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TRANSNATIONAL AFFECT & THE REBELLIOUS SECOND GENERATION: MANAGING SHAME AND PRIDE IN A MOMENT OF CULTURAL RUPTURE

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TRANSNATIONAL AFFECTⁱ & THE REBELLIOUS SECOND GENERATION: MANAGING SHAME AND PRIDE IN A MOMENT OF CULTURAL RUPTURE

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*'Stepping on the Ammi, looking at the Arundhati star and accompanied
by drums, Australian girl takes the hand of a Tamil'*ⁱⁱ

Musuguntha countrymen, consisting of 32 villages, have for generations gone abroad to work and live. Despite that, for the first time, an overseas girl of a different language, race, religion and country has married in full Hindu Tamil tradition into our community. That the whole wedding was done in the full traditional way is something we should be proud of. Selvaraj and Amanda's wedding initially caused some objections, but as the day went by, gradually everyone changed their mind and fully consented to it.

The bride and her family's affection for our Tamil culture and tradition was very pleasantly surprising for us. This wedding was overseen by the groom's maternal uncles, pangalisⁱⁱⁱ, former village headman, present panchayat president and other close relatives and had their full cooperation. This should be acknowledged and congratulated, so says the head of one of the most important and well-to-do families in the village. (Dina Thandi 2005:12)

In this paper we explore what happens to a tightly bounded translocal village when the second generation rebels. The news story above encapsulates a number of threads we would like to discuss in this paper. The article was published in one of Tamil Nadu's leading newspapers, the *Dina Thandi*, which has a readership of some 10 million. It reports the wedding of a Tamil and an Australian girl that took place in the town of Pattukkottai, in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu recently. This was no ordinary wedding; the participants are transnational as well as cross-cultural. More importantly, the story was covered by the newspaper following a phone call from an established and respected man in the village who wanted to ensure the wedding was publicly sanctioned.

In this article, we use our transnational wedding as a means to explore some key issues pertaining to second-generation migrants as played out in a transnational social field of a small village in South India whose members have migrated to Singapore and Australia. We show how the home village and first generation transnationals respond to a moment of cultural rupture caused by a proposed ‘out-marriage’, the first time this has occurred in this transnational community. We argue that a range of ritual re-workings were deployed in order to re-seal the borders of the community so as to retain the successful cultural membership of its ‘rebellious son’. We show how regimes of emotion and affect operate to reproduce the translocal moral economy^{iv} of caste and village, and function to incorporate the ‘outsider’ family from Australia into the system of obligation and reciprocity.

The Musuguntha community, consisting of 32 villages in the district of Thanjavur in the Southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, belongs to the Musuguntha Vellalar caste. The members of this tight-knit and endogamous community have migrated overseas to places such as Malaysia, Singapore, and the Gulf States. In the process, the highly circumscribed socio-cultural structures and relationships that exist in the Musuguntha villages have been translocalised. In a recent article (Velayutham and Wise 2005), we theorised the ways in which extended family sub-groups within the Musuguntha Vellalars in Tamil Nadu and Singapore continue to maintain their transnational connections. We argued that a moral economy characterised by reciprocity, obligation and responsibility to fellow caste members and based on transnational affective regimes in the form of shame, guilt, pride, stigma, ostracism, gaze, and gossip were instrumental for the reproduction of the social viability of the village-caste-based identity across national borders. Our aim in that paper was to further develop the analytical dimensions of transnational studies which tend to primarily focus on material, social, symbolic, and cultural connections and their replication in a transnational context. While these were evident in our study, we found that the mirroring abroad of the ritualistic practices at home were fundamentally governed by the transnational traffic of affect. We argue that affective structures are critical to the production of sociality and function as social glue. As much as such moral economies facilitate and circumscribe a communal sense of belonging and identity, they are not entirely repressive. They produce a context of social viability (Hage 2003) and belonging for those de-territorialised members who participate and are included within them. We developed the term ‘translocal village’ to describe this village-oriented transnational social field (Velayutham and Wise 2005),

and we used the term ‘moral economy’ to describe the tightly-bounded system of reciprocity, obligation, and connection to kin and fellow caste members as it stretches across borders.

Because of the bounded and regulated nature of this translocal village, we concluded that the social viability of the village has not been challenged. We found that second-generation children of the villagers living in Singapore continue to conform to established norms; returning to the village for marriage and other activities, thus maintaining continuous kinship and social networks with the village. Until now, there had been only one or two cases of out-marriage among Musuguntha Vellalars in Singapore. In those instances, the marriages were to Tamil women of other castes and these resulted in ostracism. Our argument was that the collective affective regimes, the gaze and power of the moral economy functioned in such a way that it was practically impossible for any form of public transgression to emerge. When we presented our study at a conference, the audience was slightly surprised by the rigidity and delimited nature of this transnational social field. An audience member suggested that it was unfathomable there was no resistance by the translocal members of the village, especially the second generation. In some ways then, this article seeks to address this issue. As you may have gathered from the newspaper report, the groom is a second generation Musuguntha Vellalar who grew up in Singapore and the social field has been prised open by his cross-cultural wedding, a first for the Musuguntha Vellalar community.

As the literature suggests, deviation and rebellion against the first generation are not unusual among second-generation migrants (cf: Portes and Zhou 1993 : Portes and MacLeod 1996: Levitt and Waters 2002: Portes and Rumbaut 2005).^v The second generation are invariably portrayed as rebellious, experiencing a loss of cultural identity, and culturally clashing with their parents’ culture. The end result of this conflict is often represented as either a complete rejection of the parental culture, or what Stuart Hall calls a *return to the roots* (Hall 1992), whereby the second generation rediscovers and re-embraces their parents’ culture and identity. However, rejection or return is not a matter of choice but determined and motivated by any number of complex political, cultural and socio-economic factors. The focus of much of the literature is concerned with the experience of the second generation and their resolve, whilst the first generation is represented to be at the receiving end either as the contributor or source of the conflict/convergence. We argue that neither the linear ‘hybridity model’, nor the conformist

notion of returning to the fold sufficiently complicate second generation migrants' lived experiences and response to generational and contextual incommensurability. Equally, it fails to take into account how the first generation deals with moments of cultural rupture that occur when the second generation rebels. This reading assumes, to some extent, a fixed and essentialised form of first-generation identity, where the old culture and tradition is unable to cope and adapt to the new environment, modernise or reinvent itself.

The story we want to tell in this article is somewhat different. We explore how this transnational and cross-cultural wedding represents 'traditionalisation of modernity' and how the resilience and creative adaptation of the original culture is able to respond to the impacts of modernity and migration. The news story is not just a public announcement of the wedding. It represents an effort to publicly sanction the wedding and give it an official status. It was an attempt to displace the shame produced by such a dramatic deviation from the cultural norm of endogamous cross-cousin marriage, and replace it with a sense of pride. The story frames the breaking away from tradition as a temporary state where the 'rebellious' son comes back to the fold, bringing along his new wife. This is a narrative which symbolically anchors the 'Tamil sons' who have gone overseas in such numbers to the Tamil physical and cultural space. While the choice of the bride was clearly an act of transgression on the part of the groom, the wedding itself was not. It was very much in accordance to Hindu-Tamil cultural practices and was eventually legitimised with the consent of the families and caste-members involved.

Unravelling the Translocal Village

In our previous article (Velayutham and Wise 2005), we argued that fear of ostracism, shame, guilt and the moral economy of the village were powerful means by which first- and second-generation migrants were held together. We told a number of stories about the second-generation Tamil migrants living in Singapore, among them the story of Elangovan. When Elangovan's parents discovered through various gossip networks and the gaze of the village that he was seeing a Tamil girl of another caste, their immediate response was to impress upon him the guilt and shame that would arise from his actions. Adamant that he would not concede to these pressures, his parents intensified their pressure, by employing various forms of emotional blackmail. He was criticised for not being a filial son; and accused of not fulfilling his '*Nandri*

Kadan’ (thankful-indebtedness) to fellow Musuguntha Vellalar *pangalis* back in India. The varying disciplinary mechanisms employed to bring him into line were systemically affective and embodied. Elangovan was sent off to the village in India to visit his supposedly ‘ailing’ grandmother – only to discover that she was in good health and upon his arrival was pounced upon by his *pangalis* and *sondakaras* vying to force him to marry that same day. He managed to flee the situation but on his return to Singapore there were threats of suicide by his parents because of the shame brought about by his actions. Ultimately he was unable to outmanoeuvre their threats of suicide and eventually acceded to his parents request to consent to an arranged marriage.

Since Elangovan’s marriage, another major event has unfolded. Again the primary act of rebellion centres around an out-marriage. When Selvaraj’s parents discovered his involvement with a non-Musuguntha-Tamil-Hindu-Indian girl they too used similar techniques to discipline him. Fortunately for Selvaraj, his studies in Sydney offered a buffer from the psychological and emotional violence against him. After three years and many phone calls, when all parental efforts had failed, Selvaraj’s family recognised the inevitability of the situation and eventually conceded to his wish to marry outside of the caste. It might seem odd that despite the seemingly intractable situation, his parents so quickly and resolutely accepted the situation, once they realised they risked losing their son altogether should they continue to pursue their dream of arranging a ‘suitable’ marriage. In Werbner’s study of Pakistanis in Manchester (2002), there were a number of similar cases. The common factor seemed to be age; beyond a certain age (mid-30s), it was the view of a number of the Pakistani parents in her study that not marrying at all was a more shameful fate than their acquiescing to an out-marriage. In Selvaraj’s case, his parent’s decision to accept his out-marriage after many years of conflict was not the end, but just the beginning of a whole new set of negotiations involving the extended family and caste.

Ritual Repairs - Filling the Gaps

Weddings and other important rites of passage involve rituals that reproduce and codify tradition, family and community. There has been a long history of transnational Musuguntha Vellars upholding the rules of endogamy by entering into arranged marriages with villagers back in India. Among those in Singapore, it has generally been the case that marriage partners are sought from

the village in preference to caste members in Singapore, principally as a means of assisting poorer relatives in India and to strengthen kin alliances. Translocal Musugunthas, moreover, engage regularly in what we call ‘ritual returns’ to the village to participate in key life-cycle rituals surrounding birth, marriage and death. This signals the importance of ritual in maintaining the boundaries, even translocally of this closed community, creating a single social field between the village and its translocal strands abroad.

The impending wedding presented a new challenge to the Musuguntha Vellalars of Soorapallam village. The cross-cultural and transnational character of the wedding meant that particular ceremonies and rituals leading up to the wedding involving family members and kin had to be renegotiated. Once they realised that the wedding was inevitable, they had to invent ways to ritually repair the ruptured boundaries of the social collective. As Gluckman argues, rituals have a moral base. In circumstances of change which provoke great disturbance to present social arrangements, ritual must be performed prophylactically to redress its effects (Gluckman 1962:30).

Traditional Tamil-Hindu weddings normally involve a complex array of extended family actors from both sides playing key parts in a lengthy series of rituals spanning several days. Both bride and groom are assisted by immediate and extended family on their respective side. Under normal circumstances, the bride would be assisted by a large number of relatives on her side. Males on her side play a strong role in organising the wedding, negotiating finances and dowry, while a large number of bride-side female relatives particularly sisters and aunts play a more hands-on role throughout the wedding.

However this ‘outside’ bride from Australia was accompanied to India only by a brother, sister-in-law and a close male friend. In the context of the village this caused a great deal of concern and was seen as a severely inadequate family entourage and importantly, left a number of key ritual roles, normally played by extended family members, unfilled on the bride’s side. This caused enormous initial anxiety in the village, but after lengthy discussions among the groom’s extended family, it was decided that a number of the groom’s maternal aunts, his sister-in-law, and his mother’s male cousin would be appointed to stand in as ‘nominal relatives’ in order to fill key ritual roles for the duration of the five-day wedding.

The first ritual involved senior aunties facilitating a ritual bath for the bride. This was followed a day later by one of the most important parts of the wedding; the ‘welcoming of the bride to the village’. The first half of that ritual normally involves a large event at the bride’s village home, and involves key roles for female relatives on the bride’s side. Ever creative, the village had hired a hotel room and wedding hall in the nearby town which functioned as a pretend ‘home village’ for the bride and her ‘stand-in’ family, where this set of rituals could take place. The bride was then accompanied via a procession, to the groom’s village home, where the brides ‘stand-in relatives’ formally handed the bride over to the groom’s family.

Other gaps emerged, and these were perhaps the most tense and complicated ritual gaps to fill because they involved the question of reciprocity. They were particularly anxiety-producing because weddings are one of the most ‘reciprocity-intensive’ occasions in Musuguntha life showcasing long temporal cycles of receipt, exchange and indebtedness among members of the clan. This mode of reciprocity is a highly formalised and circumscribed mode of reproducing the boundaries of the moral economy. Each gift of money, saris or gold jewellery to the couple is recorded in a family ledger by the designated ‘accountant’ and used as a means over time to determine how much your family has received from other families and individuals and in turn, how much should be returned in reciprocal gift exchanges on future occasions. Bringing in a completely ‘outside’ family who has no history of contribution to the gift economy of the caste complicates things immensely.

A formal aspect of the ‘welcome of the bride’ ritual mentioned earlier involves the presentation of gold jewellery, especially solid gold bangles, rings, and necklaces by relatives on the bride’s side, often valued at several thousand Australian dollars. This is normally reciprocal; the worth of each family’s gift of gold is determined by the value of the bride’s family’s previous gifts to the giver’s family in the past. It signifies very strong core social bonds, and also acts as a public demonstration of wealth of the bride’s extended family. This bride’s Australian family did not have gold to present to the bride, and her appointed ‘pretend’ family obviously were not in a position to begin a new cycle of reciprocity by gifting gold to an outsider with whom their families had no ‘gift relationship’ in the past. Yet the need to maintain that important part of the ritual remained, as did the desire of the groom’s family to ensure that the village did not think the bride’s family was so poor as to be unable to afford the requisite gifts of gold. Creatively, the aunties acquired gold plastic bangles from the town. The bangles looked, from a distance and to

the audience, convincingly authentic. The aunties also pitched in bits of their own gold jewellery – an armful of bangles and several gold necklaces to lend the bride so that she and her new husband's family would not be publicly embarrassed. She was required to wear this borrowed jewellery throughout her stay in the village to show off her 'wealth'.

The traditional presentation of dowry from the bride side to the groom's family also had to be re-invented because of the rupture the 'outside family' caused in the local moral economy. Again, 'stand-in' family members, this time male, were designated to join the bride's elder brother to 'negotiate' and then present the dowry. Instead of the usual procession of the bride's family members carrying the dowry items, the stand-in aunties took their place and came bearing 'token' items such as flowers, pots and oil lamps instead of the usual 'big ticket' items such as TVs, cars, furniture and whitegoods. However in order to keep up appearances, at least one large item was needed, as well as bundles of cash. Despite the fact that the bride and groom and his parents did not wish to have a 'real' dowry, the extended family felt that the ritual needed to be completed and that it was important to show it was done properly. The bride's stand-in family acquired a new fridge and large wads of cash to be handed over to the groom's family during the dowry ritual. As far as we are aware these items eventually made their way back to those who donated them some days later so that no-one was out of pocket, yet dowry was seen to be paid, and face was kept.

We argue that this 'ritual gap filling' was an attempt by the extended family to smooth over ruptures in the ritual ceremonies to avoid obvious or glaring omissions and to ensure the rituals remained intact. Each element of the wedding ritual exists to fully sanctify the marriage. Conducting them in full tradition with no missing elements ensures the success of the wedding and the ongoing marriage. In a sense, this was about keeping the cosmos intact. As Gluckman, Evans-Pritchard and other anthropologists have argued, 'ritual, ... is associated with notions that its performance in some mysterious way, by processes out of sensory control, affects the wellbeing of the participants; it is believed to protect them or in other ways achieve their wellbeing' (Gluckman 1962:30). There was then an element of care in all this; that the act of our rebellious marriage potentially so unsettles the given order of things that the rituals and rites of marriage had to be carried out in the fullest and most specific tradition in order that the village could protect the couple who now belong to them. Ritual gap filling also served to mend the

rupture in the translocal village and ensured the ongoing viability of the tight knit moral economy.

On the Management of Pride and Shame

While the need to manage gaps in ritual and cycles of reciprocity was one aspect of this particular act of second generation rebellion, there was also a great deal of attention paid to the management of affects such as shame and pride. Shame and pride do not just apply to the rebellious son. They impact upon his immediate family and their connection to the home village, translocally. Scheff calls shame the ‘social emotion’ and argues that the defining feature of shame is that it involves a feeling of a threat to the social bond (2000:96-7). For this reason, it is the most basic of social emotions. In terms of social control, shame ‘figures in most social interaction because although members may only occasionally feel shame, they are constantly anticipating it’ (Scheff 2000:97). While the groom is somewhat ‘outside’ of the social field in a day-to-day sense in Australia, his parents’ sense of identity, belonging and social viability is very much tied up with and circumscribed by the translocal village, and they thus have much more at stake in managing their acceptance and reputation within it. This applies as much to acceptance by fellow Musuguntha Vellalars in Singapore, implying a transnationalised management of reputation.

The groom’s father has already accumulated a high degree of social and cultural capital as a ‘good migrant’. He returned to the village regularly, married off his eldest son in an arranged marriage to a daughter of a good family, and contributed as he should to the replication of the moral economy of the village, demonstrating his *nandri-kaadan*. For these reasons he felt a great deal of pride at his obvious success and standing in the village. The rebelliousness of his second son threatened his reputation and sense of pride and also left him unable to fulfil his moral indebtedness to the village by not marrying in. The groom’s family also had to demonstrate that even though the son was marrying ‘out’, the family, son, and new bride remained respectful of and committed to the village and *pangali*. Despite eventually conceding to the wedding, the groom’s parents were not the ultimate arbiters. Bound by moral obligations and responsibilities to their village, the groom’s family were compelled to return to the village to announce the situation, consult and seek support for the wedding to go ahead.

While there was great unhappiness and dissatisfaction (especially amongst maternal uncles who were vying to marry their daughters to the groom), the groom's father, after much discussion and difficult negotiation, managed to secure a number of key allies having convinced them that if the wedding were not allowed to go ahead, they risked losing their transnational son altogether. Having conceded to the inevitability of the marriage, the groom's father and advisors were resolute that the only way that the couple and their family could be rescued from ostracism was to take the bull by the horns and hold the wedding in the village in strictest accordance to tradition. Their view was that the wedding needed to be celebrated on a grand scale to show a proud face to the sceptical villagers and extended family.

There was general consensus among the groom's extended family and allies that it would be shameful for the couple if they were to marry quietly on their own in Australia or Singapore and that this would result in an enduring stigmatisation of the couple and their family. This kind of liminal belonging was seen as *unviable*. The only way forward was to hold the wedding in the village; to either crash through with pride in tact or burn, as it were. Irving Goffman might call this 'face work'. In his discussion of 'face saving', he coins the term 'Corrective Process' and argues:

When the participants in an undertaking or encounter fail to prevent the occurrence of an event that is expressively incompatible with the judgements of social worth that are being maintained, and when the event is of the kind that is difficult to overlook, then the participants are likely to give it accredited status as an incident—to ratify it as a threat that deserves direct official attention—and to proceed to try to correct for its effect. At this point one or more participants find themselves in an established state of ritual disequilibrium or disgrace, and an attempt must be made to re-establish a satisfactory ritual state for them. (Goffman 1967:19)

A number of key allies (close male relatives and the village headman) joined the groom's father throughout the organisation of the wedding to make decisions in order to ensure that the family would retain face throughout and, indeed, to ensure the wedding would be seen to be a successful one that the family could be proud rather than ashamed of. The wedding, in this sense, was very much about the accumulation and protection of reputation. The key allies were brought in

strategically, first, to make them feel important, but were also chosen because they were individuals held in high esteem within the village. They included mostly educated men; a pharmacist, a retired teacher, a doctor, and the current and former headmen (*thalaivar*) and a number of village elders.

Each of them were given responsibility to oversee various aspects of the pre-wedding organisation and wedding rituals in order to produce the most socially acceptable wedding out of the complexities of this cross-cultural moment. They were intimately involved in the process of setting the wedding date. Although the groom's father had visited a priest in Singapore with the couple to ascertain the best date for the marriage, the allies in the village felt that a Singaporean-based Hindu priest did not hold sufficient spiritual authority to make such a determination. They visited their own priest in India who had final say over the date and time for the marriage. These allies were also charged with making decisions surrounding the bride's wedding attire, hair and jewellery, the wedding invitation, food, and scale of festivities. This was not just about managing pride in front of the village, there was also a great sense of presenting 'Tamil culture' in a proud and impressive way to the outsiders. There were even suggestions to hold a classical Bharatanatyam dance and orchestral concert, scuttled only for budgetary reasons. These grander visions were as much about producing a situation of pride and high regard of the outsiders from the bride's side, as it was about managing the reputation of the groom's family internally.

However despite appearances, the groom's family were not completely beholden to the advisors on key decisions. The groom's father was very strategic about manoeuvring and negotiating his way through the event, often inserting controversial elements in a way that allowed the advisors to think that these were their own decisions. Equally, the allies were not simply allies because they supported or liked the groom's father. Each had a stake in ensuring the moral economy of the village was not ruptured by this transnational transgression. The key allies had a duty and obligation to express their '*nandri-kaadan*' which they acquired through the groom's family's sponsorship and contributions to their own families (which we talked about in earlier paper) in years gone by. By implication there was always a degree of self-interest involved in reproducing the moral economy and ensuring future material gain through the indebtedness of the groom's family to them for their support. Their support through the wedding ensured the ties remained strong and the circle of reciprocity continues and that more opportunities in the transnational

field (such as assistance to their children with migration or obtaining employment overseas) were opened up through this obligation. There was a great deal of interest at the possibility of access to a new transnational locale in Australia. These families were very aware of the role of kinship networks in producing migration chains. Not surprisingly, after the wedding there were many requests for assistance thus.

Nandri-Kaadan, as we noted above, roughly translates as ‘thankful indebtedness’. As Appadurai points out, there is no simple way of expressing thanks verbally in Tamil society (Appadurai 1985). While it is considered impolite (and indeed insulting in some circumstances) to express thanks verbally at the point of receiving a gift, or favour, gratitude nonetheless is important in Tamil culture and is deeply intertwined with the notion of moral economy. Gratitude has a long life cycle for Tamils. The giving of gifts in Tamil society is governed by the idea of *duty*. There is one common verbal expression of gratitude, which translates as ‘I will never forget this act’ (*nan ithai marakkave matten*). It is an expression which implies that ‘the receiver will not forget, at the appropriate time, to make the appropriate return’ (Appadurai 1985:241). In this context, the logic of Tamil gratitude is thus; ‘gratitude implies appreciation, appreciation involves acknowledgement, and the only significant form of acknowledgement is return’ (240). *Nandri-Kaadan* then, implies a sense of duty and in terms of important social and kin relations, generates a never ending cycle of reciprocity which define the limits of the social relationship. There is then a degree of economic strategy in the *pangali*’s eventual willing incorporation of the outsider bride and her family into the tightly knit transnational social field, entailing, as we’ve argued, deeply held and frequently called upon modes of reciprocity. Indeed, the greater the largesse of the wedding and the public support from key *pangalis* and allies, the greater the debt of *nandri-kaadan* owed by the couple once they leave.

The groom’s mother managed shame and pride in a different way to her husband. There was a distinctly gendered aspect to their roles and experience throughout and their respective experience of transnational affect. She did not work outside the home in Singapore and was very much confined to the Singapore Musuguntha social world, whereas the groom’s father worked in ethnically mixed workplaces. Because of her gendered care responsibilities to her elderly mother in the village, she spends much of each year in the village, unlike her husband who spends most of his time in Singapore, returning to the village for only about three months of the year. For this

reason, the groom's mother is inextricably tied to the quotidian modes of village life, its social norms, gossip networks and regulating gaze.

The groom's mother had to tread a very fine line throughout the wedding, neither alienating husband and son, nor close relatives and other caste members upon whom she relied for own social viability at an everyday level. She took a deliberately 'back-stage' role throughout; displaying strategic indifference to the newcomers initially; neither too publicly proud or welcoming, nor displaying outright rejection. She spent a great deal of time organising background elements of the wedding, but played no public role in negotiations, or rituals through the actual wedding. Those ritual roles normally requiring the participation of parents were filled by the groom's elder brother and sister-in-law or uncles. Yet the groom's mother demonstrated her support by organising the wedding and by attending and sitting in the front row. Only after the wedding and its public sanction did she begin to take a more 'front-stage' role – beginning with a blessing to the bride and groom when they performed the traditional prostration at the parent's feet. Her role became increasingly public and formalised during the post-wedding rituals, including a ritual involving re-threading the wedding *thali* (or *manglasutra* incorporating gold chain and pendant.) onto the bride at a temple the following week.

Her support implied a moral indebtedness that does not cease with the couple's wedding. Following the wedding, the groom's mother was concerned to ensure the couple understood the continuing obligation of care they owed her and close family. She sought assurance that she would be cared for by the couple in her old age, and that close family members would receive support from the couple when required.

Indeed, it was generally the case that the villagers now saw a new layer to the moral economy, one which involved the groom, his new bride and her family. On departing, many important caste members and extended family reminded the couple that, having made such an extraordinary wedding possible, the couple had a great responsibility not to disappear and forget them. They reminded the couple of their new and ongoing responsibilities to assist with village-level issues such as building the temple, helping to pay the educational fees for important sons, helping them to secure employment and migration, keeping in regular contact, and, most importantly, to bring their children back for important rituals and rites of passage. Given the

difficulties and obstacles presented to the couple in securing their wedding, the approval from the village and caste members was experienced as so great a favour that one could not simply ignore the indebtedness implied. There is indeed a level of mutuality in this moral economy and it is this ongoing mutuality that ties the couple into the translocal village. ^{vi}

ANALYSIS

There are a number of threads of analysis we'd like to develop in this last section. These include some reflections on the response of the first generation, followed by a number of propositions on how we believe the translocal moral economy was reproduced and reinforced in the ethnographic account above.

Response of first generation

There have been calls, in recent literature, for more research into whether transnationalism is a first-generation phenomenon (Mahler 1998: Glick-Schiller 1999: Levitt and Waters 2002). Recent literature argues that the second generation do not 'assimilate' in linear fashion, but rather produce hybrid modes of cultural identity that reflect both country of settlement and parental culture (Leichtman 2005) yet continue to engage in the transnational circuits.

Here, we'd like to make a brief point about the cyclical nature of transnational participation of the second generation. We do not agree with arguments that posit some defined and permanent 'either-in-or-out' notion of second generation participation in transnational social fields. Involvement in a transnational moral economy ebbs and flows with the rhythms of various life stages. Participation may be more intense as a child when still under parental influence, may ease during years of identity exploration and the rebellion of young adulthood, and often re-intensify when reaching the life stage of marriage and reproduction where there is often an increased interest in family connection and cultural roots. In other words, one enters and leaves the transnational system over time and is more or less influenced by it depending on context and life-stage.

Nonetheless, there is a sense in which this literature maintains the assumption that the first generation and homeland remain, to some degree, culturally static. In this paper, we have chosen to deal with the second generation not in and of themselves but through the lens of the first generation and home village. Our argument is that there is not, in the case at hand, evidence that the second generation will, over time, gradually drift way from the translocal moral economy. Yet there is inevitably some drifting away or rebellion from it. However the ‘translocal village’ – this includes the home village and the first generation -- does not simply remain the same and regret the outflow of the second generation. The ‘system’, in this instance, responded creatively to the rebellion and expanded its social field, reworked its modes of reproduction, in order to keep the system intact, re-circumscribing the boundaries of its moral economy. Rebellion by the second generation does not spell the end of the translocal village, merely a re-working of its boundaries.

Reproduction of social field and moral economy transnationally

In our previous article we showed how the translocal village was reproduced through an enduring moral economy, reinforced through the transnational circulation of affects such as shame and pride and policed through gossip networks and the village ‘gaze’. This social field is not simply repressive, it is a social system which produces a sense of belonging, and viability and provides significant support systems for this within it. There is much at stake, in remaining a part of this moral economy which functions to bind this community together. There are several means (in addition to those we outlined in the original paper) through which the moral economy of this transnational social field was reproduced in a moment of potential rupture.

1. The work of affect.

Our argument is that transnational studies should not simply focus on the material flows, institutions and enabling structures, but also on what compels groups to remain within and continue to reproduce transnational social fields. In other words, what are the non-material conditions which foster and underpin transnational networks and relationships? A great deal of energy was put into managing shame, pride and reputations throughout the lead up to and during the wedding. Shame and pride are key threads to what we term ‘transnational affect’ and

function to reproduce the boundaries of transnational social fields. We define transnational affect as:

The bodily emotive (affective) means of reproducing belonging to and boundaries of transnational fields. Transnational affects emotionally reinforce a moral economy made up of social norms and systems of care, reciprocity and obligation. These are regulated through affects such as pride, honour, shame, fear of ostracism and embarrassment and policed through the collective evaluative gaze of the transnational community.

Gossip by members of the translocal community, for instance, is one important means through which the evaluative process takes place and affects such as shame and pride are produced. Gossip, as Gluckman (1963) has pointed out, is ‘generally enjoyed by people about others with whom they are in a close social relationship’. It functions as a means of social control because ‘when you gossip about your friends to other mutual friends you are demonstrating that you all belong to one set which has the duty to be interested in one another’s vices as well as virtues’ (Gluckman 1963:313-4). In other words, it is only among those who are members of a group that gossip has currency and only before them that one feels shame. In this way, gossip defines the boundaries of the translocal community. ^{vii}

Transnational affects emotively compel participation in and conformity to the system. Scheff, speaking in a different context, argues that ‘we experience the system as so compelling because of emotions—the pleasure of pride...and the punishment of embarrassment, shame or humiliation...’.(Scheff 1988:396). It is our argument that in this case, the strength of affects such as shame, pride, and even family love, functioned to ensure the reproduction of the moral economy. Transnational affects are not simply experienced in the face of an undifferentiated moral community. Often when abroad, the most basic of human relations—love and care for immediate kin such as parents—are the driving force of participation in the moral economy. So while a young couple overseas may be less concerned with the views of extended kin, care and concern for parents who are very tightly connected to the home village is such that they modify their behaviour in order that their parents are not subject to negative evaluation from the translocal village and extended kin.

Transnational affects are also palpable. Their very embodied and emotional intensity allows them to travel beyond the actual moment of shame or embarrassment in the co-presence of other community members. Their corporeal palpability embeds these affects into transnational community members and the associated emotions and attendant behavioural responses carry across distance and time. Thus, it is the scale and intensity of affect across the transnational social field that reproduces sociality across space.

2. Filling ritual gaps

Yet accession to the system by the family and couple involved is not enough when it involves a controversial out-marriage. This cross-cultural arrangement brought problems of two kinds. To reproduce a moral economy transnationally, there needs to be acceptance from those already in it that the deviants and newcomers may be allowed 'into' the system. As we saw, this required a great deal of management on the part of those most closely allied to the groom and his family. And the second problem lay, as we saw, in the application and replication of the core rituals which have the important function of binding, over time, the moral community together. In order not to 'lose' the groom and his family, we have shown in this paper how the ritual system creatively responds to repair or overcome the rupture in order to keep the boundaries of the translocal social field intact.

Here, the work of 'public secrets' comes into play. The *Pangalis* who attended the wedding were aware that many of the rituals were re-arranged to cope with this unusual set of circumstances, but this was never commented upon openly. A public face was maintained to show the wider group of wedding guests that '*all was going well*'. Public secrets (Herzfeld 1997) play a role when there is investment in the public pretence that what occurred has ritual legitimacy, partly in order keep the social boundaries (and the associated moral economy) intact.

The idea of filling in ritual gaps is perhaps not unusual. Cultures are resilient and dynamic. The use of improvisation, innovation and hybridisation are generally known to take place in cross-cultural weddings. In their recent study of intercommunity marriage in contemporary India, Jauregui and Mc Guinness (2003:73) found that cultural blending, rejection of certain practices, insertion of new rituals and selective interpretation and mingling of rituals were common

practice. However in our case, the filling of ritual gaps demonstrates less the fluid nature of cultural practices, and more the suturing of gaps, unexpected voids and ruptures in order to maintain the boundaries of the transnational social field.

3. Bringing the world to them

A third conclusion we wish to make has to do with the newspaper article we introduced at the very beginning of the paper. The article deals creatively with the anxiety produced by the ‘outward flow’ of young Tamils in a context of globalised modernity. It deals at several scales from a highly localised village-caste based scale, through to a broader scale of the Tamil-culture and nation.

At the village level, rather than the transnational son going out to the world and losing his culture, there was a distinct sense of investment in a narrative that implies that if the village was strong enough in showing the worth of Tamil culture, it would be able to incorporate the outsider from Australia into their world. During the interview, the journalist and others present were demonstrably pleased that this young Tamil man had gone overseas to study, and not lost his culture. Indeed, he had brought his culture to the world, which was so impressive his bride and her family wanted to become more Tamil. They spoke proudly at the ‘work’ their transnational Tamil boys (all those Tamil IT workers abroad) were doing abroad to show the world how glorious Tamil culture is. There is a section in the article which invented words for the bride, and she is quoted thus;

“There are 50,000 Tamils in Sydney. I love Tamil food, culture and arts ... Through this wedding I have fulfilled my lifelong ambition to marry a Tamil”.

At both these scales of Tamil-nation and village, there was a sense that Tamil culture had the ability to flip global modernity on its head. Through its strength, Tamil culture is seen as able to ‘Tamilise the world’, rather than ‘worlding’ Tamils abroad. The underlying message in the article is that although Tamils are ‘going out to the world’ through a process of migration and transnationalisation, this does not necessarily mean losing Tamil culture. If Tamil culture does its work well, the world instead, will come back to Tamil culture. This discourse is a way of

mentally re-framing these anxiety producing developments. In some ways this is a fantasy, a means of coming to terms with the cultural impacts of economically driven out-migration.

Conclusion

In this article we have argued that a moment of potentially serious cultural rupture caused by the ‘rebellious second generation’ posed a threat to the viability of a successful translocal moral economy. We explored how the first generation and those in the home village dealt with this moment of disruption through filling in ritual gaps which was, we argued, linked in turn to the management of affects such as shame, pride and embarrassment. We went on to develop the term ‘transnational affect’ to describe how embodied emotions which travel across time and space function to reproduce the local kin and village based moral economy within a transnational social field. In our view, the concept of transnational affect offers new possibilities for theorising and understanding the complex experiential dimensions of the rapidly increasing number of communities which span national borders. Indeed, by looking at the work of moral economies, ritual work, and transnational affect in reproducing social structures in transnational contexts, we may begin to understand the temporal resilience of communities which maintain their connections and viability in the contemporary age of migration.

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ Editor's note: Below, the authors describe "transnational affective regimes" as including transnational "shame, guilt, pride, stigma, ostracism, gaze, and gossip." They note: "Transnational affects emotionally reinforce a moral economy made up of social norms and systems of care, reciprocity and obligation."

ⁱⁱ The stepping of the Ammi (grinding stone) and the observing of the Arundhati star are two rituals in an amalgam of rituals that are performed during a Hindu-Tamil wedding. The stepping of the Ammi involves the husband placing the right foot of his wife on a flat grinding stone, reciting some Vedic mantra while he puts on the metti (toe-ring).

ⁱⁱⁱ While we speak of the Musuguntha Vellalar caste, the principal members of the transnational social field are a family sub-set. *Pangalis* (to whom the Dina Thandi refers) are seen as 'close kin, or immediate family'. Pangali incorporates fraternal line members – from immediate uncles, aunts and cousins, through to second cousins, great aunts and uncles, principally on the male side. Sondakara is a related term which refers to a wider network kin relations – in-laws, second, third and fourth cousins. Musuguntha Vellalars follow endogamous cross-cousin marriage rules (first and second cousins on the fraternal line) – thus, Pangalis and Sondakaras spanning many families are still strongly socially interconnected.

^{iv} Moral economy has been used in differing ways by a number of important scholars such as E.P. Thompson (Thompson 1971), James Scott (Scott 1976), and more recently, Pnina Werbner who develops the concept in reference to Manchester Pakistanis (Werbner 1990 and Werbner 2002). It is Werbner's definition of moral economy that most accords with our usage in this paper.

^v The concept of 'second generation' has been a subject of some debate over correct definition. For our purposes, we define the second generation as the host country-born children of immigrants and children who migrated to there with parents at a very young age.

^{vi} These obligations have continued since the wedding with a visit back to the village for the Harvest Festival of Pongol, financial contributions to cover the college fees of two young men within the extended family and financial contributions toward the building of an annex onto one of the village temples.

^{vii} See also Irving Goffman's work on Stigma for his ground-breaking discussion on the ritual management of shame and stigma. (Goffman 1963)