and I was thinking, ‘I am taking a number 8 bus or a rickshaw and these people are doing so well’. But my father said he would never go to England to become a bus conductor or a postman...so we never went to England...I came to Canada in the 1960s...”.

The introduction of a points system in Canada’s immigration policy in 1967 made it easier for both Anglo-Indians and Chinese to migrate there.

For the Chinese community in Calcutta, the 1962 war was the first trigger for migration. Although both Hakka and Cantonese Chinese were sent to internment camps and/or deported, many Cantonese carpenters in Calcutta lost their jobs in the docks, and were compelled to move. As Pamela Chen explained:

“Things were getting a bit rough for our generation. There was so much restriction after the war. Our generation was looking for places in Canada to open up. Many went to England, to Hong Kong and to Australia. I first went to Hong Kong. If I hadn’t come back [to Calcutta], I would have been a totally different Chinese. Then my husband’s sister came to Toronto in the late 1960s. A lot of my friends had come to Vancouver but I decided to try out Toronto. So I came here.”

The Cantonese Chinese migration from Calcutta has not been recorded in detail and although some migrated to London as well, many went to Canada. The Cantonese population in Calcutta was more ‘anglicised’ and it is probable that many were registered as British Subjects, compared to the Hakka Chinese who lived in Tangra, making it easier for them to emigrate. The reasons for migration for both Hakkas and Cantonese, though, often reflected the same concerns that Anglo-Indians had around the availability of jobs and better future. Laura Chen, for example, explained that her father migrated first to Toronto in 1976 and then sponsored the rest of the family- ‘I guess it was the idea of a better life for the children’. Since the Chinese were entrepreneurs in Calcutta, many sent off their children and stayed back themselves. Describing the pattern of Chinese migration from Calcutta, Patricia Hsu, says:

“The main catalyst was the war in 1962 because prior to that the Chinese community were left in peace with whatever business they had established. But after that, the authorities would often come and bother them....another thing is our parents had so many children, and although they educated them, all they ended up with was a shoe shop or a restaurant. So they saved money, bought a plane ticket and sent their kids out for better opportunities”.

Chris Wong is one such person who was sent off from Calcutta by his parents at the age of 18. He migrated first to Sweden and now lives in Toronto. As he remembers, 'I didn't want to go, but my parents just bought me a ticket and sent me off to Sweden, because my uncle was in Sweden and he had a restaurant'. The family played an important role in Chinese migration from Calcutta. Chris Wong further remarked, 'we never questioned our parents and probably I am the eldest in the family, so it was my responsibility to go to a foreign country and make some money'. Family relationships for those who lived in Tangra were also an important factor in migration. Lucy Chang, whose grew up in Tangra, but whose family did not own a tannery, said that 'we rented a place... so there was nothing to fall back on or keep us back'. She explained that for those who owned tanneries, inheritance within the families played a determining role in migration (Ellen Oxfeld, 2003 also made this point). As Lucy Chang explained:

“Let's say I have a house or tannery, and I have four sons. When they get older, they all live in one tannery. So you get one room, one room, one room, one room. The sons, they fight, because its all controlled by parents...then there are the daughters-in-law...and how are you going to divide a tannery into four? ...[]...Later on when the girls got married and started moving out to Canada, U.S., Austria, Australia, Denmark, they sponsored the families out. That's how they bring it all away from India.”

Lucy Chang migrated from Calcutta in the 1960s and while the Hakka Chinese from Tangra began migrating in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the main push came in 1992 when the Supreme Court of India ordered the tanneries to shut down and move out of Tangra. While the Hakka Chinese draw on the idea of being 'guest people' who are always on the move, even in Toronto, the success that they found in the tannery business had kept them longer in Calcutta compared to other Chinese groups. Sarah Wang, for example, pointed out, 'in those times they used to live in the tanneries till they died, but now they know that is not permanent, so they move'. In Toronto, the more recent migrants from Calcutta often form a distinct group, as they usually come as entrepreneurs, with money from selling the tanneries. Brenda Chen explained the sense of loss that this groups feel compared to others those who

migrated earlier. When I asked her about the identity that the Calcutta Chinese in Toronto claim, she pointed out to the difference between groups:

“There is a difference...in terms of establishment. The more recent immigrants are more established in Calcutta and they bear a heavier loss when they leave Calcutta. Twenty years ago, the immigrants would have left Calcutta more with a sense of adventure...with the recent immigrants there is a sense of loss. There is this battle of ‘should we go back and try a life in new Tangra?’, but they have made that choice too.”

These material conditions which affect Anglo-Indian and Chinese migration from Calcutta, and the intersections between the two communities in terms of the wider narrative explaining the migration from Calcutta, frame the memories of the city that Anglo-Indians and Chinese have of Calcutta. In the next section I analyse how home as a space of dwelling intersects with a memory of the city.

Home in the city

‘Jade’, one of the short stories in *The Palm Leaf Fan* written by Kwai-Yun Li, follows the life of the central character Jade, across her different homes in Calcutta and Toronto, and charts an interesting route that many Calcutta Chinese women have taken, negotiating the promise of a better life in Toronto and arranged marriage. The story flits between the crowded setting of 14/1 Chattawalla Gully in Calcutta where Jade lives with her extended family; 5 Trafford Road, Markham, Toronto where Jade and her husband share a three-bedroom house with her parents-in-law and four brothers-in-law; and 17 Pioneer Road, Scarborough, a one-roomed basement apartment where a pregnant Jade moves in with her husband and two children. It is an interesting story revealing several aspects of the ‘homing desire’ for the Calcutta Chinese diaspora in Toronto as well as the cartographies of home for the community. It offers readers a glimpse into the patriarchal nature of the Chinese (particularly Hakka) community in Calcutta and into the home-life of Hakka women in central Calcutta. It also highlights issues around sharing home-space and owning a home in Toronto. Kwai-Yun Li’s stories are based on the Calcutta Hakka Chinese community and although such ‘home’ issues for Hakka women from Tangra, and also Calcutta

Cantonese women differ to some extent, such stories abound amongst the predominantly Calcutta Hakka community in Toronto.

The issues around home raised in the story 'Jade' form an important part of the literature engaging with ideas of home and migration. Writing about transnational homes, Blunt and Dowling (2006:202) comment that:

“For many transnational migrants, material and imaginative geographies of home are both multiple and ambiguous, revealing attachments to more than one place and the ways in which home is shaped by memories as well as everyday life in the present”.

A wide range of research interrogates how transnational migration unsettles the idea of home and critically analyses the relationship between mobility and location (Ahmed et al., 2003; Al-Ali and Koser, 2002). The idea of home in such research also extends over a range of scales from a broader sense of 'homeland' to the actual spaces of dwelling. In the chapter on everyday cosmopolitanisms, I discussed the idea of the neighbourhood as a semi-public, semi-private space and how that influenced the imagination of the neighbourhood as home. When I asked interviewees to put down their memories of Calcutta on paper, many of them marked important landmarks - buildings, objects and places - as the defining points of the neighbourhood. Spaces like community clubs, schools, churches, temples are important sites through which minority communities engage with the public space of the city. I discuss this theme further in the next section. In this section I explore the memories of home as a dwelling and a domestic space in Calcutta for both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities and analyse how these memories intersect with homing desires in London and Toronto.

Dwelling (in) the city

The home occupied an important space in the maps drawn by many interviewees, especially women. Some represented idyllic memories of the home, whilst others gave a wider sense of its location. Many of the maps drawn by women often began by marking the home and other places located in relation to it. Many maps also mention the exact address, which was significant as many of them had not been back

to Calcutta for over 40 years. In the following description of her memories of Calcutta, Mei Ling, a Hakka Chinese woman living in Toronto, told me:

“This is... Chhatawala Gully. In the mornings I have to help my mother go to the market here and then I have to go home and take out buckets and go to the hand pump and these are cobbled stones, these are all broken up. So you almost step over each stones. Then I would go to school...this lane is bad...against Welland Gouldsmith’s wall...Then there is a huge beautiful banyan tree. Under the tree there are two cows...and again this is really bad for people walking through...and all this was cobbled stone...I guess its quite pretty...I got picture of it now-one of them is rented out for people to grind glasses...after my mother had sold some stuff, we had some money. On the way back...there was a Chinese lady who sells pork...we bought an ounce of meat...and go home...that meat was for 4 of us...and kind of walk along Chhatawala Gully...sometimes take the tram but most of the times we walk...”.

(Figure 6.1)

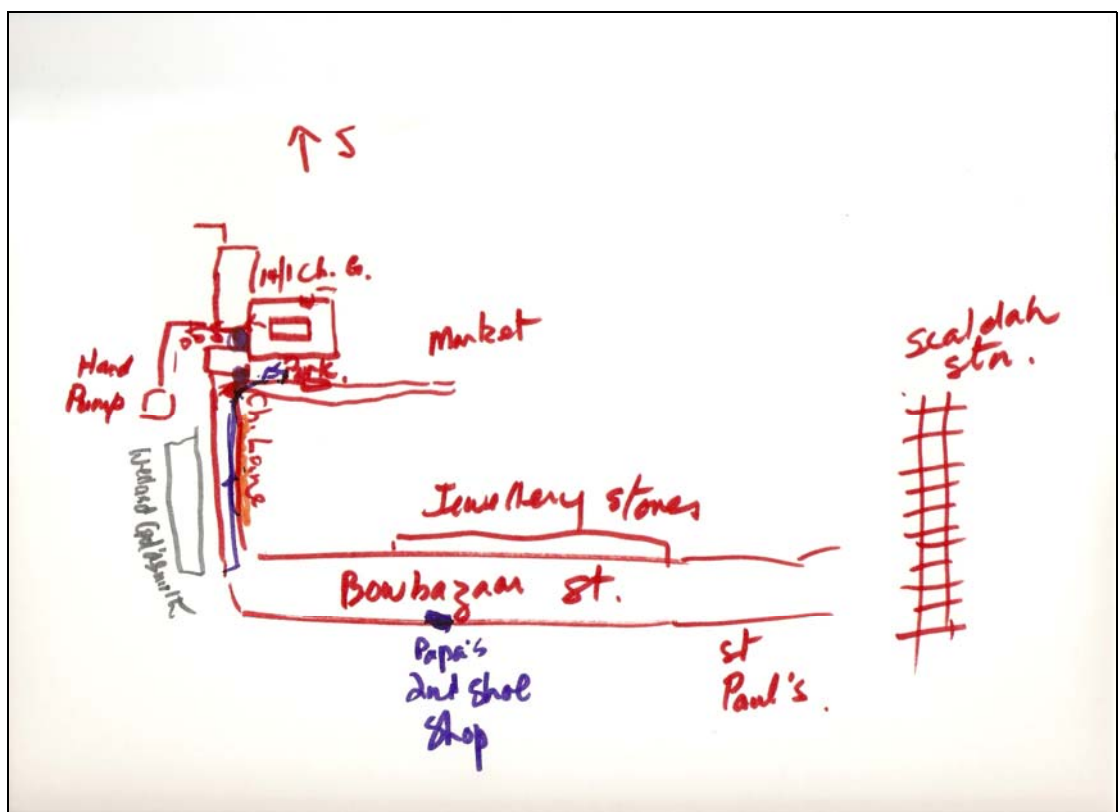


Figure 6.1 Memories of home (Mei Ling)

Mei Ling's memories of Calcutta (Figure 6.1) revolve around her home and the daily routes she used to take around the neighbourhood. Apart from locating home as the central space of her memory, Mei Ling's description also gives an idea of the modest beginnings that many Hakka Chinese in the Tiretta Bazar and Bentinck Street area had. Like Mei Ling, Jessie Li (Figure 6.2) too remembers Calcutta through the daily routes she took from her home to school, her mother's beauty parlour, the weekly trip to New Market, and the occasional trip to the cinema. The home, no doubt, occupied a central place in the memory of Calcutta.

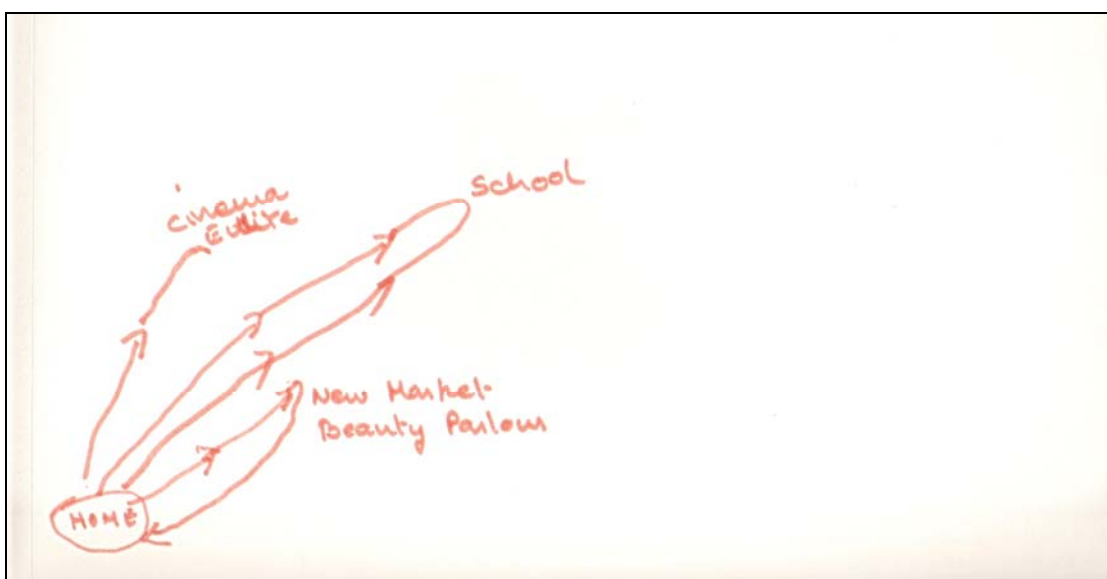


Figure 6.2 Daily routes (Jessie Li)

Whilst many such memories revolve around childhood homes, home as a space of dwelling for the Chinese community in Calcutta is an important site of being and belonging. Chinese homes in Bentinck Street and for those who owned or lived in tanneries were also a space of work. However, none of the maps drawn by Chinese men reflects this central role played by the home. The home is also seen a site of enclosure from wider society and the space in which culture and tradition was maintained. As Beatrice Chan, talking about the difference between Anglo-Indian and Chinese women, pointed out:

“The Chinese are more conservative. Our family was quite conservative...we never dreamt of going out dancing at night...even if

we went out, we came back before midnight...I have heard some Anglo-Indians would dance till early morning when they had parties.”

Beatrice Chan is Cantonese and even though the Cantonese Chinese were seen as more anglicised and were more likely to have Anglo-Indian friends through the convent or missionary schools they went to, a common idea of the Chinese home as a conservative space remained. The two photos of Cantonese women taken in Calcutta (figures 6.3 and 6.4) are reflective of how Cantonese women embodied this difference compared to Hakka women, who often dressed differently.



Fig. 6.3 Celebrating Christmas in Calcutta

Fig. 6.4 At home in Calcutta c. 1952

(courtesy: Peggy Chen)

Pamela Chen, who is also Cantonese, remembers her home in Calcutta as follows:

“In the beginning there was just going to school and we came home and there was homework to do. My mum was quite strict about extra-curricular activities: I would go swimming, I would have music classes twice a week...at school we had to do Bengali and Hindi and we needed help with it because we were not very good at it, so we had a tutor. So we

came home...we had homework, we had tuitions, we had piano lessons. We all sat down and had dinner with grandparents- we all lived in the same house. We couldn't stay out too late, my mother was very strict. We weren't allowed to go out unless my brother was with me. So we had a lot of friends coming over."

Although considerable economic differences exist within Hakka and Cantonese Chinese as well, Pamela Chen's memories of her home in Calcutta marked out the differences between a more anglicised Chinese home and a more traditional one.

Talking about memories of home with Chinese women also brought out the differences that existed not only between Tangra and central Calcutta but also within Tangra. Whilst those who owned tanneries in Tangra had large homes, those who did not own tanneries had different memories. Lucy Chang, whose father was a teacher at Pei May School, and grew up in Tangra, painted an idyllic memory of her home (Figure 6.5)



Figure 6.5 Idyllic memories of Tangra (Lucy Chang)

Talking about her home, she gives a detailed description of her daily routine:

“The boys...everything was just served to them. The girls had to do everything. They had to carry the water, pump the gas, pull out the tank...we also had to get the ration. We had limited quantities of rice, flour, *suji* (semolina), and sugar. Sometimes life is tough...early in the morning we had to go to the market, because we did not have a fridge...the girls were supposed to do all the housework...”.

Whilst memories of home in Calcutta brought out the differences in experiences within the Chinese community in terms of gender and class, narratives of home also revolved around home as a site of remembering familial relations. Pamela Chen, for example, told me:

“I think we had a close community...the bond with my friends and the family. There were several families on top of each other every weekend...we were that close. When we came to Canada, we were sort of scattered. You try to keep in touch but it is not the same...you’ll be lucky if you talk on the phone once a month”.

Anglo-Indians, too, remember the home in Calcutta as a space where the family was together. When I asked Linda, who now lives in Toronto but lived in London initially, why she thought of Calcutta as home, she replied:

“I think it’s because Mom and Dad and Nana were there. Our family was a unit there. When we came to England, everyone separated. My father died when we came to England. My mother had to go out to work. My grandmother later went into an old-age home and died there. My brother got married. It seemed England had brought such a fragmentation of my family. When I think of home and the love and the bond, I think of Calcutta because that’s where we were together...Life brings you this, life brings you that, but Calcutta brought me great memories...The early 1960s England was good to me in a way, but when I think of Calcutta, I just feel in my body the warmth, and the love and generosity I

felt...going anywhere and everywhere people would share meals with you....”

Members of both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities spoke a lot about the ‘warmth of Calcutta’ as an aspect of the city that they missed most living in London and Toronto. Whilst many spoke about this in terms of the presence of a close-knit community in Calcutta and also in terms of everyday inter-communal relations, some, especially Anglo-Indian women, talked about their homes as the site where they felt this warmth. Reminiscing about Calcutta, Anne explains:

“...in Calcutta the warmth that you get, I don’t think you get it anywhere else. The poorest of the poor there will share their little bit with you, when you go to visit them they will give you this and that....and I don’t think you can get that anywhere. But there comes a time, you know, for jobs and I guess for our children’s sake we have to move. I tell my kids those times will never come back...no matter how you try to re-live it. Although we live here [Toronto] now and we do go back to visit, we cannot have those times again. We were all one family back then, we lived in each others’ houses...we looked after each others’ kids...we were all one”

Anne’s memories of Calcutta are intimately tied to the closeness she felt at home. It is a memory of home that she cannot recreate in Toronto. Like Anne, Penelope has a similar memory of Calcutta. When I asked her what she misses most about Calcutta, she told me:

“The warmth...the love of people...you know, Calcutta has its own charm... when we go back on holidays or even when we were there, when we visited somebody, we didn’t have to phone and say that we are coming. I think it’s the distance here that causes it, or maybe because people are too preoccupied. But in Calcutta, we just go...Its that warmth that you miss you here...[] Like where we lived, [her husband] would never be at home, but I always had my sisters every Saturday, Sunday, my sister-in-law would come with her kids. So I always had big *handies*

[cooking pot] of food cooking and we used to cook, eat and relax...it's not like you had your own bedroom, you just put one sheet down and everyone had fun."

Both Penelope and Anne migrated to Toronto in the late 1970s and 1980s and the descriptions of their homes in Calcutta are fraught with the sense of loss they still feel about missing their close-knit family home. For others as well the home is an important place of memory. Belinda, who moved to Toronto in 1966, drew a map of Calcutta marking the three homes that she lived in (Figure 6.6).

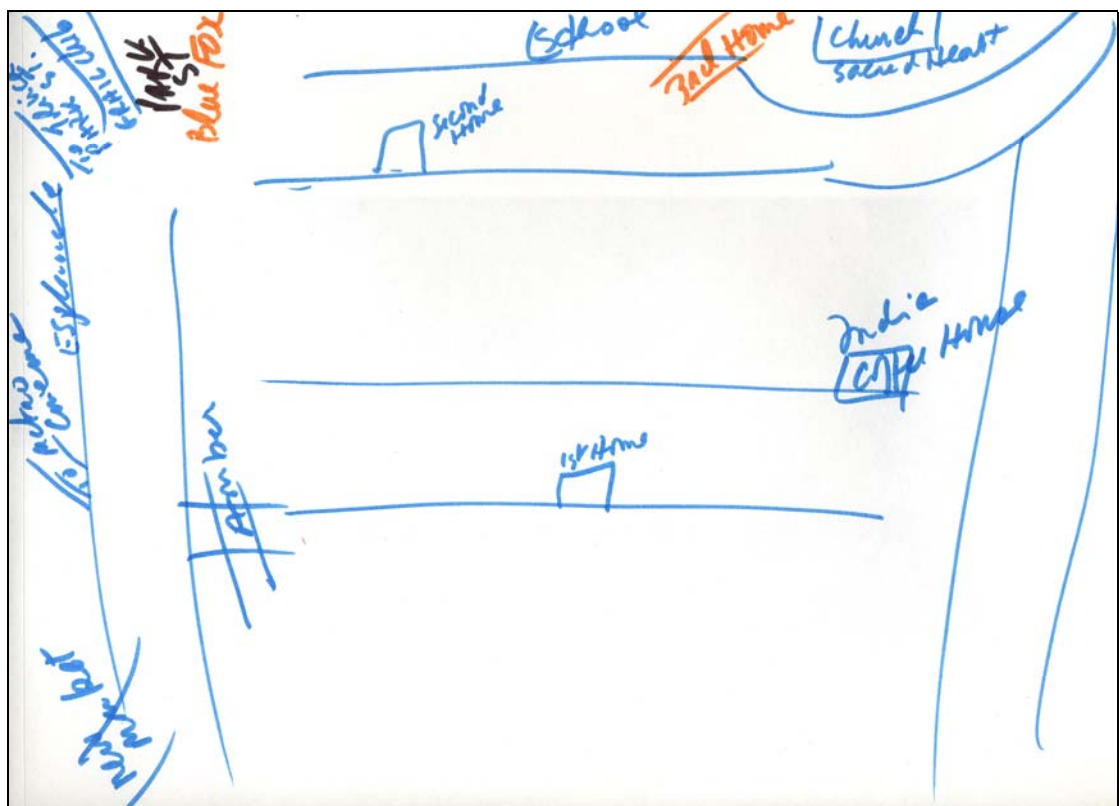


Figure 6.6 Places of attachment (Belinda)

Talking me through the places she had marked, she says:

"This was where my first home was. This was the second. My third home was very close to the Sacred Heart Church...I am not putting it exactly as I don't have the scale of how far these places are...Blue Fox was my favourite restaurant...and Trinca's- on Sunday afternoon all the Anglo-Indian boys would be there and they would sing...there would be bands

and everything. Of course New Market was my favourite haunt and Amber restaurant which was close to my first home...”

Although Belinda marked many places which were popular with other Anglo-Indians as well, she marked them in relation to her home. When I asked her about special places that she remembered in her neighbourhood, she replied that there were ‘nothing other than these ones...I was mostly at home...I used to read a lot...go to school, come back...go to church, come back’.

For Anglo-Indians who migrated to London as well, the home was an important part of their memories of Calcutta. Many associated the home in Calcutta with happy memories. As Alice reminisced:

“We had a lovely flat with a balcony...New Market was beside, so we could walk there. All the cinemas were around us. We walked everywhere, we didn’t have to take rickshaws or taxis anywhere...we were very happy. Down the road was the Maidan where we used to take the children...it was very convenient.”

Happy memories of home located a sense of belonging to Calcutta rather than India. When I asked Susan why she felt more attached to Calcutta, she replied:

“I suppose it’s because I was born here...I still dream of going through each room in my house...I picture every room, and I remember opening every drawer...every memory. I have been back four times and I can’t wait to go again. [When I go], I knock on the door and they show me how it has changed...I stand there and cry”.

Susan later told me that her previous home was now rented by another Anglo-Indian family and they still kept in touch. I explore the idea of re-encountering home in Calcutta later in the chapter.

As well as creating a space for memory, home for Anglo-Indians who migrated to Britain, as Alison Blunt (2005) writes, is also a space where domestic life

experienced in India is unsettled and reveals wider discomforts around imagining Britain as home (p.124). Many Anglo-Indians I spoke to also reflect this concern in comparing Calcutta and London as home:

“London was a big disappointment when I came here. I was used to the city lights, over there in Calcutta. I was used to the climate...and I came here on a cold November day...I came into Victoria and there we got to see what London was like...it was vast...but all the houses looked the same, and I wasn't impressed”. (Donald)

“We arrived in January and it was very cold....we were taken to a house where my aunt lived...it was an awful town, where they had little homes, terraced houses and I remember till this day...I asked my aunt, ‘is this what you call home?’” (Leonard)

“When you came here, it was a shock...you had to everything yourself...there were no servants.” (Ellen)

“When I look back, it was a huge change. My mother was 55 when we came here, and she had never even made a cup of tea, now she had to learn to cook and feed her family”. (Wilma)

Many Anglo-Indian women spoke about how difficult it was to learn how to cook and do household work that formed an important part of narratives of survival and settling (Blunt, 2005).

Memories of home as recounted by members of both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities brought out the differences which existed between and within the communities, yet there were also similarities in the ‘homing desire’ as described through narratives of migration. Both communities, whilst remembering homes in Calcutta fondly, explained they had migrated for a better future. One of the ways in which the idea of home was discussed by both communities is through the idea of owning a home. For Anglo-Indians, it is an idea which came through in interviews with those who live in Toronto rather than in London. Roger, who migrated to

Toronto in the late 1960s, for example, explained to me that he went to London for a holiday in the early 1970s and remarked on the difference in the houses. He said, 'I saw those who had left Calcutta in the 1950s that had bought houses and had jobs and cars', but he added that to 'live like we lived in Canada they had to do three jobs'. He also added that the situation may have changed now.

Most Anglo-Indians in Calcutta continue to live in rented properties in central Calcutta, although many have now bought homes in Picnic Gardens, Behala and Tollygunje, in the suburbs. For those who migrated to Toronto in 1960s and 1970s, owning a home was big step. As Dominic explained, Anglo-Indians in Calcutta lived mainly in apartments. He further said:

“...we couldn't afford anything else...[]...and that's why I say, you come here and gosh, you are doing the same kind of job...sure enough you are in a mortgage up to the nose but at least you are beginning to own that home....where could you do this in India?...[]...it was a big deal...never mind the social status...but the self worth, to own a house, to own a home...for us it was a big deal.”

Lawrence explained this urge to own a house in similar terms. He said, 'people ask me why am I so materialistic, but I think, I have never had a home, now I have a home'. Although the experience that Anglo-Indians went through in relocating their home from Calcutta to London and Toronto was unsettling in terms of domesticity and also wider unease about embodied identities, having English as their first language made the transition easier compared to some groups within the Calcutta Chinese community. For some members of the Hakka Chinese community, the inability to speak English compelled them to work in factories doing manual work (Oxford, 1993: 254). Many could only afford to live in government assisted housing like St. Jamestown (ibid.). Talking about St. Jamestown, a housing estate in east Toronto which was the destination of many Chinese Calcuttans, Mei Ling told me that those who lived there were generally 'looked down upon'. She explained that, 'you start in St. Jamestown and then when you save enough money, you buy somewhere else'. Owning and having a home in Toronto revolves around familial relationships for the Chinese community. When I asked Mei Ling whether it was

common for the Calcutta Chinese community to live in St. Jamestown when they first moved to Toronto, she answered:

“For the new immigrants...it means they have no relatives. For those who come through sponsorship by brother or sister or uncle, they move into the home and help pay the mortgage...that is very common.”

Yet as Mei Ling further explained, the issue of a house was lot more than carrying over familial relationships, even extended ones, from Calcutta. It also opened up a divide within the community between those who can own a house and those who cannot. Talking about how, for those who are unable to speak English, the hold of the community continued, Mei Ling said:

“Some of them would really prefer to be in Calcutta...especially those who work in factories. Because if you look at some, they have these huge houses, these mega-houses in Markham and there are these people who live in government housing or in basement apartments. They are seeing the other side...because they are in factory jobs, it means they don't speak much English...they cannot break out of the community, so they have to stay within the community. They are in a disadvantaged position, so people look down upon them...that is why cars and houses are so important.”

As Mei Ling's comment shows, memories of home in the city and the city as home across diaspora intersect to create complex connections between home as a site of dwelling in the city, issues around ownership of home and spaces of difference within communities.

Calcutta memorabilia

Memories of the city were also narrated through material possessions and objects in the home. Talking about the 'bits of Calcutta' that they have kept with them in London and Toronto, members of both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities spoke about a wide range of things, from photographs to food and personal objects. For many, the memorabilia reminded them of their actual homes and family, whilst

for others the memorabilia acted as a reminder of the ‘carefree’ days that they had enjoyed in Calcutta. Writing about artefacts in British Asian homes in London, Divya Tolia-Kelly (2004), describes these as ‘precipitates of re-memory’, and re-memory as ‘encounters with memories, stimulated through scents, sounds and textures in the everyday’ (p.314). Like Tolia-Kelly, other research has also investigated the significance of such material objects in the context of the home (Miller, 2001). In this section, I explore how Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans remember the city in London and Toronto through personal memorabilia and to what extent these memories help in creating a sense of home for them.

The Calcutta memorabilia that I discuss here are not always significant parts of home interiors of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans. Indeed, some interviews on these objects were conducted outside the home, and these were objects that interviewees brought along. There was also no special place where these memories were stored or displayed. Rather it is the everyday-ness of the memories associated with these objects that is important. Belinda, for example, showed me a showcase, an important feature of Anglo-Indian homes, where she had kept things which reminded her of Calcutta. The showcase contained a porcelain doll which she had bought in New Market with her first pay cheque for her mother. Her mother had stayed on in Calcutta, and when Belinda came to Toronto she had given it to her. Belinda’s mother has since died, and now this porcelain doll remains as a ‘special’ memory. She also showed me a toy dog which resembled her own pet dog in Calcutta. When I asked Belinda where these things were kept in Calcutta, she said they were kept in a showcase, and now she had it for over 50 years in Toronto. She explained that ‘these are two very special things in [her] life...no matter what happens to it, no matter how bad it is’. A memory of Calcutta, for Belinda, was preserved through these personal objects which she cherished, and now reminded her of her family. The city, in this case, is remembered, through the places where these objects were brought and also through people associated with them. Like Belinda, Wilma who now lives in London, also has a collection of personal memorabilia which reminds her of her link with Calcutta. For her, the link with Calcutta is preserved in a lamp which she had brought back and her father’s *kukri* (a small sword). She also showed me a scrapbook which she had made while in school in India, and which she still treasures. The scrapbook contained photographs of her family and the places that she visited. Some

interviewees showed me objects which they had bought in Calcutta, but which did not necessarily have a familial connection for them. Polly, for example, showed me her collection of brass trinkets (Figures 6.7) which she kept in her living room.

Others, like Terence, who migrated to Toronto more recently, had an entire collection of trinkets which he had collected over the years and brought over from Calcutta to remind him of his days there. (Figure 6.8)



Figure 6.7 Brass artefacts in an Anglo-Indian home (Polly)



Figure 6.8 Fragments of memory (Terence)

When I asked Terence what are the things he thinks of, when he thinks of Calcutta, he replied that it was ‘the places I used to hang out in’. The memorabilia that he had gathered for the interview were things which had particular connections to places in Calcutta. So the hand-carved pipe, which ‘is unique because [one] won’t get the kind of workmanship here’, reminded Terence of New Market, where he had bought it. He also showed me many photos of the city that he took, and as he explained- ‘I have tons of photos of Cal...I keep them in a folder...I took them because those are the places I wanted to remember’. Whilst others mainly had personal and family photos, in which case the city acted as the locale for remembering these relationships, Terence’s photographs reveal a more direct attachment to the city.

One of the aspects which link these various narratives around Calcutta memorabilia is the memory of the city as home. Whilst these material objects may or may not be displayed in the home, the stories behind each of them create an idea of Calcutta as home. Talking about a tablecloth which belonged to her mother, and which now

covers a small table at her place in Canada, Deliah explains how it embodies her connection with Calcutta:

“ It is more a connection of growing up in a house that is very much a part of our home...home is where we were rooted...we didn't go out that much except on certain ritual occasions, so this is very much part of home. And again, very much an unconscious sense of what home is, and you stop and think about it”.

Deliah further explained that she had got the tablecloth from her mother's linen collection and it just stayed in the trunk for several years. She had taken it out recently and started using it. She could not remember where her mother had got it from, but for 'all these years [she] was growing up, it was there in our household...so there is some tradition there...'. The sense of tradition acts as a connection between the memorabilia and home, between the people and the city. It shapes a very personal connection to the city, routed through the home and family. Julia, who lives in Toronto, showed me a huge collection of stainless steel utensils which she had bought in Calcutta and which she still uses in her daily life. She was evidently proud of her collection which she had beautifully maintained for 37 years. Julia also had a big collection of artefacts in her drawing room - elephant figures, objects made of glass China and dolls. Showing me an ivory elephant, she said, 'this is an heirloom...I want to pass it on to my children so that it is always kept in the family'. When I asked her whether her children saw the Calcutta connection in these objects, she replied that the connection was just for her- 'I am the one because I know from where I have purchased these'. Daniel Miller (1998:9) writes that, 'through dwelling upon the more mundane sensual and material qualities of the object, we are able to unpick the more subtle connections with cultural lives and values that are objectified through these forms'. Whilst Miller's argument is more directly related to the materiality of the object, it can also be extended to analyse the connection between the symbolic meaning attributed to the objects and those who possess them. For many Anglo-Indians, these memorabilia which they cherish signify how a personal connection to Calcutta is remembered.

The material relations that accompany the memorabilia also point to a difference in the narratives of Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities around the possession of such objects. Whilst a few Calcutta Chinese homes had objects from India, most brought along more personal rather than decorative objects for the interviews compared to Anglo-Indian Calcuttans. There were some overlaps in the kind of artefacts kept in Chinese and Anglo-Indian homes. Beatrice Chan, for example, had a set of carved wooden tables which I had seen in many Anglo-Indian homes. These ‘Kashmiri’ tables were bought mostly in New Market. At the same time, a comparative lack of ‘Calcutta artefacts’ in Chinese homes point to a difference in the histories of the two communities in Calcutta and also the conditions under which they migrated. Beatrice Chan told me that she bought the tables the second time she went back to Calcutta after migrating. Talking about the lack of ‘home possessions’ that the Calcutta Chinese brought over, she said that ‘because they were so focused on making money that they didn’t think of their own lives’. She also said that once they come to Toronto, many people buy Chinese paintings or Chinese furniture. A similar argument was put forward by Lucy Chang, but instead she drew on the Hakka narrative of migration, rooted in constant movement. Pointing to the importance of the altar for ancestors in Chinese homes in Calcutta, Lucy Chang said:

“In Chinese homes, we always worship our ancestors...we pay respect to them. The Hakka Chinese always believed in this. When we came from China, we could not carry much, we just carried our clothes...”.

Apart from locating specific migration histories of the communities, talking about Calcutta memorabilia also brought out stories of other communities, and especially stories about places that were remembered by both communities. Writing about how memories are activated through material culture in the home, Tolia-Kelly (2004: 314-315), argues that:

“The prismatic qualities of material cultures ensure that these cultures become nodes of connection in a network of people, places and narration of past stories, history and traditions...[] This form of memory-history geographically locates the post-colonial within landscapes, mobilized in the process of migration. These landscapes are neither bounded

nationalistic landscapes nor lived tangible everyday spaces instead these remembered locations situate the post-colonial migrant.”

Similarly, narratives around Calcutta memorabilia by members of both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities also tell a story of those overlapping spaces in the city that have remained etched in their memories. Some of those spaces do not exist any longer, except in memory and in the memorabilia that remain. When asked about the object which embodied her connection to Calcutta, Mei Ling showed me a pair of trousers she had made with her Anglo-Indian friend at Maggie Myers sewing class. Maggie Myers was a Calcutta Jewish lady who lived on Park Street and I came to know about her through many Anglo-Indian and Chinese interviewees. For Mei Ling, the skirt represents memories of her carefree days in Calcutta and of her Anglo-Indian friend:

“I am not sure whether this reminds me of Calcutta or it reminds me of my carefree days in Calcutta. This is a sari material, which I had bought in New Market with my Anglo-Indian friend... we split it into half and made this...when I pulled this out...I was not sure what it reminded me of...maybe it reminds me of the time we had...we went to New Market...and made this...I wonder if she [her friend] has kept this”.

Mei Ling is no longer in touch with her Anglo-Indian friend, but the memory of Maggie Myers’ classes and their friendship remains. In another instance, Patricia Hsu brought along a photo of Our Lady of Bandel (Figure 6.9).



Figure 6.9 Memories of Bandel (Patricia Hsu)

Many Catholic Chinese and Anglo-Indian remember Bandel as part of their memories of Calcutta. This photo was sent to Patricia Hsu by a priest in Bandel. She mentioned that she had visited the church when she lived in Calcutta for a retreat and wishes to go back to Calcutta mainly to revisit it. Besides encapsulating the religious significance of Bandel for Patricia Hsu, the narratives around this photo also reminded Paul Hsu (Patricia's husband who was also present at the interview), about his Anglo-Indian god father, who had converted him to Christianity.

Such narratives of home as a site of dwelling resonate with studies that have focused on the house as a space to interrogate mobile lives. In her analysis of the film *Floating Lives* as a depiction of Chinese diasporic life, Jane M. Jacobs (2004) draws on the 'dispersed relational geography of dwelling' in migrancy and writes that, 'it shapes the affective scope of home, it constitutes the materialities of taste that come to be displayed in the house, it determines the various economies of exchange, and it stretches the home's rituals of living' (p.167). For both Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans the issue of owning a house in Toronto locates the idea of home in the

city. The house as a space of dwelling in the city also locates the narratives of migration within the politics of community, as do the materialities of Calcutta memorabilia.

Feeding Nostalgia

Memories of Calcutta are intimately connected to food, for members of both the Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. A large part of my research in London and Toronto revolved around discussions of Calcutta food as well as eating. Some interviewees went to great lengths at preparing curries made ‘just like in Cal’, and also inviting me to eat at Hakka Chinese restaurants in Toronto, which are run predominantly by the Calcutta Chinese. Research on geographies of food in diasporic contexts has spanned a wide range exploring connections between food and identity (James, 1998). Some research has focused on consumption patterns within the home (Valentine, 1999) whereas others have analysed globalised commodity aspects of food (Cook and Crang, 1996). Longhurst et al (2009) write about the ‘visceral experience of food’ that shapes ‘emotional and affective relations with place’ (p.333). The association of food, memory and nostalgia has also critically explored connections between authenticity, nationalism and belonging (Mannur, 2007). Arguing that ‘the desire to remember home by fondly recreating culinary memories cannot be understood merely as reflectively nostalgic gestures’, Mannur (2007) uses the term ‘culinary citizenship’ to describe a ‘form of affective citizenship which grants subjects the ability to claim and inhabit certain subject positions via their relationship with food’ (p.13). While Mannur used the notion of ‘culinary citizenship’ to explore multiple subject positions within literary narratives of culinary nostalgia amongst Asian Americans, I extend this idea to explore how Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans use their memory of food to describe their sense of belonging to the city and also to analyse the space of Hakka Chinese restaurants in Toronto in re-creating the nostalgia for the city.

One of the significant aspects which connects Anglo-Indian and Chinese memories of Calcutta is their memory of street food. Indeed, an overwhelming number of

interviewees mentioned *phuchkas*, *alu kabli* and *dal puri*²⁹ as what they missed most about Calcutta. Street food also framed the memory-scapes of Calcutta to a large extent (Figures 6.10 and 6.11). While street food such as these, and also Nizam's *kati rolls* and *biryani* from Shiraz, Rahmania or Aminia³⁰ restaurants formed part of memories of both communities, Anglo-Indians had certain community-specific food like *bakarkhanis* and Entally sausages which reminded them of Calcutta.

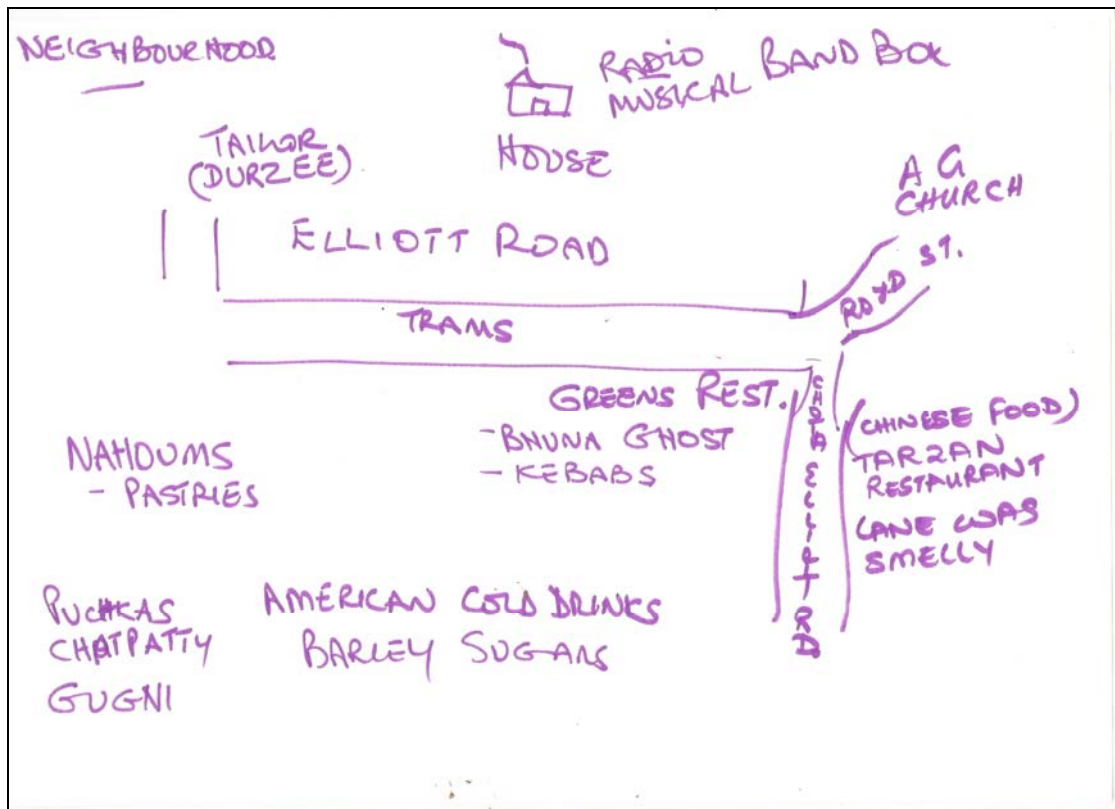


Figure 6.10 Memories of food (Christine)

The nostalgia for food is intricately linked to different places in Calcutta. Bradley, who lives in London, remembers all the details about the food he missed:

“Nahoum’s...with all the cakes and biscuits was very popular with Anglo-Indians...and in New Market [there was] the American cold drink shop and Fernandez’s...their mango drink...they had tall slim glasses, and they used to come around with a spoon and a lump of ice-cream...the

²⁹ These are different kinds of street food found in Calcutta. While practically anybody from Calcutta nostalgically remembers these foods, which are found in other cities of India as well, there is a staunch support for the kind found in Calcutta. See also note, page 73

³⁰ Refer to notes on page 73

mango drink was superb...and then kati rolls...the other thing you got in Calcutta was bakarkhanis...in no other place you got bakarkhani³¹...you come back from a dance at 5-6 in the morning, and wait for the bakarkhani man to come and have fried eggs and sausages with bakarkhanis...”

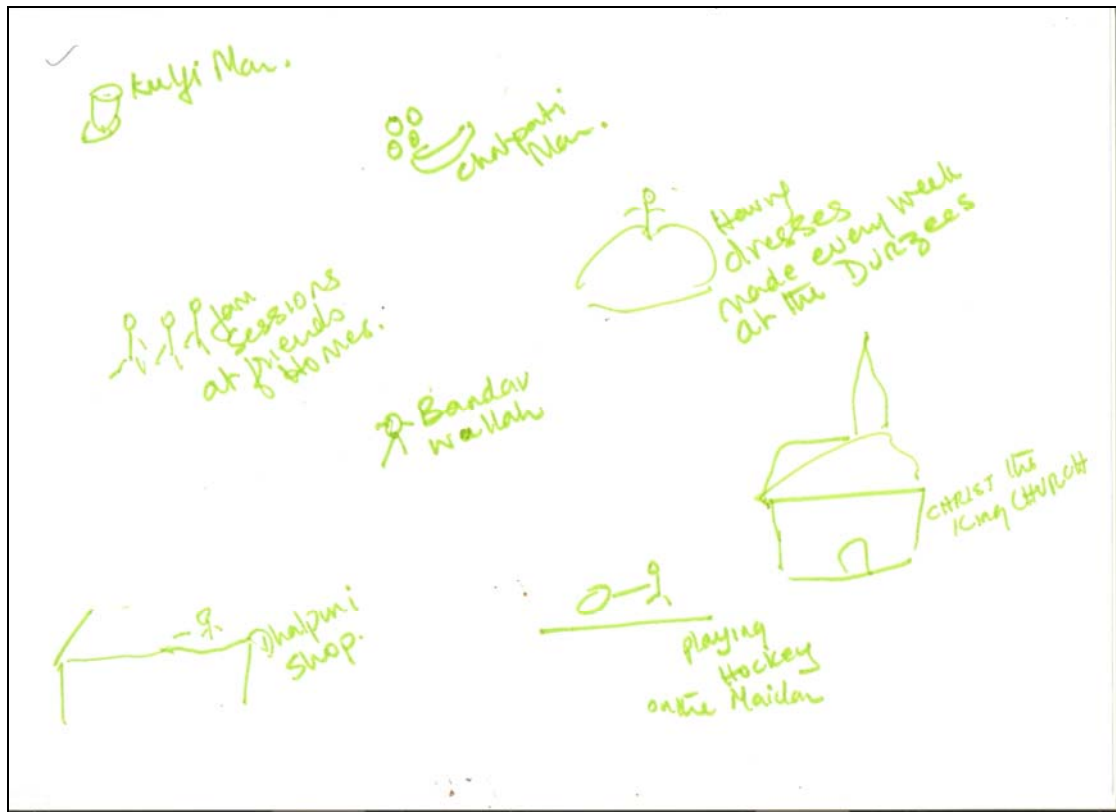


Figure 6.11 Food in the neighbourhood (Sarah)

Indeed, as Linda pointed out certain types of food are specifically linked to Calcutta:

“People in Calcutta would say there are two things: Entally sausages³² and bakarkhanis that were only associated with Calcutta. Entally sausages are pork or beef sausages which a lot of people in Canada make.”

³¹ Bakarkhani is a kind of flat bread, common in Kashmiri or Bengali Muslim cuisine. Although many interviewees link this specifically to Calcutta, it is possible that bakarkhani is found in Bengal more widely.

³² Entally is a neighbourhood in Central-East Calcutta

For the Chinese Calcuttans too, food forms an important part of the nostalgia for the city. Julie Hu, for example, said that she misses the food, 'especially the street food'. To her, 'all the vegetable and meat taste different here' and it is impossible to recreate that nostalgia for Calcutta. Similarly, William Lin remembers the '*alu kabli wallahs* and *phuchka wallahs*' that used to be present around Pei May School. Lucy Chang told me that the prawn chips which were made during Chinese New Year reminded her of her days in Calcutta. Although food formed an important part of memory of the city for Chinese Calcuttans, there is no specific food, as in the case of Anglo-Indians, which is traced to the city. Instead, there is a wider identification of being Chinese from the Indian subcontinent and a more general nostalgia for 'Indian' food. Talking about the difference between the Indian Chinese and other Chinese in Toronto, Thomas Chang remarked that the Chinese from India 'have our own curry, we make *parathas*, *samosas* and we have *phuchkas*...we mostly have Indian food like kebabs'. Many Chinese, like Anglo-Indians, cook Indian food at home, to relive the nostalgia. Reminiscing about the chicken curry they used to cook on picnics to Bandel, Julie Hu said that at times, they have curry picnics in Toronto.

The nostalgia for food that Anglo-Indians and Chinese had in Calcutta and attempts to recreate in their homes or in restaurants, however, goes beyond just a mnemonic association of food with the city. The memory-scape of the city when imagined in diaspora through food also masks a longing for certain spaces in the city and its associated memory of togetherness. Mei Ling described this connection of food with Calcutta vividly. She said:

"They can get the same food here [in Toronto] but it is never the same...because the togetherness is not there. For example, I got some Hakka noodles...I am sure it is exactly the same, but it is not the same, because of many reasons- I can say that over there [Calcutta] it was wrapped in banana leaf and then newspaper over that...I can say I miss the sound of the tram...it's cooling down in Bentinck Street...that's when we get the noodles...I am sitting there with my brother, my sister...we are all grabbing and eating...there is a sense that we are together...over here it's the same noodles, but somehow it isn't...the togetherness is gone."

The city in Mei Ling's narrative is remembered through food, but also through the located experience of eating the food. It is the togetherness that they experienced in Calcutta which becomes important for Chinese Calcuttans. Keith also elaborates on how food becomes the vehicle for remembering places in Calcutta for Anglo-Indians. Talking about the memories associated with *phuchka* he points out:

“Ask anyone how many times they had *phuchka* when they were in Calcutta...[one] went to the Maidan for half an hour, had *phuchka* and that was it. But it is a memory and [one] mixes that memory with having *phuchka* over here. It tastes different...doesn't taste anything like it...”

I explore the idea of togetherness as experienced in neighbourhoods and in community further in the next section. Echoing Mei Ling's narrative, Belinda, who also lives in Toronto, explains the nostalgia for Calcutta and food. Talking about the various restaurants that Anglo-Indians in Calcutta frequented, she said that many Anglo-Indians cook Indian and/or Anglo-Indian food at home in attempts to recreate those memories. But as she points out,

“ The English sausages...the bakarkhanis...and the *kachori* bhajis...I miss that...we have *kachoris* here, but its nothing like Calcutta...whenever we get together we end up talking about food for hours, because it was so fantastic..[]...but what do you do when you miss the place...you can't bring Trinca's back...you can't bring Amber back, you know.”

She pointed out that most Indian restaurants in Toronto had 'Western interiors' and 'somehow doesn't capture that feeling'. Like many Anglo-Indians, Belinda also frequents the Little India neighbourhood in Toronto, but as she said, 'it is different... it is not very Calcutta'. While the north Indian feel in Little India and in the dishes served in most Indian restaurants in Toronto failed to recreate Calcutta for Belinda, the Hakka Chinese restaurants somehow recreated that atmosphere, 'because all the Hakka people are here [Toronto]...when you go into their restaurants, you feel that you are back home'.

Indian Hakka restaurants in Toronto

Hakka restaurants serving Indian-style Chinese food have opened in large numbers in the suburbs of Toronto since the late 1980s. Unofficial estimates put the number at over 60 restaurants with over 90% run by the Calcutta Chinese. Although there are a couple of Indian Chinese restaurants in Downtown Toronto like Yeuh Tung and Spadina Garden, most are located in the suburbs of Brampton and Mississauga in the west and Scarborough and Markham in the east of Toronto. The sizes of the restaurants vary and can accommodate from 30 to over 100 people. Chris Wong explained to me that there has been a significant increase in the number of Indian Hakka restaurants in the past decade. While quite a few of these restaurants are run by the Chinese from central Calcutta, many Chinese from Tangra have opted to open a restaurant as it facilitated their immigration to Canada on business grounds. Facing closure of their tanneries back in Calcutta, the restaurants have indeed offered the Tangra Chinese an opportunity to invest their capital and create a niche.

Chinese restaurants have a marked presence in diasporic landscapes of many countries and cities. For Chinese immigrants, restaurants were often the main way to earn a living. Cheuk Kwan's documentary on Chinese restaurants traces the history and lives of Chinese immigrants in several lesser known countries (Chinese Restaurants, 2005). He also documents the history of Chinese restaurants in Calcutta, Bombay, and Delhi by following two families. Although he does not document the Indian Hakka restaurants in Toronto, Kwan's technique of locating the history of restaurants within family history resonates with the migratory trends and issues of the Calcutta Chinese. Indeed many Indian Hakka restaurants are family-run, like in Calcutta. The history of the restaurants also reflects the unique migratory story of the Indian Hakka community. Despite being conservative in maintaining tradition and customs, Hakka communities also draw on the idea of the 'guest people' in explaining their cuisine, stressing the need for innovation in order to survive. Robert Li, who runs an Indian Hakka restaurant in Scarborough, for example, explained to me that 'Indians did not like the bland taste of Chinese food, so our forefathers started adding all kinds of Indian spices...that's how Indian Hakka food was created'.

Dishes like Chilli Chicken, Hakka chowmein and paneer Manchurian as well as chicken pakora continue to attract a large South Asian clientele to these restaurants in Toronto. Usually with Bollywood music in the background and chefs and waiters who can converse in Hindi, Indian Hakka restaurants provide the perfect setting for feeding the nostalgia for back home. As Shyam Selavdurai in an article in *The Globe and Mail*, the Canadian newspaper, writes that a Chinese restaurant full of South Asians is ‘a room full of people tasting a remembrance of things past’ (<http://chowhound.chow.com/topics/102610>).

Whilst Indian Hakka restaurants in Toronto act as a ‘lieux-de-memoire’ (Nora, 1996) for the South Asian population in general, for Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans they are places where their shared memory of Calcutta and friendships play out through conversations about ‘back home’. Many Anglo-Indians mentioned that they visited Indian Hakka restaurants, and indeed many of them had their personal favourites. Dominic, an Anglo-Indian man for example, said:

“No matter which Hakka place you go to, they are all Calcutta Chinese...they say Indian Chinese, but they are all Calcutta...we talk Calcutta all the time...as soon as we go there, in no time they come to our table and have a chat and then we start talking about Calcutta...you know like ‘there is nothing like this restaurant on Chittaranjan Avenue or Peiping on Park Street’...and we have mutual friends somehow, so its very easy to strike up a conversation with the Calcutta Chinese people here.”

Similarly, Penelope also explained: ‘We talk about Calcutta and some of the Chinese speak Hindi, so we have fun...we talk about Tangra, about Dhapa...about Calcutta...who went back, how things are...what is good...what is bad...’. The excitement of being able to talk about Calcutta and to talk in Hindi draws on the shared experience of the city, and even though encounters between friends from Calcutta are frequent, it is the chance encounters amidst a wider South Asian diaspora that make Indian Hakka restaurants a place to relive memories of the city.

Re-membering the city

During the World Anglo-Indian Reunion held in Toronto in August 2007, I came across several Calcutta Chinese people who had come to attend the various programmes organised as part of the reunion. When I asked them the reason for their being there, they explained that they had come to meet old school friends. Soon after the reunion, I was doing an interview at a Hakka Chinese restaurant in downtown Toronto, when the owner of the restaurant, on coming to know my research topic, excitedly told me that her Anglo-Indian neighbours from Calcutta, from where she had migrated almost 40 years back, had dropped into the restaurant by chance and much to her joy recognised her. By chance, I also happened to meet the same Anglo-Indian family later in London, who recounted the same story. As coincidences of such kind played a significant part in my research, I was reminded of Daniel Li's comment about being 'Changlo-Indians' (field notes). I wondered whether such neighbourhood acquaintances and friendships played any role in the lives of the communities in London and Toronto and what it meant to be an Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttan in London and Toronto. Whilst spaces of home and spaces of restaurants act as sites of remembrance for Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans, in this section I explore how the memory of everyday living in Calcutta within spaces of neighbourhood, community and the wider city act as grounds of 're-membering' the city in London and Toronto. Anne Marie Fortier (2000) argues that "memory rather than territory is the principal ground of identity formation in diaspora cultures where 'territory' is de-centered and exploded into multiple settings [...] memory in diaspora, may be place-based but they are not necessarily place-bound". She further describes 're-membering' as a process which dwells on memories of places and also identifies 'members' who fit in, thereby 'thickens the act of memory, and gives it substance' (ibid.). In this section I draw on the idea of re-membering to explore the connections between communities and the city through notions of neighbourhood, sociability and identity. I critically analyse Anglo-Indian and Chinese memories of Calcutta within these three contexts and explore how the process of 're-membering' Calcutta in London and Toronto is located within a broader narrative linking politics of community, cosmopolitanism and identity. I argue that place-based memories of Calcutta are closely linked to the lives of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in London and Toronto but are re-membered differently in the two cities.

Dias-para

Many interviewees, both Anglo-Indian and Chinese, explained the differences in their lives in London and Toronto in terms of a loss of the neighbourhood, of everyday sociability that they had in Calcutta. The word ‘dias-para’³³ is a take on the Bengali term *para* meaning ‘neighbourhood’. In the first chapter I described how the neighbourhood is an important part of everyday experience of the city for both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. In this chapter I use the word ‘dias-para’ to explore the memories of everyday landscape of Calcutta that the two communities share and analyse how such memories are transposed in their lives in London and Toronto. The nostalgia for a close-knit everyday life in Calcutta was expressed by both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities, yet the varied experiences of re-settling in London and Toronto produced different narratives.

Remembering Anglo-Indian neighbourhoods

The neighbourhood is an important site of memory for Anglo-Indian Calcuttans now settled in London and Toronto. Whilst memory-narratives of the wider city focus on a nostalgia for the ‘good old days’ of community life, memories of the neighbourhood revolve around a sense of being and belonging in everyday life. Nostalgia for the neighbourhood in Calcutta is contrasted with a sense of scattered existence in London and Toronto. Whereas Anglo-Indians in both cities have generally settled in specific areas, a sense of an ‘Anglo-Indian neighbourhood’ has not developed. In London, for example, there is a concentration in southern suburbs of Croydon, Norwood, Thornton Heath and Wimbledon, whereas in Toronto Anglo-Indians have settled in more marked ‘Asian’ neighbourhoods of Brampton and Mississauga to the west of the city, as well as in pockets of Scarborough, Markham and East Pickering in the east. But as Timothy, who now lives in London, explained, ‘for someone in North London, it is impossible to know someone in South London...but when you think of Calcutta, you knew most of the Anglo-Indians’. The lack of an identifiable Anglo-Indian area in the city has created a nostalgia for neighbourhoods in Calcutta, which are remembered as a place of belonging in the city. As Terence, a young Anglo-Indian man settled in Toronto, explained:

³³ I thank Dwaipayan Bhattacharya for suggesting this term when I presented a paper on Anglo-Indian memories at Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta in December 2007. He used the term to describe his own neighbourhood which had witnessed significant out-migration of the younger generation and the way in which people still kept in touch with neighbourhood friends.

“[The way of life in Calcutta] is more laid back...there is the hustle bustle...there is a neighbourhood sense of existence, like people know who you are in your neighbourhood. Here in Toronto, three houses down my road, I don’t know my neighbours...but in Cal you would know. It is not the same in Canada...there is a certain distance between people...its very superficial...I miss the neighbourhood. We also have many neighbourhoods here [in Canada], and sometimes I get a sense of a de-javu...a building with the sun at the back...but you cannot replicate Cal anywhere”.

For Terence the anonymity of everyday life in Toronto marks it differently from Calcutta, a sentiment which is also shared by Christine. Talking about the neighbourhood where she lives in Scarborough, Toronto, Christine said:

“[In Calcutta] we just walked out of the house and would meet someone, we would chat...in Toronto initially it was quite lonely because you missed all your friends...in Calcutta, you walked two steps and met someone...here people are very reserved. This neighbourhood is very nice because we have lived here for a very long time, otherwise Canadians don’t mix that much...they tend to move very frequently, so you barely get to know someone...so the neighbourhood changes every 5-10 years...it is very different because back home you were in one place forever”.

The Calcutta neighbourhood in Christine’s memory remains as an unchanging place and provides a sense of stability. She remembers her neighbourhood in central Calcutta through the places that she frequented in her everyday life (Figure 6.12). Many memory maps of the neighbourhood drawn by Anglo-Indian interviewees mark the physical spaces of the neighbourhood. Richard, for example, drew a very detailed map of his neighbourhood in the Park Circus area of Calcutta, showing places which stand out in his memory (Fig. 6.13).

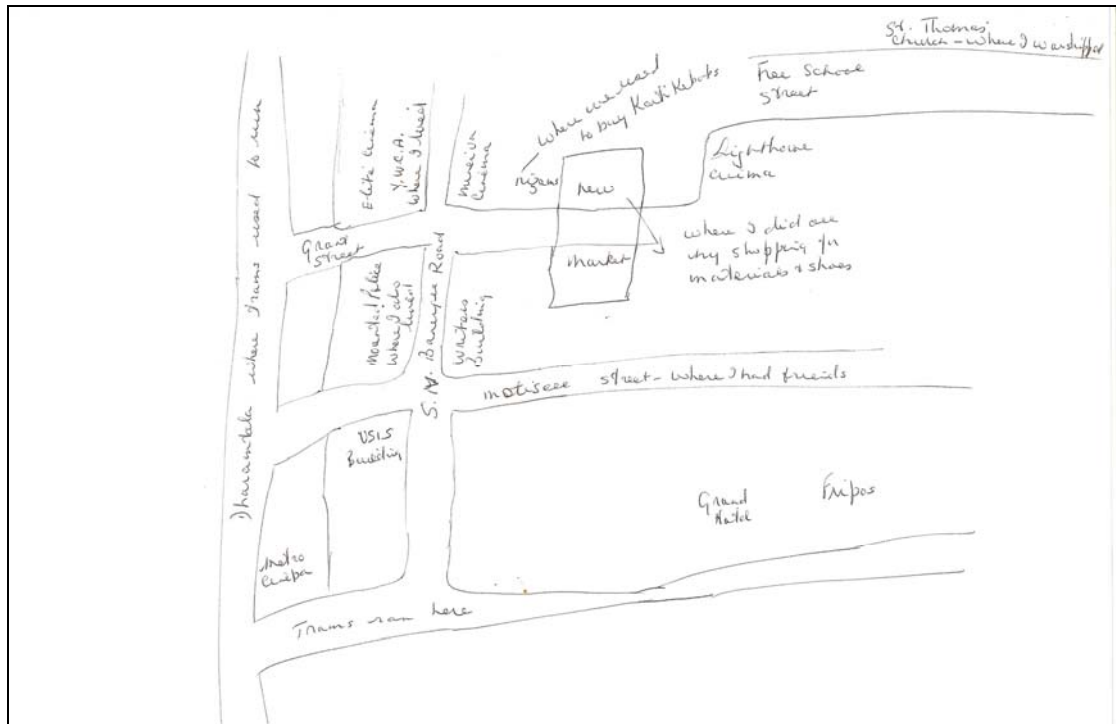


Figure 6.14 Iconic places in the neighbourhood (Alice)

Alice also makes note of places which were personally significant to her. So New Market was not only an iconic place which defined the neighbourhood, but also a place where she shopped for ‘materials and shoes’. While drawing the maps many interviewees asked me whether the places they remembered still existed. The physicality of the neighbourhood acts as an anchor for the memory of Calcutta. As Terence explained that conversations about Calcutta between those who have migrated at different times, often revolve around the streets, ‘how each street is, is it still the same way...what does it look like?’

While Richard and Alice’s maps mark places which were significant in remembering the neighbourhood, Linda’s map (Figure 6.15) is more indicative of spaces of personal memory that also form part of the nostalgia for the city . Linda now lives in Toronto, but her memory of neighbourhood finds resonance in narratives of other Anglo-Indians as well:

“I remember this would be our home here and it would be situated in the middle of Circus Row. When we came home from school, Lakshmi [her ‘Indian’ friend] would carry on further with her mum...the Down’s

syndrome girl [who lived on the opposite side of the road] was very sad...she was always crying...the *paan-wallah* was there with his smoking rope. If we came down the road and turned left, there was Karnani Mansion. I think those buildings also had Anglo-Indians...we would go there to visit.”

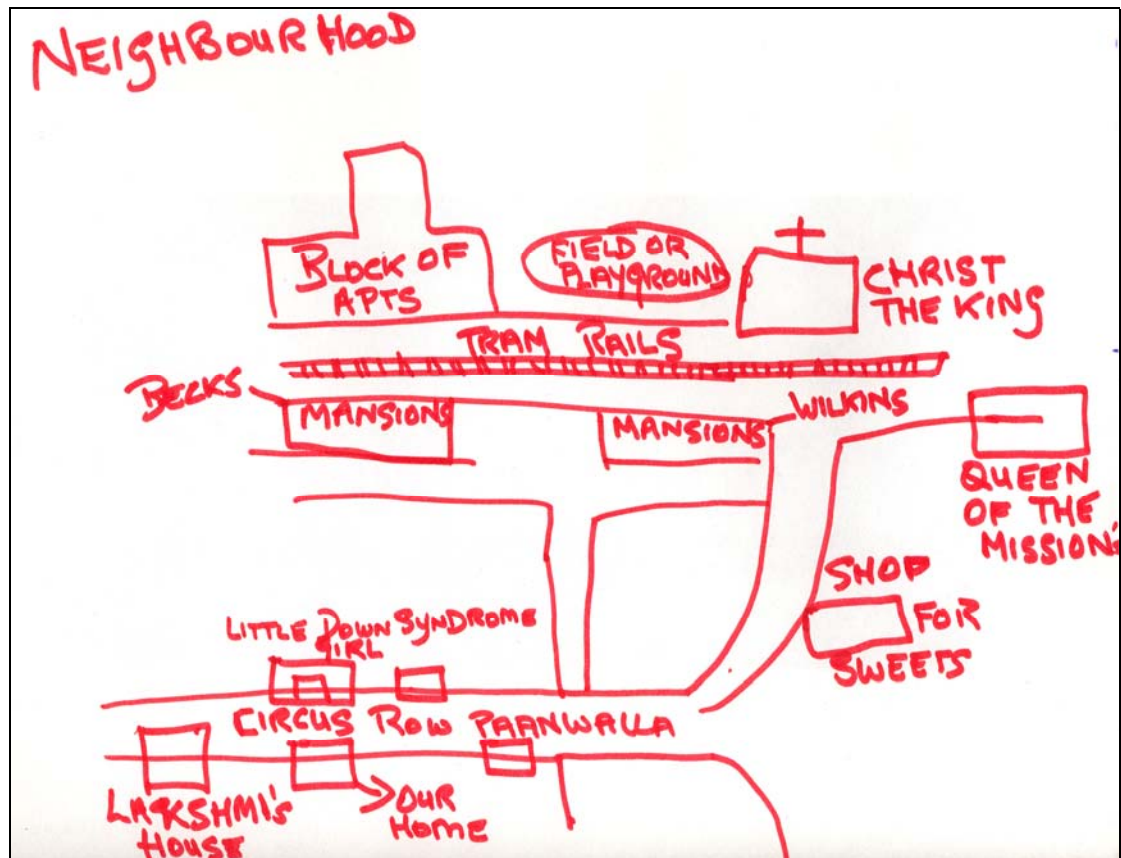


Figure 6.15 Personal memories of the neighbourhood (Linda)

It is through these personal, often childhood, memories of the neighbourhood that the city is remembered in diaspora. As Linda said, ‘memories of Calcutta are precious but they are also childhood memories...I still look at those memories and treasure them’. Whilst personal narratives of the city such as those recounted by Linda, Alice and Richard also find voice in the memories of Anglo-Indians from other cities, Calcutta memories are significant in exploring the specific networks that developed amongst Anglo-Indians in London and Toronto.

Remembering neighbourhoods in London and Toronto also goes beyond locating the memory in a particular space and time in Calcutta. Such memories are often used to narrate how the Anglo-Indian community has settled in London and Toronto. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, Anglo-Indians in London form part of an earlier migration from Calcutta, most having migrated in the 1950s and 1960s. In this immediate postcolonial period, narratives of migration to London reveal a disjuncture between ideas of ‘coming home’ and the community’s initial perception of the city. Brian, who moved to London in 1958, explained that many Anglo-Indians thought they were ‘going home’ and that ‘you heard that from a lot of people’. Yet, as he mentioned, ‘[in London] it was much too cold for life and in the first week, we thought of going back’. Similarly, Mary, who migrated in 1962, said:

“I think when I first came to London, I was homesick...you know what I mean...I grew up in Calcutta and this was a very different place. If anybody had said, ‘here is the money’, I would have gone back”.

For many Anglo-Indians, the initial disillusionment with London was explained through a difference with the kind of everyday life they had in Calcutta. Although many said they settled into jobs soon enough, the narratives were tinged with a nostalgia for Calcutta. Donald told me that London was a ‘big disappointment’ for him. He said:

“In England nobody had a smile on their face...you walk down the street and nobody smiles at you...it was cold, misty and foggy all the time. So it took me a long time to actually feel some comfort here, for certainly the difference with Calcutta was very marked...I came in November and within a week I got a job...I would go to work in the morning, come back in the evening and all I would do is have a meal and sit by the fire. I didn’t go out, I didn’t socialise except with family...it was a very different existence...[in contrast] in Calcutta it was an extended family. There was my immediate family and then there were [names of his neighbours]. So while you were intimately involved with your family, you also socialised with a larger group of people...you met them on a daily basis, in the market place...”.

The disjuncture between the memory of the neighbourhood as an ‘extended family’, and arriving at a city ‘where no one knew about Anglo-Indians’ (Ellen) added to a sense of unsettledness. Talking about being an Anglo-Indian in Calcutta, Melvyn, who came to London in 1952, said that he had more friends in Calcutta than he has here, and that is ‘strictly because of where you lived...over here you are more spread out’. Whereas neighbourhood memories helped locate identity in Calcutta, migration to London added to a wider Anglo-Indian identity. Charles, for example, pointed out that although the ‘majority of Anglo-Indians [in London] are from Calcutta or the railways...there isn’t that division amongst Anglo-Indians here...once we got here, we were Anglo-Indians from whichever part we came’. Similarly, Bernard, who migrated to Toronto in 1988, also pointed out that the neighbourhood-based identity that prevailed in Calcutta dissolved when one migrated. As he said:

“I think migrating to Canada has bonded them [Anglo-Indians] more because you tend to classify yourself as Anglo-Indian, and then when you start talking, you find out where you are from...I think you bond more here because in Calcutta, you ought to realise that people who lived in Khiderpore never mixed with people who lived in Chandni because you had no reason to. But here you live in Mississauga, or Brampton, or Scarborough, you do your things separately but there are always occasions where you mix with each other”.

Bernard’s comment brings up issues in linking community, identity and neighbourhood over diaspora. It is indicative of how Anglo-Indian identities in Calcutta were rooted in class divisions, and at the same time how such identity issues are negotiated in diaspora. Talking about neighbourhoods in Toronto also frequently brought up the idea of Toronto as a multicultural city, an aspect I discuss further later. In the context of the neighbourhood the idea of a multicultural Toronto places Anglo-Indian Calcuttans in an in-between position, but unlike in London, where the invisibility had been somewhat unsettling in the context of colonial history, in Toronto the community is placed within a wider South Asian community. Yet, it is precisely in this context that a shared history and memory of the community based in

Calcutta that provides a ground for a more nuanced understanding of Anglo-Indian identity. As David remarked,

“I think in Calcutta people knew who we were, more than people know who [we] are here. The Indian population is one of the fastest growing here, but a lot of them have come from Punjab....they didn't really have much interaction with Anglo-Indians...people from Calcutta would know Anglo-Indians”.

The located memory of Calcutta neighbourhoods, in this case, acts as an anchor for a wider Anglo-Indian identity, albeit for those who are from the city.

Remembering Chinese neighbourhoods

Remembering Chinese neighbourhoods in Toronto, much like remembering Anglo-Indian neighbourhoods, involves narrating a loss, connecting memory with the physical spaces of the city, and also a changing narrative of ‘community’ identity. Yet, as Benjamin Kuo’s poem in the beginning of this chapter suggests, the sense of loss as expressed through nostalgia for Calcutta is also balanced by ‘re-birthing in the foreign town’. Calcutta Hakkas have migrated in large numbers to Toronto, and while other Chinese sub-groups like the Cantonese and the Hupei have also made Toronto their home, the communities are far less organised than the Hakka Chinese. The strong community network that has characterised the Calcutta Hakka community has almost reproduced itself in Toronto, yet as the process of ‘re-remembering’ suggests, the memory of places back in Calcutta is re-appropriated in different ways.

The presence of the Chinese community in Calcutta revolves around the idea of the two Chinatowns, one in central Calcutta and the other in Tangra. As explained in Chapter Four, while the two Chinatowns upheld different ways of everyday lived and imagined cosmopolitanisms, community life in both neighbourhoods revolved around specific ‘community’ sites, such as temples, schools and associations. Memories of everyday spaces, as portrayed in several maps drawn by Anglo-Indian interviewees, also featured in maps of Chinese neighbourhoods. Patricia Hsu, for example, drew the memory of her neighbourhood in Chattawalla Gully by marking the everyday spaces that she frequented (Figure 6.16).

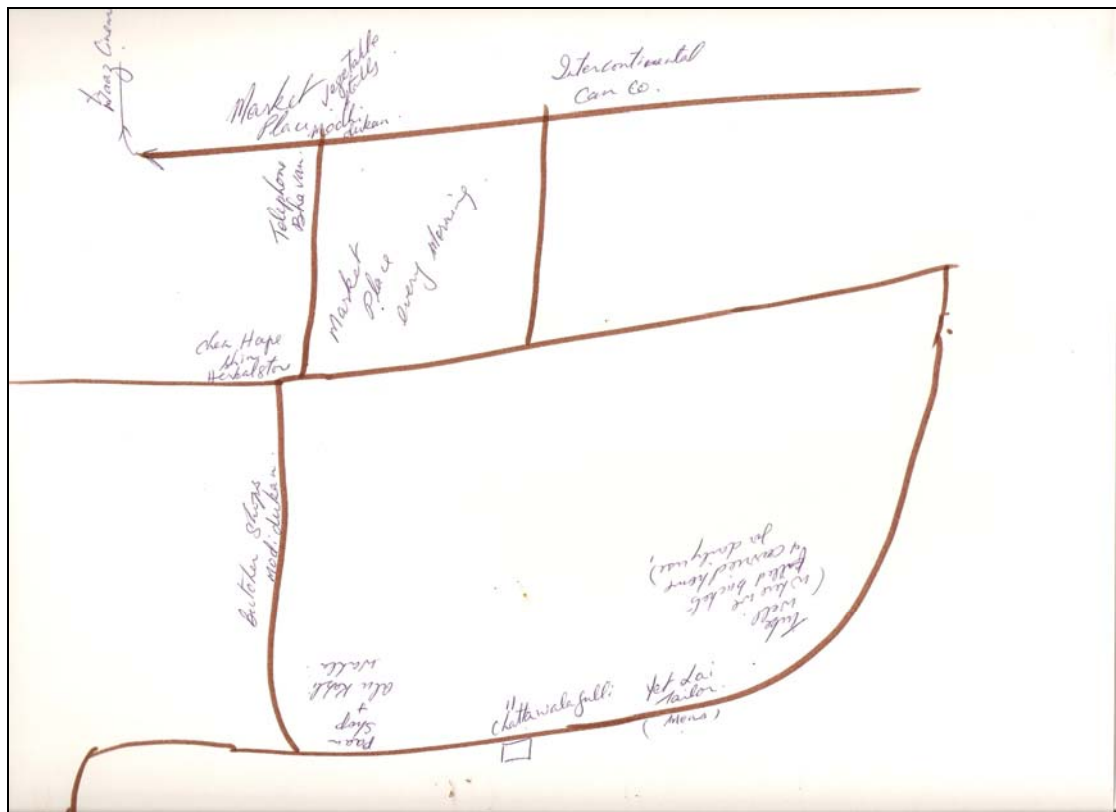


Figure 6.16 Everyday places in the neighbourhood 3 (Patricia Hsu)

She reminisced about her neighbourhood by focusing on the streets and her everyday memories:

“This is a crude street map of the area where I lived before I came to Canada. I lived in Chattawalla Gully and next to my house there was a tailors shop. I remember there was a *paan* shop (corner store), and a place where they would sell *aloo kabli*. When my dad died in 1968, I became the predominant member in my family. I had to do grocery shopping every morning so I remember there were many Chinese butcher shops and a *modi ka dukan* (small grocery store) with people selling stuff. I would go and buy whatever my mom told me to buy...the market area was busy till 8 o’ clock in the morning...many Chinese people made breakfast and sold it there.”

The morning market was a prominent landmark for those who lived in the Territi Bazaar and surrounding area. Like Patricia Hsu, Christopher Wu’s memory also

revolves around this area (Figure 6.17). Christopher is a young Calcutta Chinese who lives in London. Whilst marking everyday spaces of the neighbourhood, his map also shows ‘community’ places such as the Chinese Temple, the Ling Liang School and also the market place.



Figure 6.17 Community places (Christopher Wu)

Memories of Tangra are also depicted through these everyday places in some maps (for example, Figure 6.18), but Tangra, for those who lived there, also framed the memory of the city. Thomas Li’s map, for example, shows Tangra as a distinct space within Calcutta, as a separate enclave within the city, yet a part of it (Figure 6.19).

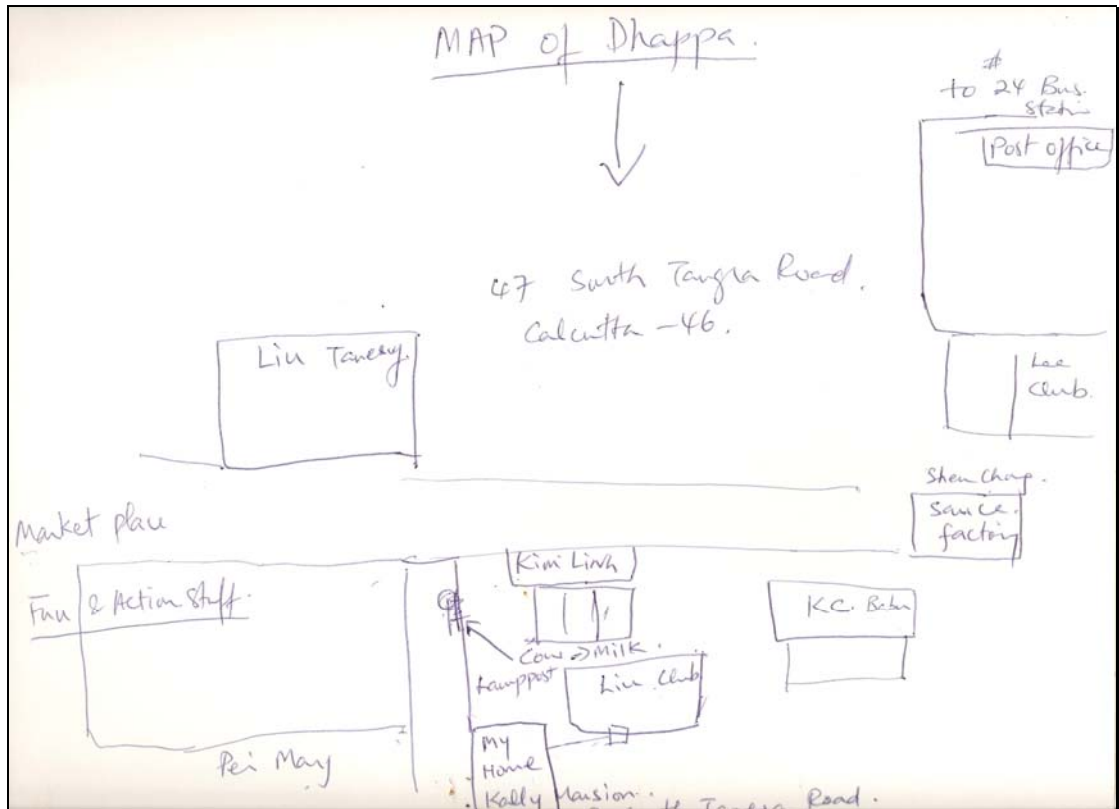


Figure 6.18 Inside Tangra (Lucy Chang)

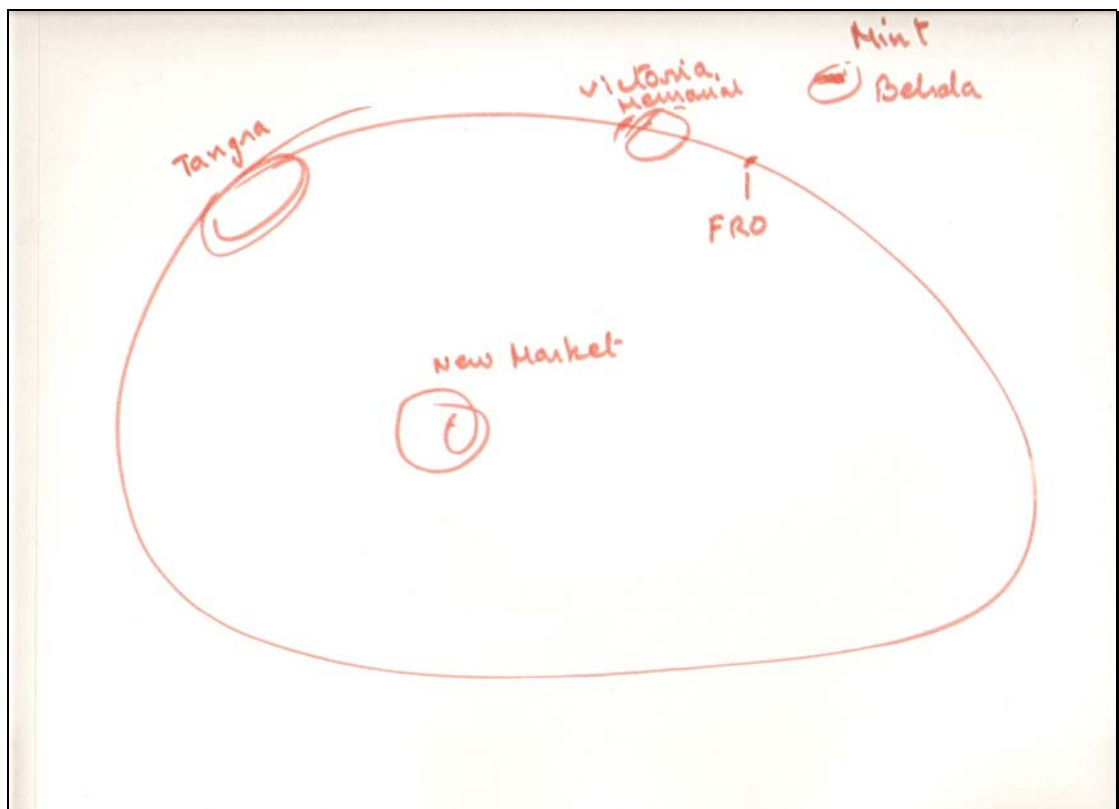


Figure 6.19 Beyond Tangra (Thomas Li)

Continued migration from the central Calcutta Chinatown and a more 'mixed' everyday space characterising it, has made Tangra a more 'visual' Chinatown, an aspect which is being emphasised in present day Calcutta. In diaspora in Toronto, the predominance of the Hakka community has resulted in the sense of loss narrated more through Tangra, than central Calcutta, and also forging a common Calcutta Hakka identity in Toronto. Sarah Wang, who grew up on Bentinck Street in central Calcutta, explained the difference in the sense of nostalgia for these two neighbourhoods. In her words:

“The way the people lived in Calcutta was different...it was more scattered. There was no space to make a wall and all live in there...so in Calcutta there were more individual businesses and spaces, but in Tangra they were more unified, I guess because of the close proximity they lived in. The tannery owners built these huge houses, which they would rent out to people, and they formed a close-knit community. [] In Canada they still talk about Tangra, they still talk about people who lived in their tanneries, they still talk to them like they are really close and sometimes like family members. Even now when some of the older people meet, they say, 'oh so and so used to live in my tannery'...like an ownership...pride kind of thing... 'they used to be in my community'.

Many like Sarah, who grew up in central Calcutta, draw on the sense of loss by narrating the decline in Tangra. Laura Chen, who is Cantonese and who grew up near Chattawalla Gully, but who also has many Hakka friends, expressed her feelings about the large-scale migration from Calcutta in the following way:

“When we went back, [someone in Tangra] invited us for lunch, so I was talking to them and asked them what Tangra is like now. They said it is like a ghost town...there are no Chinese anymore...it is sad to see that...our ancestors have been doing business there for so long, but the youngsters don't want to learn the art of tanning...they are just leaving...so they feel one day our trademark will go away...”.

The sense of loss, as expressed by Laura Chen, focuses on the contribution of the Chinese community in Calcutta, and also on the loss of a 'community' feeling. Brenda Chen, for example, elaborates on the nostalgia for the community:

“I think the nostalgia is for the heydays when the community was at its peak and everything was fine. Tangra is a historic spot, because day by day there is less and less of Tangra. Every time there is an immigration, there is a tannery put up for sale...the people buying are not necessarily Chinese....so the community is slowly being cut away.”

Because so many Calcutta Chinese, and particularly Calcutta Hakkas, have re-settled in Toronto, the diaspora has almost literally transformed into dias-para. Most Calcutta Chinese have settled in Scarborough and Markham areas of east Toronto, where there is a presence of other Chinese communities, but the close proximity that they shared in Calcutta has been lost. However, attempts are made to recapture the loss of the neighbourhood through networks and sociability within the community. As Julie Hu, a young Calcutta Hakka, jokingly said:

“This [Toronto] is like heaven for the Chinese people from Calcutta, because this is the place where you find all the Hakka people with network...and it [Canada] is a developed country, so it has all the good infrastructure. You won't miss the community because everyone is here, and you won't miss the Western set-up because everything is here.”

The sense of loss of the close-knit community space, however, is quite strong, especially amongst the older generation. Mei Ling, for example, described how migration from Calcutta influenced the community. Talking about the differences between Calcutta and Toronto and how that affected the rituals which marked Hakka life in Calcutta, she said:

“I kind of thought that people were so lonely here...they didn't have their walls around them anymore...yet they were so afraid...there was a spill-over from the 1962 war, and the first migrants are more scared...they kind of transported what was in Calcutta..[]...some family tried [to keep

alive rituals] but it sort of lost its significance...it is almost a forlorn way of doing it because who are you affirming to...where is the clan? It is almost like strangers in a strange land and you change...whereas in India there is still some [sense of community]...you can still see it...and you are together...here it is not the same. You keep hearing the phrase, 'it is not the same here', but it is truly not the same”.

The focus on a conservative Hakka way of life, maintained through rituals and a tight-knit community in Tangra, gives way to a generation gap in trying to maintain a community identity. Many elderly Calcutta Chinese migrate through sponsorship of their children, and many are dependent on them. Many having lived a closed life in Tangra are not able to speak English. Hence there is a greater need for them to try and maintain a community identity. Talking about the differences in the way Calcutta is remembered by the different generations, William Lin, a young Hakka Chinese who migrated with his family and runs an Indian Chinese restaurant in Toronto, says, 'even those from my generation when they talk of Calcutta, they talk about their attachment to New Market and their schools...[the older generation] have their own memories, we have our own...they are more attached to their tanneries’.

Calcutta connections

The divide between generations is an aspect which both Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans draw on when talking about spaces of sociability in the city. For both communities there is a distinct nostalgia about the kind of social life they had in Calcutta, both within and outside the community. Although such nostalgia attempts to recreate a city of the past, and also creates a gap between generations, it is an important aspect to explore how memories of the city are transposed in the communities’ lives in London and Toronto. In this section I analyse the importance of these memories for both Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans within the contexts of early migration to London/Toronto, personal friendships, and the role of community associations.

Memories of spaces of sociability in Calcutta revolve around both ‘community’ sites as well as the wider city. Both Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans remember the close-knit community life focused around clubs and associations, but also other

iconic places like New Market, the Zoo, Botanical Gardens, Eden Gardens and Victoria Memorial as well as spaces of the neighbourhood. Thomas, who now lives in Toronto, made a list of places that are important part of his Calcutta memories, when I asked him to draw a map (Figure 6.20).

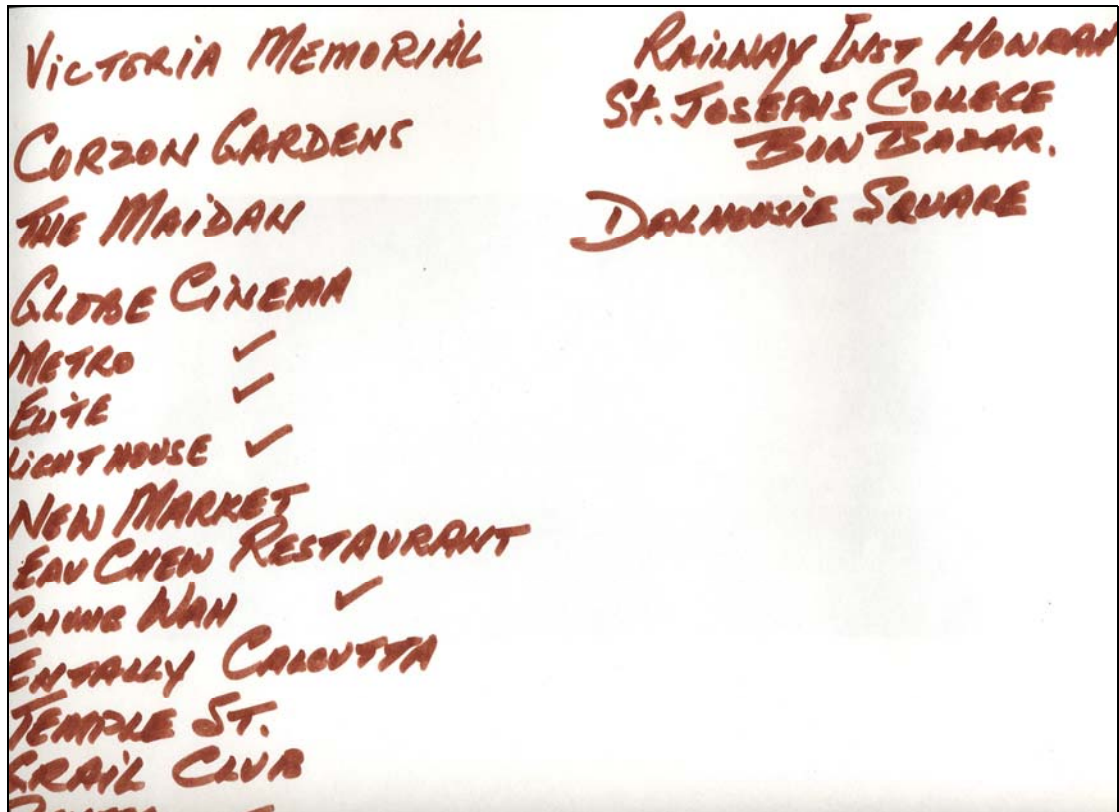


Figure 6.20 Memorable places of sociability 1 (Thomas)

Thomas' memory of Calcutta included a vast range of places from the Grail Club, which still forms an important part of Anglo-Indian life in Calcutta, to Chinese restaurants and the cinemas, as did Lawrence's (Figure 6.21). These, however, are not just places in memory, these are memorable places for both Anglo-Indians and Chinese Calcuttans to reminisce about the social life in Calcutta. Belinda, for example, spoke about how going to the cinema was a weekly affair:

“[We went to the cinemas] every Saturday...unless there was another party. And of course you had Mocambo, Blue Fox, Trincas, Magnolia (restaurants).we would go there too...afternoon tea at Flury's...and Firpo's near Grand Hotel...[]...even now when I hear rock n' roll I go back to that time...to Trinca's...Music takes me back...to the

Bandwagon at New Empire...when I hear certain tunes, I go back to a certain party...a house party...some songs are very nostalgic...”

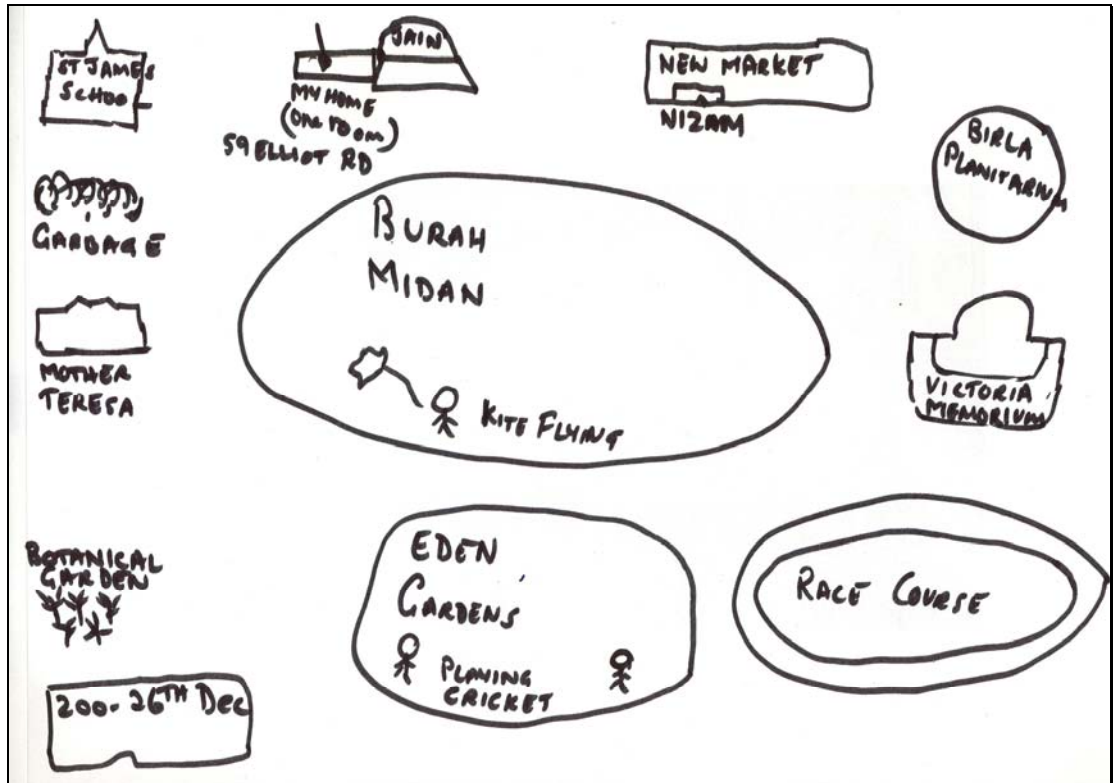


Figure 6.21 Memorable places of sociability 2 (Lawrence)

Chinese Calcuttans also remember these iconic places in Calcutta alongside more personal memories. Lucy Chang, for example, spoke about the same places that were marked in Lawrence’s and Thomas’ maps. When I asked her how she described her feelings for Calcutta now, she said:

“It’s sweet, you know...we enjoyed a lot...going for movies at New Empire, Globe....they had Kwality ice-cream...I still remember that...we went to see *The Sound of Music*... that was expensive...I remember those days...coming back in a horse carriage....when all the neighbours went together for a movie, we couldn’t get a rickshaw, so we would call a taxi and all crawl in...then there was New Market...it was like a centre for us...those are the memories...”.

Paul Hsu drew a map of Calcutta with Eden Gardens, a place where he used to go regularly (Figure 6.22).

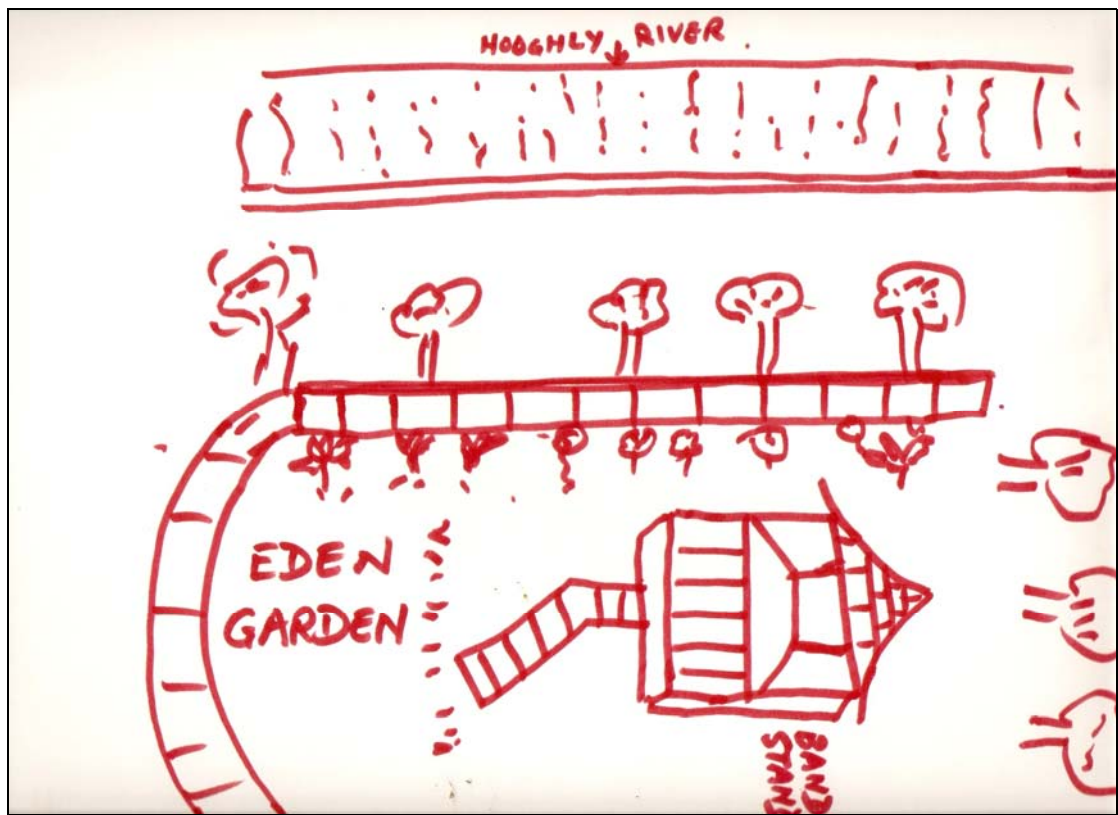


Figure 6.22 Memorable places in Calcutta (Paul Hsu)

Paul Hsu’s memory of Calcutta also finds resonance in Cynthia Au’s memory of going to Botanical Gardens as part of a community outing:

“Botanical Gardens was one of the places we have memories of when we went to the Chinese school. We used to go early in the morning. I remember we woke up at 4.30...three groups would go- one by bus, one by cycle and one group by boat...we would all go there and see which group reaches first...in the morning, we used to go round the neighbourhood on our cycles and ring the bell to wake everyone up...then we would have Chinese porridge and set off...”.

Such shared memories of Calcutta form an important part of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttan identity. Although a ‘community’ identity has been reconfigured as a wider identity issue, and the sense of close proximity of living alongside lost, old

friendships across both communities continue, and new friendships forged through the Hakka Chinese restaurants in Toronto, for example. As Kenneth explained :

“Most of our friendships started in schools and we also visited each other’s homes...if I go to any mall or any place here and there is a Chinese person, I can tell you straight away that they are from Calcutta, because of their Anglo-Indian accent...it is so distinct”.

Kenneth explained that many of his Chinese school friends were in Toronto and that they meet often ‘at church, or at each other’s homes’, and that they are culturally ‘Anglo-Indian Chinese’. His sentiments are also echoed by Thomas, another Anglo-Indian man living in Toronto, who claimed that ‘the Calcutta Chinese mainly mix with Anglo-Indians...because they find the other Chinese different’. He explained that such affinity and close friendship existed because ‘they went to the same schools and lived in India’. Pamela Chen, who I met at the Anglo-Indian Reunion also remarked that it was my Calcutta connection which excited her and got her talking to me. She said she goes to the Reunion to meet her old friends and because ‘there is that bond’. In Toronto, a greater presence of the Calcutta Chinese community compared to London, as well as a greater visibility through the Hakka Chinese restaurants, offers more opportunities to maintain and rekindle Anglo-Chinese friendships. Although there are a few Calcutta Chinese families in London, and I did come across a few cases of Anglo-Chinese friendships, the links between the two communities are far less visible. One exception is the Calcutta Club, an association which was established in 1999. Mike Ford, the founder of the association, and an Anglo-Indian Calcuttan, mentioned that he started the Calcutta Club when he realised that the school reunions were getting smaller. The Calcutta Club is ‘open to any Calcuttan’ and meets every second Thursday of the month at a hotel near Green Park in central London. The club also organises an annual lunch which is well attended by a cross-section of people from Calcutta- Anglo-Indians, Chinese, Jews, Bengalis, non-Bengalis and provides a space to relive friendships and memories of Calcutta (field notes).

Whilst friendship across both communities keeps alive the Calcutta connection for some, for others, personal contacts from within the community defined the early spaces of sociability in the city. Such contacts were useful not only to find a bearing in a new city, but also to relive memories of Calcutta. Talking about his migration to Toronto in the mid 1960s, Peter Au said,

“When we first arrived, people would talk and it would be like so and so has arrived...we would maybe rent a flat together. At that time we were around 20-30 people, so we would congregate at the flat, and chit chat and cook for ourselves...we would share a lot of things, and it is quite natural...you try to socialise with people with similar backgrounds and this was foreign land, so you better stick together and try to help around, like if there is a vacancy in the factory, you would say...”.

Similarly Dominic, a Toronto-based Anglo-Indian who grew up in Bangalore and Madras and lived in Calcutta for over 15 years, said that in the initial days he met up with his friends from the cities very often. He remarked that,

“...you wanted to talk about a lot of things...your children were growing up, you were starting a new life...you want to stay together, to eat together, to socialise together...at the drop of the hat you had twenty people at your place...”

Impromptu get-togethers were also part of early Anglo-Indian sociability in London, whether at home or at organised dances and picnics. Talking about his early days in London, Bradley rued that ‘England gave [Anglo-Indians] material things, but it took away [their] way of life’. He mentioned dances which were organised by the Calcutta Rangers Club at Crystal Palace in south London where he met other Anglo-Indians. Timothy too remembers these dances as places where he met people who he knew from back in Calcutta. He mentioned one of his friends from Calcutta, who had lost touch with him, and who he met again at the Calcutta Rangers dance in Crystal Palace. Dances were also held near King’s Cross and Harrow in north London (Ellen). As Sarah explained, Calcutta was such a small place, ‘where even if you didn’t hang around with them, you still knew of them’.

Such informal acquaintances made at dances and get-togethers continue in present day London, but as the community settled in the city, associations and school reunions have given these get-togethers a more formal shape. Annual school reunions, such as the one organised by the Victoria and Dow Hill Association (VADHA) and the Loreto and St. Xavier's schools are important places of sociability, not only for Anglo-Indians from Calcutta, but also for those from other parts of India. The concentration of the community in south London led to the formation of the South London Anglo-Indian Association in 2002. The SLAIA started a luncheon club for Anglo-Indian pensioners in 2004 and meets every Thursday at a church hall in South Norwood, 'where a hot meal is served with light entertainment like music, raffle and Bingo' (www.anglo-indians.co.uk/history). The association also organises a picnic to celebrate World Anglo-Indian Day on 2nd August. Besides the SLAIA, the UK Anglo-Indian Association also functions to bring the community together.

In Toronto too, the informal get-togethers based around personal friendships continue, although the distance in the city makes such get-togethers relatively infrequent. As Kenneth explained:

"It is not like going out of your house and walking across to your neighbour's place in Calcutta where he is still up and music blaring...there is a loss of unity here because of the distance and also the weather...you can organise a dance maybe every three months or so"

Christine too mentioned that people often met over dinner 'with close friends not the larger community' mainly during winter. In the summer months, she said, 'there are picnics and other get-togethers' organised by associations. Much like in London, the community associations are few in Toronto. Anglo-Indians in Touch was formed in the early 1980s. Apart from organising social events, the AIIT published a newsletter by the same name from 1982 till 1997. In the first issue of the journal, its editor Merv Gaynor noted that although there was a proposal for an Anglo-Indian Association of Canada, it was difficult to start one as Anglo-Indians in Canada were too scattered, even in Toronto (<http://home.alphalink.com.au/~agilbert/c82.html>). But at the same

time, he wrote, 'because of our own particular heritage, culture and way of life, a gathering of the 'clan' always provides an atmosphere of warmth, gaiety and nostalgia as memories are rekindled and old acquaintances renewed' (ibid). The AIIT stopped functioning in 2007, and merged with the Anglo-Indian Association of Canada (A-IAC) formed in 2004, which organised the World Anglo-Indian Reunion in Toronto in 2007.

The memory of the 'clan' assumes a greater role in get-togethers of Indian Chinese, particularly those who are Hakka. Memories of togetherness in diaspora for them are carried over to Toronto, where the close-knit community continues to exert an influence in the way Chinese Calcuttans socialise. The presence of a large number of Chinese Calcuttans has meant that the close network they had in Calcutta is transferred to Toronto. When I asked Julie Hu how the network amongst Hakka Calcuttans operate, she claimed,

“Through phone calls...it is better than the BBC or the CNN...there is no formal announcement, but if one family knows, others get to know as well...nothing escapes in our community...whatever happens, everyone gets to know...its amazing...our network works better than if somebody were to publish it.”

The close links are also maintained through marriage. Many Chinese Calcuttans have married within the community which maintains the connection between groups of people who have migrated over time. Chris Wong, for example, pointed out that 'most belonged to the same group...marriage has taken place amongst Hakka people, so they know each other well...during a wedding you can see 500 Hakkas'. Weddings and other occasions like births and deaths define the sociability of Chinese Calcuttans. But as Brenda Chen says it is still different from Calcutta:

“Socialising here is done mostly with the family during the weekend or other holidays. Then most are related through marriage, so if you go to one member's house, you will have news of another. If there is a marriage, everyone will know about it. We are connected that way. When you say socialising, it is not the Calcutta sense of socialising. You don't

have that here in Canada. The socialising here is on a more finite scale. When there is a marriage, a funeral or new year, it brings everyone together. Socialising is a more defined event.”

Beyond weddings and funerals, Chinese Calcuttans have also recreated a little bit of Calcutta through informal get-togethers at Tim Horton’s, a coffee shop outlet in Scarborough every Friday and Saturday evenings. Men and women usually meet in separate groups to talk about their memories of Calcutta over a cup of coffee and snacks. As Cynthia Au said:

“In Bentinck Street or Esplanade to Bow Bazaar or even Tangra, anything would happen and you would know. Here some may be in Scarborough...some in Markham...it isn’t the same here. People do meet at times at Pacific Mall, some retired people might sit and chit chat...or at Tim Horton’s people meet for coffee...there is now that way of communicating because the community has grown.”

The Yin Hua Association, which literally translates as Indian Chinese Association, also provides a space for elderly Chinese to get together and play mahjong. The association organises an annual barbeque and dinner during Chinese New Year to get the community together. However, as Brenda Chen noted, there is a generational divide in the way the association functions. In addition, she remarked:

“One must remember that in Tangra, although there was a great community feeling, one could not even sneeze without letting the neighbours know. It was, to a certain extent, suffocating. Everybody knew what you were up to....so there are some Chinese who stay away”.

Memories of close proximity and everyday spaces of sociability in Calcutta are remembered in different ways by the two communities, and also within the community. Another way in which the city is re-membered is through the idea of community responsibility. Whilst for Anglo-Indians this often translates into organising social events for a cause or philanthropic reasons, for Hakka Calcuttans the idea of community responsibility has led to the formation of specific associations

looking after the need of the community in Toronto itself. Although philanthropy is an important link connecting diasporic Anglo-Indians with India in general, Calcutta figures prominently for two reasons. Firstly, organisations like Calcutta Anglo-Indian Service Society (CAISS) and Calcutta Tiljalla Relief (CTR) whose work began in Calcutta, and for CTR then spread to other parts of India, have important links with community associations in London and Toronto. Secondly, the presence of a large group of Calcutta Anglo-Indians also influences the connection. When I asked Dominic why Calcutta figured prominently in philanthropic ventures, he explained that ‘there is a big *gusti* (extended family) of Calcutta Anglo-Indians’ in diaspora. Dances are held regularly to raise money for these charities and while the main aim is to help those who are ‘back home’, it is also a question of influencing community identity. Often, but not always, such identities are reframed in relation to the city. As Deliah explained, participating in events of the CTR is ‘more a sense of contributing to Calcutta’. She said that although she led a comfortable life in Canada, there were some back home who were struggling and she helps because ‘there are certain ties of identity’. In London, a dance is held in November to raise money for the Bow Barracks Christmas festival, pointing to a more specific engagement with Calcutta. Strong family networks amongst the Calcutta Chinese community, on the other hand, have not led to philanthropic engagement with Calcutta. As Brenda Chen explained, ‘because the tanneries are disintegrating, the connection [with Calcutta] becomes less and less’. However, there is concern within the community to continue the forms of sociability that existed in Calcutta, especially for the elderly. Hakka Helping Hands is one such association which organises a monthly get together and outings for elderly Hakka Chinese. Another association, the Toronto Hakka Chinese Community Network (THCCN) organises games and picnics for the younger Chinese and also provide an opportunity for their parents to meet. As the THCCN website mentions, their main aim is ‘to build a strong, united and supportive community awareness through social, educational, cultural, and recreational programs’ as well as ‘networking with other organizations to develop a 'melting-pot' with the rest of Toronto's multi-cultural community’ (<http://thccn.com/about.htm>) .

Cosmopolitan city/multicultural city

The idea of a multicultural Toronto was brought up many times in interviews with both Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans. One of the ways in which memories of

neighbourhood and sociability are important is the fact that while both communities reminisced about Calcutta in cosmopolitan terms, in the sense of a mixed and shared everyday space, they also remember Calcutta as the city where their community identity was preserved. Such a memory of cosmopolitan Calcutta sets up an interesting contrast with the idea of Toronto as a multicultural city and Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans as invisible parts of a wider South Asian diaspora. Cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism are different ideas of 'living together in the city'. Whilst cosmopolitanism refers more to a sense of everyday mixing, an 'ordinary' aspect of cities like Calcutta, multiculturalism is an idea discussed in policy contexts of especially Western cities. Extending the debate outlined in the previous section on how narratives of neighbourhood and sociability are used to remember the city, in this section I consider how narratives of identity are reconstituted in the context of an official policy of multiculturalism in Toronto. Whilst multiculturalism is also part of urban policy in London, here I focus particularly on the Seventh World Anglo-Indian Reunion held in Toronto in August 2007 and the notion of being Indian Chinese/ Chinese Calcuttan amidst a wider Chinese diaspora, to draw parallels and differences across the two communities. I locate the analyses within critical perspectives on cosmopolitanism, identity and the city that attempt to 'frame the cosmopolitan city trans-nationally' (Keith, 2005:1).

The Seventh World Anglo-Indian Reunion

The Seventh World Anglo-Indian Reunion was held in Toronto on 12-19 August, 2007, for the second time since its inception in 1989. Earlier international reunions have been held in various cities like London, Perth, Bangalore, Auckland and Perth. The Reunions are organised by local Anglo-Indian associations in each city, but since 2004 have been governed by The International Federation of Anglo-Indian Associations. Get-togethers at such a large scale provide an international platform for discussion of Anglo-Indian identity, community issues and also a chance to relive nostalgia. Generally a theme is chosen for each Reunion and the Seventh Reunion in Toronto had 'multicultural mosaic' as its theme. Whilst following a similar pattern of programmes, the theme provides a rationale for local Anglo-Indian Associations to further a cause. Anglo-Indians from across the world take this opportunity to travel to meet old acquaintances. The fact that not many from India are able to come

because of the cost involved makes the Reunions a platform for mainly those who live in diaspora outside India.

Reunions are essentially about the past but they are also about the present and the future. The week-long programmes organised as part of this get-together included events that encompassed fun (picnic, visit to Niagara Falls, carnival, concert, dinner and dance), and discussions (a symposium). Nostalgia formed an important part of the programmes through playing old songs, meeting old friends and eating. The first event, Meet and Greet, for example, offered a space for people to look up old acquaintances, and was very well attended. Some attended only on this day, just to catch up with old friends. The event was held in an open field with marquees set up all around (field notes). Stalls selling *phuchka*, *gulab jamun* and *jeera pani* fed nostalgia, while a cake decorated with Indian and Canadian flags marked Anglo-Indian presence in Canada (Figure 6.23).



Figure 6.23 India and Canada: At the 7th World Anglo-Indian Reunion

The symposium, titled ‘Made for the Mosaic’ brought together people to talk, listen and share the past, present and future of the Anglo-Indian community. An exhibition of memorabilia from old schools, books and photographs was also held at the event (field notes). Although exhibits included a wide range of photos and objects like the *sola topi*³⁴, Calcutta was the only city which had a wide coverage. A photo montage on Calcutta showed places of nostalgia in the city (Figure 6.24 and 6.25). Whilst many participants mentioned that they had travelled to the Reunion to meet old friends and take the opportunity to visit Canada, some wondered at the purpose of the Reunion in fuelling nostalgia (field notes). Keith, for example, claimed that ‘he was not one for reunion as it encourages nostalgia’. He explained that ‘you meet people you really don’t know...the fact that they were in the same city is irrelevant’.



Figure 6.24 Exhibiting memorable Calcutta places, Symposium

³⁴ A light-weight helmet made of sola (a tree which grows in the tropics) pith. It is an object associated widely with colonial India, and was used by Anglo-Indians who worked in the sun (mainly railways)



Figure 6.25 Books and display on Calcutta at the Symposium

Despite Keith's scepticism, the Reunion offers a space for reliving memories. At the same time, the choice of a theme around which Reunion events are generally organised reveal a more local engagement. The theme for the Seventh World Anglo-Indian Reunion was based on multiculturalism. The Reunion mission was stated as follows:

“Host a reunion event to celebrate the multicultural assimilation of Anglo-Indians into the mainstream of Canadian society, aimed at creating a strong image and profile of ourselves as a community”. (in Seventh World Anglo-Indian Reunion souvenir programme, p.3).

The idea of multicultural assimilation reveals a wider unease about the invisibility of the community. Describing the Reunion as an opportunity to ‘publicise the community’s place...in the ‘Canadian mosaic’, Lionel Lumb writes:

“...as a community of survivors, multicultural by birth and mainly ‘Anglo’ by upbringing and mother tongue we have much to offer...[]...yet we seem to have an identity problem. It’s been said that we are ‘the invisible visible minority’. We are often mistaken for South Asians...or for southern Europeans or various island people from the Caribbean to the Pacific. Or for North American Aboriginals. Another compliment to our multicultural heritage? That’s one way to look at it. But it’s difficult- at times irritatingly so- to get others to understand just who we are.” (Reunion souvenir programme, p.6)

The unease at being an ‘invisible visible minority’ is not simply a discomfort of not being recognised, it is also rooted in inequalities of the multicultural city. The Reunion as an event based on nostalgia, is also at times used to address such inequalities. In an interview, the then president of the Canadian Anglo-Indian Association, Ron Forbes, mentioned that the Reunion provided a platform to ‘advance our agenda’ and to ‘help get more profile within the indigenous Toronto society and also within municipal, provincial and federal political hierarchy’ (Anglos in the Wind, Sep-Nov 2007: 23). Whilst getting political recognition in Toronto, in

the sense of an acknowledgement of Anglo-Indian cultural identity, was one of the main aims of the Reunion, it also set up an interesting dynamic with the community in India. Controversies around whether the profits made from the Reunion would be used to acquire a community hall in Toronto or to help the community back in India revealed that issues of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism need to be analysed transnationally.

Being Calcutta Chinese in Toronto

In her book *On not speaking Chinese*, Ien Ang (2001) argues for a critical dismantling of both the term diaspora and the idea of multiculturalism as practised in the West. Exploring the different levels of not just the idea of diaspora, but also of 'Chineseness', Ang asserts that 'the global city is the space of diaspora's undoing' (Ang, 2001: 92). I extend this debate on different Chinese groups in Sydney that forms the focus of Ang's analysis to study the Calcutta Chinese community in Toronto. But instead of attributing 'intense simultaneity' as a condition only in Toronto, I also argue that the memories of togetherness in Calcutta act as a factor in influencing a Calcutta Chinese identity in Toronto.

The notion that diasporic identities are fluid is equally applicable to the Calcutta Chinese community. While there is a sense of attachment to Calcutta, most interviewees call themselves Indian Chinese and/or Canadian Indian Chinese. Stephanie Huang, for example, felt that she was 'three parts- Western, Indian and Chinese'. She said she felt more 'Chinese and Indian, [as she is] more attached to India, because I grew up there'. Differentiating between the Calcutta Cantonese and the Calcutta Hakka, she said that the Cantonese 'mix around a bit more as they have a Westernised mind'. Similarly, Cynthia Au explained her sense of belonging and identity as follows:

"It is a blend...of Chinese identity...like you are Chinese even if you call yourself Canadian. It is kind of Chinese identity, Indian attachment and Canadian status....I am truly Canadian...but ethnically I am still Chinese, and I have parts of my roots in India...it is a kind of a harmonious blend, not negative and not inseparable".

Whilst many Calcutta Chinese people I spoke to were comfortable with such a fluid identity, and the Hakka Chinese especially often drew upon the analogy of them being ‘guest people’ to explain their comfort at always being on the move and not having a place to call home or root their identity, the intersections between ethnicity, citizenship and a sense of attachment revealed a rift. Some expressed difficulty in explaining this fluid identity to their Toronto-born children. Chris Wong, for example, recounted a conversation with his son, where he told his son that he was Indian Chinese, and asked him if he was too. The son replied in the negative, telling his father, ‘but Indians are brown, you are not brown’. The limits of an embodied identity has been considered in postcolonial studies (cf Ahmed, 2000), and is an aspect to take into consideration when discussing the identity of Indian Chinese. In the context of the present discussion it is also important to note how the city intervenes in issues of identity.

One of the ways in which the context of Toronto assumes importance is the presence of a wider Hakka community in the city. Toronto is home to Hakka communities from Jamaica and South Africa as well as India. There has also been a recent resurgence of interest in Hakka identity. The Toronto Hakka Conference has been organised annually since 2000, in collaboration with York University, dealing with Hakka identity issues. Calcutta Hakkas have also taken part on the conference. At the same time there is also an attempt to differentiate an Indian Hakka identity. Talking about the need to assert a different Indian Hakka Chinese identity, William Lin explained that though the community was extremely close-knit in Calcutta, in Toronto there is a need to differentiate this identity from a wider Hakka identity. As he explained,

“Here [in Toronto] because of so many different communities living together, you do think of your identity, and you want to identify yourself. In India it is more like Chinese and Indian. Here it is more like, you are an African Chinese, a Jamaican Chinese, or Indian Chinese. So when people ask what is your background, you have to kind of say, I am Hakka, but Hakka from India.”

The difficulty of identifying oneself with a wider Chinese diaspora is also encountered amidst a largely Cantonese Chinese diaspora from Hong Kong. Much like in Vancouver, the Hong Kong Chinese are more recent migrants with more capital to invest in the city. The Hong Kong Chinese community in Toronto have built huge malls in the suburbs specialising in 'Chinese' products. These malls are frequented by the Indian Chinese community, but the economic divide between the groups is often pointed out by the Indian Chinese in explaining their identity. Julie Hu, for example, explained that in Toronto 'there are three distinct groups- those from Hong Kong, from India and from China...we automatically make out who is who'. The difference is not just economic because many Indian Chinese have done well for themselves in Toronto, but also ethnic. As Chris Wong said, 'the Hong Kong Chinese are more Cantonese, they look down upon the Hakka'. In a situation where the Hakka-Cantonese divide in Calcutta is transformed, Pamela Chen, a Cantonese Chinese from Calcutta said that she insists on speaking in English with other Cantonese Chinese, who speak Mandarin instead, just to assert that she is different from them. The memory of a shared history in Calcutta is drawn upon in Toronto to explain a Calcutta Chinese identity. Sarah Wang, for example, asserted that

“There is closeness with people who are from Calcutta...especially when you are introduced to other people, you say oh, this person is from Calcutta or from Tangra...there is an immediate bond to begin with. We share a lot of commonality, like we grew up together, and sometimes we end up cracking joke in Hindi”.

Re-encountering memories

In his essay, *Imaginary Homelands* (1982), Salman Rushdie elucidates on how diasporic writers encounter memories of homeland through the shards of a mirror. Memories in such cases are re-membered through the inherent distortions brought about by distance. Memories of Calcutta, similarly, for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities are narrated through the significant differences that exist between their lives in Calcutta and their lives in London and Toronto. It is to re-encounter those memories that many Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans revisit the city. The literature on return visits focuses on the emotions of returning home as well as a wider diasporic engagement through remittances (Walton-Roberts, 2004). Although

some Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans go back regularly to the city, during the winter months and for Chinese New Year, for many it is a one-off journey that they make to visit their place of birth. For the Chinese who were deported after the 1962 War, returning is not a possibility, whereas some Anglo-Indians prefer to leave their recollection of Calcutta in memory. In this section I explore the reasons behind return visits to Calcutta and the way in which memories of Calcutta are re-encountered.

For both Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans, returning to the city after a long span of time is an emotional affair. Many who have visited the city after several years explained their visit as a journey back home. Pamela Chen, for example, went back to Calcutta in 1973 for the first time since she had left in 1963. She told me that she was so emotional that she started to cry when the plane landed, and she thought to herself, 'oh my God, I am home'. Emily and her husband Richard too described their first visit to Calcutta after 40 years in similar terms. Emily and Richard live in London and had talked to many people at the South London Anglo-Indian Association who had been back. Emily explained that she had never wanted to go back all these years, but listening to people talk about Calcutta she had the yearning. She said that 'when the plane landed at Dum Dum airport, I really had tears in my eyes...this is where I was born and where I grew up'. Whilst there is a wider cultural attachment to India for both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities, the city as the place of birth was certainly the emotional home. This interplay between the idea of home, nostalgia and roots is evident in Richard's sentiments on going back. He said:

"I feel that nostalgia is something which comes with age. A 30-year old doesn't know the meaning of nostalgia. In the first six months I was in London, I would have gone back if I had the opportunity. But after that it settled and I never had the yearning. But after all these years I have the desire to go back. When we went back, we loved it. The smells, the memories, the sounds...our children are not much interested about India right now, but maybe when they grow older they will want to know about their roots".

Richard was evidently talking about India in general, but he was also talking about Calcutta through very specific memories. Describing the nostalgia which took him back to the city he said, ‘when we go back to Calcutta, its not like we go back as tourists...we go back for the memories’. Nostalgia of such kind does not always mask the mixed feelings on having left Calcutta. While many Anglo-Indians mentioned that they may not have left India had it not been for the fear in the community’s mind or for a better life, for many Chinese the departure was forced. Describing the situation after the 1962 War, Dominic Liu said:

“After the 1962 War there was discrimination against the Chinese...there were restrictions...I don’t blame the government...that was how the political situation was. In a sense people should be thankful...it provided a reason to move away...you find that people moved not because they wanted to move but because of the situation...that is also the main reason why people still want to go back to Calcutta. Their roots are still in Calcutta...never mind how long they have been away...it’s still your roots...you cannot take that away from people...even though you are 60-70 years old, your mind still dreams of those old days...dream about how we used to live, how we used to hop on and off the tram...that’s my memory of Calcutta, you cannot take that away”.

The Chinese community still has more family links in Calcutta compared to the Anglo-Indian community, and the close-knit community that they experienced in Calcutta, alongside family, is the main reason why many make return visits. As Cynthia Au explained:

“It is the close community...and the close friendship that has developed over time which are the reasons people go back. It is because of friends, because of memories, of places that they were educated in, or places where they had established a neighbourhood link. Even now some of the seniors go back for Chinese New Year, not so much because of India or Calcutta, but because of the friendships they have developed over the years. The festival is also so localised compared to here where we are all scattered...”.

Indeed Chinese New Year is one of the main reasons for Chinese Calcuttans to make a return visit to the city. And although there are mixed and ambiguous feelings about whether Calcutta is really home, the return to the city during Chinese New Year is seen as the return to home. As Stephanie Huang told me, ‘we like to go back to Calcutta for Chinese New Year...that is very important for us, because it is our home’. Most Chinese who go back at Chinese New Year have family in the city, and as the celebration in Tangra has grown in recent years, the 3-day carnival caters to this home-coming. It is a similar story in Bow Barracks, where many family members come back at Christmas, although not all of them go back from London or Toronto.

The festivals provide a concentrated space to re-encounter memories and for both Anglo-Indians and Chinese, this usually revolves around the family. But others who go back to the city to revisit the ‘roots’, re-encounter their personal memories through the everyday space of the city. Often people revisit the iconic sites that they remember, but it is usually to relive their memories of the place. Pamela Chen, for example, went back to the Botanical Gardens, the Victoria Memorial and Strand Road because that was where she had gone with her husband for a ‘*chakkar* (round) on a motorcycle and [where] we would have *phuchkas* and *bhel puri*’. For Anglo-Indians too, the return to Calcutta is relived through the past and places that represent memories of the past. Sarah, who now lives in London, has gone back a couple of times to Calcutta and she said that she went to ‘New Market...Nahoum’s...the barley sugar place, but they have changed a lot’. Many Anglo-Indians go back and visit other places in India, as tourists, because as Melvyn said, ‘I would go to parts of India that I had not visited’. Many go back to do the touristy tour of Rajasthan, Agra and also Goa. Return visits to Calcutta, in this context, assumes a more personal journey. Donald described his reasons for going back to look for his home as follows:

“We went back to our house, our home. When we were away, many of our friends who went to Calcutta took photographs of our house. When I first saw it, I could not recognise it...I knew the address, but I could not recognise it”.

Revisiting old homes, old schools, old neighbourhoods are ways in which memories are re-encountered in the city. Some told me stories about how they found certain places in the city had not changed at all. Charles, for example, told me that on his visit to Calcutta he went into a shop where his mother used to take him as a child to buy clothes, and an old man who was sitting at the back of the shop came up and asked him, 'you are from Ripon Street, aren't you?' Charles was in his 70s when he went to Calcutta and his shock at being recognised after almost 50 years was immense. Stories such as these were common in narrating return visits to the city, and framed the memories of Calcutta in a time-warp. Return visits are journeys to re-capture the past, yet as Rushdie's (1982) evocation of shards of mirror suggest, the visits also shatter memories. Belinda's comment captures this sentiment aptly. She said:

“My feelings for Calcutta are nostalgic...it is actually very hard to separate the two. When I talk about back home, I am really talking about Calcutta...but when I went back, I couldn't find my home in Calcutta, because things weren't the same...some ties are never severed, but the places I knew are all so different”.

Both Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans, on their return to the city, expressed dismay at the way that city had developed. Many rued the loss and degradation of the places that they so fondly remember. In re-encountering memories of the city, Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans see the city through the past, but also set up a difference between their lives in Calcutta that they remember and their life today in London and Toronto.

Conclusions

I began this chapter by quoting two poems written by a Hakka Chinese man and an Anglo-Indian woman to depict the different shades of nostalgia for each community. The first poem by Benjamin Kuo describes a sense of loss linked to Tangra by continuing migration of the Chinese community and the second poem by Colleen Campbell encapsulates a sense of nostalgia for a Calcutta of the past for Anglo-Indians who migrated in an earlier period. Both poems focus on a specific time and

space in the communities' memory of Calcutta and their migration from the city. Whilst the spaces and times that characterise Anglo-Indian and Chinese nostalgia for Calcutta extend beyond Tangra and the colonial period, the two poems underline the essence of such nostalgia located in the everyday space of the city. In this chapter I have explored the idea of a 'Calcutta Diaspora' through the location of memory and identity in the everyday spaces of the city, drawing on a shared nostalgia for Calcutta. I have analysed memories at different scales from the home to the wider city, as well as across communities and across Calcutta, London and Toronto to make an argument about the city as a located space in the communities' imagination. Whilst the memories are linked to particular spaces in Calcutta, as shown by the maps drawn by the interviewees, they are also carried along with both communities to London and Toronto, and continue to impinge on their lives in these cities.

In the first section of the chapter I analysed memories of moving from Calcutta. Such memories, often focusing on reasons for which the communities had to move, frame an idea of Calcutta as home, albeit a temporary one. For Anglo-Indians the narratives of moving create an image of Calcutta as place of assumed non-belonging, but also at the same time firmly root the idea of home in the city. A feeling of not belonging for the Chinese community revolves mainly around narratives of the 1962 War. While many narratives dwell on the idea of Calcutta as emotional home, as a place of birth, the emphasis of the Hakka Chinese on their perception as 'guest people' creates a more ambiguous and fluid sense of home compared to Anglo-Indians. For both communities the narratives of moving frame the materialities which affect their memories of Calcutta as home.

The idea of Calcutta as home is a multi-scalar concept (Blunt and Dowling, 2006) which includes memories of the domestic space as well as the wider city as an emotional home. In the section on 'home in the city' I explored how a 'homing desire' led to migration from Calcutta and also the different practices of creating home in London and Toronto. Using memory as a tool to explore connections between cities, I have analysed how a nostalgia for home in Calcutta influences the sense of home in London and Toronto. The memory of home, for both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities, locates Calcutta as an important space of dwelling (in) the city- a space which marked the boundaries of community identity and at the same

time remembered as a space encapsulating the 'warmth of Calcutta'. In London and Toronto, the home becomes a symbol to signify that the move from Calcutta was for the better, yet as the narratives around acquiring homes show, the memory of a community life in Calcutta seeps through and continue to influence community life. Within the home, I analysed the various Calcutta memorabilia that preserve personal memories of the city for both communities as well as encapsulate their overlapping lives in Calcutta. The memorabilia contribute to a sense of home in London and Toronto, and at the same time chart the different migration trajectories of both communities.

A considerable part of the nostalgia for Calcutta is tied to the memory of food. Such memories locate the idea of togetherness, both within and across the communities, in the everyday space of the city. The memory of kati rolls and Entally sausages bring up memories of particular spaces of Calcutta, as well as memories of togetherness which surround the actual eating. Feeding that nostalgia for Calcutta involves a wide range of activities, like cooking curries at home and eating 'Indian' food. In Toronto the proliferation of Hakka Chinese restaurants have recreated a space not only to have a taste of Calcutta, but also for both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities, it is a space to remember and rekindle friendships across the two communities.

Remembering the city also involves recreation of the social ties that bound the communities in Calcutta. For both Anglo-Indians and Chinese communities these ties are located in memories of close proximity and of living together alongside in the neighbourhood. Using the idea of dias-para I explored how memories of neighbourhood travel across the diaspora. Whilst for Anglo-Indians the dias-para is characterised by a sense of loss, for Chinese Calcuttans it involves a recreation of the neighbourhood through close ties within the Hakka community. For both it involves a process of re-remembering the city, identifying those who fit in that memory and those who don't. Recreating Calcutta connections becomes important in this process. Personal friendships within and across the communities as well as the various community associations in London and Toronto keep alive the link with Calcutta and also reveal ways in which the city is reconfigured in memory.

One of the important ways in which memory links the three cities is through the idea of cosmopolitanism. In this chapter I have explored the notion of cosmopolitanism particularly within the idea of a multicultural Toronto and analysed how through practices of the Seventh World Anglo-Indian Reunion and narratives of identity for Chinese Calcuttans, memories of a cosmopolitan Calcutta provide a stark contrast to the actualities of a multicultural Toronto. The juxtaposition of these two cities brings out the dilemma of identity for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities and locates their different diasporic positions in Calcutta and Toronto. While in Calcutta, both communities drew on their commonality as minorities in the city. Moving to Toronto problematises and renders their identity within a wider South Asian diaspora more complex.

Memories, however, are not unilinear. As memories flow across cities and diaspora, these also draw back the communities to Calcutta. In the section on return visits to Calcutta, I have explored how memories of the city are re-encountered. Travelling back to Calcutta on reminiscing visits and for Chinese New Year involves re-visiting memories of a past, but it also adds to a process of re-encountering memories for those still living in present-day Calcutta, through the politics of neighbourhood that I discussed in the context of Bow Barracks and Tangra in the first chapter.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis I have explored the connections between Calcutta's Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities in the city and in diaspora to interrogate the idea of Calcutta as a 'diaspora city' and the notion of a 'Calcutta diaspora'. Despite each community having its own 'cultural' and 'ethnic' identities, connections exist between these two communities in several ways. Both communities form an important part of Calcutta's 'colonial' diaspora and are at present the largest and most visible of such communities still living in the city. Despite the different journeys that mark the communities' history in Calcutta, both communities draw on a sense of being religious and ethnic minorities in the city. Both communities have shared and still share residential space in particular areas of central Calcutta. Through intermarriage in the past as well as the present and through common social circles focused around the school and the church the lives of both communities in the city have overlapped in different circumstances. The connections between the two communities also exist in their migration trajectory from the city. A significant number of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans now live in a wider diaspora across the world but converge in London to a small extent and in Toronto to a much greater extent, where they draw on a common identity of 'being from Calcutta'.

I have outlined these connections between Calcutta's Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities to explore the critical connections between the city and diaspora. I have studied the lives of these two communities both separately and alongside each other in Calcutta, London and Toronto, and at the scale of the neighbourhood, the city and diaspora. I have focused particularly on the everyday lived spaces of the communities charting a sense of overlapping lives existing in the shared space of the neighbourhood and sociality in the city. I have analysed how this sense of a close-knit 'community' creates a sense of belonging to the city and also how this space is imagined and re-membered in diaspora. Locating a city-specific identity for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities within ideas of belonging I have explored how the city is imagined as home. Through a focus on times of political turmoil, in 1947 during India's Independence and Partition and in 1962 during the Sino-Indian

conflict, I have also analysed notions of the unhomey city. At the scale of the diaspora, I have studied the connections across Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in London and Toronto to explore how the city is imagined in diaspora. Focusing on practices of nostalgia and a recreation of everyday connections from Calcutta, I have explored how re-remembering Calcutta is grounded in everyday materialities of London and Toronto. Finally, I have studied return visits of diasporic Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans to the city to explore how memories of the city are re-encountered.

The neighbourhood is an important site of identity and belonging for both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. Both communities reside/d in specific areas of the city and have developed particular sites of attachment around these localities. 'Anglo-Indian neighbourhoods' in various parts of central Calcutta, for example, have focused around the church, the schools, and social clubs and other 'community' attachments to everyday spaces through the presence of tailors, certain kinds of food, and the market, as well as the 'sights' and 'sounds' of Anglo-Indians in the vicinity. 'Chinese neighbourhoods' have less numerous locations compared to Anglo-Indian neighbourhoods and are more concentrated around the focal points of the two Chinatowns- *cheenapara* and Tangra. The physical presence of community associations, schools and temples have also marked Chinese neighbourhoods as have the presence of a large number of community members. However, apart from Tangra, which has developed as an almost exclusively Chinese neighbourhood, none of the other localities named 'Anglo-Indian' and/or 'Chinese' are exclusively so. The presence of several other communities like the Armenian, Jewish and Parsi communities in the past, and North Indian Hindu and Muslim communities has also made parts of central Calcutta quite cosmopolitan. The cosmopolitan-ness of these neighbourhoods is expressed in different ways. Often narrated through ideas of everyday and/or mundane cosmopolitanisms, these practices include neighbourly feelings of sharing close residential proximity, of sharing and/or buying food, everyday transactions of the market and celebrating festivals together. Everyday cosmopolitan gestures across Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities also include intermarriage between the communities as well as going to the same school and church, and having a common circle of friends. The narratives of cosmopolitanism for both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities are also set within a narrative of

loss. There is a sense that a cosmopolitan Calcutta existed in the past but it has disappeared over time. Practices of everyday cosmopolitanisms exist in the present but a narrative of loss expressed through the migration of many members both communities and the changing demographics of the neighbourhood place the idea of a cosmopolitan Calcutta in the past. I have explored how such a narrative of ‘de-cosmopolitanisation’³⁵ re-figures the relationship of Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans with the city through a ‘politics of cosmopolitanism’ exemplified in two neighbourhoods, Bow Barracks and Tangra. Bow Barracks, as not just an Anglo-Chinese neighbourhood, but also a ‘true cosmopolitan’ neighbourhood with several communities living alongside each other is going to be destroyed soon. It is a neighbourhood located in Anglo-Indian memory and imagination as a ‘licentious’ and ‘unsafe’ place marked by inter-racial marriage. Tangra, on the other hand, is recently being ‘marketed’ as ‘the’ Chinatown of Calcutta. For the Hakka Chinese community, Tangra is a place where ‘pure’ Hakka identity has survived. Both neighbourhoods have also been in the media for their celebration of Christmas and Chinese New Year, which is seen as a positive step by both communities. The two contrasting kinds of cosmopolitanisms upheld by these neighbourhoods and the intervention of urban conservation politics point to the complex overlaps between cities and communities.

Whilst close proximity in the everyday spaces of the city and certain markers of ‘community’ in the neighbourhood create a space of belonging amidst an idea of ‘cosmopolitan’ Calcutta, the city itself is a space where identity and belonging is grounded for Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities. Both communities trace a sense of belonging to the city through myths and stories that are rooted in the everyday spaces of the city. The idea of ‘Calcutta-wallah’, for Anglo-Indians, is an embodied identity refracted through the cosmopolitan spaces of the city. It is also an identity often expressed in gendered terms through particular ideas around the ‘ladies of Calcutta’. The Chinese community also traces a sense of belonging to the city through the embodied myth of Achhi, the ‘first’ Chinese to have arrived in the city. The ritualistic performance of paying obeisance to ancestors, including Achhi as well as other members of the various surname and regional clans that form the Chinese

³⁵ A term used by McFarlane, 2008 to describe a similar narrative existing in case of Bombay.

community, along with the physical presence of various ‘community’ structures roots the sense of a Chinese identity in Calcutta. Whilst both Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans draw on a sense of cosmopolitan Calcutta that has allowed the creation of these ‘community’ identities, the city is also seen as a place where ‘community’ identities are preserved. Such contradictory connections across cosmopolitanism and community identity also frame the politics of cosmopolitanism that I discussed above. Asserting a sense of belonging to the city is also narrated through spaces of work. Whilst the Anglo-Indian community narrate their sense of belonging by mentioning their contribution in the public services, like the railways, the post and telegraph and customs till the 1960s, the Chinese community draw on their contribution to the city through occupations that are closely linked to their ethnic identity like Chinese restaurants, shoe shops, hair and beauty salons and also others such as the tanning industry. These narratives of belonging to the city also create a sense of Calcutta as home for these communities. I have explored the idea of city as home through the idea of *desh*, an imaginary homeland. *Desh* is an idea also used by Laura Bear (2007) to describe a sense of belonging to railway colonies for Anglo-Indians. A narrative of Calcutta as *desh* not only contrasts with the small-town railway colonies as a space of belonging for Anglo-Indians, but also with the wider rural connotation of the Bengali term. By locating *desh* for Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in the city, I have explored how belonging and identity are rooted in everyday spaces of the city. I have also explored the affective dimensions of this sense of belonging by setting the idea of the city as home within narratives of diasporic Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans. One of the connections that Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans draw on is their sense of being minorities in the city. The identity of the communities as religious and linguistic minorities is framed by the nation but their located experience in the city grounds these specific experiences. There is ambivalence for both communities around belonging/not belonging to the nation. Whilst both Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities draw on the ‘Indian-ness’ of their identity either through cultural practices of eating certain kinds of food, speaking Hindi and/or Bengali, they also draw on the respective ‘community’ aspects of their identity. Drawing on links between ideas of home and identity, this thesis has explored how this sense of home and identity are located in the city. I have also explored how the ambivalences of belonging to the nation and/or the city are

refracted through notions of the homely city/un-homely city in the context of the political turmoil of 1947 and 1962.

At the scale of the diaspora the sense of belonging, home and identity in the everyday spaces of the city are refigured through memory. The neighbourhood and the city are re-membered by Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans in London and Toronto in a wide range of contexts. Both communities draw on a sense of dwindling numbers in Calcutta and the search for a better life to explain their migration from the city. Although marked by different migratory trends and trajectories, they also recreate their attachments to the city and friendships across the communities in London and Toronto. I have explored these connections across cities and diaspora and the intersections of home, memory and identity through maps of the neighbourhood and city drawn by interviewees in different contexts. The maps reveal interesting cartographies of the city that are re-membered and re-produced in diaspora. Spaces of home, for example, are remembered through the actual process of finding a dwelling in the city and through the different memorabilia kept at home. In diaspora, Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans miss the close proximity and the 'warmth of the city' and the Calcutta connections for each of the communities are reproduced as '*dias-para*' and the memory of the city becomes a ground for a wider community identity. Whilst a significant part of these memories are placed within respective 'community' memories, some are also memories of overlapping spaces in the city. The friendships and a shared sense of being from Calcutta are re-membered through memories, but also re-enacted in certain spaces like the Indian Hakka restaurants in Toronto and other occasions for socialising. I have explored the memory of a sense of everyday cosmopolitanism in the particular context of a multicultural Toronto and how cosmopolitan identities are re-negotiated within a multicultural politics of the city. These intersections of memory, identity and the city place Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans within a wider South Asian diaspora, but also make them an 'invisible' part of this diaspora.

Ideas of cosmopolitanism, home/belonging and memory/nostalgia are themes that run through each of the chapters of this thesis. Whilst there is a relative emphasis of each of the themes in the respective chapters, the connections of these ideas within and across the chapters point to the critical connections between and across both city

and diaspora. The cosmopolitanism of Bow Barracks and Tangra, for example, are rooted in a specific memory of the communities. On the other hand, the memory of a cosmopolitan Calcutta remembered through everyday spaces of the city is refigured in different ways in Toronto. The embodied cosmopolitan (Jeffrey and McFarlane, 2008) too is also located in different ways within the city, the community and across diaspora. This thesis has explored the ways in which ideas of cosmopolitanism, home and memory play out in a range of scales and frame the connections between cities and diaspora.

The main argument of the thesis is that the specificity of the urban, through its particular experiences rooted in spaces of sociality, is a key site to explore diasporic connections. The story of the shoe that I began the thesis with is not only indicative of the different interactions between Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans that characterise their lives in the city, but also how memories of such specific connections are used to narrate a sense of home. By focusing on the experiences and narratives of two minority colonial communities and spanning a time period covering both the colonial and postcolonial period, the thesis creates a broad framework within which to analyse diasporic lives that have witnessed multiple historical trajectories. It gives voice to such minority communities whose narratives are often lost within narratives of other dominant communities in the city, be it in Calcutta or in London/Toronto. In theorising the urban as an important site of identity and belonging for such diasporic communities, as well as conceptualising the urban through the idea of 'diaspora cities', this thesis contributes to wider debates on cosmopolitanism, belonging, home and memory in three main ways. First, it analyses cosmopolitanism, which has emerged as an important concept to study both the urban and the diaspora, through a range of scales from the intimate to the public, the located and the diasporic. Second, it locates the idea of home and belonging for minority colonial communities in the city. Third, through a particular focus on interactions and connections across communities, the thesis makes an important argument around the idea of 'diaspora space', emphasising the need to envisage community through translocality.

The journey for this research began in Calcutta. It weaved its way across London and Toronto, as both a personal journey as well as a journey following the subjects of this

research. But it never left Calcutta- in a way Calcutta, besides its Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities is the third character in this research. I began this research with discomforts around ideas of ethnicity and community, of singular and exclusivist histories and geographies, and a personal attachment to Calcutta. Over the course of this thesis, I have attempted to give shape and critically explore these discomforts as well as attachment, through a study of Calcutta's Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities and their presence across diaspora in London and Toronto. Although the thesis focuses on identity and belonging for Anglo-Indian and Chinese Calcuttans specifically, it is also located within the wider concern of the 'Diaspora Cities' project to explore critical connections between cities and diaspora, and recent attempts to revisualise the 'urban'. There have been different ways of understanding the 'urban' recently. Jennifer Robinson's (2006) idea of 'ordinary cities' located this concern within a politics of postcolonialism and city. Other research on the 'urban' in India has engaged with ways of conceptualising the non-Western city (cf. Ravi Sundaram's, (2010) idea of 'pirate modernity' describing a different modernity for Delhi). In their analysis of the urban through charisma, for example, Blom Hansen and Verkaiik (2009: 12), however write that there has been a 'preponderance of work on planning and disciplining and the physicality of space and architecture' in studying the urban and that 'relatively less attention has been paid to the urban as a kind of sociality, a mental condition [and] also a way of being in the world'. This thesis is placed in that gap on research on socialities and the urban and has conceptualised the urban through diaspora, as well as grounded an understanding of diaspora through the urban.

APPENDIX A

List of interviewees

I have used pseudonyms for all interviewees to maintain confidentiality. The following list gives a brief biographical description. However, both communities are extremely close-knit and well networked, so the details are very brief. I have mentioned their age in brackets. Most members of Chinese community I interviewed used a Christian name. To distinguish between Anglo-Indian and Chinese interviewees I have used only the first name for Anglo-Indians and a first name plus a Chinese surname for Chinese interviewees.

Anglo-Indian interviewees

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Agatha (81) | lives in south London, migrated in 1950. Married to Donald. |
| Alan (62) | works for the community, lives in Ripon Street |
| Alice (78) | lives in north London, migrated in 1953 |
| Anne (72) | lives in east Toronto, migrated in 1989 |
| Belinda (70) | Anglo-Chinese, lives in Brampton, Toronto; migrated in 1966 |
| Bernard (62) | lives in East Toronto, migrated in 1989. Married to Penelope. Has family members who are Anglo-Chinese. |
| Bradley (67) | lives in south London, born in a railway colony but worked in Calcutta; emigrated to London in 1963 |
| Brian (77) | lives in south London, migrated in 1958. Married to Sarah. |
| Catherine (53) | lives in Picnic Gardens |
| Cecile (50) | lives in Toronto; migrated in 1972. Christine's sister. |
| Charles (80) | lives in south London, migrated in 1958. |
| Christine (45) | lives in Mississauga, Toronto; migrated in 1979. Married to Kenneth |
| David (62) | lives in Toronto, migrated in 1972 |
| Deliah (42) | Anglo-Chinese, migrated to Canada in 1985 |
| Denzil (73) | lives in Brampton, Toronto; migrated in 1965. Married to Polly. |
| Derek (42) | works for the community, lives in south Calcutta |
| Dominic (80) | born in a railway colony, worked in Calcutta for 15 years, lives in Toronto, migrated in 1966 |

Donald (83)	lives in south London, migrated in 1950. Married to Agatha
Douglas (78)	lives in Bow Barracks
Ellen (75)	lives in south London; migrated in 1949
Emily (61)	lives in south-east London, migrated in 1962. Married to Richard
Hilda (55)	lives in Picnic Garden
Jane (55)	Anglo-Chinese, born in Bow Barracks, now lives in Tollygunje. Martin's sister.
Joan (72)	lives in south London. Married to Leonard.
Julia (73)	lives in Brampton, Toronto; migrated in 1969
Keith (60)	works for the community, lives in North-East Toronto, migrated in 1965
Kenneth (46)	lives in Mississauga, Toronto, migrated in 1980. Married to Christine.
Lawrence (48)	lives in Mississauga, Toronto; migrated in 1980
Leonard (74)	lives in south London, migrated in 1950. Married to Joan.
Linda (59)	lives in Mississauga, Toronto, migrated first to the UK in 1959, then to Toronto in 1975
Lionel (65)	lives in south London, migrated in 1961
Martin (53)	Anglo-Chinese, lives in Bow Barracks. Jane's brother.
Mary (61)	lives in south-east London, migrated in 1962. Married to Timothy
Melvyn (74)	lives in south London, migrated in 1953
Nigel (77)	works for the community, lives in south Calcutta
Noel (58)	teacher in a school in Calcutta
Patricia (70)	works for the community in Calcutta, lives in Wellesley
Penelope (61)	lives in East Toronto, migrated in 1989. Married to Bernard.
Peter (65)	works for the community in Calcutta, lives in Elliot Road

Polly (62)	lives in Brampton, Toronto; migrated in 1965. Married to Denzil
Raymond (60)	lives in Toronto, migrated in 1999
Richard (62) Emily	lives in south-east London, migrated in 1962. Married to Emily
Robert (80)	lives in Bow Barracks, Calcutta.
Roger (62)	works for the community in Toronto, migrated in 1968
Sarah (70)	lives in south London, migrated in 1958. Married to Brian
Susan (78)	lives in south London, migrated in 1952
Terence (32)	lives in Brampton, Toronto; migrated in 1996
Thomas (82)	lives in Toronto, migrated to the UK in 1949, then to Toronto in 1967
Tim (32)	lives in Bow Barracks. Works for the community
Timothy (62) Mary.	lives in south-east London, migrated in 1962. Married to Mary.
Wilma (75)	lives in south London, migrated in 1954

Chinese interviewees

Agatha Yeh (70)	Cantonese, lives in Tangra
Ann Lo (65)	Hakka, lives in south Calcutta
Beatrice Chan (75)	Cantonese, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1961
Brenda Chen (38)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1986
Cecile Hu (30)	Sea Yap, lives in Bow Bazar
Chris Wong (40)	Hakka, lives in Scarborough, Toronto, migrated in 1988
Christopher Wu (25)	Hakka, lives in London
Cynthia Au (68)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1967
Daniel Lee (45)	Hakka, lives in Bentinck Street
David Chung (45)	Hakka, lives in Cheenapara

Dominic Liu (66)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1966
Francis Chu (28)	Hakka lives in Bow Bazar
Fu Huang (63)	Hakka, lives in Tangra
Jessie Li (52)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1976 Married to Thomas Li
Julie Hu (32)	Hakka, lives in Scarborough, Toronto, migrated in 2000
Laura Chen (43)	Cantonese, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1976
Lucy Chang (50)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Scarborough, migrated in 1977 Married to Thomas Chang
Mei Ling (65)	Hakka, lives in Mississauga, Toronto, migrated in 1970
Michael Lim (48)	Hakka, lives in south Calcutta
Pamela Chen (60)	Cantonese, lives in north Toronto, migrated in 1973
Patricia Hsu (65)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1972. Married to Paul Hsu
Patrick Hsu (57)	Hakka, lives in Tangra
Paul Hsu (67)	Hakka, lives in Toronto, migrated in 1974. Married to Patricia Hsu
Peter Au (70)	Cantonese, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1967
Robert Li (66)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1978
Sarah Wang (38)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1989
Serene Chu (30)	Hupei, lives in Bow Bazar
Stephanie Huang (33)	Hakka, lives in Scarborough, Toronto, migrated in 1999
Thomas Chang (52)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1977
Thomas Li (55)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 1976
William Liu (26)	Hakka, lives in Markham, Toronto, migrated in 2004

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Background information/ Neighbourhood

When were you born and where?
Where do/did you live in Calcutta? How long did you live there?
Did your ancestors live there as well?
Where do/did the AI/Chinese live in Calcutta?
Do/did you live in a shared apartment/house?
Where did you work/go to school?
Can you describe the neighbourhood you live/d in?
Which other communities live/d near you?
Is/was there a community feeling in the neighbourhood?

Chinese:

When did the community move to Tangra? How is/was Tangra different from Chinatown?
Why did the community move to Tangra?
How did Tangra/ Tiretta Bazaar change over time?
What were the problems faced by the Chinese during 1962?
Did the Chinese feel threatened at any other time?
How did your neighbours react during the war?
Current problems- Tangra/Tiretta Bazaar

Anglo-Indian:

How have Anglo-Indian neighbourhoods in Calcutta changed over time?
When did Anglo-Indians begin to move to Picnic Gardens? What were their reasons for moving?
How did the events in 1947 affect the Anglo-Indian community? Are there any other events, which is significant for the community?

Anglo-Chinese

Anglo-Indian: Do you have Chinese friends? Do you go to the same church as Chinese Christians? Do you like Chinese food? Which restaurants do you go to? Has the Anglo-Indian education system influenced the Chinese? Are there many intermarriages between Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities? Do you celebrate Christmas with your Chinese Christian neighbours?

Chinese: Do you have Anglo-Indian friends? When did the Chinese in Calcutta convert to Christianity? Why? Are missionary schools popular with the Chinese? Are some of these schools governed by AI now? Do you think there are similarities between AI and Chinese communities in Calcutta?

Cosmopolitan Calcutta

How well have the AI/Chinese community integrated in Calcutta?
What are the main contributions of the AI/Chinese community to Calcutta?
Would you say that Calcutta is a cosmopolitan city? Was it more cosmopolitan in the past?
How do you think the city has changed in relation to the different communities who live there?
Where did you meet non-AI/Chinese?
Which were the main community organisations in Calcutta? How important were these in your life? Were there any events which involved other communities?

Migration

In Calcutta:

When did AI and Ch emigrate from Calcutta? Where did they go? Why did they migrate?
Do they feel differently about Calcutta after emigrating? Do they miss Calcutta when living abroad? Why? How do they keep in touch with Calcutta?
How often do people come back to the city?
How do you think their migration has affected the community in Calcutta?
How have AI/Chinese neighbourhoods changed after the migration?
Do you know anyone who has migrated to London or Toronto?

In diaspora:

When did you migrate from Calcutta? Why did you migrate? Where did you migrate first?
Did you migrate with family/alone?
Did your neighbours migrate around the same time?
Which are the main cities that AI/Chinese have migrated to?
Where did you first live when you came to London/Toronto? Are there particular areas where AI/Chinese live here?
How is London/Toronto different from Calcutta?
How different is community life in London/Toronto?
Are your friends in London/Toronto mainly from Calcutta?
How often do you meet other Calcutta AI/Chinese in London/Toronto? Where do you meet them?
Which are the main community organisations in London/Toronto? What are their main functions? How often do you go to these community events?

Memory/attachment

How often do you go back to Calcutta? Do you still have friends/family in Calcutta?
How would you describe your feelings for Calcutta? Do the AI/Chinese feel attached to Calcutta? Do you? Are there particular areas of the city you are attached to? Can you explain this sense of attachment?
What do you miss about Calcutta? When do you miss Calcutta most? (Festivals- description)
How was Calcutta different from other cities?
Which areas of the city do you visit when you go back? What are the main AI/Chinese landmarks of Calcutta?
Where would you say your home is?

SECOND INTERVIEWS

I ask people to bring any thing (photographs, food, clothes, object etc) which reminds them of Calcutta.

Questions:

- Description of the thing
- Since when do they have it
- Where do they keep it in their homes
- Why is it important to them?
- What other things are there in their homes which remind them of Calcutta?
- Is there anything which is particular to Calcutta AI/Chinese- decorations, photos etc.

I ask them to draw a map of Calcutta, showing where their homes were, where other AI/Chinese lived, important landmarks of the city. I also ask interviewees to draw another map of the neighbourhood, showing the roads, buildings, friends' place and important places of sociability.

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

REC	Protocol	Number.	2006/19
YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET			
Anglo-Indian and Chinese Neighbourhoods in Calcutta			
<p>I would like to invite you to participate in this PhD research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.</p>			
<p>I am doing a research on Anglo-Indian and Chinese communities from Calcutta. I want to find out about your memories of Calcutta and the particular neighbourhoods you lived in, how long you had been in the city, how attached you are to the city and whether and how you maintain link with the city. At the end of the research, I will use the information to write about both communities and their relationship with Calcutta.</p>			
<p>If you decide to take part, I will ask you to participate in an interview at a place and time convenient for you. The interview should last around 1.5 hours. If you give permission, I will record the interview. You may decide not to give permission for recording the interview. If needed, I may have to come back for a second interview or ask you to participate in a group discussion. Again, you are free to withdraw if you wish.</p>			
<p>Please confirm that you are a member of either the Anglo-Indian or Chinese community and that you do or have at some point lived in Calcutta for at least 10 years.</p>			
<p>I will keep any information that you provide confidential and will not use your name or details on paper. The information that I get from you, will be used only for my research.</p>			
<p>It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.</p>			
<p>Thank you.</p>			

CONSENT FORM

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: **Anglo-Indian and Chinese neighbourhoods in Calcutta**

Queen Mary Research Ethics Committee Ref: **2006/19**

. • Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organizing the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part.

. • If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

. • *I understand that if I decide at any other time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and be withdrawn from it immediately.*

. *I agree to be contacted by the researcher to ask me to participate in follow up studies related to this research.*

. • *I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.*

Participant's Statement:

I _____ agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed:

Date:

Investigator's Statement:

I, Jayani Bonnerjee, confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the volunteer.

Signed:

Date:

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