



Mapping the Diaspora

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REGIONS AND COMMUNITIES

The modern Indian diaspora came into being over the 19th and 20th centuries. Different impulses and opportunities fuelled the migrations from which the diaspora grew. The background to this modern development was set in pre-colonial times, when trade provided an incentive for Indian merchants to circulate through Asia by land and sea and, in some cases, to lay the foundation of Indian communities. The 19th and early 20th centuries, however, saw much larger movements overseas of Indian labourers under schemes of varying degrees of 'contract', followed by the migration of a wider range of Indians through free migration to take advantage of the opportunities—service, business or labour—offered as the Empire expanded. By the mid-20th century there existed a widespread diaspora around the world. Unprecedented migration to the metropolitan centres of the disintegrating imperial state in the 1950s and 1960s was then further diversified as worldwide globalising pressures attracted professional and highly skilled migrants to move into advanced industrial regions, while labour and commercial migrants tapped economic opportunities in less developed areas that had begun to advance. From these movements came the Indian diasporic communities which this section of the encyclopedia details.

MAPPING THE DIASPORA

AS A STARTING point, we map the changes that took place in the population of the diaspora in the last three decades of the 20th century. The two maps on page 143 display, through proportional circles, the distribution of the Indian diaspora in 1971 (Map 8.1) and 2001 (Map 8.2). The maps achieve multiple objectives. The scale of the circles enables comparison of the size of the Indian diaspora in different countries at these two points in time. The colours of the circles used in these maps express different variables. For Map 8.1, the blue colour with a value variation (light blue to dark violet) expresses the proportion of the population of Indian origin as a percentage of the total population of the country, ranging from 0.01 per cent to 70 per cent. In Map 8.2, there are diverging hues to show the evolution of the population of Indian origin from 1971 to 2001. Blue indicates a decrease; yellow to orange indicate an increase; and red highlights new locations where there was no population of Indian origin in 1971.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 1971

The year 1971 was selected as an important marker in the history of the Indian diaspora for two reasons. The first was a change in migration policies in the West, which opened the gates for Asian immigration. The second was the growth of Africanisation policies in East Africa, which led to the re-migration of Indians from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. The maps show a clear shift in the spatial distribution of the population of Indian origin after 1971. Up to this date, colonialism remained the most important factor that had led to the formation of Indian communities in former colonies (including French and Dutch territories) and to some extent in the metropole. These changes affected migration to the US (Immigration and Naturalization Act 1965), Canada (White Paper on Migration 1966) and Australia (end of the Immigration Restriction Act 1966).

THE DIASPORA BY THE 21ST CENTURY

Map 8.2 highlights the different waves of migration that transformed the 'old' diaspora born out of colonial capital. The years between 1971 and 2001 saw a great dispersal of Indians, who can now be found in nearly every country that offers economic opportunities. The large-scale movement of professionals to North America, Australia and, to a lesser extent, Europe, is particularly notable. Large numbers of labourers have also moved to the Gulf countries, albeit mainly as temporary workers. Smaller numbers of Indians can be found in new locations such as the Baltic states and Eastern Europe, which were opened up by the end of the Cold War.

In the former colonies, the growth of the Indian diaspora between 1971 and 2001 has largely been the outcome of natural increase. In Fiji, Guyana and Surinam, political problems or better economic opportunities elsewhere have led to the re-migration of many Indians. Few of the East African 'twice-displaced' have returned to Uganda, but some have reclaimed their place in Kenya and Tanzania, although numbers remain considerably lower than in the 1960s.

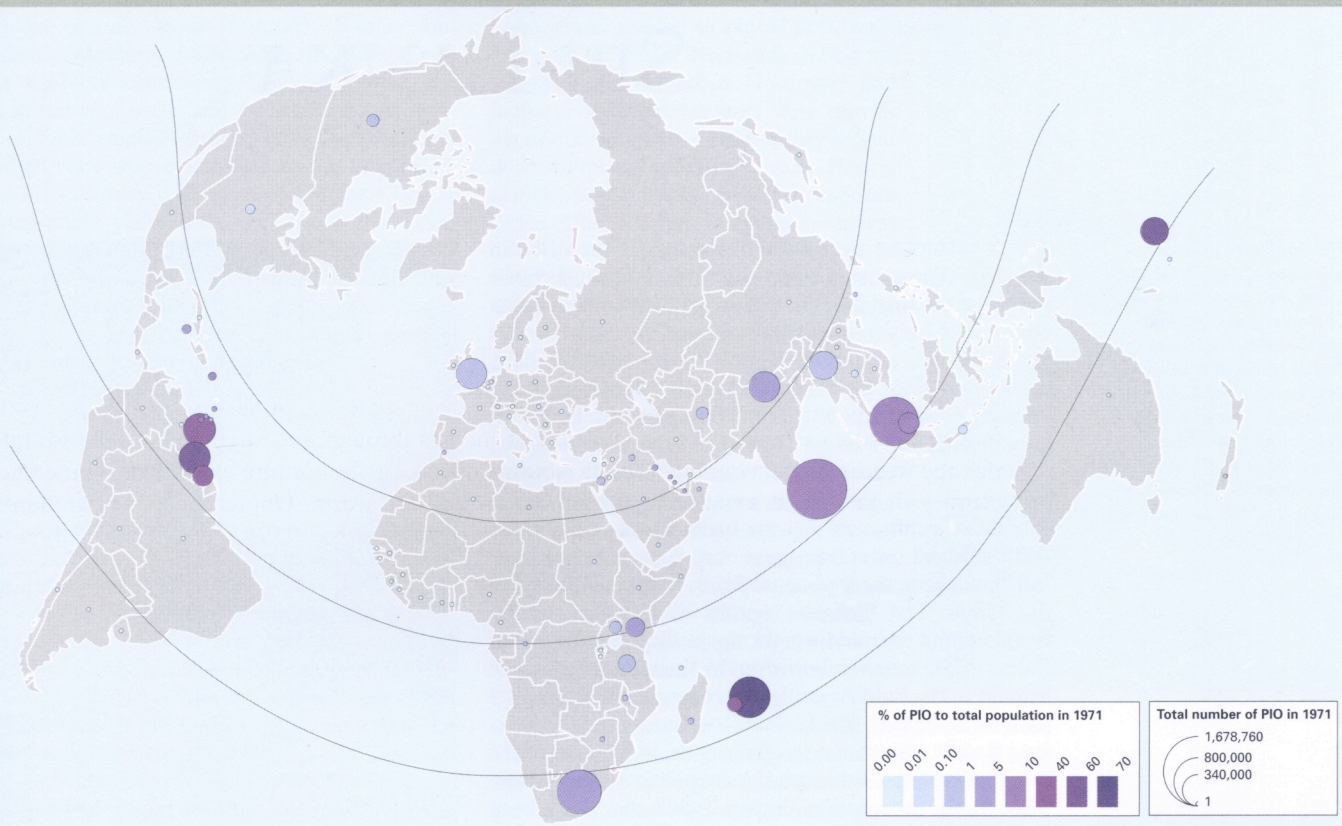
SOURCES

The maps have been drawn from numerous sources for the purpose of providing realistic estimates. A. W. Helweg and U. M. Helweg's *An immigrant success story: East Indians in America* (1990) was particularly useful for estimates for 1971, while the report of the High Level Committee on Indian Diaspora, set up by the Indian government, aided in the assessment for 2001. This information was cross-checked with data from Hugh Tinker's *The Banyan Tree: Overseas emigrants from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (1977) and various country-based census data.

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p 8.1

TOTAL NUMBER OF PIO AND THEIR PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION IN HOST NATIONS (1971)



p 8.2

TOTAL NUMBER OF PIO AND GENERAL GROWTH (1971–2001)

