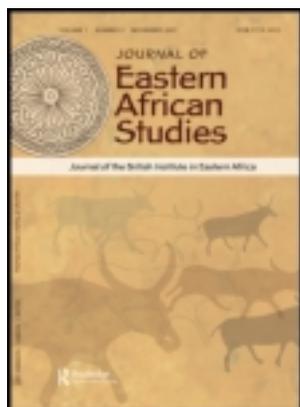


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Exceptions to the expulsion: violence, security and community among Ugandan Asians, 1972-79

Anneeth Kaur Hundle ^a

^a Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, 48109, USA

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Exceptions to the expulsion: violence, security and community among Ugandan Asians, 1972–79

Anneeth Kaur Hundle*

Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI 48109, USA

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This paper explores the precarious social worlds of Indians, or Ugandan Asians, who continued to live in Uganda after the 1972 expulsion of the Asian population; men and women who were bureaucratic “exceptions” to the larger out flux of the Indian population. They responded to their racialization and ambivalent inclusion in Amin’s Uganda with complex forms of collaboration, complicity, and social practices geared towards shoring up security. Significantly, leaders defined the Indian social body away from an already marginalized Indian political domain that was instituted in the colonial period. Men constructed a new cross-ethnic, religious and sectarian social collectivity in response to their visible status as racialized subjects, forging private enclaves of urban Indian space. Finally, their narratives illustrate aspects of the contingent, bureaucratic, and arbitrary nature of violence and governance in the dictatorial regime. The social and cultural practices developed by Indians during the 1970s continue to structure the dynamics of Afro-Asian relations in contemporary East Africa.

Keywords: Asians; Idi Amin; race; security; Uganda; violence

Scholars have long debated the nature of power and violence in 1970s Uganda by describing Idi Amin’s state as a “military ethnocracy”, “totalitarian rule”, a “lumpen militariat”, or even a system of fascism.¹ The near obsessive focus with Amin as African dictator *par excellence* has obscured research on the complex nature of governance and subordination during this era – and by extension, other putative dictatorial regimes in Africa. In Uganda, the analysis of Amin’s governance, when not wholly preoccupied with Idi Amin’s origins, life history, and personality, focuses on Kampala-based high politics, foreign economic relations with Euro-America and the Middle East, or a popular narrative of national decline and ruin.²

Ethnographic and historical research, however, allows us to rethink this conventional picture of Amin as archetypical sovereign ruler. By building on the anthropological insight that “sovereign power and the violence (or the threat thereof) that always mark it, should be studied as practices dispersed throughout, and across societies”,³ it becomes possible to view Amin’s *lumpen militariat* as a social body constituted by a hierarchical and ever-shifting composition of personnel embedded in extensive and diverse networks. By exploring the modes by which power and agency are broken down into their component processes across a wider social field and a broader range of cultural practices, it is possible to theorize the complex

*Email: anneeth@umich.edu

political positioning and subjectivities of everyday social actors. In Amin's Uganda, for example, government advisors, bureaucrats and businessmen manipulated various forms of cultural and symbolic capital in their efforts to attain leverage in an environment of capricious and arbitrary violence. In doing so, they contributed to a radically different moral and social order that emerged during the Amin years.

Support for Idi Amin as sole ruler is not only rooted in his Machiavellian persona and displays of extreme violence against the Ugandan body politic. Amin's ascendancy and grip on power via a military coup, followed by the dissolution of the parliamentary system and the adoption of rule by decree, became entrenched post-colonial political forms during the regime. The monopolistic right to suspend constitutional law via decree is perhaps most infamously exemplified by the 1972 expulsion of Asians from the country. The Immigration (Amendment) Decree, issued on 5 October 1972, followed General Idi Amin's public decision on 9 August 1972 to "cancel every entry permit and certificate of residency for any person who is of Asian origin, extraction, or descent".⁴ In a three-month period, it is estimated that 55,000 South Asians (British, Indian and Ugandan citizens of multiple ethnic, religious, class, and caste affiliations) left the country as stateless refugees or displaced migrants.⁵ Scholarship on the 1972 expulsion is extensive and beyond the scope of this paper.⁶ I will note, however, that in their laudable efforts to detract international media attention away from Idi Amin as an erratic, racist, and primitive African leader – their attempts to understand racialized violence and exclusion within larger structures of colonial governance and historical political economy – scholars overlooked the dynamics of everyday Afro-Asian social life during and after the Indian citizenship crisis.

In the domain of scholarship, the deep racial segmentation of East African society has resulted in an equally pervasive division of historiography and ethnography across "African" and "Asian" racial groups, often assumed to be fixed, objective, and natural social facts.⁷ This essay is part of a larger project that seeks to rewrite Indian presence across racial boundaries by illustrating the complex social and cultural links across and between racially demarcated groups. Although the bulk of this analysis draws from research with people who identify themselves and are defined as "Indian" (*muhindi*), the material begins to define the contours of an Indian-African world that flourished during the Amin regime.⁸

Below, I explore the everyday lives of Indians who continued to live in Uganda after the expulsion.⁹ Ugandan Asians "who remained" (*rehan walley*) possessed a heightened sense of the self as a *racialized* self, a notion of individual and community that developed in relation to the racialized gaze of Amin and the state.¹⁰ The dissolution of the Indian family, community and religious institutions, and the daily rhythms of work and social life rendered those who remained in a post-expulsion environment rife with complex moral and psychic dimensions. Veena Das's (2007) conceptualization of "violence in the weave of everyday life" is useful here for considering the ways in which former Indian urban space was transformed into new and uneven domains of social and cultural practice in the years that followed the expulsion. Rather than exploring violent events and their relationship to anthropological subjects, Das considers the "mutual absorption of the event and the ordinary . . . so that I end up thinking of the event as always attached to the ordinary as if there were tentacles that reach out from the everyday and anchor the event to it in some specific ways".¹¹ In the context of this research, I found that the violence of the expulsion event was not always expressed by interviewees in articulate speech

utterances, but rather located in fragments of social practice across many arenas of daily life. I then shaped together this evidence, drawn from oral histories and ethnographic fieldwork carried out from 2008 to 2011, into a post-expulsion milieu of social vulnerability and the desire for security.

By drawing on themes of violence, the everyday, security and subjectivity, I explore how Indians became embedded in relationships with an array of Ugandans in order to survive in a social and political context of pervasive violence and unpredictability. Indian community entrepreneurs worked to cultivate relations of commensality and exchange with bureaucrats and officials in order to attain bodily, financial, and community security. In Kampala, confraternity and conviviality among Indian and African men was commonplace. Yet the inverse was also true: sodality might unexpectedly be retracted or broken, and thus Indian men developed a number of “tactics of practice” in relation to the project of seeking security.¹² Visible and vulnerable, Indians could become “big men” within specialized economic niches; or conversely, fairly powerless and dependent. They were visible in times of relative security and necessity; and at other moments, in hiding, exile, or confinement.

Thus, Indian presence during the 1970s can be described as tenacious and imperiled. Indeed, reconsidering the regime, by way of the ordinary lives of Indians who remained, enables us to shift our attention from the nature of dictators (and the sovereignty that they embody) to the complex and ambiguous forms of interdependency and collaboration that structured relations between African and Indian men during this era. While this analysis illustrates the agency of Indian subjects in Amin’s regime, it also explores critical processes of *subject-making* among Indian men.¹³ Struggling with the breakdown of the Indian community and social order, Indian men sought new forms of social recognition by powerful African entrepreneurs, politicians, and Idi Amin. The Amin era, then, resulted in the emergence of new social collectivities, inter-racial exchanges, and transformed political subjectivities among Indians who remained.

After the deadline: social life in “the vacuum”

Ugandan Asians who remained were exceptions to the general out flux of the Indian population from East Africa in the 1960s, and from those who left *en masse* as refugees or displaced migrants in 1972 as a result of Idi Amin’s Economic War. While the literature on the expulsion typically analyzes this out flux of Indians as a dramatic event that spanned three months in 1972; in fact, processes of out-migration took place across a more protracted time frame. At the time of Amin’s expulsion decree about 55,000 Indians lived in Uganda and began to make their arrangements to leave the country. On 9 November 1972, the deadline for Indians’ exit from Uganda, an estimated 3000 to 5000 Ugandan Asians were still within national borders.¹⁴ The majority of this population (rather isolated Indians in remote regions) filtered out gradually over the next few years. Many crossed the Uganda–Kenya border as they were dispossessed of businesses and homes by early 1973. Their departure was hastened by additional threats from Amin, delivered to the remaining group of Indians in Kampala after the deadline.¹⁵ Five hundred Indians, largely men, lived in Kampala throughout the decade.¹⁶ Men who remained inhabited a diverse set of ethnic, religious and caste-based identities; generally of Gujarati or Panjabi ethnic background; and most were Lohana Hindus, *Shia* Ismailis and Panjabi Sikhs.

One hundred and fifty Indians would remain in Kampala fairly consistently throughout the regime. This group possessed Ugandan citizenship (by birth or naturalization after Ugandan independence) and understood themselves as East African Asians, or Ugandan Asians. The others, usually civil servants, were Indian nationals and temporary contractors who had become long-term residents prior to the expulsion. They occupied professional niches that were necessary to the new regime, and were thus entitled to stay on for these reasons. In my interviews, both groups described themselves as “exempt” from the expulsion – they possessed special permits and identity cards that indexed their exceptional status from the expulsion decree.¹⁷ Ostensibly, these bureaucratic forms protected them from anti-Indian racialized violence, identified them as legitimate (if incomplete) members of Amin’s Uganda, and rendered their presence legible to state agents.

As Figure 1 suggests, it was Indian men who received official exemptions from the expulsion exercise. Men had already performed significant labor during the expulsion by relocating female kinfolk outside of East Africa well before the November deadline.¹⁸ This small, tight-knit group often described Kampala as a “vacuum”. In doing so, they described the spectral, ghost-town quality of the capital city in the absence of the Indian population and commercial class.

Prior to the expulsion, Indians in Uganda were organized according to the colonial constitution of society. Governed by the “non-native” department of the British colonial apparatus, the population was relegated to what Hannah Arendt calls “the social”, or the socioeconomic realm governed by administrative and biopolitical rationalities but removed from the realm of politics proper.¹⁹ The “Indian



Figure 1. Idi Amin pictured with his British associate Bob Astles and remaining Ugandan Asians. The photo circulated electronically via email forwards in Kampala in 2011. Its origins are unknown. Interviewees and other sources suggest that Amin invited “exempt” and remaining Indians to a reception at Command Post in Kampala after the deadline, sometime between November 1972 and 1973. (I thank Bharat and Kusum Gheewala for forwarding this photo to me in August 2011.)

community”, as it was defined by the colonial state, was not only racialized as Asian, it was also gendered male.²⁰ Indian men represented and gave voice to the Asian social body, which was governed internally according to communal and sectarian divisions and interests. H.S. Morris, an early ethnographer of Indians in Uganda, argued that the notion of the “Indian community, as a social entity, has a tenuous existence as an unrealized ideal”.²¹ Rather, the structural units that guided the lives of Indians were communal religious, sectarian, and caste-based organizations. Thus, the organization of colonial society meant that Indians were divided across communal lines and then racialized into a homogenous, if fictive, “Indian community”.

Amin’s Economic War against the Indian commercial class significantly broke down elements of this (post)colonial social order. After the expulsion, there were no Indian communal groups organized according to colonial society, nor any clearly defined Indian leaders attached to colonial and communal institutions. Indian political life would also be privatized in Amin’s regime, but in a different way. This privatization of “the political” was based on non-recognition and racial exclusion. Indian men, possessing multiple social identities, transformed “the political” away from formal institutions and leaders embedded in the colonial set-up into a new racialized and cross-communal collectivity organized around an intensely private and contained life. Leadership of the community who remained depended upon individual entrepreneurship, creativity, and patron–client relations with members of the government or the military.

This new form of social marginalization was distinguished by the politics of vulnerability and the search for security. The notion of “security” had multiple and shifting meanings in Amin’s Uganda, and in relation to Indians exempt from the expulsion. Security referred to the absence of the threat of violence. It could signify an existential recognition of the individual self via official state documentation. But it could also index bodily safety, economic stability, or the protection and reproduction of the Indian community who remained. Finally, men routinely evoked a broader notion of security that was related to the heavy handedness of Amin’s regime. They often discussed Amin’s ability to govern for almost a decade, the numerous bureaucracies and state agents engaged in information-gathering activities, and the strong military presence in Kampala.

Some Ugandan Asians who remained were elite businessmen or civil servants of strategic importance to Amin’s government. They had extensive personal connections and networks with Ugandan political elites. It is likely that in the context of increasing economic insecurity for Indians in East Africa in the 1960s, they were already plugged into a broader system of enterprise and patronage with soldiers and officials, facilitating their ability to negotiate inclusion after the expulsion deadline. This group was able to accrue enough power through financial capital and other forms of cultural or symbolic capital that they were able to receive protection from Amin’s army. By aiding less fortunate Ugandan Asians who remained, they became new community leaders.

There were also civil servants who continued to work in the ministries to which they had originally been assigned prior to the deadline; and possibly, prior to Amin’s governance in 1971.²² Ram Singh, for example, was responsible for negotiating the exemptions for a number of Sikhs who worked as contractors on development projects in the Ministry of Defense. Singh purportedly agreed to continue working in Uganda as long as his colleagues could stay behind with him. This group formed an important interface between remaining Indians and the government; thus they were

key community leaders. Other Ugandan Asians who remained could depend on this group to help them with the numerous day-to-day challenges of living in Uganda: harassment and monetary extortion by soldiers, the negotiation of employment and/or travel permissions, financial security, and the fear of looting or kidnapping. Furthermore, Ram Singh negotiated with the Departed Asian Properties Custodial Board (DAPCB) to retain religious institutions in Kampala, Jinja, and Entebbe among the Ugandan Asian community in Kampala (see below). Some Ugandan Asians, less successful in generating revenue and without government jobs, maintained a quasi-presence by traveling in and out of the country. Others, without a consistent stream of revenue, left permanently in the middle of the regime.

Some well-connected Ugandan Asians remained aloof from the remaining community. These individuals, often described as “whiskey runners”, or “drivers”, criss-crossed Ugandan national borders, moved across East and Central Africa, and even traveled to Dubai and other locations. They engaged in entrepreneurial trade by importing scarce and valuable state-sanctioned items; others transported these commodities.²³ Some may have engaged in the smuggling (*magendo*) of coffee and other commodities, or, even more duplicitously, valuable minerals.²⁴ Typically described as self-interested capitalists, whiskey runners and others who invested their energies in monetary accumulation became the focal point for moral discourses about the ethics of business and businessmen after the expulsion. Indeed, for those who stayed behind in Uganda and lost their businesses, or for those who were already impoverished before the expulsion, staying behind could provide new types of financial opportunities. Thus Amin’s Uganda was characterized by the displacement and immiseration of the Indian commercial class, but also by new forms of capitalist enterprise, community entrepreneurs, and a business culture unique to the rapidly shifting economic conditions of the country.²⁵

There was little influx of Indians from Europe or India to Uganda during the period 1971–79. Nonetheless, one of the key contradictions about Idi Amin and his anti-Asian policies is that he began to seek the emigration of Indian professionals to Uganda as early as 1974.²⁶ Aside from business entrepreneurs and civil servants, Indian doctors, engineers, technicians, managers, and other types of professionals constituted the demographics of Ugandan Asians who remained. One interviewee noted that as early as 1976, between 20 and 30 Sikh families returned to Uganda as laborers for the government and private companies involved in construction projects.²⁷ Fortune-seekers, traders, and other migrants began to settle in Uganda more aggressively by the early 1980s, most significantly after the 1979 war that ousted Amin.

Bureaucratic verification

Amin’s state issued identity cards to Indians as early as 1971 during a formal census of the Asian population in Uganda.²⁸ The exercise continued throughout the expulsion crisis. Indians who remained after the deadline possessed a number of documents: passports, birth certificates, business licenses, property and land titles, many of which indicated their citizenship status. Surprisingly, little scholarship has paid attention to the emergence of modern bureaucratic technologies in Amin’s state. Although a proliferation of institutions such as verification committees, ration boards, and the DAPCB, were central to the consolidation of Amin’s sovereignty and the new African entrepreneurial class, bureaucratic methods of enumeration, lists,

cartography and town maps, writing and records, and other forms of material documentation have been far less examined and taken as serious objects of inquiry in their ability to recognize, organize, govern and exclude subjects. This is important because prior to the expulsion of all racialized Indians from Uganda, East African post-colonial regimes sought to identify “citizen” Indians from “non-citizen” or “alien” Indians.²⁹ During the expulsion exercise itself, an official verification committee, composed of bureaucrats from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Immigration) examined the paperwork of Indians. The committee confirmed or canceled the Ugandan citizenship of Indians; eventually the committee would also issue paperwork to Indians who remained in Amin’s regime after the expulsion deadline.

Rajivbhai, a third-generation Ugandan and Lohana Hindu from a prominent business family in Kampala, shared his memories of the expulsion and its aftermath with me. In 1972, he was a shopkeeper and trader who lived in Kasese in Western Uganda. He traveled to Kampala in order to have his documents checked by a verification committee at the Immigration Department in Kampala. Unlike the nullified passports and documents of other Ugandan Asian citizens during the expulsion period, his citizenship was confirmed. Officials issued Rajivbhai a red-colored identity card and he was entitled to stay on in the regime. Thus, despite their status as legal Ugandan citizens, the presence of Indians in the country after the expulsion had to be made immediately legible to the state vis-à-vis the imposition of a new system of identification.

Anthropologists have noted that documents, like other forms of material culture such as uniforms and buildings, are central to the everyday representation and reproduction of the state and its power.³⁰ Bureaucratic practices that index formal proceduralism such as the process of citizenship verification in Kampala constitute the ways that subjects come to imagine, understand, and respect the sovereignty of the state and its leadership. Among Indians in the post-1972 era, Amin’s state manifested itself in the mundane, systematic, and violent nature of bureaucratic processes. Indian men, often subject to routine checks by military men, carried and displayed identity cards during the 1970s.

During our conversations, Rajivbhai discussed his status as a Ugandan citizen during the expulsion era and stressed that the Amin state had provided him with a card which authorized his presence in the country. However, he also seemed to grapple with the contradictory nature of his inclusion in Amin’s regime. He diminished the bureaucratic significance of the identity card that he received, stating, “but . . . I didn’t need a card. Only they had to prove that you are a Ugandan. Then they give you a card.”³¹ The arbitrariness by which other Indians with Ugandan citizenship lost their rights and became excluded from the national body was troubling to him. Although Indian men acknowledged the formal bureaucratic practices that included certain populations within the regime, they were also keenly aware of the contingent and arbitrary nature of their inclusion in Uganda after the deadline.

Others were only interested in emphasizing their status as Ugandan citizens (by birth or naturalization).³² Lalbhai, who continued to live in Mbarara town in Ankole, continually emphasized his legal status as a Ugandan citizen. He noted that he “was a citizen”, that “he was working”, and that his “citizenship had been verified as proper”.³³ He also acknowledged that his ability to stay may have been related to his family’s involvement in the copper mining business. Mining required specialized and technical knowledge; it was also a financially lucrative activity that would ostensibly

produce profits for Amin's government and other officials connected to the industry. Both Rajivbhai and Lalbhai highlight a central conundrum among Indian men exempt from the expulsion. Interviewees acknowledged the role of state recognition and bureaucratic practices in their everyday lives. Yet both men indicated that the substantive meaning of bureaucratic verification was less important than its aesthetic form and procedure. Rajivbhai observed that [they] "didn't need identity cards . . . they just had to check".³⁴ Men confronted this profound unbundling of formal citizenship from biological birthright and inclusion in the nation-state, especially as the citizenship of other Ugandan Asians was revoked and canceled by virtue of their racialized status as Indians. Thus, Indians who remained behind inhabited the interstices of the modern concept of citizenship (as signified by state bureaucrats, institutions and the officialdom of documents) and its fictional status in the postcolony.

The management of documents and emphasizing the verification of one's formal citizenship status became the central means by which Indian men could make claims about residing in the country and "doing business" (*okola business*, Luganda). These practices also served as a response to anyone who might question the presence of an Indian in the country in the absence of the Indian population writ large. Indeed, claiming formal Ugandan citizenship, by birth or naturalization, continue to be important discursive and social practices among Indians from different diaspora communities in contemporary Uganda.

Forging security: negotiations, commensality, repression

After the deadline, Rajivbhai explained to me that while he and others had lost their businesses in rural areas and moved to the capital, some Indians had managed to retain possession of their businesses in the Kampala region. He observed that these men had money and "couldn't be touched". For example, Rajivbhai's *Shia* Muslim friend owned two petrol stations in Buganda that required specialized expertise and large amounts of "cash money" to run.³⁵ Another influential Sikh industrialist had an "entire platoon" guarding his sawmill and workshops throughout the 1970s and 1980s.³⁶ Entrepreneurial men carved out protected enclaves to continue business in Uganda, usually forging alliances with local government officials and soldiers by distributing large amounts of money in exchange for protection. These types of relations (monetary or other rewards in exchange for security and protection) became especially important for Indians who lived in more isolated places away from the larger group of Ugandan Asians in Kampala.

Men like Rajivbhai could continue to live in Uganda as long as they found a way to earn money. For example, Rajivbhai's uncle in Jinja owned several general stores. Through his connections with bureaucrats and soldiers, his uncle managed to continue trading and retained possession of the shops. Rajivbhai resided in Kampala, moving in with an Indian friend who had empty rooms in his house. During one conversation, he described the foreign exchange business that he and his partner established to earn money at this time. By networking with another contact with connections to England, Rajivbhai sent British currency out of Uganda, earning profits through the handling fees that he charged. European officials, diplomats and other businessmen (Indian and Ugandan) became their customers.³⁷

After the expulsion, the Indian property repossession and allocation process quickly devolved into an exercise of personal enrichment for Amin's high-ranking governmental officials and soldiers, largely from his own ethnic group. Like

Rajivbhai, many men who remained in Uganda described their jobless status in the early years of the regime. Most overcame their dire situations by engaging in informal or illegal work (currency exchange and other forms of trade). Eventually, however, many found regular work as managers running former Indian-owned businesses that had been repossessed by the state! Ugandan ministers, who divided time between official duties and their newfound businesses, often negotiated with Indian men to take on the work of business management.

As Rajivbhai described to me, a minister who had “grabbed” a former Indian-owned factory asked Rajivbhai to manage the place. Thinking quickly, he negotiated an offer to manage the minister’s business on the condition that he obtained special visas, permits, and eventually, identity cards for his wife and children to return to Uganda from England and live with him. Other Indian men, concerned about their separation from displaced families, reached similar agreements with a variety of officials. As it became usual practice for Indian men to negotiate visas and permits from ministers and the Immigration Department, Indian families began to trickle back into the country. Thus, Indian men and government officials participated in reciprocal exchanges with each other that did not exclusively involve money, “goodwill” or bribes. Reciprocity between Indian and African men could also involve the exchange of management or technical skills for immigration documents. While officials at immigration were discontent with endorsing Indians who returned to Uganda during Amin’s regime, high-ranking ministers, in relations of authority over lower-ranking bureaucrats, would authorize the return of some individuals. Rajivbhai’s story is exemplary of how some returnee Ugandan Asians returned to the country merely six years after the expulsion in 1972.

While men like Rajivbhai were preoccupied with finding ways to earn money and re-establish family life, other community entrepreneurs constructed relations of trust and loyalty with their government contacts. One-on-one socializing between Indian and African men, in addition to larger gatherings in public spaces, involved sharing food, cooking meat, and drinking whiskey. Some Indian men frequented clubs and discos that military officers attended. Others avoided these places and entertained ministers and army men in their homes. Mini, the mixed-race daughter of a Punjabi Sikh construction worker and his Ugandan Nyoro wife, described her memories to me:

M: When I was a child . . . we were not walking outside. We were indoors. And even food was a problem because we couldn’t get everything. We would use what was there. During the regime . . . dad would continue with his work, going, coming. He was given everything. Like cement he would get in loads, building materials in loads, because he was in construction for the government. He would also go to the Minister of Information. The minister would come home. Dad would prepare meals for them. Slaughter a goat for them. And we would enjoy the feast, enjoy feast with my dad at home. Others would come, the colonels, the military. Life was not easy for him, but he made it . . . if you have contacts in the government, you have safety. You have a bit of safety.”³⁸

Likewise, Hari Singh, a Ugandan Asian who returned permanently in the 1980s, described forms of male socializing among Indian men, ministers and army men:

H: You had this guy, he was probably the kingpin during the 70s. He was the sole importer of sugar, salt, and cooking oil. You couldn’t touch this guy. Yeah, yeah. Patel. You couldn’t touch this guy. But he was a very nice man, a gentlemen. But in those days, there were such few people. In the evening, you would go to his house, and he would be in his *lungi* (sarong, Hindi) cooking. And he would love doing it. You know, a bottle of

whiskey and he would start cooking his chicken curry. That was the only social structure we had. Just sitting with somebody . . . that was the score.³⁹

Hari Singh also discussed his late-night visits to the homes of ministers with yet another Indian “kingpin”.⁴⁰ He and his colleague often brought bottles of whiskey with them to their meetings, carrying along bottles of wine for the wives of ministers. The gifting of whiskey bottles and other luxury items to ministers, army men and bureaucrats was essential to the maintenance of social relationships, inter-racial loyalties, and networks. Luxury commodities pleased officials by providing a form of social lubrication during important conversations that involved requests for special favors or negotiations. They also displayed deference to Amin’s inner circle.

Indian men enjoyed new forms of social recognition by powerful African men after the expulsion. They were often critical of popular Western apprehensions of Idi Amin, displaying ambiguous attitudes of awe and respect for him. Some individuals stated that Amin “had no problem with Asians” after 1972.⁴¹ In contrast to the violence that they experienced during the expulsion exercise, the insecure states that followed Amin’s coup, and Milton Obote’s second regime between 1979 and 1985, men expressed that they felt secure during the regime. At least three repressive state institutions (the Bureau of State Research, the Public Safety Unit, and the expanding military police) could suspect, detain, and shoot to kill *kondos* (thieves), the Indian community’s main fear during the regime.⁴² As one interviewee noted, “you could walk in the town, you could walk in the town alone without any problem”.⁴³ Sahota, who lived in the *gurudwara* in Old Kampala during, explained that the keys to the front gates of the temple were always chained to the gate and left open to the public. Others would also leave their doors open or unlocked to indicate to potential *kondos* that there was nothing to steal and that Indian men and families had the protection of police and soldiers.⁴⁴

Nonetheless, men did articulate ideas about anti-Indian violence during the regime. Below, Rajivbhai describes killings of Indian men, which he often renders as exceptional events.

R: In Amin’s time, safety was there, and security was there. You could walk at 12 o’clock at night alone. Nobody would accost you, nobody would disturb you . . . when Amin declared the expulsion of Asians, about 7, 8 Asians were killed by army people throughout the country. I lost one of my cousins. They abducted him someplace where he had gone to do some business or collect some money which Ugandan traders owed him. We have not seen his body even. Nobody has seen it. So there were such instances. About 10 people must have died, about 10, 12 during Amin’s time. That is during the expulsion. Then after the expulsion about three, four people died. One Sikh died in Mengo. But they say it was the thieves who came to rob him. There was an Indian Ismaili, they came to grab his car, and he was mentally not active, or slightly thick, so he resisted, and they killed him. Young boy, about 18, 20. So like that about four, five people died during Amin’s time. But I don’t think Amin has got anything to do with it, it was his soldiers, like that. But it was generally not bad. I mean, peace was there.

Hari Singh, Virdee, and Tara Singh would also discuss the deaths of community members as exceptional events in a broader context of relative security and stability. Aside from Hari Singh and the women I interviewed, none explicitly mentioned violence against Indian women, particularly during the expulsion and its aftermath from 1972 to 1973.⁴⁵ Virdee, for example, stressed periodically throughout his interview, “I am not saying that people [Indians] did not die . . . they did. But if it

happened, it was because someone drank too much alcohol, a soldier got angry, and shot him. Things like that.”⁴⁶

Although men minimized the impact of violence in their everyday lives, my research revealed that they were deeply aware of the possibility of imminent violence and that they sought to pre-empt possible danger. The most important strategy was to obtain information from Ugandan friends and contacts in or close to Amin’s inner circle. For example, men knew that it was important not to be seen in particular places or with individuals who were under investigation by Amin’s intelligence services. Dr. Syed Abidi discussed narrowly avoiding a meeting with a well-known professor in Lusaka whose home had become a meeting point for anti-Amin exiles. Similarly, Ali Jafar described a number of adventurous close encounters with suspected Ugandans that could have resulted in his death.⁴⁷

Because Amin had banned all political activities among civilians, everyday life occurred in a milieu of complicity and repressive silence surrounding actual political circumstances in Kampala. Civil servants rarely discussed public executions, disappearances, and other rumors of violence that circulated the town. They stressed that they reported for work duties and stayed near home and religious sites. Indian men explained that it was important “not to discuss politics”, and “as long as you didn’t talk about politics, you were safe, you had some security”.⁴⁸ Thus, everyday life depended upon a construction of self and community as outside the realm of “politics”.⁴⁹ As a persecuted population within the regime, men’s subjectivities became fragmented, flattened and suppressed. In an earlier era, individuals might have resisted their economic “middle man” status via direct political agitation. In the regime, however, they reified themselves as individuals who operated in an economic domain. Ali Jafar, a trader and tailor who had sewn several of Amin’s suits prior to the expulsion, described pleading with Amin in 1973 to not promote him to the position of Ugandan ambassador to Zaire. He implored Amin, “Please, I am not a politician, just a simple businessman.”⁵⁰

Forging Indian space: religious sites in the post-expulsion era

Amin’s Economic War involved two aspects: the first was the expulsion of non-citizen Indians, followed by a large number of Ugandan Asians. The second part involved the expropriation and re-allocation of private property from Indians to Ugandan Africans, typically those already involved in trade or business or among the military. In order to systemize the allocation of close to 5500 Indian properties, Amin established a governmental body, the DAPCB, in 1973. “Properties” (homes, schools, commercial enterprises, industrial factories, and other assets) were re-distributed, at first in a systematic way, and then more quickly among Amin’s inner circle. Other Indian properties were owned communally prior to the expulsion – these included the community centers and devotional sites of numerous religious, sectarian and caste-based societies. Community leaders often built religious institutions and commercial properties that were rented to wholesalers and retailers to help fund religious activities.⁵¹ Thus, religious sites in Uganda are usually located next to plots of land with go-downs, halls, or other commercial spaces.

In the early 1970s, Amin’s interest in unifying various Islamic sects in the country and his support of Islamic influences, both within Uganda and internationally, compelled him to allocate all Indian mosques to the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council. As Ugandan Asians explained to me, mosques of various Islamic groups (the *Shia*

Ismaili, Bohra, Khoja Ithna Ashari, and the Uganda Sunni Muslim Association, etc.) were “lost”. During the expulsion period, the few remaining Indian mosques, such as the Aga Khan’s Ismailia *jamatkhana* in Kampala, were raided and looted.⁵²

Notably, a few Hindu and Sikh religious sites in Buganda and Busoga were exceptions to the large-scale expropriation and re-distribution of Indian communal and religious property. Amin’s Chief Engineer in the Ministry of Defense, Ram Singh, had agreed to work in Amin’s government after the expulsion on the condition that certain religious sites “would not be touched”.⁵³ Thus, seven religious sites remained intact. They were never officially allocated to or expropriated by the central government, the army, or individual Ugandans.⁵⁴ In Kampala, sites that remained in possession of Indian congregants became the basis for community, social and religious life during the regime. Significantly, Indian men were already using the Ramgarhia Sikh Society *gurudwara* as a community center during the expulsion crisis in 1972. It was transformed into a United Nations (UN) refugee-processing center for stateless Indians and a refugee camp for displaced Indians.

Religious sites became permanent residences for many Indian men who were dispossessed of their original homes. While it is common practice for Indian congregants to sleep and reside within devotional sites for the purpose of pilgrimage, travel, and rest, some of the social practices that developed in relation to religious sites were novel to the regime. For example, Ram Singh’s cadre of construction workers and civil servants in the Ministry of Defense decided to live in the *gurudwara* together. It was an affordable place to stay, but it was also a “safe house” – Indian men could live together in order to shore up security. Moreover, as families and other returnees began to filter back to the country, the *gurudwara* provided a safe residence for travelers and migrants. As the community grew, religious sites became meeting points and informal community centers where one could obtain information about Idi Amin, the army, possible rebel movements, and the security situation in general.

Just like the homes and businesses of Indian men who did not have adequate connections, religious sites were under constant threat of appropriation or intrusion by autonomous or defected soldiers and *kondos*. For example, former Indian community centers, hotels and restaurants often became beer halls and late night discos frequented by Amin’s expanding military.

Community members stated that they had managed to keep religious sites in their possession. This was a fraught and contested process that required the patronage of Ugandans associated with the regime. Sukh Singh confirmed that soldiers, government officials and other urban Ugandans would enter, explore, and search the *gurudwara*.⁵⁵ He mentioned attempts to transform the *gurudwara* into a disco. Although unclear in our discussions, it is likely that community members hosted, befriended, bribed, or even lived with Ugandan visitors. Finally, Sukh Singh suggested that Idi Amin himself visited the *gurudwara* to check if people were using the space for religious observance and prayer. Others would refute this story, noting that Amin’s ministers were the only people who entered the *gurudwara*.⁵⁶ A prominent Indian businessman, whose mother and father became the caretakers of the *Sanatam Dharm Mandhir* (SDM) in Kampala, described Idi Amin’s visit to the religious site. There, Amin stood before a large marble effigy of *Sri Krishna*, and proclaimed that this was a holy place that should not be “touched” (repossessed).⁵⁷

Leaders also mobilized Indians who remained to visit and spend time at religious sites each week. By performing religious practices at each location, the community could assert their presence despite the attempts of military men and other

bureaucrats to appropriate the property. Congregants may have been believers who engaged in religious practice for spiritual fulfillment, but Indian men were also well aware of the need to perform community solidarity to the outside African society. Leaders had to signal that religious sites were being used for the religious needs of the community *only*.⁵⁸ In doing so, men maintained the fragile continuity of urban Indian space that had been drastically reduced after the expulsion.

Virdee, a civil servant connected to the Ministry of Defense who lived in the *gurudwara*, discussed the weekly routines of the community. Since the congregants at religious programs were largely Hindus and Sikhs, religious programs involved devotional services (*kirtan* and *puja*), followed by *langar* (communal meals).⁵⁹ Men with connections to the Kampala Ration Board could obtain large quantities of foodstuffs and Indian spices across the Kenyan border; women prepared meals.

V: Like this, four, five families of Singhs came together and lived in the *gurudwara*. We looked after the *gurudwara*, and every Sunday we had a program. We kept a schedule that one Sunday we would be at *Ramgarhia gurudwara*, one Sunday at *Singh Sabha gurudwara*, one Sunday in the *mandhir*, one Sunday at *Jinja gurudwara*, one Sunday at *Entebbe gurudwara* or in the *Entebbe mandhir*. Like this, the *gurudwara* kept going. Then in '76 the government began to fight with Obote. And us, after our work, if we had time in the evening, we would move around [the town] . . . meaning in the evening we would look to see that all our people were together. Nobody was saying, oh, this is a Muslim. Or this is a Pakistani. At that time, there was none of this. At that time everyone was in unity. And if anyone was missing, for two days, four days, if he went outside without telling anyone, after two days we would start looking for him.⁶⁰

Beyond their religious duties, Indian men patrolled the city. Virdee and other civil servants could gather information about events in Kampala, which would then help them to make informed decisions about their day-to-day safety. Information was collected and disseminated at the *gurudwara*, which served as a meeting point for Ugandan Asians in different parts of the city. Finally, Virdee and others could make themselves available to Indians who might be in trouble – if documents were confiscated, if men were held at the Central Police Station (CPS), or had been taken to an unknown location.⁶¹ Thus, religious sites were connected to practices of buttressing security among Indians.

The practices that developed during this era resulted in novel modes of community formation. This new “Indian community” transcended the strict communal, caste, and sectarian divisions of the Indian population in the colonial and post-colonial period. Indians who remained were *Shia* and *Sunni* Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, religious and secular, and of varying caste affiliations. New forms of social community (i.e. the generally “ethnic” and racialized Indian) emerged in relation to the need to maintain possession of religious sites.

Indian women and gendered practice

Attention to gendered ideologies and practices reveal deeper layers of complexity surrounding the nature of inter-racial social interactions that proliferated in Amin's state. Some Indian women returned to Uganda and joined their husbands or fathers after a temporary absence from the country during the expulsion crisis. Conversations with men revealed that they spent an inordinate amount of time preoccupied with the safety and protection of Indian women. The control of women's bodies by

men is intimately tied to their sense of self-determination, autonomy, and security within the regime. This is especially so given that Idi Amin and attendant processes of Africanization had symbolically emasculated Indian men during the expulsion and its aftermath.

Mini was only eight years old when her father prepared feasts for visiting ministers and colonels in their family home. Although her memories of this period are vague, she remembers staying confined in a back room of her house during their visits:

M: Because my dad was one person . . . my father was one person who would not let us . . . us being girls . . . he would face them [ministers and soldiers] himself. But for us, we are locked up in one room. What would happen between them, we wouldn't know. We would be in a room locked up until everybody was gone, and then we would come out. Just "keep quiet and don't talk," he would say. Because we were ladies . . . and I don't think there were many ladies then.⁶²

In Amin's Uganda, Indian men continued to be the natural intermediaries between outside African society and private Indian spaces. While Indian men were visible in their daily movements, and even used visibility strategically to claim possession of Indian spaces, Indian and mixed-race women remained invisible and inaccessible. Although the racial and gendered segregation of domestic space is common in both Indian and African homes in East Africa, Indian women's mobility and visibility in public and private spaces became intensely restricted in the context of increasing anti-Asian sentiment and violence during the 1960s and 1970s. Whether or not soldiers and ministers were an actual threat to women, men were motivated to keep their wives and daughters in confined spaces due to their fears of the violation of women's bodies by African men.

Male anxieties over Indian women's bodies, of course, are linked to the historical and sexual order that regulates racialized "African" and "Indian" group boundaries in East Africa. Concerns surrounding the purity of Indian women's bodies and their *izzat* (honor) are based on East African Asian cultural, caste and religious norms and entrenched ideologies of African aggressive sexuality. Finally, Indian men's concerns were heightened by traumatic memories of sexual attacks against Indian women during the 90-day expulsion period in 1972.⁶³

During the regime, Indian homes had to become more accessible to ministers, soldiers, and other bureaucrats in order to facilitate relations of trust and loyalty between Indian and African men. When inter-racial male socialization occurred within domestic contexts, women like Mini occupied and inhabited even more private and contained spaces. Thus, while homes and religious sites served to protect exempt Indians from the possibility of violence, they can also be re-signified as sites of detention and confinement. Women, like the few Indian children that were born in Uganda during the regime, spent most of their time inside private space until the onset of political stability in 1986.

Not all women, however, were confined to interior spaces or subjected by the protective gaze of men. Some, perhaps due to their "non-political" nature within the larger community, served as vehicles for alliances with African populations that helped to secure their families. Miraben, for example, returned to Uganda in 1975 after she received a dependent pass and an identity card. Immediately after her arrival, her husband, engaged in the lucrative trade of construction materials, was

imprisoned for nine months. In our conversation, Miraben described how she continued to live in her home with other male relatives. Despite the absence of her spouse, she began a stitching and tailoring business, and tutored both Ugandans and Indians in English and Gujarati languages. She also acquired visas, passports, and other travel documents for contacts through a friend at East African Airways. Finally, she procured bulk quantities of food for the community. She explained to me proudly in Hindi, “all Ugandans called me Mama. When sugar was there, they brought it to my place first and asked, ‘Mama, *unataka sukari?*’ They gave it to me first, and then I distributed sugar to all the Asians.”⁶⁴

Conclusion: reconsidering Indian presence in Uganda

The Indian population who continued to live in Uganda after the expulsion can be divided into three groups: powerful businessmen with industrial know-how and personal connections to Amin, small-time traders who cultivated relations of protection with more powerful Indian and African men, and civil servants who worked in ministries. Exempt Ugandan Asians shored up a fragile and splintered sense of autonomy via their relations with government officials, often becoming important community representatives or big men. Patronage networks, relations of commensality, shared masculinity, strategic visibility and invisibility, community patrolling, and an obsession with Indian women and their bodies – all of these inter-racial and intra-community practices shaped the social and moral order of post-expulsion Afro-Asian life in Uganda.

Yet the study of Indians in Amin’s Uganda also reveals much about the nature of totalitarian regimes in general: the capricious use of violence, the arbitrary and contingent nature of governance, the relations of complicity and collaboration that ordinary subjects inevitably become part of, and the many social actors (ministers, bureaucrats, businessmen) that are essential to the smooth functioning of the state. As more liberal forms of government come to replace the authoritarian regimes of the high nationalist period in Africa, the multi-racial politics of East African societies are becoming relevant to social analysts once again. Indeed, the vulnerable and tenacious nature of Indian communal and social life, practices of security-seeking, and the racialized Indian self that emerged during the Amin era – these complex dynamics underscore the very dynamics of Afro-Asian relations in East Africa today.

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Notes

1. Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*; Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda*, and Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*, offer various framings of Idi Amin’s state and mode of governance.
2. See Peterson and Taylor, “Rethinking the State in Idi Amin’s Uganda: the Politics of Exhortation” for further discussion.

3. Hansen and Stepputat, *Sovereign Bodies*, p. 3.
4. The Immigration (Amendment) Decree, Decree No. 30, October 5, 1972.
5. The total Asian population in Uganda increased dramatically over the course of the twentieth century (5000 in 1921; 14,150 in 1931; 35,215 in 1948; and 71,933 in 1959). The Asian population was 74,308 in 1969, approximately 0.73% of the total population in Uganda at this time (Read, "Some Legal Aspects of the Expulsion," p. 193). The Indian population had fallen to 55,000 at the time of Amin's expulsion decree (personal communication with Dr. Vali Jamal, August 2011).
6. For an excellent online bibliography, see http://coombs.anu.edu.au/Biblio/biblio_sasiadiaspora.html
7. Racial formation and processes of racialization are critical to understanding the lives of Indians in East Africa. This discussion is beyond the scope of this essay; however, new works by Brennan, *Tajifa*; Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones*; and Hansen, *Melancholia of Freedom*, suggest fresh perspectives on the history of racial thought and the ethnography of racial practice in Eastern and Southern Africa.
8. *Muhindi* (Luganda), or Indian. Following their own preferences, I refer to interviewees as "Indian" or "Ugandan Asian", regardless of their formal citizenship status. Practices of self-referencing, in relation to generational status, racial, ethnic, religious, national, and migration history, is on-going discursive labor among interviewees. "Asian" is another term that is commonly used among East African Asians and South Asian diaspora populations in the UK.
9. I conducted interviews and home stays with Ugandan Asians and their immediate and extended families in Kampala, Mbarara and Jinja between September 2008 and February 2011. Among Indians in Uganda, discussion of the expulsion and the Obote and Amin years is sensitive and it is difficult to access information on this era. Friends introduced me to their networks, and after establishing rapport with interviewees, I received permission to conduct interviews. Unless they are prominent or historical figures, I have changed all real names to pseudonyms in the text in order to protect the identities of interviewees.
10. Translated from interviews in Hindi and Panjabi, the phrase "Indians who remained" (*rehen walley*) is often used in this essay. Ugandan Asians always described themselves in relation to the absence of the larger population of Indians who left during the East African exodus.
11. Das, *Life and Words*, p. 7.
12. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. xi–xxiv.
13. I refer here to Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol.1. Both Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* and Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, discuss relations between the state, its ideological apparatus, and the individual that may be more appropriate to the formation of political subjectivities among men during the regime.
14. Personal communication with Dr Vali Jamal, June 2011.
15. Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, February 2011 and Lalbhai, Mbarara, April 2010. See also Lalani, *Uganda Asian Expulsion*, pp. 125 and 133.
16. Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, February 2011. See also Adams and Bristow, "Ugandan Asian Expulsion Experiences: Rumour and Reality."
17. One of the more prominent Indian figures during Amin's regime was Ram Singh, the Chief Engineer of the Ministry of Defense. Interviews with Tara Singh and Rajivbhai, Jinja and Kampala, February 2010.
18. This process began in the late 1960s and more intensely after the Asian Conference in 1972 when Indian men became acutely aware of Idi Amin's interest in African men's inability to marry or have sexual relations with Indian women. See Moghal, *Idi Amin* and Tandon [O'Brien], *Brown Britons*, for further discussion.
19. Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, p. 129; also cited in Hansen, *Melancholia of Freedom*, p. 35.
20. I argue that the Indian community is gendered "male" because it is interpellated by the colonial state via Indian male community representatives. Indian women also form the symbolic "inner essence" of the "Indian community". In general, the colonial state engendered symbolic relations among European, Indian and African men such that Indian men were emasculated. See Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, for a discussion of imperial processes and gender formation in India.
21. Morris, "Communal Rivalry Among Indians in Uganda," p. 316.

22. Ram Singh and Sahib, both high-ranking contractors in the Ministry of Defense, received permission to hire labor from Punjab on a number of construction projects throughout the 1970s.
23. These items included whiskey, cigarettes, and other luxury goods. Other Ugandan Asian traders became the sole importers of staple items such as sugar and salt.
24. *Magendo* (Kiswahili) refers to the informal and untaxed economy that proliferated after the expulsion of the Asian commercial class. Most Ugandan Asian traders and entrepreneurs who remained took part in various forms of smuggling. Some interviewees would describe this group as “opportunists”. Because everyone engaged in enterprise that was considered illegal in the context of the declining infrastructure and economic crisis, conventional African and Indian social norms of morality became ambiguous. Ugandan Asians are embedded within domains of community and social respectability that deal with the moral politics of individual and community wealth accumulation.
25. The expulsion resulted in the emergence of new African traders and entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, Indians continued to engage in the trade of commodities that African traders did not have access to.
26. Tandon, *Technical Assistance Administration in East Africa*.
27. Interview with Sukh Singh, Kampala, October 2009. This is undoubtedly after the first coup attempt against Amin in 1976, and the period when Amin’s Uganda has entered serious economic crisis. Amin may have allowed Punjabi Sikhs to emigrate at this time in order to help revive certain sectors of the economy.
28. Mamdani, *From Citizen to Refugee*.
29. In 1969, Uganda’s total Asian population was 74,308. Uganda citizens formed more than a third (26,657), British Asians almost a half (36,593), Indian citizens were 8890, and Kenyan citizens were 1768. Read, “Some Legal Aspects of the Expulsion,” p. 193. Before independence, most Indians were considered to be British Protected Persons (BPP), without British citizenship but often with access to British passports. The post-independence naturalization of BPP to Ugandan citizenship was a complex affair, with several rule changes occurring over the decade. Immigration restriction policies passed by the Powell government in the UK also affected the numbers of BPP who became Ugandan or British citizens.
30. See Das, “The Signature of the State” and Hansen and Stepputat, *States of Imagination*.
31. Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, February 2011.
32. The emphasis on one’s formal citizenship status as a Ugandan may also reflect the current desire of Ugandan Asians to position themselves as citizens in relation to new migration streams of South Asians to Uganda.
33. Interview, Lalbhai, Mbarara, April 2010. Translation from Hindi.
34. Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, February 2011.
35. Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, February 2011.
36. Interview with Hari Singh, Kampala, November 2010.
37. Interview with Rajivbhai, Kampala, February 2011.
38. Interview with Mini, Kampala, February 2010.
39. Interview with Hari Singh, Kampala, November 2010.
40. Interview with Hari Singh, Kampala, November 2010.
41. Interview with Hari Singh, Kampala, November 2010.
42. *Kondos* practiced *kondoism*, or violent robberies and looting. See Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, pp. 112–16.
43. Interview with Virdee, Kampala, February 2011.
44. Interview with K. Sahota, Kampala, November 2009.
45. Interview, Hari Singh, Kampala, November 2010.
46. Interview with Virdee, Kampala, February 2011. Translation from Panjabi.
47. Professor Syed Abidi, personal communication, Kampala, February 2011. Meeting with Ali Jafar, personal communication, Kampala, January 2010.
48. Interviews with Rajivbhai, Mini, and Tara Singh, Kampala and Jinja, 2009–11.
49. Ugandan Asians often described “politics” as being openly critical about Amin’s policies, especially the expulsion. It is interesting that even civil servants imagined themselves as outside the realm of “politics”, viewing their labor as an extension of the economic role with which the Indian community was conflated.

50. Interview with Ali Jafar, Kampala, February 2011.
51. Interview with Tara Singh, Jinja, February 2011.
52. Interview with Gulzar Amin, Kampala, February 2010.
53. I was not able to track down and interview Ram Singh, and unfortunately he passed away in early 2011.
54. Ugandan Asians continued to attend and live in two major *gurudwara* in Kampala: the *Ramgharia Sikh Society* and *Singh Sabha gurudwara* in Old Kampala and on Sikh Street. They also maintained the *Singh Sabha gurudwara* in Jinja, *Shikhar Bandi Mandhir* and *Sanatan Dharma Mandhir*, or SDM, in Kampala, and the *Ramgariah gurudwara* and *mandhir* in Entebbe. In Kampala, the large *Sri Swami Narayan Mandhir* was expropriated and converted into a school; the Ismailia *jamatkhana* was allocated to the Uganda Supreme Muslim Council. These are key religious institutions in Buganda and Busoga, but they are only part of a vast religious landscape that once flourished in the country.
55. Interview with Sukh Singh, Kampala, October 2009.
56. Interview with Virdee and Tara Singh, Kampala and Jinja, February 2011.
57. According to personal communication with Pradip Karia, July 2011.
58. The ramifications of property expropriation, allocation, and re-appropriation by returnee Ugandan Asians is a set of complex issues that unfortunately is discussed in rather limiting terms in scholarship. See Oloka-Onyango, "Race, Class and Imperialism in Uganda" for a preliminary discussion. It is important to consider the symbolic dimensions of Indian spaces (homes, businesses, places of devotional worship), once viewed as "inaccessible" by Africans who distrusted a "closed community" of Indians. In the 1970s, Indian men's manipulation of Indian space was a mode of forging relations of inclusivity and trust with Ugandans.
59. *Kirtan*, or Sikh musical recitation of scriptures. *Puja*, or Hindu devotional ceremonies. *Langar*, or shared meals among congregants.
60. Interview with Virdee, Kampala, February 2011. Translation from Panjabi.
61. Ugandan Asians could disappear, and this was always a bad situation. During the 90-day expulsion period, Indian men were frequently kidnapped, beaten, robbed, and often asked to bring soldiers back to their homes for more looting.
62. Interview with Mini, Kampala, November 2010.
63. Gulzar Amin states that many of these cases went unreported (Interview, Kampala, February 2011). Mini noted that Indian women were violated in the period of instability following the invasion of Tanzanian troops in 1979 (Interview, Kampala, February 2011).
64. *Unataka sukari*, or "Do you want sugar?" (Kiswahili). Interview with Miraben, July 2011.

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