A Socio-Historical and Ethnographic Study of the Migration of Hindus from the Greater Durban Area to the Greater Johannesburg Area, South Africa

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the migration of Hindus from the Greater Durban Area to the Greater Johannesburg Area, South Africa, in the period since the 1970s, and whether and how this has led to transformation in their practices and beliefs. A socio-historical and ethnographic approach is brought to bear, exploring sub-research questions that inquire into the historical migration of Indians from the then Colony of Natal to the Transvaal, their adaptation to the new setting, and Hindu experiences within neo-Hindu organisations and traditional temples, priests and festivals. The study employs a constructivist grounded theory methodology to develop a theory on the evolution of Hinduism between these cities as a result of this migration. Constructivist theory emphasises the interrelationship between researcher and participant and the mutual construction of meaning, while grounded theory seeks to construct novel theory that is inductive and derives from the data. The grounded theory approach contributes to diaspora studies, the body of knowledge on the evolution of Hinduism, and to understanding migration, settlement and belonging.

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Declaration

Faculty of Humanities

I, Trivern Hunsraj Ramjettan, hereby declare that:

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Glossary

Aarti	A Hindu religious ritual of worship, a part of *puja*, in which a light or flame is offered to one or more deities. *Aarti* also refers to the songs sung in praise of the deity, when the light is being offered. Usually performed at the end of a *puja*, it is common to most Hindu ceremonies and occasions.
Abhishekam	(Also, *Abhisheka*). A Sanskrit term which means anointing, inaugurating or consecrating, and is generally used for the bathing or anointing of an image of a deity. Water, milk and other substances can be used in this ritual. The principle behind *abhishekam* is total surrender to and love of the deity. It is believed that by bathing the statue, or *murti*, devotees cleanse and purify their own minds.
Acharas	Sanskrit word for rules.
Acharya	A teacher or Guru. A Sanskrit term, it literally means one who teaches or knows the rules (*acharas*). In ancient days, it mainly referred to those who taught the *Vedas* and other aspects of sacred texts. Today, the title is bestowed on religious leaders and any saintly or learned person.
Arjuna	The third of the Pandava brothers whose story is told in the *Mahabarata*. *Arjuna* is famous for his dialogue with the God *Krishna* in the *Bhagavad Gita*, which took place on the battlefield at the time of the great *Mahabarata* war.
Artha	The pursuit of wealth and profitability, in service to one's family in line with *dharma* and subordinate to *moksha*.
Aryan	A term used for the authors of *Vedic* texts. The English word Aryan, comes from the Sanskrit '*arya*' or noble, which the *Vedic* authors used to describe themselves. There are a number of controversies about these Aryans and who they were. They may have been the first occupants of north-west India (including Pakistan), and later extended their territories across the Gangetic plain and towards the south.

Asana	A term for a stance or posture. An *asana* is a means to focus the mind and open up subtle energy channels in the body and psychic centres that run along the spine, leading to self-realisation.
Ashram	(Also, *ashrama*). A Sanskrit term which literally means, 'a resting place'. In ancient days it referred to the hermitage of a sage, which was usually located in serene surroundings, in a forest. These *ashrams* were described as places of peace and harmony. The term continues to be used today to describe a peaceful place of worship where modern-day Gurus and their disciples congregate.
Ashramas	A term referring to the four stages of life in Hinduism: the student (*brahmacharyi*), the householder (*grihastha*), the half renounced (*vanaprastha*) and the full renounced (*sannyasi)*.
Avatar	An incarnation of God on earth. It also means descent, advent or manifestation. The Hindu God *Vishnu* is most commonly associated with *avataras* (plural). Among Vishnu's *avataras, Rama* and *Krishna* are the most popular. *Avataras* of all kinds are said to descend to earth from time to time to guide people on the right path.
Ayyappan (Lord)	A popular deity in Kerala, India, there are various myths and stories about the origin of *Ayyappan*. He is said to be the son of Lord *Shiva* and Lord *Mohini* (*Vishnu* in female form). Regarded as 'the Lord of celibacy', women in their fertile years are not permitted inside the Ayyappan temple in Sabrimali in Kerala, south India. Lord Ayyappan further represents the ability to destroy negative and destructive forces within us to acquire positive virtuous traits.
Ayodhya	A town in the province of Uttar Pradesh, India, that is considered to be one of the seven most sacred cities in Hinduism and, according to tradition, is the birthplace of Lord *Rama*, an *avatar* of Lord *Vishnu*. Today, *Ayodhya* abounds in temples as well as sacred sites associated with Lord *Rama*.
Bantu	A group of Niger-Congo languages spoken in central and southern Africa, including Swahili, Xhosa, and Zulu.

Bhagavad Gita	'The Lord's Song' or the 'Divine Song', an early Sanskrit text, revered as one of the most sacred to Hindus. Though usually published as a separate text, it forms part of the *Mahabarata*. It has 18 chapters with 700 verses and deals with various philosophical themes. Most of it is in the form of dialogue between *Arjuna* and *Krishna*, which takes place just before the great *Mahabarata* war begins.
Bhagwan	(Also, *Bhagavan*). In Sanskrit, it means 'one who is illustrious, glorious, revered, divine or holy'. It is the most common word for God in Hinduism.
Bhajan	*Bhajans* are Hindu devotional songs to a chosen deity. They are often sung at gatherings, sometimes led by a teacher or Guru. The songs praise the divinity, listing his/her aspects and virtues and recounting favoured elements of his/her mythology. They are used to establish closeness or communion between singers and God. *Bhajan* and *kirtan* singing are forms of *bhakti* (devotion).
Bhakti	(Also, *Bhakti yoga*). A Sanskrit term from the root *bhaj*, to adore, honour, worship. It is a central spiritual path in Hinduism, involving devotion to and service of a chosen deity. The *Bhagavad Gita*, written around 200 B.C.E., was the first true *bhakti* text in the Indian tradition, in worship of Lord *Krishna* (Jones and Ryan 2007, 77). This text describes *bhakti* as devotion, faith and union with God through love. *Bhakti* implies worship, total surrender and personal love of God. "Forgetting everything and everyone else, the devotee yearns for a glimpse of God, and finally for total union" (Dalal 2010, 65).
Bhakti yoga	(See *Bhakti* for the first of three spiritual paths to God-realisation; the others being *karma yoga* and *jnana yoga*).
Bhandari	Cook.
Bharatanatyam	A major form of Indian classical dance that originated in the state of Tamil Nadu, south India. It is one of the eight forms of dance and expresses south Indian religious themes and Hindu spiritual ideas, particularly *Shaivism*, *Vaishnavism* and *Shaktism*.

Brahmin	(Also, *Brahman*). A priest in Hinduism, the traditional role associated with imparting the knowledge of the *Vedas* and other religious texts, and the performance of rituals and various ceremonies associated with birth, marriage and death. *Brahmins* are to be treated with honour and respect and in turn they should be pure and perform their duties sincerely.
Brahmachari	A student in the four *ashramas* or stages of life in Hinduism.
Brahmacharya	The first of the fourfold stages of life in Hinduism. In this stage, a *brahmacharyi* or student lives with a Guru, serves him, and studies the *Vedas* and other texts.
Caste	A Hindu socio-religious system. Hindu society is divided into four main castes, further subdivided into sub-castes, each with their own deities, rituals and dietary laws. A precursor to the term 'Hindu', people initially identified themselves by caste, village, region of origin or specific deity worshipped. The caste system is ancient. Early caste structure was based more on occupation than on birth, and there was interchangeability among castes (Dalal 2010, 90). Over time, a lower caste came into being, based on occupations considered unclean by 'higher' castes and this led to growing rigidity which persists in contemporary Indian society. The caste system divides society into four classes: Brahmins (scholars and priests), Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors), Vaishyas (farmers, merchants and artisans) and Shudras (workmen/service providers).
Chaitanya	(Also, *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*). A *Vaishnava* saint who is believed to have been an incarnation of the God *Krishna*, born in Bengal, India in 1485.
Dalit	(See *Untouchable*).
Deepavali	(Also, *Diwali*). One of the most important and celebrated Hindu festivals, which occurs in October/November. It is known as the 'Festival of lights', and is celebrated by placing lights outside and within the home, and lighting fireworks. Among the deities associated with *Deepavali*, the most important is Lord *Rama*, who is said to have returned to *Ayodhya*

	after 14 years in exile. The citizens decorated the city to welcome him home and *Deepavali* recreates this event. It is also associated with *Lakshmi*, the Goddess of wealth who enters lighted homes and brings prosperity for the rest of the year.
Devi	A generic term for any Hindu Goddess, as well as for one supreme Goddess. In the latter context, she is referred to as *Mahadevi*.
Dharma	The term is generally interpreted as duty, right conduct or truth. It is also translated as religion.
Dhoti	A long loincloth traditionally worn by Hindu males.
Diksha	The term is translated as 'preparation or consecration for a religious ceremony' and is marked by recitations of mantras and initiation into a spiritual discipline by a Guru.
Diwali	(See *Deepavali*)
Draupadi	A goddess from the Hindu epic, the *Mahabarata*, primarily worshipped by south Indians, Sri Lankans and also popular in South Africa. *Draupadi* is believed to be the incarnation of the Hindu Goddess *Mariammen*. *Draupadi* is a contentious character in the Hindu epics, who had five husbands and unlike other Goddesses, was not described as being subservient to her father, husband, brothers and sons (See Motswapong 2017).
Dravidian	Relating to or denoting a family of languages spoken in south India and Sri Lanka. Dravidian people or Dravidians are speakers of any of the Dravidian languages.
Durga	A goddess in Hinduism with many forms and roles. Her main role is as a fierce and independent deity, but she also has benign and gentle forms. Though eternal, she incarnates in order to defeat demons and protect her devotees.
Durga puja	A ten-day festival for the worship of the goddess *Durga*, celebrated in October. Images of *Durga* are set up in houses and temples and worshipped, commemorating the triumph of good over evil.

Ganesha	An elephant-headed God, who is one of the most popular deities revered by Hindus of all sects. *Ganesha* is the patron deity of writers, accountants, traders and businesspeople and is worshipped at the start of any new venture. He is said to grant progress, prosperity, wisdom and the removal of obstacles.
Ganga	(Also, *Ganges*). The *Ganga* is the most sacred river in India. It is associated with *Ganga Rani*, the Goddess in the form of the river itself. Across the Hindu diaspora, representations of the river are made and imbued with spiritual connotation. Bathing in the river is said to cleanse one of all sins. In Hindu rituals, a few sips of its water are given to those on their deathbed. According to the *Mahabarata*, to chant the name of the *Ganga* brings purity, to see her assures prosperity and to bathe in her provides salvation.
Ganga aarti	An *aarti* performed before the river *Ganga* or a representation of the river in various regions across the Hindu diaspora.
Ganga rani	A Goddess associated with the sacred river of the Ganges in India.
Gara prayers	(See *Navagrahas*).
Gargum	An idol of the Mother Goddess made from turmeric powder.
Gayatri hawan	A *hawan* performed alongside the recitation of the *Gayatri mantra*.
Gayatri mantra	A *mantra* considered especially sacred to Hindus, said to beseech divine illumination.
Gengaiamman festival	A festival in honour of the Goddess *Gengaiamma*, another form of the Goddess *Mariammen*.
Girmitya	An indentured labourer.
Gita	(See *Bhagavad Gita*).
God lamp	(See *Lutchmee*)
Gopuram	A term for the gateway of south Indian temples. The temples could have one or more gateways, which were several stories high, with elaborate carvings.

Goshala	A protective shelter for cows. *Goshalas* focus on treating cows well because of their religious significance in Hinduism and cultural sensitivity towards their welfare.
Gram devata	Village deities.
Gramma Devi	Goddess of the ground, or of the earth.
Grihastha	One of the four stages of life in Hinduism. Referred to as the 'householder' stage.
Gurukulum	(Also, *Gurukula*). A type of education system in ancient India (persisting in contemporary times) where students live near or with the Guru in the same house. The term is also used today to refer to residential monasteries or schools operated by modern Gurus.
Guru paramapara	The succession of teachers and disciples in traditional *Vedic* culture. *Guru parampara* refers to the tradition of spiritual relationship and mentoring whereby teachings are transmitted from a Guru to disciple. Such knowledge is imparted through the developing relationship between the Guru and the disciple. The student eventually masters the knowledge that the Guru embodies and undertakes to pass it on to the next disciple.
Hanuman	A deity in the form of a monkey, who is worshipped particularly on Tuesdays. *Hanuman* is described in the *Mahabarata* and in the *Ramayana*.
Hanuman Jayanti	A Hindu religious festival that celebrates the birth of Lord Sri *Hanuman*, who is immensely venerated in India and across the Hindu diaspora.
Hawan	(Also, *havan* and/or *homa*). A ritual in which offerings of food and other items are consecrated into a fire. The ritual process involves kindling and consecrating a fire, invoking one or more deities and making real or visualised offerings into the fire. Prayers and *mantras* are also chanted during the ritual.
Hindu	A follower or adherent of *Hinduism*
Hinduism	A religious system or a way of life, originating in India and widely practiced around the world. Known to be the oldest religion in the world, it is referred to as *Sanatan Dharma* and is illustrated by a fusion and a

	syndissertation of various cultures and traditions with diverse roots and no original founder or central text.
Holi	Known as the 'festival of colours', 'festival of spring' and/or the 'festival of love', *Holi* is a popular and ancient Hindu festival that occurs around March. It symbolises the arrival of spring and the blossoming of love and is a spirited occasion when Hindus laugh, forget and forgive and repair broken relationships.
Indian diaspora	A generic term used for addressing people who have migrated from the territories that are currently within the borders of India. It is estimated to be over thirty million people and constitutes NRIs (Non-resident Indians) and PIOs (Persons of Indian Origins).
Janoyi	A cotton thread which a Hindu of the Brahmin caste wears, invested at the ceremony of initiation. It is worn constantly thereafter from the left shoulder across the body to the right.
Japa	The repetition of a holy name, word, phrase or *mantra*. *Japa* can be silent, with the word being repeated mentally, or spoken aloud. Traditionally, repetitions are done 108 or 1 008 times or more.
Jati	(See *caste*).
Jhanda	(Also, *jhandi*). A flag erected at Hindu homes symbolising a family's Hindu identity.
Jnana yoga	One of the three paths to uniting with God through the path of '*jnana*' or knowledge. *Jnana yoga* is portrayed in the ancient Hindu schools of philosophy as the use of knowledge to attain divine unity.
Kala Pani	'Black waters' or the Indian ocean that surrounds the subcontinent, said to cause a Hindu to lose his/her *caste* upon migrating across it.
Kali	A Goddess in the Hindu pantheon of deities, and a ferocious form of the Goddess *Durga*. *Kali* is the dark side or the 'shadow' of each individual. This darkness can be eliminated by worshipping her. She is usually depicted as black in colour with disheveled, long hair. Her skirt is made of severed arms, with severed heads around her neck. She is adorned with skulls and is depicted holding a severed head in her hand.

Kali Amman prayer	Translated as 'Mother *Kali'* prayer, this prayer is in reverence of *Kali*, the Hindu Goddess. It is accompanied by the sacrifice of animals and invocations of trance.
Kali yuga	In Hindu mythology, the fourth and final *yuga* or period of time when an age comes to an end. It is said to describe a general decline in righteousness when people focus on the body more than the mind. It is the contemporary age, marked by anger, hatred, discord and strife.
Karma	The results of one's action, used as a synonym for fate or destiny. In simple terms, it is the law of cause and effect, the principle that 'as you sow, so shall you reap'.
Karma yoga	One of the four spiritual paths to God-realisation whereby the devotee is encouraged to serve humanity, in dedication to the divine. *Karma yoga* is the system of ethics and religion that aims to attain divinity through the path of unselfishness and good works.
Kartikeya	(See *Murugan*).
Katha and Jhanda	A popular domestic ceremony also known as the *Satyanarayana Vrata katha*. Commonly held at home, sometimes once a year or whenever the need arises, the central activity is the recitation of sacred narratives. Accompanied by the erection of a *jhanda*, the ceremony is termed *katha and jhanda* (Kumar 2013, 59).
Kavadi	Translated as 'burden dance', *Kavadi* is a ceremonial sacrifice and offering practiced by devotees during the worship of Lord *Murugan*, the Hindu God of War. It is a central part of the festival of *Thaipoosam* and emphasises debt bondage. To 'carry *Kavadi'* refers to the devotee carrying a decorated, heavy wooden structure on his/her shoulders across the temple premises, in a show of endurance and spiritual faith.
Kirtan	A term for devotional song that can include solo and chorus singing accompanied by musical instruments and sometimes by dance.
Krishna	A popular deity and an incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*, surrounded by numerous myths and stories about his birth, childhood, adulthood, and family. Some Hindu sects are specifically devoted to the worship of

	Krishna, both historically and in the present. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness is one such recent neo-Hindu organisation.
Krishna Janmastami	A Hindu religious festival celebrating the birth of Lord *Krishna* as the eighth incarnation of Lord *Vishnu*.
Kriya Shakti	*Kriya* (meaning action) and *Shakti* (meaning the power of the Goddess), *Kriya Shakti* refers to action in the name of the Goddess. It refers to the altruistic impulse contained in Mother worship, whereby the devotee seeks to serve God in service to humanity.
Kul	'Family' or 'home'.
Kund	A short, four-legged structure where a fire is lit during a *hawan*.
Lakshman	(Also referred to as *Lakshmana*). The half-brother of *Rama*, considered to be a partial incarnation of Lord *Vishnu* and described in the *Ramayana*.
Lakshmi	A popular deity, the Goddess of fortune and prosperity. She is the wife of *Vishnu* and is worshipped both with him and separately. *Lakshmi* is known as '*Shri*', which indicates riches, prosperity and fortune. She is seated on a lotus, a symbol of spiritual growth and purity and is depicted as a beautiful woman. *Laksmi* is associated with several festivals, including *Diwali* and *Durga puja*.
Lutchmee	(Also, *God lamp*) A lamp in the home of the Hindu marked by a number of rituals including cleaning the lamp, prayer and lighting at dusk and dawn.
Mahabharata	An early Indian epic, written in Sanskrit and consisting of 100 000 verses. It is still popular today and contains the *Bhagavad Gita*, one of the most sacred Hindu texts. The *Mahabarata* has 18 sections, and a main story and several sub-stories. It includes legends, myths and advice on living an ethical life.
Mahadevi	(See *Devi*).
Mandir	Another term for a Hindu temple.
Mantra	A sacred sound, word or verse. In Sanskrit, it means 'instrument of thought' and it is used in Hinduism to invoke deities or powers, or in

	meditation. They may be used alone or in tandem with an image. *Mantras* are given to a disciple by a Guru at the time of initiation, though some mantras can be used without initiation or transmission by a Guru. *Mantras* are generally shorter than prayers, and their power is revealed through repetition and concentration.
Mariamma	A Goddess in the south Indian tradition.
Mariammen prayer	(Also known as 'Porridge prayers'). A prayer in reverence of *Mariamma*, a Goddess in the south Indian tradition, especially at village level.
Mata	The Mother Goddess. In the plural (*Matas*), refers to the Mother Goddesses.
Maulvi	An honorific Islamic religious title given to Muslim religious scholars. A highly qualified Islamic scholar.
Mawlana	A title preceding the name of respected Muslim religious leaders, particularly graduates of religious institutions.
Mohini	*Vishnu* in female form
Moksha	A Sanskrit term implying liberation or release from the cycle of rebirth and death. *Moksha* is the final goal of life and the ultimate aspiration of Hindus.
Muharram	The first month of the Islamic calendar and one of the four sacred months of the year during which warfare is forbidden.
Murugan	(Also, *Muruga* or *Kartikeya*). A deity known by many names, he is a local God of the Tamil region and is very popular in the south of India and across the Hindu diaspora where south Indians immigrated. He is associated with the mountains, war and fertility and depicted holding a spear, sometimes in a frenzied dance. *Murugan* is a very popular deity among South African Tamils and is the primary deity worshipped during *Kavadi*.
Murti	A Sanskrit word for an image or form of the divine.
Nagara	A style of temple architecture.
Narayana	(Also, *Narayan*). One of the names of the God *Vishnu*.

Navagrahas	(Also known as nine Saturdays prayer, bad luck prayers and *Gara* prayers). The prayer refers to supplication to the nine planets over nine Saturdays to remove obstacles and bad luck from one's life.
Navaratri	A festival of nine nights during which *Durga puja* or the worship of the Goddess *Durga* takes place, along with veneration to two other Goddesses. The festival occurs from October to November and is very popular in India and around the world.
Neelkanth	An aspect or form of Lord *Shiva* in which he is known as "the blue-throated one".
Nine Saturdays Prayer	(See *Navagrahas*).
Pandit	(See *Brahmin*).
Pangat	Row.
Pita	Father.
Porridge prayers	(See *Mariammen* prayer).
Prasad	(Also, *Prasadam*). A Sanskrit term for consecrated food, offered to the deities in temples or after home ceremonies and then distributed among worshippers.
Puja	The act of worship in Hinduism, which may take place at the temple or at home. Prayers, along with offerings such as fruit, flowers or incense, are made to the image of the deity, or to a symbol of the divine. *Puja* may be done according to prescribed rituals or in a spontaneous way.
Pujari	Temple priest.
Radha Krishna	*Radha* is the Goddess who symbolises love and longing for God. She is the divine lover and consort of Lord *Krishna*. *Radha Krishna* refers to the union between the two deities.
Rama (and Sita)	A deity, one of the ten main incarnations of Lord *Vishnu*. The story of *Rama* is provided in the *Mahabarata* and in greater detail in the *Ramayana*. Lord *Rama* is the quintessential example of righteousness,

	duty and proper conduct. *Rama* is often depicted holding a bow and arrow and is accompanied by *Sita*, his wife who is also a Goddess.
Ramayana	(Also, referred to as *Ramayan*). A Sanskrit epic which tells the story of Lord *Rama*. There are many versions and numerous critical analyses of the epic. The text is laden with symbolism and contains much of the dominant philosophical and ethical themes inherent to Hinduism.
Rambhajan	Devotional songs (*bhajans*) in honour and reverence of Lord *Rama*.
Reincarnation	*Reincarnation* or rebirth is the belief that souls cycle through human or animal lives until they are liberated and merge with a higher reality. The concept emerges from the *Vedic* tradition and relates to that of *karma* in which *reincarnation* results from one's actions in one's previous life, one's *karma*. The escape from rebirth is especially important in Hinduism and *moksha* is known as the release from this cycle and as the highest goal in all major Hindu traditions (Jones and Ryan 2007, 364).
Sadhu	A holy man, sage or ascetic.
Sadhna	The term literally means 'a means of accomplishing something' and is a generic term referring to any spiritual exercise that is aimed at spiritual growth and liberation (*moksha*).
Samadhi	Complete and intense concentration and integration with the divine. A state so described.
Sampradaya	The term can be translated as 'tradition', 'spiritual lineage' or a 'religious system'. It relates to a succession of masters and disciples, which serves as a spiritual channel and provides a network of relationships that lends stability to religious identity.
Sanathan Dharma	The term refers to the 'eternal' or absolute set of duties or religiously ordained practices incumbent upon all Hindus, regardless of class, caste, or sect. Hinduism is often described as the 'eternal religion' or *sanatan dharma.*
Sanathanist	A Hindu who follows *sanathan dharma.*
Sankirtan	(See *Kirtan*).

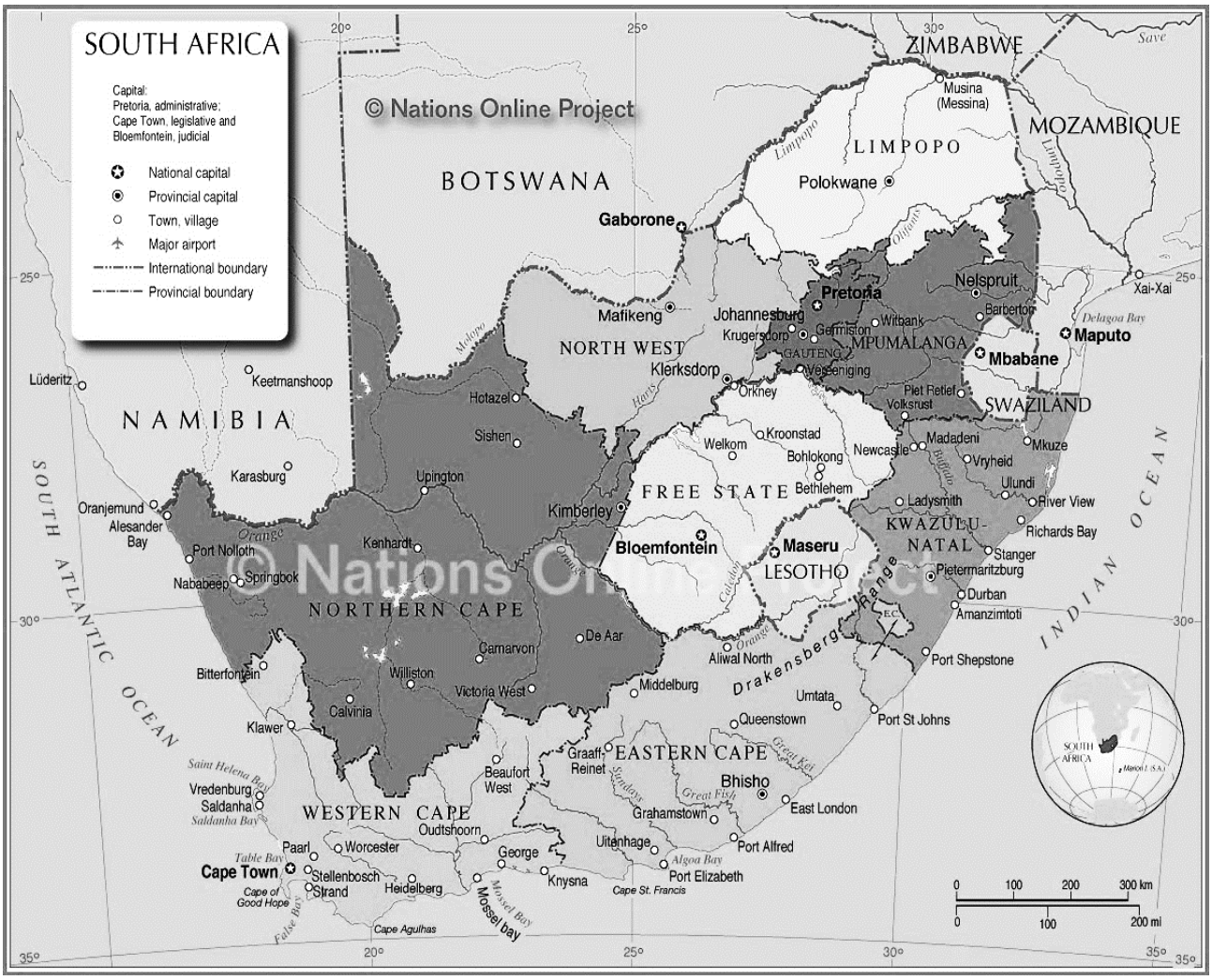
Santana	Guru lineage.
Sannyasi	(Also, 'taking *sannyas'*). A person who has renounced the world and has become a wandering ascetic. In the fourfold system of the *ashramas*, or stages of life in Hinduism, *sannyasi* represents the fourth and final stage. This stage helps to free a person of all attachments, focus on God, and to prepare for death and the next life.
Satsang	A Sanskrit term usually translated as the company or association of the good or righteous. It also refers to a congregation for worship, to listen to religious and spiritual discourses or sing *bhajans*.
Seva	A Sanskrit term which describes the art of selfless service, renunciation of selfish desires and a commitment to give time and effort to the greater social good.
Shaivism	One of the three main streams of Hinduism, the others being *Vaishnavism* and *Shaktism*. *Shaivism* centres around the worship of Lord *Shiva* in his various forms and other deities associated with him. Innumerable texts, as well as sects and cults are associated with *Shaivism*. The various *Shaivite* sects have developed a complex philosophy of *Shiva* as the supreme being. Among *Shaivite* festivals, *Shivaratri* is the most popular.
Shaivite	A follower of the God *Shiva* or any of the sects of *Shaivism*.
Shakti	The principle of female energy encompassed in worship of the Goddesses of the Hindu pantheon of deities or *Devi*.
Shaktism	A term for sects related to *Shakti* or female power.
Shembe	An African sect that combines Christianity with aspects of *Bantu* religion.
Shiksha	A Sanskrit term that means 'instruction', 'learning', 'lesson', and 'study of skill'. It refers to the study of scriptures and the ability to acquire skills.
Shiva	One of the two most important Gods in Hinduism, the other being *Vishnu*. *Shiva* is known to be the God of destruction and renewal. In **Shaivite** sects, *Shiva* is known to be the supreme deity, the ultimate source and goal of spiritual life. In generic depictions, *Shiva* sits in a meditative posture with the snake around his neck and covered in holy ash. His entire

	skin and throat is blue (in the form of *Neelkanth*) and he is sometimes adorned with skulls (in the form of Mahakaal, God of Death and Time).
Shivaratri	A festival to honour and worship the God *Shiva*. The festival takes place in February or March and on this night, Shiva is said to manifest as a pillar of light. Devotees fast during the day and gather to chant a series of *Shiva mantras* throughout the night.
Sloka	(Also, *Shloka*). A Sanskrit term referring a verse, proverb, hymn or poem that uses a specific meter. It is considered as the classic basis for epic Indian poetry and its use is found in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabarata*, which are composed entirely of *slokas*.
Soolum	A trident associated with *Shiva*, father of Lord *Muruga*.
Srimad Bhagavad	(Also, *Srimad Bhagavatam*). The term translates to 'story of the fortunate one' and is a text which is considered to be one of the main collections of wisdom in Hinduism, covering a wide range of knowledge from the nature of the self to astrology, geography, music, dance and culture. The focus is *bhakti yoga* and devotion to Lord *Krishna*.
Swami	Guru or teacher. A learned spiritualist, often the head of a neo-Hindu organisation.
Tamasa	A traditional form of Marathi theatre, often with singing and dancing.
Thaipoosam	(Also spelt *Thaipusam*). A Hindu festival celebrated by the Tamil and Malayali communities on the full moon in the Tamil month of *Thai*. It is a festival in reverence of Lord *Murugan* and is accompanied by the act of 'carrying *Kavadi*'.
Trance	In Hinduism, trance is a state of bliss and complete absorption into *samadhi* or intense concentration and union with the divine. A person in trance is said to be in union with a specific deity and capable of supernatural abilities or, in a meditative state, is said to be in union with God. There are differing meanings of trance in the north Indian and south Indian Hindu traditions.

Untouchable	(Also, known as *Dalit*). A member of the lower-*caste* Hindu group or a person outside of the *caste* system, contact with whom is traditionally held to defile members of higher *castes*.
Upanishads	Sanskrit texts which form part of the *Vedic* literature. At least 280 *Upanishads* are known today of which 108 are recognised in classic texts. They are uneven in quality and character. *Upanishadic* ideas form the basis for several later streams of thought in India.
Vaikuntha	The celestial abode of *Vishnu* said to be built of gold and precious stones. Those who dwell in *Vaikuntha* enjoy bliss and freedom from *karma*.
Vaishnavite	Any of the sects or texts pertaining to *Vaishnavism*.
Vaishnavism	One of the three main sects of Hinduism, the others being *Shaivism* and *Shaktism*. *Vaishnavism* focuses on the worship of Lord *Vishnu* who is regarded as the God of preservation. *Vaishnava* sects include numerous sects which worship Lord *Vishnu's* incarnations, Lord *Rama* and Lord *Krishna*.
Vanaprastha	The third stage of life in Hinduism, referring to the half-renounced whereby the person's children have grown up and left the homestead and the Hindu should live in the forest, preparing for *sannyasi*.
Vedanta	One of the six main schools of ancient Indian philosophy. *Vedanta* includes all those schools of philosophy which use the *Upanishads* (the last part of the *Vedas*) as the ultimate authority.
Vedas	A term for a group of Sanskrit texts, which are the most sacred texts for Hindus. *Veda* comes from the Sanskrit root '*vid*', to know, and the word *Veda* implies 'divine knowledge'. The *Upanishads* are the philosophical component of the *Vedas*.
Vedic	Of or relating to the *Vedas*.
Vibhooti	Holy ash.
Vishnu	A deity who is one of the two most important Gods in Hinduism, the other being *Shiva*. The name is said to come from the word '*vish*', to pervade, as *Vishnu* pervades the world and is the force of preservation. *Vishnu* lives in *Vaikuntha* and is married to *Lakshmi*. *Vishnu* is born in the world in

	different forms and these are known as *avataras*. The most popular incarnations are Lord *Rama* and Lord *Krishna*.
Yuga	A period of time in the Hindu system of cosmic time. There are four *yugas*, ending in the *Kali yuga*.
Yuga Dharma	The religion of a given *yuga*. The principles of good conduct and righteousness that pertain to a given *yuga*.

Map 1: Contemporary South Africa



Source: http://www.orangesmile.com/travelguide/south-africa/country-maps.htm

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The South African landscape

This study examines the evolution of Hinduism (see glossary) as Hindus migrated from the Greater Durban area (henceforth Durban) to the Greater Johannesburg area (henceforth Johannesburg). Hinduism arrived in South Africa as a direct result of the British system of indenture which was introduced after the end of slavery in the British Empire in 1833 (Desai and Vahed 2010, 2012; Henning 1993; Kumar 2013; Lal and Vahed 2013). Religion played an important role in the lives of indentured migrants who were imported to the then British Colony of Natal between 1860 and 1911 (Brain 1988; Chetty 2013; Desai and Vahed 2010; Lal and Vahed 2013).

Sooklal (1996, 336) writes that the early pioneers came to Natal with their religious practices and beliefs and immediately set about establishing them in the new environment. The indentured migrants maintained their religious consciousness by erecting temples, establishing vernacular classes and schools, performing rituals, ceremonies and festivals, and through the recital and reading of prose and poetry from sacred texts. Hinduism was a key factor in fostering a sense of group identity among the immigrant Hindu population in the Colony of Natal – an identity based on their common experiences in South Africa as well as their origins on the subcontinent (Chetty 2013, 54).

Hinduism evolved as a result of the diasporic movements of Hindus from the subcontinent to various parts of the world, including South Africa. The features of this evolution that pertain to the South African case include the enduring prevalence and adaptation of ritual-based Hinduism; the centrality of the *Ramayana* as a key religious text; the importance of the temple as a distinct sacred space among diasporic Hindus; the growing influence of neo-Hindu movements in the second half of the twentieth century; the complex relationship that diasporic Hindus have with 'Motherland' India and the changing role of priests or Brahmins in diasporic Hinduism. These factors are discussed in subsequent chapters as we focus on travelling Hinduism in the internal movement of Indians from Durban in the province of KwaZulu-Natal to Johannesburg in Gauteng.

As we discuss in chapter two, historically, the vast majority of Indians were concentrated in Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal) for it was to the Colony of Natal that they were imported as indentured migrants between 1860 and 1911. After the expiry of their labour contracts, some returned to India but the majority remained in Natal due to the immigration restrictions imposed by the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape Colony governments. These restrictions remained in place even after these four territories came together to form the Union of South Africa in 1910 and ensured that most Indians were restricted to Natal.

The relaxing of regulations around Indian travel to the Transvaal in the 1970s resulted in a burgeoning phenomenon of migration from Durban to Johannesburg, a trend that continued and has increased in the post-apartheid period. Migration to Gauteng is not confined to Indians as this is the economic powerhouse of South Africa and members of all racial groups as well as recent foreign arrivals make their way to the province. As seen in **Table 1** below, a trend comparison of statistics from Census 2001 and Census 2011 shows that Gauteng had by far the largest net migration of any province in South Africa.

Table 1: Net migration per province, 2001-2011

PROVINCE	OUT-MIGRATION	IN-MIGRATION	NET MIGRATION
Western Cape	128 697	432 790	303 823
Eastern Cape	436 466	158 205	-278 261
Northern Cape	69 527	62 792	-6 735
Free State	151 402	121 101	-24 301
KwaZulu-Natal	281 568	250 884	-30 684
North West	166 008	273 177	107 169
Gauteng	402 271	1 440 142	1 037 871
Mpumalanga	191 089	243 934	52 845
Limpopo	372 283	219 426	-152 857

Source: Census 2001 and Census 2011

While Indian migration to Gauteng is not unique in itself, a report by Statistics South Africa, based on the 2011 census, indicated that 15 percent of the migratory stream from KwaZulu-Natal to Gauteng was made up of Indians, which is significant in that they only make up 7.4 percent of the population of KwaZulu-Natal (Statistics South Africa 2015, vi). As one such migrant who made the move from Durban to Johannesburg in 2010, my informal discussions and formal research revealed that most Indians made the move for job prospects. In my hometown of Durban, Indians from various walks of life often spoke of "moving up to Jo'burg" to find a good job. Gauteng, and Johannesburg in particular, are perceived of as a lucrative economic hub where social and economic mobility is possible for Indians, particularly given that, as some have noted, anti-Indian sentiments are most prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal and pose a serious barrier to promotion and progress in the workplace.

Johannesburg's economic power explains the high in-migration of South Africans to Gauteng, and indeed of South Asians and African migrants from across the continent since the 1990s, whose migration was principally motivated by socio-economic mobility. A considerable portion of Indian migrants from Durban to Johannesburg are Hindu, and this study set out to investigate whether and how Hinduism evolved as a result of this relocation.

While devotees may believe otherwise, Hinduism has historically shown significant evolution across time and space, adapting to suit changing local and global conditions. Spatially, and especially since the migration of Indians overseas since the mid-nineteenth century, Hinduism has evolved as it relocated to many different parts of the world. Vertovec (2000, 1) states that Hinduism is ever-malleable, as its forms and meanings outside of India continue to change in ways that are both distinct from and continuous with the constantly evolving forms and meanings of Hinduism within India itself. The result, Vertovec (2000, 1) writes, is that "Hindu socio-religious phenomena and the identities of Hindu people from place to place outside India are often highly unlike each other, having travelled along diverse historical trajectories conditioned by a wide range of locally contextual factors."

Smart (1999, 424) raises questions on 'travelling Hinduism' to suggest that some of its core themes, such as *caste*, pilgrimage, temple rituals, veneration of the cow, the practice of astrology,

belief in *reincarnation*, and so on, are elements of Hinduism in India and do not travel easily to new environments.[1] Brown (2006, 94) states that Hinduism is not a tradition based on a clear creed or set of religious texts, which are by definition easily exportable. Instead, it is a heterogeneous collection of traditions and practices which are held together by shared assumptions, particularly by the way of life developed in India over centuries. The export of Hindu practices and beliefs may thus be more difficult than that of other religions which are based on certain core texts. Zavos (2013, 306) poses a pertinent question:

> How does a religion which is subject to such ritual constraints, such fastidious observance of purity and pollution, regulation related to travel, reconcile itself to the compromises, adaptations and innovations of rapid, forced and/or mass migration in the modern world?

In the historical antecedent of indenture and passenger migration to colonial South Africa from 1860 onwards, the literature has found that Hindu beliefs and practices were creatively carried, replicated and transformed in the process of resettlement.[2] Clear evidence exists for the evolution of Hinduism from homeland India to the Colony of Natal, as to many other destinations where colonial migrations took place (see Barot 1994; Baumann 1998, 2010; Brown 2006; Cohen 2008; Jain 2012; Lal 2013; Vertovec 2000; Younger 2010; Zavos 2013).

As stated earlier, Hinduism is ever-malleable and this evolution of beliefs and practices continues in contemporary times as can be seen in various locales across the Indian diaspora (Agarwal 2014; Barot 1994; Baumann 1998, 2010; Brown 2006; Dwyer 2004; Harlan 2004; Jacobsen 2004, 2006, 2013; Jacobsen and Kumar 2004; Jain 2012; Jayaram 2003; Junghare 2004; Kumar 2006, 2013; Long 2013; Rampersad 2013; Shimkhada 2013; Van der Burg 2004; Vertovec 2000; Younger 2010; Zavos 2013).

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[1]'Travelling Hinduism' refers to the export of Hindu practices and beliefs from India to various parts of the world and the extent to which it undergoes transformations across space and time.

[2]The term 'colonial South Africa' is used loosely to refer the Cape Colony, Transvaal, Natal, and the Orange Free State which were independent entities in the nineteenth century but came together to form the Union of South Africa in 1910.

The literature reveals several distinctive features with regard to the changes Hinduism has undergone as it has migrated from originary to diasporic forms. These are discussed in the following section.

1.2 Travelling Hinduism and features of its transformations

The prevalence of ritual-based Hinduism: Travelling Hinduism is said to be marked by rituals and ceremonies that belong to the 'little traditions' and not that of Brahminical Hinduism (Brown 2006; Lal 2013; Van der Burg and van der Veer 1986; Vertovec 1994; Zavos 2013).[3] The reason is that "most of [the indentured labourers] came from poor and unsophisticated backgrounds, where religious expression was mainly local and popular rather than conforming to the high theological traditions within their religions" (Brown 2006, 97).

The truncation and general adaption of rituals (Agarwal 2014; Baumann 2010; Kumar 2006; Zavos 2013): In the context of a prevalence of rituals across diasporic Hinduism, there have been further changes to the rituals themselves. These rituals have been truncated and generally adapted to suit distinct local environments. Agarwal (2014, 10) writes that in places outside of India, the basic Hindu ritual procedures have been "curtailed, refashioned, or eclectically performed". Hindu rites are popularised in order to appeal to the young, diaspora-born Hindus rather than the more conservative elders. There is evidence of Hindu ritual procedures becoming truncated (Hutheesing 1983), refashioned (Michaelson 1987), or eclectically performed (Bharati 1976); in other settings, many rites have been virtually invented in conjunction with social change in the diasporic community (Vertovec 1991, 1992) (in Vertovec 2000).

[3]Brahmins (also spelt Brahmans) are the priests of Hinduism. 'Brahminical Hinduism' refers to a more regularised and organised aspect of the religion, dependent on the authority of priesthood. Brown (2006, 97) explains that scholars of religion in South Asia often draw a distinction between the 'great tradition' and the 'little traditions' within religious experience and practice, where the former refers to "high Hindu philosophy, theology and social theory", and the latter to "local, popular religion [emphasising] the worship of deities within the all-Indian pantheon."

The centrality of the Ramayana as a key religious text: Historically, the *Ramayana*, a key Hindu text, was important to Hindu migrants in the colonies (Brown 2006; Cohen 2008; Lal 2013). There are several significant texts in Hinduism, including key stories and myths, unlike Christianity and Islam which have one central scriptural text. For Hindus in the diaspora, the story of Prince *Rama* held "universal appeal" as it spoke of "exile, suffering and struggle, and of loss", those areas of life where migrants felt anxiety and sought guidance (Brown 2006, 102). According to Brown:

> The popularity of its public reading, from the wretched barracks of indentured and contract labourers to the wealthy homes of recent migrants to Britain or America, suggests that it is one of the ways in which Hindus have found part of their religious tradition that speaks powerfully to them in changing situations and enables them to manage the challenges of a new environment far from their original homes (Brown 2006, 102).

The centrality of the temple as a distinct place of worship for Hindus in the diaspora (Agarwal 2014; Baumann 2010; Brown 2006; Jacobsen 2006, 2013; Jacobsen and Kumar 2004; Jain 2012; Knott 1986; Kumar 2006; Long 2013; Luchesi 2004): Among Hindus living outside of India, being in the diaspora has led to increased focus on the temple as a cultural centre and as a place to confirm identity in a minority situation. Many studies attest that "the temple has often become the single most important cultural institution of the diaspora group" (Jacobsen 2006, 163).

The growing influence of imported, Western-influenced 'neo-Hindu' movements (Baumann 1998, 2010; Brown 2006; Dwyer 2003; Younger 2010; Zavos 2013): Some Hindus in late nineteenth century India became concerned about many of the practices conducted in the name of Hinduism and were increasingly determined to present Hinduism to the wider world as a serious world religion which should take its place in the modern world (Brown 2006, 98). This was in part a reaction to the imposition of British rule in India as well as the work of Christian missionaries and resulted in reformist initiatives in India, extending to diasporic situations. According to Brown:

> It was not surprising that reformers turned their attention to Hindus abroad, particularly those lowly folk who as indentured labourers had taken their own versions of Hinduism

with them and were practicing what reformers perceived as degraded, populist forms of religion (Brown 2006, 98).

The complex relationship of diasporic Hindus with their Indian 'homeland' (Agarwal 2014; Baumann 2004, 2010; Bhowon and Bhowon-Ramsarah 2013; Eisenholr 2006; Jayaram 2003; Parekh 1994): For Hindus living abroad, India is often assumed to be "a country of ritual purity, religious authenticity and the locale of religious traditions; and their cultural ancestry is traced to it" (Jayaram 2003, 127). Baumann (2010, 128) describes the striking feature of overseas Hindus who have remained "religiously parasitic" on India, "importing its movements and cults but neither transforming them in light of their needs, nor throwing up a new movement fashioned in the crucible of the diasporic experience, nor even adding new gods and goddesses to their pantheon." This study explores whether this is in fact the case.

The changing role of priests (or Brahmins) in diasporic Hinduism (Baumann 1998; Bisnauth 1989; Jayaram 2003; Kumar 2006): Jayaram (2003, 127) writes that with regard to diasporic Indo-Trinidadian Hinduism, Brahmins imposed some organisation of religious beliefs and practices, often against apostasy from Hinduism. Jayaram (2003, 127) continues that "the resurgence of Hinduism in Trinidad, which has reinforced the place of Hindu rituals in the emerging lifestyles of the Hindus, has bolstered the status of the pundit."

The creation of a transitive sacred regional geography in the diaspora (Agarwal 2014; Jacobsen 2004, 2006; Jain 2012; Knott 1986; Rampersad 2013): Jain (2012, 54) speaks of a "transitive sacred regional geography" in India and across the diaspora. In the diaspora, it is reflected in a '*Ganga'* (the holy river Ganges in the north Indian plains) in Trinidad and an '*Ayodhya'* (the disputed birthplace of *Lord Rama*, also in north India) in Fiji. Agarwal (2014, 11) states that "in Thailand, the Chao Phya River has long been seen as a sacred river for the Thais as sacred as the Ganges." Many families scatter the ashes of their dead relatives in the Chao Phraya River where a Brahmin may be invited to conduct a ceremony (2014, 11). Zavos (2013, 310) states that, "diaspora Hinduism in this way fashions new arenas of sacredness in multiple ways, potentially challenging traditional ideas about the sacred quality of the Indian landscape."

1.3 Research Questions

The central research question that drives the sub-questions is:

> *Did Hinduism evolve, and if so how, from its initial establishment in the Greater Durban area as it migrated to the Greater Johannesburg area?*

The central research question is embodied by three sub-research questions, which combine socio-historical and ethnographic research. The first sub-research question is historical while the other two are ethnographic. In terms of the historical research, the study covers the history of migration from the then Colony of Natal to the Transvaal.[4] [5] While restrictions on interprovincial movement were in place from the turn of the twentieth century, some Indians from India as well as from places like Mauritius and Mozambique settled in the Transvaal. Indians from Natal also settled there before the law was passed. Thus, while not substantial in number, there were always some Indians living in the Tranvaal.

There is limited research on the earliest migrations from Natal to the Transvaal, whether as 'passenger' Indians, a problematic term in the literature that refers to Indians who came from outside the system of indenture, or as time-expired or ex-indentured, which referred to those whose labour contracts had expired. Both streams of migrations (passenger and ex-indentured) reinforce the fact that the move to the Transvaal was primarily due to economic motivations (Brink 2008; Cachalia 1983; Ginwala 1974; Henning 1993; Hiralal 2007; Kumar 2013; Ruggunan 2016; Tayal 1980). The most comprehensive study of this movement is Bhana and Brain (1990) but there is

[4]The Colony of Natal was proclaimed a British colony after the British government annexed the Boer Republic of Natalia in 1843. Durban was formed in 1835 on the site of Port Natal.

[5]The Transvaal was an Afrikaans republic independent of British controlled South Africa where the city of Johannesburg was located. After the Anglo-Boer War, the Transvaal came under British rule and military occupation and in 1910, it united with three other British colonies to form the Union of South Africa.

room for a study that comprehensively develops an adequate narrative of this phenomenon, similar to the study by Vahed and Bhana (2015) for Natal.

The first sub-research question is:

> *What is the history of the migration of Indians, including Hindus, from the Colony of Natal to the Transvaal?*

The rationale for this historical perspective is firstly, to remedy the lack of information on the earliest migrations of Indians from Natal to the Transvaal. The second reason is to provide a backdrop against which the ethnography is conducted. History provides insights into the contemporary world and much remains to be said on how continuous or discontinuous the current migration of Indians from Durban to Johannesburg is with antecedent migrations. To understand the history of a phenomenon is to gain a better understanding of contemporary trajectories and this study relies heavily on secondary historical research to support its answers to the central research question.

In terms of the ethnographic dimension, the study covers Hindus' experiences with regard to their migration to Johannesburg, and their experiences of traditional temples and neo-Hindu organisations in the Greater Johannesburg area, as well as with Hindu priests and participation in Hindu festivals.[6]

The second sub-research question that this study is concerned with is ethnographic in nature and focuses on Hindus' general experiences of adaptation in their migration from Durban to Johannesburg:

[6]Neo-Hindu organisations can be regarded as institutional formations intended for the reform of Hinduism in India and globally (Klostermaier 2002; Kumar 2013; Younger 2010). 'Neo-Hindu' movements can also be referred to as 'Organised Hinduism' (Kumar 2010) or 'Institutional Hinduism' (Vahed 2013).

What are the personal experiences of Hindus in the migration from Durban to Johannesburg and their religio-cultural settlement?

The third sub-research question is:

What are the experiences of immigrant Hindus in Johannesburg, with regard to traditional temples, neo-Hindu movements, priests and festivals?

The rationale for selecting an ethnographic approach is the dearth of information and qualitative research on actual experiences of migration between these cities. There are many emic studies on the lives of migrants and migration elsewhere but none on the migration of Hindus from Durban to Johannesburg[7]. Ethnography prioritises the rich qualitative perspectives of the subjects themselves, resulting in knowledge and meanings that pertain and belong to the lives of the group being studied. This emic perspective is vital in answering the central research question.

Answering the question on how Hinduism evolved in the migration from Durban to Johannesburg required an inquiry into the actual practices and beliefs of the migrants themselves. Ethnography was deemed the most suitable approach due to the unit of analysis being studied – Hindus and their motivations for a better life, their deepest-held beliefs, inherited and novel practices, and their migration between cities, striving to find settlement in an otherwise anomic environment. These are all richly qualitative themes and, despite ethnography's problems and limitations which are discussed in chapter four, it was the best means to answer the central research question and sub-questions. The historical dimension of the study forms the background while the ethnographic dimension about the recent decades is the main focus.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To provide an overarching historical narrative of the migration of Indians from Natal to the Transvaal;

[7]See Agier 2002; Appadurai 1991; Burawoy 1991; Creswell 2006; Fitzgerald 2006.

2. To provide a qualitative account of Hindu experiences of migration from Durban to Johannesburg and their religio-cultural settlement; and

3. To provide a qualitative account of Hindu settlement in Johannesburg via traditional temples and neo-Hindu movements, including their interaction with priests and participation in festivals.

The historical narrative of migration from Natal to the Transvaal relies on secondary data, while the methodological approach includes a mix of both socio-historical and ethnographic research, specifically a qualitatively 'thick description' of objectives two and three.[8] The ethnographic inquiry on Hindu experiences of migration from Durban to Johannesburg and their experiences with traditional temples, neo-Hindu organisations, priests and festivals (objectives two and three) was conducted qualitatively, particularly through in-depth interviews and participant observation, but also by means of a survey.

The study is ultimately concerned with developing a grounded theory with respect to the central research question. 'Grounded theory' (Charmaz 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1994) refers to both a method and a product of inquiry. The methods employed included a flexible set of analytic guidelines that enabled the researcher to focus on data collection and to build a contextually-based theory (Charmaz 2005, 507). There is no theory on the evolution of Hinduism in the process of migration from Durban to Johannesburg and grounded theory offers the opportunity to develop one. By remaining inductive and avoiding any form of theorising that does not emerge in the researcher's construction of it based on the data, a theory is presented in the final chapter (chapter ten) that seeks to provide a fresh sociological understanding of the phenomena of Hinduism, religious adaptation, migration, and settlement.

[8]Geertz's (1973) adoption of the term 'thick description' denotes the method of descriptive ethnography, moving away from objectification of 'objects of study' toward a research methodology that embeds the researcher in the enactment of the settings being studied.

1.4 Chapter Outline

Chapter two provides the historical background to the study. It discusses the migration of Indians from the then Colony of Natal to the Transvaal, and in more recent times from Durban to Johannesburg. The chapter addresses research objective one which is to provide an overarching historical narrative of the migration of Indian South Africans from Durban to Johannesburg.

Chapter three presents a literature review on the Indian diaspora with particular reference to South Africa, as well as Hinduism in the diaspora with a particular focus on the transformation of religious beliefs and practices. It highlights the key themes encountered in the secondary literature and the gaps that remain, some of which this work fills, positioning this study within this broader literature.

Chapter four details the methodological framework employed in this study and the steps followed in the execution of the research. It discusses the sampling design, data collection methods, data analysis, and the eventual theory building under the grounded theory approach, describing in detail how the research was conducted.

Chapter five addresses research objective two and focuses on the experiences of Hindu migrants themselves, in terms of their migration from Durban to Johannesburg. Migrants' reasons for migrating, issues with regard to adjustment to life in Johannesburg, the migrants' links with Durban, questions of home and place, and religious life and migration, are all discussed.

Chapter six discusses Hindu migrants' experiences of traditional temples in Johannesburg. The key findings are highlighted, analysed and discussed, *inter alia*, the history of temple worship in Johannesburg; growing patronage and popularity of temple worship there; activities that take place; specific fulfilments of temple worship; and the influence of both north and south Indian temple design in the construction of temples in the city.

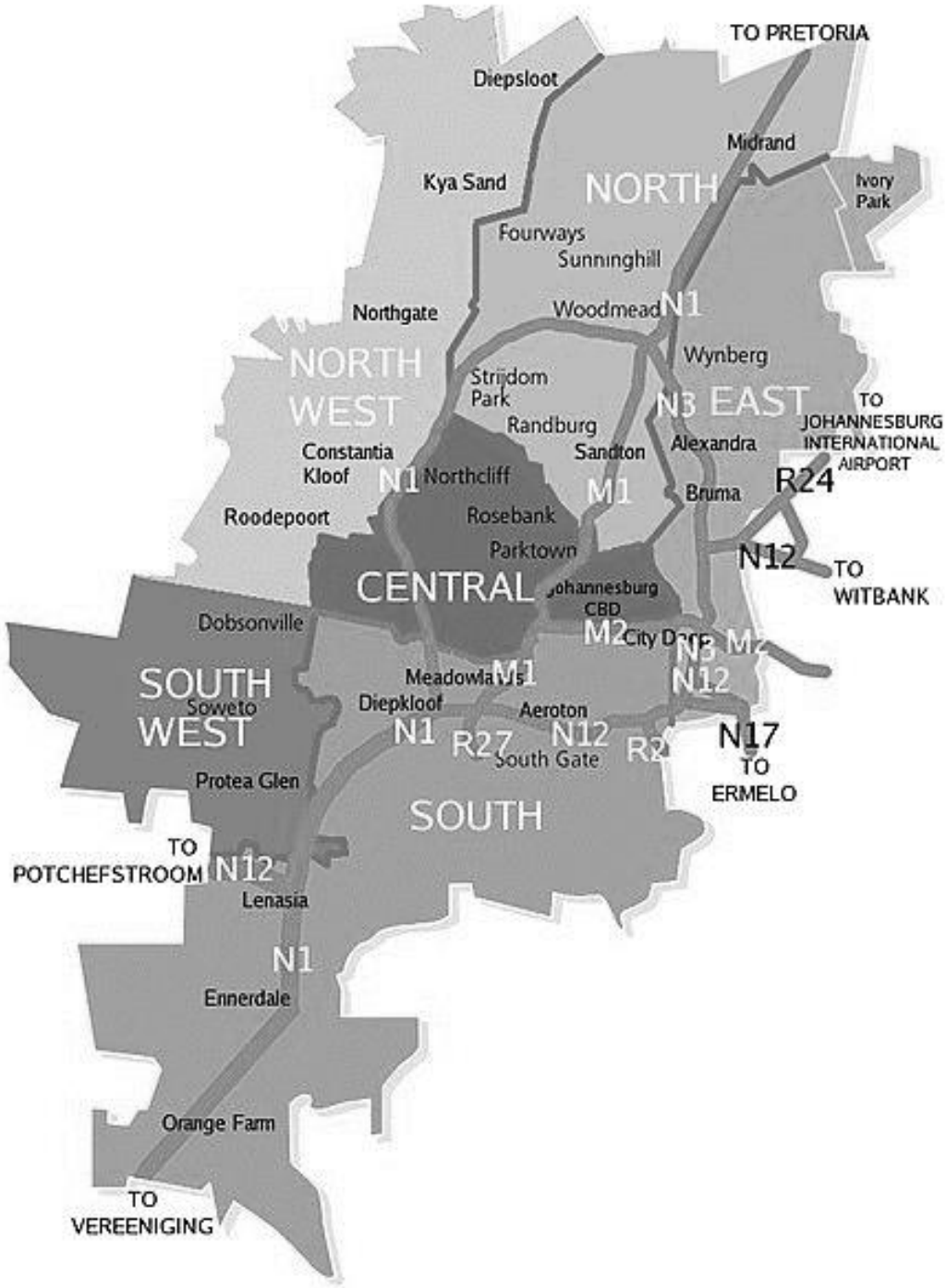
Chapter seven presents key findings and discusses Hindu migrants' experiences of neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg. The issues addressed in this chapter include the Indian origins of

these reformist organisations in Johannesburg, arriving via Durban, their respective purposes, and the centrality of Guru-worship and peculiar dynamics relevant to Johannesburg, as well as issues of membership and participation, activities and their underlying philosophy and orientation as reformist organisations.

Chapters eight and nine discuss priests and festivals in contemporary Johannesburg, respectively. Here again, the chapters are descriptive with the experiences of respondents but also distil important key analyses and findings.

The key findings of chapters six to nine are employed in chapter ten, the concluding chapter, which theorises the migration of Hindus from Durban to Johannesburg.

Map 2: The Greater Johannesburg Area and regions



Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suburbs_of_Johannesburg

Chapter 2: Migration of Indians from Natal to the Transvaal

The literature on migration from the then Colony of Natal to the Transvaal tends to focus on migration and settlement in the Transvaal as a peripheral issue. The major concern of most studies is the political struggle involving the Transvaal government, the British government and Indians, led by Mohandas K. Gandhi, who went on to carve a reputation in the struggle for Indian independence from the British and as an icon of nonviolent resistance.[9] One study whose focus is solely on Indian settlement throughout South Africa is Bhana and Brain (1990), but others by Pillay (1976), Swan (1985), and Desai and Vahed (2016) contain information that allows us to map a picture of Indian settlement in the then Transvaal.

There has been an Indian presence in the Cape Colony since the seventeenth century when some of the slaves brought to work there were of Indian origin. However, the origins of the contemporary Indian South African population date to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire and the decision to introduce Indian indentured labour in sugar-producing colonies across the British empire. Between 1860 and 1911, 152 000 indentured workers were brought to Natal. Around two-thirds were from south India and close to 85 percent were Hindu (Desai and Vahed 2019, 36).

Indentured migrants were followed to Natal by free migrants, the majority of whom were from Gujarat though some, including south Indians, came via Mauritius. They were known as 'passenger' Indians because they paid their own passage. There are no exact numbers but we do know that the majority were from the villages of Gujarat, with Muslims predominating, but Hindus among them. These Indians settled in Natal but also in Johannesburg and Pretoria in the South African Republic (hereafter Transvaal) and the Cape cities of Kimberley, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, and East London (see Bhana and Brain 1990; Vahed and Bhana 2015).

[9]Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, later known as Mahatma or 'Great Soul', lived in South Africa between 1893 and 1914. During this period, Gandhi developed the philosophy and political campaign of 'passive resistance' or '*Satyagraha*' which he introduced to great effect in colonial India from the 1920s. For the South African campaign, see Desai and Vahed (2016).

One example of a free south Indian Hindu migrant in the Transvaal is Thambi Naidoo whose family achieved iconic status by being on Gandhi's side during his South African years and in continuing the struggle against White minority rule through the twentieth century.[10] In addition to free migrants, some of the ex-indentured also made their way to these places in the post-indenture period.

Historically, most Indians in the Transvaal were concentrated in Johannesburg and this remains true in the contemporary period. In 1970, of the total Indian population in the Transvaal of 80 556, almost half (39 312) lived in the municipal area of Johannesburg, constituting the second largest concentration of Indians in an urban area after Durban (Dinath 1972, i). Because Johannesburg was an important economic, social and political centre for South Africa, the large concentration of Indians in the city made it an important socio-economic centre for Indians in the Transvaal and South Africa more generally.

However, Dinath (1972) noted in the 1970s that, despite this large concentration and the relative importance of the community, there was scant information on Indians and their activities at various levels. Dinath lamented that most studies revolved around the legal impediments affecting the community and usually related to Natal, with few focusing specifically on the Transvaal. Recent years have seen some valuable work emerge on all facets of Indian life in the Transvaal (Bawa

[10]Govindasamy Krishnasamy Thambi Naidoo made a significant contribution in mobilising the Tamil population in the Transvaal. Born in 1875 into a family of indentured Indians in Mauritius, Thambi Naidoo initially came to the Cape Colony when he was 14 and moved to Johannesburg when gold digging commenced on the Witwatersrand in 1886. His public life began soon after his arrival in Johannesburg when Law 3 of 1885 was passed, restricting Indians to segregated locations (see later in this chapter). Thambi Naidoo collaborated closely with Gandhi in resisting anti-Indian measures. He served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Transvaal British Indian Association in 1907 and was elected President of the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) in 1932. Thambi Naidoo was the chief picket of the *Satyagraha* Campaign (a Gandhi-led passive resistance campaign against discriminatory laws against Indians). He was arrested on many occasions and served time in prisons around Johannesburg. After Gandhi left South Africa in 1914, Thambi Naidoo continued to lead the Indian community of Johannesburg and South Africa until his death in 1933. Gandhi hailed Thambi Naidoo as one of the most important figures in the history of the *Satyagraha* Campaign in South Africa (See https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/gkthambi-naidoo).

2005; Cachalia 1983; Carrim 1990; Itzkin 2000; Rugunanan, Seedat-Khan and Smuts 2012; Tomaselli 1983; Yengde 2016) and this study adds to this slowly-growing literature.

This chapter focuses on several key aspects of the Indian experience in the Transvaal. It traces the arrival of 'passenger Indians', initially in Natal in the 1870s and from there to the Transvaal; the stereotypes surrounding Indians in the Transvaal and the putative wealth this category was said to amass, and the severe restrictive legislation that followed; restrictions on free Indian immigration into the Transvaal; and perpetuation of racist policies under various White minority governments during the apartheid era, particularly the passing of the Group Areas Act of 1950 and its impact on Indian settlement patterns in the Transvaal. The impact of these developments on religious formations among Indians in the Transvaal is also discussed, focusing on the Hindu population.

2.1 Passenger Indians

'Passengers' began arriving in Natal in the 1870s and soon some began making their way to the Transvaal (Brink 2008; Cachalia 1983; Ginwala 1974; Henning 1993; Hiralal 2007; Kumar 2013; Rugunanan 2016). The distinction between indentured and passenger Indians acquired special significance in the context of the economic agenda of Whites during the colonial period. White settlers were interested in indentured labour for the sugar cane plantations and regarded passenger Indians with suspicion and as a threat to their economic progress (Henning 1993, 81-82). According to Kumar (2004, 376), "the distinction between the indenture Indians and the passenger Indians, to begin with, is based on economic considerations but gradually acquired political ramifications" (Kumar 2004, 376). Economic competition became racialised and evolved into anti-Indian legislation after Natal acquired Responsible (Self) Government in 1893.

An intricate network of trade emerged amongst Indian traders which relied on family members for capital, goods, and expansion. Initially, this network was confined to coastal Natal but it quickly spread to the interior of the Colony of Natal and from there to the Transvaal (Cachalia 1983, 4). Passengers were followed to the Transvaal by the ex-indentured who had served their five-year contracts. Many moved to the Transvaal in search of higher wages (Cachalia 1983, 4). Indians

entered the Union hoping "to make good in the burgeoning city of gold which was fast developing and laying the basis of a modern capitalist state" (Cachalia 1983, 4).

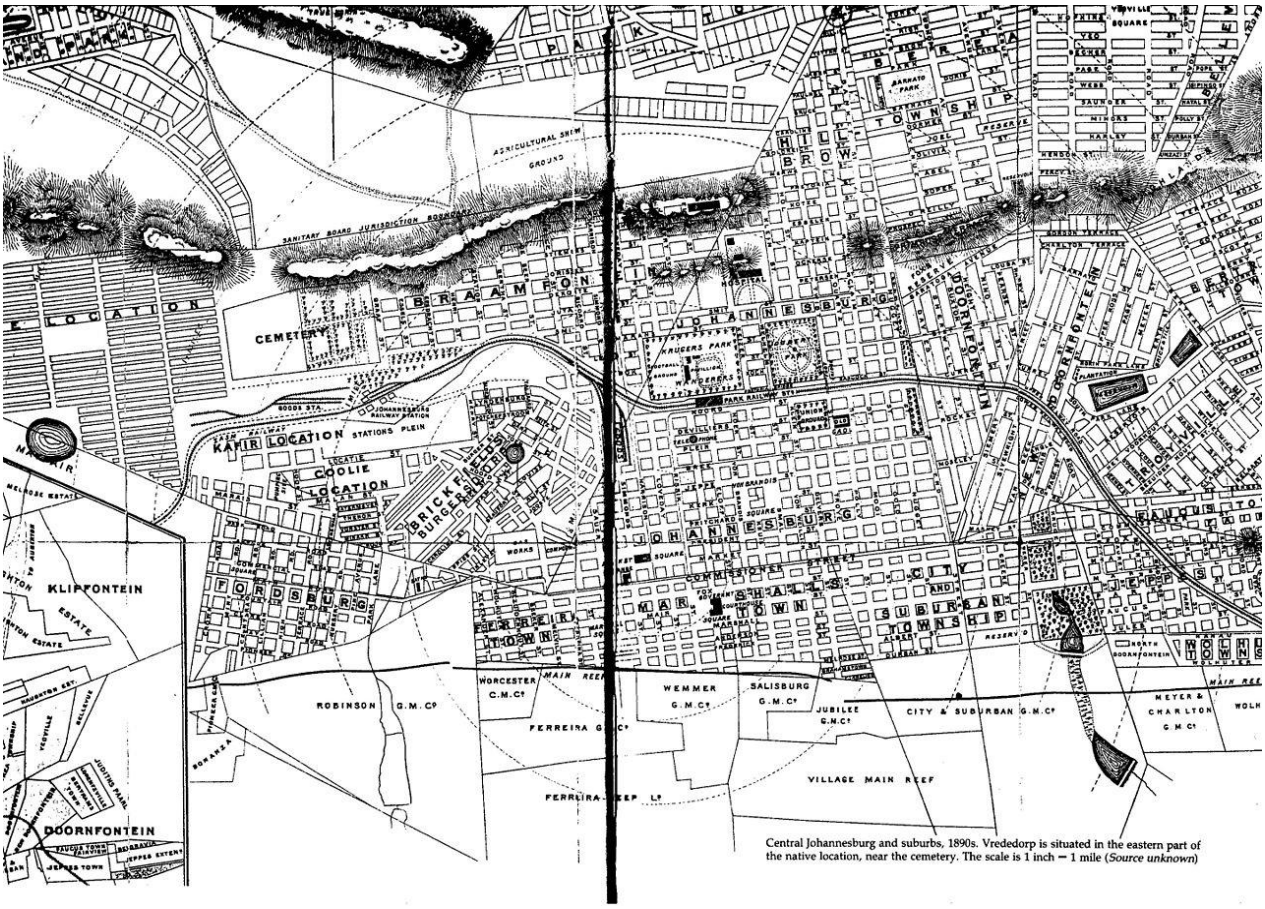
While stereotypes associate Indians with wealth and affluence, Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2009) argues that the term 'passenger Indian' erroneously stereotypes Indian traders as rich businessmen (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2009). Likewise, Cachalia observes that many Indians who came to Johannesburg were "faced with a new urban environment [and] sought to make a living, which in many cases involved little more than the economics of survival" (Cachalia 1983, 6). According to Dhupelia-Mesthrie "the simplified definition suggests the stereotype of the 'rich Gujarati' and excludes many working-class Indians from various regional origins. [Many] passenger Indians secured work … in menial positions and some remained in these for more than just an initial phase" (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2009, 129). This is not to suggest that there was not a strata of very wealthy merchants, with shops across the Transvaal, who often provided funds for Gandhi's political campaigns. Their successes are especially significant in the context of severe economic and political restrictions (Cachalia 1983, 6).

Indians first made their way to the Transvaal around 1881. The discovery of gold spurred further migration, just prior to the outbreak of the South African War in 1899 between the British and the Boers, who had migrated from the Cape and established their own states to escape British rule. At this point there were approximately 15 000 Indians living in the Transvaal, in comparison to over 100 000 in Natal (Brink 2008, 11). Indians played a valuable role in the commercial life of early Johannesburg whose growing Indian population made a living from small trading, hawking, shop keeping, market gardening, peddling, and as cooks, waiters, and laundrymen. Indian traders catered mainly for Black and Coloured clients in segregated parts of downtown Johannesburg (Brink 2008, 11).

The Census of 1896 showed that within a distance of three miles from the Market Square, Johannesburg, there were 50 907 Whites, 42 533 Africans, 3 831 Malays and Coloured, and 4 807 Indians and Chinese, comprising a total population of 102 078. Five-sixths of Asians were males (Desai and Randall 1967, 1). The Census also showed that about half of the total Asian population of Johannesburg was living in the 'Coolie Location', discussed below, which included Vrededorp,

Pageview, and Burghersdorp. Others were living in Ward 2, which included Ferreirastown, Marshallstown west of Sauer Street, and the western part of Braamfontein (Desai and Randall 1967, 1). The following map depicts Johannesburg in 1890.

Map 3: Central Johannesburg and suburbs, 1890



Source:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Old_maps_of_Johannesburg#/media/File:Johannesburg_1890.jpg

As in Natal, Indians were found across the Transvaal and came into economic competition with White storekeepers who lobbied for restrictive legislation.

2.2 Political and Economic Restrictions

Throughout much of Johannesburg's history, Indians had no representation in local government, or in provincial or national tiers. A telling description and clear sense of defiance is conveyed by Desai and Randall (1967, 2):

> Whatever decisions have been taken in regard to them as a community, decisions that affect their rights to live in certain areas, to follow certain occupations, to own land, to move from one area to another, have been taken by White councillors or by White government elected by White voters. During the more than seventy years that Indians have lived in Johannesburg they have paid rates and taxes, they have performed essential services and they have erected fine and substantial homes, temples, mosques, schools and other institutions. They have made a significant contribution to the culture and the rich variety of human endeavour in Johannesburg. They have lived in amity with their neighbours of different faiths and backgrounds, and they have been responsible for no racial unrest and animosity.

The context and details of political-economic restrictions imposed on Indians in the Transvaal have been covered by Brink (2008); Cachalia (1983); Hansen (2014); Henning (1993); Hiralal (2007); Kumar (2013); Pillay (1976); Rugunanan (2016); Swan (1985) and others. Cachalia writes (1983, 4) that Indians were confined to separate streets and wards in the name of sanitation and their trading activities were curtailed by licensing policies and restrictions on property ownership. Law 3 of 1885 provided that Indians in the Transvaal should be prevented from acquiring landed property and citizenship rights. It stated that:

> … Coolies, Arabs, and other Asiatics ... cannot obtain the burgher right of the South African Republic ... they cannot be owners of fixed property in the Republic ... the Government shall have the right, for purposes of sanitation, to assign to them certain streets, Wards, and locations to live in (Desai and Randall 1967, 3).

Law 3 subsequently made mention of a 'Coolie Location' to this end. The following year, the Volksraad amended the first part to allow Asians to own fixed property only where Indians were assigned to live.[11] But as Brink (2008, 12) points out, Law 3 governed the life and movement of Indians in the Transvaal. Indians expected that they would be treated more equitably after the British defeated the Afrikaners in the South African War of 1899-1902. Instead, the new British government maintained and augmented discriminatory laws. In 1906, a new ordinance, the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance and the Asiatic Registration Act inflicted even more stringent restrictions on Indians by requiring them to carry a registration certificate, prohibiting further Indian immigration into the Transvaal and allowing for the deportation of illegal residents (Brink 2008, 12). This Act was vetoed by the British government but passed the following year when the Transvaal was granted Responsible Government. It was this law which resulted in Mohandas K. Gandhi, who spent the years between 1893 and 1914 in South Africa, initiating a passive resistance campaign to get the law overturned (Brink 2008, 12).

Gandhi organised campaigns in the Transvaal and Natal. In the Transvaal, they revolved around the burning of passes and prison sentences for resisters. The iconic moment was the August 1908 meeting at the Hamidia Mosque in Johannesburg where around 2 000 registration certificates and 500 trade licenses were burnt (Brink 2008, 23). Resistance subsided by 1909 when the government threatened to seize businesses (Brink 2008, 23). This was followed by the 1913 strike in Natal which drew thousands of Indian resisters and prompted international condemnation of the South African government. The eventual agreement between Jan Smuts (Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa) and Gandhi in 1914 effectively closed the door to new immigrants, other than the wives and children of Indians who were already in the country and about five educated Indians like priests and teachers per year (Desai and Randall 1967, 7-8).

As a result, the Indian population of Johannesburg grew slowly from 5 348 in 1904 to 6 214 in 1921. One of the reasons was the restrictions on interprovincial movement of Indians within South

[11]The Volksraad was the parliament of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) which existed from 1857 to 1902 and ceased to exist after the British victory in the Anglo-Boer War.

Africa even after Natal, the Transvaal, the Cape Colony and the Orange Free State formed the Union of South Africa in 1910. Indians were totally barred from the Orange Free State from the 1890s, while they required a permit to enter the Transvaal until 1973. There were fewer restrictions on entry to the Cape but its distance from Natal made it an unattractive proposition (Lemon 1990, 132). As a result of restrictive laws in the other provinces as well as "strong community institutions and family ties" amongst Indians, most remained confined to the southern part of Natal. According to the 1980 Census, 82 percent of all Indians in South Africa lived in Natal (Lemon 1990, 132).

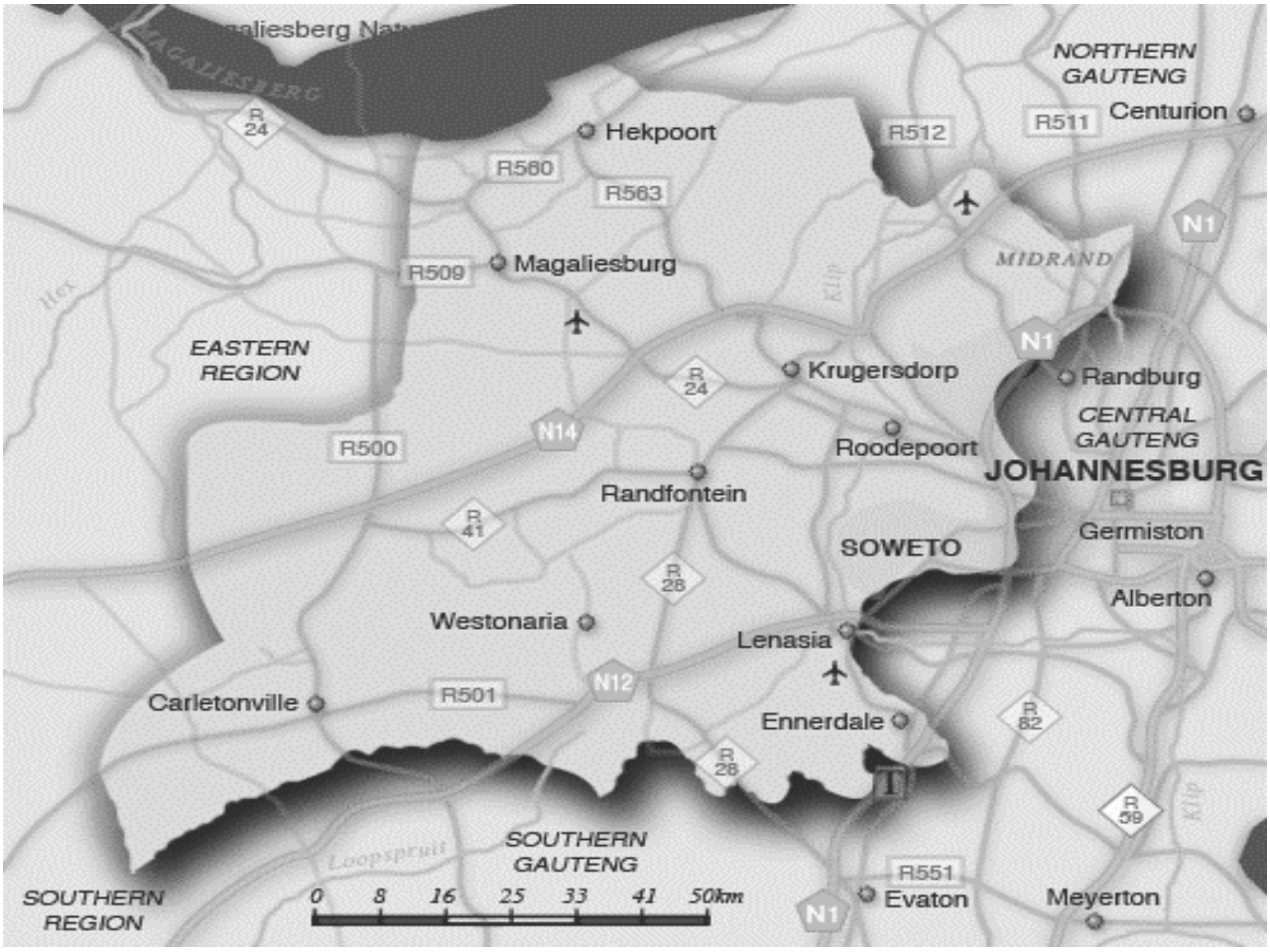
2.3 Mid-twentieth century Transvaal

Indians in the Transvaal confronted many restrictions even though their numbers remained small precisely because of them. The 1934 report of the Indo European Council on the conditions of Indians in Johannesburg stated: "During the last months, members of this Association have been investigating conditions among poorer sections of the Johannesburg Indian Community and are appalled by the extreme poverty and distress that exist among them" (Cachalia 1983, 8). Cachalia notes that poverty was exacerbated by high levels of unemployment and by the exorbitant rents extracted by wealthy Indian and Jewish landlords (Cachalia 1983, 8). So exorbitant were the rents and so appalling were the living conditions that some poorer Indians even supported, against the wishes of the prevailing Indian organisation, the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC), the establishment of an Indian township near Diepkloof (see Cachalia 1983, 8).

Whites were opposed to Indian economic activity, not only in the form of the large traders, but also the small hawkers and street traders, the predominant activities of Indians in the Transvaal (Brink 2008; Cachalia 1983; Rugunanan 2016). Cachalia (1983, 7) explains that street trading and hawking emerged partly in order to escape the confines of wage labour and partly because Indians were prevented from entering the majority of trades in the Transvaal. Besides restrictions on street traders, a law was proclaimed in the 1930s which effectively closed off the entrenched career of waiter to most Indians as they were no longer allowed to handle liquor. These restrictions and the lack of access to capital prompted many Indians to engage in hawking and street trading, as they and not the established mainly Muslim trading class constituted the majority of Indians in Johannesburg (Rugunanan 2016, 57).

By far the most repressive legislation enacted by the Afrikaner-dominated National Party (NP) government which came to power in 1948, and embraced apartheid which aimed at total segregation of the 'races' in South Africa, was the Group Areas Act of 1950 which aimed to segregate and confine all South Africans to one of four racial areas – White, Black, Indian and Coloured. Indians, for example, could only live and own fixed property in areas designated for them (Desai and Randall 1967, 11).

Map 4: Present-day map of the West Rand and Lenasia in relation to Johannesburg



Source: https://wiki--travel.com/map-of-johannesburg-west.html

Writing during the implementation of the Group Areas Act, Desai and Randall (1967, 11) explained that:

> The position now is that Indians in Johannesburg may not purchase any property from Non-Indians, unless that property is situated in an Indian group area. Since Lenasia is the only Group Area, Indians may not acquire property from non-Indians in any part of the city of Johannesburg.

Lenasia was designated an Indian 'Location' in terms of the Group Areas Act. The Townships Board approved the establishment of an Asiatic township in Lenasia in March 1964, and the Minister of the Interior approved the setting aside of land for this purpose. The proposed township was named Lenasia ('halfway to Asia') and was to consist of 2 700 plots to accommodate Indians from central Johannesburg. They could get to work in Johannesburg and West Rand towns by rail and roads. While the township was underdeveloped, advertisements tried to entice buyers through:

> eye-catching press advertisements and leaflets ... "Unique opportunity for the Indian community ... Stop paying exorbitant rents and goodwill for slums when you can now build your own ... freehold residential stands from £350": these were some of the catch phrases used (Desai and Randall 1967, 14).

Desai and Randall observed in 1967 that while many Indians had moved to places like Pageview, which had been set aside for Indians in 1885 and was declared an area for White settlement in 1956, others challenged the decision in the courts, albeit unsuccessfully (Desai and Randall 1967, 2). The government refused to accommodate Indians in an area closer to the city. The Minister of Community Development was adamant: "We are satisfied that the proclamation of a further group area for members of the Indian Group in Johannesburg is not justified, desirable or necessary…. This statement must now be considered as *final"* (Desai and Randall [(1967, 3) original emphases]).

Desai and Randall (1967, 5-6) provided ethnographic accounts of the many traumatic experiences of forced removals. For example, Mr M, a 55-year old shop-keeper in Turffontein, and father to six children, with his wife and elderly father who was blind, was found guilty of occupying his own premises unlawfully, and he and his possessions were thrown on the streets. In January 1967,

a newspaper reported that a new mosque had been built by Muslims on the corner of Market and Nugget Streets despite a government declaration that it was illegal because it conflicted with Group Areas. The government eventually reprieved the mosque "on religious grounds" (Desai and Randall 1967, 7). Many of those forced to relocate were poor working class Indians, such as waiters "still following the avocation of their fathers and grandfathers and assisting Whites to dine comfortably in the plush hotels and restaurants of Hillbrow, Rosebank, or the city centre." The cost of daily transportation, long hours travelling, and inadequate transportation made life arduous (Desai and Randall 1967, 10).

Indians resisted in various ways but ultimately to no avail. Desai and Randall (1967, 5) lamented that "the cost in money, energy and time has been enormous, both to the Indians as a community and to the city, and indeed the country, as a whole…. Could not the same energy and dedication have been more usefully, and more humanely, used in other ways?"

The desire to own a home was pervasive, however, and people ultimately responded to the advertisements knowing that would eventually be ousted from where they were living. A comparison of the Census data of 1960 and 1970 shows that the Indian population of Johannesburg grew from 28 893 in 1960 to 39 312 in 1970, an increase of 36 percent or more than 10 000 in just one decade. Another significant change was the increase in the population of Lenasia from 650 in 1960 to 21 037 in 1970 (Dinath 1972, 1). However, Dinath (1972, 2) argues that the population enumeration for Lenasia was an underestimate:

> The reason for this scepticism is based on the view that Indians from other towns in Transvaal have settled in Lenasia and also that there are numerous families which have come from Natal to settle in the area. It is generally accepted that these families from other areas are not included in the Census forms for fear that by revealing their presence legal action may be taken by the authorities to force them to move back to Natal and out of Lenasia.

According to Dinath, it was popularly believed that Lenasia's population was close to 40 000 in 1970 as opposed to the official Census figure of 21 037 (Dinath 1972, 2).

Lenasia was the only residential area set aside for Indians residing in Johannesburg in terms of the Group Areas Act[12]. Dinath (1972, 1) recounts Indians' experiences of resettlement to a township more than 30 kilometres from their original place of settlement:

> So rapid has this resettlement been that it has caused a complete disruption of community life and a breakdown in services. It has brought tremendous pressure on the economic stability of the community. Since the Group Areas Act affects both residential areas and shopping and other economic activity, there have been serious financial losses to the community and it has thrown the entire community into a turmoil.

Lenasia was incorporated within the municipal boundary of Johannesburg in 1970 but little attempt was made to cater for the social, cultural and religious needs of Indians who were treated as a homogenous group despite comprising of several language and religious groups (Dinath 1972, 2).[13]

Relocation also impacted on religious practices. The South African Hindu Maha Sabha (SAHMS) stated in a written submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) dated 18 November 1999:

> The most serious and painful of legislation was the Group Areas Act passed in 1950. Settled communities who had built little schools and temples were rudely uprooted by the ruling class and relocated to some distant areas with very little facilities … In all such areas, including Johannesburg, where the Group Areas applied, temples, schools and cultural

[12]While Laudium was also an Indian area proclaimed by the apartheid government in 1961, it applied to the implementation of the Group Areas Act in Pretoria and not Johannesburg.

[13]With regard to family interaction and family forms, Dinath (1972, 10-11) writes that the overcrowded conditions that resulted from restriction of land ownership by Indians have been partly responsible for the retention of the extended family. However, with the availability of housing in Lenasia and the sudden easing of the pressure on accommodation, more Indians started breaking away from the extended family system and the nucleated family became more acceptable.

> centres had to be left behind. It took the Hindu community a long time to rebuild their places of worship…. Homes were relatively small, giving birth to the dismantling of the joint family system and the disruption of the traditional family life. To compound the problem, religious sites in the new areas were generally purchased by the Christian churches because they had the necessary funds. This led to many conversions to other faiths, especially Christianity (South African Hindu Maha Sabha 1999, 3).

White minority rule ended in 1994 and the period since then has witnessed three broad trends as far as the Indian population of Johannesburg/Gauteng is concerned. These are rapid migration from KwaZulu-Natal to Gauteng; the arrival of new migrants from South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh); and internal movement within the Greater Johannesburg area from the former Indian township of Lenasia to former White Group Areas like Houghton, Sandton, Greenside, Rosebank and elsewhere. This changing geography has important implications for religious worship as new places of worship must be established in these areas to accommodate worshippers.

Discussions with interviewees who relocated to Johannesburg over the past three decades suggest that the reasons for the movement of Indians from KwaZulu-Natal to Gauteng include better job opportunities for highly skilled professionals, in part because of Gauteng's larger economy and the fact that it is home to many multinational companies. Secondly, rightly or wrongly, there are widely held perceptions that Africanisation and affirmative action policies are much more restricting for Indians in KwaZulu-Natal which has experienced more anti-Indian racism than other parts of country. Thirdly, there is a desire to link up with family already in Gauteng. That such internal migration has been taking place is borne out by statistics drawn from Census 1996, 2001, 2011 and the Community Survey 2007, shown in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Total population of Indians per province, 1996-2011

	1996		2001		2007		2011	
Province	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Western Cape	**40 376**	3,9	**45 030**	4,0	**69 446**	5,5	**60 761**	**4,7**
Eastern Cape	**19 356**	1,9	**18 372**	1,6	**16 661**	1,3	**27 929**	2,1
Northern Cape	**2 268**	0,2	**2 320**	0,2	**1 986**	0,1	**7 827**	0,6
Free State	**2 805**	0,3	**3 719**	0,3	**6 259**	0,5	**10 398**	0,8
KwaZulu-Natal	**790 813**	75,6	**798 275**	71,6	**835 882**	67,1	**756 991**	58,8
North West	**10 097**	1,0	**9 906**	0,9	**11 441**	0,9	**20 652**	1,6
Gauteng	**161 289**	15,4	**218 015**	19,5	**281 851**	22,6	**356 574**	27,7
Mpumalanga	**13 083**	1,3	**11 244**	1,0	**12 870**	1,0	**27 917**	2,1
Limpopo	**5 510**	0,5	**8 587**	0,8	**8 238**	0,6	**17 881**	1,3
Total	**1 045 596**	100	**1 115 467**	100	**1 244 633**	100	**1 286 930**	100

Source: Census 1996, 2001, 2011 and Community Survey 2007

The Census figures show the remarkable increase in the Indian population of Gauteng which more than doubled in the 15 years from 1996. The population increased by around 200 000 in nett terms while Gauteng's share of the overall Indian population in South Africa almost doubled. On the other hand, the decline in the Indian population of KwaZulu-Natal as a percentage of the overall Indian population is quite staggering. Census 1980 showed that 82 percent of Indians were residing in KwaZulu-Natal; this dropped to 58 percent by 2011. While similar data was not available in the Community Survey 2019, the trend is likely to show Gauteng's share of the Indian population as even higher.

The following **Table 3** shows that this growth is evident in the case of Johannesburg, suggesting that this is where the population moving to Gauteng is concentrated.

Table 3: Indian population in Johannesburg as a percentage of the total population of Indians in South Africa, 1951-2011

	1951	1960	1970	1980	1996	2001	2011
Number	22 295	28 993	40 021	54 940	96 821	134 080	216 198
Percentage	6.1	6.1	6.3	6.7	9.2	12.0	16.8

Source: Brink 2008, 11; Census 1996, 2001 and 2011

As **Table 3** above shows, the Indian population of Johannesburg remained fairly consistent as a percentage of the Indian South African population until the 1980s, but increased dramatically thereafter.

Indians moving to Gauteng in the post-apartheid period are not confining themselves to Lenasia but are tending to move to the apartheid era former White suburbs, while many former residents of Lenasia have done likewise. According to the Community Profile 2016 for Gauteng, 67 382 Indians were living in the Ekurhuleni Municipality and 217 988 in the City of Johannesburg, a total of 285 370. Thus 80 percent of the Indian population of Gauteng, which stood at 357 409, was living in these two municipalities (Statistics South Africa 2016, 13).

These movements into previously White areas and the changing racial geography of Johannesburg since the 1980s are well documented (for a list of studies see Beavon 2000). Beavon (2000) contends that this has led to rapid reinforcement of the affluence of the northern suburbs of Johannesburg in particular. Continuing into the 1990s, the freedom to acquire property outside of the group areas led to many Indian households venturing further away from their originally designated areas. Dinath, Patel and Seedat (2014, 470) regard this as a second wave of migration (the first being forced migration into locations), whereby Indians began to sell up and move to areas further north and to the north-west of Johannesburg to suburbs like Houghton, Killarney, Emmarentia, Greenside, Northcliff, Rosebank, and Auckland Park.

Alongside this ‘second wave’ of migration, are the continuous streams of migration from Durban to suburbs around Johannesburg. Further north, between Pretoria and Johannesburg, is the suburb of Midrand where a sizeable population of Indians resides. Midrand has developed rapidly over the past 15 years, transforming from undeveloped land into towering residential and industrial complexes as well as numerous shopping centres and malls. Along with Randburg to the west, these two areas are known for their concentrated Indian population and are sometimes referred to as a ‘mini-Durban’, as they are destinations of choice for Indians migrating from Durban. Much like Durban, there are popular butcheries and fruit and vegetable markets in Midrand and Randburg that attest to a secure and growing Indian market and commercial taste in these areas. The existence of temples and a dense network of neo-Hindu organisational centres is testament to the growing Indian and especially Hindu presence in these areas. For the more affluent, Sandton is the preferred area, and especially northern suburbs such as Sunninghill, Morningside and Bryanston (see Beavon 2000).

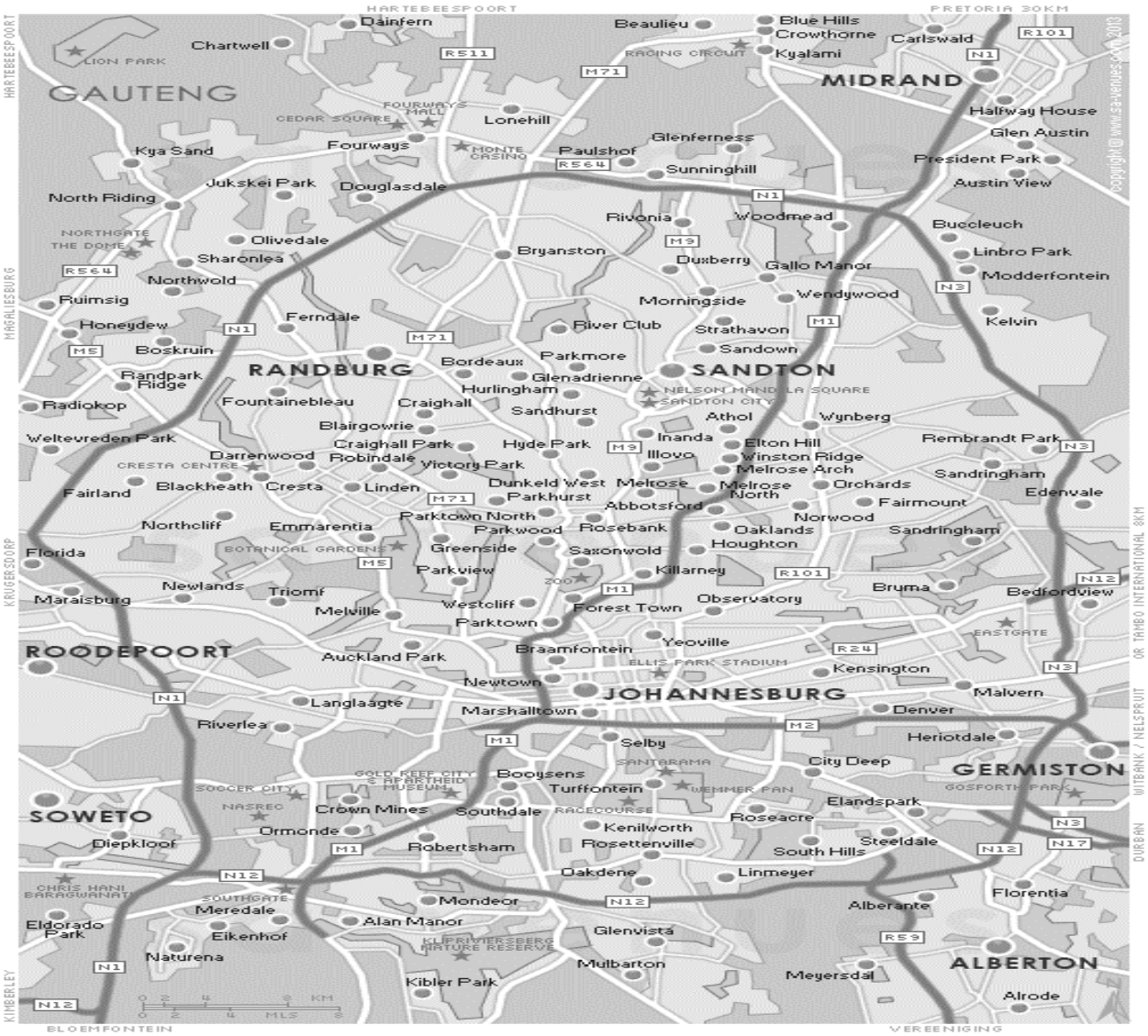
Another discernible trend that affects both the make-up of the Indian population in Johannesburg as well religious and cultural practices is the influx of migrants from South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh) in the post-1994 period (see Yengde 2016). They are referred to as ‘Indians’ here because from the perspective of the wider society, they fall into this racial category. During the apartheid era, the South African government put an end to Indian migration, but the transition period of the late 1980s and early 1990s created a void and many entered the country legally or illegally. Many of the migrants saw South Africa as a ‘halfway stop’ in the hope that a South African passport would be the means to migrate to the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, or Europe. However, most of these countries became aware of such intentions and tightened their visa requirements for South Africans, with the result that post-1994, South Asian migrants remained in South Africa (see Desai and Vahed 2019, 280-285).

Immigrants from South Asia, who have sought to secure both business and professional occupations in Johannesburg, are living and working in urban areas where Indian South Africans reside, although many others are settling in former African townships and rural areas where the old Indian population would not venture. Post-apartheid migrants include a substantial number of Hindus, who rely on the network of temples around Johannesburg to settle into the city and more

readily call it home. Many reside in Fordsburg and Mayfair, in the south of Johannesburg where various traditionally 'Indian' vocations (such as tailors, barbers and Indian cuisine restaurants) are popular but the South Asian presence in northern Johannesburg is also substantial. 'Bollywood' events and other religious and cultural events (such as *Diwali* celebrations) are attended by South Asians living and working in Johannesburg along with Indian South Africans in the city.

The influx of migrants has increased property prices while also creating tensions with locals. There are many studies of this post-1994 phenomenon, but the most comprehensive is arguably that by Suraj Yengde (Yengde 2016).

Map 5: Suburbs of the Greater Johannesburg Area



Source: https://www.sa-venues.com/maps/gauteng_johannesburg.htm

2.4 Indian Religious Formations in the Transvaal

There is a dearth of information on Hindus, Hindu temples, rituals, priesthood, festivals and neo-Hindu organisations in the Transvaal for the historical and contemporary periods, with most studies focusing on Natal. This section charts broad trends in the growth of the Indian population in Johannesburg and some of its key features, particularly in relation to Hindus.

Data on the religious composition of Indians in Transvaal/Gauteng is sketchy but it does suggest that Muslims are in the majority, though this was not always the case. Bhana and Brain (1990, 84) record that according to Census 1896, there were 3 398 Indians in Johannesburg, consisting of 1 572 Muslims and 1 826 Hindus, with the male: female ratio eight: one. This changed over the decades, most likely because restrictions on inter-provincial migration prevented the ex-indentured migrating from Natal, while the Muslims already resident there, supplemented their numbers through marriage and natural growth.

A 1956 report on the Distribution of Indian Religions in the Union of South Africa by the South African Institute of Race Relations found that of the 25 495 Indians in the Transvaal, 9 278 (36 percent) were Hindus; 13 142 were Muslims (52 percent); 1 178 were Christians (5 percent) and the balance were not specified. However, what is interesting is that in Johannesburg itself, Hindus marginally outnumbered Muslims. There were 4 234 Hindus (42 percent) and 4 150 Muslims (41 percent). The primary languages spoken by Hindus were Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati and Hindi. Except for Gujarati Hindus, most of the Tamil, Telugu and Hindi-speaking Hindus "were unskilled and semi-skilled workers employed by the municipality and in various trades and industries. From this group is recruited also a considerable proportion of Indians occupied in skilled trades and the professions, especially teaching" (1956, 9). With regard to religious instruction, the report found that vernacular schools taught some sacred songs and stories, but that:

> formal religious instruction is non-existent. Hindu children learn their religion in the normal course of family life. They imitate their elders in religious ritual… and find solace in family worship, in offering simple prayers at home, observing social customs and periodically organising and attending festivals…. Under these circumstances, except for the common ritual, a substantial portion of the Hindu population has no clear idea of the tenets of their faith (SAIRR 1956, 9).

What is noteworthy here is that in the absence of formal religious instruction, Hindu beliefs and practices were, at the time, transmitted orally and often in inherited ways of practice within the family. I would argue that even in these intra-family, 'mimicked' religious practices, the Hindu derives some idea of the tenets of his/her faith. It may not have been doctrinal or orthopractic, but

religious practices never depend entirely on orthopraxy for them to be meaningful. Up until today, many Hindus depend on personal, idiographic meanings ascribed to rituals and other religious performances precisely because they derive from family worship and inherited practices and this forms the basis of their understanding of so-called 'tenets of faith'.

The only reformist Hindu organisation identified in the report was the Arya Samaj movement, which, at the time, had no temples but its adherents met weekly. History would show that the report was wildly off the mark in concluding that "the time is not far when the bulk of the younger generation of Hindus will have no knowledge of the religion of their fathers," as there was an influx of new ideas from Hindu reform movements while the older, ritual-based Hindu practices became more systematised with the training of priests and establishment of temples.

Census 1960 showed that in the area defined as Johannesburg/Witwatersrand, there were more Muslims than Hindus, at 22 823 and 19 050, respectively. Hindus made up 37.5 percent of the Indian population of Johannesburg/Witwatersrand and Muslims 45.9 percent. In Johannesburg alone there were 7 782 Hindus in 1960, while Census 2001 showed that there were 44 937 Hindus in Johannesburg. Nationally, Census 2001 revealed that there were 556 669 Hindus, with 72 642 in Gauteng. It is difficult to make a direct comparison since the boundaries may have changed but the figures do show a massive increase. It is unfortunate that we do not have recent figures to establish what the current religious breakdown is in Johannesburg/Gauteng. Census 2001 was the last to take count of religion, as the 2011 Census did not include a question on religious affiliation. My perception, and one borne out by most respondents, is that the period since 2001 has witnessed a considerable increase in the Hindu population of Johannesburg. **Table 4** shows the home languages spoken as a percentage of the total Indian population in the Transvaal in 1960.

Table 4: Home languages in the Transvaal as a percentage of the total Indian population, Census 1960

Home Language	1960
Afrikaans/English	1.2
English	19.0

Afrikaans	4.9
Tamil	5.1
Hindi	9.3
Telugu	0.1
Gujarati	46.1
Urdu	5.0
Other	9.3
Total	100

Source: Census 1960

The language breakdown confirms that Gujarati-speaking Indians, both Hindu and Muslim, constituted the majority of the Indian population in the then Transvaal. The small number of Tamils and Telugus is likely due to the fact that south Indians were educated and listed English as their home language. 'Urdu' was most likely spoken by descendants of indentured Muslims who had made their way to the Transvaal. Dinath (1972, 6) observed in 1972 that "…regional and language differences that have been carried across from India still govern aspects of the manner in which prayers will be offered at the temples." Dinath added that the importance of *caste* in governing relationships had diminished.

While this breakdown helps to provide a likely ethnic/regional breakdown of Indians in Gauteng, this has changed markedly over the past few years and it is not always possible to keep track of the changes. The period from the mid-1960s saw an expansion in educational opportunities for Indians, and successive Censuses in 1996, 2001, and 2011 showed that over 80 percent of Indian South Africans gave their home language as English. Census 2011, for example, showed that 86 percent of Indians cited English as their home language. Ethnic languages deriving from India were categorised as 'Other' in successive Censuses and this makes it difficult to ascertain the likely ethnic make-up of the Indian or Hindu population of Gauteng.

A brief comment must be made on Christianity amongst Indians. Dinath (1972: 6) observed that Christians represented the smallest of the religious groups among Indians in the Transvaal. A tiny proportion of the indentured Indian population was made up of Christians but the majority

converted from the Hindu faith in South Africa. While missionaries worked among the indentured labourers in the sugar fields of Natal, they were mostly unsuccessful in converting Indians. The real breakthrough came through the work of Pentecostals from the 1930s, but especially since the 1970s when Group Areas relocation left many Indians feeling alienated from their religion and open to conversion.

A comparison of Census 1950 and Census 2001 shows that Christians as a percentage of the Indian population increased from 6.2 percent to 24.1 percent, while the percentage of Hindus declined from 67.1 percent to 47.2 percent. Muslims remained constant at around 24 percent. While religion was not accounted for in 2011, it is estimated that Christians now make up around a third of the Indian population and Hindus around 40 percent. In fact, a 2012 publication by Statistics South Africa indicated that Hindus comprise 41.3% of the Indian population of South Africa, Muslims 24.6 percent, and Christians 24.4 percent (South African Statistics 2012). The drop in the percentage of Hindus is significant, mainly as a result of conversion to Pentecostal Christianity.

What Dinath (1972) observed in the 1970s remains applicable to this day, namely, that the bulk of Christian Indians are of the south Indian section of the Indian community who, in many cases, no longer use Tamil as a mother tongue. This study does not examine the reasons for this massive conversion to Christianity as it is concerned with those who remain practicing Hindus, but there is substantial literature on the conversion of Hindus to Christianity in South Africa (See Goh 2018; Hofmeyr and Oosthuizen 1981; Kuppan 2005; Naidoo 1989; Oosthuizen 1975; Pillay 1997; Willemse and Vahed 2013).

As noted earlier, there is a dearth of information on early Hindu temples and neo-Hindu organisations in the Transvaal, with most of the literature focusing on Natal. The following section presents a brief overview that relies on Kumar (2013) and Dinath (1972) which will be expanded in the chapters to follow.

Dinath (1972, 28) identifies five types of Indian organisations in the Transvaal during the 1970s, namely, village organisations; *caste* organisations; religious organisations; religious/language organisations; and non-denominational organisations. Village organisations were marked by

membership restricted to individuals who had come from a certain village in India. Dinath (1972, 25) states that some village organisations have been in existence for over 40 years, which indicates the on-going need for close cooperation with fellow immigrants from a given village/region. In the Transvaal, these village organisations catered for religious education, welfare and scholarships for the benefit of members. *Caste* organisations were based on the *caste* system and sought to provide assistance to immigrants of the same *caste* in the Transvaal. While *caste* relations slowly diminished upon arrival to South Africa, the presence of *caste*-based organisations in the Transvaal indicates that *caste* identity and interrelations endured to a certain extent.

Religious organisations served the various religious groups in the Transvaal. Dinath (1972) briefly discusses the various Christian, Hindu and Islamic religious organisations in the Transvaal. The overview confirms a healthy presence of religious activity in the Transvaal during the 1970s, characterised by religious instruction to children and adults, the construction of places of worship, welfare activities and forms of worship. Religious/language organisations catered for the different language groups within a religious framework and non-denominational organisations served all Indians regardless of religious, ethnic or linguistic differences.

Early Hindu practices were *Sanathanist*, meaning that they were ritualistic rather than scriptural. Temples were often the site for these ritualistic practices and given that Indians were a small minority in the Transvaal, Hindu, Christian and Muslim practices initially comprised of local groups coming together as ritual communities. In Johannesburg and the Transvaal, an important step in reconstructing religious life would have been the building of temples and mosques, which were central to community formation, by providing space where adherents could meet and educate the young. In the colonial period, festivals and rituals strengthened the community. Hindu festivals such as *Draupadi* and *Mariammen* were celebrated, while the Easter festival at the Isipingo Rail Mariammen Temple south of Durban was a central part of the lives of thousands of south Indian Hindus (Kumar 2013, 95). According to several older respondents, given the composition of the Hindu community in Johannesburg, the middle-class festival of *Diwali* was the major festival among Hindus in the initial decades of settlement.

The following Hindu organisations are briefly discussed by Dinath in terms of their objectives,

premises, staff, services, comment, financial situation, and future prospects: The Divine Life Society; Lenasia Tamil Association; The Ramakrishna Vedanta Society; The Sanathan Ved Dharma Sabha; The Siva Soobramanian Temple and Education Society; The Transvaal Hindu Siva Samaj; The Transvaal United Patidar Society; The Transvaal Darjee Mandal; Lenasia Women's Social Club (a social club for Tamil speaking Hindu women); and The Martha Sangum (Dinath 1972, 36-37).

The Divine Life Society and the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society were reformist organisations (discussed below) and it is interesting that they gained a presence in the Transvaal very shortly after they were established in Natal. It was the occasional visits of Hindu leaders from 'the motherland' that brought reformist ideas. Three broad forms came to characterise Hindu practice in South Africa, including the Transvaal, viz., linguistically associated temple-based Hinduism; the reformist Arya Samaj; and neo-*Vedanta* organizations (such as the Ramakrishna Centre and Divine Life which revolve around an *ashram* and a Guru). These organisations were most likely connected to headquarters in Natal and India (see Gopalan 2013; 2014).

Hindu reformists sought a more enlightened understanding of Hinduism based on the sacred texts of Hindu philosophy. As Kumar (2013, 128) explains, to redirect Hindus to "their roots", reformists hoped to give Hindus what they considered a "higher" form of Hinduism. The Arya Samaj failed to attract a following in the early twentieth century, but other reformist movements have gained ground since the mid-twentieth century, including the (south Indian) Saiva Sithantha Sungum, Ramakrishna Centre, and Divine Life Society from the 1940s; and from the 1970s ISKCON (Hare Krishna) and Sai Baba devotees. In recognising the need to carry out their work in Durban, the leadership of these reformist organisations likewise saw the need to redirect Hindus living in the Transvaal to their roots and to follow a higher form of Hinduism. The histories of neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg, set out in chapter seven of this study, confirm that the reformist impulse was not isolated to Durban but gained momentum in the Transvaal from quite early on.

It should be noted that Kumar is critical of those, including academics, who draw a contrast between 'higher' philosophical Hinduism and 'lower' ritualistic Hinduism, which he attributes to nineteenth century missionary criticism of image-centred rituals and to western education. He

argues instead that rituals have been integrated into philosophical Hinduism in different guises (2013, 208). This point is important when considering the presence of both philosophical and ritualistic Hinduism in early Johannesburg and the Transvaal.

It is clear from the list of organisations covered by Dinath (1972) that the full spectrum of traditional temples, based on rituals and the authority of priesthood, as well as neo-Hindu organisations, based on scriptures and philosophical study, coexisted. It is furthermore clear that with these religious organisations being in existence for decades prior to Dinath's review, there was a vibrant presence of religious, social and cultural activities, especially significant in the context of colonial and later apartheid government repression. This reveals that, despite the clarion indication that Indians were unwanted in Johannesburg, there was an enduring presence marked by lively religious, cultural and social activities and institutions, which was especially evident in the building of places of worship, some of which still stand today.

2.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter presented a narrative on the migration of Indians to the Transvaal during the colonial and apartheid periods. The significance of the narrative to this study lies in three findings. The Transvaal, and Johannesburg in particular, has always been perceived as being lucrative in terms of socio-economic mobility. Throughout its history and persisting into the present, Johannesburg attracted Indians and other demographic profiles from around the country and globally, who sought economic prosperity. This explains why Gauteng province has the highest in-migration rate amongst South African provinces. A mid-year estimate by Statistics South Africa (2018) stated that the "economic strength of Gauteng relates to 'pull' factors that influence its attractiveness to migrants. Gauteng receives the highest number of in-migrants for the period 2016 to 2021. Better economic opportunities, jobs, and the promise of a better life are some of the factors that make Gauteng an attractive destination."

Dinath (1972, 12) made the crucial point that Indian economic power was important to build mosques and temples as there was no state support for places of worship, welfare organisations and religious institutions. The earliest Indian migrants comprised both passenger and the ex-

indentured, of varying economic standing, who faced severe political and economic restrictions in terms of political rights, property ownership and trade, as well as interprovincial movement which stymied migration to the Transvaal. With the relaxing of these restrictive policies after 1973, and especially after Indians began to acquire tertiary education and qualifications as professionals and their skills were in demand, there was an upsurge in migration to Johannesburg. The increased movement of Indians to Gauteng province over the past few decades is a result of the relaxing of restrictive policies on movement as well as Indian professionals possessing the requisite skills to secure positions with companies in Johannesburg.

Religious and cultural life accompanied Indian migrants and the evidence on religious formations shows a sizeable Hindu population existing alongside a larger Muslim one in the Transvaal. Furthermore, religious festivals took place and religious institutions such as temples and neo-Hindu organisations, though few in number and geographically confined to 'Indian' areas, were in existence prior to the contemporary increase in movement of Indians to Gauteng. It would be erroneous to assume that newly arriving Hindus had no means of practicing their religion; temples and other religious institutions existed, albeit that they moved with Indians to the areas where they were designated to reside, that is, 'locations' and later the township of Lenasia. The changing geography of Johannesburg meant new patterns of residence and a changing religious landscape as temples began sprouting up in mainly former White residential areas.

These themes are taken up in subsequent chapters. The following chapter presents a review of relevant literature and highlight the gaps that this study seeks to fill.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

The primary focus of this study is how Hinduism evolved as it migrated from Durban to Johannesburg. The evolution of Hinduism in the context of historical and contemporary migrations of Indians to various parts of the world has been addressed by other scholars, with Paul Younger (2010) producing an excellent comparative study. This chapter reviews the key facets of this body of literature and identifies the gaps in knowledge that this study seeks to fill. It:

- identifies, describes and syndissertationes previous work on the topic in general and the research questions in particular;

- demonstrates proficiency in understanding the literature on the topic and the research questions; and

- highlights the gaps in knowledge that emerge from this review and sets out where and how the study contributes to addressing such gaps.

The chapter presents a syndissertation of various authors' work according to themes identified in the literature that intersect with the current study. Its five sections cover:

(i) The Historical Indian Diaspora and Hinduism;

(ii) The Contemporary Indian Diaspora and Hinduism;

(iii) The Historical Indian Diaspora in South Africa and Hinduism;

(iv) Contemporary Hinduism in South Africa, and

(v) A Conclusion.[14]

Each begins with an introduction outlining the identified themes in sequence of discussion. Collectively, these sections and the themes they present demarcate a field of enquiry (body of knowledge) that the study sought to contribute to. The chapter concludes with a section on the gaps that this study aimed to address.

[14]The term 'Indian diaspora' also refers to the 'South Asian diaspora'. While it is in fact more accurate to refer to the 'South Asian diaspora' given the various groups that emigrated from the South Asian region historically and in the post-World War Two period from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the bulk of the migrants left what was then India under the colonial system of indenture and most migrants were Indian. This study thus employs the term 'Indian diaspora', bearing in mind that it includes some people from what are today Pakistan and Bangladesh.

3.1 The Historical Indian Diaspora and Hinduism

The origins of the current Indian diaspora date back to the abolition of slavery and the export of indentured labour from India to various sugar-producing colonies. The indentured were often followed by free migrant traders. Religion was important for Indians in the diaspora and, fortunately, for them, the planters and colonial authorities were not opposed to early immigrants' religious practices and beliefs. Key themes that emerge in the literature include the centrality of the *Ramayana* as an important religious text; the historical phenomenon of the evolution of Hinduism as it migrated and settled across the Indian diaspora; the reification of Hinduism into a stable 'world religion'; and, the development of neo-Hindu or reformist Hindu organisations across the diaspora.

Indians in British-controlled India were recruited to work as contract indentured labourers across the colonial empire and most carried their religious beliefs and practices with them. Various authors have written on the historical importance of religion for Indian immigrants (Brown 2006; Jacobsen and Kumar 2004; Lal 2013). Jacobsen and Kumar (2004, xi) describe religion as a "decisive force", particularly in Indian history. According to Narayan's demographic study based on the Calcutta Emigration Reports, 86 percent of migrants were Hindus and 14 percent Muslims (Narayan 1995, 8). Among the Hindus, 16 percent belonged to upper *castes*, 32 percent to agricultural intermediate *castes* and the remainder to lower *castes* and '*untouchables'* (Narayan 1995, 8).

Lal (2013, 90) challenges the common assumption that the religious practices and protocols of Hinduism and Islam suddenly collapsed on the colonial plantations and notes that religion continued to play an important role in the protection of Indian culture and identity in the different colonies. Lal (2013, 90) adds that labourers who went to the colonies took with them their own family (*kul*) or village deities (*grama devata*) as well as their associated rituals and ceremonies.

Scholars writing on the subject of the Indian diaspora and early Hinduism agree that the forms of Hindu practices (rituals, rites, and ceremonies) belonged to the 'little traditions' and not those of

Brahminical Hinduism (Brown 2006; Lal 2013; Van der Burg and van der Veer 1986; Vertovec 1994; Zavos 2013). Brown (2006, 97) states that "…most of [the indentured labourers] came from poor and unsophisticated backgrounds, where religious expression was mainly local and popular rather than conforming to the high theological traditions within their religions."[15]

Several authors have found that colonial planters were not always opposed to the practice of migrants' religion (Lal 2013; Mangru 1993; Younger 2010). As Lal (2013, 90) writes:

> [The colonial authorities] correspondingly endeavoured to make estate life as attractive as possible so as to induce the indentured workforce to prolong their residence through re-indenture. One certain way of substituting a temporary sojourn for permanent residence was to permit the Indian labourer to practice his religion, which was an inseparable part of his life.

In this way, the colonial authorities sought to create a sense of settlement and encourage re-indenture for another five years, in some cases granting religious holidays and making contributions to Hindu religious festivals (Lal 2013). Similarly, Younger (2010, 5) observes that the prevailing British attitude toward the Indians seemed to be that Indians "…had suffered a lot, and it was a relief to see that they were showing some cultural creativity and were busy getting their festivals and other religious activities organised."

Authors have also noted that the *Ramayana*, a central Hindu text, became important to Indian immigrants living in the colonies (Brown 2006; Cohen 2008; Lal 2013). As Cohen (2008) explains, the *Ramayana* as a key religious text was a "constitutive" aspect of the early Hindu diaspora. Similarly, Lal (2013, 90) notes that in Fiji, within a decade of the beginning of indentured migration, the basic texts of popular Hinduism were circulating among the indentured Indians. Cohen (2008, 66) writes that the *Ramayana*'s central theme was exile, suffering, struggle and eventual return, similar to the use of the Bible by religious and Zionist Jews.

[15]Vertovec (1994, 114) notes that over time, across the Hindu diaspora, the 'little' or folk traditions of Hinduism were replaced by a more universal form of Brahminised Hinduism.

Most studies on the historical Indian diaspora assert that Hinduism underwent change, evolution, or adaptation to the new environments in which Indians settled (Barot 1994; Baumann 1998, 2010; Brown 2006; Cohen 2008; Jain 2012; Lal 2013; Vertovec 2000; Younger 2010; Zavos 2013).[16] Brown (2006, 96) states that historically, the physical construction of places of worship, the practice of domestic and personal religion and the creation of religious leaderships have shown "…subtle changes … when compared with the religious practice on the subcontinent". Jacobsen and Kumar (2006, xii) suggest that the common thread that links Indians across the diaspora is their never ending search for ways to preserve the cultures, religious beliefs and practices of their indentured forebears. "In that endless search," they write, "many of them have reinvented traditions or transformed traditions in order to adapt themselves to these non-Indian cultures."

Baumann (2010, 237) provides further insights on the nature of this evolution. He asserts that any religion in a diasporic context exhibits the simultaneous endeavour to maintain and adapt religious ideas, practices, organisational forms and so on. Without adaptation and changes to the transplanted religion, there is the danger of later generations becoming alienated from the tradition. Thus, ritual changes, adjustments to the language used in liturgy, new architectural styles, and new forms of congregational meetings incorporate elements previously unknown to the tradition. Baumann (2010, 238) adds that, while first generation migrants' cultural and religious bonds become disembedded from their previous socio-cultural background in the country of origin, their children and grandchildren strive to re-embed the religion in the new context. Changes and innovations are introduced to religious practices to align with some mainstream ideas of the host society.

The construction or reification of Hinduism as a 'world religion' that emerged in the late nineteenth century has been remarked upon by various authors (Agarwal 2014; Asad 1993; Baumann 1998; King 1999; Vertovec 2000; Zavos 2010, 2013). Barot (1994) employed historical, sociological and anthropological approaches to analyse Hinduism in Europe. With regard to the historical dimension, he highlights European awareness of Hinduism especially from a British point of view

[16]This is not, however, to discount the changes in Hindu practice and belief that have occurred inside India itself. Kumar (2013c, 2) writes, "in the subcontinent of India, Hinduism has continued to evolve and diversify, exhibiting a variety of fascinating forms."

(1994, 68-72). He writes that the establishment of the East India Company and Pax Britannica was a basic factor in the transformation of religion and society in India. It was this British connection that brought knowledge of Hinduism to the West before any significant physical presence of Hindus in Europe (1994, 68).

Zavos (2013, 307) believes that the notion of a reified Hinduism itself is problematic, as it is "…barely able to encompass the rich and sometimes conflicting variety of traditions and social positions that it seeks to represent." Zavos observes that this problem is associated with the processes of abstraction and universalisation through which the notion of religion itself was produced in the modern world. "Religion as a single category of human experience, encountered differently in different regions only because of the development of different 'religious systems', is a discourse of modernity" (Zavos 2013, 307). Zavos (2013, 308) adds that "… it is certainly the case that the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century was a period when Hindu traditions were drawn increasingly into a comparative framework and organised in a manner which enabled them to be represented as one of the 'religious systems'." This homogenisation of Hindu practice produced what Vertovec has called a kind of "official Hinduism" (2000, 41) that was clearly demarcated and identifiable as a religion.

Zavos (2013, 310) further argues that although these homogenising developments generally marginalised the fragmented, parochial practices associated with kin, *caste* or village gods, on the other hand, they provided fertile ground for other forms of Hinduism to emerge. The "delinking of Hinduism from specific, localised practices," he writes, "opened the way for the propagation of so-called 'neo-Hinduism' by a range of new, systematically structured organisations eager to propagate their own forms of Hinduism across the networks of Empire" (2013, 310).

The development of neo-Hindu organisations and its effects on diaspora Hinduism has been well chronicled (Baumann 1998; Brown 2006; Hansen 2014; Zavos 2013). Brown states that some Hindu reformers in late nineteenth century India were concerned about some of the practices conducted in the name of Hinduism and became increasingly determined to present it to the wider world as a serious world religion which should take its place in the modern world. Reforms began in India but gradually filtered out to the diaspora. According to Brown:

> Numerous reformist movements developed on the subcontinent and it was not surprising that reformers turned their attention to Hindus abroad, particularly those lowly folk who as indentured labourers had taken their own versions of Hinduism with them and were practicing what reformers perceived as degraded, populist forms of religion (Brown 2006, 98).

Similarly, Hansen (2014, 278) shows that with the large-scale labour migration out of India in the nineteenth century, Hindu organisations began to dispatch learned *sadhus* as missionaries to Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad and South Africa. The notion of *sadhus* as missionaries was a novel concept in Hinduism at the time. "Their objective was to 'save Hindus from pollution' by helping the indentured labourers create religious organizations, build temples and imbibe the teachings of the Hindu tradition – in short, to make Hindu practices and belief portable" (Hansen 2014, 278).

3.2 The Contemporary Indian Diaspora and Hinduism

While scholars have identified different phases in the historical Indian diaspora (Baumann 2010; Jacobsen and Kumar 2004; Jain 1993; Motwani 1993; Oonk 2007; Vertovec 2000), our concern here is with the most recent phase in the migration of Indians across the globe and its intersections with evolving Hinduism. The historical phase refers to the export of Indian labour around the world under the system of indenture and the contemporary phase refers to migrations from erstwhile colonies and from India to various parts of the world as seen in the post-World War Two decades and into the present.

One important theme that emerges is the complex and contested relationship Indians in the diaspora have with the 'Motherland', India. Important to the current study is the distinct theme that emerges from the literature on the phenomenon of change/transformation of Hindu practice and belief among diasporic movements. Vertovec's (2000, 16-18) list of changes that Hinduism underwent in diasporic contexts is considered for several themes that are discussed thereafter, such as the growing influence of neo-Hindu movements; the general adaptation of rituals across the

diaspora; the changing role of priests in the diaspora; the centrality and multiple roles played by temples in diasporic contexts; and the importance of 'sacred space'.

The relationship of Indians in the diaspora with 'home' is complex and contested (Agarwal 2014; Baumann 2004, 2010; Bhowon and Bhowon-Ramsarah 2013; Eisenholr 2006; Jayaram 2003; Parekh 1994). Jayaram's (2003, 127) study on Indo-Trinidadians, remarks that India is often assumed to be "…a country of ritual purity, religious authenticity and the locale of religious traditions; and their cultural ancestry is traced to it." Baumann (2010, 128), citing Parekh on the global Hindu diaspora, writes of the "striking feature" of overseas Hindus who have remained "religiously parasitic" on India, "…importing its movements and cults but neither transforming them in light of their needs, nor throwing up a new movement fashioned in the crucible of the diasporic experience, nor even adding new gods and goddesses to their pantheon." Furthermore, diasporic Hindus have not presented any religious leaders or critiqued traditional beliefs and practices. This leads the author to conclude that "in this sense there is no diasporic Hinduism, a distinct form of Hinduism created by overseas Hindus in the light of their unique experience and need" (Parekh 1994, 612).

Such an argument is debatable. It is the intention of this study to show that diasporic Hinduism does in fact exist, marked by distinct forms of practice and belief when exported from homeland India to various parts of the world, and very possibly between cities in a diasporic country. However, Parekh's (1994) point is important insofar as, while there are changes to Hindu practices and beliefs across diasporic contexts, there is a limit to how distinct and divergent such practices are to homeland India.

Agarwal's (2014, 6) study of Hindus in Thailand, presents it as "a home away from home" for the Hindu diaspora, indicating that while India continues to exist as 'homeland', Thailand is equally a home for the Hindu diaspora. This reveals a dual belonging for Hindus living in Thailand and a contestation of what 'home' means (see also Hooksooming 2003). In a study on Hindus in Mauritius, Eisenholr (2006, 5) found that the performance of diasporic traditions and allegiances to India as a land of origin became a hegemonic basis for cultural citizenship with continuing commitment to ancestral traditions:

> These traditions are portrayed as ancient and glorious and as repositories of cultural values that enable their adherents to lead spiritually and economically productive lives in solidarity with others…. full membership in the Mauritian nation is performed through the cultivation of such tradition with origins elsewhere (Eisenholr 2006, 5).

As an example of the innovative ways in which Hindus around the world are connecting with homeland India and reconceiving rituals, Kumar (2006, 275) relates how the Tirupati temple in India launched a new form of performing rituals for those who live abroad:

> The Hindus who live overseas can, by internet or federal express mail, contact the temple authorities for any particular rituals to be performed for them at the temple without their presence being needed and they would be sent the *Prasadam* in the Federal Express mail. This indicates the radical and new ways in which Hinduism is attempting to become attuned to the changing society.

On the other hand, Baumann (2004) makes the important argument that there is a *de-identification* with the religious and political norms of the land of origin (India) and that for Indians in Trinidad, there has been an emphasis on becoming full members of the society in which they live. Therefore, while diasporic Indians may continue to draw from their ancestral homeland, they are fully integrated as citizens of the countries in which they reside.

As noted earlier, during the historical period in which Indians migrated across the globe, mainly as labour in the British system of indenture, Hinduism underwent transformation as it was applied and practiced in new contexts (Barot 1994; Baumann 1998, 2010; Brown 2006; Cohen 2008; Jain 2012; Lal 2013; Vertovec 2000; Younger 2010; Zavos 2013). Similarly, in considering the contemporary Indian diaspora mostly to Western countries as a professional, skilled class, many authors have written on the evolution of Hindu practice and belief as an on-going phenomenon (Agarwal 2014; Barot 1994; Baumann 1998, 2010; Brown 2006; Dwyer 2004; Harlan 2004; Jacobsen 2004, 2006, 2013; Jacobsen and Kumar 2004; Jain 2012; Jayaram 2003; Junghare 2004; Kumar 2006, 2013; Long 2013; Rampersad 2013; Shimkhada 2013; Van der Burg 2004; Vertovec

2000; Younger 2010; Zavos 2013). To understand some of the specific changes that Hinduism may undergo in diasporic contexts, Vertovec (2000, 16-18) presents the following eight features of evolution, which are quoted verbatim:

1) In Malaysia (Jain, 1968), Trinidad (Vertovec, 1992) and Fiji (Kelly, 1988), it has been suggested that entire paradigms of devotional orientation have developed in accordance with local structural and social environments; but also ... some observers point to the growing influence or conflict surrounding recently imported, Western-influenced 'neo-Hindu' movements such as ISKCON and the Satya Sai Baba movement among Indian immigrants; also in South Africa (Diesel, 1990), as well as in Singapore (Babb, 1974) and the Caribbean (Vertovec, 1993 ...), there simultaneously appears to be a resurgence of ecstatic 'folk' traditions of Hinduism;

2) And with regard to emergent patterns of group formation and institutionalisation, trends in both Britain (Bowen, 1987) and the United States (Bhardwaj and Rao, 1990) indicate successive processes of community 'fusion' and 'fission' given the size and distribution of migrants drawn from distinct *caste*, regional and linguistic backgrounds (Williams, 1992);

3) Virtually regardless of the above mentioned differences of development, however, in virtually every context outside India, Hinduism has emerged as a core feature of ethnic consciousness and community mobilisation (even into political spheres) among Indian migrants and their descendants;[17]

[17]In the South African case, Hinduism has emerged as a core feature of ethnic consciousness, but not as a core feature of 'community mobilisation'. Several authors have described Indian identity in South Africa as "significantly intertwined" (Maharaj 2013, 93) with Hindu identity (see also Ganesh 2010; Sooklal 1996). Hinduism is an intrinsic part of the ethnic identities and consciousness of Indians in South Africa. This is further discussed later in this chapter. The extent to which Hinduism underpins community mobilisation is less certain; Indian communities are not mobilising for specific gains on the basis of their religious, racial or ethnic identities. Instead, most of the Indian communities of South Africa, if politically mobilised, do so on the basis of class-based grievances and demands which are intrinsically non-racial (and non-ethnic) in character (See Desai (2002) on political struggles in the Indian township of Chatsworth, Durban).

4) In some places, Hindu ritual procedures have become truncated (Hutheesing, 1983), refashioned (Michaelson, 1987), or eclectically performed (Bharati, 1976); in others, much of the style or corpus of rites has been virtually 'invented' in conjunction with social change in the community (Vertovec, 1991, 1992), and in still other places, basic rites have been mutually 'negotiated' so as to provide a kind of socio-religious bridge between migrants from regionally distinct traditions (Knott, 1987; Nye, 1995; Lessinger, 1995);

5) The role of Brahman priests has differed around the diaspora as well, ranging from those who had total dominance over systems of belief and practices in the early days of settlement in the Caribbean (van der Veer and Vertovec, 1991), to those virtually at the mercy of market forces and local Hindu associations in present-day Britain (Barot, 1987) and to those openly rejected by the progressive and well-educated Surinamese Hindu youth of The Netherlands (van der Burg, 1993);

6) Ethnographic studies of Hindu communities in places such as South Africa, Malaysia, Sweden, the United States and Britain highlight the changing status and role of women: this includes evidence of women's empowerment within the community (Diesel, 1998), their maintenance of control over domestic religious practice (McDonald, 1987; Mearns, 1995), their activities as primary agents of religious nurture (Logan, 1988) ... and therefore, in all these ways, their key positions as shapers of diasporic traditions (Hole, 1996) and cultural reproduction (Wilkinson, 1994);[18]

7) In Mauritius (Hollup, 1993), East Africa (Morris, 1968; Nagar, 1997), Malaysia (Ramanathan, 1997) and Britain (Barot, 1998; Michaelson, 1979), certain *caste*, regional and sectarian groups have maintained their distinct practices, associations and institutions while in many other countries such phenomena have almost totally fallen into desuetude (see Schwartz, 1967);

[18]South African studies that address the changing status and roles of women in Hindu communities include Chirkut (2006); Chirkut and Sitaram (2007); Gopal, Khan and Singh (2014); Maharaj (2013); and Moodley (2015b).

8) Hindu temples in Guyana and Fiji have been said to differ in kind and function (Jayawardena, 1968, 1980): in the former country, many have come to be of a generalised sort whereby any one 'dispenses the same rituals and doctrines' as any other, while in the latter context more tend to be 'specialised centres that confer unique benefits' (Jawardena, 1968: 444-445).

In sum, the eight characteristics highlighted by Vertovec are neo-Hindu influences in recent decades; 'fusion' and 'fission' among Hindus; Hinduism as a source of ethnic consciousness and community mobilisation; changes in rituals to meet local needs; differences in the roles of Brahmin priests; the increased roles of women in all aspects of Hindu community life; the varying role of *caste* or sectarian associations among Hindus from place to place; and finally, the fact that temples may maintain their distinctions or become a fusion of traditions. Some of these are discussed in greater detail below.

The first characteristic – the growing influence and conflict surrounding recently imported, Western-influenced 'neo-Hindu' movements – has been widely commented on (Baumann 2010; Dwyer 2003; Younger 2010; Zavos 2013), as has the simultaneous resurgence of ecstatic 'folk' (or 'little') traditions of Hinduism in the diaspora (Jayaram 2003; Kumar 2013; 2013b; Shimkhada 2013). Restated, Vertovec's point is the prevalence of neo-Hindu movements in diasporic contexts and the fact that conflict surrounds them as relatively recent imports. In this scenario, there has been a resurgence of non-institutional, folk or little traditions that favour ritual over scriptural/doctrinal philosophy. Kumar (2013, 49) reiterates this point to state that historically, Hinduism has survived because of its ritual orientation and not so much for its doctrinal orientation: "Although doctrinal and philosophical aspects are important for any religious tradition, it must be firmly grounded in the ritual in which it is expressed in a concrete form rather than in abstract terms" (49-50).

In relation to Vertovec's fourth characteristic of diasporic Hinduism, these rituals have generally adapted to their new settings in various ways (Agarwal 2014; Baumann 2010; Kumar 2006; Zavos 2013). Agarwal (2014, 10) observes that in places outside of India, the basic Hindu ritual

procedures have been "…curtailed, refashioned, or eclectically performed." Hindu rites are popularised in order to appeal to young, diaspora-born Hindus compared to the more conservative elders. By way of example, Agarwal (2014, 10) shows that in Malaysia, Hindu leaders complain of the "disco-ization" of Hindu rituals influenced by modern music (Vertovec 2009, 142). Sinha's (2005) work on the making of a new Hindu deity and rituals in urban temples as part of popular Hinduism in Singapore is another example of the refashioning of Hinduism (in Agarwal 2014, 10).

Kumar (2006, 276) thus argues that the content of rituals is constantly renegotiated and developed according to need. This is in stark contrast to the claims of some priests that there is only one way to perform a ritual. Similarly, Zavos (2013, 315) writes of the growth of public rituals such as the procession to mark diaspora Hindu-ness as it is being reformulated and reimagined.

Vertovec's fifth point concerns the changing role of priests (Brahmins) in diasporic Hinduism. Various authors have written on this subject (Baumann 1998; Bisnauth 1989; Jayaram 2003; and more recently, Kumar 2006). Baumann (1998, 124) notes that in the contemporary Hindu diaspora, the Brahmin or priest has acquired a broadened role and status as the residential priest carries out a range of duties and services, for which separate priests would be available in India. This concentration of functions and capabilities is a result of diasporic limitations and is handled pragmatically. Thus, during worship, there are many "…lay-preachers, women or low *caste* persons as officiating personnel" (see also Knott 1986, 74; Pocock 1976, 361). The status of ritual purity is "less decisive here than the practical knowledge gained through repeated attendances" (Baumann 1998, 124). Kumar (2006, 276) states that the invention of rituals is consonant with changes in priesthood. He points out that in the context of British Hindus, for example, the distinction between 'pure Brahmins' and the Brahmins who perform funerary rituals has disappeared.

Most studies of contemporary diaspora Hinduism note the centrality of the temple as a distinct place of worship for Hindus in the diaspora (Agarwal 2014; Baumann 2010; Brown 2006; Jacobsen 2006, 2013; Jacobsen and Kumar 2004; Jain 2012; Knott 1986; Kumar 2006; Long 2013; Luchesi 2004). Jacobsen (2006, 163) observes that among the Hindus living outside of South Asia, the diaspora situation has led to increased focus on the temple as a cultural centre and as a place

to confirm identity in a minority situation. "The temple has often become the single most important cultural institution of the diaspora group," he concludes.

Jacobsen (2013) adds that in the Tamil Hindu temples of Norway, an attempt is made to recreate the ritual world of the temples of India in order to make religion seem authentic and the foreign seem like home. The temple becomes a site for the preservation and generational transfer of culture and is a place to confirm identity. As such, it becomes "the single most important cultural institution of the group" (Jacobsen 2013, 68). Baumann also affirms the growing importance of the temple for Hindu migrants. It is "the main site for biographical rituals … for being introduced to Hindu tradition and for celebrating festivals. A decisive shift takes place away from the home to the temple, accompanied by a shift in authority away from women and mothers to men and priests" (2010, 240).[19] This leads Baumann (2010) to question the extent to which processes of "templeisation" are observable among Hindus, in particular Tamil Hindus in continental Europe. He concludes (2010, 251), that "the temple provides an institutionalised home away from home for diaspora people, pointing to a significant shift in meaning."

The centrality of the temple for Hindus in the diaspora is further explored by those concerned more generally with 'sacred space' (see Agarwal 2014; Jacobsen 2004, 2006; Jain 2012; Knott 1986; Rampersad 2013). Jacobsen (2006, 165) refers to religious public processions such as festivals as "…statements of devotion that make a claim on territory". However, in the diaspora, while

[19]However, as Baumann (2010, 248) writes, it needs to be borne in mind that temples are but one part of Hinduism. Much of Hindu religious practice takes place in the home and in the natural environment and some Hindus hardly ever visit temples. This was corroborated by the primary material gathered and analysed in Chapter six of this study. Furthermore, Moodley (2015a) makes reference to the Hindu view on the sacredness of the entire natural environment:

> …activities such as the natural elements, the planetary system, and even the ecosystem of the flora and fauna are governed by this universal law. Thus, humanity is no exception and therefore human relationships with these entities are interconnected. Hence, the Hindu view of life is holistic in nature.

Moodley's (2015a) article argues that in the genre of painting, South African artists of Indian ancestry use the landscape to convey spiritual, religious and metaphysical concepts and that these landscapes suggest a nuanced understanding of Hinduism and the representation of Hindu deities in South Africa.

processions do make sacred the larger surroundings of the temple, they also raise interesting questions about territorial claims and public space in pluralistic societies. Jacobsen states that, "In the diaspora, most often processions do not represent a shared religious idiom, it is rather an expression of religious and cultural difference."

Similarly, Jain (2012, 54) remarks on a "transitive sacred regional geography" in India and the diaspora. Here, the holy river Ganges in the north Indian plains is replicated and invested with the same spiritual connotation in Trinidad. Similarly, in Fiji, there is a replicated *Ayodhya*, the birthplace of *Lord Rama*. The Chao Phya River is a sacred river for Thais, "as sacred as the Ganges" is for Hindus and many Hindus scatter the ashes of their dead relatives in this river with a Brahmin invited to conduct a ceremony (Agarwal 2014, 11). The point here is that Hindus across the diaspora are replicating the spiritually iconic places from India into their spaces.

Rampersad (2013) offers an example of the significance of the *jhandi*, a flag commemorating a Hindu deity erected at the place of residence among the north Indian Hindus of Trinidad. She comments thus on the adapted significance of sacred space in the diaspora:

> The *jhandi* dominates the Hindu Caribbean landscape standing as a unique indentured diasporic symbol and signifying a unique Caribbean experience and identity with people struggling to 'be themselves' amid rapid Creolisation.... This symbol of *jhandi* is not likely to be dwarfed or absent in urban, elite spaces where Caribbean Hindus live. It remains a colourful symbol that is annually renewed to reaffirm a social and spiritual identity (Rampersad 2013: 65).[20]

[20]The *jhandi* is referred to as the *jhanda* in South Africa and has the same status as a symbol of social, ethnic and spiritual identity among Indian South Africans. There are subtle differences between the *jhanda* of "Hindi" speaking Hindus and "Tamil" speaking Hindus and indeed other linguistic groups of Hindus in South Africa, confirming that these linguistic categories have become reified into distinct groupings in this country with differentiated religio-cultural symbols. Furthermore, this symbol of Hindu (and ethnic-linguistic) identity is not dwarfed in urban areas across South Africa; from what I have observed, despite the more congested residences in complexes and flats around Johannesburg, Hindus maintain this symbol by placing shorter flags in pot plants, for example, where larger yards and more space is not available. Erection of these *jhandas* is accompanied by rituals and prayer performed by priests and often consecrate the personal space of devotees.

Thus Zavos (2013, 310) states that, "diaspora Hinduism in this way fashions new arenas of sacredness in multiple ways, potentially challenging traditional ideas about the sacred quality of the Indian landscape."

3.3 The Historical Indian Diaspora in South Africa and Hinduism

A number of themes emerge in the study of Hinduism within the historical Indian diaspora in South Africa. These include the role of religion in the lives of indentured migrants in Natal; the religious composition of indentured labourers, including differentiation along linguistic lines and the relative insignificance of *caste* as a social marker; the attitude of employers and the state towards religious worship; the role of Brahmins among Hindus in Natal; the content of Hindu practices (the ritual form of Hinduism); the place of temples and festivals in Hindu practices in Natal; the egalitarian rather than hierarchical nature of religious practice among the indentured; and the influence of reformist individuals and organisations at the turn of the twentieth century.

Several studies have noted the important function that religion played amongst indentured labourers in Natal (Brain 1988; Chetty 2013; Desai and Vahed 2010; Lal and Vahed 2013). Desai and Vahed argue that "cultural robustness" exemplified in festivals and other religious practices was an important mechanism for the migrants to deal with indenture. "Like *Deepavali*, the 'festival of lights', whose significance is the return from exile of *Rama* and *Sita*, many of the indentured considered themselves 'banished', and harboured thoughts of returning 'home' to adulation" (Desai and Vahed 2010, 240).

Chetty (2013, 54) states that Hinduism was a key feature in fostering group identity among the immigrant Hindu population in Natal, an identity based on their common experiences in South Africa as well as their origins on the subcontinent. According to Sooklal (1996, 336), the Methodist Mission reported in 1862 that within two years of their arrival in Natal, Indians had begun to celebrate their customary festivals. Various studies have outlined the religious composition of Indian migrants to Natal under the indenture system and there is consensus that around 85 percent were Hindu, around 15 percent Muslim, and a tiny fraction was made up of Christians (Brain 1988;

Diesel 2003; Lal and Vahed 2013; Sooklal 1996; Younger 2010). This is not surprising as Hindus comprised the bulk of the population of India in the nineteenth century. Brain's (1988, 210) study of indentured Christians states that according to the 1872 census of India, the population numbered around 192 million people: 139 million or 73 percent were Hindu; 21.5 percent were Muslim, 1.5 percent were Buddhists and Jains, 0.62 percent were Sikhs, 0.47 percent were Christians and about 3 percent were unspecified.[21]

As far as the linguistic and regional divide is concerned, around two-thirds of indentured Indians were from south India. According to Diesel (2003, 35), four language groups dominated amongst Hindus. The Tamil and Telugus came from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in south India, respectively, whilst those who spoke the Indo-*Aryan* languages, Hindi and Gujarati, came from north India.[22] Remarking on *caste* differentiation among indentured labourers in South Africa, Diesel observes that the traditional *caste*/class system was not properly replicated in the South African context. This was largely because of the forced mixing of people from a variety of backgrounds, social classes, geographical areas, and religions on plantations and beyond (Kuper 1960, 20-21). Diesel (2003, 35) believes that since the majority of Hindu migrants were from the lower *castes*, it was not to their advantage to maintain a system which discriminated against them. However, immigrants did maintain their identity through language and religious practices.

As noted previously, some freedom of worship was afforded to indentured labourers in Natal (Bhana and Vahed 2005; Brain 1988; Kumar 2013). Bhana and Vahed (2005, 52) remark that "…some employers contributed by donating cash or land, and giving their workers time off for

[21]Writers concerned with the makeup of indentured labourers coming to South Africa have shown that the majority of Indians came from south India (Diesel 2003; Younger 2010). As Younger (2010, 130) writes, "because the majority of the labourers brought to Natal were from south India, it is not surprising that many of the reports we have about the religious practices of the plantations involved the worship of the south Indian goddesses *Mariamman* and *Draupadi*." Similarly, Diesel (2003, 33) notes that, "The early Tamil immigrants from south India, who still constitute the majority of Hindus in South Africa, brought with them the veneration of *Dravidian* 'folk' deities, which has remained an extremely popular aspect of their daily worship."

[22]According to the 2001 census, the approximate proportion of the four predominant linguistic groups of Indians in South Africa was: Tamil speakers – 45 percent; Hindi-speakers – 30 percent; Telugu-speakers – 18 percent; and Gujarati-speakers 7 percent (Diesel 2003, 35).

religious observances." As Kumar (2013, 23) reminds us, when the Natal Government advertised for indentured labourers from India in 1874, an assurance was given in the advertisement that migrants' religion would not be interfered with, but there was no law to this effect.

Inasmuch as a certain measure of religious freedom was granted to indentured labourers, Brahmins were deliberately not recruited for indenture (Brain 1988; Desai and Vahed 2010). Brain (1988, 211) writes that the Brahmin *caste* was unpopular with employers in Natal as well as other colonies where agricultural labourers were exported. This was not because of religious prejudice as such, but employers found that the Brahmins refused to work, preferring to minister to the spiritual needs of the migrants, and this constituted a loss to them. Nonetheless, a small percentage of migrants were Brahmin despite the colonial government repeatedly instructing its agents in India not to recruit them. Desai and Vahed (2010, 242) note that many of the migrants continued to rely on Brahmins for emotional succour and spiritual guidance in a harsh environment. However, "Even though priests played a crucial role in cushioning the most terrible aspects of indenture, loneliness, powerlessness and self-estrangement, the authorities remained sceptical."

Some Brahmins did arrive in Natal and regularised the rituals of the Hindus (Chetty 2013; Singh 1996; Sooklal 1996). Sooklal (1996, 337) cites the lack of qualified and knowledgeable Brahmin priests during the early indenture period as the reason for the predominance of ritualistic Hinduism:

> While the priest played an important role in conducting home and temple prayer and rituals, their knowledge of Hindu religion and philosophy was largely restricted to the domains of ritualistic Hinduism, or the specific rituals with which they were familiar (Sooklal 1996, 337).

Singh (2013, 69) writes that as the number of indentured labourers grew between 1860 and 1913, people from common geographical areas began to identify the need to regularise worship patterns through the ritualism that they had brought with them from India:

> Among people of north Indian backgrounds, *Pandits*, mainly from the Brahman *subcaste* of 'Maharaj', brought by colonists to cook on the ships and on the sugar cane plantations,

began assuming the role of priests and religious leaders within this segment, a watered-down version of India's Brahmanism, the priestly *castes'* hegemonic control of ritualism (Singh 2013, 69).

Chetty (2013, 54) contends that although much of the Hinduism practised by the early indentured labourers was of an informal nature, the arrival of Hindu priests in Natal changed this situation. Brahmins had to claim a lower *caste* status in order to be allowed to enter the Colony but once there, they claimed their status as religious ministers and some were able to travel to different plantations to give indentured labourers an understanding of Hindu scriptures (Chetty 2013, 54). According to Chetty, this had two important consequences. It gave indentured migrants "a sense of continuity with a religious past as well as a sense of belonging to a wider Hindu community. This served to counter their isolation and alienation" (Chetty 2013, 54). Brahmins brought with them a more institutionalised or 'official' form of Hinduism, which would later lead to the establishment of temples and religious organisations, or what may be termed institutionalised Hinduism.

The predominance of ritualism among indentured labourers arriving in Natal from 1860 has been remarked upon by various authors (Brain 1988; Desai and Vahed 2010; Diesel 2003; Kumar 2000, 2013, 2013b; Lal and Vahed 2013; Mukhopadhyay 2016; Singh 2013; Sooklal 1996; Younger 2010).[23] Mukhopadhyay (2016, 225) states that the initial stage of Hinduism in South Africa lacked "textual or philosophical sophistication" and was more ritualistic. "This early version of Hinduism was termed as '*Sanatan Dharma'* and was marred with dogmatic practices including blood sacrifices and several superstitious beliefs" (Mukhopadhyay 2016, 225). Mukhopadhyay's use of the term "marred" suggests that these practices tarnished the early version of Hinduism.

The egalitarian nature of religious practice among early indentured Indians led to religious intermingling (Brain 1988; Desai 2013; Desai and Vahed 2010; Kumar 2000; Lal and Vahed 2013;

[23]Singh (2013, 69) states that ritualism in Hinduism is best understood as "...prayer and ceremonial performances that contribute towards the hopes, aspirations and psychological well-being of people in terms of their localised identities as people of a caste or sectarian background".

Mukhopadhyay 2016). Desai and Vahed (2010, 240) quoting Lal (2004) note that migration and indenture disrupted the *girmityas'* [indentured migrants'] religious and cultural life:

> There were few shrines and sacred places, few *murtis* or images [of God or gods], few learned men, *pundits* [Brahmin scholars], *sadhus* [Hindu holy men] or *maulvis* [Muslim learned men], versed in the scriptures to impart moral and spiritual instruction. Their absence facilitated an essentially emotional, egalitarian and non-intellectual moral order among the *girmityas* (Lal 2004, 17).

Kumar (2000, 38) suggests that Hindi-, Telugu-, and Tamil-speaking indentured labourers that lived side by side on plantations exchanged local customs and practices. In the process they developed a unique blend of Hindu religious practice. "This was facilitated," he states, "by the fact that the early indentured labourers were bent on preserving what little they brought with them by mutually assimilating each other's customs and practices, instead of being exclusivistic" (Kumar 2000, 38). The only thing that Hindu indentured migrants had in common was being Hindu, and they celebrated each other's festivals and participated in each other's ceremonies. Brain (1988, 211) writes that although many of the ceremonies and customs practiced in north India differed considerably from those in the south, during indenture language and regional barriers were broken down in common worship.

This process began on the ships. Lal (2000, 29) observes with respect to the intermingling of *caste* and its relative breakdown on the ships to the colonies: "No one could be certain about the true *caste* of *bhandaries* (cooks); high and low *caste* ate together in a *pangat* (row), shared and cleaned toilets, and took turns sweeping and hosing the deck. The voyage was a great leveller of status." Thus, Mukhopadhyay (2016, 224) writes that, Indians who crossed the '*Kala Pani*' (black waters) believed that they lost their *caste* and at the same time acquired religious rituals that belonged to different regions. "This can be counted as a unique development in terms of modern Hinduism and unthinkable in Indian society. So, for example, individuals whose land of origin was Bihar started worshiping *Mariammen* and typical north Indian rituals were appropriated by Tamils and Telugus." This refutes Parekh (1994, 612) who states that "there is no diasporic Hinduism, a distinct form of Hinduism created by overseas Hindus in the light of their unique experience and

need." Instead, as can be seen in the intermingling of *castes* and its relative breakdown across the diaspora – unthinkable in traditional Indian society – Hinduism evolved in distinct ways across migration as it was applied to changing socio-cultural contexts.

The early influence of reformist Hinduism in South Africa has been partly chronicled (Desai and Vahed 2010; Gopalan 2012; Hansen 2014; Kumar 2013, 2013b; Lal and Vahed 2013; Mukhopadhyay 2016; Singh 2013; Sooklal 1996; Younger 2010).[24] For Mukhopadhyay (2016, 240), the period between 1890 and 1940 introduced a "paradigm shift" in South African Hinduism, transforming the ritualistic form of Hinduism to a more organised *Aryanised* theoretical discourse of Hinduism. This paradigm shift attempted to make Hinduism a transnational doctrine and to transform a national religion into a world religion. Kumar (2013b, 78) writes that reformist Hindu missionaries as well as the organisations that were established as a result of their influence emerged in South Africa as part of a critique of Hinduism during the early twentieth century.

This process was driven by both Hindu missionaries, especially *Swami* Shankeranand and Bhai Parmanand in the first decade of the twentieth century (Desai and Vahed 2010; Kumar 2013, 2013b; Mukhopadhyay 2016; Vahed 2013), and neo-Hindu or reformist Hindu organisations such as the Arya Samaj.[25] Some of the early reformist Hindu organisations are discussed in Desai and Vahed (2010), Gopalan (2012), Kumar (2013, 2013b), Mukhopadhyay (2016), Vahed (2013), and

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[24]These reformist tendencies originated in India at the time (late nineteenth century) and were responses to the challenges of the British Raj and of Christian missionaries in the attempt to present a modern and respectable Hinduism. As Vahed (2013, 18) remarks,

> The likes of Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883), Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), *Swami* Vivekananda (1863-1902), Lala Rajpat Rai (1865-1928), and Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950) were involved in different ways in this project that invoked India's Hindu past to meet the challenges of reform and modernisation.

[25]The Arya Samaj is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Its missionary activities began with Bhai Parmanand's arrival in Natal in August 1905. As Mukhopadhyay (2016, 226) notes, other organisations that emerged included the Hindu Young Men's Association (HYMA) and Hindu Young Men's Society (HYMS), formed in 1905. Other smaller Hindu social groups were established, such as the Umgeni Hindu Progressive Society, Surat Hindu Association, Sanatan Brahman Sabha, Hindu Dharma Society, Gujarati Indian Association, Kathiawad Arya Mandal, and a myriad of other such organisations. Mukhopadhyay (2016, 226) provides a list of associations that can be found at http://www.mkgandhi.org/social_reform/chap03.htm.

Younger (2010). Gopalan (2012, 273) states that the influence of reformist Hindu organisations and their attempts to reduce ritualism and unite South African Hinduism eventually fell into periods of inactivity, nor did they abolish the so-called archaic ritual practices South African Hindus continue to practice.

From early in the twentieth century Hindu missionaries began travelling to many parts of the world, including Natal and the Transvaal in what would become South Africa, where the indentured had settled. They delivered lectures on Hindu ideals, practices, customs, and so on. Kumar notes that most "were part of the Arya Samaj movement in India" (2013, 18). One of the first significant leaders of this kind to visit South Africa was Professor Bhai Parmanand, who arrived in Durban on 5 August 1905. "Parmanand's influence," Desai and Vahed write, "was significant as the organisations he established were heavily involved in the contestation to define Hinduism; they challenged a Hinduism inscribed in rituals and superstitions" (2010, 248).

Desai and Vahed (2010, 250) add that until the turn of the century the situation was "fluid" as "institutional Hinduism didn't exist as such and it was pretty much left to devotees to practise as they wished, hence the large numbers participating in (the Muslim festival of) *Muharram*" (2010, 25). The arrival of *Swami* Shankeranand who followed in 1908 resulted in the establishment of institutional Hinduism, leading to much religious contestation among Hindus and between Hindus and Muslims as he challenged existing practices and leaders. Singh (2013, 70) states that the *Swami* and the organisations that emerged as a result of his influence, represented attempts to introduce *Vedanta*, a philosophical approach to Hinduism, against the existing extant ritualism.[26] One of the

[26]*Swami* Shankeranand inspired the formation of organisations such as the Veda Dharma Sabha, the Hindu Young Men's Association, and the Young Men's Vedic Society. As Singh (2013, 71) explains:

> While each had to forge an identity of their own, they remained committed to common ideals that were being fostered by *Swami* Shankaranandaji. Such commitment brought them to converge on the purpose of consolidating Hinduism as a religion that had more to do with higher philosophical traditions and ideals than with restrictive family or individual-oriented rituals.

practical outcomes was that as a result of pressure exerted by the *Swami*, *Deepavali* emerged "as the principal holiday of Hindus" (Desai and Vahed 2010, 251).

Neo-Hindu movements in South Africa began with the ideal of transforming Hinduism from what they termed "superstitious beliefs and archaic ritual practices" (Kumar 2013b, 77). In reality, Hindu reformers were responding to the fear of losing Hindus to either Christianity or Islam, more so Christianity as missionaries had been very active in India following the imposition of direct British rule after 1857. Neo-Hindu organisations believed that Hindus who went to South Africa and elsewhere were from the lower strata of society and were steeped in ritual practices that were grounded in superstitious beliefs. They felt that these labourers lacked a rational philosophical and intellectual understanding of Hinduism and they acted to rectify this perceived shortcoming:

> This led to their attempts to introduce an intellectual and rational approach to Hinduism which they believed would provide a strong foundation to withstand the attraction of converting to other religions in the face of a strong critique that Hinduism was based on idolatry and polytheism (Kumar 2013b, 77).

The importance of temples for Hindus in Natal has been well documented (Brain 1988; Desai and Vahed 2010; Diesel 2003; Kumar 2000, 2005, 2013; Lal and Vahed 2013; Mukhopadhyay 2016; Sooklal 1996; Younger 2010).[27] During the 1860s and 1870s, the Indian population was small and spread across many employers. It is therefore not surprising that there were few known temples. As the Indian population grew and began to settle outside of plantations from the late 1870s, temples started appearing in various parts of Natal, including on sugar estates, where shrines and temples were erected in devotion to Hindu deities (Desai and Vahed 2010, 242). Building temples was an onerous undertaking given the meagre resources and limited time of the indentured, yet

[27]Lal and Vahed (2013, 4) note that the first temples included Umbilo (1869), Newlands (1896), Cato Manor (1882), Isipingo Rail (1870), Mount Edgecombe (1875), Somtseu Road (1880s), Umgeni Road (1885), and Sea View (1910).

they continued to be built as this was considered a sacred activity and was mostly a community effort (Desai and Vahed 2010, 242).[28]

According to Desai and Vahed (2010, 244), "temples were a source of comfort for many, as it was here that communal worship was experienced; birth, marriage and death ceremonies observed; and festivals carried out". Likewise, Mikula *et al* (1982, 13) state that temples helped create an atmosphere that was familiar to migrants as they were decorated with rich imagery of familiar deities. Religious and cultural centres such as temples became places of "solace and comfort" (in Kumar 2005, 265). Elsewhere, Kumar (2000, 18) relates that in the early decades of settlement, temples and schools became centres of religious and cultural activities:

> Reading of the scriptures, storytelling and staging religious dramas became the activities of these centres where people could meet not only for social activities but also for religious activities. These centres provided the much needed sense of belonging as members of one Hindu community (Kumar 2000, 18).

Festivals have also been discussed as a characteristic feature of Hindu practice in early Natal (Desai and Vahed 2010; Lal and Vahed 2013; Landy 2005; Younger 2010). As Kelly (2004, 55) writes:

> The colonial Europeans had little comprehension of, or patience for, the Indian religious *tamasas*, ritual festivals of indenture days. They saw heathen, ungodly, lewdness, dangerous tumult and disorder, and all the more evidence, they thought, of the Indians' 'bad character'…There was more than cheap thrill and particular revenge available from these rituals.

While not matching the wanton excesses of *Muharram*, Hindu festivals that have their roots in early indenture and continue to this day, such as *Draupadi* (fire-walking) and *Kavadi*,

[28]These temples were modest efforts. Henning (1993, 150) states that "most were tiny, often no more than six feet by six feet, and made from wattle, daub, thatch and, later, corrugated iron."

"nevertheless were a vital vantage point for building a presence and collective consciousness of Hinduism."

It should be noted that most of these studies on the historical Indian diaspora and Hinduism are on Natal, with no differentiation with the Transvaal (Gauteng) and Hindu life there.

3.4 Contemporary Hinduism in South Africa

A number of key themes emerge when analysing Hinduism in contemporary South Africa. Those covered in this section include the impact of apartheid and particularly Group Areas legislation on the practices of Hinduism; how the end of apartheid has impacted on Hindus; the role of *caste*; the reification of language groups; Indian South Africans' relationship to the global Indian diaspora; their real or imagined connections to India as a homeland; the continuation of reformist impulses as well as the survival of ritualistic practices in contemporary Hinduism; the nature and role of temples and priesthood, and particularly the impact of Hindu priests coming from abroad.

Many observers have remarked on the 'success' of Indians in South Africa against the backdrop of their indentured past and the discriminatory policies of successive White minority regimes (Kumar 2005; Maharaj 2013; Schroder 2013). Maharaj (2013, 94) speaks of the "extraordinary accomplishment" of the indentured Indian who "…struggled against discrimination, poverty, lack of education as well as political and civic representation, and religious and cultural marginalisation." Schroder (2013, 413) argues that the story of migration and indentured labour is generally told by Indian people as a story of success, "...of genuine grit and determination of the forefathers – and mothers – against the harassments of colonialism and apartheid." Discussing the role of religious communities in the constitution of discourses of identity, the author adds:

> As in the case of Chatsworth Hindus, the historical narratives are complemented by a spiritual message. This addresses the hardships of Indian life in South Africa and appeals to its listeners to take the early indentured Indians as a role model for the Indian, and particularly, Hindu life in the new South Africa (Schroder 2013, 413).

The merits of these arguments are not as important as the fact that this is what Indian South Africans believe as part of their founding narrative. Until 1961, Indians were considered a foreign element and various White South African regimes were bent on repatriating them. After South Africa became a republic in 1961 Indians were accepted as a permanent part of the population. A Department of Indian Affairs was created, a South African Indian Council was formed, and the House of Delegates was established in 1984. These measures led to improved educational opportunities, housing, and jobs. As Kumar observes, Indians "used the system and began to become prosperous in business, service sector and in various fields, such as education, law and medicine" (Kumar 2005, 267). It should be added that this has generated enormous antipathy on the part of some Africans and this relative 'privilege' is being questioned in the post-apartheid period.

Most observers believe that the role of *caste* is relatively insignificant in contemporary South Africa (Diesel 2003; Ganesh 2010; Hiralal 2013; Kumar 2004; Maharaj 2013; Vahed and Desai 2010). Ganesh (2010, 30) remarks that *caste* itself is not prominent in the diasporic experience, at least in the initial period:

> In the initial phases of emigration out of the country, *caste* distinctions get erased or downplayed, due to the absence of a structural context, and due to heightened consciousness as an Indian. The latter is reinforced by the perceptions of the host land as well. There are also the pressures of surviving and succeeding in an alien, often hostile environment which precipitates a 'we Indians' feeling.

Hiralal (2013, 591) explored the role of *caste*-based or *jati* organisations amongst Gujarati-speaking Hindus from a historical and contemporary perspective.[29] She found that *caste*

[29]Hiralal (2013, 592) provides a brief review of the literature on the subject of *caste*, listing several important studies:

> Scholarly works over the past two decades both from a historical and contemporary perspective have sought to theorise *caste* in the diaspora in the context of changing notions of *caste* consciousness and endogamy and identity formation (Bhana and Bhoola 2011; Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2012; Grieco 1998; Jaffrelot 2000; Kumar 2004; Kumar 2012; Mehta 2001; Sartape 2012; Waughray 2009).

consciousness is more relevant than actual *caste* practices. As noted earlier, the traditional *caste*/class system was never rigidly observed in the South African context because of the forced mixing of people from a variety of strata and religions on plantations and because many of the migrants were from lower *caste* backgrounds and it was not to their advantage to maintain the system.

Instead, several studies suggest that the four predominant language groups – Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, and Gujarati – were reified into social strata (Diesel 2003; Ganesh 2010; Kumar 2004, 2009, 2013; Maharaj 2013; Schroder 2013; Sooklal 1996; Vahed and Desai 2010).[30] Kumar (2009, 257) argues that "South African Hindus, although they do not marry along caste lines (as those boundaries have long been broken), still marry predominantly along the lines of linguistic affinity." Ganesh concludes that among Tamil Hindus in contemporary South Africa, a broad convergence has evolved around language/region as the basis for ethnic identity, and that caste as a normative category is not visible (2010, 30). Ganesh adds that the broad distinction between 'north' and 'south', represented respectively by the Hindis and the Tamils has persisted in South Africa (2010, 32).

Maharaj (2013, 99) explains that the vernacular is still an important marker of identification even though it may not be spoken anymore. Illustrating the reification, Maharaj (2013, 99) writes that it has become the name of a community (sometimes including religious features) and not the name of a language as such. Maharaj (2013, 99) suggests that there is some differentiation between Hindus of north and south Indian origin associated with the Hindi and Tamil languages, respectively. This linguistic division was very strong until around the 1980s and remains, but has diminished in the past 30 years as witnessed by the rise in inter-linguistic marriages.

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[30]Ganesh (2010, 32) writes that since the 1970s, the salience of the mother tongue among Indian South Africans has diminished sharply. Singh (2008, 9) links this to the upward social and economic mobility of many Indians and the emergence of a professional English speaking elite. Educated and upwardly mobile families also use English as a home language. In the 1991 census, almost 95 percent declared English to be their mother tongue (Freund 1995, 87). Therefore, it is not entirely accurate to refer to Hindi-speaking Indians, for example, when in fact many from this category do not speak Hindi.

There are many studies on the complex issue of contemporary Hindu identity in South Africa (Chetty 2013; Chirkut 2006; Chirkut and Sitaram 2007; Diesel 2003; Ganesh 2010; Kumar 2004, 2005, 2006; Landy 2005; Maharaj 2013; Moodley 2015a; Sooklal 1996; Vahed and Desai 2010). Kumar (2005, 270) writes that post-1994, South Africa's Constitution provides for the recognition of Indian cultural and linguistic rights and practices. Indian customary marriages are now recognised and "…the Indian immigrant is no longer an immigrant but has acquired a unique status of being a South African Indian." Maharaj (2013, 93) states that Indian identity in South Africa is "significantly intertwined" with Hindu identity and that Hinduism is an intrinsic part of the identities of Hindus in South Africa.

Sooklal (1996, 341) observed in the immediate post-apartheid period that Indian South Africans have chosen to express themselves through religion rather than other aspects of their identity. Ganesh's (2010, 25) study on Tamil identity in South Africa found that no single identity dominates and that "Tamilness", "Hinduness", and "Indianness" are all asserted as identities in different contexts by people of Tamil origin in present-day South Africa.

This identity has transnational dimensions as many Indians in South African similarly identify with the 'Motherland' of India. Kumar (2006, 282) found that transnationalism is multidimensional among Hindus. Hindus in South Africa may think of themselves as citizens of South Africa first and of their ancestral origins in India second. "It is perhaps in this sense Hindus in the diaspora are citizens, ethnics and transnationalists depending on the situation." In line with this statement, Kumar (2004, 389) remarks on the pluralistic nature of Indian identity by stating that any attempt to provide coherence to the notion of Indian identity in South Africa has to take into account the various competing ethnic and religious values of each sub-group.

Furthermore, the literature contests the notion of a South African Indian diasporic identity. Ganesh (2010, 27) notes that late anti-apartheid activist and sociologist, Professor Fatima Meer categorically rejected the term 'Indian diasporic' as a prefix to a South African national identity. Instead, her view was that since Indian immigrants in South Africa had struggled for acceptance and participation in the national polity, 'South African' should be their primary identity. Similarly, Landy (2005, 4) contends that the success of certain segments of the diaspora, particularly the

United Kingdom and North America, has fuelled Indian South Africans' fantasy of belonging to a global diaspora, especially those who have the financial and cultural means to express such global belonging. "The others, especially those from the poorer classes, often Hindus, have few dealings outside South Africa."

The question of a connection, real or imagined, to India as 'homeland' is considered in several studies (Chetty 2013; Kumar 2003, 2005; Landy 2005; Maharaj 2013; Shukla 2013; Sooklal 1996; Vahed and Desai 2010). Maharaj (2013, 97) asserts that the majority of South Africans have no direct links with India, "except as an abstract, spiritual motherland." Vahed and Desai (2010, 4) argue that while Indians' everyday lives are increasingly distant from India, they remain 'Indian' in the eyes of fellow South Africans and to themselves. Quoting Mishra (2007, 17), the authors add that Indian South Africans are able to "re-create their own fantasy structures of homeland [through] the collapse of distance on the information highway of cyberspace and a collective sharing of knowledge about the homeland." Furthermore:

> The nation state continues to determine citizenship, labour force opportunities, and immigration. Diaspora as transnationalism remains in tension with place bound nationalism but South Africa remains the place Indians call home. The moment of suture with the 'Motherland' would also be the moment of new tensions (Vahed and Desai 2010, 6).

Another theme pertaining to Hinduism in contemporary South Africa that is the subject of academic study is the continuation of reformist impulses, particularly through neo-Hindu organisations (Diesel 2003; Ganesh 2010; Gopalan 2010; Kumar 2013, 2013b; Lal and Vahed 2013; Maharaj 2013; Schroder 2013; Singh 2013; Sooklal 1996; Vahed 2013; Younger 2010). Singh (2013, 73) suggests that the common political and economic experiences of most Indians in South Africa, as well as their minority status, provided fertile ground for both the South African Hindu Maha Sabha and the Arya Samaj to embark on various programmes of reform. These were successful in bringing together Hindus across *caste*, linguistic, and regional barriers and in offering

collaboration and coordination on matters of common interest.[31] [32] [33] Ganesh points out that major reformist impulses emanating from Indian Hinduism and fuelled by Indian nationalism have been impacting on South African Hinduism for the past century and more. He identifies three major phases, viz., Arya Samaj from the turn of the twentieth century, neo-*Vedantic* movements from the 1940s, and charismatic guru-based sects and movements from the 1970s onwards. As a result of the neo-Hindu movements, "elaborate and complicated domestic rituals have been given up, reduced or adapted ..." (Ganesh 2010, 33).

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[31]The South African Hindu Maha Sabha (SAHMS) is a national umbrella body that seeks to represent the South African Hindu community. Emerging out of a conference on 31 May 1912, it was the brainchild of *Swami* Shankeranand who visited South Africa in 1908. The SAHMS is not strictly reformist in the neo-Hindu organisational sense and recognises the value and importance of traditional temples, rituals and the authority of priesthood. It can be regarded as reformist insofar as it encourages the promotion of religious education in schools and Hindu institutions and women's participation in social and religious activities. Maharaj (2013, 96) notes that, there is a lack of women's representation of women in Hindu organisations where, "…very few [women] hold executive positions at an organisational level." The SAHMS seeks to unite various Hindu traditions and to encourage democratic cooperation without a strong theological bent (See Gopalan 2010; 2013).

[32]The Arya Samaj South Africa (ASSA) has been explicitly reformist since its inception after the arrival of the Vedic missionary, Bhai Paramanand in 1905. Its goal is to reinterpret and present Hinduism in line with the key scripture, the *Vedas* and it disassociates itself from what it regards as superstition, meaningless rituals, animal sacrifice and the *caste* system. Much like the SAHMS, this reformism includes advocacy for women's emancipation and a Women's Forum (See Naidoo 1992).

[33]Other prominent neo-Hindu organisations in Durban include the Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa, the Divine Life Society, the Chinmaya Mission, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and the Sai Baba Movement (Singh 2013, 73). Brief mention is made here of the Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa (given that the other organisations are given fuller exposition in this study). The Ramakrishna Centre of South Africa is a branch of the international Ramakrishna Mission, originating in Bengal, India. The South African organisation has a long history, having been established in 1942. It was founded by *Swami* Nischalananda and propagates the ideal of spiritual wellbeing to followers in addition to a strong welfare outlook. Its programmes include poverty alleviation (through nutrition drives), medical assistance (through the establishment of clinics), educational programmes (through distance learning courses), and educational courses on Hinduism (involving the study of various religious scriptures). The Centre is particularly strong in Durban and a branch also exists in Johannesburg.

Schroder (2013, 408) observes that reform movements, which are constantly increasing in popularity, attract people from various backgrounds, although the organisations with a more *Vedantic* outlook seem to attract the majority of their followers from the north Indian community.[34] Kumar (2013, 128) writes that within the South African context, neo-Hindu organisations emerged as what one might call "denominations", and ceased to function as movements of missionary change.[35] In modern-day South Africa, they largely operate as organisations with specific doctrinal leanings. However, as Kumar (2013, 128) observes, they continue to have strong ties with their Indian headquarters.

Perpetuation of neo-Hindu reformism in South Africa has not put an end to ritualism. Lal and Vahed (2013, 8) note that the majority of Hindus continued to practice a ritualistic form of Hinduism "…which included major festivals such as the *Draupadi* firewalking festival, *Mariammen* 'Porridge' prayer, the *Gengaiamman* festival, and *Kavadi*. Neither urbanisation nor Group Areas failed to dampen enthusiasm for these festivals." Similarly, Diesel (2003, 41), who asserts that the Hindu religion in South Africa encapsulates various streams, concludes that traditional ritualistic Hinduism attracts the majority of adherents.

The nature of temples and priesthood have been identified by several authors as central to understanding Hinduism in contemporary South Africa (Chetty 2013; Diesel 2003; Kumar 2009, 2013; Kuper 1960; Maharaj 2013, 2013b; Schroder 2013; Sooklal 1996). With respect to temples, Schroder (2013, 407) writes that each temple adheres to a major form of Hinduism and that the differences between them can best be explained by considering some of the main features of Hindu culture in South Africa. Schroder (2013, 417-418) identifies four major differences and features:

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[34]Younger (2010, 147) lists the following neo-Hindu organisations: Arya Samaj, the Pentecostal-style Bethesda Temple Movement and the Saiva Siddhanta Sangha.

[35]Kumar (2013) devotes a chapter to each of the following neo-Hindu organisations: Arya Samajists, Saiva Siddhanta Sangum, Ramakrishnaites, Divine Life Society, Hare Krishnas and Satya Sai Baba followers.

1) There is a clear and visible difference in religious culture between north and south Indian Hindus.

2) The internal differentiation of Indian South Africans on the basis of language plays a further role in the formation of temple communities. The south Indian form of Hinduism is dominated mainly by Tamil-speaking Indians but also includes a minority of people from Telugu and other south Indian language backgrounds.

3) The division between Brahminical and non-Brahminical traditions in Hinduism is much more permeable in South Africa that it is in India.

4) There is an ongoing attempt by the temples to attract as many followers as they can and to 'cater for all devotees'. This means that many temple communities are open-minded about the inclusion of other traditions and ritual practices and they try to accommodate all main deities.[36]

With respect to priests, a debate exists among Hindus in contemporary South Africa as to whether priests coming from abroad, particularly India and Sri Lanka, are necessary, and, indeed, whether or not they are beneficial (Chetty 2013; Kumar 2009, 2013; Maharaj 2013b). Kumar (2013, 44) identifies two schools of thought, namely, those who believe that the best way to re-establish proper rituals is to import priests and those who assert that the arrival of international priests is detrimental to Hinduism in South Africa as they may be poorly qualified, lack command of English, and lack understanding of the particular circumstances of Indians and Hindus in South Africa.

[36]Kumar (2013, 35 - 36) makes a similar point when he states that most of the temples in South Africa have a mixture of south and north Indian styles. Typically, older south Indian temples are marked by a general east-west orientation, a square form of the shrine, axial alignment of an external altar and the stylised flagpole. North Indian temple design (known as the *Nagara* style) is more simple and plain, characterised by an emphasis on verticality, the absence of flagpoles and the influence of Islamic, Victorian and Edwardian architectural styles. More recent temples in South Africa exhibit a mix of north and south architecture in an attempt to cater for all devotees.

3.5 Conclusion: Knowledge Gaps

Having presented the predominant themes emerging from the literature and its intersections with the current study's central research questions, the following two research gaps are identified:

No study has been conducted on the contemporary migration of Hindus from the Greater Durban Area to the Greater Johannesburg area.

While the historical antecedent of migration from the subcontinent to various colonies of Indian settlement and the attendant transformation of Hinduism post-settlement have been extensively covered in the literature (Barot 1994; Baumann 1998; 2010; Brown 2006; Cohen 2008; Jain 2012; Lal 2013; Vertovec 2000; Younger 2010; Zavos 2013), as far as I am aware, no research is available on the transformation Hinduism has possibly undergone in the process of internal migration between two cities in South Africa, or in any other part of the diasporic world. Such a research question raises novel issues in relation to the evolution of Hindu practice and belief between cities in a single country and whether or not Hindu religious experience exhibits any discernible changes upon inter-city migration. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap which provides the rationale for research questions two and three as well as the attempt to provide an overall theory on the migration of Hindus from Durban to Johannesburg.

No theory exists on the evolution of Hinduism between two cities in a single diasporic setting.

No theory could be found in the literature that presents an abstract understanding of the evolution of Hinduism as it migrates between two cities in a diasporic country. While scholars have identified various key characteristics of evolution, change, or adaptation of migrating Hinduism (Agarwal 2014; Barot 1994; Baumann 1998, 2010; Brown 2006; Dwyer 2004; Harlan 2004; Jacobsen 2004, 2006, 2013; Jacobsen and Kumar 2004; Jain 2012; Jayaram 2003; Junghare 2004; Kumar 2006, 2013; Long 2013; Rampersad 2013; Shimkhada 2013; Van der Burg 2004; Vertovec 2000; Younger 2010; Zavos 2013), no theory draws these characteristics into an abstract understanding of what occurs when Hinduism migrates within a single country. This justifies the current study's

grounded theory methodology which is used to present a theory emerging from the data on the migration of Hinduism between cities.

This chapter identified the major themes in the body of literature pertaining to the research topic and research questions. It concluded with the identification of the knowledge gaps that this study seeks to address. The following chapter presents the methodological and theoretical framework employed in this study. Having established the field of inquiry that the study contributes to, the chapter clarifies how the grounded theory approach and its product of a theory on the evolution of Hinduism from Durban to Johannesburg can make such a contribution.

Chapter 4: Methodological and Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses the methodology employed to conduct this study. Grounded Theory (Charmaz 2006; Glaser and Strauss 1967) was employed as the methodological framework. This chapter is entitled "The methodological and theoretical framework" because grounded theory is both a method and a product of inquiry; that is, it is simultaneously a process of inquiry (method) as well as its eventual product (theory). Charmaz (2006, 2-3) explains the nature of grounded theory methods:

> Stated simply, grounded theory methods consist of a systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves. The guidelines offer a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules. Thus, data form the foundation of our theory and our analysis of these data generates the concepts we construct. Grounded theorists collect data to develop theoretical analyses from the beginning of a project. We try to learn what occurs in the research settings we join and what our research participants' lives are like. We study how they explain their statements and actions, and ask what analytic sense we can make of them.

It is important to note that there is no single version of grounded theory methodology. Instead, after the seminal work by Glaser and Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* was published in 1967, it became clear that the new methodology could be interpreted and applied in a number of ways and several versions of the Grounded Theory Method have emerged. The main versions currently dominating the field are Barney Glaser's 'Classic Grounded Theory' (1992); Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin's 'Basics of Qualitative Research' (2008); Kathy Charmaz's 'Constructivist Grounded Theory' (2006); and, Adele Clarke's postmodern 'Situational Analysis' (2005). McCallin (2004) describes these as the 'classical' (Glaserian) version, structured approach (Strauss and Corbin), constructivist version (Chamaz), and postmodern Situation Analysis (Clarke).

This study employs the third variation, that is, Charmaz (2006), which is differentiated by being less prescriptive in coding, and recognises that categories and theories are necessarily constructed

by the researcher and do not simply emerge from the data. In fact, it is questionable whether any grounded theory can be developed without the necessary involvement and co-construction of the researcher; hence, this study's avoidance of the classical and more structured approaches of grounded theory. These approaches speak of discovering theory as emerging from data separate from the scientific observer. My position is that neither data nor theories are discovered in the strict sense. Rather, we are all a part of the world we study and we construct our grounded theories interactively with our data and research subjects. This is especially the case here as I am a practicing Hindu who migrated from Durban to Johannesburg.

The rationale for selecting constructivist grounded theory as my methodological and theoretical framework relates back to chapter two where it was noted that, to date, no study and theorisation has been conducted on the migration of Hindus from Durban to the Johannesburg area, both historically and/or ethnographically, and the impact of this on religious practices. The need for a fresh theory on the migration of Hindus between these two cities thus presents itself and grounded theory offers the opportunity to do so. By remaining inductive and avoiding any form of theorising that does not emerge in the researcher's construction of it based on the data, the theory that is presented seeks to offer new understandings of the phenomena of religion, religious adaptation, migration, belonging, and settlement. This drive to provide new understandings and a fresh, abstract theory underpinned the selection of grounded theory as the methodological and theoretical framework.

Furthermore, the study relies on qualitative methodology and deals with the quality of experience of Hindu migrants migrating from Durban to Johannesburg, and the array of meanings associated therewith. Grounded theory offers an appropriate inductive approach to ensure that the analyses and eventual theory are richly qualitative and insightful. This approach is missing from the literature and this grounded theory study helps fill the void.

Table 5: Fundamental components of a grounded theory study

COMPONENT	STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Openness	Throughout the study	Grounded theory methodology emphasises inductive analysis. Deduction is the usual form of analytic thinking in medical research. It moves from the general to the particular, beginning with pre-existing hypotheses or theories, and collecting data to test those theories. In contrast, induction moves from the particular to the general; it develops new theories or hypotheses from many observations. Grounded theory places particular emphasis on induction. This means that grounded theory studies tend to adopt a very open approach to the process being studied. The emphasis of a grounded theory study may evolve as it becomes apparent to the researchers what is important to the study participants.
Analysing immediately	Analysis and data collection	In a grounded theory study, the researchers do not wait until all the data are collected before commencing analysis. Rather, analysis should commence as soon as possible, and continue parallel with data collection, to allow *theoretical sampling* (see below).
Coding and comparing	Analysis	Data analysis relies on *coding* - a process of breaking data down into much smaller components and labelling them - and *comparing* - comparing data with data, case with case, event with event, code with code, to understand and explain variation in the data. *Codes* are eventually combined and related to one another - at this stage they are more abstract, and are referred to as *categories* or *concepts*.

COMPONENT	STAGE	DESCRIPTION
Memo-writing (sometimes also drawing diagrams)	Analysis	The analyst writes many memos throughout the project. Memos can be about events, cases, categories, or relationships between categories. They are used to stimulate and record the analyst's developing thinking, including the *comparisons* made (see above).
Theoretical sampling	Sampling and data collection	Theoretical sampling is central to grounded theory design. A theoretical sample is informed by *coding, comparison* and *memo-writing*. Theoretical sampling is designed to serve the developing *theory*. Analysis raises questions, suggests relationships, and highlights gaps in the existing data set, revealing what the researchers do not yet know. By carefully selecting *participants* and by modifying the *questions* asked in data collection, the researchers fill gaps, clarify uncertainties, test their interpretations, and build their emerging theory.
Theoretical saturation	Sampling, data collection and analysis	Qualitative researchers generally seek to reach 'saturation' in their studies. This is often interpreted as meaning that the researchers are hearing nothing new from participants. In a grounded theory study, theoretical saturation is sought. This is a subtly different form of saturation, in which all of the concepts in the substantive theory being developed are well understood and can be substantiated from the data.
Production of a substantive theory	Analysis and interpretation	The results of a grounded theory study are expressed as a substantive theory, that is, a set of concepts that are related to one another in a cohesive whole. As in most science, this theory is considered to be fallible, dependent on context and never completely final.

Source: Sbaraini, Carter, Evans, and Blinkhorn (2011, 3)

The following section discusses the sampling design employed. This is followed by a discussion on the data collection methods (qualitative interviews, participant observation, a survey, and memos), how data analysis was conducted in line with the grounded theory approach, and the final section on theory building under the grounded theory approach.

4.1 Sampling Design

Characteristic of grounded theory approaches, "theoretical sampling" (Glaser and Strauss 1967) was employed to guide the iterative conduct of data collection, analysis and theory building. The idea was to accumulate information-rich data sources and further interviews were conducted as new data sources were identified. As defined by Glaser and Strauss, theoretical sampling:

> …is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is *controlled* by the emerging theory [(1967, 45) original emphasis].

Sampling decisions were not made in advance of the study but rather dictated by its unfolding processes. The important guidelines were asking whether the interviews provided sufficiently insightful data and whether any further interesting questions could be asked to answer the central and sub research questions. Sampling decisions were aided by writing memos and other notes jotted down during and after interviews to guide what data to collect next and identify where best to possibly find it.

There were many potential respondents in my socio-cultural circles that fitted the classification of Hindus who had migrated from Durban to Johannesburg and this study commenced with those individuals included in the sample. As the interviews continued, I grew more involved in the Hindu community in Johannesburg and more contacts were made for future interviews. The sample size was determined after I felt that the number of interviews conducted suitably answered the research questions and that no (or very little) new information was being presented.

In line with theoretical sampling, and emerging from my first round of 12 interviews with respondents, I found that the question of gender and Hindu migration required additional focus and attention. Female migrants experience migration in ways different from male migrants and there are unique experiences in settling in, finding community and entering the labour market. Similarly, the relationship between Hinduism and gender is complex and contested (Knott 2000; Kondos 2004; Narayanan 2003). Hindu women perform rituals and other religious practices differently from men, occupy a unique position in the Hindu family and can face distinct challenges and injustices, prejudice and discrimination in being Hindu women. While there were four women among the initial 12 respondents interviewed, I saw the need to conduct a second round of in-depth interviews with three female Hindu migrants who made the journey from Durban to Johannesburg. This resulted in the addition of another class of interview respondents.

The four main classes of interview respondents that made up the sample are presented in **Table 6** below:

Table 6: Sample class and number of interviews conducted[37]

Sample Class	Interviews Conducted
Hindus who migrated from the Greater Durban area to the Greater Johannesburg area	12
Female Hindus who migrated from the Greater Durban area to the Greater Johannesburg area	3
Priests and/or temple committee officials involved in traditional Hindu temples in the Greater Johannesburg area	5
Participants and/or committee members involved in neo-Hindu organisations in the Greater Johannesburg area	5

[37]A table is presented towards the end of this chapter listing the biographical details of each of the 12 respondents interviewed in this study. Further details on the location and duration of the interviews with neo-Hindu organisations and temple priests/committee members are provided.

For eight of the 12 respondents in the class, "Hindus who have migrated from the Greater Durban area to the Greater Johannesburg area", no directed effort was made to determine whether they belonged to traditional temples or neo-Hindu organisations. In other words, the selection was random. Four of the 12 respondents were from my immediate circle of friends and family and the rest were referrals. In these instances, I was not sure of the leaning of the person making the referral or the referred individual in terms of their adherence to traditional or reformist Hinduism. Importantly, it should be added that, these migrants are referred to as 'recent' migrants and pertain to those who migrated from Durban to Johannesburg post the mid-1970s when the restrictions on interprovincial movement were lifted.

4.2 Data Collection Methods

Four data collection methods were employed, viz., semi-structured interviews, participant observation, a quantitative survey, and memos. Each of these methods is discussed below with some reflection on what it was hoped they would contribute.

Semi-structured qualitative interviews

The interview questions were designed to answer the research questions but also permitted open-ended questioning. Four types of interview scripts were designed: those administered to Hindus who had migrated from Durban to Johannesburg; those administered to female Hindus who had migrated from Durban to Johannesburg; those who participated in neo-Hindu organisations and/or were committee members of these organisations; and, those who were priests and/or temple committee members of traditional Hindu temples. The four Interview Scripts are attached as **Appendices 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D**. In-depth interviewing was favoured as it allowed for probing into various avenues that were considered meaningful for the overall study. After a given area of interest presented itself, subsequent interviews probed these areas, thus deepening and enriching the interview data. This analytical and investigative approach was an important means to pursue avenues not necessarily inscribed in the initial interview script. Topics and areas of interest considered important and worthwhile were pursued through this approach.

In all, a total of 25 in-depth interviews were conducted. This included 12 individual Hindu migrants who had migrated from Durban to Johannesburg; three female Hindu migrants who had migrated from Durban to Johannesburg; five participants and/or committee members involved in neo-Hindu organisations in the Greater Johannesburg area; and five priests and/or temple officials who are involved in temples in the Greater Johannesburg area.

The first round of interviews was conducted between July 2017 and November 2018 and took place in the Greater Johannesburg area. The second round conducted with the three female Hindu migrants took place in August and September 2019. The long timespan over which interviews took place was due to my intention to transcribe and study each interview before proceeding to the next one to make these more meaningful in terms of the information required for this study. The duration of the interviews ranged from 35 minutes to over two hours. The average length was approximately one hour. The interviews commenced by soliciting informed consent from the respondent and informing him/her of the confidentiality and anonymity of the interview (See **Appendix 2**). The interaction was one-on-one between the respondent and the researcher and there were no focus groups, except in two instances when two individuals were interviewed simultaneously. All interviews were voice recorded using a digital voice recorder after permission to do so was obtained. After each interview was conducted, it was transcribed verbatim and an effort was made to ensure that all additional observational notes were included in the transcript. This added to the richness and depth of the data.

The interview method was suited to emphasise the depth, nuance and complexity of the data. As opposed to a broad survey of surface patterns in large populations, depth and roundness of understanding was sought in a smaller sample. Because the interviews were anonymous and confidential, respondents were not asked for their name and other personal details. However, biographical information was requested in the survey. In working with the interview data, I relied on the sample category the respondent belonged to and named the individual interview script accordingly, but not according to biographical details or name. I did, however, include in my notes some background on each interviewee and this is provided in Table 7 of this chapter to help

contextualise the responses in terms of age, occupation, gender, and length of residence in Johannesburg.

Some difficulty was experienced in gaining access to participants and committee members of neo-Hindu organisations. Many neo-Hindu organisations in South Africa have tightly structured hierarchies and committees and gaining access to office bearers is a lengthy process that has to go through many channels before permission is granted (or denied). This required the exercise of great patience and fortitude and persistent follow-up. Setting up interviews with temple priests and temple officials was less challenging and with the migrants themselves, even less so. It seems that neo-Hindu organisations are extremely careful about who represents them in public statements and indeed in terms of what is said. They are highly structured and protective of the discourse around the organisation, perhaps due to concerns regarding its public image. After all, they are challenging the *status quo* and could be seen to have ulterior motives.

Participant observation

Participant observation was an important component of this study. Marshall and Rossman (1995, 60) point to the extremes to which the researcher can participate in the research process:

> The researcher may plan a role that entails varying degrees of 'participantness' – that is, the degree of actual participation in daily life. At one extreme is the full participant, who goes about ordinary life in a role or set of roles constructed in the setting. At the other extreme is the complete observer, who engages not at all in social interaction and may even shun involvement in the world being studied. And, of course, all possible complementary mixes along the continuum are available to the researcher.

My level of involvement and participant observation was a balance between these extremes. As a practicing Hindu, I regularly attended temples, the activities of neo-Hindu organisations and festivals, engaged with priests and asked questions around rituals and philosophy while the study was underway. In this way, fieldwork criss-crossed my ongoing duties and aspirations as a Hindu.

The extensive time I spent with devotees allowed me to observe them in action, build rapport and trust, make field notes, and observe in multiple ways.

The benefit of participant observation was that it supported the emic approach of my study, which prioritises the viewpoints of the study population. This methodology allowed me to participate with the respondents to gain as close a perspective of their views as possible. Through participant observation, I was able to gain valuable insights into the nature of Hindu life at temples, in public spaces, within neo-Hindu organisations, and during home worship. I became more questioning and reflective on the significance of Hindu beliefs and practices at these various sites of worship. These insights would not have been possible had I simply read texts or interviewed Hindus exclusively.

Field notes were used in conjunction with the interview data and in many cases corroborated what interviewees had to say. Participant observation differed from the semi-structured qualitative interviews in that it yielded richer, personal reflections on why Hindus practiced their faith in the way they did and the underlying belief structures. Informal conversations were held and preliminary notes were made while frequenting temples and organisations. These conversations helped gain access to new potential interviewees and enriched my understanding of the various activities at these sites.

Participant observation also had the benefit of influencing my own aspirations as a practicing Hindu. While "methodological atheism" (Berger 1967) is expected of the sociologist studying religion, my participant observation and role as a researcher enriched my own beliefs and practices as a Hindu.[38] I learnt more about the significance and rich variety of Hindu rituals and philosophy, reflected in greater depth on my own religious orientation and understood my faith more fully. Learning is a crucial component of any aspirant's faith and participant observation (and indeed the study *in toto*) was certainly a means to build on my own religious and spiritual inclinations. Having said this, my duty was first and foremost to study Hinduism as a belief system and a social

[38]Along with Ninian Smart (1972), Berger's (1967) concept of "methodological atheism" is that academic study of religions is underpinned by the concept that, for methodological purposes, the scholar makes no comment on the truth, reality or value of the religious communities under study.

institution academically and objectively and not to allow my personal beliefs and subjective views to influence the study's outcomes. However, it is important to declare my position rather than keep it hidden so that the reader can decide to what extent I have been successful.

Survey

A survey was developed based on the interview questions set out in **Appendix 3**. This was designed using Google Forms and administered through an online social media platform. The process began by gaining access to several social media groups on Facebook that cater to the religious and cultural interests of participants. These groups included, "Gauteng Hindus", "Reservoir Hills Secondary Alumni", "Breado's", "The Official Indians Gauteng Group", and "KZN [KwaZulu-Natal] Indians in GP [Gauteng Province]". These social media groups are indicative of the need for Indians who have migrated to Gauteng and Johannesburg to maintain contact with one another and regularly share posts about various activities within the online community. The online groups were accessed and after permission was granted to join, the survey was distributed. A total of 578 responses was received over the 28 questions. Of course, some respondents did not answer all the questions. This quantitative survey had the benefit of triangulating data from my interview scripts, participant observation notes, and memos.

The survey provided a quantitative dimension to the study. Because the qualitative sample population was small, this large quantitative sample added range and provided further insights across a larger population sample and helped to corroborate some of the interviewees' testimony. This had the benefit of adding complexity to the data and enriching the findings to make them more generalisable.

The survey data findings and analyses are presented in Chapters five to nine and are interspersed with the qualitative responses. The graphical illustration of the analyses of the quantitative data was done using Microsoft Excel, mainly by generating pivot tables, followed by a suitable graph or figure. In most instances, two variables are compared for depth and complexity of data analysis.

Memos

To avoid forgetting what respondents told me, what I had observed, or certain ideas that came to mind during the research process, I wrote memos in an A5 book and in some cases made notes on my phone. A scan of a memo page is included as **Appendix 4**. These memos were personal in nature and recorded what I felt were significant routes to pursue in the study, as well as what I had learned from the data. They also included a process to follow and often included steps to take to further the research process.

Note taking and memo writing were not always immediately possible. In such cases, I took mental notes and later jotted down the key points. This helped to jog my memory of key concepts, important phrases used during interviews, quotations, ideas and observations. Memos helped me to accumulate written ideas about concepts and their relationships. They differed in size, style and manner as they were, at that point, somewhat disorganised and creative reflections on some aspect of the study. It was in understanding what these memos meant for the broader study that they began to become organised, that is, how they related to the relationship between concepts or categories.

The memos helped me to embed in the empirical reality of my study, constantly thinking and reflecting on the main research question and sub-questions. As my learning of the field grew, my memos became more complex and interrelated. I dated the memos and referenced what concept, idea or observation they related to. My memos contributed to the qualitative research process and to its credibility. I was more confident of the data analysis, as I relied on the memos written throughout the research process. While not presented in actual form, the memos are included in the emboldened analyses captured in Chapters six to nine and add to the defensibility of the results.

Concepts, ideas, and preliminary thoughts on the eventual theory that emerged from the research process were jotted down and these were relied on when theory building commenced. The building of theory occurred after the memos were organised and made sense to the overall study. The memos helped me to gain an analytical distance from the data and this helped me to conceptualise the findings.

4.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was initiated by separating, sorting and syndissertationing data through qualitative coding. According to Charmaz, "coding means that we attach labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about. Coding distils the data, sorts them, and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other segments of data" (Charmaz 2006, 3). By making and coding numerous comparisons, my analytic grasp of the data began to take shape.

The memos about my codes were used and compared to other notes. In other words, I studied my data to be as familiar with it as possible, reading and rereading, defining ideas and interpreting the data. I then developed analytic categories, combining various codes. As I proceeded, the categories coalesced and became more theoretical, with higher levels of abstraction. Charmaz (2006, 3-4) notes:

> Our analytical categories and the relationships we draw between them provide a conceptual handle on the studied experience. Thus, we build levels of abstraction directly from the data and, subsequently, gather additional data to check and refine our emerging analytic categories. Our work culminates in a 'grounded theory', or an abstract theoretical understanding of the studied experience.

It is important to note that data analysis was not a final stage following data collection. Instead, data analysis commenced during and simultaneously with data collection. Rubin and Rubin (1995, 226-227) explain the process that was followed:

> Data analysis begins while the interviews are still underway. This preliminary analysis tells you how to redesign your questions to focus in on central themes as you continue interviewing. After the interviewing is complete, you begin a more detailed and fine-grained analysis of what your conversational partners told you. In this formal analysis, you discover additional themes and concepts and build toward an overall explanation. To begin the final data analysis, put into one category all the material from your interviews that

speaks to one theme or concept. Compare material within the categories to look for variations and nuances in meanings. Compare across the categories to discover connections with themes.

My overall goal during data analysis was to integrate themes and concepts into a theory that offered an accurate and detailed interpretation of my research arena. The analysis was complete when I felt that I could share with others what my interpretation meant for theory and for sociologically understanding the subject of research. A computerised programme such as nVivo was not used to analyse the complex and rich qualitative data because I felt that the traditional 'manual' approach provided a more familiar grasp of the data at hand. I read and reread the transcripts several times before coding and categorising and this had the added benefit of increasing my knowledge of the topics discussed and of the data itself. I felt that this approach was more suitable for improving my grasp of the data. It was not that I am unfamiliar with such software or feared technical glitches, but rather that reading and rereading the transcript provided a 'feel' that software cannot. After all, I did conduct the interviews and understood fully the context in which statements were made.

The results of the data analysis are presented in Chapters five to nine which address the central research question and sub-questions.

4.4 Theory Building under the Grounded Theory Approach

Thornberg and Charmaz (2014, 4) state that a "theory states relationships between abstract concepts and may aim for either explanation or understanding." Theories attempt to answer questions. As Chamaz (2014, 228) points out, "theories offer accounts for what happens, how it ensues, and may aim to account for why it happened. Theorizing consists of the actions involved in constructing these accounts." In other words, theorising raises and answers questions of 'why', 'what' and 'how'. Charmaz (2014) discuss two general orientations toward theory building – positivist and interpretivist, which are now briefly discussed.

According to Charmaz (2014, 229-230), positivist theories consist of a set of interrelated propositions that aim to treat concepts as variables; identify the properties of variables; specify

relationships between concepts; explain and predict these relationships; systematise knowledge; verify theoretical relationships through hypodissertation testing; and generate hypotheses for research. For Charmaz (2014, 229), positivist theories emphasise parsimony and aim to be elegant in form with direct statements. This has the danger of offering narrow explanations that omit emotions and cultural contexts when explaining individual behaviour. However, Charmaz (2014, 230), along with others like Bryant (2002), Charmaz and Bryant (2007), and Clarke (2005), is of the view that grounded theory can never be decontextualised and that the theory that often emerges from the positivist approach can never be wholly universal or empirically generic.

With regard to interpretivist definitions of theory, Charmaz (2014, 230) writes:

> An alternative definition of theory emphasizes interpretation and gives abstract understanding greater priority than explanation. Proponents of this definition view theoretical understanding as gained through the theorist's interpretation of the studied phenomenon. Interpretive theories allow for indeterminacy rather than seeking causality and aiming to theorize patterns and connections.

The approach adopted in this study was within the interpretive tradition of constructing a grounded theory. The underlying approach was one of attempting to understand meanings and actions and how respondents constructed them. Thus, the subjectivity of the actors was placed centrally as was the subjectivity of the researcher who actively interpreted the data in presenting the theory. Other qualities of the interpretivist approach to theorising are the element of imaginative understanding (Charmaz 2014, 231), assuming multiple realities of the studied phenomena, and seeing truth as provisional, and social life as an unfolding, ever-changing process.

The aims of interpretivist theory are to conceptualise the studied phenomenon to understand it in abstract terms; articulate theoretical claims pertaining to the scope, depth, power, and relevance of a given analysis; acknowledge subjectivity in theorising and hence recognise the role of experience, standpoints, and interactions, including one's own; and offer an imaginative theoretical interpretation that makes sense of the studied phenomenon (Charmaz 2014, 231).

However, it is important to note that grounded theory contains both positivist and interpretivist elements because it relies on empirical observations and depends on the researcher's constructions of them. This means that there is never clear-cut separation between the positivist and interpretivist approaches to theorising.

In theorising the evolution of Hinduism from Durban to Johannesburg, I commenced by extracting the key findings of the study from Chapters six to nine. These chapters were selected due to their presentation of the findings accompanied by analyses. A table was created wherein the far left column included the majority of these findings. Where some findings were omitted, it was because they were irrelevant to yield an interpretation and key concept. The key findings were thus constructed as codes. The middle column provided an interpretation of the key findings.

The act of interpretation renders the eventual theorising interpretivist. Interpretations are subjective and may differ, but they have to be supported and corroborated by the evidence and this study's interpretations are based on what best suits the key finding/code. Interpretations were made in line with the primary research question, informed by the data, observations and understanding. Along the way, the following question was posed in each interpretation, 'What does this finding mean for the overall evolution of Hinduism in the migration of Hindus from Durban to Johannesburg?' The column on the right distilled a key concept that best and most succinctly described the interpretation and meaning for the overall study.

Relating the key concepts together, a theory is presented in the concluding chapter on the evolution of Hinduism from Durban to Johannesburg, creatively answering the key research question. Theorising was tenable in having answered the key research question as a theory, emerging from and 'grounded' in the empirical data.

The following **Table 7** lists the interviews conducted and includes several other details.

Table 7: List of interviews conducted with location, biographical details, date and duration

#	Organisation/ Temple/ Individual	Age	Gender	Occupation	Length of Residence in Jhb	Interview location	Date	Duration
1	Individual	24	Male	Call centre consultant	21 years	Midrand	5/7/17	58:12
2	Individual	39	Male	Risk analyst	8 years	Midrand	11/7/17	38:58
3	Individual	60s	Female	Retired	20+ years	East Rand	13/7/17	1.25:37
4	Individual	27	Male	Financial consultant	10 years	Centurion	18/7/17	47:00
5	Individual	41	Male	Business owner	1 year	Boksburg	22/07/17	1.03:38
6	Individual	38	Male	Junior data analyst	15 years	Paulshof	22/07/17	1.09:29
7	Individual	41	Female	Accountant	15 years	Sunninghill	25/07/17	24:00 / 8:40
8	Individual	50s	Male	Teacher	30+ years	Midrand	29/07/17	1.28:07
9	Individual	30s	Female	Legal secretary	20+ years	Sunninghill	30/09/17	40:57
10	Individual	60s	Male	Teacher	30+ years	Benoni	1/10/17	1.23:24 / 8:25
11	Individual	40s	Female	Banker	5 years	Lonehill	3/10/17	1.18:26
12	Individual	30s	Male	Auditor	11 years	Midrand	5/10/17	59:48
13	*Female migrant*	*36*	*Female*	*Finance change manager*	*11 years*	*Paulshof*	*07/09/19*	*44:32*
14	*Female migrant*	*42*	*Female*	*Financial Manager*	*20 years*	*Rosebank*	*13/09/19*	*36:15*
15	*Female migrant*	*37*	*Female*	*Accountant*	*4 years*	*Midrand*	*13/09/19*	*1.02:45*

13	Temple (Madhya Kailash)	n/a	Midrand	10/10/17	11:01
14	Organisation (ISKCON)	n/a	Kenilworth	11/2/18	2.11:09
15	Temple (Buccleuch)	n/a	Buccleuch	12/5/18	1.23:23
16	Temple (Radhye Shyam)	n/a	Marlboro	17/5/18	52:27
17	Temple (Melrose)	n/a	Melrose	20/5/18	15:13
18	Organisation (Randburg Hindu Cultural Society)	n/a	Randburg	14/7/18	18:42 / 18:03
19	Organisation (Sri Ramanuj)	n/a	Paulshof	28/10/18	36:41
20	Temple (Kali Amman)	n/a	Malvern	01/11/18	1.13:29
21	Organisation (Chinmaya Mission)	n/a	Northcliff	10/11/18	29:17
22	Organisation (Satya Sai Baba)	n/a	Pretoria	15/11/18	1.49:34

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methodological and theoretical framework employed in this study. It discussed key facets of the Grounded Theory Approach, as well as the sampling design, data collection methods, data analysis and the eventual product of grounded theory, a theory that

emerges from the research process. It is this theory that is an important contribution of this study to the field of enquiry.

The following chapter presents Hindu experiences of migration from Durban to Johannesburg and their religio-cultural settlement and is the first chapter on the study's findings.

Chapter 5: Hindu Experiences of Migration from Durban to Johannesburg

Migration is a significant life event with distinct social and psychological demands on the migrant (see Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014; Gold and Nawyn 2013). In my interviews with Hindus who migrated from Durban to Johannesburg, rich and detailed accounts emerged of their reasons for migrating, ability to adapt and settle in the new city, and enduring links with Durban as the originary city, as well as perspectives on the nature of 'home' and place. This chapter presents several of the study's findings to assist in answering the main research question – how did Hinduism evolve in the migration from Durban to Johannesburg? – and the sub-research question – what are the experiences of Hindus migrating from Durban to Johannesburg? The sections on religion and migration include an examination of how religion aided migrants' adaptation to the new city. The chapter presents the qualitative findings with excerpts from the interview data, interspersed with graphical representations of the survey data. The purpose is to evince the voices of the general Hindu population of this study while contextualising further findings and key analyses that follow in chapters six to nine.

5.1 Reasons for Migration

It emerged from both my informal discussions with migrants and through the formal research process that the majority migrated from Durban to Johannesburg for employment and business opportunities which, it is felt, are lacking in the smaller economy of Durban where, amongst other things, affirmative action policies also appear to be implemented more rigidly. Affirmative action is often spoken about as a widespread grievance among Indians living in Durban, as many feel that their jobs are being taken by Black Africans on bases other than merit. It is important to note that the two most significant episodes of racial tensions between Indians and Africans in South Africa occurred in Durban, during the 1949 Cato Manor riots and the attacks on the Phoenix Settlement in 1985. With a history of inter-racial tension over land ownership, employment, and power, migration to Johannesburg may very well be an escape from the continuation of such tension. Of course, the same issues surface in Johannesburg, but what interviewees seemed to suggest is that because there are many more affluent Africans in Johannesburg, there appears, on the surface at least, to be less visceral racial tension.

Of the 542 survey respondents, 441 (81.3 percent) stated that their main reason for moving to Johannesburg was to seek better job opportunities; 48 (8.8 percent) cited family reasons; and 53 (9.7 percent) noted that the decision was based on a combination of factors relating to the family, social life, and work opportunities.

In terms of the interviews, Respondent Twelve, an auditor who had lived in Johannesburg for 11 years, stated that he reached his career peak in Durban and moving was the only option:

> I worked in Nedbank my entire career …. from the age of 18. There came a point in my career where I reached a peak. There was nowhere that I could go. [During] discussions with my manager during my performance agreement, he asked me, 'where to next?' I said I want his job! That was the highest I could go in KZN [KwaZulu-Natal]. His response was that I had to wait for one of the managers to leave or die to get a promotion. I had to look at new options ... Coincidentally, I was headhunted by the auditing division, went for the interview and assessments and got the job. That's how I came to Johannesburg.

Work was a common reason. Respondent Ten, a corporate employee who migrated in the mid-1970s related:

> This was in 1976. I left Durban for work reasons. I had just returned from studies in the UK, came back and I started to look for a job. I used to do teaching before that but I decided to change course. So I went overseas to do business studies.

I probed the respondent as to why Johannesburg was chosen as a destination:

> We looked around a lot for a position in Natal but couldn't find much. Our family was based in Asherville in Durban and I tried for three months to get a job there. I didn't want to get back into teaching. I wanted to get into commerce and change field completely. Applying for jobs all over the place, I eventually picked up an interview with Anglo American here in Johannesburg.

Respondent One, a 24-year old male, remarked that he moved to Johannesburg as a result of his parents securing jobs in the city. He came to Johannesburg at a younger age than most other respondents:

> We were from Chatsworth and we moved because my parents got a better job up here. Well, first my dad moved and got a job and we all moved up behind him. I was about six years old. I did pre-primary in Durban. I started Grade 1 here in Johannesburg.

Respondent Five, who has been living in Johannesburg since 2017, and for about a year at the time of the interview, related that the move to Johannesburg was motivated by starting a business in the Boksburg area after getting married, since the market in Durban was "very stagnant". Similarly, a respondent spoke of career development and "much better job opportunities" in "a bigger city".

Respondent Nine also moved with her parents and is now a legal secretary for a prominent corporate law firm in Johannesburg. She indicated that education was her parents' chief reason for moving to Johannesburg:

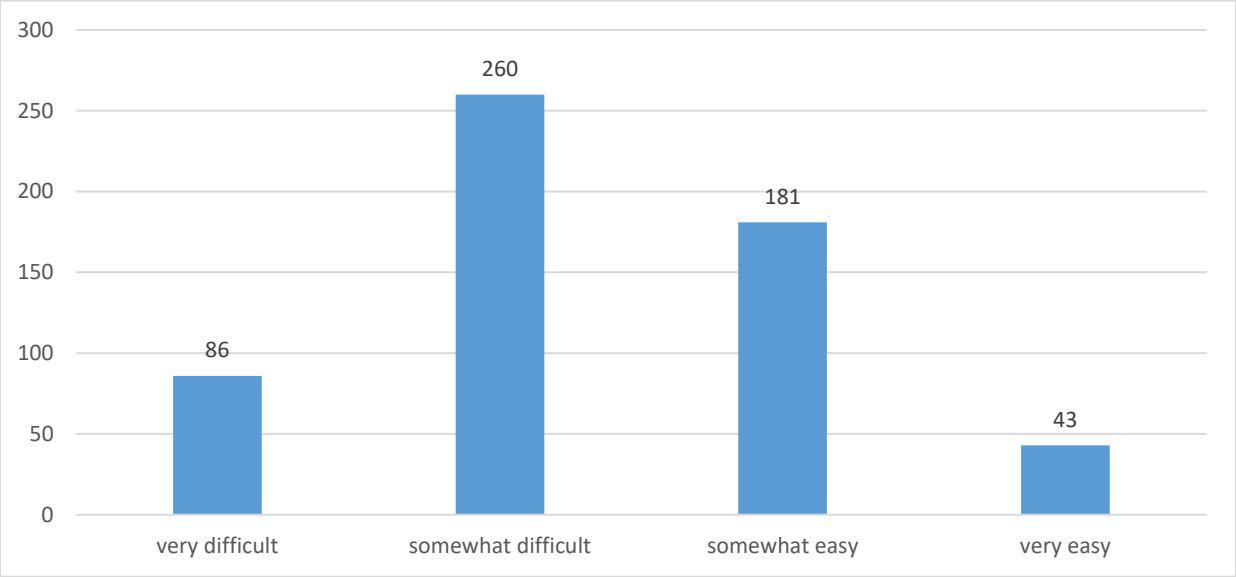
> It was basically my parents who were obviously at a young age. My brother was about five or six years old, I was about two-and-a-half to three years old and my parents were fairly new to parenting and the lifestyle in Durban wasn't what they expected for the two of us. That is why they both made the decision for my brother and I and for the both of them to move up to Johannesburg and provide a better education for my brother and I; sending us to semi-private schools and university to further our education, always looking out for the best of us in our lives. So this is why we moved here. Education was a major reason.

This is an interesting example. I was not able to ascertain where in Durban the family lived, that was considered undesirable for bringing up children and why the parents felt the need to move all the way to Johannesburg rather than a more affluent suburb in Durban with better schools. The respondent did not have the answers and when I felt that I could not pursue it without offending her, I moved on to the next question.

5.2 Adjustment to life in Johannesburg

Hindus had mixed experiences in acclimatising to Johannesburg. Most felt "fearful" and "intimidated" by the bigger, busier, faster paced city while others found the move relatively easy. Where the move was found to be easier, respondents spoke of a network of family and friends that facilitated settlement. Where respondents spoke of the difficulty of the move, the lack of family and friends, lack of involvement in a broader Indian community, and demands placed on the migrant to be more independent, were cited.

Figure 1: Respondents' views on adjustment to Johannesburg



As reflected in **Figure 1** above, of 570 respondents, 260 (45.6 percent) regarded their migration from Durban to Johannesburg as "somewhat difficult"; 181 (31.7 percent) considered the move "somewhat easy"; 86 respondents (15 percent) saw it as "very difficult"; and 43 respondents (7.5 percent) found the move "very easy". Respondent One stated that moving to Johannesburg did not have "a big impact" because he was young, "never really experiencing much of Durban". Several respondents emphasised the importance of having family in Johannesburg. One found that acclimatisation "wasn't overwhelming" as he was familiar with the city as a result of regular visits:

> I've been previously to Johannesburg visiting families and stuff. So I was not intimidated. I knew what Johannesburg was like. It wasn't anything new to me … It was easy for me because I had family up here. It was an easy transition for me. I'm a people's person so it wasn't difficult.

Respondent One also did not find it challenging to settle in Johannesburg because many family members were already living there. The respondent had moved up as a child and thus "easily made new friends".

Other respondents were more forthright on the difficulty of the transition upon migrating to Johannesburg. Respondent Six, who had been in Johannesburg since around 2002, for about 15 years at the time of the interview, and now lives in the northern suburb of Paulshof, found moving to the unknown "fearful":

> very fearful. There were no Garmins [GPS (global positioning system) for directions)] in those days. That was my biggest fear in those days. I had a very cushioned life in Durban. I never travelled around a lot. My family always cushioned me because I was the youngest. I was protected by everyone around me. Coming to Johannesburg and living alone, driving around Johannesburg where I didn't even know the place, never heard of Johannesburg before. It was the first time in my life I actually saw Johannesburg.

Respondent Three, who is currently retired, stated that she left Durban because of her husband's work situation and found it tough, especially in relation to housing:

> My husband had to move here because of his job situation. He had to take this promotion because he was out of a job. I was not keen. My mum was widowed. I had the excuse that I wanted to stay in Durban. I moved up to Johannesburg in 1980; both my kids were born here. I never liked it. I think at that time it was also because we had housing problems. In the 1980s, it was hard to get a flat here … There were very little options. If you were fortunate you would find something, like an outbuilding.

This was the apartheid era when housing was racially segregated, so I asked her about the 'Indian areas' in Gauteng in the 1980s. She recalled:

> Actonville, Benoni, Lenasia. Lenasia wasn't too far from where we stayed. We moved 14 times over the years. We also worked in the Orange Free State. But we couldn't stay there. So he used to travel 150 kilometres one way, 300 kilometres daily to get to work.

Indians were prohibited from living in the Free State from the 1890s and this only changed in the post-apartheid period. This respondent added that Indian locals in Johannesburg "didn't like you here. It was like you were coming to take the Joburg people's work". This is interesting given that all Indians were considered to be of the same race. They were certainly not a monolith, for those already resident in Johannesburg saw newcomers as a threat. This is replicated in the post-apartheid period where Indian South Africans display xenophobic attitudes towards migrants from South Asia, even though both groups are supposedly 'Indians'.

This was not an isolated sentiment. Another interviewee, Respondent Ten, who has been living in Johannesburg for three decades, also stressed the challenge of being Indian in apartheid Johannesburg. Amongst the problems were restrictions on movement and home ownership:

> At that time, we no longer had to apply for ministerial permission to come to Johannesburg, which was the practice during strict apartheid. We could come into Johannesburg freely. Although you couldn't do the same in the Free State. In the Free State you only had 72 hours to visit and then leave. But in Johannesburg, you could come into the area but the problem was where to live. All the Indian areas were restricted in terms of geographical space and most of these areas had been bought off. They were bought off by mainly Muslim businessmen. They owned most of the property and houses and captured this market because they saw it as an opportunity to make revenue for themselves. Also associated with that was the very unfortunate attitude where they felt that they must not accommodate Natalians to come to the Transvaal. Because they didn't want them to take their jobs in the Transvaal. They had this attitude that they are taking their jobs away.

Several things are important here. It appears that things were becoming less rigid in terms of inter-provincial movement as the government did away with the need for ministerial permission in 1973. It also appears that because Muslims were the wealthier trading class, many purchased properties and because of the artificial housing shortage created by apartheid, they had a monopoly on the housing market which made it difficult for newcomers. The xenophobia about migrants taking jobs is also evident, which shows that economics rather than race is often the determining factor underlying prejudice. In terms of identity, this respondent makes a very clear distinction about Indian Muslims, as opposed to Indian Hindus or Indian Christians, showing that no matter what the apartheid regime may have desired, identities other than race were also important.

This has not changed with the end of apartheid. Respondent Five who moved to Johannesburg in early 2018 and was living in Boksburg, related the "culture shock" of the absence of Indians where he lived:

> It was a culture shock because when we moved up, in I think November (2018), schools were still open, and when we went to the mall, we didn't see much people. We saw many White people living in this area. And I think that in that first week we saw just one Indian couple in East Rand mall. People just stared at us and maybe thought we were from another country. When the school holidays came, we saw more Indians. But we just felt out of place during the first two weeks or so.

This respondent formerly lived in Reservoir Hills, an apartheid era middle-class suburb established for Indians in Durban in the late 1960s. Schools, temples, medical personnel, sports grounds, and other amenities were available in the suburb, and residents saw other Indians on a daily basis and mostly interacted with them socially. Moving into a predominantly apartheid era, former White area came as a culture shock for this respondent and his family, in terms of the kinds of food sold locally, language spoken, places of worship, and so on.

Respondent Eleven, a female banker living in Lonehill since 2012 (about six years prior to our interview), explained that it took a year to adjust to life in Johannesburg:

> It was very difficult. I wanted to go back home. I could not adjust properly to the lifestyle of Johannesburg. I missed my family and my social networks very much. I wanted to go back initially. But I was told … by some of my family members to relax and if I stuck it out for six months … I would get used to this place … It was difficult because I think it was a lack of my family obviously. I used to stay at home with my parents and I was used to being comfortable there. And everything was done for me. All I had to do was work and come back home. Fortunately for me, when I came up to Johannesburg, I stayed with my first cousin for a period of six to seven months and so that made it a little bit easier on me, though I still missed my family at home and my social networks.

The respondent went on to explain that her first year in Johannesburg was the hardest and that she often considered moving back to Durban, under the pressure of living in the new city and with mounting nostalgia and heartache for her original home of Durban. Many respondents in my sample corroborated that the first year after migration to Johannesburg was the "hardest" and that if the migrant could survive the first year, he/she was more or less settled. Furthermore, there emerged a clear and distinct sense of loneliness among many of the interviewees when they described the first year of their migration to Johannesburg. Being young, often unmarried and without the usual social and familial networks they were used to in Durban, many felt isolated and had more time on their hands during the evenings and over weekends, when not engaged in work.

In this context, the respondents expressed the need to be self-sufficient. A female respondent stated that migration to Johannesburg placed new and additional pressure on her as she had to take care of all her needs, from washing, to ironing, cooking, and so on. The respondent added that it was "an eye opener" to see how independent she had to be in Johannesburg. Indian parents have a reputation for overindulging their children, even when they are in their 20s and working. It is not common for unmarried children in particular to leave home to become 'independent', so having to do so proved a challenge, at least initially.

The sheer size of Johannesburg, with its many suburbs and multiple highways, extensive shopping mall network, numerous restaurants and coffee shops, and lively nightlife, was a huge shock and was regarded as the overarching difference when compared to Durban. Other problems or

differences raised by the respondents included the excessive priority placed on work at the expense of all else, the higher cost of living in comparison to Durban, longer travel distances and traffic in Johannesburg, and less sense of community and socialising. One respondent spoke of the "ambitious character of Jo'burg residents and the priority work has in their lives," and noted that many people were "more open-minded, ambitious". The respondent added that "work is very important" in Johannesburg while Durban is more "close-knit", making it easier to have a family in Durban. This was not necessarily seen as a criticism. The emphasis on work and ambition meant that these migrants also pushed themselves to the limit to be "on their game", but this came at a price, with less time for family and friends. Even when one had time, social visits became rarer because people lived long distances away.

Respondent Four, a male who was 27 years old at the time of our interview, was working as a financial consultant and living in the largely White area of Centurion, located between Johannesburg and Pretoria. He emphasised the socio-cultural differences between Durban and Johannesburg and the resultant "culture shock":

> Living in Durban, it was predominantly Indian. Even though there was a vast majority of Whites and Blacks, people were together. There was more togetherness. In Johannesburg, people are there to do what they need to do. No one comes in your way. For me, there was no friendliness. No socialising. If you socialised it was very far and few between. Very close friends only. People were on their own mission. That for me was a bit of a culture shock, being a person who was very community oriented. Now living in this apartment, not talking to people, being afraid of talking to people, it was a difficult patch. There were obstacles to adjust to.

One person recounted that, in Durban, "you can just drive in the car, anywhere. And end up somewhere and meet friends…. It's calmer in Durban where it's more about the lifestyle. Here you work for life". Johannesburg's "fast pace" and lifestyle differences meant that one usually did things like travel or visit people for a reason. Another interviewee also emphasised that people were "more welcoming and warm" in Durban. She was surprised to find that she had to call before visiting family members in Johannesburg and that family members "…will tell you to your face,

they're not available on this weekend, please come next weekend". However, in Durban, "you can walk into your family's houses at any time and they are welcoming. There is always a cup of tea, lunch or supper ready". Similarly, the respondent spoke of how neighbours were more accommodating in Durban and that those in Johannesburg were strangers: "People live their own lives here in Johannesburg". Others spoke of taken-for-granted things like having someone take care of the children. The cost of childcare was prohibitive in Johannesburg, whereas in Durban, one simply took for granted that one's parents, siblings, friends or neighbours would take care of them.

These statements reveal a nostalgia for the social and cultural mood of Durban, something that is sorely missed in Johannesburg. It is very likely that because the migrants grew up in Durban, their past is associated with the pleasures of family interaction, busy households, visits, get-togethers and familiarity. Moving to Johannesburg, there is a more anonymity and impersonality as the usual social and emotional networks are no longer there and the migrant is more focused on the dictates of the working world with its daily effort and time-bound responsibilities.

Some theoretical insight into this is necessary. Blokland (2008) notes that elderly people within a neighbourhood imagine a community by developing a sense of 'localness'; and produce collective memories and in the process of this production, format the neighbourhood symbolically. In doing so, they reduce the multi-layered complexities of the contemporary neighbourhood to a one-dimensional memory of the past, which is equated with the neighbourhood, to make sense of their contemporary, changing social environment. When speaking of nostalgia and fondly remembering Durban, migrants to Johannesburg appear to be reducing the complexities of Durban life to a single, one-dimensional past that is positively remembered. This helps them to define the contrasts between Durban and Johannesburg.

In analysing these responses, it could be said that this was only natural and to be expected. After all, in Durban, these individuals built friendships over a lifetime and could not expect to replicate this in a short time in Johannesburg. One could add that, by the very fact of migrating, these respondents were themselves demonstrating ambition and a desire to rise economically, or they would likely have remained in Durban. This nostalgia for the 'Durban days' also masks the fact

that many Indians have moved from apartheid era Indian townships to former White suburbs (such as from Chatsworth to Yellowwood Park or from Overport to the Berea) or that the extended family has been unravelling in Durban, and that many Indians are now placing the elderly in old age homes, and people spend much more time in shopping malls than visiting family on a Sunday. Nevertheless, nostalgia helps migrants to survive as there is always the long weekend or holiday to look forward to, to reunite with family.

5.3 Links to Durban

The vast majority of migrants to Johannesburg maintain links with Durban in various ways. The main reason advanced by the respondents was that they wanted to maintain social networks with family and friends who still reside in Durban. Moreover, because of its "unique characteristics" when compared to Johannesburg, Durban held a special place in the hearts of most respondents. The reasons, as described by respondents, were not only that it was "calmer" and more "comfortable", but included practical issues like less traffic, the warmer weather, which everyone emphasised, and the Indian Ocean. Several of the respondents cited the "Lugs", or Blue Lagoon area of the Durban beachfront and swimming in the ocean and fishing as things that were missed. They thus kept in touch in various ways.

Of the 568 respondents, 537 (94.5 percent) stated that they maintained links with Durban, while 31 respondents (5.4 percent) did not. A respondent who described himself as a member of a neo-Hindu organisation, the Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation, explained his regular trips to Durban as helping to keep with his faith and service to his Durban-based Guru.[39] While all his family is in Durban, prior to joining the *Acharya*, he only travelled there once a year. After joining the organisation and following his Guru, he began to make more regular trips, the primary reason being to visit his Guru.

[39]The Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation and its Guru-based form of devotion is explained in Chapter seven of this study.

Respondent Six, a 38-year old male who had lived in Johannesburg for 15 years, also spoke of maintaining links and connections with Durban in terms of a spiritual encounter with a Hindu seer and spiritualist. His account began with how he met her and nowadays …

> when I go down [to Durban], I go and see her, just to take fruit and milk and visit her little shrine at her home. I don't go to the temple because I feel, for me, I am closer there spiritually. And I sit and talk to her. Unless I need it, she'd invoke the *trance* but other times we sit and talk, have tea, ask questions. But I feel a deepened spiritual connection when I sit and talk there.

It is interesting to note that this respondent felt a spiritual connection by simply being beside the spiritualist in Durban. Spiritual succour was an important link to Durban for some who have moved to Johannesburg. Like many Hindus who take religious pilgrimages to India and holy sites there, Hindus living in Johannesburg invest some spiritual connotation in Durban. In this way, fond remembrance of Durban mixes with a more religious and spiritual connection to the city of their birth. It is furthermore interesting that a male Hindu chose a female Guru for his spiritual guidance. It is likely that this spiritual seer was of the Goddess tradition, or *Shaktism* that permits and encourages female Gurus to serve the community (see below for further discussion on women and Hindu priesthood).

Unfortunately, the respondent was not probed on exactly where this temple is in Durban and perhaps how many other migrants to Johannesburg keep in contact with her after migrating. The opportunity for a follow-up interview was not possible given that the respondent could not be contacted after.

Respondent Two, a 39-year old male living in Johannesburg for 16 years in 2018, recounted his trips to Durban during the December vacation and other family get-togethers, such as weddings, on both the maternal and paternal sides of his family. "Other than that (holiday), there is the unfortunate side of funerals and fortunate side of weddings as to where you see your family in Durban". The respondent explained that it was difficult to visit Durban as regularly as he would like because he had a growing family and travel is costly due to exorbitant petrol and toll costs. In

common with many other respondents, nowadays, he uses social media to keep in contact with family in Durban.

Most of the respondents highlighted that travelling to Durban was difficult for a variety of reasons, including cost, but also things like taking leave from work, children being in school, and the security of their homes when away. While they themselves yearned to go to Durban, some parents indicated that their teenage children, with local friends and their own 'space', were reluctant to leave home for more than a few days. The answer for many lay in social media, such as WhatsApp, Facetime, Skype, and Facebook. Most respondents were part of one or another family chat group.

According to Respondent Six, who was working as a junior data analyst in Johannesburg:

> I have family everywhere in Durban … Phone calls and lots of visits. We go down every second month. We go often. I like driving. My wife's mum is alone in Durban so we go see her as often as possible. And recently we have a lot of sick people in the family so we go down to see them; to see family. For us, family is very important and we try to keep in contact. A phone call is impersonal to me. I use a phone for work and other purposes. So, we try to keep in personal contact with family. We are very close to our family members.

Respondent Four, a migrant living in Johannesburg for ten years and working as a financial consultant, travelled to Durban at least once a month due to his mother being ill. However, "… even if she was not ill – family is very important. That's highly important to me". Some have parents, and others children still residing in Durban, which also exerts a pull on them.

One of my respondents was a female priest, fulfilling various rites, prayers and ceremonies in the *Vedic* tradition[40]. Residing in Johannesburg for over 20 years, she mentioned that it was never her

[40]Naidu's (2013) work on female Hindu priests states that women are not overtly prohibited or tabooed from being teachers or spiritual leaders in the Hindu tradition. She examines whether the presence of women *Gurus*, albeit meagre, indicates a potential subversion of patriarchy or a perpetuation of parochial and masculinised social constructions of "woman". Naidu concludes that:

intention to migrate permanently to Johannesburg and for that reason, she maintains links to Durban:

> I came on the condition that I would go back to Durban. For that reason, we never sold our house there. Our families are there and recently we find it difficult to fly up and down. I've been performing funerals in Durban recently and it's very costly. Our children and grandchildren are here but life is not the same as it is in Durban. I was very involved in community work in the Hindi Shiksha Sangh in Durban and my circle of friends are in Durban.[41] I miss all that. Our intention is to go back. We are more comfortable in Durban and Johannesburg has a different lifestyle.

Migration literature speaks of "the myth of return" (see Cassarion 2004), so whether this priestess and others who speak of returning will actually do so remains to be seen. With children and grandchildren in Johannesburg and networks expanding in this city, if this researcher was to hazard a guess, the pull of Durban will recede over time. This is explored further in the following section.

5.4 Home and Place

> Female Hindu *sadhus* and teachers are therefore in potentially vital positions to disrupt religiously embedded gender hierarchies and asymmetry through *what they do* and *what they say* to their followers. Their (potentially subversive) religious enactments as spiritual teachers thus hold latent possibilities for the reorganisation and reconstitution of embedded hierarchies and the architecture of gendered norms [(2013, 54-55) original emphases].

Women and Hindu priesthood and the potential to subvert patriarchy embedded in religion is a fascinating and important subject of research that unfortunately was not explored thoroughly in this study; for further texts on women, leadership and emancipation in religion more generally, see Gross (1993); Kremer (2009); Ngunjiri (2010); Sered (1994); and Wallace (2000).

[41]The Hindi Shiksha Sangh is a Non-governmental Organisation committed to the promotion and nurturing of the Hindi language in South Africa, including teacher training, examinations for students of various grades, and cultural programmes. It is a cultural organisation, bent toward linguistic preservation and education with extensive coverage across South Africa, including Johannesburg. See http://hsssa.net/.

Hindu migrants to Johannesburg were divided over whether they would move back to Durban. For those who wished to return at some point, the compelling reasons cited were the things that they missed about Durban in the first place. They were clear that this was a long-term goal rather than something that would happen in the immediate future. For those who would not return to Durban, the view was that Johannesburg was a better place to live and that they had already acclimatised. However, even among this class, Durban was still regarded as having positive traits.

Figure 2: Respondents' views on whether they would consider moving back to Durban

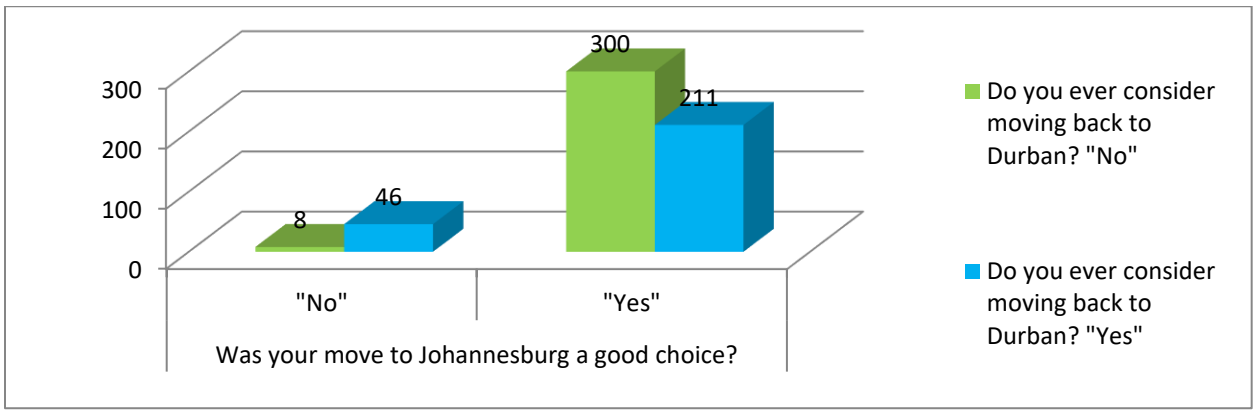


Figure 2 above illustrates that of the 567 responses received, 308 respondents (54.3 percent) replied "No", they would not consider returning to Durban, while 259 (45.6 percent) replied in the affirmative. It further shows that of the 511 respondents who stated that their move to Johannesburg was a good choice, 211 (41.2 percent) stated that they would consider moving back to Durban should the opportunity present itself as they still considered Durban 'home'. Understandably, for those who did not regard their move to Johannesburg as a good choice, 46 of the 54 respondents (85.1 percent) would consider returning to Durban.

The respondent who belonged to the Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation explained that his preference for moving back to Durban was largely due to his allegiance to his Guru:

> Strange enough, my answer was always no. But now that I met *Acharyaji*, I do consider moving back.[42] In fact, he's made a prediction. He said so in front of everyone at service. He gave me the spotlight there and I introduced myself to everyone. He said a little about who I was and he made a prediction and he said that my heart will be in Durban and I will live there. I don't know when this will happen.

Likewise, another couple who had been in Johannesburg for only a year spoke of their plan to eventually return to Durban, citing their membership of the Divine Life Society:[43]

> We talk about it all the time. We have deep roots in Durban. We were very involved in the Divine Life Society, the *ashram*. And we miss that the most. That Divine Life family. My wife's mum and my parents have been in the Divine Life from childhood. Her family is from Illovo in Durban. And the Divine Life had a strong influence there. My parents were Divine Life members before they were married.

Some considered returning to Durban for religious reasons, others because they missed its "quality of life" and feeling of homeliness, while others mentioned parents being ill or ageing. But they were also aware that this may not be possible because of economic factors. As Respondent Six, a junior data analyst who had lived in Johannesburg for 15 years pointed out:

> I would consider moving back at any point as long as I get the right job for myself. It has to be worthwhile for me, in terms of money. In today's economic climate, it's very difficult. I think once you come up to Johannesburg, and you used to living a certain lifestyle, it's very difficult to go back to Durban with a quarter of that salary.

Respondent Twelve, who had worked as an auditor in Johannesburg for 11 years, reiterated that Durban was home but that salaries are far lower when compared to Johannesburg:

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[42]The suffix "ji" after a name is used to denote respect. Thus, when a devotee and follower of a Guru refers to his Guru as 'Guruji', he/she is denoting respect.

[43]The Divine Life Society is discussed in more detail in Chapter seven of this study.

> If my parents had to come this side, then maybe this may be home. I guess Durban is where I was born and bred and where I grew up. And Durban will always be my home, because my roots are there. If it wasn't for Durban, I wouldn't be able to survive this side. Whatever I've learnt there has made me a survivor here in Johannesburg.

The majority of the migrants were clear, however, that as much as they missed Durban, Johannesburg was now home. The idea of returning was rejected because they had already acclimatised to the new city and could not return to lower-paying jobs. As one respondent stated, it might be an option after retirement:

> Maybe later on in life when retirement comes into life, then maybe Durban would be a possibility. But for now I've basically built a family here as well. I'm starting to build a reputation and a career here as well.

In some cases, the discussion turned to India which has been reaching out to its global diaspora by offering citizenship though its Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and Overseas Citizen of India (OIC) programmes. The majority of the Hindus in Johannesburg that participated in this study acknowledged the lure of India and reflected pride in its achievements, but did not consider India their home. They insisted that they were born in South Africa to which they owe allegiance. India, however, was their ancestral home, and they had a spiritual, religio-cultural, and emotional attachment to it.

Of the 569 responses, 408 respondents (71.7 percent) did not consider India their home in any sense, while 161 (28.2 percent) considered India as their "home".[44] I assumed that the older

[44]During the interviews and when asked by the respondents for more clarity, I explained that 'home' can refer to any sense the respondent felt there was a connection and attachment with a location. So when discussing if India was considered another home, I added "in any sense" to try and draw the nature of the connection Hindus in Johannesburg felt with India. In most cases, they spoke of a connection to India in an emotional and religio-spiritual sense and not in any literal sense. 'Homeland India' was thus more of an imaginary connection than a real one. See Anderson (1991).

generation would consider India their home, as the older people get, the more likely they would be to search for roots and identify with India given the socio-historical lineages that brought Indians to South Africa. The following pivot table illustrates this.

Table 8: Responses on India as home, according to age category

	Do you consider India your home in any sense?		
Age categories	**No**	**Yes**	**Grand Total**
Between 18 and 21	6	2 (25%)	8
Between 21 and 30	83	29 (25,8%)	112
Between 31 and 40	205	71 (25,7%)	276
Between 41 and 50	89	39 (30,4%)	128
Between 51 and 60	23	14 (37,8%)	37
Over 60	4	4 (50%)	8[45]
Grand Total	**407**	**162 (28,4%)**	**569**

Table 8 above confirms a gradual increase in the percentage of respondents who regarded India as their home as the age groups progressed. Though the difference is not very marked, it confirms that the search for 'homeland' and roots is more pronounced in the older generation as opposed to younger groups.

[45]As shown in **Table 8**, eight respondents from the survey sample were over the age of 60. In my qualitative interview sample of Hindus who migrated from Durban to Johannesburg, two interviewees were in the age group 60+. While the interviews and questionnaires did not address this in detail, an observable phenomenon in the migration of Indians from Durban to Johannesburg has been the migration of elderly parents (and if so, grandparents) to the inland city, after the initial migration of their sons and daughters. I heard several accounts of older, often retired parents deciding to move to Johannesburg after their children had found employment there. It was deemed a reasonable move as they could be closer to their children, sometimes in the same household, and maintain the family structure.

Respondent Three, in the age group 60+, explained that she considered India as home due to the older generation coming from India and that it was in "her genes and blood." The respondent stated that while she was not sure who the first members of her family were to come to South Africa and from which part of India as her grandparents passed on very early in her life, she believes that India is her home in the sense that there is a spiritual and emotional affinity for the country of her origin. Spiritually, in the sense that her Hindu faith is more authentically practiced in India, and emotionally in the sense that she 'belongs' there. For this respondent, being involved in the teaching of Hindi (a national language in India) to South African students, her religious and cultural ancestry was emphasised as deriving from India.

Similarly, another respondent remarked that India was home in a spiritual and emotional sense, relating his bond with his Guru, Satya Sai Baba:[46]

> I always wanted to live in India from the age of 18, which was my first trip to India. I was awestruck by India… I always asked him [Satya Sai Baba], "can I live in India? I want to live in India. I don't want to go back to South Africa". Every time I asked him, during the time he was on earth. He said, "I put you in Africa for a reason. You will live in Africa but you will visit". Prior to his demise, I visited the *ashram* and asked him once again – "I want to stay". He said again, "no, go back to Africa, you will come and visit". After his death, I decided I will pack up and live in India. I went to India and it wasn't a fruitful exercise. I came back and I realised I should have listened in the first place. I am patriotic to India but I realise that what Baba said is to be patriotic to your country first. You were born in that country for a reason, so we must serve that country.

The respondent explained that he accepted India as his spiritual home. Whenever he feels troubled, he visits the *ashram* in India to the extent that he travels to India more often than to Durban. India

[46]The Saty Sai Baba organisation, centred on the teachings and Guru reverence of Satya Sai Baba, is discussed in Chapter seven on neo-Hindu organisations.

was his "comfort zone". Having said that, the respondent is clear that he is patriotic to South Africa and that his service is first and foremost to this country.

An older respondent, Respondent Ten, in the 60+ age group, was firm in his belief that India was home:

> Yes. Certainly. Since I started teaching with the Indian Consulate, I related with the Indian staff there and my interest in India became very much stronger because of those links. I have always had this feeling that I, first of all, am an Indian from India. Everything that I am comes from there. Our culture, our religion, everything Indian comes from India. My father was an original Indian – he came from India. He was a strong Arya Samajist and ensured that we learnt Hindi and followed our culture. My attitude to India was always very strong.[47]

Others also conceded this emotional and intellectual connection with India but added that South Africa was home in a literal sense. Respondent One, a 24-year old, stated that over the generations, "down the line, we have become more South African". However, in his "heart of hearts", he regarded India as home. Respondent Nine, who is in her 30s, also mentioned the religious and cultural connection to India without regarding the country as home. She regarded herself first and foremost as a South African but recognised India as "the birthplace of where [her] culture and religion comes from." Most of those who emphasised their South Africanness and did not consider India as home in any sense, mentioned that they had never been to India and that their loyalty was to South Africa. An older respondent (Respondent Seven) replied emphatically that she was not born in India and did not consider India or any other country as home.

However, when the question of an 'authentic' Hinduism came up, respondents generally regarded India as being more authentically Hindu, citing the "correct way" of their practices and beliefs, and as them having a more pronounced devotion and conviction to Hinduism in comparison to their South African counterparts. Respondent Two, who had been to India, noted the depth of faith

[47]The Arya Samaj (and the nomenclature of being an Arya Samajist), is discussed more fully in Chapter seven.

and devotion among Hindus in that country: "People flock every day at temples … People are crying at temples. Crying out their souls. You can see that they've left it in God's hands. They believe in the power of God. You won't see that here." Unfortunately, I did not investigate which temples he had been to. Respondent Six felt that India has the "correct way" of Hindu rituals and beliefs and that it was for Hindus in South Africa "… to learn from these people, like Indian priests, because our religion started off in India and then went to the rest of the world." He was pleased that:

> lots of people are going to India and they learning how to become priests and they are learning the philosophies and the correct way of doing things, and they are returning and educating us, the public. From my personal experience, from my Hindu friends, they've said that most of the rituals we perform are not performed there. India is the place where our religion comes from so I think that's the place where people must go and learn. The priests that come from there also know a lot about the proper way of doing things. They would know about any extra things that we don't need to do. Or maybe less things, or maybe something new. Ultimately, our religion starts in India. It is authentic there.

Thus, India appeared to be the repository of all authentic practices and beliefs and performed them in the "correct way" when compared to local practices and beliefs. The fervour of devotion was also said to be more pronounced in India than locally, as Hindus were sincerer in prayer and devotion. Much like the comparison with Durban, which was also seen to be more "authentic", it seems that many Hindus living in Johannesburg regarded their variant of Hindu practice to be derivative.

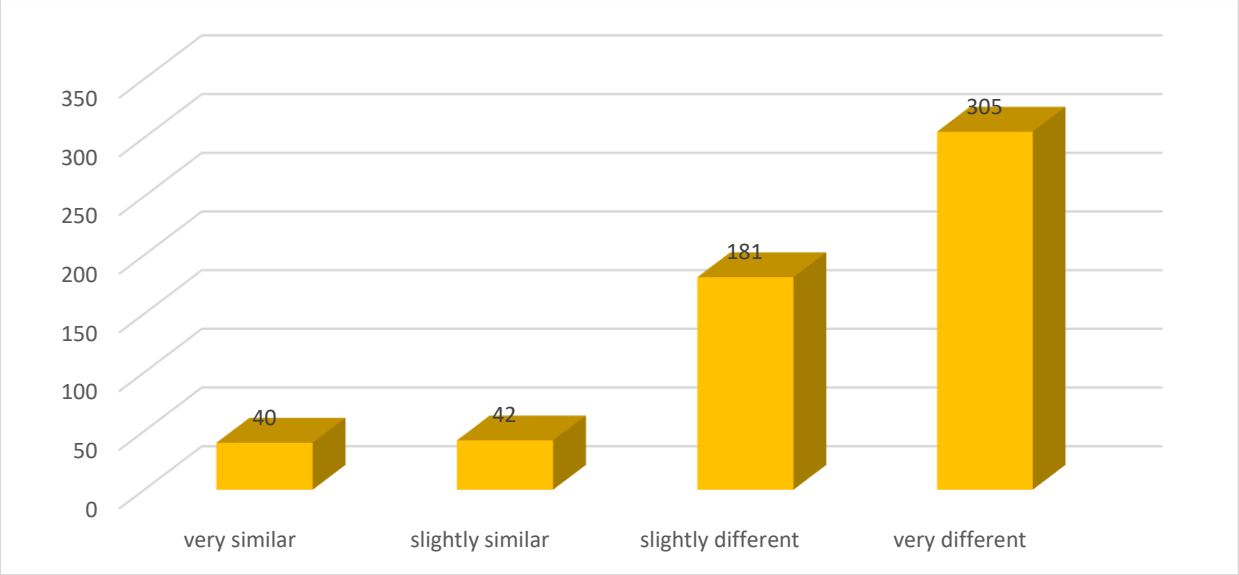
The following section discusses issues relating to the migration of Hindus from Durban to Johannesburg and their religious lives.

5.5 Religious Life and Migration

Most Hindus in Johannesburg regarded Hindu religious life in Durban as different to some extent from that in Johannesburg. Religious beliefs and practices were deemed to be more "staunch" in

Durban and attracted a greater following. Some respondents regarded religious life in Johannesburg as "rushed", with ritual and prayers done for the sake of doing them, and felt that the essence of religion was lost. But others also related the vibrancy of Hinduism in Johannesburg, where Hindus actively seek to preserve their religion and culture after arriving in the big city, as opposed to Durban where they took it for granted.

Figure 3: Respondents' perceptions of similarities/differences in Hindu religious life between Johannesburg and Durban



As shown in **Figure 3** above, of the 568 respondents, more than half (305, or 53.6 percent) regarded religious life in Johannesburg as "very different" from that of Durban while 181 (31.8 percent) considered religious life as "slightly different." Combined, this means that 85.5 percent of the respondents regarded religious life in Johannesburg as differing to some extent from that in Durban.

One respondent, a member of the Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation, stated that religious practices were "quite different" between the cities, but that much depended on how "religious" an individual wanted to be when moving to Johannesburg. This respondent felt that he would be more religious in Durban, "I would be doing more religious activities because there are more families there. There is a bigger community in Durban. There are also more events." In his case, the

presence of his Guru and community of worshippers would help to give his religiosity greater depth.[48]

Similarly, one interviewee insisted that there were many more…

> temples, spiritual places you can go and visit in Durban. In Johannesburg, less places, less temples, less organisations that you can visit. Also here, the distance is a problem. *Puja* shops are fewer. Only recently there are more *puja* shops. Some of them don't even cater for your prayers. With the *puja* shops, they very expensive. Here they kill you with profit.

Religious life in Durban was described by one devotee as being "more staunch" than in Johannesburg where "it's a very laid back thing." In Durban, "everybody believes in it, and everybody takes part in it, whereas in Johannesburg, you have a lot of young community that don't really practice anything because they more worried about other things in life." Respondent Eleven, who was in her 40s, added that in Johannesburg, younger people left it to their parents to remind them about religious events and fasting but it was different in Durban where the young were more proactively involved:

> In Durban, if you look at the amount of youngsters involved in prayers and practicing their Hinduism, culture is homogenous. In Durban you have small boys of the age of six or seven years old pulling a chariot.[49] Witnessing that and having that faith at such a young age is amazing.

Respondent Seven, who was also in her 40s, remarked on her disappointment with religious life in Johannesburg, citing the fact that she does not hear of regular prayer and ceremonies among the

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[48]'Religiosity' can be defined as the extent to which a devotee commits time and effort to engage in religious activities, congregating with like-minded believers and/or practicing privately, and the extent to which he/she sincerely and fervently prayers and meditates on the core tenets of the religion.

[49]'Pulling a chariot' refers to the Hindu festival and prayer of *Kavadi*, discussed in Chapter six of this study.

community as she did in Durban. Hindus in Johannesburg, she believes, are "not really in touch with their religion" and there is no community feeling of invitations to religious ceremonies or festivals: "I think it's because we have more family in Durban. The family we have here, don't really care."

The absence of family social networks could be why the respondent regards the practice of Hindu religion in Johannesburg to be less sincere and authentic than in Durban. The respondent came from a strongly supportive family social life in Durban and much of her religiosity was dependent on her mother in particular, in terms of when significant prayer dates were to be observed, what was necessary for specific prayers, how they were to be conducted, and the overall significance and importance of following her religion. Religion, in large part, depends on the close-knit and collective participation of immediate family members during ceremonies, prayer and other ritual acts. It could be that for this reason, respondents who spoke of the lack of an adequate Hindu community when moving to Johannesburg, were in fact expressing their own lack of immediate family networks on which much practice of the Hindu religion depends.

Others disputed this and argued that for a young community, Johannesburg was developing as a religious community. As Respondent Four, a 27-year old male, pointed out:

> This year I carried *Kavadi* here in Johannesburg. I've been going to the temple. And there are people here that are religious. It's just that when you visit these places, like a temple or place of worship or the Sai organisation and other organisations, like the Hare Krishna movement, and I've been to some of these places here in Johannesburg, it's not as full as Durban but there are people who are committed.[50]

The respondent reiterated that religion depends on the commitment of the individual and "…about how much you value your religion. What your religion means to you. At the end of the day, we

[50]The Hare Krishna movement or International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is discussed in Chapter seven.

make sacrifices and find the places." With time, this respondent was sure that the community would grow and more adherents would join the faith.

Likewise, Respondent One, a 24-year old call centre consultant, reiterated that migrants to Johannesburg can be as religious as they want and that it was very much up to each individual. This respondent added that the main hurdle to practicing Hinduism in Johannesburg was establishing where the temples are located:

> There are many temples here in Johannesburg. It's a case of finding those temples … If you want to find something, you go and find it. Those temples are here in Johannesburg. The Marabastad area has temples over 100 years old.[51] No one knows about it because no one asked. That's the sad part of it. We don't do our research. Yes, there is the aspect of holding on to things, the attachment to certain temples ... well and good. But also the practicality is that we Hindus in Johannesburg can practice up here.

Respondent Two spoke at length on the subject of religious life in Johannesburg including his views on that of Durban. The respondent stated that religious life was in existence in Johannesburg when he first moved to the city in 2011 but not as established as now. Over the past eight years, "… it has become entrenched in Johannesburg." He recalled the "solid" religious life in Durban with various Hindu organisations in existence and the Hindi classes he attended in this city from a young age:

> In Johannesburg, I think it has improved over the past years. I was involved in ISKCON Midrand since inception and I took to it … Johannesburg is getting very solid in terms of the different organisations. I know that there are also Sai [Baba] *ashrams* in Pretoria and one of my friends is highly involved there. When it comes to the festivals, like *Krishna Janmastami*, *Diwali*, *Hanuman Jayanti*, there is always a place to go to for these services.

[51]The Marabastad temple and other temples in the Greater Johannesburg area, are discussed in Chapter six of this study.

> Either temples or people have it in halls, so I think it's easily accessible now in Johannesburg.

Clearly then, some respondents found Johannesburg deficient in terms of Hindu practices but others were realistic that the Hindu community in Johannesburg was small but growing in number and that Hindu life was rapidly establishing a firm foothold. Indeed, Respondent Ten described it as "excellent." Having moved from Durban to Benoni in the 1970s he related his experience of the growth of Hinduism in the region:

> When we first moved, we were in a suburb with very few Hindus, but not significant. Again, the question of religious upbringing of children came to the fore. We met with some of the Hindi speaking people in the area and said let's start a *satsang* group. We can at least start teaching our children a few things about culture and religion. So I got together with two or three parents and one of us said he will provide his garage on Sundays. We then started having *satsangs*. Amongst them I was the only fellow who could play a little harmonium. I poked around and we started the *satsang*. Gradually it [began] to grow and we went to people's homes to recruit children and families to attend. We said we needed to build the community here. I got landed with running this *satsang* and I ran it for more than 20 years. It grew very well. I had an aggressive nature and I went to parents' houses and got them to come. Sunday we used to have over 60 kids in a little garage.

Respondent Three who teaches Hindi classes to residents on the East Rand in Johannesburg was of the view that "…Hindu practice in Gauteng is in still in good hands." She stated that "people want to preserve what they have":

> I experienced this in teaching Hindi. I get people all the time coming to learn Hindi. And people of all races and nationalities. The future of our language will depend on these people. I ask people why they want to learn Hindi and they all say that "ever since we came from Durban, we have felt lonely in terms of our culture. We don't relate to our aspects of our culture and we feel estranged from ourselves." I am pleased to hear that. People need

to be who they were meant to be. There are many young Natalians who want to learn Hindu and acquire the language to preserve their culture.

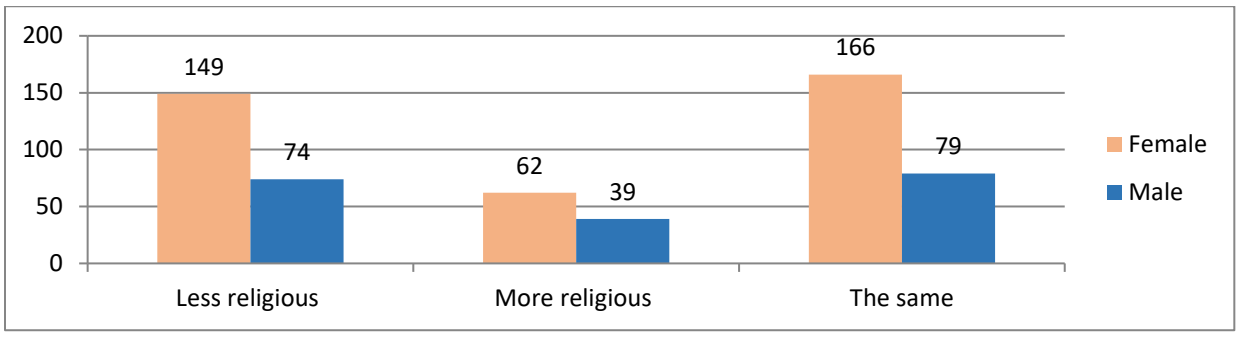
Clearly then, many Hindus are proactive and do not feel despondent. They are taking steps to entrench practices and confident about the future of the Hindu community in Johannesburg. This growing community is an important means for new migrants to adjust, settle and belong to Johannesburg. With more temples and more neo-Hindu organisations soliciting participation, regular observance of major Hindu festivals, more prayer shops and priests available, migrants are better able to adjust to the city.

In discussing the role of religion in the adaptation of immigrant groups in the United States, Hirschman (2003) writes that religious organisations play an important role in the creation of a community for new immigrants. "In past times, individuals could turn to the extended family (and the larger community) for social and spiritual comfort as well as for material assistance. With smaller and less proximate families in present times, churches and temples can sometimes fill the void" (2003, 1207). This is especially significant for migrants from Durban to Johannesburg where the familiarity of the erstwhile family network is absent and has yet to be replaced by new bonds and relationships that do not depend on expectations of reciprocity.

5.6 Gender, Migration, and Religion

In the quantitative survey, I posed the question of whether respondents considered themselves to be more or less religious after migrating to Johannesburg. This relates to the definition of 'religiosity' provided earlier in this chapter – the extent, sincerity and frequency of Hindu involvement in religious organisations, following rituals, offering prayers, going to temple, attending discourses and so on. I was also interested in respondents' views on whether they lost touch with their religion after migrating or became more involved (greater religiosity), or whether it stayed the same after migrating. **Figure 4** illustrates that of the 569 responses received, 223 (39.1 percent) of the respondents considered themselves to be less religious after moving to Johannesburg; 101 (17.7 percent) regarded themselves as more religious; and 245 (43 percent) considered themselves to be neither more nor less religious after migration.

Figure 4: Gender, Migration and Religiosity



Of the total sample, 377 respondents were female (66.1 percent) and 193 were male (33.8 percent). This required an explanation. The sample for Gopal, Khan and Singh's (2014, 30) study on Hindu identity in South Africa was also overwhelmingly female (63.6 percent of the study sample). Their reasoning was that:

> For many years most religious functions, excluding those performed by priests, was primarily initiated in the home by women (Naidoo 1985). Hence the large response rate from female respondents in the study attests to the role of females within the Hindu family system who maintain the religious value system and explains the indifference of men to engage with the study.

Of the 223 respondents who regarded themselves as less religious after migrating, 66.8 percent were women and 33.1 percent were men. This is in keeping with the percentage distribution of men and women and there was no significant gender difference. Of the 101 respondents who considered themselves to be more religious after migration, 38.6 percent were men and 61.3

percent were women. Finally, of the 245 respondents who considered themselves neither more nor less religious after migrating, 32.4 percent were men and 67.7 percent were women. These figures equate roughly to the gender breakdown of the sample, and suggest that there was no significant gender difference in terms of how people felt about the impact of migration on their religiosity.

Respondent Four, a 27-year old male who had lived in Johannesburg for ten years, spoke of being less religious after migrating to Johannesburg:

> When I came up to Johannesburg, because of distance and being alone, I left it (Hindu practice). My friends were not religious and I was joining the not religious people, it faded away. To be honest, I shouldn't even pray in the mornings. When you move up to Johannesburg, it was more difficult because there's no mother telling you to pray or even a *God lamp*. When you come up you need to get your own *God lamp*, your own prayer place. Sometimes what happens is you place more emphasis on people and going out and stuff like that than religion, so it sort of fades away. The only time we remember a religious holiday is when your mum calls you and reminds you. Other than that, you don't really know. In Durban, you know these things.

Like many other respondents, this respondent spoke of the importance of his mother for the transmission of religious understanding and practice. Motherhood is a critically important role in the intergenerational transmission of religious belief and practices. More often than not, it is women who educate their children on the details of religion, including answering any questions the child may have, and who urge migrants who have moved to new cities to keep in contact with their religion and with spirituality. This was found in the current research and it emphasises the critical role femininity plays in the intra-family, inter-generational transmission of religious culture. This finding is in line with Chirkut (2006) and Chirkut and Sitaram (2007) who note that Hindu women are traditionally perceived as mothers, educators and nurturers to maintain the Hindu value system in their families. Despite the pressure from westernisation and globalisation, Chirkut (2006) shows how working married Hindu women in the Stanger area of KwaZulu-Natal made use of Hindu festivals such as *Navaratri* to keep the Hindu value system, their religion and cultural traditions alive.

On the subject of gender, migration and religion, the data derived from three additional interviewees on their migratory experiences and on being Hindu women, revealed interesting insights. While it is beyond the scope of this study to intensively discuss and further explore the emergent themes, a few comments and findings can be made. All three respondents took the decision to migrate by themselves and a better career and more secure financial position was what they sought. The respondents were of the view that there are just as many women migrating as men.

On the subject of gender bias in the workplace in Durban, Respondent Thirteen, who was working as a Financial Change Manager for a prominent corporate bank in Johannesburg stated:

> In Durban, the corporate world has a ceiling one reaches very quickly. And yes, there is gender bias in the workplace. In Durban, they still have the old family traditions that is headed by a male, who is supposed to take care of a woman. They are still getting to grips with gender equality in the workplace and in the home."

I asked if this situation was any different in Johannesburg and the respondent replied:

> In Jo'burg, there is more of an evolution of that old school way of thinking. You see less gender bias. But there is racism in Johannesburg as well. You see that in Johannesburg there is more of a push toward compliance with the BEE [Black Economic Empowerment] scorecard in companies. Jo'burg is trying to become more racially transformed … There are very few women in leadership positions in Johannesburg. But they are pushing their agenda actively.

Thus, according to the respondent, while a gender bias exists in both Durban and Johannesburg, Johannesburg is perceived to be more progressive in addressing it, especially in the workplace. The respondent is correct to assert that the agenda is commonplace in most workplaces across Johannesburg where the term 'gender mainstreaming' is becoming *au fait*, implying that corporates are actively raising awareness on gender issues in the workplace and attuning to the

grievances of women. As stated by the respondent, this contrasts with the situation in Durban and is an important dimension as to why some women may be migrating to Johannesburg. If it is not a determining (manifest) factor, it is at least a positive (latent) consequence.

The three female respondents I interviewed during the second round of qualitative interviews spoke extensively on the preservation of their Hindu religion in Johannesburg. There was no overt criticism of Hinduism and its treatment of women in any of my respondents' statements; it seems that, for the women I interviewed, Hinduism was not considered to be intrinsically patriarchal or guilty of stereotyping women. But themes of women's empowerment did arise.

I rely on Motswapong (2017) who has written on the use of a Hindu Goddess, *Draupadi*, as a paragon and heroine of empowerment for women. Delving into Hindu mythology and scripture, Motswapong covers the character of *Draupadi*, as she appears in the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, and her interactions with patriarchy on a figurative level, concluding that the Goddess can be reappropriated as a paragon of resilience, valour and resistance through a rereading of the surrounding narratives. More importantly, the rereading and reappropriation of *Draupadi* is subversive in a context where, she argues, much of the narrative of Hindu literature and scripture is patriarchal and patrilineal.

Likewise, Graham and Sundarraman (2018) state that there has been an overt lack of feminist narratives in modern Hinduism since British colonialism and the rise of Indian nationalism in the nineteenth century. The authors write that the Hindu iconography found in paintings in particular show much more diversity in narrative and sometimes even contradict narratives in Hindu texts. Arguing for improved inclusivity within Hinduism and in Indian society on issues such as androgyny, *Dalit* politics, gender variance, homophobia, LGBTQI [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex], queer feminism, and transphobia, the authors conclude with several recommendations (2018, 670).

Similarly, Moodley (2015b) asserts that Hindu iconography, when used in contemporary art practices, create vital platforms for critical engagement. Her article discusses the work and paintings of Reshma Chhiba and her representations of the Goddess *Kali*, which raised debates

and contention within the South African Hindu community. Chhiba's art exhibition comprised a 12-metre-deep walk-in vagina which represented the power of the Hindu goddess *Kali* and was used to suggest empowerment and the sanctity of the feminine form. Notwithstanding claims that the exhibition was blasphemous and offensive (a statement to such effect was made by Ashwin Trickamjee, president of the SAHMS), it illustrates the use of Hindu iconography to create much needed awareness of extant gender violence and inequality and to provoke critical discussion

On the question of being a Hindu woman and whether Goddess worship is empowering, Respondent Fifteen, who had lived in Johannesburg for four years (in 2019), related that there is a "sense of strength" in Goddess worship. Her statement reveals that not only does Goddess worship empower subjecthood, but that this relates to the body where hegemonic and patriarchal practices are often inscribed:

> I think as a woman, you have so many commitments and responsibilities. As a woman, there's a responsibility to yourself and there's certain things like the biological clock. That's a responsibility to yourself. It's [for] a woman to know that if she wants to have a child; she must be true to herself. Having a child is about yourself, not about a man. And if you look at Goddess worship, it gives you the strength to be responsible and true to yourself.

Respondent Fourteen, who was 42 years old at the time of the interview, spoke about women needing to be their "own Goddess." She explained a few of the Goddesses in the Hindu pantheon (*Lakshmi*, *Durga* and *Kali*) and the significance of each in her life and for women generally. "When you feel that you have that support of the Goddesses, you can do anything. *Lakshmi*, *Durga* devi, *Kali* are there. Your mother and father might not be there, but your God is there." This statement on the absence of parents is pronounced for women migrants who often do not have parental support in the new city of Johannesburg. The respondents' statements reveal the importance of Goddess worship, for women especially, who rely on these deities and regular prayer to them, for self-affirmation, self-belief and empowerment. In other words, religion has helped the migrants to settle and adapt to the new city. This theme is addressed in the following section.

5.7 Religion and Adaptability

The respondents who agreed that they had become more religious – of greater religiosity – emphasised the importance of the Hindu faith for their adjustment to the new conditions in Johannesburg. Religion played a crucial role in assisting them to acclimatise to the new city and to hold on to a sense of continuity of tradition. As Respondent Seven, a 41-year old woman working as an accountant in Johannesburg explained:

> I think when you come to the big city, you can be very overwhelmed and you can lose yourself. I think being close to your God and your religion, it grounds you. You don't become overwhelmed. Your morals and your values that your parents and grandparents taught you, you hold dear. Godliness teaches you what's right and what's wrong.

I probed a respondent who is a member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) on how religion assisted him to settle in Johannesburg:

> That has given me a purpose to live in Johannesburg. A more comfortable purpose in my life, because Johannesburg was a very difficult place for me to adjust. If it wasn't for attending these discourses, getting involved in Food for Life, I think it would've been more difficult to live in Johannesburg.[52] It has settled me. There is a sense of commitment, a sense of fulfilment in my life. I am highly involved so my life is busy at the moment in Johannesburg. I think it's thanks to the Hare Krishna movement in Midrand.

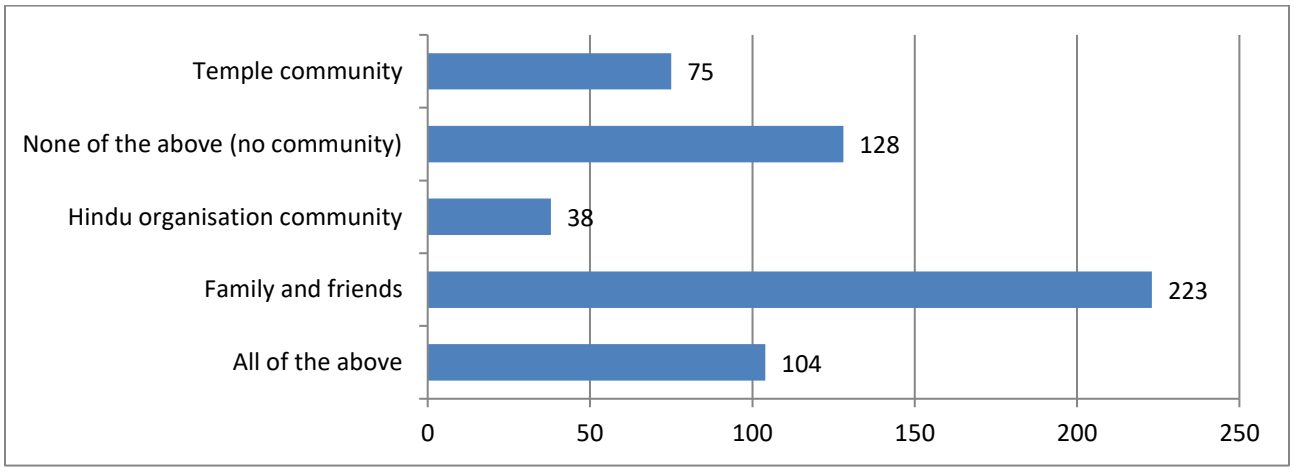
Respondent Twelve said that his faith gave him purpose in life:

[52]Food for Life is a global vegetarian food relief programme reaching into South Africa. The Food for Life programme is run independently from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) but relies on volunteers from ISKCON in an attempt to eradicate hunger and malnutrition in the areas in which it operates. The food prepared is first offered to Lord *Krishna* and honored as *prasadam*, or sanctified food. It is thus believed that it not only nourishes the body but the soul.

> To live here independently is awesome but if you do things without any structure in your life, it doesn't make things easy. It makes things more difficult. If you go down a path where you don't know who you are, you continually search – you won't reach a destination. Independence is not enough. You need direction in your life. If you don't have structure, destination and guidance you will be lost. I believe you must start your day, light lamp, pray and get the peace and focus for the day. Whereas if you don't, you just get up in the morning, get dressed and that's it. You don't get that peace and focus for your morning. You must start with some kind of direction and purpose or you just doing what you must.

This reiterates the importance of religion for adaptation to Johannesburg. Where larger, extended families were the norm in Durban, these were notably absent in Johannesburg and migrants had to rely on their Hindu religion, mainly marked by involvement in congregations of temple goers, but also Hindu organisations and participation in Hindu festivals, to garner important social and spiritual comfort. Involvement in Hindu religious organisations and institutions helped migrants to settle and form new bonds and relationships based on service, duty and trust. However, for the majority of new migrants to Johannesburg, "friends and family" were the immediate Hindu community encountered in the new city, before their acculturation into the organisations and institutions of Hinduism in the city.

Figure 5: The Hindu community that respondents first encountered in Johannesburg



As shown in **Figure 5** above, of the 568 respondents, 223 (39.2) percent found "family and friends" as the immediate Hindu community when initially migrating from Durban to Johannesburg; 128 respondents (22.5 percent) found no Hindu community at all; 75 (13.2 percent) found a temple community; 38 (6.6 percent) found a Hindu organisation as the Hindu community; and 104 respondents (18.3 percent) found "all of the above", that is, family and friends, Hindu organisations and temple communities when they moved to Johannesburg.

Respondent Two, a 39-year old male who found a religious community in the organisation, the Midrand Seva Semaj, recounted:

> I left Durban in 2003 and coming up to Johannesburg I was one of the first of my family to come up. It was quite daunting. It was a scary feeling. I needed guidance because it's a big wide world. The reason I moved toward the organisation was to find security. The easiest thing is to find security in religion. That is the reason I joined the Midrand Seva Semaj. They are still going strong. When I joined in 2003, there were 10 to 15 people and *satsangs* were held in someone's house. Then they found a hall and the organisation grew.

Interestingly, the respondent was not a member of the Seva Semaj in Durban; his interest and need to join the Midrand Seva Semaj only arose after migration. In a follow-up interview, I was told that the respondent did not belong to any organisation whilst living in Durban. This corroborates his statement that he joined the organisation only after needing security, having "a scary feeling" when he first moved to Johannesburg. The membership of the Semaj has remained stable over the past few years with approximately 30 to 40 people attending the weekly *satsangs*. All major Hindu festivals and prayer dates are observed and the Semaj is a very close-knit organisation, with members being very familiar with one another. From my observations, there is a familial feeling to attending the Midrand Seva Semaj which is very warm and welcoming.

The experience of other respondents was negative as far as religion is concerned. One stated that he and his wife did not find "much of a religious community up here" in the Boksburg area. Another respondent was "quite disappointed in what religious community I found when I first migrated. There was nothing interesting 37 years ago. Very few temples and services." However,

today, "…there are quite a few. There are more people attending. There are more people today that want to maintain and preserve their Hindu religion."

In my fieldwork and my coverage of the various regions around the Greater Johannesburg Area, I encountered an interesting case in the erstwhile Randburg Hindu Cultural Society.[53] The respondent from this society related the experience of the Hindu community on the West Rand. She spoke of a "hunger" among Hindus for a community where they can pray, observe major Hindu festivals and commemorate key events. This was a challenge because conditions in Johannesburg made it difficult for Hindus to observe their religion and be part of a broader community:

> In Johannesburg, the working hours are slightly longer. I would get home by six. Then to quickly make sure supper is cooked, then rush to a *satsang* at seven. It was a bit hectic and we used to do that for a very long time. Because of winter in Johannesburg, people do not want to leave their homes. They prefer to be indoors.

Nonetheless, most devotees continue to struggle to forge a strong Hindu identity in Johannesburg. The respondent related, "The time you realise there's a huge Hindu community is when you have a big function. The major celebrations. And during that time, we used to pull around 250 people. At the *satsang*, we had only three to four families." However, with the disbanding of the Randburg

[53]The Randburg Hindu Cultural Society became defunct in 2017 due to challenges around a premises and funding. It was made up of a chairperson and a few other roles. Due to its small size, the committee mainly comprised the few families who joined in the weekly *satsang*. Its activities however, gathered a large following mainly according to the Hindu calendar of festivals and prayer, fulfilling an important need in the Johannesburg West region. According to respondents, its demise left a void in the Hindu community on the West Rand. On the establishment of the Society, the respondent noted:

> My brother-in-law was involved. It stemmed from them meeting and realised that in Randburg there isn't a cultural society, let's get together and form this. They had meetings and started with *satsangs*. They formed this organisation. This was in 2005 or 2006. It ran all these years and grew until 2017 because of this premises problem. ... Numbers grew very quickly. There were times when our *satsang* grew to 50 people.

Hindu Cultural Society, Hindus on the West Rand were without a place to worship. On the purpose of the society, the respondent stated:

> We wanted to promote Hinduism. There are many Hindus here. We wanted to ensure there is a place they could go to. When we said Hindu Cultural Society, we wanted to accommodate everyone, Hindi, Tamil, whatever. People could sing whatever *bhajans* they wanted. That was the purpose. Also, the main purpose was to bring together Hindus. To promote that culture in a simplified way. We didn't want something to become too much. As long as we had a simple prayer, people were happy to come and do a simple prayer and go home. They were content with it. During *Navaratri*, people used to look forward to come forward and do the *hawan*. That brought a lot of people together.

The member emphasised that the Randburg Hindu Cultural Society was neither *Shaivite*, *Vaishnavite*, nor *Shakti*. Attendees would carry their own *murtis* to the venue to worship. "Not everyone uses a *murti*, so we tried to be open." The respondent added that the society aimed to unite Hindus across differences but more importantly, to meet a need in the Johannesburg West region. "People need a place to worship. Up till today, people call and ask for a place to worship. I feel bad to say that it doesn't exist anymore." The respondent observed that in moving to Johannesburg, "…people miss socialising with other Hindus." The value of the society lay in creating a sense of community and belonging with other Hindus, especially among new migrants.

In the absence of a structured Hindu community, devotees found ways to cope. Respondent Nine, a female in her 30s, related that she obtained regular advice relating to matters of culture and religion from her mother which connects her to Durban:

> For instance, I had to do a clay lamp prayer with lime and lemon. My mum said if I can't do lime or lemon, then just use ghee. I also tell her sometimes I can't get sweetmeats to offer. She says, "no problem, fruit and milk is good enough." There are always little things like that. I ask how to break fast and she tells me. She says as long as prayer is in your heart that's good enough.

Several other devotees related similar experiences. Respondent Seven, a female in her 40s, mentioned that:

> …the simple practice is at least keeping your fast on Mondays and Tuesdays. That is what we used to practice at home and I still practice that to this day. I moved up with my lamp. We used to light the lamp at home and I still do that here. Cleaning it was an eye opener for me; my mother used to do it. But I learnt how to clean it. Lighting the lamp and praying at the lamp I carried up with me. That and fasting on major religious days. I always kept that up.

I probed on an earlier point she made regarding religious practice being a part of her independence in Johannesburg. She spoke of there being "no mother and father screaming at you, 'do this, do that'." The respondent realised in the first month of moving to Johannesburg that:

> ...you [are] on your own and have [to] light [the] lamp and get into routine … I always light my lamp in the morning. Some people can do it at the evening. But it needs to be done on your own. I carried it with me up to Johannesburg but it also helped me to become independent in my faith. The background comes from my family though.

Her point was that she was no longer undertaking rituals out of habit or because her mother was doing so. She was now conscious of her beliefs and practices and undertaking the rituals herself. This made her undertake her faith independently.

Respondents found other ways to stay in touch with their Durban Hindu landscape while adapting to the new city of Johannesburg. A member of the Divine Life Society stated that daily and weekly rituals were practiced to maintain religion after migrating. The respondent spoke of initial difficulty in following rituals and went further to address how social media aided their observance of major functions in Durban. Some were prompted by circumstances to set up a prayer area in their homes as a means of preserving the Hindu religion and adapting to the new city and were aware of major dates on the religious calendar. One respondent "made fasting a regular thing." Several others spoke of expanding their Hindu outlook or modifying their beliefs and practices

through interaction with local devotees and organisations. Another respondent spoke of his ongoing links with Durban in terms of a vow that was taken and is fulfilled by making regular trips to a temple in Durban where a specific prayer is conducted: "What I do is, when I go to Durban, I must make a visit to the temple and pray. Always. I go to Mariammen Temple in Mount Edgecombe. That is the Mother. I pray to the Mother. I have taken a vow."

Many Hindus take vows to achieve some spiritual or material benefit from their chosen deities. The vow can consist of a duty that the Hindu will fulfil for the duration of his/her life or a short-term fulfilment. To 'take a vow' is thus a commitment to do something with earnestness and devotion in expectation of something in return. What is noteworthy in the comment from the respondent above, is that this vow was taken at the Mariammen temple in Mount Edgecombe, Durban. It could just as easily have been taken in Johannesburg where the respondent resides, but the respondent clearly feels a stronger spiritual impulse at the temple in Durban. This reiterates the point made earlier in this chapter that Hindus living in Johannesburg often invest spiritual connotation to Durban as a city of religious authenticity.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter examined some of the experiences of Hindus who migrated from Durban to Johannesburg. The narrative is replete with various perspectives and experiences. The main reasons for migration were better work opportunities and greater financial security. Other factors included the need to migrate away from potentially anti-Indian sentiments in Durban and a lack of gender equality in workplaces around the originary city. This shows that Johannesburg is considered to be more progressive in racial and gender transformation when compared to Durban. The move to Johannesburg was a culture shock for many migrants and they expressed their initial difficulty in acclimatising to the new city. A corollary to this is the overt nostalgia for the social and cultural "mood" of Durban, invested with fond remembrance and positive qualities when compared to the new life in Johannesburg. A tenable explanation for this is the lack of social and emotional networks for many migrants living in Johannesburg and the rigours of the more demanding work life in the inland city.

A very interesting finding emerging from this chapter is migrants' enduring links with Durban. Migrant Hindus living in Johannesburg never completely severed their ties and connections to Durban, socially as well as religiously and spiritually. Durban was seen to be stauncher and more authentic in religious practice, as perceived in the supposed greater religiosity of the city's Hindus. Furthermore, a spiritual connotation was placed on Durban. This is exemplified in the vows that some Hindus living in Johannesburg took, only to be fulfilled in Durban and the close, personal relationships some migrants have with Gurus and spiritual seers that reside in Durban. One may add that for some Johannesburg Hindus, certain temples such as the Mount Edgecombe Mariammen Temple and the Isipingo Rail Mariammen Temple in Durban have greater spiritual and religious significance than temples in Johannesburg.

In addition, the Indian Ocean, on the coastline of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, holds a special spiritual significance for Hindus, which is more pronounced for Hindus living in the inland city of Johannesburg. 'Home' for Johannesburg Hindus thus connotes much more than the city of their birth but also a place with spiritual meaning. For many of my respondents, it is much more than nostalgia for the 'Durban days' and associated fondness of growing up in Durban, but also, that the originary city feeds into their religious identities. Many migrant Hindus living in Johannesburg are unlikely to return to the city of their birth despite prevalent sentiments that they hoped to return, if not immediately, then in the long term (the 'myth of return'). In this scenario, nurturing an unrealised wish to return to Durban, the identity of Johannesburg Hindus is of dual belonging.

In this author's opinion, Hinduism in Johannesburg is vibrant and Hindus are free to preserve and pursue their various religious orientations without many limitations or challenges. As many respondents suggested, this may not have been the case a few years ago but nowadays there are ample prayer shops, priests, lively festivals, and a dense network of institutions, temples and organisations. I would agree with a few of my respondents who stated that the Hindu community of Johannesburg is growing and that as it continues to do so, more adherents will join the temple communities, smaller *bhajan* groups, or neo-Hindu organisations that suit their orientations. As has been shown in this chapter, such participation is a crucial prerequisite for the adaptation of Hindus in new locales.

The next four chapters examine in greater detail devotees' experiences in traditional Hindu temples, neo-Hindu organisations, their interaction and perspectives on Hindu priests and participation in major Hindu festivals. The key findings and analyses are extracted to answer the question on the ways in which there is continuity and change, perceived and real, in Hindu practices between the two cities.

Chapter 6: Temples and Temple Worship in Contemporary Johannesburg

Worship is not confined to any particular place in Hinduism. It can occur at home, outdoors or in a temple, with the purpose being the same, namely, to integrate body, mind, and spirit, in order to connect with conceptions of God, express one's love for God and seek blessings. While neo-Hindu organisations as well as Christianity have made inroads into the following of temple-based Hindu worshippers over the past three to four decades, temples continue to draw large numbers of devotees, especially on auspicious occasions. This chapter examines the role of temple worship amongst Johannesburg's Hindus. It includes a description and analysis of the data obtained from the interviews. Each section begins with a finding in bold font that is then supported by the data. Further insights and findings are presented using the survey data.

In many parts of the world, temples are the most visible aspect of Hinduism, the literal and figurative meeting place of humankind and God. They occupy a significant place in the lives of Hindus across the Hindu diaspora, including South Africa (Agarwal 2014; Baumann 2010; Brown 2006; Jacobsen 2006, 2013; Jacobsen and Kumar 2004; Jain 2012; Knott 1986; Kumar 2006; Long 2013; Luchesi 2004).

Jacobsen (2006, 163) writes that:

> Among the Hindus living outside of South Asia, the diaspora situation often has led to an increased focus on the temple as a cultural centre and as a place to confirm identity in a minority situation. The temple has often become the single most important cultural institution of the diaspora group.

Kumar (2013, 34) observes that temples are of great significance for Hindus in contemporary South Africa, stating that "almost all their life seems to be guided by temple activities. From birth to death, an average Hindu passes through a series of temple ritual activities. Temples attract Hindus of all background, regardless of their education and economic status" (Kumar 2013, 34). The author adds that construction of temples has continued into the present as Hindus move to new

locations around South Africa, thus ensuring that future generations are rooted in temple culture (Kumar 2013, 34).

6.1 Temple history in contemporary Johannesburg

The histories of the establishment of temples and temple communities in Johannesburg are varied, with some dating back to the era of the 'gold rush' in the nineteenth century and others of more recent origin. There are instances of individual entrepreneurship as well as community support and decision-making in establishing temples and temple communities.

One of the earliest temples in Gauteng is the Mariammen temple in Marabastad, Pretoria. A Mariammen temple honours the Goddess *Mariammen* and falls within the *Shakti* tradition of Hinduism. The temple in Marabastad was established in 1905 and was initially a small wood and iron structure. It served the religious and spiritual needs of Hindus living in Marabastad and surrounding areas, which represented a cosmopolitan mix of cultural and racial groups. The area was home to African traditional medicine shops, a mosque, a Hindu temple and the historic Asiatic bazaar area. The temple was renovated in 1927 and an ornate *Goparum*, its characteristic feature, was built. It continues to draw devotees from around Gauteng despite being located in what respondents described as an "unsafe" area. Because of its location and the unavailability of space to expand, the temple structure and architecture has remained the same for many decades.

Another of the older temples in Johannesburg is the Shree Siva Subramaniah Temple (JMSST), known more commonly as the Melrose Temple. A 1978 publication by its temple committee recounts that the temple was established on the farm Syferfontein which originally belonged to Reginald Linaker, who purchased the land on 29 August 1919 and established the Melrose Steam Laundry. Linaker is described as being "always sympathetic to his employees and because nearly all of them were Indian, was also generous to their religious aspirations" (Melrose Temple 1978, 4).[54] Most of the Indian workers were Hindus who were ardent worshippers of Lord *Muruga*. A

[54]This is corroborated by Bhana and Vahed (2005, 52) who remark that historically and during the age of indenture, "some employers contributed by donating cash or land, and giving their workers time off for religious observances."

group led by 'Sardar' Kandasamy Pillay, the foreman at the laundry, and spokesperson for the workers, approached Linaker and convinced him to allow the workers to build a small wood and iron temple dedicated to Lord *Muruga*, described in the publication as "the most popular of all Hindu deities in the South Indian religious tradition."[55] The temple underwent extensive renovation in 1996 and is now a national monument, catering mainly for Hindus of south Indian origin.

After the establishment of Group Areas, Indians were confined to Lenasia, the only township in the then Transvaal designated for Indians. Temples started to spring up, especially in the 1970s when the number of Indians moving into Lenasia grew exponentially. Two of the older temples in Lenasia are the Lenz Shree Siva Soobramaniar Tirukoil and the Sivan Gnana Sabay Sivan Koil Temple which were established as soon as Indians began moving into the township, while the Shri Lakshmi Narayan Temple was established in the 1970s. On the East Rand, where many Indians historically resided, the town of Benoni has several old temples. A popular temple is the Ardhanareshwar temple, commonly known as the *Shiva* Temple. Temples were also built in Springs from the earliest days of Indian settlement. Two popular temples are the Shree Vishveshwar Mandir and the *Ganesha* Temple. Moodley (2015a, 3) notes that the Group Areas

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[55]The temple's website provides additional information on the history of the establishment of the temple opposite the Jukskei River thus:

> The Johannesburg Melrose Shree Siva Subramaniar Temple (Melrose Temple) was founded circa 1897 by indentured Tamil labourers working in the Melrose Laundry, north of Johannesburg. The Temple that initially started out as a tin shack was extensively renovated in 1996 and then again in 2011. The Melrose Temple is now a beacon of *Murugan* worship in South Africa and the world and has a congregation in excess of 20 000 devotees.

While the website states that the temple was established in 1897, the publication (1978) states that the land was purchased by Mr Linaker in 1919, prior to him donating a portion of the land to the indentured labourers to worship. This suggests that while labourers were worshipping opposite the Jukskei River in more rudimentary ways prior to the donation, the land was only formally bestowed in 1919. Other information on the website includes upcoming religious events and festival dates, a booking form for priestly services, a gallery of pictures and contact details https://www.melrosetemple.org.za/.

Act ruptured the relationship between the temple and the devotee by forcibly moving communities from their homes to new isolated townships far from established temples. Such displacement also occurred in Durban. However, it is important to add that, as seen in the development of temples in Lenasia, for example, Hindus proactively built new religious institutions in their 'Locations' as a matter of necessity and survival.

The survival of the older temples in Johannesburg attests to the enduring need for such sites of religious worship in contemporary times. Indeed, in my discussions with respondents, the long histories of specific temples were proudly spoken of, as Hindus appreciate the survival of temples with rich cultural and religious traditions. New temples are being built in areas where Indians have begun to settle in the post-apartheid period which saw the end of the Group Areas Act. In reality, Group Areas were not strictly enforced after the late 1980s, before the formal end of apartheid. There was significant movement out of erstwhile Indian locations to new areas, and for the more affluent in particular, to previously White suburbs. One consequence is that temples are being built in these areas. While some respondents spoke of allegiance to a temple of their choice, others pointed to the convenience of having temples in their area of residence, without having to travel long distances to participate in temple activities. As more Indians move to various suburbs around the Greater Johannesburg area, and indeed as more Indians migrate from Durban to Johannesburg, the temple culture is spreading across Johannesburg.

The Shree Radhe Shyam Mandir, popularly known as the Marlboro Temple, was opened in July 1994.[56] It was built after a community of Hindus in the Wynberg area resolved that they needed a temple in the area. Prior to the establishment of the temple, *satsangs* and prayer were held at people's homes. The respondent from the Marlboro Temple explained that there was a committee at the time of the inception of the temple made up of trustees and committee members. "Funding came from the *aarti* money, donations, fund raising and people's generosity." While initially conceived to serve a small community, the Marlboro Temple has grown substantially in recent

[56]The Marlboro temple's website focuses on services offered as well as the Hindu calendar, providing important festival dates and upcoming events at the temple. A booking form and contact details are also provided. See https://radheyshyamtemple.com/.

years. It currently serves approximately 400 devotees from across Johannesburg but more so those from northern Johannesburg in proximity to Marlboro. The numbers increase during the major Hindu festivals which are carried out at the site of the temple with good communication via a Whatsapp group. The Whatsapp message usually includes the date of the festival, its significance, what to bring (such as garlands, fruit, milk etc.), and how to observe the religious occasion.

The Kali Amman Temple conducts its ritual activities in a temple setting. It is led by "Mother" who is regarded as a Guru to her devotees.[57] With regard to the establishment of the Kali Amman temple, the Mother remarked that she experienced headaches after she moved to Johannesburg in 1996 and was referred to a spiritual seer in Springs, Johannesburg, whom she met:

> We didn't know what he looked like but he came to us. He knew our names. [He said] the reason I was getting the headaches is because she has the *Matas*.[58] When the prayer started, the *Matas* came out and the headaches stopped. I was never spiritual, but after the Springs situation, I started being spiritual. [Previously] we just fasted because we had to do it. For

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[57]In the Goddess tradition of Hinduism, or *Shaktism*, the Mother (represented by various feminine deities) is considered to be God. The respondent I spoke with was known for her invocations of the Goddess during *trance*-like states and during these *trances*, "brought the Mother out." During *trance*, the respondent *became* the Mother Goddess; hence, her devotees call her as such. The temple's website notes that its origins date back to 2001 when Mrs Sarojini Pillay (Tilla) "...had a calling from the Divine Mother *Kali* to serve the Hindu community in Johannesburg." Together with her husband and children, a small temple was erected at their home in Malvern, Johannesburg:

> A few devotees started attending prayer meetings every Tuesday's where they were seen to by Mother Kali. By word of mouth, the small congregation of devotees started growing. A decision was made and a three meter by three meter Wendy House was erected replacing the small temple.

The website states that more than 200 devotees from all over Johannesburg attend the weekly prayer "...to seek the blessings of Mother *Kali* and other *Matas* [Mother Goddesses] ... All holy day prayers are observed by the temple. Due to space constraints, the *Thaipoosam Kavady* is observed at Melrose Temple." A prayer calendar, photo gallery and forum can be found on the website, https://kaliammantemple.webs.com/.

[58]That the spirit of the Mother Goddesses was in her and thus gave her the ability to heal others and provide spiritual guidance in their lives.

> no sake as such. At that point in time, I was not a *Kali* devotee. I was a *Murugan* devotee. In standard eight, I did a piercing and I got *Muruga* on me.[59] I never thought of any other God. But after we had this experience in Springs, the Mother came out and I changed. But still I had more to learn about *Kali*. The day we accepted Mother *Kali* in our lives, she changed everything.

The temple priestess was a crèche owner prior to this spiritual event. I probed why the Mother decided to open up the temple to the community and she stated that people "...started feeling an improvement in their lives and by word of mouth, it spread to other families. The first five families started spreading the word that I could heal." I further probed the background of those that worship at the temple. She explained that most were Johannesburg East residents who migrated from various parts of Durban, but that she also draws devotees from all over South Africa who are aware of her healing powers. Approximately 100 devotees attend the weekly service at the temple, with numbers increasing to between 200 and 300 during major Hindu festivals. While the temple is modest and located at the back of the temple priestess' home, this has not proven to be an obstacle as many people regularly attend for their spiritual needs.

The Mother was keen to emphasise that she was not financially driven in providing spiritual services to the community. While donations are accepted for larger prayers such as the *Kali Amman*, she often refuses money for personal one-on-one blessings:

> A lot of people can't do sacrifice at home. They live in complexes. But we can't run like Isipingo [Rail Mariammen] temple [in Durban] either. People don't bring their own chickens and goats and so on. We accept the monies and we say let's do 15 goats and then sacrifice. I do all the shopping and cooking myself. Plus I do salt-less fasting on that day. People ask how this is possible, I say it is the Mother.

[59]To 'do a piercing' refers to the festival of *Kavadi* whereby the devotee pierces parts of his/her body including the tongue and skin in an act of devotion to Lord *Murugan*. More detail is provided in Chapter nine.

I asked a devotee at the Kali Amman Temple to tell me more about this animal sacrifice. He said that it is based on the myths and legends of the Goddess *Kali*, who sacrificed lives in order to protect her devotees. According to the interviewee, the slaughter of animals is a form of paying homage to Mother *Kali* and the food that devotees partake in, is thus *prasad*, or holy food. It is important to add that while animal sacrifice is permissible among some Hindu sects and traditions, it is not pervasive and some Hindus argue that Hinduism expressly forbids eating meat, let alone slaughtering animals. Devotees of the Hare Krishna movement, for example, avoid eating onions and garlic as part of their strict vegetarianism because it is believed that garlic, being an natural aphrodisiac, stimulates the central nervous system and can disturb vows of celibacy. Also noteworthy is that most Hindus living in Johannesburg are unable to conduct animal sacrifices themselves due to living in tight-knit residential complexes with highly regulated Body Corporates which usually oppose such practices. Whereas in Durban some Hindus are free to slaughter animals on their own premises, living in residential complexes in Johannesburg amidst predominantly White neighbours means that there is opposition to things such as fireworks and sacrificing animals. While racism and cultural intolerance are often behind such opposition, it is couched in the framework of protecting animal rights. In this scenario, the ritual act of sacrificing animals is outsourced to temples.

The Madhya Kailash Temple was established in 2005 in Midrand, which is about halfway between Johannesburg and Pretoria. The chief priest, who is supported by a few secondary priests who can also perform rites and rituals in service to the community, remarked that the early development of the temple was due to the need for temples expressed in the Hindu scriptures – "...it says, do not live in a place where there is no temple." The priest added that the temple was built by the community: "An individual person cannot take a decision to build a temple. It is always the community." The Madhya Kailash Temple is colloquially referred to as a *Shiva* temple in the south Indian tradition.[60] According to its website: "The temple has been a true example of Auvayar's saying 'Thirai Kadal Odiyum, thiravyamthedu' ['Go even beyond the covered sea to get what you

[60]Being a *Shiva* temple, the presiding deity is Lord *Shiva*. This differs from a *Vaishnavite* temple in which the presiding deity would be Lord *Vishnu* or a *Murugan* temple where the presiding deity is Lord *Murugan*. This is a characteristic of temples in general, where the presiding deity determines the character of the temple and especially the major festivals celebrated.

need'] and is serving thousands of devotees who follow our rituals and our ceremonies" (www.midrandtemple.org/). The statement, 'going beyond the covered sea' is indicative of the temple catering for a specifically diasporic Hindu constituency and recognises the importance of Hindus living outside of the subcontinent receiving spiritual and religious guidance.

I can attest that the Madhya Kailash Temple, while being a popular temple that is very busy during major Hindu festivals, is in a quiet and serene location with ample space across the temple grounds. Even the inner sanctum of the temple is large and spacious. On a Saturday morning, many devotees take their time, first circumambulating the temple before entering the inner sanctum and receiving blessings from the chief priest or secondary priests. There is a definite peace and serenity to the act of prayer and meditation at the Midrand temple.

The priest of the Shree Ganesha Prathanay Kootum, known colloquially as the Buccleuch Temple after the area in which it is located, explained the origins of the temple thus:[61]

> The Transvaal Indians were very different. They were successful prosperity wise. And that is attested to [by] a lot of hard work and their faith and religious beliefs. I took a decision to become a leader and get involved in starting this temple. This was the reason I started this temple. I used to meet for *satsangs* at my home in Midrand on Mondays which started with few people and before I knew it, it was over 40 families. I knew something was being done right because people were looking at this as an alternative way of worship. The journey started there. That was for three to three-and-a-half years where we held the service. This grew into us observing calendar functions, *Navaratri*, *Shivaratri*….

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[61]A temple in the Goddess tradition, the Buccleuch Temple states on its website:

> The Shree Ganesha Prathanay Kootum Temple, humbly welcomes all devotees regardless of religious or cultural beliefs. The temple's deep rooted value's aim to inspire the love of spirituality, a passion for righteousness and a consciousness to their duties to the Divine Mother and their fellow community members.

A photo gallery, list of important prayer dates, information on the various prayers offered (car prayers, *Navagrahas* or nine planets worship, house prayer, *Kavadi* prayers, etc.), volunteer services and contact details are provided on the website. See http://www.buccleuchtemple.org.za/.

The priest, who was also a priest in Durban prior to moving to Johannesburg and who said that he moved due to the growing need for spiritual guidance and instruction in Johannesburg, added that while temples are mainly concerned with rituals, he stresses the importance of attendees understanding the significance of these rituals, that is, the philosophy behind them:

> Here in Johannesburg, people practiced ritual but they lacked the philosophy behind the ritual. My background was predominantly in the *Devi* or *Shakti* aspect. I wanted people to understand this and not just the rituals. The temple focuses on more than ritual but also the philosophy. Our forefathers started these rituals but over time, it included philosophy. But with philosophy, devotees are encouraged to perform action, *seva*, and this is another principle this temple is centred around.

Importantly, this indicates that the Buccleuch Temple is cognisant of neo-Hindu ideas and that the priest wants the patrons of his temple to understand the philosophy behind the rituals. The division between neo-Hindu and temple worship is not clear cut and while rituals are found in neo-Hindu worship, so too does philosophical understanding find its way into temple worship. There is a sense that Hindus in Johannesburg are more questioning because they are of a younger generation and have migrated from Durban, which frees them from the traditions in which they were steeped. They seek to understand more about their religion and why certain things are done. This has made priests such as the one at the Buccleuch Temple more explanatory in their performance of Hindu rituals.

Furthermore, the Buccleuch Temple, like many of the other temples in Johannesburg, is largely self-sufficient. There are thus no real links with Durban, apart from a considerable base of devotees who are migrants from this city. They have built their own congregations and rely on their support to offer donations, and host festivals, regular *satsangs*, as well as co-ordinate feeding schemes and so on.

6.2 The need for temples in contemporary Johannesburg

The need to build temples in Johannesburg is expressed as meeting the spiritual requirements of the growing population. Meeting devotees' spiritual needs is emphasised.

The priest of the Madhya Kailash Temple expressed the need to build a temple in the area due to the influx of Indians: "ten to 15 years back, there were very few temples. In Gauteng there are many Indians now. Some moved from Indians areas, others from Natal. And they live mainly in Midrand. Also, there is lots of vacant land and many different income levels." This confirms the dispersion of Hindus across Johannesburg, while alluding to class differences among Indians.

A member of the temple committee at the Marlboro Temple also remarked that the need for the temple arose in response to population growth in the area which created a spiritual vacuum amongst locals. The need has grown with the population, and there was great support from the broader community for a temple. In fact, "the current area is too small and we are expanding." The respondent added:

> The Hindu community was here already. [There were] many Hindus in Wynberg (about six kilometres away from the temple) but when the temple was built here, it moved to Marlboro. But the temple was only built for the current moment; it only catered for 150 people. But now the need is larger. There was no temple in Wynberg. If people wanted to celebrate, it used to be in peoples' houses.

According to the priest, the Marlboro Temple needs to accommodate around 500 worshippers, as the number of patrons is growing steadily. At present, it accommodates approximately 300 devotees.

The Kali Amman priestess also referred to the spiritual needs of devotees in the area as the reason for the temple's establishment: "It's the help they are getting. If the temple is having *Shivaratri*, all the devotees can give *Abishekgam* to the deity. At normal temples, you can only see the *murti*. We observe all the calendar events. The only festival we can't accommodate is *Kavadi* because of the space."[62] In more practical terms, this means that the kind of Hinduism practiced in

[62]*Thaipoosam Kavadi* is a major festival celebrated among Hindus in which the devotee takes a vow with God to gain assistance through the obstacles of life and to request guidance. The deity prayed to is Lord *Murugan*. 'Carrying *Kavadi*' (where a heavy wooden and decorated

Johannesburg, as compared to Durban, is more intimate and geared toward the individual needs of devotees. At the Kali Amman temple, devotees can spend a longer period of time inside the inner sanctum of the temple where they can almost privately pay obeisance. This is characteristic of the larger temples of Johannesburg as well where, despite the numbers, devotees have more time to practice their rituals. Interestingly, this is in contrast to the more general comments by respondents on the "faster pace" of Johannesburg. It seems that when it comes to religion, the pace slows and devotees are able to pray without being rushed.

The priestess went on to explain that one can receive personal succour from the Kali Amman Temple and underscored the central importance of receiving *trance* there:

> If you go to Melrose Temple, there is no one personally helping you. No one is there to bless you every week. Here, people get the dot and if they have *trance*, it can come out and you will feel better.[63] There are more people with *trance* these days. And Mother can help you take it out.

The priestess raises interesting points on competition between temples in Johannesburg. In mentioning the larger Melrose Temple (a larger temple with more devotees attending regularly) which is, in her opinion, without anyone "personally helping you", she draws a contrast with the smaller form of her Kali Amman Temple. This is important in that it reveals that personal attention is important for devotees. I am inclined to agree with the priestess that larger temples, especially those in India, for example, have an extremely rushed procession as the patron has to queue for an extended period of time, only to see the image of the deity for a few seconds before moving on.

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construct is carried, often accompanied by body and tongue piercings) was explained to me as, "as I carry this burden on my shoulder, so too does God carry my burdens on His shoulder." More detail is provided in Chapter nine.

[63]To 'get the dot' refers to receiving the blessings of 'Mother' and 'taking out *trance*' refers to the devotee allowing a Hindu deity to inhabit him/her. On the latter, I have observed a devotee, first blessed by the 'Mother' then inhabited by the power of *Hanuman*, a popular Hindu God mentioned in the *Ramayana*, after which he seemed infused with additional physical strength. The act of 'taking out *trance*' is as much a phenomenon of the devotee being blessed as it is a spectacle of faith and miracle that the rest of the congregation observes.

They are even turnstiles in place for crowd control. Many temples in Durban have the same problem, such as the very populous Isipingo Rail Mariammen Temple, especially during the Easter weekend when thousands of devotees attend and such haste cannot be avoided. The priestess has a good point when she states that smaller temples provide a more intimate setting where prayer and obeisance can be patiently done and one-on-one attention is offered by the priest or priestess.

6.3 The activities of Hindu temples in Johannesburg

The activities of temples in Johannesburg include regular prayer, with devotees and respondents emphasising the increasing number of people who patronise the temples each week and during festivals. As with neo-Hindu organisational activity, temple activities include discourses on Hindu philosophy and other intellectual aspects of the faith. Temples provide a site where cultural activities and festivals (hosted by various organisations) take place.

Most of the temples have regular programmes, with attendance varying according to the day it is held and the significance of the event. A devotee of the Kali Amman Temple remarked that prayers were conducted every Tuesday. "We get about 200 to 300 devotees":

> The aunty does her prayers and [blesses] everyone and does a special kind of reading where she gets into *trance* and talks to people.[64] Our temple is so powerful that our Kali temple at one point actually oozes ashes from the face and over the years from a standard colour it changed from a bright red to maroon to pink to beige to blue. Having witnessed that, I think is a miracle on its own and [it] increased my faith so much more. We perform a standard activity on auspicious days as per the Hindu calendar. We try to practice those festivities as they appear on the calendar.

[64]The "aunty" the interviewee is referring to is the Mother or priestess of the Kali Amman Temple referred to earlier.

The priest at the Buccleuch Temple explained that during Sunday *satsang*, he sets aside 15 to 20 minutes to deliver a talk on aspects of religion where participants engage in the topic. Topics cover both the spiritual and the secular. For example, "basic life skills" were discussed along with discourses on inspiration and hope. The Guru stated that his talks were especially geared towards those with debilitating health conditions and emotional problems. Furthermore, the congregation raises questions at these sessions and the intention of the talk is to "clear any doubts" in the minds of devotees. He believes that these gatherings provide the perfect forum for such discussions.

Having attending several of these discussions and interacted with the participants, I observed that the vast majority were migrants who moved from Durban to Johannesburg. Being located in an area where many ex-Durban residents now reside, it is apparent why so many of the temple's patrons are from Durban. However, the temple does not only serve the ex-Durban community living in the Buccleuch area. It serves a wide range of constituent groups from various areas, and this can be seen in its outreach or *seva* programmes, emphasised by the presiding priest.

Devotees are encouraged to engage in programmes of *seva*. Feeding is done on a weekly basis and the temple caters for a number of 'homes' in Johannesburg run by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that serve various recipient groups, such as abused women and children, disabled persons and the aged. The Guru related that they are based in impoverished, predominantly Black townships in and around Johannesburg, such as Alexandra, Germiston and Buccleuch, where the temple is located. They include Rembrandt Park Primary School, Hospice and Rehab Centre, and Talk to Me Orphanage in Alexandra; and the Zicabengeleni Self-help Association For Physically Disabled in Germiston.

According to the Guru, "the devotees of the temple assist with preparation and serving etc." Because of a lack of resources, the temple does not deliver food; "most of the homes come to collect." On that point, the Guru of the Buccleuch Temple mentioned that a new temple project was currently underway whereby the temple would relocate to larger premises in Buccleuch with more infrastructure that will make its outreach programme more effective. I asked the Guru why *seva* is so important at the temple and about its significance for devotees. He explained that "from a spiritual perspective, it is *Kriya Shakti*. *Kriya Shakti* is a tenet of Mother Worship whereby

devotees are encouraged to demonstrate our worship in the form of action. *Seva* is the most appropriate form of action. We are serving Her creation."

Most of the major world religions promote altruistic or prosocial behaviour, often ascribing such behaviour and outlooks to common ethical and moral foundations (Ahmed 2009; Habito and Inaba 2006; Neusner and Chilton 2005; Stark 2001). Hinduism is no different and for many Hindus, altruism invests the Hindu with obligations and commitment to others, often in the form of 'one's duty' toward others. These duties can be at the societal or community level (*seva*) or even within the family as parents look after children or Hindu men and women 'serve' their spouses. This is contained in one of the three major spiritual paths toward God-realisation, *karma yoga* (see Glossary). I would argue that such altruistic impulses are especially important for Hindu migrants seeking to settle and belong in new destination cities. Duties are important ways and means for the migrant to integrate into the new destination city, as they involve interaction with others from the temple community and broader society, as well as develop a positive self-image founded on a moral and ethical identity, generosity, compassion and other spiritual principles. From a micro-sociological perspective, these spiritual principles and emotions are vital to migrants settling in and belonging to new destination cities.

Apart from encouraging prosocial behaviour and service-oriented philosophies, temples in Johannesburg were engaged in various other activities. The priest at the Marlboro Temple spoke of the various activities that take place at the temple, which hosts cultural activities, festivals and, interestingly, other neo-Hindu organisational activity. The priest referred to 12 neo-Hindu organisations that use the temple as premises to conduct their worship and work:

> One good thing is that Hindus believe that festivals unite the people. There are over 26 festivals in the year [encompassing the dominant Hindu traditions]. This temple has all 26 festivals. The many festivals and activities reach out to the community. There are many devotees to Mother *Shakti* and during *Navaratri* they come. We also have yoga classes, teaching classes and so on. One is festivals and the other are activities that bring people together … There are more than 12 organisations that use this place. There are two dancing schools. There is *Bharatanatyam*. We have Chinmaya mission, Satguru foundation, also

> from India (Isha foundation), *Swami* Narayan do their *satsangs* here. RSS come here as well.

Mention of the RSS is interesting. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is a transnational Hindu nationalist, paramilitary organisation that is regarded by some as the 'parent' organisation of the current ruling political party in India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Critics have accused the RSS of being extremist, with its members allegedly participating in violence against minorities in India, such as Muslims and Dalits (See Anderson and Damle 2019; Ram-Prasad 2003). Given the contentious image of the organisation, it is noteworthy that the RSS' reach extends to South Africa and Johannesburg, with implications for Hindu identity in the country.

Respondent Eight, a 50-year old male teacher who had lived in Johannesburg for more than 30 years mentioned his ties with the RSS and the work he had done with them. I did not probe on the nature of the work and the exact nature of his ties to the organisation, nor did I explore the image of the RSS and its operations in South Africa. The national links that the RSS has in South Africa and the implications for political Hinduism and Hindu identity could be the subject of future research. Suffice to say that it appears that not many Hindus in South Africa know of the RSS and/or are actively involved in its projects.

In summing up the activities of Hindu temples in Johannesburg, it can be seen that patronage of temples is increasing as more Hindus move to Johannesburg and seek spiritual instruction and guidance. To do so, they become involved in the activities of one of several temple societies. Temple officials and priests emphasised that the numbers are growing and this can be seen in plans for temples to accommodate the increase. In this scenario, temples will continue to spring up in various locales as the temple remains the central Hindu institution.

It can also be observed that the distinction between neo-Hindu activities and temple activities is blurred. While participants in neo-Hindu organisations were at pains to express the difference between their "higher" form of worship (prioritising the philosophical and the intellectual over ritual) and the "lower" form of ritual performed at temples, it is apparent that the distinction is not clear in practice. Instead, the activities of temples in Johannesburg contain a mix of ritual (as

ordinarily performed at any Hindu temple) and philosophical/meaning-oriented discussions. I am inclined to agree with Kumar (2013, 208) who is sceptical of any clear cut contrast between ritual-based temple worship and 'higher' philosophical Hinduism. As shown in Chapter two on the history of Hinduism in the Transvaal, the region has always witnessed the coexistence and blurred mix of rituals and philosophy. As seen with temples, such a tradition continues in contemporary Johannesburg and relates to the multi-layered experience of Hinduism in the region.

A further comment can be made on the language used at temples in Johannesburg. Most Hindu rituals are conducted in Sanskrit and in some cases Tamil or Hindi, depending on the presiding priest and his/her training or vernacular background. For example, the priest at the Madhya Kailash Temple is known to carry out rituals in both Sanskrit and Tamil. However, when interacting with devotees, English is the preferred medium, which is understandable given that many Indian South Africans have limited knowledge of Sanskrit or ethnic languages such as Hindi, Gujarati, Tamil or Telugu (see Freund 1995, 87; Ganesh 2010, 32). The rituals conducted between temple priests and devotees are thus a mixture of vernacular (during rituals, prayer and ceremonies) and English (during interaction between devotee and priest). At the Buccleuch Temple, the presiding priest conducts discourses entirely in English, because the purpose of the discourse is to convey direct, clear and practical meaning to the largely Indian South African membership base. As younger South African Indian worshippers enter the fold of temple worship, it can be assumed that even fewer will be able to speak any of the ethnic vernacular languages or indeed Sanskrit. Yet, I would assert that the use of Sanskrit will continue to hold almost mystical power over devotees in that while they may not understand any of the meanings associated with recitations of ancient texts uttered by the priest, there is still deep reverence for and faith in the sacredness of the mantras and invocations and their effect on their lives. There is nothing peculiar about this. It is akin, for example, to the relationship that most Indian South African Muslims have with the Arabic language.

6.4 Patronage at the Hindu temples of Johannesburg

Temples in Johannesburg do not reach out to new devotees in any explicit drive. Instead, it is taken for granted that Hindus will seek out temples for their own spiritual needs, especially upon migration to a new locale.

The priest at the Madhya Kailash Temple noted the influx of people moving from KwaZulu-Natal to seek work in Johannesburg. He stated that, in addition, several thousand people had arrived from India in the past few decades. His observation was that they were predominantly working in the Information Technology (IT) field. Johannesburg is the economic hub of South Africa and attracts skilled migrants. Migrants from both Durban and abroad, the priest explained, "look for temples on their own. They want to stay involved in temple activities. They miss that when they migrate from Durban and India. They talk to people and people tell them to come to temple. This temple is convenient for people who live here."

The priestess at the Kali Amman temple also stated that the temple has come to be known through word of mouth, but that social media, the temple website, and Facebook, are also important in drawing worshippers:

> We've recently had a comedy and *bhangra* [dance] night as well in order to raise funds for our *Kali* prayers. We've got numerous amounts of shirts and jackets and clothing with our temple's name on it. So going around to other temples to play *bhajans* and practice, we wear our shirts and jackets and people see us and ask questions.

It appears that devotees who were used to temple-based worship in their areas of origin may be making the decision to settle within the vicinity of a temple when they move to Johannesburg, and once there, seek out a temple as temple-based worship has been a central part of their lives.

6.5 Hindu temple design in contemporary Johannesburg

Temple design in Johannesburg is expressed as neither north Indian nor south Indian. This reiterates the attempt to design and build temples in a more ecumenical manner, catering for the needs of all Hindus in a given area.

Several features define and differentiate north Indian from south Indian temples. These relate to the size of the temple (with south Indian temples being much larger), ritual modes, forms of presiding deities, and architecture. They originate in India but were carried to South Africa where temples were built in the same traditions, though without strict adherence. After all, temple priests and committees want to attract as many followers as possible and to cater for all devotees. Therefore, most temple communities are open-minded about the inclusion of other traditions and ritual practices and try to accommodate all the major deities. By and large, differentiation among temple communities in South Africa is based on language. South Indian temples are dominated by Tamil-speaking Indians, who constitute the majority, but also include members of the minority Telugu-speakers; while north Indian temples are dominated by devotees from Gujarati and Hindi speaking backgrounds.

The priest from the Madhya Kailash Temple noted that the *agamas* are the books that speak about the design of temples.[65] "Normally, a temple is built according to the human form. Sanctum Santorum is the head. The middle is the body. *Goparum* is the main gate to enter" [as it applies to the south Indian tradition]. The Marlboro Temple priest stated that the temple was neither north nor south Indian. "It is more Gujarat temple. And so many Gujarati speaking people come here. But keeping in mind that all Hindus come here as well, it is a Hindu temple first. In this temple, there is *Radha Krishna* [north Indian], there is *Muruga* or *Kartikeya* [south Indian], *Durga* [arguably both north Indian and south Indian], there is *Rama Sita* [north Indian], and so on."

The priest of the Melrose Temple also expressed the view that the architecture is neither north nor south Indian. "Most of the temples in India are devoted to one deity. In South Africa, we built all deities to allow for all kinds of worship. One can do *Navagrahas* here as well. There is a marriage tree as well."

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[65]*Agamas* refer to a body of texts that are fairly recent, when compared to the *Vedas* or other Hindu texts. "Though many of the *agamas* of the diverse *tantric* traditions are philosophical, others focus on *Shaivite* temple ritual, including the building and layout of temples, the installation of icons, and the ritual forms to be used. In this sense, they are foundational texts for temple Hinduism" (Jones and Ryan 2007, 13).

The priest's emphasis on *navagrahas* and the marriage tree relates to two unique practices in South African temples. The *navagrahas* and their worship concern nine deities associated with the nine planets in Hindu cosmology; when attending temple, most Hindus walk around the nine deities in an attempt to remove all bad luck.[66] Another interesting feature of worship in South African temples is the presence of a sacred "banyan tree", also known as the "marriage tree". Newly married couples go around the tree and pray for a prosperous family life and children.

The statements by the priests from both the Marlboro and Melrose Temples attest to the fact that migration to South Africa led to the merging of north Indian and south Indian temple styles. While this distinction is maintained in India, it never took as firm a hold in South Africa. This is due to the arrival of indentured labourers in South Africa who could not maintain a strict division of practices on separate temple grounds, given the lack of available resources. Instead, their practices had to be shared and north Indian merged with south Indian temple styles. This confluence of styles is common to both Durban and Johannesburg, and indeed across South Africa where temples are found.

6.6 Perceptions of neo-Hindu organisational worship by Hindu temple patrons

Temple worshippers were critical of the bureaucratic and institutional mode of worship inherent to neo-Hindu organisations. Respondents were especially critical of the Guru-based mode of worship which was seen to be unnecessary for a direct relationship with God.

As it will be shown in the following chapter (Chapter seven), participants and advocates for the neo-Hindu mode of worship were overtly critical of temple and home worshippers who, in their more traditional modes of worship, favoured rituals over scriptural study, philosophy and especially Guru-based worship. Neo-Hindus regarded temple worshippers as following a 'lower'

[66]The nine planets of Hindu cosmology are understood anthropomorphically with features and representations, as well as effects on human lives. They are either auspicious (causing good fortune and other positive effects) or inauspicious (in which case they require supplication). The nine planets are: Sun (Soorya); Moon (Chandra); Mars (Mangla/Sevvai; Mercury (Budha); Jupiter (Guru); Venus (Sukra); Saturn (Shani); Upper lunar node (Rahu); and, Lower lunar node (Ketu).

method of worship and neglecting the necessary role of the Guru in spiritual growth. Conversely, it was found that temple worshippers were equally critical of neo-Hindu organisations and commented on the "popularity", the "bureaucracy" and the need for validation that defines the neo-Hindu mode of worship.

The Mother at the Kali Amman Temple in Malvern, Johannesburg East remarked on the pursuit of "popularity" that defines most neo-Hindu organisations. She said that people decide to join committees or boards "…but sometimes you start to neglect prayer to become popular. I'm not saying it happens everywhere, but I have seen a few organisations that work like that." When probed on what the respondent believed neo-Hindu organisations engage in, the Mother remarked on her sense that bureaucracy defines their operations: "…there are rules in place ... committees and boards … always seek permission and refer your questions. It shouldn't be like that."

It can be corroborated that neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg are highly structured entities with distinct lines of hierarchy and delegated functioning. I can attest from my personal experience to the rigorous procedure required to obtain permission to conduct an interview with the "right" participant in the organisation. While this was in terms of the research process and not general participation, my experience also showed that any Hindu can become involved in neo-Hindu organisations without much "bureaucratic" hassle.

Respondent Two, a 39-year old male who is a regular temple-goer that favours the non-institutional mode of worship and service, remarked that people join religious organisations to be part of something, but that anyone can contribute without necessarily being a part of "a group or committee." "They join a committee where I think, you are forced. You are now committed to this and meetings are set out; you have to go there every day. For me, that's too structured and too forced." The respondent emphasised that being a Hindu and being of service to others can be done privately and at a temple without "validation" from others.

Again, the highly structured form of neo-Hindu organisations is seen as unfavourable to being a Hindu and truly connecting with God; it is believed that such rules and meetings are unnecessary for proper worship. The respondent also made reference to the need for validation that underpins neo-Hindu organisational worship, which is absent in temple worship. He was clear in his preference for temple worship which is made out to be freer and less "forced".

Similarly, a temple worshipping devotee was clear on the lack of appeal of organisational worship:

> The Tamil community I was joining was quite involved in Sai Baba [organisation]. I didn't exactly take to it. I did see so called miracles and I do admit there was something to think about, but I never looked into it. All my life, all the divinities I worshipped was enough. I never thought of Sai Baba as God we need to worship. Maybe he was like Jesus, the son of God. I always thought that there was a higher being. And these are just disciples of the higher being that we get into contact with. To call them God and worship, that doesn't appeal to me.

This last point is a critical departure from the basic premise of neo-Hindu organisational worship, viz., the veneration and following of a Guru. Temple worshippers expressly avoid following a Guru and attend temple to develop a direct relationship with God. While temple priests are often referred to as 'Guru', they are not direct or indirect embodiments of God and this is a definitive difference between temple worshippers and Guru-based worship.

Respondent one, a 24-year old who had lived in Johannesburg for 18 years, gave his opinion on why people may want to join neo-Hindu organisations, expressing the view that "it is hard for people to have faith in something they can't see or talk to or get a reply from. Lots of people look for that kind of guidance. But people can get lost in that." The respondent was critical of Guru worship: "…if you're following the Guru all the time, you are being led. If the Guru says you must walk barefoot every day, you will do it. Because you are being led."

6.7 Priesthood and Guru-worship in the temples of contemporary Johannesburg

Temples in Johannesburg are marked by the presence of priests and priestesses who also act as Gurus. While differentiated from the Guru of a neo-Hindu organisational form, these priests similarly provide a personal and emotional relationship with devotees.

The priest of the Buccleuch Temple emphasised that there is no fixed definition of a Guru. From his perspective, a Guru is loosely defined as a teacher:

> But a spiritual Guru is about the ability the person has to be community-oriented but also to lead by example. What I try to do is to be as open and transparent as possible and I make myself accessible. People want more than spiritual help; they also need human interaction. That is also part of my role as a Guru. On a Saturday I do spiritual counselling. People want prayer but they also want a Guru to intervene in their lives humanely. Gurus have become very secluded and they hide behind their qualifications and their philosophy. But in this day and age, we need to help people who are on the verge of committing suicide for example. I deal with cases of rape, abuse, drugs, multimillion Rand businessmen who come to de-stress. Gurus often don't avail themselves in this way. And all of this is free of charge. This is how I am accessible to the community.

The Marlboro Temple's priest stated that a Guru is like *Mata Pita*, like mother and father. He expressed his personal relationships with devotees thus:

> I make time to see people in hospital and pray for them. I do astrology for young people and do marriage counselling as well. My base is always what is in the scriptures. If you are going away from the basic *dharma*, these problems arise.

The Guru is thus expected to serve multiple purposes, being a teacher, tutor, counsellor, mentor, sage, spiritual mentor and much more. This has its secular parallel in the rise of mentors and personal or life coaches to assist people to cope with the stresses of personal life.

This can place huge pressure on temple-based Gurus. The Kali Amman Mother, for example, remarked on her erstwhile function as a counsellor to the community and her decision to eventually put a stop to this role due to her neglect of family responsibilities. Being a counsellor to the community on matters beyond spirituality, she soon saw that her personal life was suffering as a result of the pressure placed on her time, and she thus decided to help people on Tuesdays only, "...especially when they crying at my door."

Gurus stationed at temples around Johannesburg are not exclusively South African but include those from India and Sri Lanka in particular. This influx of international priests into Johannesburg

was corroborated by my interviewees and observations and some of the findings and insights are presented in Chapter eight of this study. Suffice to say at this point, that, as a result of transnational flows in the post-apartheid period, many priests from abroad entered into the country to ply their services in temples around Johannesburg as well as Durban.

6.8 Differences between the temples in Durban and Johannesburg

Devotees largely consider temples in Durban to be different from those in Johannesburg, seeing the latter as more commercial, more concerned with pomp and status, and less sincere.

On the question of whether temples in Durban are different from those of Johannesburg and to what extent, the following **Figure 6** presents the survey data:

Figure 6: Hindu perceptions of whether temples in Johannesburg are different to those in Durban

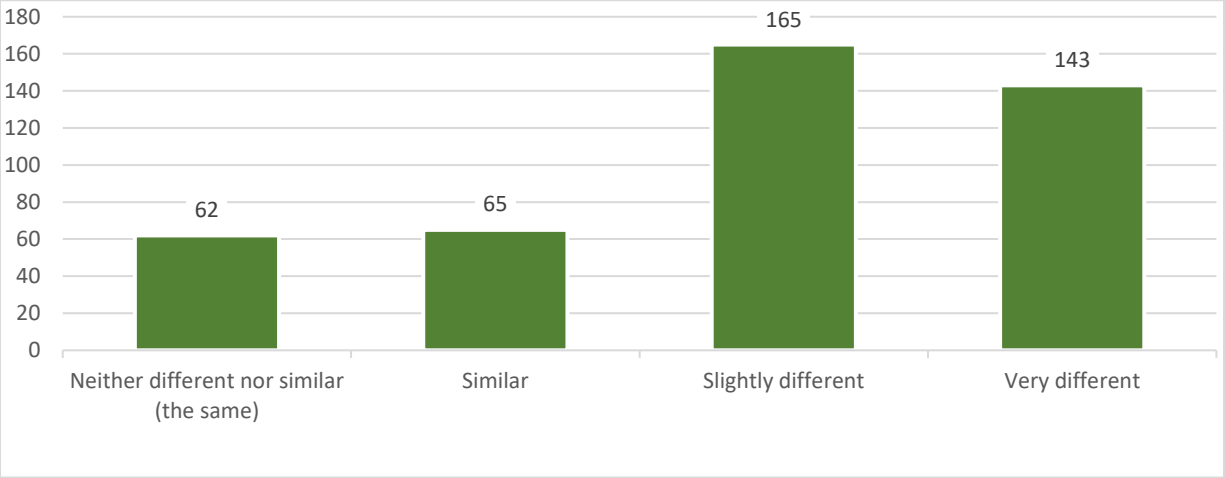


Figure 6 above shows that of the 435 respondents who did not belong to neo-Hindu organisations, 165 (37.9 percent) regarded temples in Johannesburg as "slightly different" from those in Durban and 143 (32.8 percent) regarded them as "very different". Thus 70.7 percent of respondents regarded temples in Johannesburg as different to some extent from those in Durban. These are significant numbers. When probed in interviews about such differences, one respondent remarked critically on the commercialism at temples in Johannesburg:

> I have heard that the Melrose Temple is very commercial. The Guru drives a nice car. He has an iPad, etc. This is not traditional. People know that it's a very wealthy temple. Therefore, they attract wealthy people. I would say that Johannesburg is more commercial in temples.

It needs to be borne in mind that this last statement relies on second hand information. It is purely a perception and while perceptions are important, this research cannot vouch for whether it is right or wrong. What is important is the statement that the temple attracts "wealthy people". Many temples in Johannesburg attract people from various economic strata. Observing the parking area of temples in Johannesburg, there is a considerable presence of high-end German vehicles but also cars of more modest purchase price. It would be erroneous to assume that one temple in particular attracts only the wealthiest Indians in Johannesburg.

Yet this statement was echoed by other respondents who also felt that some temples in Johannesburg are more commercial in their operations and that this was seen in 'rich person's' patronage of some temples. This is ironic as the Hindu worldview accepts and even promotes the pursuit of wealth or *artha*. As a distinct goal in life, valid in its own right, the *grihastha* or householder should earn a profitable living, providing for the family. However, such a pursuit should be in line with *dharma* or righteous living and remains subordinate to the ultimate aim of Hindu life – *moksha* or liberation. Many Johannesburg Hindus migrated to the inland city precisely because of economic mobility and many have achieved this. But interspersing with the commonplace ambitions of Johannesburg Hindus is the almost cynical observance of the wealth of others, even at sites of religious worship.

Respondent Eight, a 50-year old teacher who has been in Johannesburg for more than 30 years, also spoke of the commercialism in Johannesburg temples:

> I have been to Actonville [Johannesburg East] temple twice, I think, once for *Shivaratri* and second time for *Mariammen* prayers. I used to go to Isipingo [Rail Mariammen] temple when I was in Durban but since I was up here and married, I went to Actonville. I didn't

> like that temple very much because people are more money-oriented there. So the wealthy get recognised and the rest are ignored. So I stopped going there. I find more sincerity in Durban temples than here. Back in Durban, priests don't tell you to bring specific amounts of money…

The priest at the Buccleuch Temple remarked that he had visited many temples in Johannesburg, and his view was that people in Johannesburg "... kind of stood there and prayed in a different way from Durban.... I watched the culture of devotees and people just prayed and left. That was it. There wasn't a community of devotees being built. Yes, their faith was there but it was alone, isolated." The priest added:

> I asked, is this the only way people were going to pray? The Transvaal Indians were very different. They were successful prosperity wise. And that is attested to a lot of hard work. But something was missing and this was a community of devotees. I took a decision to become a leader and get involved in starting this temple.

In assessing these comments, we should add that these differences are probably to be expected. Devotees grew up in community temples where, very likely, their parents and grandparents had prayed, and where they probably knew groups of devotees. Coming to Gauteng they were compelled to attend a new temple where most devotees were strangers, and this must be unsettling for those who could not expect the Durban experience to be replicated, as that was built over decades of worship. It could thus be argued that the sentiments expressed in these statements, indicating experiential differences between Durban and Johannesburg, are to be expected.

6.9 Preferences on where to worship among Hindus in Johannesburg

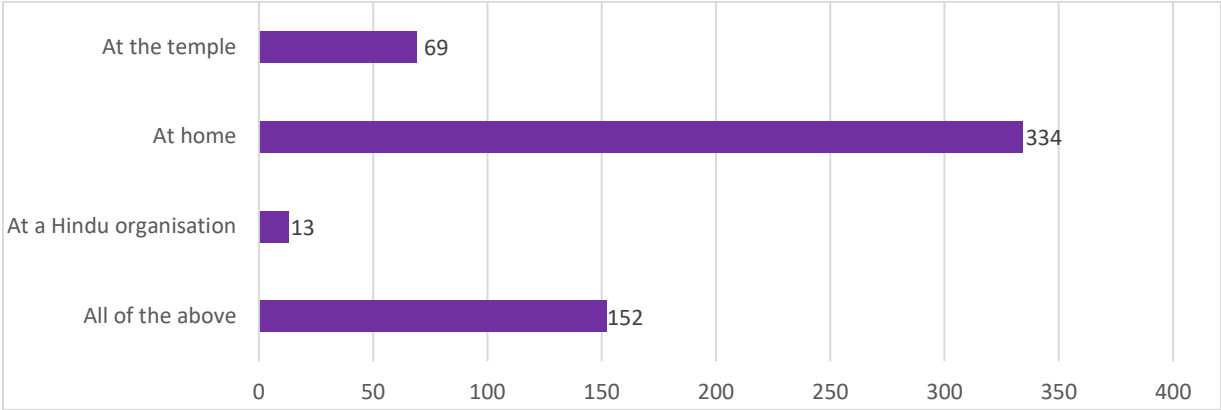
Hindus in Johannesburg prefer worshipping at home rather than at the temple or at an organisation. However, there are specific fulfilments that are only possible at temples such as the observance of festivals and ritual prayers that require a temple-based priest. The social belonging of temple worship that is absent from home worship, is emphasised.

The survey data confirms that the Hindu respondents predominantly prefer worshipping at home rather than at a temple or at a Hindu organisation. Of the 568 responses, 334 respondents (58.8 percent) preferred worshipping at home while 69 (12.1 percent) preferred worshipping at a temple. However, it is important to note that 152 respondents (26.7 percent) recorded that they worship at all sites of Hindu practice, that is, at Hindu organisations, temples and at home. This reveals a portion of the population who have no explicit preference when it comes to prayer and devotion. The low percentage of devotees who preferred worship at a temple comes as no surprise given that temple attendance is not compulsory in Hinduism and that the choice of place of worship is eclectic.[67]

Moodley (2015b, 3) notes that temple worship in South Africa is mostly limited to weekly attendance and prayer. The author provides three reasons why this is the case: as a result of urban design, many Hindus do not live close to temples and are not able to visit temples daily; long working hours limit the time available for temple worship; and, where Hindus would wish to visit the temple in the evenings, the fear of crime prohibits such (2015b, 3). I would agree that this tendency to mainly visit temples over the weekends is a feature of Johannesburg worship, as there are certainly more devotees on weekends than during the week. **Figure 7** illustrates Hindu preferences on where to worship.

[67]As Baumann (2010, 248) writes, "...temples, and what goes on in them, are but one part of Hinduism as a whole." Referring to Fuller (1988: 50), the author states that much of Hindu religious practice takes place "...in the home, or in the fields or on the riverbanks; some Hindus hardly ever visit temples at all and many certainly engage in as much religious activity outside temples as in them."

Figure 7: Hindu's preferences on where to worship



With regard to preference for home or temple worship, Respondent Three, a retired female in her 60s, stated that she prefers "a bit of both", not necessarily choosing one or other. By way of example, the respondent spoke of being able to conduct *Shivaratri* and *Kali* prayers at home and at the temple. Respondent Five, a 41-year old male, explained the attraction and importance of the temple in terms of the emotional and social aspect of temple worship, the "celebration of God" found amongst others, and the value of a priest at temples:

> I think our home is where you practice what your parents and grandparents told you. The reason we go to temples and other places of worship is because you meet other people there and it's a celebration of God there. You celebrate with other people. You are linked with other people when your family comes and you celebrate. At home, we pray and feel contentment. But, when you go to temple and pray with other people, there's another feeling. A more spiritual feeling. Because we are on the same level with other people. There's this intense connection. You can get goose bumps.

The respondent added that certain rituals and prayers cannot be done at home, such as the *nine Saturdays prayer* over a procession of days (see *navagrahas* in the Glossary). This is one of the most important points made by Durkheim (2006) on his sociological treatises on religion where he argued that communal worship in places like temples brought devotees together physically, leading to social interaction and communication that strengthened social bonds. Durkheim's point was that religion was built through and was an expression of the community.

Respondent Six, a 38-year old male who had lived in Johannesburg for 15 years, remarked that temple worship is more "elaborate" and reiterated the importance of priestly knowledge of rituals:

> The temple priest knows some of the deeper meanings of prayers. Prayer is never wrong, but they know how to do it in a correct fashion. There are parts we miss at home. Not to the detriment of the prayer. Just that we don't know it. We don't speak the language. And we don't understand the parts. Even with *katha and janda* in the Hindi side, there's seven chapters that you have to go through. And understanding each one [and] why. That a priest knows because he has done it hundreds of times. I've been to *katha and janda* for the past ten years now. Ask me what's the first chapter and I won't know.

Several other respondents also described the differences between temple and home worship, with the figure and role of the priest being important. "At home, you are doing it yourself ... mostly you sit in front of the lamp and you pray." Visiting a temple is important "because they draw in a certain power as well. If that temple is built properly, it will draw in good energy. And it helps people who go there." Another devotee stated that "communal praying is powerful", marked by vibrations and energy. Furthermore, the centrality of the priest assists temple-goers who often do not know the rituals, "so they almost outsource the function to the priest at the temple who does it for them." In Hinduism, Brahmins are recognised as a priestly *caste* who are deemed to have spiritual authority and are respected as such, and called upon to teach the Hindu scriptures and officiate during festivals. Not all priests in this study are of the Brahmin *caste* but their authority is respected. More on Hindu priesthood in Johannesburg is covered in Chapter eight.

One of the respondents who visited the temple regularly added that he personally favoured the spiritual side of worship which was best done through private worship. He expressed the distinction between public and private worship as follows:

> Private [worship] I can do it everywhere by myself. In the car, bathroom, wherever I feel the need or want. In public, at a festival, you following others or others are following you. What you are doing and the reasoning, the next person may not share. The big festivals are

> more commonalities. The private is more your own personal needs. What do you want to derive out of it? When you are really down and out, when you at your rock bottom, are they sitting in front of church or priest, saying "please help me"? Or are they in their bedroom praying directly to God. That's private. It depends on your need.

Temple worship and achieving spirituality need not be two exclusive aspects of worship. People's experiences of religion are subjective and must be accounted for. While temple worship helps to build community through specific laid-down rituals, rites and ceremonies, each individual also has an internal, spiritual feeling and many feel an urge to search for this higher truth. The degree to which communal or individual prayer has more meaning will vary from person to person, but both aspects are important.

6.10 Conclusion

In assessing the unique features of temple Hinduism in Johannesburg, several points stand out. The first is that priests in my qualitative sample spoke of the questioning nature of Hindus in Johannesburg, precisely because they are of a younger generation, successful and often educated, and are less inclined to perform rituals and carry out traditions without knowing why. Priests related that English is the preferred medium of explanation and guidance for many Hindus in Johannesburg because of this need to express the meaning and significance of why certain things are done in the ambit of their Hindu faith. This has led priests presiding at temples and itinerant priests travelling around the Johannesburg area performing various rituals, rites, and ceremonies in Hindu homes to be more explanatory in approach. This trend is likely to continue for the benefit of questioning Hindus in Johannesburg, but is unlikely to result in the diminished use of Sanskrit, Tamil or Hindi in the performance of the practices themselves.

Second, temple worship in Johannesburg is markedly quieter and more serene than some of the busier temples of Durban and this supports the view that Hindus in Johannesburg can pray and meditate on their deities or principles without being disturbed or rushed. I can attest to this finding by means of simple observation. Because of the smaller numbers of Hindus residing in Johannesburg and the increasing network of temples in popular Indian areas, a devotee will not

experience a busy, rushed prayer at most temples in the region. Of course, during festivals and other major prayer dates, this changes and the social mix of Hindus at temples becomes less peaceful, replaced by the excitement and fanfare of collective worship (This is discussed in Chapter nine on festivals).

Temples in Johannesburg perform the vital function of coalescing a Hindu community in the region. If one closely considers the activities of temples, prayer surrounded by ritual, being blessed, and so on, are but one of many other social and cultural activities. Under the rubric of religion, such activities also include the important function of uniting a Hindu community resident in Johannesburg. Migrants and their families are provided with important social bonds, can provide for the religious education of their children, get involved in altruistic activities, learn cultural music and other arts, and so on. For migrants, especially those new to Johannesburg, the temple as the site where these activities take place is critically important.

As the findings demonstrate, the spiritual principles of altruism, prosocial ethics and moral sentiment toward fellow human beings are crucial components of migrant settlement in Johannesburg. While not exclusive to temple worship, as a Hindu may engage in *seva* without belonging to a temple or even frequenting one, it should be noted that temples are sites where allocentric discourse is conveyed, where such activities are planned and where the devotee can begin to 'get involved', be it in feeding schemes, donations and so on.

Patronage of Hindu temples in Johannesburg is on the increase and temples are planning to accommodate the increasing numbers and need. As indicated by a few of the respondents and based on this researcher's observations, new temples are springing up in areas hitherto absent of Hindu worship and current temples are being upgraded to accommodate more activities and larger numbers. It is indeed true that temples are important sites of religious worship for burgeoning communities. While sentiments were expressed on the commercialism of Hindu temples in Johannesburg, alongside a perceived lack of sincerity among priests or fellow patrons, I argue that this is to be expected. In answering the question on the differences between temples in Durban and those in Johannesburg, I also assume that the respondents related their nostalgia for the authenticity of Hindu temple life in Durban and a lack of familiarity with the temples of Johannesburg. Leaving

the community of one's birth to settle in another, bigger, faster and more anonymous city with a smaller population of Indians and Hindus was probably somewhat unsettling for migrants. Many expressed this as a critique of the quality and experience of temple worship in Johannesburg.

Finally, in concluding this chapter, I reiterate that the distinction between neo-Hindu activities and temple activities is not as clear cut as some would suggest. The activities of temples in Johannesburg contain a mix of the ritual (as ordinarily performed at any Hindu temple) and philosophical/meaning-oriented discussions. While this study touches on the differences between neo-Hindu and temple-based worship, and how one group of participants thinks of the practices of the other, this is not a key concern of this study. These difference are mentioned only because the respondents raised the issue. While not denying that Hinduism is complex and multi-faceted, this study is primarily concerned with how migrant Hindus, of whatever persuasion, outlook and practice, are transplanting their practices in Johannesburg as this is important in emphasising the salience of Hindu identity within a basket of identities.

Chapter 7: Neo-Hindu Organisations in Present-Day Johannesburg

As noted previously, neo-Hindu organisations emerged in nineteenth century India in an attempt to reform Hinduism to meet the challenges posed by Western missionaries. There is a growing body of work on the arrival of Hindu reformism in South Africa, particularly through neo-Hindu organisations (Gopalan 2010; Kumar 2013, Lal and Vahed 2013; Maharaj 2013; Schroder 2013; Singh 2013; Sooklal 1996; Vahed 2013). Kumar (2013, 127) suggests that Hindus in South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century found themselves in a situation similar to that of late nineteenth century India that made for the uptake of neo-Hinduism: they relied on Western education and the English language to survive in a foreign land; they lacked an understanding of the philosophical background of the rituals they carried out, and of Hinduism in general due to the majority being illiterate; many began to lose the oral traditions through which Hindu religious culture had been transmitted; and, social ills like divorce, gambling, and alcohol consumption, which stood in contrast to Hindu social values, afflicted the community.

Similarly, Singh writes that there was a realisation among some Hindus in South Africa that beliefs and practices "need not remain stagnant at the level of ritualism alone," and an interest in the philosophy of the scriptures such as the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* took root (Singh 2013, 71). "The mood among more conscientised Hindus brought them to the realisation that more Hindus needed to be educated in the scriptures in order to raise awareness about higher philosophies and practices than their routine ritualism" (Singh 2013, 71). This sowed the seeds for a reformist, neo-Hindu thrust in the context of the fear of Hindus converting to Christianity. Neo-Hindu organisations aimed to redirect Hindus to "their roots" by bringing *sadhus* and visiting lecturers from India to educate local Hindus (Kumar 2013, 128).

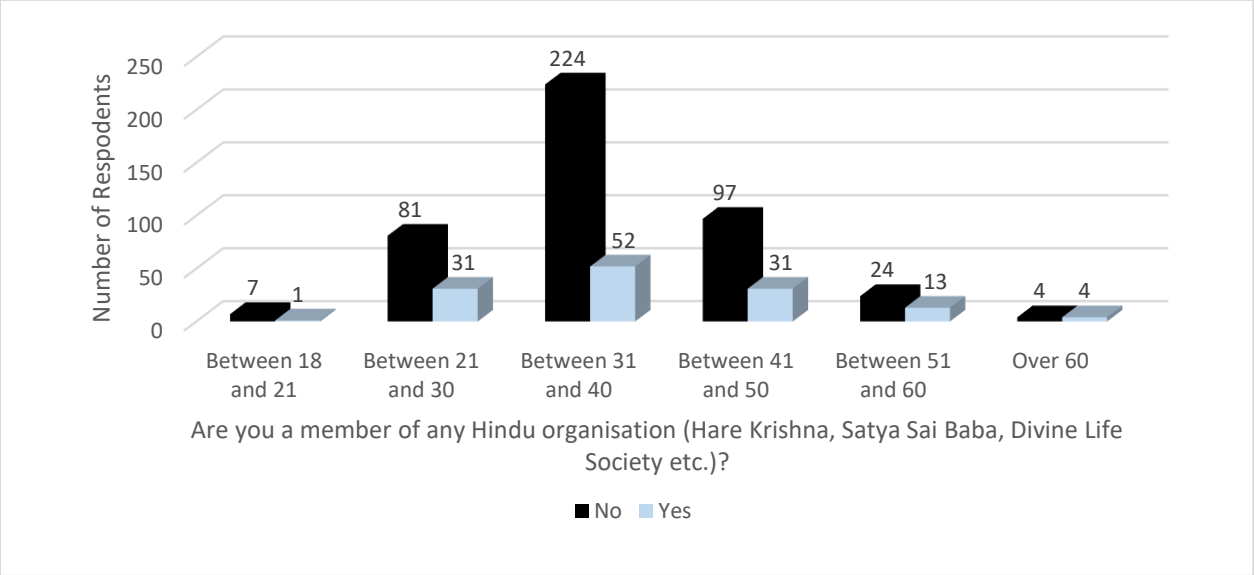
This chapter focuses on the role of neo-Hindu organisations among Johannesburg's Hindus. It covers the history and arrival of specific neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg, originating in India and coming via Durban; the purpose and activities of neo-Hindu organisations; challenges to further growth and expansion in Johannesburg; and the overarching unity/coordination of neo-Hinduism in the region. Each section begins with a finding in bold font that is then supported by the data. Further insights are presented using tables and figures constructed from the survey data.

This chapter seeks to evince the voices of the respondents while interspersing key analyses that contribute to answering the key research question and sub-questions.

7.1 Neo-Hindu Organisations

In terms of the survey data, of the 569 respondents who answered the question on whether they were members of neo-Hindu organisations, 437 responded "no" and 132 responded in the affirmative. Thus only 23.2 percent of the sample population were members of neo-Hindu organisations. **Figure 8** below shows that most of those who belonged to neo-Hindu organisations were older than 21. Only one respondent in the age category 18 to 21 belonged to a neo-Hindu organisation (12.5 percent) and the percentage of respondents who participated in neo-Hindu organisations was more or less consistent in the age categories 21 to 30, 31 to 40, and 41 to 50 (an average of 23 percent). However, the percentage of respondents who participated in neo-Hindu organisations rose to 35.1 percent in the age category 51 to 60 and 50 percent in the age category over 60. Older respondents (over 50 years of age) were thus more likely to participate in neo-Hindu organisations. One could postulate that since the search for meaning is more pronounced in neo-Hindu organisational worship, it could be the case that older respondents were participating in these organisations because of their own personal search for meaning. In other words, as one grows older, the need to reflect on one's religious practices and beliefs and to search for significance becomes greater. Such a finding would not be exclusive to Johannesburg and is likely to be seen in Durban and indeed other areas where neo-Hindu organisational life unfolds. Future studies could investigate this hypodissertation that older respondents are more likely to join neo-Hindu organisations because of an intrinsic interest in the meaning of religion and life.

Figure 8: Respondents belonging to neo-Hindu organisations by age category



Some of the key findings that emerged from discussions with interviewees are presented below.

7.2 Neo-Hindu organisational links with headquarters in India and a lineage of Indian cultural and religious transmission

Devotees in Johannesburg emphasised the linkages that neo-Hindu organisations have to headquarters in India in terms of their respective Gurus and a lineage of Indian cultural and religious transmission.

One neo-Hindu organisation that draws devotees is the Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation.[68] A respondent who is a staunch devotee related how his *Acharya* (Guru) received "transcendental knowledge" from his Guru in India:

[68]The international Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation (ASRF) lists its objective as spreading awareness of the absolute truth written in *Vedic* scriptures. The Guru my respondent refers to, is one of many Gurus under the ASRF, simply known as *Acharya* and is based in Durban. He is said to have received the teachings of the *Vedic* scriptures through his own 'transcendental' realisations and conclusions. Through *satsangs* and discourses, he conveys these teachings and "clears up the confusion with *Sanathan Dharma*" or the Eternal Truth of Hinduism. According to the organisation's website, "the ultimate duty of a *bona fide* spiritual master is to teach you who

> [Being a member of the organisation], [*Acharya*] went to India and met his Guru. He found that there was a following there but he did not know his mission. In that week he was in India, he got initiated and received transcendental knowledge. He became a *bona fide* spiritual Guru and received his power to heal. There was no formal training as such. It was transcendent. There is a lineage that *Acharya* is a part of where this knowledge is passed down from one Guru to the next.

This *Acharya* is the first *bona fide* guru of the Sri Ramanuj Sampradaya in Africa. My respondent was proud to assert this global connection with India but also the independence of his Guru: "He started in 2013... *Acharya* was then asked to form his own organisation in South Africa." While the *Acharya* was initiated in Siddarta *ashram* in India, which is a part of the Sri Ramanuj Foundation in India, he was institutionally independent and free to "follow his own path" in South Africa.

The Durban *ashram* gathers a following of approximately 30 to 40 people and *satsangs* take place every Tuesday. On Sundays, devotees meet at a second venue called the *Goshala* where cows are kept for sacred reverence and feeding. The feeding of cows is ascribed special religious significance in Hinduism. *Satsang* usually begins with the *Acharya* walking into the venue accompanied by an entourage and the sounds of devotional music, specifically to the deity, Lord *Narayan*. More music follows before the *Acharya* ushers in a few moments of silence and begins to read from relevant scriptures (often the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Ramayana*) and explain the significance of passages to the followers. His discourse is known for being direct and practical, catering for the everyday lives of devotees.

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you are, who the Supreme Personality of Godhead really is, and how you can connect to Him" (http://acharyashyamramanujfoundation.org/asrf/). The ASRF Foundation follows the philosophies expounded by Lord Sri Ramanujacharya, the original founder. The *sampradaya* is based on *Vedic* traditions and knowledge and teachings are transcendentally passed on through the succession of *bona fide* representatives via the *Guru Paramapara* system. The ASRF claims thousands of devotees both locally and internationally, attracting them from all walks of life. The Hindu religious calendar is followed, as are all major festivals and various social responsibility initiatives are undertaken.

The *Acharya* is also known for being a direct personality, often calling people out on their apparent flaws and stubbornness to grow along the spiritual path. In this way, he exhibits charisma in his religious leadership. There is a marked difference between the Durban headquarters and the Johannesburg node where only a few families and individuals attend. The Johannesburg branch was started in 2018 and is run by a few interested families and individuals. In Johannesburg, devotees meet weekly and perform an *aarti* before a few minutes' scriptural discourse. There are no singers or instrument players but this is envisaged in the future. The branch in Johannesburg is not a physical location as such and *satsangs* alternate between devotees' homes in northern Johannesburg. The scale and rate of growth of the Johannesburg node will depend in large part on the authority of the *Acharya* based in Durban and greater following of his teachings in Johannesburg, and may lead to a permanent base for worship. Alternatively, I imagine that my respondent, who appears to be a promising initiate under his Guru, could possibly progress within the organisation and receive his own 'transcendental knowledge'. This would enable him to bless and heal others, offer discourses and become a *bona fide* spiritual leader in his own right. However, at present, the spiritual authority followed by Johannesburg participants still resides in the *Acharya* based at the Durban headquarters (More detail on the ASRF is provided later in this chapter).

The devotee who belonged to the Divine Life Society remarked that *swamis* who belong to the International Divine Life Society regularly visit South Africa to impart their knowledge.[69] Additional sources on the Divine Life Society, both as a global organisation and in terms of its

[69]The Divine Life Society of South Africa was started in 1949 by a South African, V. Srinivasen (1925-2007) who visited Rishikesh in India in 1948 where he met *Swami* Sivananda, the founder of the Divine Life Society in India. Srinivasen underwent profound spiritual change and was told by *Swami* Sivananda to open a branch of the Society in South Africa upon his return. He initially held *satsangs* and gave discourses on religion at the Umgeni Road Temple before taking *sannyas* and being ordained as *Swami* Sahajananda. The Society established its headquarters in Reservoir Hills, a suburb west of Durban, in 1959. Kumar (2013, 175) observed that until his death, *Swami* Sahajananda "functioned as the sole authority of the society with every transaction under his direct control." The organisation's focus is spiritual development of devotees, dissemination of spiritual texts, and social welfare projects that focus on youth development, education and medical care (see https://www.sivananda.dls.org.za/about-us/founding-of-divine-life-society-of-south-africa.html).

South African context, include McKean (1996); Melton and Baumann (2010); Singh (1986); and Strauss (2018). Singh's (1986) Master's dissertation on the organisation aimed, *inter alia*, to ascertain what impact the organisation had on religious and social spheres in South Africa (Singh 1986) since its establishment in the country during the 1940s. The author concluded that the "spiritual guidance of *Swami* Sivananda, the revitalization of Hinduism [and] the education of the masses through the dissemination of spiritual literature" (1986, 224) were the Society's most significant contributions.

The Divine Life Society originated in Rishikesh, a small town in the state of Uttarakhand in north India, which is described as the gateway to the Himalayas and regarded as the world capital of yoga. The devotee who was interviewed stated that "When *Swami* Sahajananda (a direct devotee of *Swami* Sivananda) returned to South Africa, he used to communicate with India quite a lot. Also, there's a printing press in Rishikesh that does the same thing here." This means that the ideas propagated in India are also propagated in South Africa. Clearly, the visits by *swamis* and communication mean that locals continue to derive inspiration and guidance from the headquarters in India, thus connecting them to an Indian lineage of spiritual tradition.

Their only branch in Johannesburg is located in Zakariyya Park in Lenasia and was founded by *Swami* Sahajananda in 2002. *Satsangs* at the Johannesburg branch follow the same format as those in Durban and all major Hindu festivals are observed as per the Hindu calendar, with some minor variations specific to the Society. According to Kumar (2013, 175) *Swami* Sahajananda was the leading impetus and sole authority of the Society until his death. Further review of the Divine Life Society in Johannesburg is provided later in this chapter.

A devotee from the Chinmaya Mission recounted the more institutional aspect of linkages to India and the global reach of the organisation, explaining that the Chinmaya Mission of Johannesburg is a "centre" with headquarters in India.[70] "Each *brahmacharyi* submits reports to India. We also

[70]The Chinmaya Mission was a latecomer to South Africa. It was founded in India in 1953 to spread the wisdom of *Vedanta*. The mission of the organisation is to "[spread] the knowledge of *Vedanta*, thus contributing substantially to the rejuvenation of India's ancient philosophy, while simultaneously nourishing the minds of people in society." This is done through regular classes, intellectual seminars and discourses, academic research, value-based schools, medical projects, and rural development (http://chinmayamission.co.za/about-us/chinmaya-mission-worldwide/).

submit audited financials to India. Trustee meetings take place in Durban. We have a world workers conference and we go to India for that." The respondent spoke of the Chinmaya Mission as "a global organisation" and added that, "whoever gets posted here is because of decisions taken in India." The Johannesburg centre is not autonomous; it derives its mandate from headquarters in India. More importantly, the authority of the Mission in Johannesburg is founded on a lineage of spiritual instruction originating in India and often made up of individuals who are ordained in India and then posted to Johannesburg.

On 22 April 2015, the Johannesburg *ashram* opened in Glen Austin, Midrand. A respondent recounted:

> The Chinmaya mission in Johannesburg only started in 2015 here in Midrand. We moved in February 2018 here to Northcliff. *Swamiji* studied engineering and then decided to do the two year *Vedanta* course in India and was given *sannyasi* status after. He was posted in 2006 to South Africa and he studied under *Swami* Chinmayananda. He believes people are open minded here in South Africa and a lot can be done.

This notion of "open-mindedness" is central to the work of the Chinmaya Mission who see it as their purpose to guide Hindus to the "correct" way of practicing their religion. They are expected to jettison what are regarded as superstition and older methods of belief and practice in favour of intellectual and philosophical methods of devotion and they believe that adherents must be open-minded to make this change. It may well be that the middle to upper class composition and often professional, educated Hindus in Midrand and Northcliff foster a sense of Johannesburg residents as being open-minded. Having attended a five-day spiritual discourse in October 2018 on several aspects of the *Bhagavad Gita*, I can attest to the very intellectual and philosophical approach of the Mission when analysing and preaching on passages in this key religious text. The discourse, delivered by *Brahmachari* Keertida Chaitanya, was extremely eloquent, at a high level of

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The Mission was established in South Africa in 1980 after the visit of Pujya Gurudev *Swami* Chinmayananda, and an *ashram* was built in Durban. In 2006, after the arrival of the present *Acharya*, Pujya *Swami* Abhedananda, further *satsangs* were conducted and talks were held on *Vedanta*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Ramayana*, and *Upanishads*.

abstraction and geared toward deep reflection and understanding. This was vastly different from the ritual-based tradition I was historically exposed to and indeed, it emphasised that one has to be very open-minded to be able to engage in such intellectual conversations as devotional.

The respondent from the Satya Sai Baba organisation explained that the Satya Sai Central Trust:[71]

> is in India, in Prasanthi Nilayam.[72] It was owned by Baba himself, but there are trustees as well. Nothing has stopped since his demise. The Trust still carries on. Each country has a board of trustees as well and they have zones. Africa has its own zone, Australasia, Europe, etc. have similar structures in each country. Structures are watered down into each centre and has a chairperson, governing body, a *seva* convener, *bhajans* convener, etc. We teach spiritual programmes.… Everything we do is brought from India and practiced here. But we change the way we practice to suit the South African culture without losing the crux of the teachings.

The respondent from the Satya Sai Baba organisation was asked to give an example of how devotees apply Satya Sai Baba teachings to the local culture and context. He explained that, while the centres across global zones carry the same spiritual message of 'Love in Action', it caters for the specific cultures in which they apply. In South Africa, a different configuration of cultural diversity is found wherein poverty is largely a Black African problem. Outreach programmes and

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[71]The Satya Sai Baba organisation has no single founder in South Africa but emerged as a movement due to people's interaction with Sai Baba, the spiritual head of the organisation. Devotees of Sai Baba "formed groups at various centres in South Africa in an effort to share their experiences of Sai Baba and strengthen their faith in him" (Kumar 2013, 197). Shrines and temples were built around South Africa and the activities were coordinated by an umbrella body, the Satya Sai Baba Central Council of South Africa, which had its headquarters Durban. The Sai propagated four cardinal principles: Truth, Education, Love, and Peace. Sai Baba is considered to be God in human form and a performer of miracles for devotees, which are often recounted in personal stories of connection with the spiritual head. These messages of personal connection, healing and miracles are retold in devotional *bhajans*, *kirtans* and *satsangs* in centres around South Africa.

[72]Prasanthi Nilayam is Sathya Sai Baba's main *ashram* and the headquarters of the Sathya Sai Baba organisation. It is located in Puttaparthi, the village where Sai Baba was born, which is 125 kilometres north-east of Bangalore, India.

feeding schemes in poor Black African communities therefore have to cater for the specifics of this context and transcend perceived stereotypes. The respondent explained that he never served in poor African communities as a 'Baba devotee' of a certain religious organisation or as an 'Indian'. In fact, this was never mentioned when service (*seva*) was carried out. Instead, he saw himself as a human being serving other human beings. Such an approach crosses any perceived racial divide and encourages a more secular form of altruism.

There are numerous centres in Gauteng and Johannesburg and they can be found in each major suburb where there is a higher preponderance of Indians, but not exclusively in these areas. Lenasia has four centres and the format of religious observance (*satsang*) is similar amongst them. I observed that among the neo-Hindu organisations of Johannesburg, because of the devolved structure of the Satya Sai Baba organisation (from national to provincial and numerous *satsang* centres), this organisation has the highest number of centres and densest configuration across the region. In addition, various subsidiary committees such as the public outreach committee, the youth committee and the education wing, support the organisation's activities and purpose. More detail on the arrival of the Satya Sai organisation in Johannesburg is provided later in this chapter.

There are several academic studies on the Satya Sai Baba movement in diasporic communities (Sahoo 2011; 2013; Sahoo and Kelly 2013; Sangha and Sahoo 2005). Sangha and Sahoo (2005) consider the linkages between social work, spirituality and the diaspora and particularly how 'immigrant communities' become 'diasporic communities' and the implications this has for social work. Their focus is one particular diasporic community, the Satya Sai Baba movement and its social service activities. The popularity of the Satya Sai Baba movement in terms of its social service activities is discussed by Sahoo (2011), including a detailed narrative on the emergence and growth of the global movement. Sahoo (2013) explores how religious movements such as the Satya Sai Baba movement, have connected Indian diasporic groups to the homeland while simultaneously providing space for reconstruction of religious and cultural identities in the diaspora.

Similarly, Sahoo and Kelly (2013) show how the movement has attracted diasporic Indians and in doing so, how it has reconstructed the religious and cultural identities of Indians in the diaspora.

"Through these movements, the preservation of Indian religion and traditions are encouraged. In addition to providing a spiritual path, these new movements were also a means through which overseas Indians can remain connected to their ancestral homeland and renegotiate their Indian identity in diverse parts of the diaspora" (Sahoo and Kelly 2013, 143). It can be further argued, more generally, that, through the articulation of their specific traditions and religious Guru lineage, not only the Satya Sai Baba organisation, but most neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg, connect the Hindu migrants of Johannesburg to Durban inasmuch as India. None of the neo-Hindu organisations included in my sample originated in a vacuum, without descending lineages from Durban and prior to their establishment in Durban, from India. The Divine Life Society, the Chinmaya Mission, and the ASRF headquarters are based in Durban, and the connecting lineage to India is as much a connecting lineage to Durban. The respondents I spoke with from the neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg confirmed this and, relying on Sahoo and Kelly (2013, 143) in particular, this lineage is an important means of Johannesburg Hindus preserving their traditions and connecting to proxy homelands.

7.3 Patronage of neo-Hindu organisations in terms of personal and spiritual affinities

Johannesburg Hindus who join neo-Hindu organisations do so because of personal and spiritual affinities with the doctrines and Guru personalities that are inherent to specific organisations.

Kumar (2013, 13) states that neo-Hindu organisations in South Africa project a strong sense of self-identity and tend to isolate themselves from one another. This is largely due to their leaders who assert their presence, "resulting in a sort of Guru culture." This was corroborated in the interviews and analyses. It is a feature of what devotees regard as spiritual growth, whereby following a Guru is encouraged and is regarded as indispensable for one's spiritual development.

Unlike temples, where one is usually born into a particular form of worship, there is something very personal about Gurus and why devotees opt for one or other neo-Hindu organisation. As the devotee from the Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation explained, his affinity for his Guru was due to his feeling "a spiritual and emotional connection":

> I joined *Acharya* because I felt something. I felt like this is where I belong. I could've met thousands of Gurus in my life, but it was *Acharya* who stood out. This all depends on the spiritual merits we have from previous lifetimes. My spiritual merit drew me to *Acharya* at that point in time.

Importantly, the interviewee met his Guru after he moved to Johannesburg and lived alone without the kinds of social networks that he was used to in Durban. This "spiritual and emotional connection" was thus sorely needed in the otherwise anomic environment of Johannesburg. It could well be that the belonging to the Guru the respondent speaks of was a means to settle in the city of Johannesburg. By gaining a personal affective bond with his Guru, he was more readily able to settle in Johannesburg. Such a spiritual and emotional connection is certainly a means to offset the anomie of a foreign city.

Other devotees related similar experiences. The member of The Divine Life Society stated that "certain Gurus appeal to different people. *Swamiji* always told us that the reason we are in the *ashram* is because of previous lives. We were connected in previous lives [in] that we are drawn to certain Gurus. Sai devotees were probably Shirdi devotees and so on."[73]

Interestingly, the Sai Baba member remarked that inasmuch as the devotee chooses the Guru, it is also true that the Guru chooses the devotee. When asked to elaborate, he explained:

> Sai Baba himself says you are not just my devotee by your choice but by my choice; I chose you to be my devotee. You can't just go to the *ashram* in India. He says that you never come until I call you. I was fortunate yes, I went 43 times but there were some times I bought the ticket and nothing materialised and I didn't end up going. Similarly, these deities have ordained or chose you long before you're even born. [It was] many births

[73]Satya Sai Baba (1926-2011) was said to be a *reincarnation* of Shirdi Sai Baba (date of birth unknown-1918). The respondent is stating that contemporary Satya Sai Baba devotees were most likely Shirdi Sai Baba devotees in previous lives, referring to the Hindu belief of *reincarnation*.

> before it was decided that you will serve them. It's by no choice of ours. The second human component is that something in it attracts you to them. If you look at the ISKCON movement [and] ... the Divine Life Society similarly ... People get drawn to these *avatars* for unique reasons. Baba says that people get drawn to him because of his *bhajans*. People say that *bhajans* are enjoyable. Then they start understanding what the teachings are behind it, of love all and serve all, and that further draws them and pulls them into the organisation to become community oriented.

The respondent is correct to point out that there is both a spiritual and a secular reason why devotees choose and "are chosen" to join certain neo-Hindu organisations. With regard to the secular, this pertains to the devotee being attracted to the organisation, be it because of the *bhajans*, outreach programmes or the underlying doctrine or branch of philosophy the organisation espouses. With regard to the spiritual and being "chosen by" the Guru, it is important to understand the Guru and his role in neo-Hindu worship.

Flood (2003, 203) explains that the Guru is the embodiment of specific Hindu traditions and the channel of divine grace to the community of disciples. The Guru lineage (*santana*) is thus an expression of God's power [in Flood's (2003) work, discussing more specifically the God *Shiva*]. Flood (2003, 203) highlights two points that derive by implication. The first is that this understanding of tradition and the emphasis on the Guru indicate "strong decentralising processes … While the texts of revelation are important, it is above all the revelation as the living tradition of the Guru lineage that animates the tradition and through which the grace of Siva (*Shiva*) is believed to flow." Secondly, Flood writes, "this structure which places such great emphasis on the teacher-disciple relationship, allows for a kind of particularism or individualism *which is personal* …" [(2003, 203) emphasis added]. It is in this Guru-devotee relationship that the transmission of tradition occurs.

This is corroborated by Gold (1988) who states that Gurus convey divine power concretely and should ideally be embodied by a living person. But for his spiritual power to be trustworthy, he must seem to be more than an individual person. Gold (1988, 17) writes that there are three ways of "access to the divine" that Gurus are indispensable for: the eternal heritage (whereby tradition

is embodied by the Guru reciting immemorial *mantras* (or verses from the scriptures), performing ancient rituals and other practices handed down over centuries); the singular personality (wherein a presiding deity is expressed in the form of the Guru as a unique source of grace); and the holy man himself who personally enlightens the devotee.

Thus, the Guru can be best understood from the perspective of devotees as the embodiment of divinity, central to neo-Hindu organisational worship, where ancient traditions are given continuity, God (and Goddesses) are expressed, and there is a personal connection with the devotee. It is through this personal connection that Johannesburg devotees of neo-Hindu organisational worship were able to speak of "being chosen by" their respective Gurus.

7.4 The purpose of neo-Hindu organisations in contemporary Johannesburg

The purpose of neo-Hindu organisations is to promote Hinduism in specific doctrinal ways, to bring about the *true* spiritual development of participants in a "confused" and "uncertain" age. There is no unique differentiation of purpose within the neo-Hindu organisations of Johannesburg and they thus draw inspiration from and remain consistent with Durban and India.

A devotee responsible for training and examining potential initiates to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) in Johannesburg explained the purpose of the Hare Krishna movement thus:[74]

> It's about propagating the teachings of Lord *Krishna*. More importantly, it is to establish the *Yuga Dharma* – the religion of this age. The spiritual culture for this age which is the chanting of *Krishna's* name. The Hare Krishna movement is nothing new; it [was] started

[74]Also known as the Hare Krishna movement, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) began at the *Chaitanya* school of Vedanta in Bengal. *Chaitanya* was born in the fifteenth century and, in response to the presence of Muslim rule in Bengal during that time, attracted a following based on a reawakening of the *Vaishnava* tradition (Kumar 2013, 185-186). At the present time the organisation is involved in *inter alia*, feeding schemes, religious textual study (also catering to academic study with university students), *bhajans* and *satsangs*.

> about 500 years ago by Lord *Chaitanya* who was an incarnation of Lord *Krishna*. All scriptures establish his authority. Each age has its own religious application and in this age, the religion is the chanting and worship of Lord *Krishna*. So it depends on the lifespan of the age.

The respondent went further to express the need for this spiritual instruction as indicative of the age we live in. "In this age, people don't live very long and things are topsy-turvy. It is not the golden age; not the age of truth. Due to its nature, its qualities, things are degraded and people are not very spiritual." Furthermore, the lineage of knowledge via spiritual masters in the Hare Krishna movement was expressed:

> Srila [A.C. Bhaktivedanta] Prabhupada comes from this rich tradition as well and all previous *Acharyas* have handed down this knowledge intact on how to live in this age. The knowledge is not adulterated, made up, it is handed down directly. There are many *slokas* and verses from various scriptures, the *Mahabharata*, the *Vedas* that actually provide evidence of what we do.

A document was received from a respondent setting out the history of ISKCON in South Africa and detailing the work of the founding member, A.C. Bhaktivedanta *Swami* Prabhupada in New York in 1966. The Hare Krishna movement arrived in South Africa in 1974 with Ksudhi Das and supporting visits by Srila Prabhupada. In the 1970s, the first Hare Krishna centre was opened at Desainagar, north of Durban, and in Yeoville in Johannesburg.

On the early establishment of ISKCON in Johannesburg, the publication illustrates the burgeoning need for spiritual instruction in the Hare Krishna movement:

> On returning to South Africa, Pusta Krishna *Swami* felt that it was time to extend the preaching work to Johannesburg, and he rented a house in an area called Yeoville. By that time a few South Africans had come forward to join the movement … The new premises in Yeoville were completely sound proofed by the devotees, so no neighbours could complain of being disturbed by the early morning *kirtans*. The opportunities for preaching

there seemed ripe and the Sunday feasts drew a very big crowd (From humble beginnings: The history of ISKCON in South Africa, personal document received, page 3).

In terms of the arrival of the spiritual founder of the organisation, Srila Prabhupada, the document states that he "liked South Africa very much". The leader spoke on one occasion at the Laudium Civic Centre in Pretoria, Gauteng, and was present in two programmes in the Great Hall of Wits University in Johannesburg (page 4).

Turning to the purpose of the organisation, the devotee from the Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation remarked that it was "to spread awareness of Lord *Narayan*. To stop the confusion around Hinduism. To heal and cure illness. To provide security for devotees; to ensure people are safe. To provide liberation, *moksha*." The respondent added that his Guru has "transcendental knowledge from *Vaikuntha*, the highest spiritual planet" and that his discourses are on Truth. "Hinduism is in a confused state. So *Acharya* is trying to show us the true way of *Sanatan Dharma* and what it means. We are meant to follow the *Bhagavad Gita* and not anything else. But because of us following our *nanis* and *nanas* way of doing things, we have lost the true meaning of *Sanatan Dharma*."[75]

What is articulated here is that Hindus have deviated from the "authentic" teachings of the text, relying on traditions and practices handed down from generation to generation and that it was essential to follow the reformers who were guiding believers back to the true word.

The devotee from the Chinmaya Mission of Johannesburg stated that its mission is "…to serve the maximum number of people for the maximum number of time." She explained that her Guru was a former journalist who was sceptical of *swamis* and seers and had gone to Rishikesh to expose them. Instead, *Swami* Chinmayananda ended up studying spirituality and taking up *sannyasi*. The respondent added:

[75]'Nani' and 'nana' refer to both grandmother and grandfather, in this sense, traditional ways of religious activity handed down by others.

> He decided to convert the Hindus to Hinduism. He wanted the *Gita* to be taught in English. People fought against it – it was in the 1950s – but he felt everyone needs to know what was in the scriptures and to get the freedom of spirituality. That is the main focus of the Chinmaya Mission.

The same message was repeated by other devotees of neo-Hindu organisations. Ordinary Hindus needed access to the true text in order to fully comprehend it and not rely on the interpretations of others. Thus, in the respondents' view, the essence of reformist organisations lies in marking a departure from traditional and inherited ways of belief and practice. This is what is conveyed in the 'neo-' of neo-Hindu worship. The notion of a "confused" and "uncertain" age, as mentioned by the respondents and indeed as found in many scriptures, is pivotal to understanding the work of neo-Hindu organisations. To avoid this confusion and uncertainty, participants in neo-Hindu organisations expressed the need to find the correct way, specifically by following a *bona fide* guru and subscribing to the spiritual (and intellectual/philosophical) quest for self-realisation.

It must be emphasised that, apart from finding and settling into the correct way of practicing their Hindu religion, forging a personal and emotive bond with the Guru of their respective neo-Hindu traditions is a crucial factor that attracts devotees to neo-Hindu organisational worship. This affective connection appeared to be vital and indispensable. Feelings of love, duty and belonging underpin devotees' attraction to the neo-Hindu mode of worship, which, they said, was particularly important and useful to migrants living in a city that is not of their birth and upbringing.

These neo-Hindu organisations' long term goals (such as the spiritual and socio-economic development of humanity) apply across all branches and nodes of each organisation. There is little divergence between the central goal of these neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg and that of their Indian headquarters and nodes or branches in Durban. In this way, they are largely consistent in fulfilling their respective purposes.

7.5 The activities of neo-Hindu organisations in contemporary Johannesburg

The activities of the neo-Hindu organisations centre on what devotees see as meaningful rituals, prayer, philosophical discourses and altruistic activities. The main thrust is the spiritual and moral development of participants while benefitting the broader society.

Most of the respondents spoke of their organisation assisting them spiritually, and through that, making them aware of the importance of serving the wider community. In other words, they did not just pray for themselves but sought to benefit society as a whole. The Satya Sai member stated that the organisation is:

> based firmly on the foundation of "love all, serve all". The basic activity is love in action, meaning serve every human being you can in whatever way you can. It teaches meditation and prayer, group devotional singing. [There is a] firm foundation [of]… service to mankind. Serve mankind in whatever way possible.

This respondent had made many trips to India while an active member of the Satya Sai, becoming well-known at the headquarters in Prasanthi Nilayam. Describing the altruistic activities of the Satya Sai in India, the respondent stated:

> I used to go on feeding schemes in villages. We fed over 80 000 people. We prepared food for 80 000 people in three hours. We gave food hampers, clothing, sweets. That carried over into South Africa where there is here, a firm foundation of the Satya Sai organisation. We don't worry about building temples and other places of worship, rather building people and communities.

The member was probed on the South African context. His statement that the focus of the Satya Sai Baba organisation is to build people and communities has specific implications for Gauteng and Johannesburg in particular. In centres around Gauteng and Johannesburg, devotees are encouraged to donate blood (known as 'giving liquid love'), serve food to the homeless, plant trees, help to clean up neighbourhoods, and visit nursing homes. The respondent stated that this *seva* is at the heart of Satya Sai Baba's teachings and a devotee should always be local in his/her outlook when it comes to *seva*. This suggests that, much like temple goers and even home

worshipping Hindus, followers of neo-Hindu organisations are encouraged to engage in prosocial activities in Johannesburg that are of direct benefit to residents in the area. It is true that the Satya Sai Baba organisation in Johannesburg is not defined by building places of worship but by its ongoing outreach and altruistic initiatives. Compared to the other neo-Hindu organisations, it is more involved in outreach programmes aimed at socio-economic development.

The respondent who spoke on behalf of the Divine Life Society stated that the Society did a lot of community and philanthropic work in South Africa, especially in the Black African community. He placed on record that the Society had built more than 600 schools and clinics, "…even churches, *shembe* churches in rural areas. They've done a lot of work in rural areas, building schools and clinics." There was also a feeding scheme at the Zakariyya Park headquarters in Lenasia, Johannesburg. One weekend a month, devotees start preparing food hampers in the early hours of the morning for approximately 200 poor families in the surrounding area. Describing the activities at Zakariyya Park, the respondent stated:

> Hindus go to the *ashram* for *satsangs* regularly. They have a yoga camp every month, the third Sunday of the month. And that starts at 6:00am with meditation and chanting. Then there's yoga *asanas* which is yoga exercises, then breakfast. They have talks that cover different aspects of the Hindu religion. It also covers how householders should conduct themselves, handle situations. That's very important because temples don't have that.

This respondent appeared to be critical of those who simply attend temples and carry out rituals without a deeper, philosophical understanding of Hinduism. This is not to say that they themselves are not concerned with rituals. While not emphasised, performance of rituals is part of their activities. But overlaying these ritualistic activities is an emphasis on the meanings behind them. The respondent from the Divine Life Society added:

> On the first of every month, we have *satsang* every morning. We are fortunate because at the *ashram*, our discussions centre around the relevant festival. You are enlightened about the festivals and we discuss on it. We are told why we do it, which deity, etc. Afterwards, we break out and all devotees go into groups and we discuss it and get feedback. "What do

> you think?" That is important because it's not just listening. If you have doubts, you can work through it. We also get a chance to take notes and people give summarised versions. It's interactive. Throughout the year, we cover most of the major festivals and the stories. It's done in a workshop setting.

Further discussions with the respondent provided a picture of the establishment of the branch of the Divine Life Society in Zakariyya Park, Lenasia, in 2002. Prior to this, devotees conducted *satsangs* in members' homes and public venues such as school classrooms. Once the Gauteng *ashram* opened, principally through the efforts of *Swami* Sahajananda, a range of activities was introduced, similar to those in Durban, including *Ganga aarti* (obeisance before a pool of water resembling the Ganges River in India); *satsangs*; distribution of grocery hampers; dissemination of spiritual literature; youth events; yoga retreats and Sunday school for children. The respondent was of the view that devotees in Johannesburg are keener on spiritual and religious guidance because the challenges they face in living as Hindus and raising children in the faith in Johannesburg are greater than was the case in Durban.

This statement is noteworthy and reveals the respondent's concern over the fast pace and commercial nature of Johannesburg along with the lack of an extended family network. In such a perceived context, the need for spiritual and religious guidance becomes more urgent. It is also noteworthy that the respondent, who lives approximately 70 kilometres from the *ashram* in Lenasia, finds it difficult to frequent it on a regular basis. Lenasia lies in the outlying districts of the Greater Johannesburg area and travel to the *ashram* is certainly an impediment to those who do not reside nearby.

There are plans to establish a new *ashram* in Gauteng and this would assist devotees in northern Johannesburg. Land has been acquired in Buccleuch, Sandton and the centre will carry out the same activities as Zakariyya Park and Durban, where the South African headquarters are. The organisation's website confirms that the need for this new *ashram* is due to "the growing devotee and donor base in the north of Johannesburg" (www.sivananda.dls.org.za).

The devotee of the ISKCON outlined the organisation's activities in Johannesburg:

> Besides hearing and chanting Lord *Krishna*, the narrations, the philosophy, the names; apart from that, we associate with devotees, we go to temple. [There are] six loving exchanges.[76] But apart from that, the association of devotees are important. We have 12 centres around South Africa. Some are large and established, such as the ones in Phoenix and Chatsworth, Lenasia, Sandton. Our main activity is for our own spiritual development but also to help others to develop spiritually. We also maintain the deities in the temple. We congregationally chant *Krishna* either at the temple or on the streets. *Sankirtan* is congregational. *Japa* means chanting individually often with beads. That is part of our *sadhna*.

I attended a *satsang* at the branch of the Hare Krishna movement in the affluent suburb of Sandton and can confirm a detailed schedule of activities aimed at uplifting devotees' spirituality. There is a temple on the premises which, while not a conventional one, contains a *murti* of the presiding deity, Lord *Krishna*. The Sandton branch is one of the more developed branches of the Hare Krishna movement in terms of its large membership. Many internationally-renowned speakers from the organisation are invited to provide discourses to devotees at this branch. There is a popular vegetarian restaurant on the premises, Govindas, that caters for devotees and others from the area who can partake of food that is first offered to Lord *Krishna* and then eaten as *prasad*.

During *satsangs*, approximately 100-120 people attend to congregationally chant. While rituals are carried out (seating, chanting, singing, and so on in routinised formats), this is less important than the devotion the aspirant is meant to feel within. Devotees explained that this is central to the Hare Krishnas whereby *bhakti* is an important element in the path to devotion. I observed that devotees seated and congregationally chanting the name of Lord *Krishna* at the Sandton *satsang* were moved by the chanting and appeared to be emotionally invested in the prayer.

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[76]The six loving exchanges are: offering gifts in charity, accepting charitable gifts, revealing one's mind in confidence, inquiring confidentiality (or that a devotee can inquire confidentially about the methods of performing devotional service); accepting *prasadam* (holy food), and offering *prasadam*.

Reiterating the importance of meaningful rituals in the Hare Krishna movement, another Hare Krishna devotee and respondent elaborated:

> In Hare Krishna temples, the design is different from conventional temples. But you can also offer fruit, pray and if you want you can stay for further activities or leave. But I think the difference is also that the Hare Krishna movement don't perform a lot of the rituals that the conventional temples perform and they have reasoning for it. They explain it and we learn from that. I'm not condemning any form of ritualistic activities that people perform. Everything is respectable. Everybody performs their prayers according to how they were taught to do it. As long as people have some kind of direction to their religion, I think that's the most important thing.

The respondent from the Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation emphasised the organisation's outreach work, referring to the Angels project whereby the Foundation sponsors disadvantaged, orphaned children in Newlands, Durban. "We help support this school, which is a part of our *seva*. We invite them to our *satsangs* and talks. We support them with food and clothing, whatever we can." Here, the respondent living in Johannesburg is referring to the outreach programme of the Durban branch. The respondent indicated that no such outreach programmes existed as yet in Johannesburg as the branch was still in its infancy. However, this does not prevent him contributing financially to the Durban branch to help it to fulfil its mission. The Johannesburg branch is dependent on the teachings and advice of the Guru based in Durban. Should any decision and implementation of outreach activities begin to take place in Johannesburg, it would be at the behest of the central spiritual authority, the Durban-based *Acharya*.

The devotee from the Chinmaya Mission described the activities of performing the *gayatri hawan*, offering flowers to the 1 008 names of *Vishnu* and various classes:

> We have classes for the younger generation (14 to 35). We do all the festivals. We don't have *bhajans* as such; all our classes [are]… knowledge based. Every evening we have classes. On certain evenings we have *Gita* classes. But it is applied to everyday life. We have *Vedanta* texts that are explained on Tuesdays to Sundays here at the *ashram*. Our

> *Brahmacharyi* teaches this. We have *Srimad Bhagavad* classes and *Ramayan* classes. We take the classes to people because of the distance here in Johannesburg. On a Wednesday, we travel to a complex in Randburg and hold classes there.

The respondent provided a pamphlet on the classes held by the Chinmaya Mission of Johannesburg. These are taught by initiates who have completed the two-year *Vedanta* course in Mumbai, India. Apart from the daily and weekly classes, monthly activities are carried out for half a day and include a youth class. The classes are according to levels and participants have to progress from level one before reaching level two and so on. Having attended some of these classes, I observed that the average number of attendees was ten and was a mix of males and females, young and old. The avid interest of the participants was clear and many carried notebooks with them to make notes and study the discourses as they were being delivered. Courses are offered daily because of the interest of participants and the complex subject matter at hand. When probed on the economic standing of the people who attend these classes, the devotee from the Chinmaya Mission remarked that mainly middle and senior managers from the corporate world attended. The respondent speculated why this was the case:

> When I first heard of these classes, I was a FM [Financial Manager] of a company. But there comes a point where you feel that there has to be more to life. Middle and upper management ask these questions, after material needs are met. We go to work, come home, eat and sleep. Is that what life is all about? We all feel a certain emptiness and want that void filled. Spirituality answers that.

If neo-Hindu organisations emphasise the intellectually challenging subjects of Hindu philosophy and virtuous practice, it could be assumed that participants in these organisations are more educated professionals. A pivot table on whether or not the respondents were members of neo-Hindu organisations and their highest education qualification, is presented below.

Table 9: Educational qualifications of members of neo-Hindu organisations

What is your highest educational qualification?						
Are you a member of a neo-Hindu organisation?	**Degree/Diploma**	**Doctorate**	**Honours**	**Masters**	**Matric**	**Grand Total**
No	214 (75,8%)	7 (70%)	81 (79,4%)	48 (68,5%)	86 (83,4%)	436 (76,8%)
Yes	68 (24,1%)	3 (30%)	21 (20,5%)	22 (31,4%)	17 (16,5%)	131 (23,1%)
Grand Total	**282**	**10**	**102**	**70**	**103**	**567**

Table 9 above reveals that of the 567 responses, 131 respondents (23.1 percent) belonged to neo-Hindu organisations while the majority (76.9 percent) did not. It could be that those who were members of neo-Hindu organisations did not bother to reply, so these figures may not accurately reflect the percentage of those who follow neo-Hindu organisations. However, based on my observations and discussions within the Hindu community of Johannesburg, the neo-Hindu organisations do not draw the bulk of support, with most Hindus following traditional (temple-based and/or home-based) modes of worship. Furthermore, the numbers are most likely stable given the fact that neo-Hindu organisations do not go on any explicit drive to boost membership numbers.

Of those who belonged to neo-Hindu organisations, 46 respondents (35.1 percent) held post-graduate degrees. Among those who did not belong to neo-Hindu organisations, 31.1 percent held post-graduate degrees. The percentage difference between those who belonged to neo-Hindu organisations and held post-graduate degrees and those who did not belong to neo-Hindu organisations but held post-graduate degrees is negligible. This suggests that it is erroneous to assume that participants in neo-Hindu organisations are more educated and thereby inclined to become members of such organisations with their emphasis on the philosophical and intellectual.

7.6 Spiritual discourse at the neo-Hindu organisations of Johannesburg

Spiritual/Scriptural discourses are part of the regular activities of collective worship at neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg. These are pivotal to the work of these organisations, precisely in their overarching goal of promoting "correct" Hinduism to reform Hindus and relate Hindu philosophy in a practical way to allow devotees to live their lives as required in the scriptures (as interpreted by them).

All of the respondents who belonged to one or other neo-Hindu organisation remarked on the emphasis placed on discourses based on the scriptures as a means of education and transformation. What attracted most was that the lessons were at a level that they could understand, but they were also not purely philosophical, but practical. The aim was to teach and transform each individual to help him or her to deal with others and cope with life's challenges. Indeed, many of these challenges can and do arise from being a migrant in Johannesburg.

From my conversations with respondents, and as shown in Chapter five on migrants' experiences in adjusting to life in Johannesburg, this adjustment was often difficult. Many found Johannesburg to be "fearful" and "intimidating" as they grappled to find their feet in the "bigger", "faster" paced city. This is essentially a question of needing practical advice on how to live and cope and these spiritual/scriptural discourses address this directly. The topics covered in spiritual discourses, including character development (building virtues and being moral), interpersonal relationships (ethics, amongst others), handling stress and worries, being principled, and pursuing spiritual goals as opposed to material ones, relate to migrants living in the commercial, fast-paced and work-oriented Johannesburg. The value of these spiritual and scriptural discourses, as they are interpreted and taught by the respective Gurus, lies in assisting migrants to adjust and survive in Johannesburg while preserving basic human values.

The Chinmaya Mission devotee remarked, "I grew up going to *satsangs* and service etc. but I never learnt about changing myself. This philosophy is about changing oneself, nothing else. Happiness is within. And the philosophy is about looking within ourselves and not to the material world of work and money."

This transformation, several devotees explained, came about through education. The respondent from the Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation stated that he had been with the organisation for a short while and that each trip to Durban to attend a major religious festival was marked by:

> talks on the significance of the festival and the main deity, but in practical terms. The *Acharyaji's* discourse is practical. He teaches you information about what is in the scriptures. It is about how to live one's life and how to be good in today's world. He explains *reincarnation*, *karma*, etc., but all made practical in terms of how to live and also about the importance of following a Guru. *Acharyaji* has received this information transcendentally. He then uses examples and metaphors to relate it to real life.

The devotee from the Divine Life Society stated that his Guru, *Swami* Sivananda, had summarised key Hindu texts "for the common man":

> Gurudev or *Swami* Sivananda, has taken the *Upanishads* or *Vedas* and summarised it for the common man in English.[77] In English is important. When you are reading Divine Life Society books, like yoga lessons for children, you are reading what's in the *Vedas* or *Upanishads* and the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayan*. Basically he's made it so simple for the common man to follow and learn about Hinduism.

The devotee of ISKCON stated that in the Hare Krishna movement, discourses are on recitations of key religious texts followed by explanations of the purport of such texts for practical living: "They relate it back to life and what we can do to improve on that aspect." The one to one-and-a-half hour discourses are followed by *kirtan* or *bhajans* which "gives us completeness during the service." The respondent related:

[77]Gurudev is shorthand for Guru-Deva or the designation of teacher as God (*deva* meaning God). It is a term of respect and describes the devotion of the aspirant to his or her Guru.

> It is not about sitting down and listening to a lecture. These people give you the philosophy of that particular aspect in the *Bhagavad Gita* and explain it in context of the story and reveal principles to live by. They also give a practical understanding and how we can implement that in our lives to enhance our religious and spiritual lives, so as to cope better in our daily lives as well.

7.7 The history of the neo-Hindu organisations of Johannesburg

The history of the respective neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg is one of gaining momentum as they recognised that many Hindus were migrating from Durban to Johannesburg and that this created a need for "spiritual instruction". Importantly, the organisations' establishments in Johannesburg are closely linked with Durban, where most of these organisations began.

The Satya Sai Baba devotee related an anecdote on the origins and initial flourishing of the organisation around South Africa:

> [The] Johannesburg [branch] mainly started from the Durbanites. In the early 1970s, many South Africans got drawn to Satya Sai through the bread. I don't know if you heard about this... it was sort of a dough bread that used to multiply and you had to pass this on every day. I don't know how it came from India to the shores of South Africa. People had it in their houses. You had to pour a cup of black tea in it every day. After a certain time, you had to take the first bread and pass it on to the next person and the second bread and pass it on, and the third bread you had to put back into the ocean. But people started to see an image of Baba in the bread. And that's how the belief of the Satya Sai organisation started in South Africa. Miracles started happening and people started believing. Especially when they saw the bread multiplying. That's how it moved on and came to Johannesburg. People carried it with them. As Indians moved from Durban to Johannesburg, the organisation grew. Now the organisation has grown leaps and bounds beyond that, into a fully-fledged organisation; now more a spiritual teaching than a religion.

This comment is important because it shows that according to the respondent, belief in miracles is a vital part of his faith and worship. I spoke with the respondent on this point and he explained that there was "a spiritual force behind the teachings." The story of the bread allows the respondent to confirm a belief in miracles, which is central to Satya Sai Baba devotion. He also cited the oft-heard accounts of Satya Sai Baba devotees who miraculously observe *vibhooti* (holy ash) appear from the picture frames of their beloved Guru, Satya Sai Baba. Such accounts support devotees' belief in the divine and their personal, spiritual quest.

Many works in the field of religious studies have addressed the question of miracles (Brown 1984; Drake 2017; Hume 1985; Lewis 1947; Nickell 1997; Randi 1987; Woodward 2000). Religious miracles are by definition events or acts that are not explicable by natural or scientific laws, inspiring devotees to invest faith and belief in a deity, saint or religious leader (Hume 1985). In theology, religious miracles are acts of 'divine providence', describing how gods and deities, saints and sages, *swamis* and other religious leaders work through nature, yet, as supernatural beings, are free to work without or above nature. For example, the emergence of *vibhooti* from picture frames, 'seeing' into a devotee's mind and future and multiplying bread, function to invest rationality in the belief in God, deity or spiritual leader; they support the theistic worldview that God (and/or his *avataras*) does indeed exist and that in seeing or observing a miracle, the devotee's belief is rational.

The Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation was also founded in Durban and is situated there, though it now has members in Johannesburg. A member explained:

> Over the last few months (in early 2018), we have branched out. In Johannesburg, because I am based here and a devotee of the organisation, *Acharya* has given me mandate to run here. It's just me and a few other devotees who have *aartis* on Mondays at my house. We play the *aarti* and pay obeisance with a few minutes' discourse. Once we have singers and instrument players we will grow. The branch in in Johannesburg is not a physical location as such. *Acharya* has said that we can alternate locations among the devotees in Johannesburg.

The Foundation does not have a home in Johannesburg, but was started by a few members who hope that in time it will grow into something substantial. The respondent was eager to point out that this is how most other organisations started in Johannesburg.

The respondent from the Chinmaya Mission remarked that initially, there was just one centre in Chatsworth, Durban:

> but *Swami* Abhedananda saw that many Durbanites were moving to Johannesburg. We all had the feeling of where can we get spiritual instruction here in Johannesburg? And so this created the need here. *Swami* heard this and thought there should be something for the Hindus here. But there comes a point where you want more than *bhajans*, rituals. You realise there is something bigger than you, and that where the Chinmaya Mission comes in.

For the respondent, "something bigger than her" was the quest for self-realisation that the reformist thrust of the Chinmaya Mission seeks to meet. The respondent had earlier lamented that her upbringing was traditional and that rituals did not meet her true spiritual needs. She tended to carry out rituals without knowing why. She said that it was on joining the Chinmaya Mission that she realised that "something bigger" than her was available and it was contained in following a Guru, committing to the organisation and its outreach activities and growing spiritually.

It is likely that the procurement of land in Glen Austin, northern Johannesburg in 2015 was coordinated by the international headquarters in India. Likewise, the later move to Northcliff, Johannesburg was approved in India with local initiates handling the legwork. This is because of the highly centralised nature of the Chinmaya Mission. The respondent further indicated that membership in Johannesburg is considerably lower than that in Durban with more funding from India being apportioned to Durban due to the higher numbers but she was optimistic that the Mission in Johannesburg had the potential to flourish.

7.8 Challenges in the growth of neo-Hindu organisational worship in contemporary Johannesburg

Challenges to the further growth of neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg include funding and the possibility of devotees leaving ritual-based temples to follow a "higher" form of worship.

Establishing Hindu practices in a relatively new setting posed many challenges. During the apartheid era, most Indians lived in Indian Group Areas where the infrastructure was already in place to practice Hinduism. In the new former White areas, respondents pointed to problems such as zoning issues to establish places of worship; the spread-out nature of the Hindu community; the lack of resources to fund building projects; and, of course, the entrenched beliefs of existing temple-based Hindu forms of worship.

The respondent from the Randburg Hindu Cultural Society cited the challenge of a stable venue where Hindus in the Randburg area could attend to their religious needs. The Society was making use of a community hall in Windsor but members found the area unsafe due to high levels of crime. They moved to a hall at the Randburg Police Station and drew "a big crowd"; however, that venue became unavailable after a while and they decided to hold services and observances at participants' homes. According to the respondent:

> If you look at most of Hindus in Randburg, we know there's a temple in Midrand, Marlboro, etc. and so they go there instead of worshipping here. People also travel to Lenasia during these festivities. In this area, we don't really have a place of worship. But if you having it at various homes, it becomes tiring for the person who is hosting the event. That's when the numbers started declining. Further, it was very costly to run events and cater for devotees. We were on a drive to get funds but you need the right people to raise money in a short space of time. For these reasons we eventually folded even though we were making a valuable contribution to the local community. We lacked any transnational networks of support.

The devotee from the Acharya Foundation stated that they also held *satsangs* at devotees' homes because of their small numbers which made it unfeasible to erect a structure:

> *Acharya* knows what is in the future because he is a *bona fide* guru. And so we trust him to give us guidance. It would be great to have a physical branch. I don't know if I will ever become an *Acharya* myself, but I give discourses on his behalf. Right now, there is no real plan. But he did say that once the *satsang* grew [in Johannesburg], we would look for a venue.

Whether the *satsangs* will grow in size, and the extent of such growth is uncertain at this stage, as the respondent believes that the majority of Hindus are not yet ready for spiritual growth that moves away from rituals, requiring them to change their ways, and embrace higher philosophical goals:

> People are accustomed to traditions and rituals. Fewer people are ready for spiritual growth and this is a challenge. People learn about the organisation, join, and then sometimes they leave, some because are not ready for stopping their rituals and changing themselves. They need to stop drinking (alcohol), eating meat, and so on. They don't want to make the change. Then they start withdrawing from the organisation, questioning my authenticity, and making "politics" in the organisation. But this is in the scriptures. That in the *Kali Yuga*, only one percent will know who God is which is a very small percentage.

7.9 Membership and patronage of the neo-Hindu organisations of Johannesburg

Neo-Hindu organisations reach out to new devotees in Johannesburg in terms of already existing activities and programmes and use social media, marketing and advertising to attract devotees to these activities and programmes. Importantly however, there is no independent drive to bring more participants into the following and boost membership.

According to most respondents, the religious field is 'open' in terms of attracting followers as it was evident that many people are searching for a spiritual home. In this context, many organisations seek to attract followers. The ISKCON devotee, for example, remarked that the organisation attracts followers in several ways. One is to sell and distribute books about the movement, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and other literature as a means of raising funds for the temple and

getting people interested in the organisation. ISKCON also propagates the Food for Life campaign, which is a separate entity from the movement, seeking to attract people from various cultures, racial groups, and religions in South Africa. While fulfilling a social need, this campaign also propagates the teachings of *Krishna* Consciousness. With its message that no woman or child must go hungry, Food for Life leads some to enquire more about *Krishna* consciousness and some get involved.

The Acharya Shyam Ramanuj Foundation devotee stated that his Guru advises people who move to Johannesburg to attend the *satsangs*. The respondent stated that when his *Acharya* visits Johannesburg, there is extensive advertising on social media. The Chinmaya Mission respondent said that the word of the organisation and its teachings is spread through social media and newspaper advertisements, although Durban has "a better approach" due to the organisation being larger and with more money to publicise its activities through radio and television. As this chapter was being completed, for example, there was an advert in the *Sunday Tribune Herald* (21 April 2019, p. 7) placed by the Chinmaya Mission South Africa, for people seeking to "Find your key to happiness". The advert was for a six-week residential foundation course in *Vedanta* by Pujya *Swami* Abhedananda, spiritual head of the mission in South Africa. There were contact numbers for Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg, the latter being a Mrs Nundini Maharaj. The course was to be conducted at the mission's headquarters in Montford, Chatsworth, Durban.

The respondent from the Divine Life Society related that while he was not sure of the drive to publicise the activities of the Society in Johannesburg, in Durban, "they tell you about functions coming up; they tell you "bring family and friends". They don't actually go out and have a media campaign or anything. There's no mission as such."

All of the organisations have a comprehensive website where all their activities - past, current and future - are listed. From what I have seen, it is mainly by subscribing to specific email lists and joining Whatsapp groups that regular information on neo-Hindu organisational activities is shared. Without being a member of these email lists and Whatsapp groups, very little public information is circulated (such as through newspapers, television or radio) in Johannesburg. Having joined the

Whatsapp groups of various temple societies and neo-Hindu groups for the purposes of this study, I can attest to very regular updates on the ongoing activities of these institutions.

7.10 Unity and collaboration among the various neo-Hindu organisations of contemporary Johannesburg

There is no unity among neo-Hindu organisations in South Africa, which is largely ascribed to the weak governance of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha (SAHMS). Despite its original intention to provide a coordinating role for Hindu organisations, the SAHMS conducts its cultural work independently of constituent organisations. This has led to more isolated activity of non-collaborating neo-Hindu organisations, albeit with mutual respect for one another.

The field of neo-Hinduism is not monolithic, and organisations are competing for members. One respondent was of the view that neo-Hindu organisations are doing well but sorely lack "...the vision of further work. Advocacy, coordination and collaboration. We need more of that." On the question of collaboration between Hindu organisations, the respondent added:

> They have collaborated to some extent. There is some religious unity between organisations. And there is a healthy respect between them. But collaboration can be better. We need a senior Hindu body that speaks for Hindu organisations, but it doesn't exist. The SABC [South African Broadcasting Corporation] often wants to interview a representative of an overarching Hindu organisation but there is no one to speak with. They contact us and we are not representatives.

Illustrating this weak collaboration and the reality of neo-Hindu organisations conducting their activities in silos, the devotee from the Chinmaya Mission remarked that they often had their own events despite inviting other Hindu organisations. During the course of this study and its fieldwork, I attended various events, discourses, feeding schemes, prayers and outreach programmes hosted by individual neo-Hindu organisations but not one that involved all of these organisations in some coordinated enterprise.

Some members hoped that, given its mandate, the SAHMS would serve to unite Hindu organisations.[78] As one respondent pointed out, SAHMS is "...supposed to be the overarching organisation taking care of Hindus in society" but it does not act in that way. Past experiences with the Sabha revealed that it is "... more intent on conducting cultural activities." The respondent was of the view that smaller organisations were already conducting cultural activities and lamented why the Sabha was doing the same. "The Maha Sabha should focus on socio-political matters and deal with government. Try and solve our problems. But they don't do anything of importance in this country. It is the sad story about it."

This view on the need for cooperation among neo-Hindu organisations was not universal. Most other respondents from neo-Hindu organisations, did not express the need for the SAHMS to engage directly with their respective organisations to foster cooperation and coordination across the broader Hindu community. It seems that most were indifferent to the need for the SAHMS to intervene and fulfil its mandate. It should be borne in mind that the various neo-Hindu organisations are competing from a limited pool for membership and that the SAHMS may be perceived as yet another body seeking to boost its own membership. Hence the respondents' reluctance to express any definite and clear opinion on the need for the SAHMS. Cooperation between the various neo-Hindu organisations of Johannesburg is not a pressing concern. If one looks at the mandate of the SAHMS and its drive to be the national umbrella body representing the South African Hindu community, it appears to respondents that such a mandate is not being fulfilled in Durban or in Johannesburg. Instead, the SAHMS is seen to be conducting activities of its own accord and it reveals itself to be no more than another Hindu religio-cultural group paying mere lip service to pushing the agenda of progressive Hinduism in South African society.

7.11 Conclusion

[78]As explained in Chapter three, the SAHMS sees itself as a forum that seeks to unite various Hindu traditions and to encourage democratic cooperation without a strong theological bent. It further claims to be an organisation geared toward advocacy and lobbying for progressive Hindu ideas in South African society.

This chapter presented qualitative (respondent) and quantitative (survey) data specific to Hindus' experiences of neo-Hindu organisations. Essentially, it found that neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg cannot be divorced from their Indian origins and from founding chapters in Durban. After first establishing roots in Durban and since the burgeoning migration from Durban to Johannesburg, these organisations have spread to Johannesburg to meet the need for the spiritual instruction and spiritual development of interested devotees. The respondents were of the view that devotees in Johannesburg were keener on spiritual and religious guidance because of the greater challenges they faced in living as Hindus and raising children in the faith in Johannesburg than was the case in Durban.

Neo-Hindu organisations rely on their headquarters in Durban and India for leadership and decision-making. In this way, their purpose and programmes, the central spiritual authority in the form of Gurus, and the spiritual discourse and its contents and interpretations, remain largely centralised. Based on the respondent data, I argued that most neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg connect their participants to Durban as well as India. In line with Sahoo and Kelly (2013, 143), these lineages are an important means for Johannesburg Hindus to preserve their traditions and connect to proxy homelands (both Durban and India).

I would not say that the composition of Hindus living in Johannesburg, being mostly professional with some financially successful, is a predisposition to participation in neo-Hindu organisations. Hindus living in Johannesburg are not predisposed to join neo-Hindu organisations; instead, it appears that those participating are simply attracted to join for various personal reasons. This is reflected in one of the key analyses in this chapter: 'Johannesburg Hindus who join neo-Hindu organisations do so because of personal and spiritual affinities toward the doctrines and Guru personalities inherent to specific organisations', and not because of any unique circumstances or overarching context to Hinduism in Johannesburg. Similarly, no observable differentiation was found in the respective purposes of neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg when compared to Durban or India for that matter.

However, it should be added that the altruistic impulse contained in many of the neo-Hindu organisations, much like the underlying ethos of allocentrism in Hindu life more generally, will

and does have a positive effect on the surrounding communities of Johannesburg. The notion of "building people and communities" cited by my respondent from the Satya Sai Baba organisation is particularly interesting as it implies more than mere charity and intimates the entry of well-resourced Hindu religious organisations into the structures of material inequality in South African society. Neo-Hindu organisations, more so than temples and individual devotees, have much to offer in this regard.

The participants in neo-Hindu organisations believe that Hinduism is in a "confused state" and that many of its rituals and performances are without understanding. These participants believe they have found the "correct" way to practice their religion. The merits of this missionary perspective are irrelevant; suffice to say that, participants in neo-Hindu organisations feel that they have found their home in a "correct" Hinduism. People are joining neo-Hindu organisations because of personal affinities toward the doctrines contained in each of the organisations.

Furthermore, I would add that the personal and emotive relationship with the Guru is especially important for migrants seeking to settle in the potentially anomic city of Johannesburg where social networks are less durable than what they had in Durban. The practical ways in which a Hindu should live his or her life is especially important for migrants who depend on advice, guidance and direction to settle and belong to the city of Johannesburg. *Finding the correct way to live*, is important for migrants who have moved from Durban to Johannesburg and many find that it can best occur through participation in neo-Hindu organisations. Getting involved in *seva* or altruistic activities is yet another means to find one's place in the city as it entails cooperation with others and socialising along with personal meaning for devotees who have migrated.

The challenges to neo-Hindu organisations are not serious or threatening to the vibrancy of neo-Hindu worship and there is a promising future for these organisations in Johannesburg. As long as population numbers continue to grow, which seems likely as more Indians migrate to Gauteng and Johannesburg in particular from both KwaZulu-Natal and South Asia, demand from Hindus seeking spiritual instruction and guidance will grow. Without an independent drive to garner more support and participation in the fold of neo-Hindu worship, it is likely that numbers will grow slightly and according to the overall population growth of Hindus in the province.

The following chapter focuses on priests in present-day Johannesburg and is structured similarly to the two preceding chapters, presenting respondent and survey data with discussion and analysis.

Chapter 8: Priests in Contemporary Johannesburg

Ever since Indians first arrived in South Africa, priests have played an important role in the religious and spiritual lives of Hindus. This has not changed and Hindu priests continue to occupy a central position in Brahminic Hinduism in contemporary South Africa. The role of priests among the indentured in colonial Natal was emphasised by Desai and Vahed (2010, 242):

> Many of the migrants continued to rely on Brahmins for emotional succour and spiritual guidance in a harsh environment. … Even though priests played a crucial role in cushioning the most terrible aspects of indenture, loneliness, powerlessness and self-estrangement, the authorities remained sceptical.

Furthermore, as Desai and Vahed (2010, 242) explain, the fact that Brahmin 'priests' may not have been scholars in the commonly accepted sense of the term and may have been considered 'pseudo' by the authorities, is irrelevant. They exerted an important spiritual influence on indentured Hindus. Other scholars have also recorded that Brahmin priests in Natal enforced a more regularised and formal format of religious practice among Hindus (Chetty 2013; Singh 1996; Sooklal 1996). Singh (1996, 69) writes that "...*pandits*, mainly from the Brahman subcaste of 'Maharaj' ... began assuming the role of priests and religious leaders within this segment, a watered-down version of India's Brahmanism (the priestly castes' hegemonic control of ritualism)". Chetty (2013, 54) states that although the Hindu practices by the early indentured labourers in Natal were mostly informal in nature, the arrival of Hindu priests changed such informality. Brahmins sometimes had to claim a lower caste status in order to be allowed to enter the Colony as indentured migrants because employers regarded them as averse to work, but once in, they were able to travel to different plantations, giving indentured labourers an understanding of the Hindu scriptures (Chetty 2013, 54).

This reiterates the historical importance of priests for Hindus, an importance that continues in contemporary Johannesburg and South Africa more generally, reinforced by several respondents in this study. Priests provided vital emotive-spiritual succour to Hindus while at the same time

introducing a regularity and formality to Hindu practice. They remain central to Hindu practices in Johannesburg and their presence and activities have raised several key issues.

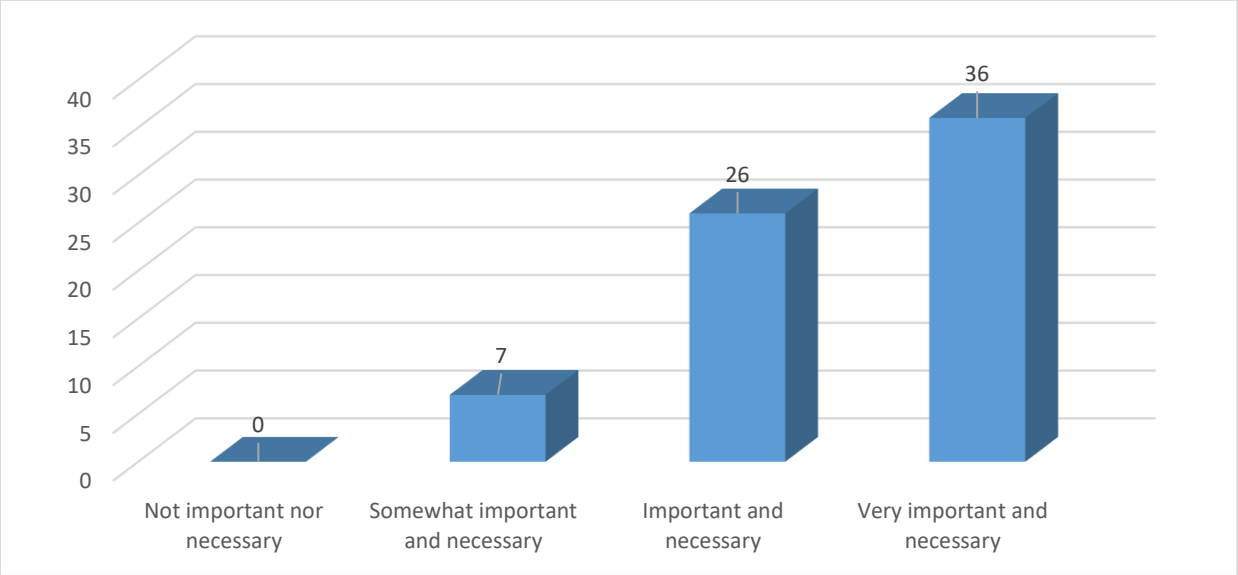
8.1 The "essential" role of priests in contemporary Johannesburg

Hindus in Johannesburg regard priests as essential to the practice of Hinduism. The necessity and value of priests is expressed in terms of their learning and ability to interpret the scriptures for laypersons' understanding, convey the correct meaning and significance of rituals, offer moral direction and guidance, and provide personal and emotional succour to devotees.

Of the 436 respondents who did not belong to neo-Hindu organisations, 168 (38.5 percent) regarded Hindu priests as "very important and necessary" to their religious practices. A further 118 (27 percent) considered priests to be "important and necessary". Thus 65.5 percent of the respondents regarded priests as essential to their Hindu practices.

Figure 9 below compares the respondents who preferred worshipping at a temple with those who regard priests as variably important and necessary. It shows that of the 69 respondents who preferred worshipping at the temple, none considered priests as "neither important nor necessary", emphasising that for respondents who worshipped at temples, the role of priests was important.

Figure 9: Importance of priests for respondents who preferred worshipping in temples



A devotee who attended temple was of the view that priests "... are there to interpret the scriptures for us ... They are there to guide us, to make sure we understand our religion and the practices and rituals. Hindus say *Guru Deva Mata Pita*. First they say Guru, before mother and father. They are there to teach you." Thus, most of those who went to the temple held priests in very high regard; this was also evident in the interviews.

Another devotee stated that Hindu priests remind the devotee of the existence of God:

> [People] need a figure in society to pull them towards God. Hence the need for Hindu priests, *mawlanas*, pastors, whatever religion, needs a figurehead to pull you in the correct direction, to guide you. Hindu priests don't just conduct *pujas* and help with prayer; if you really sit down and talk to them, they have studied and [are] qualified. It took a lot of penance and study to become a priest. Some were born in *Brahmin* families and their learning was handed down. The need for them is pivotal … you need those figures in *ashrams*, temples, mosques to guide you and to take you away from the bad path; to protect you.

Respondent Twelve, a 30-year old who had lived in Johannesburg for 11 years, remarked on a personal relationship with an elder at the Sri Ayyappan Temple, who, while not a priest, was performing a similar role: "Speaking to him I get more out of that than listening to a priest.[79] He will explain it to you, and he will equate spirituality to real life. What does it mean in real life today?" While some devotees valued the formal training of priests, others were happy to benefit from the advice and counsel of knowledgeable elders.

This mirrors the role of Gurus in neo-Hindu organisational worship whereby the spiritual leader has the function of conveying the practical relevance of Hinduism to Hindus. This practicality is especially important for migrants living in Johannesburg who rely on temple priests, to adjust to the new city. In my interviews with the Guru of the Buccleuch Temple, for example, I experienced

[79]The Sri Ayyappan Kshethram Temple in Centurion, Gauteng is an exact replica of the Sri Ayyappan Kshethram in Sabrimali, Kerala in south India and is a temple in reverence of the presiding deity, Sri *Ayyappan*, an incarnation of Lord *Muruga*. The temple in Centurion, Gauteng has been in existence for around 30 years. The Sri Ayyappan Kshethram in Sabrimali, Kerala has been the subject of much political contestation, activism and debate. Historically, the temple has denied women of menstruating age (according to temple policy, those between the ages of 10 and 50) access to the temple premises. Recent decisions in the Supreme Court of India have upheld the tradition, leading to many women protesting against the verdicts (*The Hindu*, October 2018; *TheNewsMinute*, December 26, 2018; *Deccan Chronicle*, September 3, 2018). The protesting women and women's rights groups argue that menstruation should not be considered impure or be denigrated on religious grounds and that such a perspective is tantamount to misogyny. The Kshethram (*ashram*) in Centurion, Gauteng also prohibits the entry of women into the temple premises yet no such protest or contestation has ever occurred. It seems that while the original temple in Sabrimali is being questioned in the homeland, no religious organisation speaking on behalf of women and women's rights is doing the same in diasporic South Africa. Coordinating bodies and so-called progressive advocates for women's rights in South Africa, such as the SAHMS and the Arya Samaj have been silent on the matter.

I was told by a respondent that the Sri Ayyappan Kshethram in Centurion has a *Ganga rani* or a flow of water running through the temple grounds. This has been modified and constructed to suit the worship of *Ganga Rani*, the Goddess of Water. Currently there are plans to construct a crematorium nearby in order to perform last rites in the form of cremations, thereafter disposing of the ashes in the flow of the *Ganga rani* which ultimately merges into an ocean. Currently, there are two crematoriums in Gauteng, viz., Brixton and Pretoria central. However, this is insufficient to accommodate the need. By and large, Hindu funeral rites, including cremation and the ceremonial disposal of ashes for migrant Hindus living in Johannesburg are conducted in Durban.

generous and keen listening from the priest. Moreover, he was interested in speaking to me as an individual and not so much in the formality of the interview. The priest is clearly skilled, with empathetic understanding of his devotees' problems and issues in their personal lives. I imagine that many Hindu migrants from Durban to Johannesburg, especially those residing in the Buccleuch area, rely on the Guru for practical advice, spiritual and emotional guidance and sometimes simple conversation to help adjust to their new lives in Johannesburg or more generally with issues facing them.

Respondent Nine elaborated on the importance of priests for Hindu worship:

> It's so beneficial to the disciple when the priest explains. You are not doing it blindly; you know what you are doing. It invokes the *bhakti* in you. We consulted with my priest a lot after moving to Johannesburg even though he was in Durban, and he guided us. He explained the need for a *hawan* when we moved into our new house and why it was needed.[80]

The respondent added that many Hindus have a problem understanding the complexities of their religion. Hindus thus need priests and Gurus to understand how to perform certain prayers and rituals and to understand why they are doing these rituals. Respondent Eight, who had been living in Johannesburg for over 30 years, emphasised the value of priests as those who, due to their training, can offer an understanding of rituals to devotees which aids worship:

> I have found recently a lot of priests do explain what they are performing. So you have some kind of understanding if you sit there and listen. Prior to that, maybe a few years ago,

[80]A *hawan* or fire ceremony is often conducted when a Hindu moves into a new home. This home ceremony is used to consecrate the personal space of the Hindu, clearing all negative energies and introducing divinity into the home. It needs to be emphasised that this house-warming ceremony is crucial for many Hindus in settling in a new locale. By performing this important and very popular prayer, the migrant living in Johannesburg is more readily capable of calling the new destination 'home'. This describes how religion and the meanings associated with it can invest a place with spiritual connotation (from 'house' to 'home'). A priest is necessary to this *hawan*; therefore, priests are important to migrants moving into Johannesburg, specifically through this very pervasive prayer.

> you would not find that. It was more of a procedural thing. Lots of people in Johannesburg don't even understand the vernacular, including myself.... So the priests nowadays actually do a prayer or say a scripture or a verse from a scripture but they explain in English what it means. Also, in terms of a ritual, as they doing the ritual, they do it with Hindi words but explain it in English and what it means. That is a recent thing.

This statement corroborates what was mentioned in Chapter six on Hindu experiences of traditional temples. Again, we can infer that, being "a recent thing", Hindus in Johannesburg are more questioning and relatively free to question why they are practicing their religion and the significance of certain ritual acts. The respondent is also correct in asserting that English is the preferred medium of communication, alongside Sanskrit and other vernacular languages. For this reason, devotees appreciate priests' explanations of *mantras*, especially in English. This not only strengthens the bond between the Hindu devotee and his/her priest (Hindus often select and depend on one priest in particular, regarding him/her as their 'home priest') but also supports the devotee and temple-goer to add significance to his/her life and religious practice. Having said this, there is no reason to believe that Hindus in Durban are any less questioning in the performance of their Hindu faith there. The shift is seen across the country and is similar as such, with there being a different sense of enquiry on matters of religion and spirituality.

Several of the respondents spoke of needing the priest for this purpose, especially since they migrated from Durban to Johannesburg. Traditionally and historically, in Durban, the priest was more of an expert in rituals who assisted families to conduct certain sacraments at different times of the year for different reasons or did so at temples. According to what some of my respondents stated, these priests were not always learned or very skilled in interpersonal communication on matters of deep, confidential significance. This has changed, in part because of increased demand from devotees for a more nuanced understanding of their religion. I suspect that over time, the popularity of priests who forge these interpersonal connections with Hindu devotees in Johannesburg, providing spiritual guidance, advice and support, will grow while priests without this proclivity will wane as fewer devotees solicit their services. This may be as true for Durban as much as it applies to worship in Johannesburg.

The search for significance and the meaning behind one's Hindu religion was thus pronounced for migrants from Durban to Johannesburg and the value and importance of priests increased. This may be because of the demands that migration places on the worldviews of migrants. Moving to a new country or city is a significant life event that places demands on the personal meaning structure of migrants. It could be postulated that in this context of change, people turn to religion and develop a need to understand it in all its detail. Purpose, social networks, meaning structures, and so on are in upheaval during migration and, in this case, the Hindu devotee seeks comfort from religion, becomes more questioning and relies on the Hindu priest to provide answers.

Some respondents explained that, whereas they were living mostly among Hindus in Durban, they are now living with people of different religious and racial backgrounds and on occasion, they had to explain why they were fasting or performing certain rituals to curious non-Hindus at work or at their residence. Whereas previously they simply carried out these rituals without questioning, it was now imperative for them to be cognisant of what they are doing and why. Most of the devotees are also more educated and affluent than their parents and expect a deeper explanation for their religious practices.

Respondent Nine recognised the courses undertaken and examinations written by priests, and the learning that they had to undergo, in order to be able to explain "the proper way of doing things.... That makes it more fulfilling because you know what you are doing; you understand it. You realise the significance of what you are doing and how it comes into your worship." The importance of the understanding gained from knowledgeable priests was emphasised by most of the respondents that were temple-based worshippers. One interviewee described Hindus as "very ritual people" and stated that for this reason it was important to have a good knowledgeable priest to help them through these rituals:

> A lot of the priests are not knowledgeable about what they do. Therefore, our people who want to do a rite in all sincerity … do so in ignorance, not knowing whether this was done properly or not. The Arya Samaj has been training priests and ordaining priests to do rituals. But this hasn't filled the void, because there are many priests doing their own thing.

8.2 The training of priests

Training for priests is available in both South Africa and India for those who wish to pursue this path. There are ongoing attempts to streamline and standardise the training of priests such that a uniform quality of priesthood is found in South Africa.

A respondent who had undergone priestly training stated that ISKCON "...rigorously trains people" and that rigorous training is provided in India but that most people do not seek such intensive training. It appears from my discussions and reading that the training of priests in India is considered to be more exacting than that in South Africa, often taking place at austere *Gurukulums* with strict observance of behavioural routines and long hours of study and practice. Another respondent remarked on her own training and qualification as a *Vedic* priestess and on the credibility of priests more generally which led to ongoing attempts to standardise such training:

> The *Vedic* training is three years. We train at the academy and write exams at the end. We can do so through Skyping as well, distance learning. The Maha Sabha intervened a few years ago due to the influx of overseas priests. To avoid the free for all and restore credibility in priests, they introduced standardisation of training of priests. Many of the Hindu organisations got involved and a lot of work was done to standardise the field of training of priests.

It is interesting that while the issue of women priests and Imams is controversial and contentious in Islam, Christianity and Judaism, none of my respondents flagged this as an issue. The respondents did not appear to have a problem with a woman priest, nor did the women express the view that devotees were dissatisfied with them or objected to their religious authority. It could be that in a fluid situation such as in Johannesburg, where institutional Hinduism is not well established, it is easier for women to become priests. The female informant who was a *Vedic* priestess related the ease with which one can become initiated into priesthood in South Africa. However, it should be clarified that this is *Vedic* priesthood and not *Brahminic* priesthood, which is traditionally understood and associated with temple worship. While there are many women practicing as *Vedic* priests in Durban and Johannesburg and across the country, I do not know of

a single *Brahminic* (temple-based) female priest. In this way, the presence of female priests is less apparent in public spaces and mainstream *Brahminic* temples. This is ironic given the central position of women in Hindu rituals in the home and the importance of women for religious and cultural transmission (Chirkut 2006; Chirkut and Sitaram 2007; Gopal, Khan and Singh 2014). Despite the apparent absence of female *Brahminic* priests, it must be reiterated that few Hindus have any concerns regarding women as spiritual and religious authorities.

One of the concerns in this context, and especially the proliferation of priests from overseas in the post-apartheid period, is the quality of such priests. The SAHMS has established the National Council of Hindu Priests (NCOHP) in response to numerous complaints about the malpractices of priests in the performance of their duties to the public. In the past decade, the SAHMS has been promoting the registration of Hindu priests with the NCOHP. The intention is to ensure educational sustainability and conformity among Hindu priests in South Africa via the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which will monitor the certification of Hindu priests. This includes training, a formalised curriculum and syllabus, external assessment and final acceptance as a registered professional priest. This is the only initiative of the SAHMS to promote the registration, certification, and monitoring of priests in South Africa.

Despite these initiatives, there were a few concerns about the quality of priests in Johannesburg among interviewees during my fieldwork. It seems that the work of the SAHMS is stymied by a degree of non-conformity on the part of priests. The problem is that the SAHMS has no legal means to enforce its authority. It can point out which priests are registered and certified, and which are not, but it cannot stop those who do not register from continuing their work as priests since membership of the SAHMS is voluntary. If devotees wish to continue visiting a particular place of worship, that is their prerogative. To what extent the SAHMS, through its NCOHP programme will remedy this remains to be seen.

The training of priests and their certification is, of course, not a new concept though it may be new to South Africans. For example, the Marlboro Temple priest related his experience of training at an austere *Gurukulum* or *ashram* in India:

> Our latest age to enter into *Vedic* training is seven years old. I was put there forcefully but I liked it. In a *Gurukulum* we go there permanently and [you] see your parents only once a year. Every morning we bathed in cold water; winter or summer. We do prayer in the morning and bath. We used to sleep in one small stone room. That way I studied. We wear *dhoti* and *janoyi*. There were evening prayers. There is no pen and paper in that *Gurukulum*. Guru will teach a *mantra* and then next day you must know the *mantra*. We had groups to learn in, first group, second group and third group. You progress if you got a good memory. I finished in five years. One side is the learning of the *mantras*, *Vedic mantras*, the second side is learning technical side. How to do *katha*. And then the speaking to others. We learn how to deal with people and how to speak.

The Marlboro priest raised a more significant point in comparing the situation in South Africa with that of India where each temple had many priests with specialist functions. In contrast, in South Africa a priest is required to perform various functions:

> Before a son of a priest could simply become a priest. He didn't have to go to the *Gurukulum*. In South Africa, a priest has … multiple jobs. In India, I was a specialist in opening the *mandir*. I never did funerals and marriages. I studied it but I never did that. In South Africa all that changed; I had to do everything. In this community, there is only one priest. *Pujari* and learned priest is the same.

Priests in Johannesburg are expected to perform all Hindu rites and ceremonies, in addition to being mentors and life coaches for devotees. The Buccleuch Temple priest remarked that training and a paper qualification should "not be the be all and end all", and that there is a need to go beyond formal qualifications to ensure the qualities of personal commitment and compassion among priests in South Africa. This intangible aspect, the priest argued, is critical:

> Today, bodies are trying to streamline the formal education of priests. But that is just qualifications. What is the role of priests? Are we going into communities and working with communities? We need Gurus who are interacting with people on a human level. It is the respect people offer to priests given their experience. The Guru's work is in

communities and is not only about the qualifications he has received. Leaders need to be assessed on the basis of their experience in communities.

Given this attitude among some priests that their work cannot be 'quality assured', and that some organisations and individuals do not feel the need to abide by the dictates of SAHMS, it is unclear whether the programme will succeed.

8.3 The influx of overseas priests into South Africa and Johannesburg

The influx of overseas priests into South Africa, predominantly from Sri Lanka and India, is not considered detrimental to the ongoing worship of Hindus in Johannesburg. In fact, some relate the important contributions overseas priests make to South African Hinduism in the context where local priests are seen to have less understanding and expertise. Nor do Hindus in Johannesburg regard the influx of overseas priests as posing the potential danger of reintroducing caste relations in the country.

On the question of foreign priests, Respondent Nine, a female in her 30s, stated that temple committees clearly felt the need for overseas priests. Her view was that if priests perform their duties well "...it doesn't matter" what their origins are. The respondent added that "...it's actually good because they come here and they got the knowledge. They come from our homeland and so they know why things are done and why things shouldn't be done." Another respondent was also indifferent as to whether priests were overseas born or local, emphasising the importance of their learned stature to perform rituals appropriately. He expressed that "it doesn't matter where the priest is from so long as he is doing the rituals properly" and that devotees have full faith in the priest. "The priest can be White or Black for that matter, as long as he's had proper training there is no issue. He must be learned."

The arrival of overseas priests in South Africa is a trend that is unlikely to stop. A few of my respondents not only spoke of the superior knowledge of overseas priests but also the patent lack of knowledge exhibited by local, South African priests and the lack of sufficient facilities for appropriate training:

> It's not a coincidence that they came to South Africa. Because here priests were not learned enough to be able to guide the people. Yes, our priests have studied under the auspice of the *Brahmin* caste that came on the ships but somewhere along the line they lost – with all due respect – they lost the plot. Sri Lankan priests and Indian priests studied under rigorous spiritual masters, not just a few central texts, but they studied Sanskrit texts from leaves. They studied from lineages that came from long ago. They will still come to South Africa but they come because of a certain purpose in this country. God ordains that. But they come with vast knowledge. We must take the time and ask them questions.

Here again, as revealed in Chapter five on Hindu experiences of migration from Durban to Johannesburg, India is regarded as more authentic and staunch in its Hinduism when compared to South Africa. By corollary, the respondent states that Hindu priesthood from the subcontinent, because of their rigorous study, inherited lineages and knowledge is far beyond the priesthood of South Africa. This was reiterated by a few of my respondents and echoes the reformist concerns of the SAHMS and its institutional drive to remedy this situation. Alongside the moral panic caused by conversion of erstwhile Hindus to Christianity, the SAHMS has been very vocal on the issue of priestly quality. However, in reflecting on this concern relating to the appropriate qualifications of Hindu priests in South Africa, it pays to remember the historical importance of even the most rudimentary and so-called 'pseudo' priests of colonial-era Hinduism in the country. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Hindu priests played a crucial role in cushioning the injustices and oppressions of indenture. Diasporic Hindu priests in South Africa exerted an important spiritual influence on indentured Hindus, not necessarily because of their qualifications, as many were not qualified, but because of a subjective investment of faith and belief in the power of the priest by devotees. In this way, it can be argued that the qualifications and orthopraxy of Hindu priests are less important than the faith and devotion that a Hindu invests in his or her priest. Still, many of my respondents expected priests to be knowledgeable as well as versed in the 'correct' ways of Hindu practice, philosophy and belief.

When probed on whether overseas priests added value to Hindus and Hinduism in South Africa or were just opportunists, the respondent stated:

> Absolutely. Some do come for money, there is no doubt. They are seeking a better life in South Africa. They may not be making a lot of money in India and they also want a better life for their family and children. So they come to South Africa and start the priestly work, open temples. So they can have a selfish reason, but they also have a selfless reason. They bring benefit. They open temples and impart knowledge and help and guide people. Many priests who come to South Africa have children who are studying abroad in Western countries so they are earning well.

Respondent Eleven, a female in her 40s, remarked that overseas priests know the language of Hindu prayers and rituals and have taken the time to study the religion. She stated that this was similar to that of priesthood in other faiths. The respondent personally knew of overseas Catholic priests preaching in South Africa. She reiterated that overseas Hindu priests were arriving in South Africa to perform Hindu prayer and rituals "... because we don't have South Africans with the opportunity to learn it."

When probed on whether there was the danger of overseas Hindu priests reintroducing caste into South African society, the respondents were adamant that this would not be the case. As Respondent Eleven observed:

> Not at all. Priests come from India; yes, the caste system in India is huge. But once they see the culture and diversity in South Africa, many come to South Africa because of the diversity, and the numbers of Indians here, they come and settle without interfering. Not just inter-caste marriages but also interracial marriages take place. These priests don't have objections. They marry people across lines. They've learnt that they now live in a rainbow nation and they have adapted to it. But they still do impart the spiritual component into the rainbow nation.

In any event, the respondent added, while some Hindus do have a caste consciousness and abide by caste practices, there are many inter-caste marriages which would make caste practices difficult. Respondent Three, a retired female in her 60s, remarked that the reintroduction of caste relations

in South Africa is not possible as caste consciousness has largely eroded and is increasingly disappearing in South Africa. Due to inter-linguistic marriages, the respondent has seen a decline in caste consciousness; "young people are more questioning and won't just accept the old ideas."

This statement can probably be supported by what the respondents believe is an apparent lack of caste consciousness in places of worship in Johannesburg. While there are remnants of a lingering caste consciousness in Durban (especially among the Gujarati language group), there was less caste sentiment among my respondents in Johannesburg. With less family pressure and a smaller social network in the city of Johannesburg, Hindus are possibly more likely to meet people of other language/caste/race groups and marry outside of their immediate circles. This describes the relatively 'modern' character of Johannesburg when compared to Durban.

Curiously, while the respondents believed that caste is on the wane, or eliminated, some studies suggest the contrary. Yengde, for example, found in his work on Indians in Johannesburg that:

> caste has changed form in the new social and geographical context but it has not been eliminated. A majority of the Indian diaspora in Africa still looks to marry within caste and endorses caste identities… Although the rigid caste practices in India are not duplicated in Africa, the essence and spirit of caste persists. The Indian diaspora in Africa generally condemns and distances itself from caste-ridden, poor, sexist, filthy, loud and unequal India. However, the ideology of degraded inequality sustains in a different form (2015, 67).

An engaged examination of caste is a subject for another time, the point here being that the presence of priests from overseas does not appear to be contributing to caste practices and consciousness.

8.4 Perceptions of differences between priesthood in Durban and Johannesburg

There is a perception of there being a difference between priesthood in Johannesburg as compared to Durban, the latter being seen as stauncher in its Hindu practice and by implication priests are seen to be more learned and approachable. There is the oft-repeated

sense that Johannesburg is more commercial and therefore priests are more money-driven and "fussy" than in Durban.

The perception of differences between priests in Johannesburg and Durban was corroborated by the survey data. The data shows that of the 557 responses, only 145 respondents (26 percent) regarded priests in Johannesburg as being similar to those in Durban while the majority, 412 respondents or 73.9 percent, regarded priests as significantly different between the two cities. In discussing what the differences are, one respondent felt that Durban is a stauncher Hindu community than Johannesburg. The respondent felt that priests in Johannesburg "...are kind of part time" doing "a job that they fulfil."

Respondent Six, a 38-year old male who had lived in Johannesburg for 15 years, remarked that the differences are slight, but expressed his preference for the services of Durban priests:

> For me, I would be more comfortable to go a Durban priest than a Johannesburg priest because I feel that they are more learned, they are more approachable; the priests in Durban have been around for decades and they're quite powerful in the way they pray and the way they guide us. I'm not saying that Johannesburg is not good but I think there's a better quality of priests in Durban.

Respondent Eight, a 50-year old male, was more critical of priesthood in Johannesburg due to their commercial nature:

> They also very fussy. If you can't get a certain thing, priests in Johannesburg are not willing to overlook that. They insist that you must have all the ritual items. In Durban, priests are more flexible. I feel we need to be more focused on the prayer. It must come from the heart not the ritual items. That's where faith should come from. We must believe and feel that prayer.

There is no objective measure of a priest's authenticity, sincerity, or humility. It would appear that differences may arise from the fact that people were used to a priest over an extended period of

time in their home city and may be uncomfortable with a new figure of religious authority. This is endemic to Hindu practice where Hindus are often required to have a 'home priest' with whom they have had a strong relationship over time. There may also be cultural factors at play since many of the priests are of foreign origin and their way of doing things may be different (for example, making sure that all the ritual items are present before conducting a ritual) but this does not mean that the priests are not knowledgeable and sincere. That said, perceptions matter and many respondents perceived that there is a significant difference between the priests in Durban and Johannesburg, reflecting negatively on the latter.

It appears that there is a contradiction between devotees preferring their Durban priests, and respondents not objecting to the presence of priests from overseas. However, on deeper reflection, there is no contradiction. When this was put to respondents, the explanation was that they preferred the priests they grew up with in Durban, who were often less worldly and less interested in material gain. In Johannesburg, the priests from overseas appear to be wiser to the ways of the world, and the cost of living is higher, so it is not surprising that there is a concern with material matters. But this should not detract from the fact they many of them are highly knowledgeable, provide crucial interpersonal support, guidance and advice and bring benefit to devotees.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the voices of the respondents on the subject of priests in contemporary Johannesburg. It revealed that Hindus living in Johannesburg regard priests as essential to the practice of Hinduism. While this is endemic to most temple-going and home-based Hindu worshippers, it should be borne in mind that Johannesburg Hindus are largely migrants who have unique demands living in a new city which is different from their original home of Durban. In this changed context, they are more likely to rely on priests for the underlying significance of their religious practices. The interpretation of scriptures for lay understanding, conveying the correct meaning and significance of rituals, and moral direction and guidance, as well as personal and emotional succour are especially important and necessary for migrants who have moved from Durban because they rely on these priestly functions to acclimatise, settle and belong to the new city.

By way of example, a personal and emotional relationship with the priest (much like the neo-Hindu devotee's reliance on his/her Guru) is especially relevant for new migrants who can feel isolated and foreign upon migrating. Religion in general appeared to provide much needed succour to the respondents, providing a safe and familiar social network while imbuing their worlds with meaning. For the migrant who has moved to Johannesburg, this succour comes in the form of the priest who consecrates life events and the home-space, encourages social participation (at temple activities and at major Hindu festivals), and blesses the devotee in his/her aspirations. This is welcome succour to the migrant who, without this, would feel more anonymous and isolated and indeed find it more difficult to acclimatise and flourish in the new city. So even if some priests may have questionable motives, devotees are not irate by this; instead, they look to the positives that they gain from priests.

In the evolution of Hindu priesthood in Johannesburg, the prevalence of female *Brahminic* Hindu priests has yet to be realised. Vedic priestesses are far fewer in number than *Brahminic* Hindu priests. In other words, *Brahminic* Hinduism is still largely male and 'traditional' in the sense that gender roles in priestly positions are staid and unchanged. In this author's formulation, the concern over the qualifications of priests is a red herring and the important issue of women's representivity in Hindu priesthood is more relevant and urgent. The obvious reason for the absence of women in *Brahminic* Hinduism is due to the dynamics of the Hindu family, in which the instruction of girls in traditional modes of Hindu priesthood is unheard of. No signs were found of the progressive realisation of women priests blessing devotees, carrying out rituals and officiating at various ceremonies at traditional temples or in homes around Johannesburg.

Chapter 9: Festivals in Contemporary Johannesburg

Historically, religious festivals have always played a pivotal role in the lives of Hindus in South Africa. (Desai and Vahed 2010; Lal and Vahed 2013; Landy 2005; Younger 2010). As Desai and Vahed (2010: 246) write, festivals "... were a vital vantage point for building a presence and collective consciousness of Hinduism."[81] Festivals in accordance with the religious calendar provide Hindus with a heightened sense of Hindu identity and differentiated presence among other religions and cultures.

The transmission of cultural and religious knowledge from parent to child and from one generation to the next occurs at religious festivals, as the significance of a given festival is shared among Hindus. Furthermore, festivals offer cohesive group belonging among Hindus who participate in festivals across perceived differences, confirming the stability of a Hindu identity (Desai and Vahed 2010; Jacobsen 2006; Lal and Vahed 2013; Landy 2005; Younger 2010). This, of course, is not to suggest that there is a single Hinduism or that all Hindus observe the same festivals, but festivals nevertheless perform the function of bringing groups of devotees together.

Hindu festivals are celebrated in accordance with the Hindu calendar used in India. However, Kumar (2013, 66) points out that festivals and religious celebrations are meant to coincide with the seasons and the movement of the sun and, being in the southern hemisphere, South Africa observes festivals in opposition to those of India in the northern hemisphere. Kumar (2013, 66) also notes the orthopraxy of Hindus in South Africa who have not made changes to their religious calendar. Kumar's point is that South African Hindus are following the Indian movement of the sun and seasons to determine when festivals should take place. To be more accurate, a separate calendar for the southern hemisphere and proper dating of festivals should be developed. The lack of change in South Africa reflects the orthopraxy Kumar (2013) refers to. South African Hindus seem to be more intent on following the "correct" Hindu calendar than redesigning it.

[81]Two major festivals that have their roots in early indenture and continue up until today are *Draupadi* (firewalking) and *Kavadi*.

Hindu festivals are numerous and their significance and duration vary. Adherence to the festival is important for Hindus who often fast for the duration of the celebration, attend temple, or mark some prayer and ritual at home at its beginning and conclusion. Although some festivals are more popular among certain linguistic groups, in the South African context there is a growing attempt to celebrate and participate in festivals that are not characteristic of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. For example, while *Kavadi* is traditionally associated with Tamils (see Gopal 2013), many non-Tamils participate as people find individual benefit from doing so. In Johannesburg, the Buccleuch Temple, under Guru Deena Govender, organised the *Thaipoosum Kavadi* festival on 19 and 27 January 2019. The festival included a flag hoisting, a 1.7 km public procession, in-temple festivities, and de-hoisting. The temple's website (http://www.buccleuchtemple.org.za/) contains a gallery of photos from the various festivals it has hosted, with the message: "Check out the amazing festivals held at our temple. By the grace of the Divine Mother we continue to grow from strength to strength with the amazing support of the devotees and community."

Similarly, some of my respondents mentioned that Tamils were beginning to celebrate *Holi*, a traditionally Gujarati festival. The festival of *Diwali* is by far the most widely celebrated and diverse cultural celebration among all Hindus, although north and south Indian Hindus observe the festival a day apart. *Diwali* is not ascribed to any specific linguistic group and is known to be celebrated by all Hindus in equal measure. The festivals observed and even the meanings ascribed to them change over time. In Natal, for example, the most popular festival among Indians in the colonial period was the Muslim festival of *Muharram*. It is not clear why but this was the case in all colonies where the indentured had migrated. The three-day annual leave to which the indentured were entitled was given during the *Muharram* festival (See Vahed 2002). It was only after the arrival of the Arya Samaji, *Swami* Shankeranand, that *Diwali*, which had been observed mainly among middle class Hindus, became the festival of the mass of Hindus as he pushed for it to be recognised by the education authorities so that children were given a day off (see Vahed 2013, 24-25).

In Johannesburg, where Indians have been moving into previously White areas, there are many objections to the conduct of *Diwali*, the 'Festival of Lights', where fireworks are lit and non-Hindus, mainly whites, complain of noise disturbance. According to newspaper reports each year,

the complainants usually insist that they are tolerant and can bear the noise but their great concern is the welfare of animals. This is an annual problem.

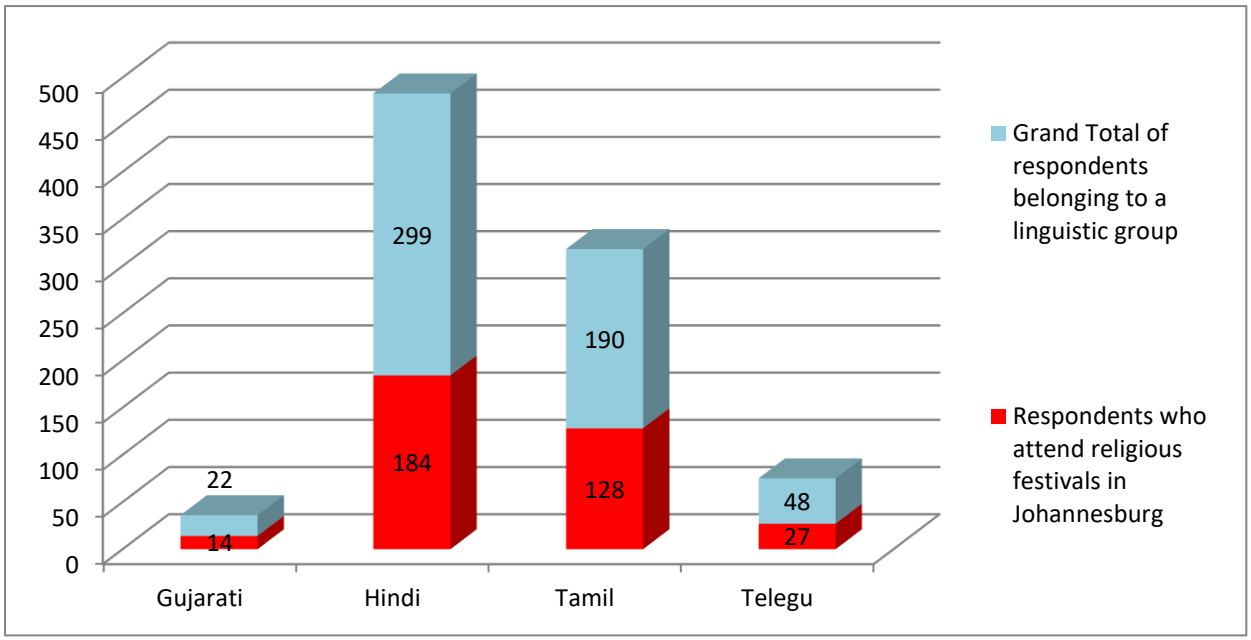
Johannesburg has imposed tighter control of this festival, especially in the previously White northern suburbs where Body Corporates request residents to completely avoid the lighting of fireworks during the festival and threaten them with fines should anyone be found to do so as it contravenes Body Corporate regulations. For this reason, one can observe quieter celebration of *Diwali* in these areas. However, it must be said that for Indians living in the apartheid era Indian areas, such as Midrand or Springs and Benoni on the East Rand and even Lenasia, celebration of *Diwali* occurs without censure or complaints. This was the case historically where Indians of various religious persuasions tolerated one another's festivals and practices.

9.1 Festivals in contemporary Johannesburg

Temples in Johannesburg have a comprehensive programme of festivals throughout the year. For example, the website of the Madhya Kailash Temple in Midrand (http://midrandtemple.org/content/Midrand_Temple_Calendar.pdf) lists a comprehensive programme of festivals. There are 27 Tamil festivals, starting with the Tamil New Year on 14 April and ending with *Panguni Uthiram* on 6 April.

The survey data confirms that festivals are seen as important occasions to bring about unity and oneness among different groups of Hindus in South Africa. Of the 567 responses, 358 respondents (63.1 percent) stated that they attended Hindu festivals in Johannesburg while 209 (36.8 percent) did not. There is no difference among the various linguistic groups (Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati, and Telugu) who attend religious festivals in Johannesburg, as shown in **Figure 10** below, which reflects that of a grand total of 22 Gujarati-speaking respondents, 14 (63.6 percent) attended religious festivals; the figure stands at 61.5 percent for Hindi-speakers; 67.3 percent for Tamil speaking respondents; and 56.2 percent for Telugu-speaking respondents.

Figure 10: Respondents who attend religious festivals in Johannesburg according to self-described linguistic denomination



9.2 Perceptions of differences of festivals in Durban and Johannesburg

Hindus in Johannesburg regard festivals as markedly different between Durban where they are considered to be more "lively", "authentic", and "embracing" and Johannesburg.

Several respondents commented on the differences in the nature of festivals between the cities of Durban and Johannesburg. One of the obvious factors is demographics. As Respondent Eight, a 50-year old male, noted, "there's hundreds and hundreds of people at these festivals in Durban. In Johannesburg, because places are far and wide, people will tend to go to the temples which are closest to them, so it's more a question of feasibility and practicality. That's why the numbers are lower." However, the respondent added that there was awareness of and resources for festivals in Johannesburg.

The priest of the Buccleuch Temple remarked that Durban is "more embracing" of festivals "...because many sectors come together to worship. *Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism* all came together in Durban during festivals." In contrast, "...what was lacking in Johannesburg was Mother

worship. Where there was Mother worship, it was very different." Mother Worship refers to worship during specific periods on the Hindu calendar where deities of the Goddess are devotionally supplicated. In South Africa, this mainly refers to the *Amman* prayer during Easter – a prayer exclusive to the South African case.[82]

The interviews revealed that some Hindus residing in Johannesburg visit Durban during Easter to participate in this important prayer. They have taken 'vows' to this effect that require fulfilment through prayer to the Goddess in Durban. Respondent One, a 24-year old male, makes annual visits to Durban during Easter to attend festivals, revealing how his Hindu practice straddles Durban and Johannesburg:

> In Easter weekend we have Good Friday which we celebrate as well. As Hindus we celebrate at the Mariammen temple in Mount Edgecombe. Also during that weekend, is *Kavadi* which falls on the Saturday. That Thursday I go to Durban and Friday morning we wake up 2:00 am in the morning to go to the temple. We get over 40 000 people there. Brake Village *Kavadi* is the biggest *Kavadi* in the southern hemisphere. Those are the two prayers that we must attend.

This theme of devotees travelling to Durban, taking vows only to be fulfilled there, and the spiritual connotation attached to Durban is reinforced in the work of Desai and Vahed (2019) and was remarked upon earlier in Chapter five. Seelan Achary, the chairperson of the Shree Mariammen Temple in Mount Edgecombe, KwaZulu-Natal, stated that the temple drew around 300 000

[82]The *Amman* or *Mariammen* or Porridge prayer is an exclusively South African prayer that originated in indentured times. A respondent explained that during indenture, there were no doctors, medical specialists or much medicine for that matter. When illness befell the indentured Indians, they believed it was borne of the ground and that supplication to the Mother Goddess in the form of the Ground Goddess, or *Gramma Devi* was necessary. They then took a vow during this period in order to have *Gramma Devi* remove the illnesses and bad luck. However, given the poverty of the indentured labourers, they had nothing to offer the Goddess in return for the removal of illnesses and bad luck. As maize was the staple food, the indentured made mealie meal (porridge) and offered it to the Goddess to take away sickness and bad luck, especially mumps and measles which were fatal at the time.

devotees per annum. The major draw is Easter with around 150 000 devotees attending over the weekend from many parts of the world. According to Archary:

> There are people who have emigrated to Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, even Sweden. There are business people from India or tourists who come here and pray … We see people from Johannesburg, Cape Town, Mpumalanga, and even Free State now, coming back, they feel a sense of belonging when they come here and pray. They like to be part of this massive crowd (Desai and Vahed 2019, 169-170).

Despite the increasing popularity of neo-Hindu organisations, Archary observes that most Hindus continue to see the temple as the primary site of worship (Desai and Vahed 2019, 170).

However, the prayer can be performed at any temple where any of the Mother deities are present and this is mostly how it unfolds in Johannesburg temples. The *Amman* prayer originated during the colonial period of indenture and was first celebrated at the Isipingo Rail Mariammen Temple in Durban. As Indians from Durban migrated to Johannesburg, so too did the *Amman* prayer. Simultaneous with the *Amman* prayer is *Draupadi* or firewalking, which takes place at the Buccleuch Temple and the Lenz Shree Siva Soobramaniar Tirukoil in Johannesburg.

I attended this *Amman* and *Draupadi* prayer at the Buccleuch Temple in April 2018. In describing my experiences, more insight can be gained into this important South African prayer. A flag was hoisted ten days before the prayer and devotees were expected to fast during that time, abstaining from all pleasures. A *gargum* (an idol of the Mother Goddess made out of turmeric powder), which stands as a representation of the Mother's head, was placed on a brass pot, covered with slinger berry leaves. Slinger berry leaves from the Neem tree have been used since the time of the indentured labourers who arrived in Natal from 1860 as a remedy for many physical ailments. Devotees carried this pot on their head from the nearby Jukskei River to the temple, which was an approximately twenty-minute walk. I was told by the devotees as we walked that this was an extremely powerful prayer for them. They spoke of an "energy" in the air and "electric atmosphere", and I can confirm that the feeling of social prayer among participating devotees was strong.

Almost 3 000 people attended the *Amman* or Porridge prayer at the Buccleuch Temple which was held during the Easter weekend in April. The walk from the river to the temple had an enthralling atmosphere as a big drum, which was first heated, was drummed as it was carried over the shoulder, providing deep resonation. The drum was beaten and chants were repeated, calling out the name of the Mother Goddess, "*Odiva Mariamma*". This invoked a *trance* among many of the devotees.

Once at the temple, the devotees circumambulated the temple three times, as a mark of respect to the Mother. They then stood in a queue in front of a fire pit which was prepared the night before the prayer, where, I was told, the logs were lit and embers were kept burning until they became hot coal. These were spread over the pit which was two by five metres in size. It should be added that the preparation and cleansing of the pit was a scrupulous and lengthy ritual.

Around 150 devotees who had taken a vow to perform the next stage of the prayer first dipped their feet in a body of milk and walked across the fire. Some were in a trance while others were not. The act of fire walking symbolises worshippers' devotion and love for 'Mother earth'. I was told by one respondent that walking over hot coals in honour of the Mother Goddess is an affirmation that "even if the Earth was a land of fire and coals, it would still be You, and I would walk over it." None of the devotees were burnt or flinched in pain. I was told that people who did get burnt were those who did not fast properly and were not entirely sincere in their prayer. It would thus appear that these devotees were steadfast in fulfilling their rituals. The flag was then dehoisted.

9.3 The understanding of the meaning of festivals among Hindus living in Johannesburg

Hindus in Johannesburg have varying levels of understanding of the meaning of festivals. Festivals are associated with the Hindu calendar and Hindus in Johannesburg follow the calendar predominantly by fasting on auspicious days.

The survey data revealed that the overwhelming majority of the respondents were aware of the meaning of festivals. Of 563 responses, 512 respondents (90.9 percent) stated that they knew the meaning of festivals. The following pivot table illustrates respondents' answers on whether they understand the meaning of Hindu festivals and whether they attend public Hindu festivals in Johannesburg.

Table 10: Respondents' understanding of the meaning of Hindu festivals and attendance at such festivals

	Do you attend public Hindu festivals in Johannesburg?		
Do you understand the meaning of Hindu festivals?	No	Yes	Grand Total
No	33 (64,7%)	18 (35,3%)	51
Yes	176 (34,3%)	336 (65.6%)	512
Grand Total	209	354	563

Table 10 above shows that of the total of 512 respondents who stated that they understood the meaning of Hindu festivals, 336 (65.6 percent) also attended public Hindu festivals in Johannesburg and that of the total 51 respondents who did not know the meaning of Hindu festivals, 33 (64.7 percent) nevertheless attended festivals. One respondent stated that he was not sure of the meaning of many festivals but learnt through asking:

> I asked, what is *Shivaratri*? Why are there prayers from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am? Why do we pray the whole night? It was from me asking these questions, the answers came about. Whether it was the correct or incorrect answer, I gained some knowledge. I then created my own perception on why we do these prayers and why we have these festivals.

Another respondent who belonged to the Hare Krishna movement explained his knowledge of Hindu festivals as a pursuit of better understanding:

> I don't know too much but I know the basis of the festivals. I know that *Krishna Janmastami* is a worship of Lord *Krishna*. I know *Hanuman Jayanti* and who that deity was. I know the basis of these festivals but I still need to learn more about these festivals and the philosophies. I am getting this information at Hare Krishna discourses. I am learning as I go and attend.

Respondent Seven, a 41-year old female working in Johannesburg as an accountant, remarked that she follows a calendar that she brought from Durban to know when major festivals take place. She described her knowledge of what these festivals are about thus:

> I just think that it's more of a celebration on that day of whatever conquering that deity did or when they were born or when they won a battle. That's what I understand. We celebrate a deity's power or victory, or what they stood for, or what they meant.

I probed the respondent as to whether there was any point in attending a festival if she did not know the full meaning of it. Her answer was that it worthwhile attending because one felt "part of a larger community", but since every festival was also celebrated in a personal way, it was important to understand its meaning:

> I used to ask my Mum why we have to go [to] temple. What is it about and so on? Even if she gives me one answer: "we give thanks to Lord *Shiva* in order for him to bless us." Whether it's all the knowledge or just a little bit of the knowledge, I believe it's something. Because myself as an individual, I wouldn't go to a prayer and not know anything and just stand there dumbfounded. For me, just having that one answer and being there in body and mind, I know why I am there. If an outsider had to ask me why I am going to temple and what festival we are celebrating, I can answer. Even if it's a simple answer. It's not a lot of knowledge but a little bit.

Festivals take place according to the Hindu calendar and according to the presiding deity of the temple. This is true of Johannesburg and Durban as well as India. However, festivals in

Johannesburg exhibit subtle changes when compared to those in Durban, in that the respondents believe that more clarity is provided to devotees. As noted earlier, there is a sense that the more professional and educated generation of Hindus and those of the younger generation who have migrated to Johannesburg are more questioning as to why certain rituals are performed and the personal significance of festivals.

According to my respondents, given this context, temple priests – who often organise and officiate at major festivals on temple premises – are beginning to be more explanatory in their approach. These explanations are provided in English, affording the devotee better understanding of his or her religion. It would appear that there is a greater likelihood that the devotee will continue to support the temple where her or his needs are met. If the devotee can understand the significance of the beliefs and practices, he/she will more likely and more wholeheartedly support the temple and its initiatives from a financial, emotional and spiritual perspective. It could be suggested that that this new thrust amongst the temples of Johannesburg – fostering a more practical understanding of devotees' Hindu religion – is a way to gather more followers into the congregation of the temple and to garner greater participation at festivals.

Festivals are organised by the temple committees and coordinated by the central authority of the temple priest. Publicity is conducted by the temple and often relies on social media and pamphlets and posters on the temple grounds. However, many Hindus are already aware of the major festivals as they occur according to the official Hindu calendar. Festivals are held on the temple premises and can gather thousands of devotees from around Johannesburg. While festivals attract a far greater number in Durban, *Kavadi* at the Madhya Kailash Temple in Midrand, for example, attracts up to 3 000 devotees, while the Melrose Temple attracts in excess of 5 000 devotees. Similarly, large numbers attend the Marabastad temple in Pretoria and Shree Ayappa Temple and Shiva Kovil in Laudium. Several respondents made the point that attendance at festivals is greater than regular temple attendance. Thus, while a Hindu in Johannesburg may not be a regular patron of a given temple they are more likely to attend during a major festival.

To describe *Kavadi* at the Melrose Temple, I provide a brief account of my experience, having attended the festival in January 2019. I arrived at the temple shortly after 6:00 am and observed

how it was being prepared for the day's event. Committed devotees were cooking vegetarian meals and *prasadam* for the day. The Melrose Temple used to be the only temple in Johannesburg that held the auspicious *Kavadi* prayer, but recently many other temples have been doing the same and the number of devotees attending has declined slightly. There were probably around 5 000 people over the course of the day and most arrived late in the morning. Melrose was the home temple for many Hindus in the Greater Johannesburg area while people from the north of Gauteng, near Pretoria, attended the Marabastad Temple and those in the south, near and in Lenasia attended the Lenz Shree Siva Soobramaniar Tirukoil.

The crowd started arriving from 7:00 am and by 9:00 am, the presiding temple priest began a *hawan* outside the temple with a massive *hawan kund* [a short, four-legged structure where the fire was lit]. Devotees told me that they had begun fasting ten days prior to the prayer, abstaining from all physical and sensate pleasures such as drinking alcohol, having sex or eating meat. All those who wished to participate would have attended the temple the night before and tied *hurdee* [cinnamon] sticks on their hand. I was told that this is for cleansing, much like the *hurdee* paste that is applied on the bride and groom the day before the Hindu marriage ceremony. Also the night before, devotees would have constructed and decorated their *kavadis*. Here, *kavadi* refers to both the wooden structure constructed for the purposes of being carried on the shoulders and the prayer itself. *Kavadis* were brightly decorated with marigolds, fresh flowers and picture frames depicting Lord *Muruga*, *Shiva* or any of the Goddesses. I observed that these *kavadis* were of various specifications and that some appeared extremely heavy.

More people started arriving and by 9:00 am, the temple was bustling. People arrived in traditional Indian attire of mainly pastel colours and without adornment, such as jewellery. After the temple priest concluded the rituals at the large *hawan kund*, people stood in queues to fill their brass pots with milk. These pots were sanctified with "holy smoke", before being filled with milk. Once filled they were covered with a banana leaf and tied tightly so as not to spill. The pots were then tied to either end of the *kavadi*, which added to the weight. Some people opted for very heavy pots to demonstrate their devotion.

By 10:00 am, a bell was rung and people marched to the nearby Jukskei River, transporting the *kavadi* to the site. The river is less than kilometre away. At the river, more rituals were performed. As part of the rituals, many devotees, but not all, pierced their bodies with the help of professionals, as part of their vows. Many devotees, around 700 in total, took vows that they would carry *kavadi* with these piercings. Piercings included items such as lime, coconut, little brass containers of milk, flowers and/or fruits, attached to the needles with string and pierced to their bodies without any bleeding. Some individuals pierced their tongues with different types of needles. 'Lockjaw', as it was called, was common, where a needle is pierced through the tongue and another needle on either check into the mouth with an attachment called *soolum* (a trident associated with *Shiva*, father of Lord *Muruga*).

A few individuals pulled a chariot, a wooden structure similar to a cart, about three metres high. It appeared extremely heavy and was placed on wheels. The outer structure had framed religious pictures adorned with sugar cane, flowers, banana trees and certain types of leaves. Prayer shops around Johannesburg often stock these items, including sugar cane, prior to the prayer. In the cart itself was an altar which housed statues of Mother *Shakti*. Fruit, milk, and sweetmeats were included in the central altar. Devotees pulled the cart with one end of the rope tied to the cart and the other attached to hook needles that pierced the backs of their bodies.

The mood at this *Kavadi* was unmistakably devotional. *Bhajans* were sung by professional groups and many of the devotees invoked *trance*, captivated by the energies of the air and atmosphere. Many people from different cultures and backgrounds came to observe this remarkable phenomenon, including family members and friends supporting the devotees carrying *Kavadi*.

At the banks of the river, those who had taken vows proceeded to offer meals and beverages such as flavoured milk to those present. A large crowd of attendees put up tables and fed onlookers and devotees alike. The temple also fed people. After the bell was rung an hour after reaching the banks of the river, some devotees picked up their *kavadis*, while others pulled the chariot, and walked slowly back to the temple. There was an emphasis on walking slowly, observing the solemnity of the 'burden' in devotion to God. The people chanted the name of Lord *Muruga* repeatedly, "*Haro Hara, Haro Hara, Haro Hara"*.

Once at the temple, the needles piercing devotees' backs and the 'lockjaws' were removed, carefully overseen by the temple priest and other devotees.

Devotees then went around the temple three times. Temple officials then disconnected the milk pots attached to the *kavadis* and chariots and handed them to the eager devotees, who made their way into the temple, where they opened the milk pots and poured the milk over the statue of Lord *Muruga*, as the final act. Thereafter, they exited the temple where the *trance* ended, and devotees took their first meal and drink of the day. The milk that is poured over the statue was collected and given to all and sundry as *prasadam*.

Participant observation during the *Kavadi* and *Amman* prayers in Johannesburg gave me much more thorough insight into the nature of festivals and Hindu devotion more generally. My experiences and observations invoked profound feelings of fascination and respect. The research and the researcher have to take these subjective feelings into account, in beginning to describe the atmosphere and the shared sentiments of these powerful collective prayers. *Kavadi* suggests that devotion is 'burdensome' and that it is in carrying one's burdens that the devotee pays obeisance to God. The *Amman* prayer, especially when some devotees carry out firewalking, illustrates the pain and sacrifice devotees are willing to undergo to prove their love for the Mother Goddess. In both prayers, through the notions of burden, pain and sacrifice, human life is seen to be a struggle, subordinate to the power and beauty of God. It is through human love for God that the strife of earthly existence is elevated, rendered divine and appeased.

9.4 The role of festivals in fostering group identification among Hindus living in Johannesburg

Festivals perform the important function of bringing together a community of Hindus in Johannesburg with group identification. Collective enjoyment and celebration of the festival is coterminous with emotional belonging and positivity for the devotee. The blessings said to be received at religious festivals are unique to the collective participation of devotees.

Festivals are held regularly throughout the religious calendar. One respondent related that holding festivals is a blessing in itself. Referring to the Brake Village Sri Siva Soobramaniar Alayam Temple in Durban, often vaunted as being the most popular festival in the southern hemisphere, Respondent One stated: "Being at such a small temple and for 40 000 people to go there, there's obviously something going on there. There's some sort of blessing coming out of that temple for so many people to go there."

Respondent Twelve, a 30-year old male, affirmed how he feels "amazed" at how many people are following their tradition. Respondent Six, a 38-year old male, commented on the sense of community belonging that arises out of participation in a festival, bringing together a community that would not normally coalesce:

> All the people are there searching for something. No one there can tell you that they are doing it for the sake of doing it. People practice and do religion in search of something, whatever it is. There is always that search. You bring a whole bunch of people together in search of something at the height of a festival [and] that is considered the pinnacle of what you should do. Every day is every day, but festivals are auspicious.

I probed on which festivals are most likely to bring about a sense of belonging and the respondent suggested that *Diwali* is quite significant in bringing Hindus together. My observations of the cultural and religious festivals of Johannesburg suggest that *Diwali* is the most communal of all Hindu festivals in that it is observed by virtually all Hindus and not confined to groups according to ethnic or regional variations. While technically the festival occurs over two days according to the Hindu calendar – one day on which Hindi- and Gujarati-speaking Hindus celebrate and the second where Tamil- and Telugu-speaking Hindus observe the day – the fanfare and exuberance is shared among all Hindus over these two days.

For example, the SAHMS organised a Gauteng *Diwali* Festival at the Gold Reef City Theme Park in Johannesburg on 20 October 2018. The advert for the festival stated:

> Guests will enjoy a fun day out, filled with plenty of live entertainment throughout the afternoon and a stunning, professional fireworks display (in a controlled environment). Other activities on the day will also include a market with stalls showcasing various goods, delicious food, clothing and much more. Parking will be available at the casino and the Theme Park from 09:00. Entrance to the festival is **FREE**. You might need to pay for parking at the Gold Reef City Casino, so make sure you take some loose change along with you. You can find ATMs at Gold Reef City Casino (https://joburg.co.za/gauteng-diwali-festival/).

The tenor of the event being a cultural occasion rather than a religious or even spiritual one is clear.

So as not to clash with the Gold Reef City event, the Hindu Co-ordinating *Diwali* Committee organised a *Diwali* Festival at the Lenasia Soccer Stadium on 27 October 2018. While these occasions underscore the ways in which religion is increasingly associated with conspicuous consumption and the obsession with "free" entry, and where to withdraw money from automatic teller machines to buy at stalls and be entertained, nevertheless, a sense of belonging and bringing Hindus together persists. It is also the case that in some families, important purchases are made during the season of the festival, and they may deliberately reserve such purchases for these occasions.

A few years ago (probably 2015), I attended a *Diwali* festival in Newtown, central Johannesburg. The reason for choosing such a venue was probably because the organisers intended to attract Hindus from Lenasia in particular, approximately 30 kilometres away.

The event was held over a weekend and there were numerous food and clothing stalls, and one or two bookstalls. A stage was set up and a brief portion of the weekend's programme included rituals. Offerings were made on stage to Lord *Rama* and *Sita* while people observed, officiated by a priest. It needs to be said though, that this ritual performance was eclipsed by the heavy commercialism of the *Diwali* festival and the fanfare and excitement of shopping that the organisers clearly wished to create. Some of those attending, especially the older people, with whom I engaged informally, expressed disappointment as they felt that the religious significance

of *Diwali* had gone astray and that no spiritual message was spread to participants. There were participants from other racial groups and one could argue that the intention of organisers was more an event to showcase Hindu cultural identity than observance of a religious prayer/festival. Fusion dance (mixing Indian with African art forms), renditions of Bollywood songs, and a loud and colourful fireworks display ensued.

Diwali festivals in various locations around Johannesburg were little different from this one. However, it should be noted that Diwali can and does hold religious significance for many Hindus especially in terms of a home-based prayer. The day (depending on whether one is following the Tamil/Telugu or Hindi/Gujarati calendar) begins with a three-oil bath (comprising a decoction of sweet oil, mustard oil and sesame seed oil) after which devotees dress in new clothes and some go to a nearby temple to make offerings and pray in obeisance to Lord *Rama* and *Sita*. *Diwali* is more of a religious prayer at the temple and at home than publicly. Interestingly, while many Hindi and Gujarati devotees maintain their fast, abstaining from meat, alcohol and other pleasures during the entire day, some Tamils and Telugus told me that they broke their fast shortly after the prayer and visit to the temple. This is due to the fact that according to the Tamil and Telugu Hindu calendar, the day on which Diwali is observed is considered to be the last day of a fast inasmuch as it is a festival and therefore once the prayer is completed, the Hindu is no longer fasting.

Holi is another festival that seeks to create a sense of community belonging among Hindus. Known more popularly as the 'festival of colours', it signifies the end of winter and arrival of spring. Kumar's (2013, 66) point referred to at the beginning of this chapter that Indian South Africans follow an Indian rather than a South African calendar, is applicable to *Holi*. In South Africa, spring starts at the beginning of September, but the festival is usually held in March. One respondent made the point that growing up, *Holi* was "not central to the Hindu calendar of festivals" and its celebration, particularly the form it takes, is very much a commericalised twenty-first century endeavour. The respondent noted that one can find little that is 'religious' in the way that a traditional festival may have been at a temple. While *Holi* is meant to pay obeisance to the Goddesses of Hinduism, particularly in the spreading of colours to adorn the faces of the Mothers, some of the Hindus that I spoke with did not appear to appreciate the religious significance of the

day. *Holi* is often organised by the Gujarati community and many mercantile stalls and exchanges take place. However, it can include other linguistic groups.

In Johannesburg, several venues hold the celebration, and include such things as water cannons, mudslides, and bubble baths, Bollywood music, and a *Holika Dahan* (a dance, also known as *Garba*), whereby attendees go around a bonfire to signify the triumph of good over evil. At the Emmerentia Dam, participants purchase little bags of coloured powder, which they throw into the air and at one another at a specified time, and not only are there beautiful colours in the air, but they leave the festival multi-coloured. There is an *aarti* for the Goddess but not much more religious significance to this festival, because it is not conveyed in any clear message or could be explained by the participants.

It is interesting to note that in my ethnographic survey of four Hindu festivals in Johannesburg, two are unmistakably religious and carry a strong spiritual message for devotees. At the *Kavadi* and *Amman* prayers, devotees are visibly enamoured by the fervour of the event and the numbers attending or participating are great. Furthermore, the detail of ritual and investment in the spiritual content of these rituals is known by almost all of the participating devotees. The mood is infectious and even as an observer, I can attest to a moving spiritual experience having attended both *Kavadi* and the *Amman* or Porridge prayers. These prayers are Tamil or Telugu prayers and while not exclusive to this ethnic-linguistic group, the crowd was made up almost entirely of Hindus from the Tamil and Telugu speaking communities. *Diwali* and *Holi*, on the other hand, are associated with the Hindi and Gujarati communities and are mainly celebrated by these communities. These events appear to be more commercialised, and did not, for me at least, carry the same emotive power as the Tamil and Telugu festivals. It seems that the dichotomy between the ethnic-linguistic groups in Johannesburg and South Africa may be expressed in the extent to which these groups fervently participate and devoutly engage in Hindu festivals. Of course, it may well be that the spiritual/religious aspects of *Holi* and *Diwali* are fulfilled at home and this is followed by a more relaxed outing.

Notwithstanding this, there was consensus on the importance of festivals for group belonging. As Respondent Six put it:

> I think it's a great sense of fulfilment that I get. You attend these festivals and meet people. It gives you a sense of positivity in your life because you see that people are still coming to these festivals and following their religion and it gives you more commitment to your religion. You also meet people and converse with people and learn from others at these festivals. At these festivals, I think it's a platform where you can carry the message and awareness.

The last point made by Respondent Six is important in that it describes the social function – meeting friends, socialising and building one's community – that is especially relevant for migrants who have moved to a bigger, more anonymous city. To "meet people", "converse and learn from others" is vital for migrants in any context who rely on such socialising to settle in a new city. Sometimes, friends and relatives who live far apart in Johannesburg and do not have the time to meet, did so on the occasion of special festivals.

It must be emphasised that, despite the infiltration of commercialism in some festivals and the patent lack of spiritualism and/or religious message, religious festivals can and do provide personal and religious meaning for the Hindu devotee, amongst other things. Importantly, this is accompanied by the social inclusion of the migrant in a broader Indian and Hindu community of Johannesburg.

9.5 Conclusion

It can be argued that while there is a degree of nostalgia for the experience of religious festivals in Durban, it is clear that festivals are lively and populous in Johannesburg. This is because participation at temples and festivals is communal in nature and they aim to attract all strata of Hindus (across linguistic, age, gender, language, ethnic categories) and therefore bring in a large crowd of interested devotees. The meaning of festivals is important for Hindus in itself, but equally important is the function that these festivals play in drawing Hindus living in Johannesburg into a broader Hindu community. This is a marker of religious identity. The social feature of festivals is

important in the lives of Hindus living in Johannesburg, especially for those who are seeking to settle in the city and belong to a wider community.

Apart from other forms of socialising and collective participation, festivals include the phenomenon of 'being blessed' in and through festival participation. Attending the festivals that are held in Johannesburg and attended by migrants who have moved from Durban is believed to derive blessing and thus certainly aids in their settlement in the city. There is no doubt that in keeping with other aspects of modern, capitalist life, consumption and consumerism play a part in Hindu festivals. Nonetheless, it is also true, as emphasised by the respondents, that when a festival or special religious occasion arrives, the entire atmosphere and feeling within an individual, household, or community, changes as they direct themselves towards the coming festival. Respondents emphasised the role that festivals play in keeping them connected to their roots and values, in helping to sacralise day-to-day struggles, in getting them to focus on the meaning of Hinduism and spirituality in their lives, and often to understand the beliefs, practices, traditions, and mythologies of Hinduism which helps to elevate their own faith.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

The social world is replete with heterogeneity and complexity and is constantly evolving. History is the unfolding narrative of transformations, as people shape and are shaped by ineluctable social forces. In *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills (1959) writes that apart from common sense, which does not grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society, the sociological imagination:

> is between 'the personal troubles of milieu' and 'the public issues of social structure'. This distinction is an essential tool of the sociological imagination and a feature of all classic work in social science (Mills 1959, 4).

Religion is not immune to these transformations and the dialectical relationships between individuals, groups and social structure. Personal troubles are intertwined with public issues, such as ongoing reform of religions that permits the introduction of progressive ideas to religious practices and beliefs. The unfolding march of religious history has shown, through continuing debates and discussion on secularisation, globalisation, gender politics, and fundamentalism, to name but a few, that the most private domain of people's lives, their faith, is ineluctably intertwined with public issues. This study has touched on the personal troubles of Hindu women, for example, and showed that the evolution of the Hindu religious system potentially offers empowerment and emancipation from a stifling patriarchal bias. More studies on this important subject and subjectivity are necessary. Studies in other settings have addressed the transformation of Hindu beliefs and practices, for example, for the empowerment of the *Dalits* and other *untouchable* castes (Dirks 2001; Dumont 1980; Menon 1994, 2006; Quigley 1993). This illustrates that academic study of religious change is no idle intellectual exercise but an important means to understand and perhaps even to champion the interests and grievances of disenfranchised, oppressed groups and individuals in society, profoundly affecting their personal lives.

The question of how Hinduism evolved as a result of migration and settlement is thus also a question of development and progressive change. This study set out to understand the migration of Hindus from the Greater Durban to the Greater Johannesburg Area, commencing with a

historical treatment of the earliest migrations of Indians, including Hindus, from the then Colony of Natal to the Transvaal. The chapter showed that despite severe political and economic restrictions under first the colonial and later the segregationist and apartheid regimes, characterised by racism and state violence, people have always migrated to potentially improve their lives and those of their families and community, or for other personal reasons. Personal troubles and opportunities are dialectically linked with public issues and the watershed moment was when restrictions on interprovincial movement around the country were lifted in 1973, resulting in a burgeoning migration of Indians to the Transvaal that has continued into the renamed Gauteng in the post-apartheid period. Religious and cultural life accompanied Indian migrants to the Transvaal and alongside these movements, the establishment of religious institutions such as temples and neo-Hindu organisations, the hosting of cultural and religious festivals, and an influx of priests occurred. As the changing racial geography of twenty-first century Johannesburg unfolds, the establishment of new sites of religious worship will continue unabated, further influencing the practice of Hinduism in the city and province.

Hindu migrants arriving in the inland city of Johannesburg sought better work opportunities and a better lifestyle. Freedom from perceptions of gender and racial issues in the city of Durban also underpinned their migration. Johannesburg is considered to be more progressive among many migrants in terms of racial and gender transformation than Durban. But this resulted in a culture shock for many Hindu migrants, which was accompanied by nostalgia and fond remembrance of the social and cultural mood of Durban. Migration and settlement in the city of Johannesburg was difficult for many migrants who often arrived without the social and emotional networks they were accustomed to.

Hindu migrants maintained their connections and links with Durban. The respondents expressed a strong spiritual connection to Durban, exemplified in the vows that some Hindus living in Johannesburg took, only to be fulfilled in Durban as well as the close, personal relationships some migrants had with Gurus and spiritual seers that reside in Durban. For many migrants, certain temples, such as the Mount Edgecombe Mariammen Temple and the Isipingo Rail Mariammen Temple occupied an exalted spiritual and religious significance, over and above the temples in Johannesburg. The Indian Ocean held a special place in the hearts and minds of Hindus living in

Johannesburg, invested with spiritual significance, akin to many Hindus around the world who revere the natural environment as holy. 'Home' for Johannesburg Hindus thus connoted much more than a city of their birth but also a place of spiritual meaning. In working towards a theory of the evolution of Hinduism from Durban to Johannesburg, this last point reveals the first concept to be employed: **Dual Belonging** of Hindus living in Johannesburg with their originary city of Durban.

Delving into the unique features of temple Hinduism in Johannesburg, it was seen that various respondents spoke of Hindus in Johannesburg as being more questioning of their faith. Because they are of a younger generation, mostly successful and often educated, they are less inclined to perform rituals and carry out traditions without knowing why. English is the preferred medium of explanation and guidance to many Hindus in Johannesburg because of this need to express the meaning and significance of why certain things are done in the domain of their Hindu faith. As noted in Chapter eight, this has lead priests of various traditions and backgrounds to be more explanatory in approach. The derived concept here is that of **Religious Inquiry**.

The serenity and slower pace of temple worship in Johannesburg, because of the smaller number of Hindus residing in Johannesburg (when compared to the larger population of non-Hindus) and the increasing network of temples in popular 'Indian' and 'non-Indian' areas, relates to a more individual mode of worship in Johannesburg. Furthermore, it was found that, 58.8 percent of the survey respondents preferred worshipping at home. While this is not to discount the popularity and interest in heady, collective forms of worship that enjoin the community, such as during festivals and major prayer events, Hindus in Johannesburg are more private in their prayer and obeisances. The concept here is **Individualised Worship**.

A healthy and vibrant Hindu community does in fact exist and temples are sites of both religious and social and cultural activity. Especially for migrants new to Johannesburg, the temple as the site where these activities take place is critically important. It was found that temples are important sites of religious worship for burgeoning communities but here again, relating to the dual belonging of Hindus migrating from Durban, nostalgia was expressed for the authenticity of Hindu temple life in Durban in comparison to Johannesburg.

Neo-Hindu organisation have very little autonomy and tend to rely on their headquarters in Durban and India for leadership and decision-making. Most neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg connect the participants to Durban inasmuch as India. These **Historico-Spiritual Lineages** are an important means for Johannesburg (neo-)Hindus to preserve their traditions and connect to proxy homelands. On neo-Hindu organisations, while there are many challenges to growth, none are too serious or threatening to the vibrancy of neo-Hindu worship and there is a promising future for neo-Hindu organisations in Johannesburg. It is likely that the number of members will grow slightly in accordance with the overall growth of the population of Hindus in the province.

Personal-emotive relationships with the Guru are especially important for Hindu migrants seeking to settle in the potentially anomic city of Johannesburg where, for some, social networks are less durable than what they experienced in Durban. The practical ways in which a Hindu should live his or her life is especially important for migrants who depend on advice, guidance and direction to settle and belong to the city of Johannesburg. This concept of the bonds devotees develop with the Gurus and priests of Hindu leadership, is described as **Religious Intimacy**. This bond relates to traditional *Brahminic* priests as much as it does to the Gurus of neo-Hindu organisational worship. The concept describes the essential role of Hindu spiritual leadership for migrant Hindus living in a city not of their birth.

In a changed context, Hindus are likely to rely on priests and Gurus for the underlying significance of their religious practices. Again, Hindus in Johannesburg are more questioning of their religion and interpretation of scriptures for lay understanding, conveying the correct meaning and significance of rituals, moral direction and guidance, as well as personal and emotional succour, are especially important and necessary for migrants who have moved from Durban because they rely on these priestly functions to acclimatise, settle and belong to the new city.

While there is a degree of nostalgia for the experience of religious festivals in Durban, it is clear that Johannesburg festivals are lively and well-attended. Festivals are a marker of religious identity for many Hindus living in this city. This social feature of festivals is important in the lives of

Hindus living in Johannesburg, especially for those who are seeking to settle in the city and belong to a wider community.

Relating these concepts together, two theoretical statements on the evolution of Hinduism from Durban to Johannesburg are presented. Firstly:

> *In the diasporic setting, Hindu migrants are more private than public in their worship modes, questioning of their faith, and rely on personal and emotive bonds with Gurus and priests to help them settle in the new city. The tendency to engage in private forms of worship is a feature of minority status in the host city. In being a minority and without the usual social and cultural networks, there is a private preservation of religious culture for the individual migrant, forging closer, more intimate relationships with other Hindus, especially spiritual leaders. Where the religious community is more populous, as seen in Hindu states and cities, the mode of worship is more social and universally shared, with public demonstrations more visible.*

Secondly,

> *'Home' is a contested notion whereby migrants dually belong to both the destination and originary cities, the latter being invested with spiritual connotations. For migrants, home is thus an imaginary space that is a feature of memory inasmuch as lived reality. The spiritual connotation to the originary city as well as the belief in historico-spiritual lineages reaching back to it is a means of religious preservation for the migrant. To be Hindu in the destination city cannot be separated from Hinduism in the originary city. In this way, Hindu migrants are able to preserve their religion in the new destination city and support their continuous identities as Hindus.*

What is particularly noteworthy and a key contribution of this study to the field, is that the evolution of Hinduism can be seen in the internal migration of Hindus between two cities in a diasporic country. The dynamics of evolution are also at play here, as they have always been in

the transnational, contemporary and historical migrations of Hindus from the subcontinent to various parts of the globe. This supports van der Veer and Vertovec's assertion that:

> to be Hindu is neither an unchanging, primordial identity nor an infinitely flexible one which one can adopt or shed at will, depending on circumstances. It is an identity acquired through social practice and, as such, constantly negotiated in changing contexts (van der Veer and Vertovec 1991: 149).

Having presented a theory of migration from Durban to Johannesburg, this study opens up several avenues for further research. As noted at the start of this chapter, the question of the transformation of travelling Hinduism is no idle intellectual exercise but raises further questions on the realisation of progressive ideas within and by religion. In the migration of elderly Hindu people from Durban to Johannesburg, often in the interests of maintaining contact with and proximity to their sons, daughters and grandchildren in Johannesburg, how do Hindu beliefs and practices assist them to settle in the new city? It can be assumed that the disjuncture and anomie of migration to a new city is more pronounced for older people who are often deeply familiar with their previous homes, neighbourhoods and communities.

A possible avenue for further research is what the Hindu religious system offers to the aged post-migration, especially if supportive, integrative religious institutions such as temples and Hindu organisations recognise the unique concerns of this social group.

Second, contemporary research on how women are or can be shapers of diasporic traditions, reappropriating an empowered femininity from Hindu lore into subverted notions of the Hindu family, child-rearing, 'duty' and submissiveness, for example, is another vital avenue.

Third, future studies can investigate the practice of Hinduism among the poorer sections of Johannesburg's Hindu community (Benoni, Actonville in the east, Laudium in the north, and certain areas in Lenasia) and whether the migration of low-income Hindus to the province or internal movements within Greater Johannesburg are discernably different from middle and upper class Hindu practices. Varying income levels are accompanied by deeply held feelings and 'hidden

injuries' as people compare themselves to one another around issues of status, dignity and worth (Sennett and Cobb 1972). What role does Hinduism play, if not through caste consciousness, for either the validation or challenge of class consciousness in contemporary Johannesburg?

I conclude with some autobiographical reflection. This study has fundamentally transformed my initial thinking and orientation as a Hindu. It has been a profound journey of learning, discipline and creativity. I began with a fixed notion of what Hinduism is, but have begun thinking more deeply about my own understanding of my faith (and being more accommodating and appreciating that of others), conceptions of God, the ethical and moral principles underpinning my religiosity and, most importantly, enamoured with renewed vigour for the altruistic commitment the religious are meant to possess. This growth has involved conscientisation on disenfranchised groups and individuals in mainstream, 'traditional' Hinduism, alerting me to the importance of the question of religious and social change. Breaking from the confines of my own common sense, I have become attuned, in questioning the migration of Hinduism from Durban to Johannesburg, to the personal troubles of other people in my milieu and how they are dialectically shaped by the public issues of socio-religious structure.

Future studies by this author will move forward with this sensitisation, intent on unearthing where private troubles can be better understood in the workings of the social structure and the possibilities for change. For Mills (1959), this has to be the task and the promise of all engaged and relevant social scientific work.

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Appendix 1A. Interview schedule: Hindu migrants living in Johannesburg

Migration

1. Why did you move from Durban to Johannesburg?
2. What was it like for you when you first migrated to Johannesburg?

Probes: how did this change?

3. What are the main differences between Durban and Johannesburg?

Probes: Socially, economically, culturally

4. How do you maintain your links and connections to Durban?
5. Do you ever consider moving back to Durban?

Migration and Hindu practices/beliefs

6. What is religious life like here in Johannesburg, as opposed to Durban?

Probes: Differences and similarities / Challenges

7. What are some of the ways in which you carried your Hindu beliefs and practices after you moved to Johannesburg?
8. Why have you become involved in your Hindu religion since coming to Johannesburg?

Probes: less/more involved?

9. What links to Durban assist your practice of Hinduism in Johannesburg? [e.g., family visits, annual visits to temples in Durban, purchasing religious items in Durban]

Home and Place

10. Do you consider Johannesburg your home now, or is it still Durban? Why or why not?
11. Do you consider India your home (or homeland) in any sense?
12. How has your religion assisted in making a home here in Johannesburg?

Probes: what specific beliefs and what practices sanctify a home? Lutchmee (lamp)/prayer room/hawan

Religious Community

13. What Hindu community did you find upon coming to Johannesburg, if any?
14. How did you involve yourself with that religious community?

15. How different is the Hindu community here in Johannesburg, as compared to Durban?

Probes: How would you describe each?

16. Is there a common Hindu community that combines Durban and Johannesburg and the rest of the country? Why or why not?

Probes: Global Hindu community?

Hindu Temples

17. What differences do you see in prayers/rituals offered at home and at temple? Give some examples.

Probes: do you prefer going to temple or practicing your religion at home?

18. Do you notice any differences between temple worship in Johannesburg as opposed to Durban? Please elaborate.
19. How do temples differ from each other here in Johannesburg?
20. Are you a member of the temple committee?

If yes:

a. Why did you join the temple committee?
b. What are some of the activities carried out by the temple and temple committee?
c. How does the temple reach out to new devotees, especially migrants from Durban?
d. What links and connections does the temple have with Durban? India?
e. How (and when) was the temple established in Johannesburg?

Hindu Organisations

21. What, in your opinion, is the main difference between Hindu organisations and Hindu temples?
22. Do you belong to any Hindu organisation?

If yes:

f. Why did you join the organisation?
g. Was this after coming to Johannesburg or before, when you were in Durban?
h. What are some of the activities carried out by the organisation?
i. How does the organisation reach out to new devotees, especially migrants from Durban?
j. What links and connections does the organisation have with Durban? India?
k. Is the organisation any different here in Johannesburg as compared to Durban?
l. How (and when) was the organisation established in Johannesburg?

23. Why do you think some people join (other) Hindu organisations here in Johannesburg and elsewhere?

Priests and Priesthood

24. What is your view on the need for priests in Hindu practice?
25. What are some of the services you have received from a priest/priests?
26. Are there any differences between priests in Durban and priests in Johannesburg?

Probes: overseas priests and local South African born priests?

Festivals

27. How much do you understand about the meaning of Hindu festivals

Probes: what personal meaning do festivals hold for you?

28. How are Hindu festivals in Johannesburg any different from that of Durban?
29. Do you attend public festivals?

Probes: Which public festivals have you attended/attend?

30. What do Hindu festivals do for your sense of belonging to a broader Hindu community?

Identity

31. How do you understand being a Hindu, a South African, an Indian, and a specific ethnic/linguistic group, in terms of order or priority?
32. Do you identify with the early Indians who arrived in this country in the mid-nineteenth-century? Why or why not?
33. How did you hear/learn of these early Indians as your forebears?
34. Has coming to Johannesburg changed you in any way? Please elaborate.

Probes: Differences between being a “Durbanite” and/or “Gautengeling”.

Appendix 1B. Interview schedule: neo-Hindu organisations in the greater Johannesburg area

1. What is the purpose/mission of the organisation?
2. Does the organisation hold Satsangs? Bhajans? Havan? Aarti?
3. Are there philosophical talks/discussions?

Probe: What about?

4. Did the organisation originate in India?

Probe: Are there links/ties to India still?

5. What are some of the activities of the organisation?
6. How does the organisation contrast with temple worship?
7. Does the organisation collaborate with other Hindu organisations?

Probe: collaboration with other faith-based organisations?

8. Are there one or many gurus in the organisation?

Probe: Is guru worship central to the organisation?

9. When was the organisation established in Johannesburg?

Probe: Was it established in Durban first?

10. What was the need to expand the organisation to Johannesburg?
11. Who was responsible for establishing the organisation here?
12. Where did funding for the relocation/establishment of the organisation come from?
13. What were the reasons for establishing the organisation in this exact location (suburb)?
14. What were some of the challenges to establishing the organisation in Johannesburg, if any?
15. How did devotees learn of the new organisation?
16. Have there been any major changes to the Johannesburg organisation since the beginning?
17. Has the number of devotees coming to the organisation increased or decreased over the years?

Probe: How does the organisation reach out to new devotees?

18. What, in your opinion, are the differences between (ISKON/Satya Sai/DLS) organisations in Johannesburg and Durban?

Appendix 1C. Interview schedule: temples in the Greater Johannesburg Area

1. When was the temple established in Johannesburg?
2. Who was responsible for establishing the temple here?
3. What is the need of this temple?
4. Where did funding for the building of the temple come from?
5. How was the design of the temple decided on?
6. Is this temple designed after the south Indian or north Indian tradition or a mixture of both?
7. What were the reasons for building a temple in this exact location (suburb)?
8. What were some of the challenges to establishing the temple, if any?
9. How did devotees learn of the new temple?
10. Have there been any major changes to the temple since the beginning?
11. Has the number of devotees coming to the temple increased or decreased over the years?

Probe: How does the temple reach out to new devotees?

12. What, in your opinion, are the differences between temples in Johannesburg and Durban?
13. Does the temple have any links or connections to Durban?
14. Do you know of any new temples coming up in the area?

Probe: Is there a need for more temples in this area?

15. Is there a temple committee?

Probe: What does the temple committee do?

16. Is this a Shiva, Vishnu or *Amman* (Goddess) Temple?

Probe: Is there a mixture of all deities on the premises?

17. Please take me through the steps devotees take when worshipping at the temple?
18. What are the various rituals performed by devotees?
19. Can one worship the Navagrahas (9 planets) here?
20. Is there a banyan tree (marriage tree) here?
21. Is the temple open daily?
22. Is the presiding priest at this temple from South Africa or abroad?
23. What sort of training has the priest received?
24. Please take me through a typical day for the priest, from morning to evening?

Appendix 1D. Interview schedule: Hindu female migrants living in Johannesburg

1. How long have you been in Johannesburg?
2. What is your occupation?
3. What is your age?

Gender and Migration

1. What was your reason to migrate to Johannesburg?
2. Did you take the decision to migrate?
3. Did you have a social network in Johannesburg when you first migrated? Was it mixed or mostly female?
4. Why do you think it is important to have a female social network when acclimatising to Johannesburg?
5. Do you think that it is harder for a woman to progress economically in Durban when compared to Johannesburg?
6. Do you know of many other women who have migrated from Durban to Johannesburg? Or is it mostly males?
7. How has being a woman affected your experience of migration to Johannesburg?
8. Did you experience any prejudice or discrimination against you as a woman, when first migrating to Johannesburg?
9. Did you migrate independently or with family members/significant others?
10. Do you send remittances to family members back in Durban?

Gender in Johannesburg

11. Are there any differences in how women are treated and respected in the workplace in Durban as compared to Johannesburg?
12. Are senior management roles in Johannesburg largely male? White?
    Probes: How does this affect your career and career growth as an Indian woman?
13. Is it safe and secure being a woman in Johannesburg?
    Probes: compared to Durban?
14. Are you less bound by family pressures and norms living in Johannesburg?
    Probes: What are some of these social and familial pressures to being in a woman (marriage roles, kids, etc.)

15. Has moving to Johannesburg increased your independence as a woman in any way?
16. What are some of the challenges of being a woman in Johannesburg today, if at all?
    Probes: to being an Indian woman?
17. In what ways has migration and life in Johannesburg empowered or disempowered you as a woman?

Gender and Hinduism

18. What do you think is expected of a Hindu woman?
    Probes: Rituals, prayer, ethical and moral conduct, etc.
19. Do you think you fulfil expectations in your Hindu 'duties'?
20. If you have a male partner in your life, how do your religious practices (rituals and prayer) differ from him, if at all?
21. Are there any pressures from temple priests or family members to conform to 'traditional' Hindu womanhood?
22. Have you ever encountered a female priest?
23. Does your following of the Hindu religion empower or disempower you as a woman?
24. How important is it to follow 'traditional' Hindu values and norms, such as marriage, child-rearing etc.
25. Do you think that Goddess Worship is empowering to women?
    Probes: Durga, Kali, Draupadi; In what way?
26. Do you know of any qualities of Hindu Goddesses and how do they challenge 'traditional' society (marriage, child-rearing, purity, chastity, submissiveness, etc)?

Appendix 2. Informed consent form

Social Sciences, College of Humanities,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Pietermaritzburg Campus,

Dear Participant,

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Mr Trivern Hunsraj Ramjettan, I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus, South Africa.

I am interested in the migration of Hindus from the Greater Durban Area to the Greater Johannesburg Area, South Africa, and how such migration has affected the evolution of Hindu practices and beliefs. Either as a Hindu migrant, a temple official, or as a member of a Hindu organisation, I am interested in asking you some questions.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

I can be contacted at: Email: trivernr@gmail.com / Cell: 071 887 5716

My supervisor is Professor Goolam Vahed who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Howard College campus of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: email: vahedg@ukzn.ac.za / Phone number: 031-260-7494
You may also contact the Research Office through:
P. Mohun
HSSREC Research Office,
Tel: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

I…… (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT **DATE**

…… **……**

Appendix 3. Survey questions: Hindus living in the Johannesburg area

Date: _____

Place: _____

1. How old are you?

Please tick		
1.1	Between 18 and 21	
1.2	Between 21 and 30	
1.3	Between 31 and 40	
1.4	Between 41 and 50	
1.5	Between 51 and 60	
1.6	Over 60	

2. What is your gender?

Please tick		
2.1	Female	
2.2	Male	

3. What ethnic and linguistic denomination of Hinduism are you?

Please tick		
3.1	Tamil	
3.2	Hindi	
3.3	Gujarati	
3.4	Telugu	
3.5	Other	

4. What is your marital status?

Please tick	

4.1	Married	
4.2	Single (never married)	
4.3	Divorced	
4.4	Separated	
4.5	Widowed	

5. What is your highest educational qualification?

Please tick		
5.1	Matric	
5.2	Degree/Diploma	
5.3	Honours	
5.4	Masters	
5.5	Doctorate	

MIGRATION

6. Why did you move from Durban to Johannesburg?

Please tick		
6.1	Better career opportunities	
6.2	Better social life	
6.3	Better climate	
6.4	Family reasons	
6.5	All of the above	

7. How long have you been in Johannesburg?

Please tick		
7.1	Less than 1 year	
7.2	Between 1 year and 5 years	
7.3	Between 5 years and 10 years	
7.4	Between 10 years and 20 years	

7.5	More than 20 years	

8. Do you consider your move from Durban to Johannesburg a good choice?

Please tick		
8.1	Yes	
8.2	No	

9. Was it easy or difficult to settle in Johannesburg?

Please tick		
9.1	Easy	
9.2	Difficult	

10. Do you maintain your links and connections to Durban?

Please tick		
10.1	Yes	
10.2	No	

11. Does your connection to Durban assist your practice of Hinduism in Johannesburg?

Please tick		
11.1	Yes	
11.2	No	

12. Do you ever consider moving back to Durban?

Please tick		
12.1	Yes	
12.2	No	

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN JOHANNESBURG

13. Is religious life in Johannesburg different or similar to that of Durban?

Please tick		
13.1	Very different	
13.2	Slightly different	
13.3	Similar	
13.4	Neither different nor similar (the same)	

14. Are you more or less religious now that you have moved from Durban to Johannesburg?

Please tick		
14.1	More religious	
14.2	Less religious	
14.3	Neither more nor less (the same)	

HOME AND PLACE

15. Do you consider Johannesburg your home now?

Please tick		
15.1	Yes	
15.2	No	

16. Do you consider India your home in any sense?

Please tick		
16.1	Yes	
16.2	No	

17. Has your religion assisted in making a home here in Johannesburg?

Please tick		
17.1	Yes	
17.2	No	

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

18. What Hindu community did you find upon coming to Johannesburg, if anything?

Please tick		
18.1	Temple community	
18.2	Hindu organisation community	
18.3	Family and friends	
18.4	All of the above	
18.5	None of the above (no community)	

19. Is the Hindu community in Johannesburg much different from that of Durban?

Please tick		
19.1	Very different	
19.2	Slightly different	
19.3	Similar	
19.4	Neither different nor similar (the same)	

20. Is there a common Hindu community that combines Durban and Johannesburg and the rest of the country?

Please tick		
20.1	Yes	
20.2	No	

21. Is there a global Hindu community?

Please tick		
21.1	Yes	
21.2	No	

HINDU TEMPLES

22. How often do you go to the temple?

Please tick		
22.1	Never	
22.2	Under 6 times a year	
22.3	Under 12 times a year	
22.4	Weekly (once a week)	
22.5	More than once a week	

23. Where do you prefer worshipping?

Please tick			
23.1	At the temple		
23.2	At home		
23.3	At a Hindu organisation		
23.4	All of the above		

24. Is prayer and ritual at home different from temple worship?

Please tick		
24.1	Yes	
24.2	No	

25. How do you participate in Hindu festivals?

Please tick		
25.1	Through the temple	
25.2	At home	
25.3	Through a Hindu organisation	
25.4	All of the above	

26. Is it necessary to understand the meaning of these festivals?

Please tick		
26.1	Yes	
26.2	No	

27. Is temple worship in Johannesburg different from that of Durban?

Please tick		
27.1	Very different	
27.2	Slightly different	
27.3	Similar	
27.4	Neither different nor similar (the same)	

HINDU ORGANISATIONS

28. Are you a member of any Hindu organisation? (Hare Krishna, Satya Sai Baba, Divine Life Society etc.)

Please tick		
28.1	Yes	
28.2	No	

PRIESTS AND PRIESTHOOD

29. How important and necessary are priests to practicing Hinduism?

Please tick		
30.1	Very important and necessary	
30.2	Important and necessary	
30.3	Somewhat important and necessary	
30.4	Not important nor necessary	

30. Are there any differences between priests in Durban and priests in Johannesburg?

Please tick		
31.1	Yes	
31.2	No	

FESTIVALS

31. Do you understand the meaning of Hindu festivals?

Please tick		
31.1	Yes	
31.2	No	

32. Are Hindu festivals in Johannesburg any different from that of Durban?

Please tick		
32.1	Yes	
32.2	No	

33. Do you attend public festivals here in Johannesburg?

Please tick		
33.1	Yes	
33.2	No	

IDENTITY

34. What is most important to you in terms of your identity?

Please tick		
34.1	Hindi/Tamil/Telugu/Gujarati	
34.2	Hindu	
34.3	Indian	

34.4	South African	
34.5	All of the above (no order of importance)	

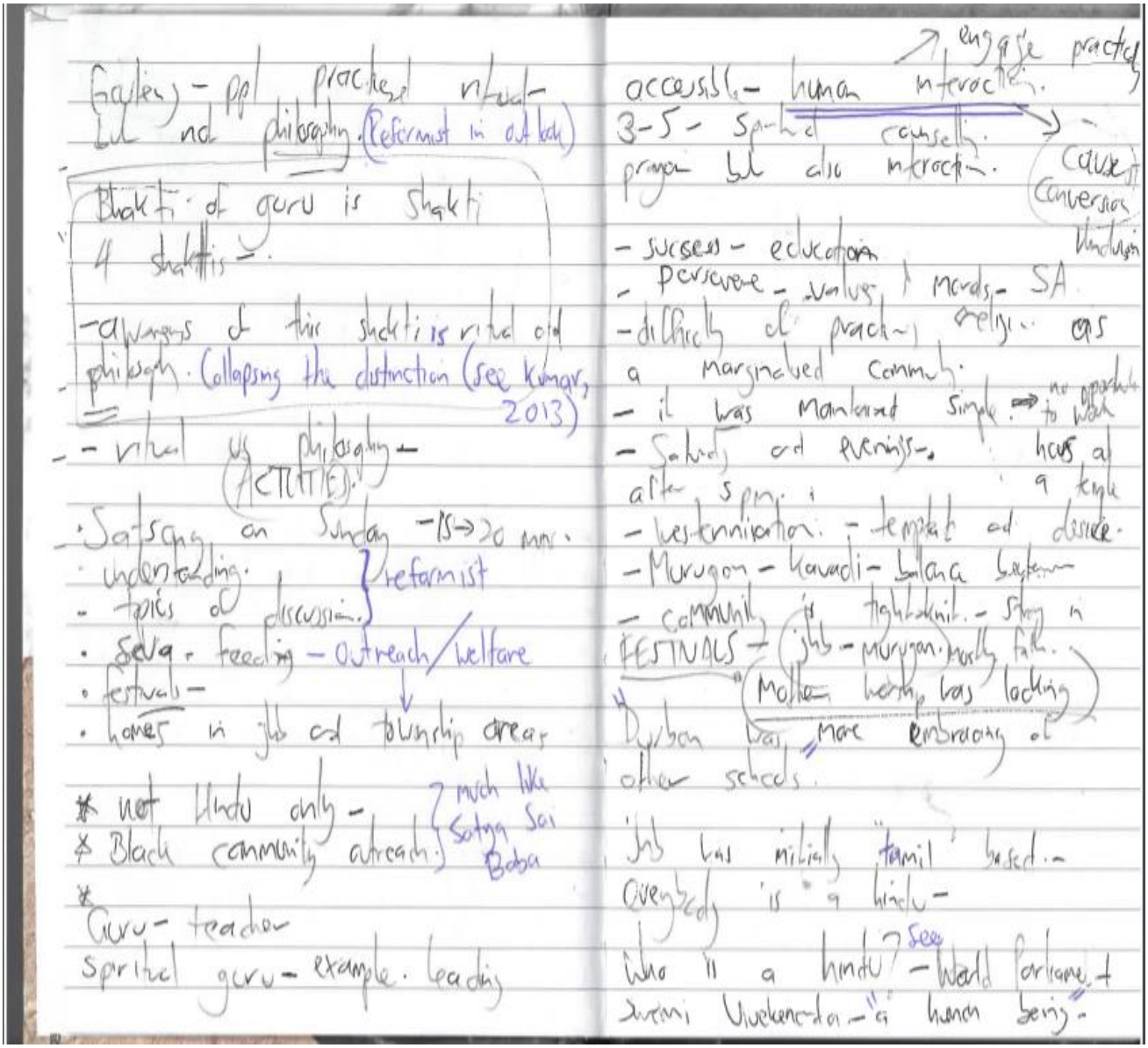
35. Do you identify with the early Indians who arrived in this country in the mid-nineteenth-century?

Please tick		
35.1	Yes	
35.2	No	

36. Has coming to Johannesburg changed you as a person?

Please tick		
36.1	Strongly Agree	
36.2	Agree	
36.3	Neither agree nor Disagree	
36.4	Disagree	
	Strongly Disagree	

Appendix 4. Memo page



Gayley – ppl practised ritual –
but not philosophy (Reformist in outlook)

Bhakti of guru is shakti
4 shaktis –

– advantages of this shakti is ritual old philosophy. Collapsing the distinction (see Kumar, 2013)

– – ritual vs philosophy –
(ACTITITIES)

· Satsang on Sunday – 15 → 20 mins.
· understanding.
· topics of discussion. } reformist
· Seva – feeding – Outreach/welfare
· festivals –
· homes in jhb and township areas

* not Hindu only –
* Black community outreach } much like Sathya Sai Baba

* Guru – teacher
Spiritual guru – example. leading

engage practically
accessible – human interaction.
3-5 – spiritual counselling.
prayer but also interaction. (Cause of Conversion Hinduism)

– success – education
– persevere – values & morals – SA
– difficulty of practising religion as a marginalised community.
– it was mainstream simple ⇒ no opportunity to work
– Saturday and evenings – hours after spm.
– westernisation – temptation and desire.
– Murugan – kavadi – balance between a temple
– community is tightknit – stay in
FESTIVALS – jhb – Murugan. mostly full.
(Mother worship was lacking)
Durban was more embracing of other schools.

jhb was initially Tamil based –
everybody is a hindu –
who is a hindu? – See World Parliament of Swami Vivekananda – "a human being".

UKZN Ethics Clearance Letter

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

5 October 2017

Mr Trivern Hunsraj Ramjettan 991234548
School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Ramjettan

Protocol reference number: HSS/1320/017D
Project title: (Re)Making Home: An historical and ethnographic study on the migration of South Arican Hindus from the Greater Durban area to the Greater Johannesburg area

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 2 August 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Professor Pratab Kumar
cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Denis
cc. School Administrator: Ms Catherine Murugan

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